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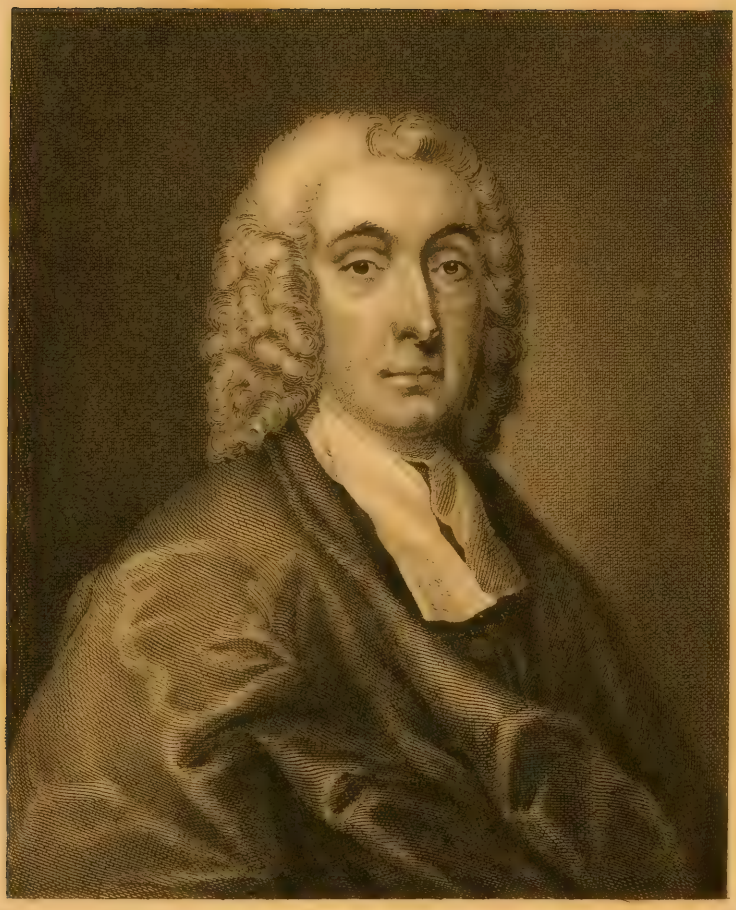
FAMILY EXPOSITOR;

OR A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE NEW TESTAMENT.



PHILIP — DODDRIDGE, D. D.



THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PARAPHRASE AND VERSION,

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND

A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

BY PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED VERBATIM FROM THE BEST EDITION IN QUARTO, WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

I MOST thankfully acknowledge the condescension of your Royal Highness in allowing me the honour of laying this work at your feet, and committing it to so august a protection; and humbly beg your favourable acceptance of it, as a most sincere though inconsiderable expression of the profoundest duty, and most cordial esteem.

Could I lay open to your Royal Highness all the secret sentiments of my heart, you would read there the most affectionate sense of that gracious Providence which conducted you hither, to instruct and adorn Great Britain by so amiable an example, as well as to bless it with a race of princes descended from the illustrious houses of Brunswick and Saxe-Gotha in so happy an union! Joyfully have I, long since, taken my part with thousands in congratulating my country and your Royal Highness on this occasion, and acknowledging that wise and paternal care his Majesty hath therein expressed for the happiness of succeeding generations: but permit me, Madam, freely to add, that with regard to yourself, I rejoice not so much in this accession to your grandeur, as in the persuasion I have, that you are possessed of a mind so superior to it, as to render it in all its remotest consequences, what greatness is not always to its possessors, safe, honourable, and advantageous. Universal report leaves me no room to doubt, that, even in this blooming age, you are tenderly sensible of the shining dangers inseparable from so high a rank; and that it appears to your princely wisdom chiefly desirable, on account of those distinguished advantages which it may give, of approving yourself the faithful servant of God, and the generous friend of the public.

Among the principal of these advantages, your Royal Highness will undoubtedly number the opportunity which this exalted station of life affords you, of forming to early sentiments of religion and virtue the opening minds of your royal offspring; those dear pledges of the liberty and happiness of ages yet to come, on whose temper and character so much of public glory to our nation, so much of private felicity to yet unformed families, will depend. We adore the great Disposer of all events, who hath lodged this important trust in so wise and so pious a hand; and it must argue a very irreligious or a very careless temper, if any neglect earnestly to pray, that He who hath so graciously assigned it to you, may direct and prosper you in it. While you, Madam, during the tender years which most naturally fall under the care of a mother, are endeavouring to bless those lovely infants with an education like that which you received from the excellent princes your parents, may your Royal Highness, in a success like theirs, receive the joys you have given! May they arise and shine on the whole Protestant world, in the lustre of every royal virtue and every christian grace, which can render them dear to God and to their country, and, to say all in a word, worthy their relation to the Prince and Princess of Wales, and to all the glorious line of remoter ancestors from which they spring!

I should esteem it one of the greatest blessings of my life, and should be able to relish the thought in the nearest views of death itself, if this humble present, which I here offer to your Royal Highness, might give you any assistance in these pious cares. If the kings of Israel were required not only to read the law of Moses all the days of their lives, but to write out a copy of it with their own hand; it may reasonably be expected, that christian princes should make the far more glorious gospel of the Son of God their daily study, that it may be their constant guide. And I persuade myself, Madam, that none of the fashionable amusements of the age will seem to you in any degree comparable to that rational and elevated pleasure, which you will find in pointing out to your happy charge, as they grow capable of such instructions, the resplendent example of Jesus, the Prince of heaven, and the King of glory; in tracing the marvellous and edifying circum-

stances of his life, as here described ; and in urging their humble and dutiful regards to that Divine yet condescending Redeemer ; to whom your Royal Highness, with all those amiable virtues which render you the delight and boast of our nation, will thankfully ascribe your own hopes of being finally accepted by God, and sharing the joys of his eternal presence.

These hopes, Madam, are the grand supports of the human mind, in those views from which royalty and empire cannot shelter it. An awful Providence, which we must all long lament, did early write these admonitions to your Royal Highness in the dust of one of the best of queens. The attention with which her late Majesty studied the sacred oracles and the evidences of our holy religion, for which, even in her departing moments, she expressed so firm a regard, will, I hope, never be forgotten by any allied to her, or descended from her. Nor am I able, in all the overflowings of the most affectionate gratitude and duty which I now feel, to form a more important wish for that condescending Patroness to whom I am addressing, than (to borrow the words of the Hebrew monarch) that the testimonies of God may be her " delight and her counsellors !" And I trust, Madam, that they are so ; I trust, that conscious of a heart devoted to God, and supported by a well-grounded confidence in his favour, you are fixing your eyes on a celestial diadem, which shall sparkle with immortal glories, when the kingdoms of this earth shall be known no more, and all its pageantry shall be passed away like a dream. May you at length, in a very distant moment, have a happy accession to that never-fading crown ; and, after having long adorned the highest stations here with that amiable Prince, whose constant and endearing friendship is so much more to your Royal Highness than all the grandeur which can result from your relation to him, may you be both exalted to the superior glories of the heavenly kingdom !

I hope your Royal Highness will please to pardon me, that I have expressed myself with so much warmth and freedom, in a presence I so highly revere : but I should be most unworthy of the name and honour of a christian minister, if I were ever ashamed of sentiments like these ; and the assiduity with which I have lately been sitting at the feet of my Divine Master, while commenting on these authentic memoirs of his life and history, hath inspired me with a veneration and ardour which it is not easy to repress. I am sensible, Madam, these are unfashionable strains on such an occasion ; and it would have been easy to have filled many more pages than these with panegyric, on what I have read of your illustrious ancestors, and what I have heard from multitudes, of the charms of your Royal Highness's person and character : but I imagined that such hints as these were more suitable to that plainness and simplicity which at all times become a servant of Christ ; and I flatter myself, that to a person of your Royal Highness's penetration, they will not seem less expressive of that undissembled esteem, and affectionate zeal, with which I am,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

Most faithful, most dutiful,

And most obedient, humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION

CONTAINING THE

FORMER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST.

I HAVE long been convinced, that if any thing can stop that progress of infidelity and vice, which every wise man beholds with sorrow and fear; that if any thing can allay those animosities, which (unnatural as they are) have so long inflamed us, and pained the heart of every generous christian; in a word, that if any thing can establish the purity and order, the peace and glory of the church, or spread the triumphs of personal and domestic religion among us, it must be an attentive study of the Word of God, and especially of the *New Testament;* that best of books, which, if read with impartiality and seriousness, under the influences of that blessed Spirit by whom it was inspired, would have the noblest tendency to enlighten and adorn the mind, and not only to touch, but to animate and transform the heart.

The station of life in which Divine Providence has placed me, rendered it peculiarly necessary for me to make these sacred oracles my principal study; and having, to my unspeakable delight and advantage, felt much of their energy, I long since determined, that it should be the main business of my life as an author to illustrate them, and to lead my fellow-christians into a due regard for them, by endeavouring, in as plain and popular a manner as I could, to display their beauty, their spirit, and their use: and I thankfully acknowledge the goodness of God to me, in giving me health and spirits to finish so considerable a part of my design, though I have so much other business daily on my hands, and have been obliged to execute this in a much more laborious manner than I at first apprehended would have been requisite.

The title I have given to the work sufficiently explains its original design, which was chiefly to promote *family religion*, and to render the reading of the New Testament more pleasant and improving to those that wanted the benefit of a learned education, and had not opportunity or inclination to consult a variety of commentators. And I thought it proper still to retain the title of *The Family Expositor*, even when I had made some alteration in the plan; because that is still the leading view of the greater part of the work. In pursuit of this, I have given a large *Paraphrase* on the sacred text, well knowing that this is the most agreeable and useful manner of explaining it to common readers, who hardly know how to manage annotations, especially when they are to be read to others. The chief objection against this way is, that when a whole verse, and much more when several verses are taken together, (as they frequently are,) it requires a great attention, and in some places some considerable penetration, to trace the exact correspondence between the respective clauses of the text and the paraphrase. There are some performances of this kind in our own language, as well as in others, in which such liberties are taken, that I freely confess that, were it not for the initial references, or opposite column, I should not be able to guess from the paraphrase itself what the scripture was which it pretended to explain. This must undoubtedly give the greatest advantage for disguise and misrepresentation; and where those glosses are read by themselves without the scriptures, (which I know has been the case in some families,) it is really exchanging the prophets and apostles for modern divines. To prevent this intolerable evil, I have formed my paraphrase so, that it is impossible to read it without the text, having every where interwoven the words of scripture with it, and carefully distinguished them from the rest by the *Italic character;* so that every one may immediately see, not only the particular clause to which any explication answers, but also what are the words of the sacred original, and what merely the sense of a fallible man, who is liable, though in the integrity of his heart, to mislead his readers, and dares not attribute to himself the singular glory of having put off every prejudice, even while he would deliberately and knowingly allow none.

I thought it might be some additional improvement of this work, and some entertainment to the more accurate reader, to give the text in a *new version;* which I have accordingly done from the *original*, with all the care I could. There are so few places in which the general sense will appear different from our received translation, that some will perhaps think this an unnecessary trouble: but I can by no means repent it, as it has given me an opportunity of searching more accurately into several beauties of expression which had before escaped me, and of making some alterations, which, though they may not be very material to the edification of men's souls, may yet in some degree do a farther honour to scripture; raising some of those ornaments which were before depressed; and sufficiently proving that several objections urged against it were entirely of an English growth: ends which might yet more abundantly be answered by a new version of the Old Testament, which has suffered much more in our translation, as it is natural to suppose it must.

I thought it might also conduce to the usefulness of this Exposition to digest the history of the four Evangelists into one continued series, or, in other words, to throw it into the *order of an harmony*. By this means, each story and discourse is exhibited with all its concurrent circumstances, as recorded by the sacred penmen; frequent repetitions are prevented; and a multitude of seeming oppositions are so evidently reconciled, as to supersede many objections, and render the very mention of them unnecessary. My reader will hardly imagine the pains that this part of the work has cost me, both in examining the order of the several texts, and collating the different accounts in each, in such a manner,

that no one clause in any of the Evangelists might be omitted, and yet the several passages to be inserted might make one connected sense, and, without any large addition, stand in a due grammatical order. I was the more sensible of this labour, as I laid it down for a maxim to myself, when I entered on this work, that I would study as much as possible to make it an original in all its parts. Accordingly, the first copy of it was drawn up with hardly any other assistance than that of the *Greek Testament*, which I endeavoured to *harmonize*, to *translate*, to *paraphrase*, and to *improve*, just as if none had ever attempted any thing of that nature before me. Afterwards I was obliged to compare it with what others had done; and, as may easily be supposed, I found in many instances an agreement, and in many others a difference, betwixt them and myself. Where we differed, I endeavoured impartially to examine the reasons on both sides; and where I have perceived myself indebted to any, for leading me into a more just and beautiful *version*, *explication*, or *disposition*, than I had before chosen, I have generally, and, so far as I can recollect, universally, acknowledged it; unless where the hint came from some living friend, where such acknowledgment would not have been agreeable. There are, no doubt, many other instances in which the thoughts that seemed originally my own, might be suggested by memory, though I knew not from whence they came; and a thousand more are so obvious, that one would suppose they must occur to every attentive reader, who has any genius and furniture for criticism. To have multiplied references and quotations in such a case, would have been, I think, a very useless and burdensome piece of pedantry, and might (as I fear has been the case with Pfeiffer and Wolfius) have discouraged the reader from consulting any, in so great a crowd. I could not well brook the drudgery of transcribing the works of others, and should scorn the meanness of dressing myself up in borrowed plumes; but if any imagine me a mere compiler, I shall not be greatly concerned at their mistake, but say, with the modest and excellent Mons. Rollin, " If the things themselves are good, it signifies very little whose they are."*

The Notes are, at the desire of many friends, entirely added to my first scheme; and when I saw so many persons of learning and rank were pleased to encourage my undertaking, I thought it would be no unacceptable expression of my gratitude to them, to insert several which I should otherwise have omitted. Some of them seemed absolutely necessary to justify the *version* and *paraphrase*, in what might seem most peculiar in it: several more refer to the *order*, and give my reasons for leaving the general track where I have left it, and for not leaving it much oftener, where some very learned and ingenious authors have taken a great deal of pains (though, I persuade myself, with a very good intent) to lead us out of the way: and as several of these are modern writers, the remarks are such as do not commonly occur. The rest of the notes consist, either of some observations on the beauty and force of various passages, which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere; or of references to, and observations upon, considerable writers, whether they be or be not professed expositors of scripture, who seem in the most masterly manner to examine or to illustrate and confirm the sense I have given. These are generally but very short; because it would have been quite foreign to my purpose, and utterly inconsistent with my scheme, to have formed them into large critical essays: but I hope they may be some guide to young students, who, if they have libraries at hand, are in great danger of being *lost in a wood*, where, I am sorry to say it, they will find a multitude of *prickly and knotty shrubs*, and in comparison but few *pleasant and fruitful trees*. It has appeared to me an office of real and important friendship to gentlemen in this station of life, to endeavour to select for them the most valuable passages which occur in reading, and to remit them thither, not only for the illustration of scripture, but also for their direction in studying the evidences and contents both of natural and revealed religion. This I have done with great care and labour in a pretty large work, which perhaps may be published after my death, if surviving friends should judge it proper. To that I have generally referred those citations which relate to *polemical divinity*; and at present only add, that, with regard to these notes, I have endeavoured to render them easy and entertaining, even to an English reader; and for that purpose have cautiously excluded quotations from the learned languages, even where they might have served to illustrate customs referred to, or words to be explained. That deficiency may be abundantly made up by the perusal of Elsner, Albert, Bos, Wolfius, Raphelius, *Fortuita Sacra*, *&c.*† books which I cannot but recommend to my young friends, as proper not only to ascertain the sense of a variety of words and phrases which occur in the apostolic writings, but also to form them to the most useful method of studying the Greek classics: those great masters of solid sense, elegant expression, just lively painting, and masculine eloquence, to the neglect of which I cannot but ascribe that enervate, dissolute, and puerile manner of writing, which is growing so much on the present age, and will probably consign so many of its productions to speedy oblivion.

The Improvement of each section is entirely of a practical nature, and generally consists of pressing exhortations and devout meditations, grounded on the general design, or on some particular passages, of the section to which they are annexed. They are all in an evangelical strain, and they could not with any propriety have been otherwise. I am well aware that this manner is not much in the present taste, and I think it at once a sad instance and cause of our degeneracy that it is not. If it be necessary that I should offer any apology, it must in short be this; I have with all possible attention and impartiality considered first the general evidences of the truth of christianity, and then those of the inspiration of the New Testament, which seems to me inseparably connected with the former; and, on the whole, am in my conscience persuaded of both, and have been confirmed in that conviction by the most laboured attempts to overthrow them. It seems a necessary consequence of this conviction, (and I am astonished it should not be more generally attended to,) that we are with the humblest submission of mind to form our religious notions on this plan, and to give up the most darling maxims which will not bear the test of it.

I should think any impartial reader must immediately see, and every judicious critic be daily more confirmed in it, that the New Testament teaches us to conceive of Christ, not as a generous *Benefactor* only, who, having performed some actions of heroic virtue and benevolence, is now retired from all intercourse with our world, so that we have no more to do with him than to preserve a grateful remembrance of his character and favours; but that he is to be considered as an ever-living and ever-present *Friend*, with whom we are to maintain a daily commerce by faith and prayer, and from whom we are to derive those supplies of divine grace, whereby we may be strengthened for the duties of life, and

* Que m importe d'ou il soit, pourvu qu'il se trouve utile.—*Roll. Man. d'enseign.* Vol. I. p. 75.

† As some of the books mentioned above are not very common among us, it may not be improper to insert their titles: viz. *Jacobi Elsner, Observat. Sacræ*, 2 vol. 8vo. *Traject. ad Rhen.* 1720. *Alberti Observ. Philolog. Lugd. Bat.* 1725. *Lamberti Bos Exercitat. Philolog. Franek.* 1700. *Lamberti Bos. Animadvers. Franek.* 1715. *Lamberti Bos. Observat. Miscell. Leovard.* 1731. *Raphelii Annotat. Philol. in Nov. Test. ex Xenophonte, Polybio, et Herodoto collectæ*, 3 tom. *Lunen.* 1731. *Wolfii Curæ Philolog. et Criticæ*, 4to. *Hamb.* 1725.

ripened for a state of perfect holiness and felicity. This is evident not only from particular passages of scripture, in which he is described as always with his church, (Mat. xxviii. 20.); as present wherever two or three are assembled in his name, (Mat. xviii. 20.); as upholding all things by the word of his power; (Heb. i. 3.) and as Head over all to his church; (Eph. i. 22.) but indeed from the whole scope and tenor of the New Testament. These views are therefore continually to be kept up; and for any to pretend that this is a round-about method, (as some have presumed to call it,) and that men may be led to virtue, the great end of all, by a much plainer and more direct way, seems to me only a vain and arrogant attempt *to be wiser than God himself;* which therefore must in the end appear to be *folly*, with whatever subtilty of argument it may be defended, or with whatever pomp of rhetoric it be adorned.

The New Testament is a book written with the most consummate knowledge of human nature; and though there are a thousand latent beauties in it, which it is the business and glory of true criticism to place in a strong point of light, the general sense and design of it is plain to every honest reader, even at the very first perusal. It is evidently intended to bring us to God through Christ, in an humble dependence on the communications of his sanctifying and quickening Spirit; and to engage us to a course of faithful and universal obedience, chiefly from a grateful sense of the riches of divine grace manifested to us in the gospel. And though this scheme is indeed liable to abuse, as every thing else is, it appears to me plain in fact, that it has been, and still is, the grand instrument of reforming a very degenerate world: and, according to the best observations I have been able to make on what has passed about me, or within my own breast, I have found that, in proportion to the degree in which this evangelical scheme is received and relished, the interest of true virtue and holiness flourishes, and the mind is formed to manly devotion, diffusive benevolence, steady fortitude, and, in short, made ready to every good word and work. To this therefore I am determined, at all adventures, to adhere; nor am I at all ashamed or afraid of any scorn which I may encounter in such a cause; and I would earnestly exhort and entreat all my brethren in the christian ministry to join with me, as well knowing to whom we have committed our souls; and cheerfully hoping, that He, by whom we have hitherto, if faithful in our calling, been supported and animated, will at length confess us before the presence of his Father and the holy angels, in that day when it will be found no dishonour to the greatest and wisest of the children of men to have listed themselves under the banner of the cross, and constantly and affectionately to have kept their Divine Leader in view.

I cannot flatter myself so far as to imagine that I have fallen into no mistakes, in a work of so great compass and difficulty; but my own conscience acquits me of having designedly misrepresented any single passage of scripture, or of having written one line with a purpose of inflaming the hearts of christians against each other. I should esteem it one of the most aggravated crimes to make the life of the gentle and benevolent Jesus a vehicle to convey such poison. Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the christian world, were forgot! and that we might agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear *his word*, to imbibe *his Spirit*, and to transcribe *his life* in our own!

I hope it is some token of such growing candour on one side, as I am sure it should be an engagement to cultivate it on the other, that so many of the reverend clergy of the establishment, as well as other persons of distinction in it, have favoured this undertaking with their encouragement. To them, and all my other friends, I return my most hearty thanks; and shall remember, that the regard they have been pleased to express to it, obliges me to pursue the remainder of the work with the utmost care and application; and earnestly entreat the farther assistance of their prayers, that it may be conducted in a manner subservient to the honour of the gospel and the edification of the church.

In these volumes I have been desirous to express my gratitude to the subscribers, by sparing nothing in my power which might render the work acceptable to them, both with respect to its contents and its form. The consequence of this is, that it has swelled to a number of sheets, which by more than a third part exceeds what I promised in the proposals; which, though at a great expense, I chose to permit, rather than I would either sink the paper and character beneath the specimen, or omit some remarks in the notes which appeared to me of moment, and rose in my mind while I was transcribing them. But I hope this large addition to what was at first expected, will excuse my not complying with the importunity of some of my friends, who have requested that I would introduce this work with a dissertation on such points of Jewish antiquity as might be serviceable for the fuller understanding the New Testament, or with a discourse on its genuineness, credibility, inspiration, and use.

As to the first of these, (a compendious view of such articles of Jewish antiquity as may be a proper introduction to the critical study of scripture,) I do with great pleasure refer the generality of readers and young students to the general preface to the Prussian Testament, published by Mess. L'Enfant and Beausobre; which preface was some years since translated into English, and suits the purpose better than any thing I have seen within so small a compass. As to the latter, I purpose, if God permit, when I have finished the second volume, to publish, with another edition of my Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, two or three discourses more on the *inspiration* of the New Testament, and on its *usefulness*, especially that of the Evangelical History; to which I may perhaps add some farther directions for the most profitable manner of reading it. At present I shall only add, that daily experience convinces me more and more, that as a thousand charms discover themselves in the works of nature, when attentively viewed with glasses, which had escaped the naked eye; so our admiration of the holy scriptures will rise in proportion to the accuracy with which they are studied.

As for these histories and discourses of Christ, I may say of them, with far greater justice, what Simplicius doth of Epictetus, in the passage of which my *motto* is a part, and with which I shall conclude my preface: "The words themselves are generally plain and intelligible: but I have endeavoured thus to unfold them, that my own heart might be more "deeply impressed with the spirit and certainty of them; and that others, who have not themselves equal advantage for "entering into it, might be guided into their true interpretation. But if, on the whole, any reader continue entirely unaffected-"ed with them, there is little prospect that any thing will reclaim him till he come to the *tribunal of the invisible world.**"

* Και ειτι μεν οι λογοι σαφεις· ω χειρον δε ισως, καλα τω δυνατον διαπυσσειν αυλης. Ο τε γαρ γραφων, συμπαθεστερος τε αμα προς αυλης γενησεται, και της αληθειας αυλων κατανοητικωτερος· και των φιλομαθων οι προς λογους ασυνηθεστεροι, ισως εξεσι τινα χειραγωγιαν εκ της εμπειριας αυλων.—Ει δε τις υπο τυφλων μη πατηχη των λογων, υπο μονων αν των εν αδη δικαστηριων υπευθυνθειη.

Simplic. in Epictet. *Proem.*

NORTHAMPTON,
Nov. 27, 1738.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION

CONTAINING THE

SECOND PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST.

THE publication of this *Second Volume* of the *FAMILY EXPOSITOR* hath been delayed so long beyond my own expectation, and that of my friends, that it may perhaps seem necessary to introduce it with an apology for that delay. But it would be tedious to enumerate a variety of circumstances which have concurred to occasion it. It is generally known, that the unusual severity of the last winter laid a kind of embargo on the press; and they that are at all acquainted with the business of printing, will easily apprehend that, under the most faithful and careful direction, a work of considerable bulk is liable to many other interruptions, even where the manuscript is entirely finished before the impression is begun. But, after all, the chief reason why this hath been published no sooner, is (what I hope my subscribers will easily excuse) the large addition I have made of more than fifty sheets to the hundred which I was by the proposals obliged to deliver.

On the mention of this, I think myself obliged to renew my thanks to those, who, by honouring me with their names and encouragement on this occasion, have put it into my power to publish the work with such improvements; and shall think myself happy if those improvements, however laborious and expensive to the author, may render it more acceptable and useful to them.

The tables prefixed to the first volume are concluded in this, and represent the disposition of the harmony in so clear a view, that by comparing them together it would not be difficult to find any particular text. But a deference to the request of some of the subscribers engaged me to add another table at the end of this volume, (of the same kind with that in Mr. Bonnel's Harmony,) which will at once direct both to the section and the page where any verse may presently be found.

I cannot pretend so much as to conjecture when the remainder of my undertaking will be completed. I shall however proceed in it as fast as my health and other affairs will permit. In the mean time, I think it necessary to observe, that I have by the advice of some considerate and judicious friends, deferred the index, and some other things which I intended to have thrown into an appendix here, till I have finished what I am preparing on the Acts; that so they may stand, as they very properly will, at the end of the historical books of the New Testament.

How far the subscribers to these two volumes may think it proper to encourage the rest, must be referred to themselves. In the mean time, as that must be exceeding precarious which depends on the continuance of one man's life and health, I would desire permission here to take leave of my friends, at least for the present, with such a serious address as may be the most substantial expression of my sincere gratitude and respect.

I should have thought, my honoured friends, that I had made you a very unworthy return for this public token of your regard to me, if I had offered you merely an *amusement*, though ever so *critical* and *polite*. It had been much better, on both sides, that the work should never have been undertaken or perused, than that these *divine authors* should be treated like a set of *profane classics;* or that the sacred and momentous transactions they relate should be handled and read like an invented tale, or a common history. I have often reminded *myself* of it, and permit me now, Sirs, solemnly to remind *you*, that these are the memoirs of the holy Jesus, the Saviour of sinful men, whom to know is life eternal, and whom to neglect is everlasting destruction. We have here the authentic records of that gospel which was intended as the great medicine for our souls; of that *character* which is our pattern; of that *death* which is our ransom; of *him*, in short, whose *name* we bear as we are professed christians, and before whose *tribunal* we are all shortly to appear, that our eternal existence may be determined, blissful, or miserable, according to our regard to what he has taught, and done, and endured. Let not the *greatest* therefore think it beneath their notice; nor the *meanest* imagine, that, amidst all the most necessary cares and labours, they can find any excuse for neglecting, or even for postponing it.

Had I not been fully convinced of the certainty and importance of christianity, I should not have determined to devote my whole life to its service: (for, on the principles of *natural religion*, I know the soul to be immortal, and should expect nothing but its ruin in the ways of the most sanctified fraud:) but as I am thus convinced, I must make it my humble request to every one that enters on the perusal of these volumes, that they may, for a little while at least, be the employment of his retired hours; and that as he proceeds from one section to another, he would pause and reflect, "Whose *words* do I hear? "Whose *actions* do I survey? Whose *sufferings* do I contemplate?" And as all must know they are the *words*, the *actions*, and the *sufferings* of Jesus the Son of God, our supreme Lord, and our final Judge, let it be farther and very seriously inquired in what degree the obvious and confessed design of the glorious gospel has been practically regarded and complied with: "Can I, in my heart, think that I am a disciple whom such a Master will approve, and whom he will chuse for his attendant in that "world of glory to which he is now gone?" Let the plainness of this advice be forgiven; for such is the temper and conduct of most who call themselves *christians*, that if this religion be true, their cold and unaffecting knowledge of the history of Christ, and of the purposes of his appearance, will only serve to furnish out matter for eternal self-accusation and remorse:

and he is, at best, but a learned and polite infidel who would not rather be the instrument of conducting the lowest creature, capable of reading or hearing these lines, to the saving knowledge of a crucified Redeemer, than fill the most refined nation with his own applause, while the *grace* of the Saviour is forgotten, or his *service* neglected.

I have yet one farther request to add to those of my readers who are heads of families; which is, that they would please to remember the title of the work, and consider it as chiefly intended, in its most essential parts, for a Family Expositor. I heartily rejoice in the reason which I have to hope, that, low as our religious character is fallen in these degenerate days, acts of domestic worship are yet performed by multitudes of christians of various denominations: yet I cannot but fear, that the scriptures are not so constantly read at such seasons as they formerly were; an omission which must be to the great detriment both of children and servants. One would think, that those who believe the divine authority of scripture, and its infinite importance, should be easily prevailed upon to restore this useful exercise, at least for one part of the day; and I would hope, that what I here offer them may render it more agreeable and useful. It would give me inexpressible delight to find that this is the case in those families with which I am most intimately acquainted; and would be an encouragement to hope this work may be proportionably useful in places and times to which neither my observation nor intelligence can extend.

I shall conclude this preface with my hearty prayers, that, weak and imperfect as these labours are, the divine blessing may every where and always attend them; and that it may rest on all who have patronized them, and on all who shall peruse them! May every prejudice against the *truth* of christianity, or against its power, be vanquished! May the most insensible minds be awakened to attend to religion, and may the weak and languishing be animated to press on to greater attainments in it! May those that are preparing for the service of the sanctuary, (as every part of this performance is their concern,) be by every part of it more abundantly furnished for the various duties of their important office! And may those who are yet but babes in knowledge, through the divine blessing grow by that sincere milk of the word which is here presented, as I trust, in its genuine simplicity! In a word, may many persons, families, and larger societies, receive devout pleasure and solid lasting improvement from it; that the great God, of whom and through whom are all things, may in all be glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in all the sacred volumes, and especially here, is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, to whom be everlasting honour, love, and obedience! *Amen.*

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION,

CONTAINING THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE nature and design of this work, and the principles on which it hath been undertaken and conducted, have been so largely represented in the preceding volumes, that it is unnecessary here to enlarge upon them. But, as what I now present to the reader concludes the *historical part* of the New Testament, this seems a very proper place to recollect the promise which I long since made, of offering some remarks on the excellence and usefulness of that history, which may dispose the reader more frequently to review it, and to study it with the greater application.

It must be universally granted, that the excellence of any performance is to be estimated by considering its design, and the degree in which it is calculated to answer it. The design of the gospel-history is summed up in the words which I have placed for my *motto;* which, though they are taken from the conclusion of St. John's gospel, are applicable, not only to all the other Evangelists, but likewise to the Acts of the Apostles, that invaluable appendix to them. "These "things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

I shall beg leave to show how admirably the history before us is calculated to answer both these ends, viz. to produce a conviction of the truth of christianity, and to make those good impressions on the heart, which may secure the eternal life and happiness of the reader; which no speculative conviction, even of the most sublime, comprehensive, and important truths, will itself be able to do. I apprehend that, in proportion to the degree in which these two premises can be illustrated, the excellence and value of this history will immediately appear; for no man is so far infatuated as to dispute whether obtaining life, eternal life, be an end of the highest importance, how light soever he may in fact make of it, and how wantonly soever he may barter it away for every trifle that strikes his imagination, or fires his passions. Obvious as the hints are which occur on these heads, I will touch a little upon them; that we may more evidently see how much we are indebted to the divine wisdom and goodness in giving us so invaluable a treasure as these books contain, and how highly we are concerned to attend diligently to the contents of them.

First, Every intelligent reader of this evangelical history must have seen, that it is admirably adapted to produce and support in all attentive and impartial minds a strong conviction of the truth of christianity, and by consequence of the divine glories of Jesus the Christ, as the Son of God.

It is evident, that our most material arguments for the demonstration of the truth of christianity are drawn from *miracles*, from *prophecies*, from the *character of its founders*, and from the *genius of the religion itself*. Now, though all these receive great illustration from the *epistolary parts* of the New Testament, and some of them, especially the second, from the Old; yet it is certain, that the grand basis and foundation of them all, is what we read in the *History of Christ and his Apostles*. There we are informed of the miracles which they wrought, of the character they maintained, and of the system of religion which they published to the world; and the application of Old-Testament prophecies to Jesus of Nazareth, is, beyond all controversy, to be justified chiefly from what we find there.

These books do in the most authentic manner, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, show us who Jesus of Nazareth was, and what he professed himself to be. They give us an account of the very high pretensions he made to an immediate mission from God, and to a most intimate relation to him as his Son, in a peculiar and appropriate sense, not communicable to any other. They give us also, as in this connexion it is very fit they should, a very large and circumstantial narration of a variety of miracles which he wrought. Their number appears to be very great; so that a late writer, who had considered them very accurately, reckons up sixty-nine relating to particular persons, besides twenty other instances, in all of which several, and in most of them multitudes, yea, frequently great multitudes, are mentioned, not merely as the spectators, but as the objects, of his miraculous power, which must on the most moderate computation arise to many hundreds; not to mention those yet more numerous miracles which were performed by his apostles in his name, wherever they came, especially after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; or the variety of supernatural gifts and powers with which they were endowed, and which in many thousands of instances they communicated to others.

It is farther to be recollected here, that these miracles were not of such a kind as to leave any room for a doubt, whether they lay within the natural efficacy of second causes or not; since the most hopeless and inveterate diseases gave way, not merely to some trivial application of means, whether internal or external, but to a touch or a word; and Death itself obeyed the voice of Jesus, and of his servants speaking by his authority.

Now I could wish, that any one who feels himself inclined to scepticism with regard to christianity, would sit down and read over any one of the Evangelists in this particular view: that he would take the stories of the several miracles in their succession, and after having attentively weighed them, would ask his own heart, whether, if he had seen such facts as these, he would not immediately have been convinced in his own conscience, that this was indeed the seal of heaven set to the commission of the person who performed them; and, consequently, whether, if these things were really done by Jesus, and his missionaries in his name, he must not be compelled to acknowledge that christianity is true. Let any impartial and rational man in the world judge whether, if any impostor had arisen, falsely and blasphemously arrogating to himself the high titles of the Son of God and Saviour of men, God would have honoured his lips with this wonderful power over diseases and death, or his dead body after a public execution with a resurrection: that is, in one word, whether he would have interposed to give such credit to him, as it is not pretended he hath ever given, in any other instance, to the best of men in the best of causes. Every man's heart will surely tell him, with the circumstances of such facts full in his view, that the only question is whether they be themselves credible; and that, if this be allowed, the divine attestation to the authority of such a Teacher follows, by a connexion which can never be broken, and which probably few men living will have an inveteracy of prejudice sufficient to gainsay.

The *historical books* of the New Testament do also admirably illustrate that argument in favour of christianity, which is drawn from *the accomplishment of prophecies*; and this in a variety of respects. Many very important passages of this kind are expressly quoted, not merely by way of allusion, but by a literal and exact application of them, according to their genuine sense, and agreeably to the connexion in which they stand. The application of some others, in themselves more dubious, will upon strict examination appear just, and may prove a key to the sense of many more, on the truest principles of analogy; as many writers have shown, and perhaps no one, since Eusebius wrote his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, more judiciously than Mr. Jeffery in his controversy with Mr. Collins. Nay, the texts quoted by way of allusion and accommodation, of which there are such numerous instances, have consequentially tended to the establishment of the argument from prophecies, however under injudicious management they may seem to have perplexed it; as they have had their share in recommending the Jewish scriptures to the perusal of christians, and so in guarding them more surely against any possibility of corruption, if the Jews themselves could have been wicked enough to attempt it.

But, besides these various views in which the citations may be considered under this head, I must farther observe, that when not this or that particular passage of the evangelical history alone, but the whole series of it, comes to be compared with correspondent representations in the Old Testament, it fixes upon the mind the strongest impression that can well be imagined, of the reference of the prophets to Jesus as the Messiah. The ingenious Earl of Rochester, whose story is so celebrated, was deeply sensible of this with regard to the 53d of Isaiah, as illustrated by all the story of our Lord's passion; and there are many other sections of that prophet, and of several others, to which the remark may be applied; which indeed extends to all the general representations of the Messiah's character, conduct, and circumstances.

The account which the New Testament gives us of the temper and character of our Divine Redeemer, is a topic of argument on this head by no means to be forgotten. We do not indeed there meet with any studied encomiums upon the subject. The authors deal not in such sort of productions; but, which is a thousand times better, they show us the character itself. The sight of what is great and beautiful has another kind of effect, than the most eloquent description of it. And here we behold the actions of Christ; we attend his discourses, and have a plain and open view of his behaviour. In consequence of this, we see in him every thing venerable, every thing amiable. We see a perfection of goodness no where else in the world to be seen or to be heard; and numberless arguments plead at once, to persuade the heart that it is absolutely impossible such a person should be engaged in a design founded in known falsehood, and tending only to mislead and ruin his followers.

And though it is true the character of his apostles does not fully come up to the standard of their Master, nor is entirely free from some small blemishes, yet we see so little of that kind in them, and, on the contrary, such an assemblage of the human, divine, and social virtues, that we cannot, if we thoroughly know them, if we form an intimate acquaintance with

them, entertain with patience the least suspicion that they were capable of a part so detestable as theirs must have been, if they knew Jesus to have been an impostor, and the gospel a fable; with which they must be chargeable, if christianity were not indeed authentic and divine.

The series of sufferings which they endured, the gentle, humble patience with which they bore them, the steady perseverance and invincible fortitude with which they pursued their scheme in the midst of them all, and with no earthly prospect but that of a continued hardship and persecution, till it should end in death, furnish out an important branch of this argument; which the book of Acts, especially taken in connexion with the Epistles, does almost continually illustrate, in the most artless, and therefore the most forcible manner.

To conclude this head, the history before us represents, in the most clear and convincing light, the genius of that doctrine which Christ taught, and of the religion which he came to settle in the world. When we view it as exhibited in human writings we may mistake; for it is too often tinctured with the channel through which it has passed. Men of bad dispositions have warped it, to make it comply with the corruption of their own hearts, and to subserve, in many instances, the schemes of their ambitious and worldly interests. Good men, insensibly influenced by a variety of prejudices, which under fair and plausible forms have insinuated themselves into their breasts, have frequently mistaken, not the *essentials* of christianity (for no good man can mistake them) but the *circumstantials* of it; and have propagated the various and frequently contradictory mistake, with a zeal which nothing but an apprehension that they were its *fundamentals* could have inspired; and thus its original purity and beauty have been debased and obscured: but here we drink this water of life at its fountain-head, untainted and unmixed; and with that peculiar spirit which at a distance from it is so apt to evaporate. Here we plainly perceive there is nothing in the scheme but what it is most worthy of God to reveal, and of his Son to publish to the world: here we see, not as in the heathen writers, some detached sentiment, finely heightened with the beauty of expression and pomp of words, like a scattered fragment, with the partial traces of impaired elegance and magnificence; but the elevation of a complete temple, worthy of the Deity to whom it is consecrated: so harmonious a system of unmingled truth, so complete a plan of universal duty, so amiable a representation of true morality in all its parts, without redundancy, and without defect, that the more capable we are of judging of real excellence, the more we shall be possessed in its favour: and if we have a capacity and opportunity of examining together with it the books which the followers of other religions have esteemed sacred, and the systems of doctrines and manners which their respective founders have published to the world, we shall find how much the gospel is credited by the comparison; shall indeed find the difference much like that of a coarse picture of sunshine, from the original beams of that celestial luminary. This I have so deeply felt in mine own heart while reading these books, and especially while commenting upon them, that it has been matter of astonishment as well as of grief to me, that there should be any mind capable of resisting evidence so various, so powerful, and so sweet.

But this leads me to the other branch of the argument; in which I shall remind my reader,

Secondly, That these books are admirably adapted to make those impressions on the heart, which may prepare it for eternal life, through the name of the Redeemer, of whose divine mission they contain such incontestable proofs.

Now the most effectual demonstration of this would be, an attentive perusal of these books, not so much with a view to criticise upon them, as to give up the soul to their genuine influences, and to leave the heart to be (if I may so express myself) carried away with the torrent whither it will; and the impulse cannot fail of being in some happy direction, and amidst all its varieties, will undoubtedly bear us forward towards that perfection of goodness and of happiness which is the great end of all our pursuits.

For surely the breast of every well-disposed reader, under the influences of that blessed Spirit which guided the sacred penmen in these lively and well-chosen narrations, must by every page of them be inflamed with some devout passion; and his progress must often be interrupted with tears of holy delight, or with warm and perhaps rapturous aspirations of soul. Surely this adorable Saviour cannot be heard, cannot be seen, without admiration and love. Surely the heart must often, as it were, go out to meet him, with its cheerful "hosannahs to him that cometh in the name of "the Lord." Often must it rise in affectionate praises to the God and Father of all, who blessed this earth of ours with such a Visitant, who enriched it with such an unspeakable, such an inestimable gift. A thousand times must it congratulate, and almost envy, the happy lot of those who, dwelling on earth, though in the meanest cottages, when it was blessed with the presence of such a Teacher, of such a Friend, had daily opportunities of conversing with him; and as often may it exult to think, that he is still near by his spiritual presence, carrying on the kind purposes of his appearance in mortal flesh, and waiting, by the dictates of his divine philosophy, to train up the immortal spirits of men for their proper and complete happiness. Under the impression of that thought, how strongly must the soul be disposed to inquire after Christ, to form an acquaintance with him, to commit itself to his discipline and guardianship, to trace his steps, and as far as possible to imbibe his Spirit. What will appear so desirable, as to secure his friendship, to be honoured with his high approbation, and enriched with the blessings of his patronage and care? Receiving the divine oracles from his lips, what incomparable advantages have we for learning every thing truly great and lovely? What powerful inducements diligently to labour, ardently to pray, liberally to dispense good, calmly to endure injuries, patiently to support the heaviest afflictions, and resolutely to meet the most dreadful death, if called out to encounter it in the way of our duty.

Among many other good affections which the perusal of this history may naturally inspire, and which I have endeavoured often to suggest in the Improvements which conclude each section, I cannot forbear mentioning one more; I mean, a generous and cordial love to our fellow christians of every rank and denomination. I never reflect upon the New Testament in this view, but I find it difficult to conceive, how so much of a contrary temper should ever have prevailed among such multitudes who have professed religiously to receive it, yea, whose office hath been to interpret and enforce it. To have listed under the banner of Jesus, to have felt his love, to have espoused his interest, to labour to serve him, to aspire after the enjoyment of him, should methinks appear to every one, even on the slightest reflection, a bond of union too strong to be broken by the different apprehensions that one or another of us may entertain (perhaps, too, after diligent inquiry) concerning the exact sense of some of the doctrines he taught, or the circumstantial forms of some of his institutions. An humble sense of our own weakness, and of the many imperfections of our character, which will never be more deeply felt than when we consider ourselves as standing before our Divine Master, will dispose us to mutual candour, will guard us against the indecency of contending in his presence, and will, as St. Paul with admirable spirit expresses it, dispose us "to "receive one another as Christ hath received us." Yea, our hearts will be so eagerly desirous of employing our life

in serving him to the best purpose we can, that we shall dread the thought of mis-spending, in our mutual animosities, accusations, and complaints, the time that was given us for ends so much nobler, and which is capable of being employed to the honour of our common Lord, and for the benefit of the church and the world.

I hope I have not forgot, in the ensuing work, this lesson which I have on every occasion been so solicitous to inculcate on others. It would have been almost impossible, on some texts which have fallen before me, especially in this *third volume*, not to have shown my sentiments on *some points of discipline*, in which, if they were not different from those which generally prevail, my known conduct in continuing among the Protestant Dissenters would be equally foolish and wicked. Yet, in handling these texts, I have not only conscientiously abstained from all reproaches, to which indeed I am on no occasion inclined, and which I should esteem peculiarly indecent where the religious establishment of my country is in question, and above all where a body of men would be affected, many of whom have been, and are, among the ablest advocates and brightest ornaments of our common christianity; but I have also been careful to adjust my expressions with as much tenderness and respect, as integrity and that reverence which an honest man would owe to the judgment of his own conscience, were it much more singular than mine, would admit. On these principles I have chosen to content myself with giving what I take to be the true and genuine sense of the scripture in question, rather than to point out any society or body of men that seem to have mistaken it.

I have also been obliged, in many of my interpretations, to differ from writers of various countries, and of various denominations in our own, whom I greatly esteem, and from whom, on other passages, I have received much light; but I have in such cases been careful not to drop any severe word: as indeed I think, where we have reason to believe that a writer sincerely intends to illustrate scripture, and to inform the world, he has so far at least a title to our candour and respect; though we may imagine him to be much mistaken in his judgment, and may think it our duty to endeavour to point out his mistake, and to guard others against it. I hope such a conduct will need no apology to the living writers with whom I have taken such a liberty; nor shall I take it amiss to be animadverted upon by any of them with the same spirit: and, if I may by this means be led to rectify any mistakes into which I may have unwarily fallen, I hope I shall be duly sensible of the obligation: For I esteem an endeavour to set a man right in religious opinions which we ourselves apprehend to be important, the second office of christian friendship, as that of attempting to reform his morals is undoubtedly the first.

No offence will, I hope, be taken at the method I have thought myself obliged in honour and conscience to have recourse to, for solving some of the difficulties which have occurred, and which I knew not how to account for candidly any other way, than by supposing, that here and there our received reading hath varied from the original. I believe it will be allowed by every competent judge, that there is no one manuscript now in the world unexceptionably exact. And it is some satisfaction to me to reflect, that critics of the first character for modesty, piety, and orthodoxy, have not only made use of this expedient, but have abundantly justified it in their writings; among whom I cannot forbear mentioning those two justly celebrated critics, as well as accurate divines, Calvin and Beza; the latter of which has expressed his sentiments on this head in so judicious, correct, and elegant a manner, that I cannot forbear inserting his own words at the bottom of the page, though I have had obvious reasons in this work for taking care not to load the margin with quotations from the learned languages.*

I am sensible how much I am indebted to the public for the kind reception it was pleased to give to the two former volumes. I hope they who favoured them with their patronage and encouragement, and have an opportunity of perusing this, will find by what I now offer them, that the indulgence shown me, far from making me indolent, hath rather quickened my diligence. If God grant me life and health, I purpose concluding the whole in three volumes more; in which I shall still endeavour, by the divine assistance, uprightly to illustrate what I in my conscience believe to be the true sense of the sacred writers; and shall at the same time labour, to the utmost of that ability which God may give me, to elevate, to animate, and to unite the hearts of my fellow christians, that I may subserve the grand plan of the gospel, and give the most substantial proof that I have not studied its doctrines in vain. May I ever reap the first-fruits of the attempt in my own soul! And if the slender and precarious thread of my life be cut short before, in the midst of so many other necessary employments, such a work can be completed, may God graciously accept a purpose with which I trust he has inspired a breast unfeignedly devoted to his service! And may he in that case raise a much abler hand to execute a task, at the prospect of which, though after the preparation of more than twenty years, I feel a secret kind of terror, mingling itself with all the delight with which I am springing forward to undertake it!

* Beza, in his note on Acts vii. 14, when he proposes the conjectural emendation of πανλες instead of πανλς, adds, "Neque verò hujus erroris obser-
" vatio quenquam debet offendere, vel in dubium revocare verbi divini auctoritatem; quum et ex *Hebraâ veritate*, ut diximus, emendetur, et salva
" nihilominus, tum doctrinæ, tum etiam historiæ ipsius, fides permaneat; et res ipsa clamat, non uno loco, temporis injuriâ, persecutionum acer-
" bitate, adversariorum veritatis fraude, hæreticorum audaciâ, pastorum denique inscitiâ et oscitantiâ, *numerorum notas* labefactari, et alia pericu-
" losiora in sacros libros invehi potuisse: Quæ tamen eruditi et sancti homines, tum ex aliorum locorum collatione, tum ex fidei analogiâ, partim
" animadverterunt, et emendârunt; partim etiam posteris observanda, et corrigenda reliquerunt: Sic prospiciente suæ ecclesiæ *Domino*, ut
" quamvis integri non pauci libri interciderint, et *errata* de quibus dixi irrepserint, tamen salutis doctrinam totam his ipsis libris certissime et
" verissime comprehensam habeat ecclesia, et ad finem usque sæculorum sit habitura."

Calvin on Matt. xxvii. 9. *Harm. Evan.* p. 354, speaking of the insertion of Jeremiah's name (as he thinks) for Zechariah's, says roundly, "Quo-
" modo *Hieremiæ nomen* obrepserit, me nescire fateor, nec anxiè laboro. Certe *Hieremiæ nomen* errore positum esse pro *Zechariâ*, res ipsa osten-
" dit, quia nihil tale apud *Hieremiam* legitur, vel etiam quod accedat." And on Acts vii. 16, where the name of Abraham seems to be put for that of Jacob, he says, "In nomine *Abrahæ* erratum esse palam est;—Quare hic locus corrigendus est."

Northampton,
December 11, 1746.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE I first published the two former volumes of the *Family Expositor*, I have taken the *Harmony* under an attentive review; but though the publication of this volume, which has long since gone through the press to the end of the Chronological Table, has been delayed so many months beyond my expectation, yet during all this time I have not met with any convincing reasons for transposing one section of it. A variety of necessary engagements have prevented my taking the new and elaborate work of the Reverend Mr. Pilkington on this subject under that accurate examination which the learning, ingenuity, and candour apparent in it on the slightest review may well demand. I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of doing it, and shall receive much light and benefit from it. In the mean time, as a specimen of the readiness with which I shall make my acknowledgments on any such occasion, for farther instruction on subjects on which I have publicly delivered my own thoughts, I cannot but mention the great pleasure with which I have traced the illustration which the account of our Lord's resurrection has received, from those very weighty and accurate observations which have been made upon it, with so much sagacity, delicacy, and candour, by Gilbert West, Esq.

It is great satisfaction to me to find that we agree in several very important circumstances of the story, in which some late very ingenious writers on this subject have differed from us both; as it likewise is to see, that several of those versions and criticisms which I had proposed and pleaded for, have the sanction of Mr. West's concurrence in them. But as this gentleman has advanced several very material things relating to this very important part of the Harmony of the Evangelists, which were wholly unthought of by me or any other commentators that I have perused, and which also seem to carry along with them a very high degree of probability, in the happiest manner to agree with each other, and greatly to illustrate other scriptures, I shall here give my reader a brief view of Mr. West's scheme, referring to his invaluable work itself for a more particular account of it, as well as for a variety of most solid and important remarks relating to the evidences of this great fact, and of the truth of christianity in general, which is so inseparably connected with it.

The scheme proposed there, so far as I can recollect it from an attentive perusal, is this: That during the time of our blessed Redeemer's lying in the grave, several of the pious women who had attended him from Galilee, together with some of their female friends and acquaintance at Jerusalem, agreed to meet at his sepulchre, early on the morning of the third day, to embalm the body. Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, and Joanna, were principal persons in this appointment: The chief care of preparing, that is, pounding, mixing, and melting, the spices, was left to Joanna and her company, who were to be there about sun-rising; whereas the two Maries, and Salome, (of whom Matthew and Mark chiefly write,) came thither πρωι, before the appointed time early in the morning, or as the day dawned, in order θεωρησαι, to view the sepulchre, that they might judge whether they and their companions could be able to remove the stone which closed it, or whether it would be necessary to call in other assistance, as they then knew nothing of the guard which was set upon it. While these three women last mentioned were on their way, Jesus arose, when the angel had opened the sepulchre and struck the guards into amazement and consternation; the consequence of which was, that some of them went to the Jewish rulers, and joined in contriving and propagating the senseless falsehood of the body's being stolen, and others went into other parts of the city, and told the matter as it really was. In the mean time the angel disappeared, and Mary Magdalene approaching the sepulchre, discerned from some distance that the very large stone that stopped it was rolled away, and concluding from thence that the body was removed, left the other Mary and Salome to wait for Joanna and her company, while she herself ran to Peter and John to acquaint them with what she had discovered. While she was gone, these two (the other Mary and Salome) went toward the sepulchre, and entering into it, saw, to their great astonishment, an angel, who told them that Jesus, whom he knew they sought, was not there, but was risen from the dead, and gave it them in charge to go and acquaint his disciples with it, and to let them know that he would give them a meeting in Galilee. The greatness of their consternation prevented them from saying any thing immediately to any one, even to some of their own company, who might pass and repass within their view at least, and so occasioned a delay which left room for some other circumstances. Just as they were on their return, Peter and John came, (perhaps passing by them at some distance,) and Mary Magdalene followed them. John at his first arrival only looked into the sepulchre; but when Peter came and entered it, John went in too, and from the circumstances in which he saw things, believed that Jesus was risen; though the angel (who could appear or disappear at pleasure) did not render himself visible to either. They returned to the city, and Mary Magdalene, who was now alone, stooping down to look into the sepulchre, saw two angels: but (perhaps imagining they were young men, whom curiosity or accident might have brought thither) took little notice of them, and continued weeping in deep thought and distress, till Jesus appeared, and made himself known to her in those very remarkable words, John xx. 17. which Mr. West illustrates with some very peculiar observations.* Leaving her very suddenly, our Lord appeared to the other Mary and Salome, whom

* Our author observes, that this text, "I am not yet ascended," &c. comprehends in a few words a variety of most important hints, which have not commonly been taken notice of in them; particularly that our Lord intended by them to recall to the minds of his disciples the discourse he had with them three nights before, in which he explained what he meant by going to the Father; (see John xvi. 28.) and by twice using the word *ascend*, designed to intimate, that he was to go up to heaven, not merely in spirit, as the pious dead do, but by a corporeal motion and translation, and that it would be some time before he took his final leave of earth by this intended ascension: All which weighty expressions and predictions concur with a thousand other circumstances, to show how impossible it was that such an apprehended appearance should have merely the result of a disordered imagination; a consideration which Mr. West illustrates at large, as he also does the mistaken apprehension of the disciples, who, when some of their companions, whose veracity they could not suspect, testified they had seen the Lord, thought his body was not risen, but that it was only his spirit that appeared to them; which hint I mention as a key, by means of which many passages in the Evangelists are explained in this work.

he permitted to embrace his feet, comforted them under their fear, and renewed the assurance the angel had given them, that he would meet his disciples in Galilee. While these things were passing at some distance, and the scene at the sepulchre was clear, Joanna and the women who brought the spices, (and of whom Luke only writes,) came and entering into the sepulchre, at first saw no one in it, till the two angels, who a few minutes before had appeared to Mary Magdalene, made themselves visible to Joanna and her attendants, and assuring them of the resurrection of Jesus, reminded them how it had been foretold by himself, with the previous circumstances of his sufferings, but gave them no charge concerning the information to be carried to the apostles; that having been committed to the others. Yet (as it was natural to suppose they would) some of this second company ran to the city, and, by whatever accident it happened, reached the eleven, and some other disciples who were with them, before the two Maries and Salome arrived, telling them (which was all they could tell them) that they had seen a vision of angels, who asserted that Jesus was alive. Peter on this ran a second time to the sepulchre, (Luke xxiv. 12.) and not entering as before, but only stooping down and looking into it, he saw no angels, or any thing else, but *τα οθονια κειμενα μονα*, only the linen clothes lying there, on which he returned; and just on his making that report, the two disciples who went that day to Emmaus, or some from whom they received their information, (Luke xxiv. 22—24.) left the place before the arrival of the two Maries and Salome; who, retarded, as was hinted above, by some unknown accident, (perhaps by guessing wrong as to the place where they might find the largest company together,) at last, however, reached them, and made abundant satisfaction for the little delay, (for all might perhaps have passed in an hour,) by assuring them, not only that they also had seen an angel who informed them of their Lord's resurrection, but that Jesus himself had appeared to them, and had even permitted himself to be touched by two of them.

This is Mr. West's scheme of this important story; and the reader will easily perceive, that it chiefly differs from mine in these two circumstances:—That it supposes the women to have made two different visits to the sepulchre, and in consequence of that, two distinct reports; whereas mine unites them (though I do not suppose they all came together, but that they met there:) And that it also makes Peter to have run to it twice, of which I now think there can be no reasonable doubt, though I before incorporated Luke's account with that of John, relating to his running thither with John on Mary Magdalene's first report.

On the whole, whatever embarrassments some may apprehend, I am fully convinced that the scheme I have offered in my Harmony will fully acquit the Evangelists from any charge of absurdity or contradiction; and I think it far preferable to any other method of adjusting them which I ever met with before or since the publication, till this piece of Mr. West came into my hands; But his plan, though not altogether clear of some difficulties, (especially from the connection of the 1st and 10th verses of the xxivth of Luke with the intermediate,) yet seems on the whole to have so many advantages, that I am inclined to acquiesce in it. I doubt not but those of my readers who have not read the ingenious piece from which this extract is taken, will be glad to find it here, and will take the first opportunity of perusing the book itself, in which they will find a variety of other excellent remarks. I cannot conclude without recommending it to the divine blessing, and declaring my joy, that so able and worthy a defender of christianity is risen up, in a rank of life which leaves no room for insinuating any suspicion of those secular views to which some, who may perhaps judge of others by what they know of their own low principles of action, may be ready ungenerously, and in many instances ridiculously, to impute those efforts, which the ministers of the gospel are so frequently making for its vindication.

Since all the preceding part of this Postscript was written, the world has been blessed with another admirable production of this kind, from the pen of one of the politest of writers and worthiest of men, who is lately become the public advocate of that religion to which he has much longer been a distinguished ornament. Many of my readers will undoubtedly know, that I refer to the *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, by the Honourable George Lyttleton, one of the Lords of the Treasury; a piece, if I may presume to give my opinion of it, as perfect in its kind as any our age has produced. I cannot but greatly regret, that I have not the opportunity of enriching my notes on the Acts with several of this gentleman's judicious and entertaining remarks, which I shall not fail to attempt, if a second edition should be required. In the mean time, I mention it here, that no one who has it in his power may lose the pleasure and benefit of perusing that masterly treatise; in which he will find a most compendious yet unanswerable demonstration of christianity, proposed in so clear, elegant, and nervous a manner, with such intermingled traces of the author's excellent heart, that he must surely be among the most perfect, or the most unteachable of mankind, who is not greatly instructed and edified by it.

October 28, 1747.

PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION

COMMENCING WITH

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

AFTER what I have said concerning this work, in the prefaces to the former volumes, I have little to add, but what relates to the manner in which I have endeavoured to conduct this part upon the *Epistles;* which, I bless God, he has carried me through, and thank the public they have so kindly encouraged.

As far as I know myself, I have no favourite hypothesis to serve, nor a fondness for any unscriptural phrases; in which so many have, on one side and the other, made the very being of orthodoxy to consist. I have been disposed to let *Scripture* carry me along with it, wherever it naturally leads, rather than resolve it should follow me. Instead of labouring to establish any particular human system, which has always, I fear, a leaven of imperfection attending it, I have endeavoured to keep controversy as much out of sight as possible, and to represent what I verily believe to be the scripture-doctrine, in as simple a manner as I could, and divested of those particular expressions, which some, who perhaps are not averse to the main doctrine itself, are ready to rise up against.

But I have not the vanity to hope I have escaped all prejudice. Where it has been manifested, may God pardon it, may my brethren excuse it, and may divine illumination, more plentifully imparted, preserve others from being led into any errors into which I may have fallen!

I hope it will be deemed no matter of just offence, that I have not always critically examined those interpretations, which, as seeming less natural, I have declined. It had been endless, amidst such a variety of sentiments and explications, to have done this. Some commentators have darkened these Epistles so much, that I am sensible St. Paul's writings are best explained, by keeping their glosses as much as possible out of sight. I have therefore frequently passed them over, as if I had never heard or known them. And if any should impute this to ignorance, I wish they had happened to be in the right; as it had been the saving a great deal of important time, not to have known the manner in which these writings have been tortured, to serve and save a favourite hypothesis.

It has seemed reasonable to me, when the text and context will bear two interpretations, to prefer that which gives the noblest and most extensive sense, and might make the passage in question most universally useful. And I hope this general apology will be sufficient.

If I have been less sanguine than some would chuse, let it be forgiven. I wrote with fear and trembling, when I considered the favourable reception which the former volumes had met with, and that these which I now publish might probably follow them over a considerable part of the protestant world: a testimony, I hope, that they breathed a spirit of piety, rather than party; and a reason for caution in these, that an air of authority might not mislead, or of rashness offend.

I have endeavoured to guard against excessive length in the Paraphrase; and so much the rather, as St. Paul's sentences are often so long, that I feared I should otherwise have obscured the sense, rather than illustrated it; and have rendered one of the liveliest writers in the world (for such undoubtedly St. Paul is) tedious to the reader. To avoid this, I have often broke one sentence of the text into two or three in the Paraphrase; and have had a great deal of work in the review, to correct the obscurity, which was the natural consequence of following one leading thought.

I have aimed at making the Improvements naturally arise out of, and follow the scriptures illustrated; and by tracing the temper of the apostles, under the influence of the great truths they are inculcating, to produce correspondent affections in my own heart. I have endeavoured that the mind of the reader, more attentive perhaps at first to the *critical sense*, may be led into the *practical use*, which, plain as it generally is, is indeed the end of all, and, alas! the hardest of all to teach. I have preferred plain and useful reflections to those which might have been curious and surprising; and proposed those lessons which I would be most desirous to impress upon my own heart.

When this work is read in the families or closets of any who practise *free prayer*, I would desire them to observe, how naturally the several Improvements will furnish them with proper materials for this important and delightful exercise; and by such a use of them, their hearts may be more powerfully impressed with the truths illustrated, and the duties recommended. In this view, I have in some of them suffered my thoughts, while warmed with serious and devout meditation, to breathe forth the language of prayer and praise; which may furnish my fellow christians with a specimen of the manner in which most of them may be converted into direct addresses to God.

Upon the whole, the design of this work is not to proselyte men to human names, nor to reconcile them to this or the other discriminating phrase; which, in the mouth of one, may be truth and propriety, and in the mouth of another, falsehood and nonsense; according as any idea or none, a just or a wrong idea, may be affixed to them. Nor is my design to influence christians to worship here or there—my design is to let into the heart the great sentiments of christianity, and to convey them there as warmly and strongly as I could. And I hope God will graciously reward the faithful care with which I have consulted the honour of my sacred guide, by making it the means of spreading true religion, and nourishing many souls in fervent piety, brotherly love, and universal goodness. *Amen.*

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

DIRECTIONS

FOR

READING THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

AS to the manner of reading this book in families, I would advise as follows:—First let the passage of scripture be read from the *common translation* in the inner column, unless the family have their Bibles before them: then read the *New Version* by itself, which is interwoven with the *Paraphrase*, but distinguished by the *Italic character;* and then the *Paraphrase* and *Improvement.*

As for the *Notes*, I should advise the person who officiates, to select such as are of most general concern, and read them after the paragraph to which they belong: for it is not so agreeable to interrupt the sense by introducing them before it is completed. Other *notes* may perhaps be more fitly made matter of conversation afterwards: but this is referred to the prudence of particular persons, who will judge with a regard to the state and character of the families in question.

In reading the *Compound Text*, it may be observed, that the words of the several *Evangelists* are distinguished by *crotchets*, thus [ ]; and the *clauses* included within them are always marked with the name of the *Evangelist* from whom they are taken, unless a *single text* only be added at the end of the verse, to which they must of course belong; or, where *more texts* than one are added, the *crotchets* which have nothing to distinguish them belong to the first.

I am pleased to think with how much ease any attentive reader will distinguish the *Text* itself from the *Paraphrase*, in consequence of the extraordinary care which hath been taken to keep the work in that particular remarkably correct; for which, I am obliged to pay my public and most thankful acknowledgments to my worthy brother and friend, the Reverend Mr. GODWIN, who generously undertook the great trouble, not only of revising each sheet as it came from the press, but also of inspecting the manuscript before it went thither, and of making several important alterations in it, very much for the better; of which I should have been ready to have given a more particular account, if his modesty and goodness would have permitted it.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER, BY THE EDITOR.

PREFIXED TO THE SIXTH VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

THE author of this work had written upon the title of that manuscript volume which contained the Epistle to the Romans, the following direction:—"N. B. If I die before this work is finished, as it "is most probable I shall, I desire that it may be transcribed, as far as it goes, by Mr. Orton; and "that he would add such notes as he shall judge most proper, from my written critical notes on the "Epistles; and that it may be printed, by subscription, in one, two, or three volumes, as shall be "judged most convenient, and according to the progress which Providence may permit me to make "in it. Jan. 1, 1746-7."—I think it therefore incumbent upon me to inform the subscribers what progress the author had made in this work, and what has been done to it since his death, in order to remove those suspicions which often arise concerning the authenticity of posthumous works.

When it pleased God to put a period to the author's life and labours, he had finished his Paraphrase and Improvement of the epistolary part of the New Testament, and of the book of the Revelation, and fairly wrote it out in short-hand; and had added the principal notes which he intended to publish. At the end of the manuscript volume containing the Revelation, he had wrote, "Through the good "hand of God upon me, which I desire most thankfully to acknowledge, I ended the first copy "of the Family Expositor, Dec. 31, 1748. exactly two years after I began to write upon the "Romans: having pursued it, during that time, without the interruption of one single day: such "health and such resolution did it please God to give me, amidst the various scenes of business, "danger, and amusement, through which I passed! May his grace raise to himself a monument "of praise from this feeble effort to explain, illustrate, and enforce his word!" And under,—"I "ended my Notes on the books I had thus paraphrased and improved, Aug. 21, 1749. having "daily pursued the work in like manner, whether at home or abroad."—He had transcribed for the press, the Paraphrase, Improvements, and Notes, of the two first volumes, as now published; the Paraphrase and Improvements of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the two first epistles of John. The Notes on these three Epistles, together with the Paraphrase, Improvements, and Notes, on the remaining Epistles, and the Revelation, were transcribed from his short-hand copy by my own hand, or under my inspection, by some of his pupils; and I carefully revised the transcript several times, and compared it with his short-hand copy.—I can assure the subscribers, that the utmost caution has been used, that no one sentiment of the author should be suppressed or changed, and only such expressions varied, as to avoid tautology, and for the sake of perspicuity and accuracy, it might be presumed the author would have varied, had he transcribed this part of the work, and given it his finishing hand. In the margin of the short-hand copy, he had wrote hints of some alterations to be made in the phraseology and length of some sentences, as well as of notes he intended to add when he transcribed it for the press. I have endeavoured to follow these hints in the best manner I could; and accordingly a few notes have been added to vindicate or illustrate his Version or Paraphrase, and references inserted to other critics; most of which were taken from his notes, according to the direction mentioned above. On the whole, I hope the attentive reader who is acquainted with his style and spirit, will discover nothing in the latter part of the work unsuitable to either; and will join with me in thankfulness to God, who spared his life till he had completed this important and useful undertaking.

ADVERTISEMENT.

There is one occurrence relating to it, which my own judgment, and that of many of the author's friends, forbid me to conceal, and the rather, because it has been greatly misrepresented. During the author's life, (in June 1750,) a fire, occasioned by a wax candle being left on his writing-desk, broke out in his study, and consumed many of his papers, and part of one volume of the short-hand copy of this work; but the light of the fire being providentially discovered by an opposite neighbour, who gave an immediate alarm, it was speedily extinguished. When the author was informed of the accident, he seemed most anxious about the preservation of this manuscript; and when the flames were extinguished, to his great joy and surprise, it appeared that the part of this volume, and that only which was destroyed, had been transcribed, and the transcript lay in another place out of danger, and all the untranscribed pages were perfectly legible, and only the edges of them singed. Being an eye-witness of the danger and deliverance, I record this account of it, partly for the satisfaction of the subscribers with regard to the exaggerated report, but chiefly as it seems to denote a particular care of Providence in preserving this work, and a favourable omen, that God intends it for extensive and lasting usefulness. "Whoso is wise, and will observe such things, even they shall "understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psal. cvii. 43.

In the name of the author's family, I heartily thank the subscribers for their encouragement of this Work, and the gentlemen who have kindly superintended the press; and I pray that it may answer those pious and benevolent ends for which it was composed and is now published.

J. ORTON.

Salop.
Nov. 21, 1755.

A

TABLE OF THE SECTIONS IN THEIR ORDER,

SHOWING THE

DISPOSITION OF THE HARMONY.

SECT.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
1	—	—	i. 1—4	—
2	—	—	—	i. 1—14
3	—	—	i. 5—25	—
4	—	—	i. 26—38	—
5	—	—	i. 39—56	—
6	—	—	i. 57—66	—
7	—	—	i. 67, *ad fin.*	—
8	i. 18, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
9	i. 1—17	—	iii. 23, *ad fin.*	—
10	—	—	ii. 1—21	—
11	—	—	ii. 22—39	—
12	ii. 1—12	—	—	—
13	ii. 13, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
14	—	—	ii. 40, *ad fin.*	—
15	iii. 1—6	i. 1—6	iii. 1—6	—
16	iii. 7—12	i. 7, 8	iii. 7—18	—
17	—	—	—	i. 15—18
18	iii. 13, *ad fin.*	i. 9—11	iii. 21—23	—
19	iv. 1—11	i. 12, 13	iv. 1—13	—
20	—	—	—	i. 19—28
21	—	—	—	i. 29—42
22	—	—	—	i. 43, *ad fin.*
23	—	—	—	ii. 1—11
24	—	—	—	ii. 12, *ad fin.*
25	—	—	—	iii. 1—10
26	—	—	—	iii. 11—21
27	—	—	—	iii. 22, *ad fin.*
28	xiv. 3—5	vi. 17—20	iii. 19, 20	—
29	—	—	—	iv. 1—26
30	—	—	—	iv. 27—42
31	iv. 12	i. 14, 15	—	iv. 43, *ad fin.*
32	—	—	iv. 14—30	—
33	iv. 13—22	i. 16—20	iv. 31—32	—
34	—	—	v. 1—11	—
35	viii. 14, 15	i. 21—31	iv. 33—39	—
36	iv. 23, *ad fin.* viii. 16, 17	i. 32—39	iv. 40, *ad fin.*	—
37	v. 1—16	—	—	—
38	v. 17—26	—	—	—
39	v. 27, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
40	vi. 1—18	—	—	—
41	vi. 19, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
42	vii. 1—20	—	—	—
43	vii. 21, *ad fin*	—	—	—
44	viii. 1—4	i. 40, *ad fin.*	v. 12—16	—
45	ix. 2—9	ii. 1—14	v. 17—28	—
46	—	—	—	v. 1—16
47	—	—	—	v. 17—30
48	—	—	—	v. 31, *ad fin.*
49	xii. 1—8	ii. 23, *ad fin.*	vi. 1—5	—
50	xii. 9—15	iii. 1—7	vi. 6—11	—
51	xii. 15—21	iii. 7—12	—	—
52	—	iii. 13—19.	vi. 12—19	—
53	—	—	vi. 20—36	—
54	—	—	vi. 37, *ad fin*	—
55	viii. 5—13	—	vii. 1—10	—
56	—	iii 19—21	vii. 11—17	—
57	xi. 2—6	—	vii. 18—23	—
58	xi. 7—19	—	vii. 24—35	—
59	xi. 20, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
60	—	—	vii. 36, *ad fin.*	—
61	xii. 22—32	iii. 22—30	viii. 1—3 xi. 14, 15 17—23	—
62	xii. 33—37	—	xi. 27, 28	—
63	xii. 38—45	—	xi. 16, 24, 26, 29—32	—

SECT.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
64	xii. 46, *ad fin*	iii. 31, *ad fin.*	xi. 33—36 viii. 19—21	—
65	xiii. 1—17	iv. 1—12	viii. 4—10	—
66	xiii. 18—23	iv. 13—25	viii. 11—18	—
67	xiii. 24—30 36—43	—	—	—
68	xiii. 31—35 44—53	iv. 26—34	—	—
69	viii. 18—27	iv. 35, *ad fin.*	viii. 22—25 ix. 57, *ad fin.*	—
70	viii. 28, *ad fin.* ix. 1	v. 1—21	viii. 26—40	—
71	ix. 10—17	ii. 15—22	v. 29, *ad fin.*	—
72	ix. 18—34	v. 22, *ad fin.*	viii. 41, *ad fin.*	—
73	xiii. 54, *ad fin.* ix. 35, *ad fin.*	vi. 1—6	—	—
74	x. 1—15	vi. 7—11	ix. 1—5	—
75	x. 16—28	—	—	—
76	x. 29, *ad fin.* xi. 1	vi. 12, 13	ix. 6	—
77	xiv. 1, 2, 6—12	vi. 14—29	ix. 7—9	—
78	xiv. 13—23	vi. 30—46	ix. 10—17	vi. 1—15
79	xiv. 24, *ad fin.*	vi. 47, *ad fin*	—	vi. 16—21
80	—	—	—	vi. 22—40
81	—	—	—	vi. 41—58
82	—	—	—	vi. 59, *ad fin.*
83	xv. 1—9	vii. 1—13	—	—
84	xv. 10—20	vii. 14—23	—	—
85	xv. 21—29	vii. 24, *ad fin.*	—	—
86	xv. 30, *ad fin.*	viii. 1—10	—	—
87	xvi. 1—12	viii. 11—21	—	—
88	xvi. 13—20	viii. 22—30	ix. 18—21	—
89	xvi. 21, *ad fin*	viii. 31, *ad fin.* ix. 1	ix. 22—27	—
90	xvii. 1—13	ix. 2—13	ix. 28—36	—
91	xvii. 14—21	ix. 14—29	ix. 37—43	—
92	xvii. 22, *ad fin*	ix. 30—33	ix. 43—45	—
93	xviii. 1—9	ix. 33—37 42, *ad fin.*	ix. 46—48	—
94	xviii. 10—20	—	—	—
95	xviii. 21, *ad fin.*	—	—	—
96	—	ix. 38—41	ix. 49, 50	—
97	—	—	x. 1—16	—
98	—	—	—	vii. 1—13
99	—	—	—	vii. 14—24
100	—	—	—	vii. 25—36
101	—	—	—	vii. 37, *ad fin.*
102	—	—	—	viii. 1—11
103	—	—	—	viii. 12—29
104	—	—	—	viii. 30—47
105	—	—	—	viii. 48, *ad fin.*
106	—	—	x. 17—24	—
107	—	—	x. 25—37	—
108	—	—	x. 38, *ad fin.*	—
109	—	—	xi. 1—13	—
110	—	—	xi. 37, *ad fin.*	—
111	—	—	xii. 1—12	—
112	—	—	xii. 13—21	—
113	—	—	xii. 22—34	—
114	—	—	xii. 35—48	—
115	—	—	xii. 49, *ad fin.*	—
116	—	—	xiii. 1—9	—
117	—	—	xiii. 10—22	—
118	—	—	xiii 23, *ad fin.*	—
119	—	—	xiv. 1—14	—
120	—	—	xiv. 15—24	—
121	—	—	xiv. 25, *ad fin.*	—

SECT.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
122	—	—	xv. 1—10	—
123	—	—	xv. 11, *ad fin.*	—
124	—	—	xvi. 1—18	—
125	—	—	xvi. 19, *ad fin.*	—
126	—	—	xvii. 1—11	—
127	—	—	ix. 51—56 xvii. 12—19	—
128	—	—	xvii. 20,*ad fin.*	—
129	—	—	xviii. 1—14	—
130	—	—	—	ix. 1—23
131	—	—	—	ix. 24—38
132	—	—	—	ix. 39, *ad fin.* x. 1—10
133	—	—	—	x. 11—21
134	—	—	—	x. 22, *ad fin.*
135	xix. 1—12	x. 1—12	—	—
136	xix. 13—15	x. 13—16	xviii. 15—17	—
137	xix. 16, *ad fin.*	x. 17—31	xviii. 18—30	—
138	xx. 1—16	—	—	—
139	—	—	—	xi. 1—16
140	—	—	—	xi. 17—46
141	—	—	—	xi. 47, *od fin*
142	xx. 17—28	x. 32—46	xviii. 31—34	—
143	xx. 29, *ad fin.*	x. 46, *ad fin.*	xviii. 35 *ad fin.* xix. 1—10	—
144	—	—	xix. 11—28	—
145	xxvi. 6—13	xiv. 3—9	—	xii. 1—11
146	xxi. 1—9	xi. 1—10	xix. 29—40	xii. 12—19
147	xxi. 10—16	xi. 11	xix. 41, *ad fin.*	—
148	xxi. 17	xi. 11	—	xii. 20—36
149	xxi. 18, 19.	xi. 12—14	—	xii. 37—43
150	—	xi. 15—19	—	xii. 44, *ad fin.*
151	xxi. 20—32	xi. 20, *ad fin.* xii. 1	xx. 1—9	—
152	xxi. 33, *ad fin.*	xii. 1—12	xx. 9—19	—
153	xxii. 1—14	—	—	—
154	xxii. 15—22	xii. 13—17	xx. 20—26	—
155	xxii. 23—33	xii. 18—27	xx. 27—40	—
156	xxii. 34 *ad fin.*	xii. 28—37	xx. 41—44	—
157	xxiii. 1—22	xii. 38—40	xx. 45, *ad fin.*	—
158	xxiii.23,*ad fin.*	—	—	—
159	—	xii. 41, *ad fin.*	xxi. 1—4	—
160	xxiv. 1—14	xiii. 1—13	xxi. 5—19	—
161	xxiv. 15—28	xiii. 14—23	xxi. 20—24	—
162	xxiv. 29—36	xiii. 24—32	xxi. 25—33	—
163	xxiv.37,*ad fin*	xiii. 33, *ad fin.*	xxi. 34—36	—
164	xxv. 1—13	—	—	—
165	xxv. 14—30	—	—	—
166	xxv. 31 *ad fin*	—	—	—
167	xxvi. 1—5 14—16	xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11	xxi. 37, *ad fin.* xxii. 1—6	—
168	xxvi. 17—20	xiv. 12—17	xxii. 7—18	xiii. 1
169	—	—	xxii. 24—27	xiii. 2, 3—17
170	xxvi. 21—25	xiv. 18—21	xxii. 21—23 28—30	xiii. 2, 18—30
171	—	—	xxii. 31—34	xiii. 31, *ad fin.*
172	xxvi. 26—30	xiv. 22—26	xxii. 19, 20	—
173	—	—	xxii. 35—38	xiv. 1—14
174	—	—	—	xiv. 15, *ad fin.*
175	—	—	—	xv. 1—11
176	—	—	—	xv. 12, *ad fin.*
177	—	—	—	xvi. 1—15
178	—	—	—	xvi. 16, *ad fin.*
179	—	—	—	xvii. 1—12
180	—	—	—	xvii. 13, *ad fin.*
181	xxvi. 31—35	xiv. 27—31	xxii. 39	xviii. 1
182	xxvi. 36—46	xiv. 32—42	xxii. 40—46	—
183	xxvi. 47—56	xiv. 43—52	xxii. 47—53	xviii. 2—12
184	xxvi. 57, 58, 69, *ad fin.*	xiv. 53, 54, 66, *ad fin.*	xxii. 54—62	xviii. 13—18, 24—27
185	xxvi. 59—68	xiv. 55—65	xxii 63, *ad fin.*	xviii.19--23,28
186	xxvii. 1, 2, 11—14	xv. 1—5	xxiii. 1—4	xviii. 28—38
187	xxvii. 15—18, 20—23	xv. 6—14	xxiii. 5—23	xviii.39,*ad fin.*
188	xxvii. 19, 24—31	xv. 15—29	xxiii. 24, 25	xix. 1—16
189	xxvii. 32—34, 38	xv. 21—23, 25, 27, 28	xxiii. 26—34	xix. 16—18
190	xxvii. 35—37, 39—44	xv. 24, 26, 29—32	xxiii. 34—43	xix. 19—24
191	xxvii. 45—54	xv. 33—39	xxiii. 44—48	xix. 25—30
192	xxvii. 55—61	xv. 40, *ad fin.*	xxiii.49,*ad fin.*	xix. 31, *ad fin.*
193	xxvii. 3—10, 62, *ad fin*	—	—	—
194	xxviii. 1—4	xvi. 1—4	xxiv. 1, 2, 12	xx. 1—17
195	xxviii. 5—10	xvi. 2—5—11	xxiv. 3—11	xx. 18
196	xxviii. 11—15	xvi. 12, 13	—	—
197	—	—	xxiv. 13—33	—
198	—	xvi. 14	xxiv. 33—43	xx. 19—23
199	—	—	—	xx 24—29
200	—	—	—	xxi. 1—14
201	—	—	—	xxi. 15—24
202	xxviii. 16, *ad fin.*	xvi. 15—18	xxiv. 44—49	Acts i. 2, 3
203	—	xvi. 19, *ad fin.*	xxiv. 50, *ad fin.*	xx. 30, *ad fin.* xxi. *ult.* Acts i. 4—12.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE FORMER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST,

AS RECORDED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

SECTION I.

ST. LUKE'S PREFACE TO HIS HISTORY, DEDICATED TO THEOPHILUS, A CHRISTIAN FRIEND, FOR WHOSE COMFORT AND ESTABLISHMENT HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED.
LUKE i. VER. 1---4

LUKE i. VER. 1.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things, which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word:

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write

LUKE i. VER. 1.

SECT. 1.

LUKE 1.

WHEREAS many have undertaken[a] *to compose the history*[b] *of those* important *facts, which have been confirmed among us* Christians *with the fullest* and most satisfactory *evidence*,[c] as the great foundation of our common faith; and since some of these historians have written, not on their own personal knowledge, but *as they*, (whether apostles or others,) *have transmitted them to us, who were* themselves, *from the beginning* 2 of Christ's ministry, *eye-witnesses* of what passed, *and* in proof of the sincerity of their testimony, courageously became *ministers of the word*,[d] that is, of the Gospel, amidst the greatest opposition; *I also, having accurately traced all* these *things*[e] *from their first* 3 *rise*,[f] even from the very conception of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of our Lord, *have thought it proper to write an orderly account of them*:[g] and I chuse to

a *Whereas many have undertaken.*] This must refer to some Histories of the Life of *Christ*, which are now lost; for *Matthew* and *Mark*, the only Evangelists which can be supposed to have written before *Luke*, could not with any propriety be called *many*; and of these two, *Matthew* at least wrote from personal knowledge, not the testimony of others. One must readily conclude, the books referred to are lost, as none of the Apocryphal Gospels now extant, published particularly by *Fabricius*, (in his *Codex Apoc. Nov. Test.*) or Mr. *Jones*, (in his *History of the Canon*) can with any shadow of reason pretend to equal antiquity with this of St. *Luke*. But I cannot, with *Ambrose* and *Epiphanius*, suppose, that the Evangelist here intends the Gospels of *Basilides*, *Cerinthus*, and some other early Heretics; since he seems to allow these histories, whatever they were, to have been at least honestly written, according to information received from the most capable judges. And it is strange, that *Eusebius* should imagine, the words are intended as a severe censure on the now unknown compilers of these histories, whoever they were. *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 24.

b *To compose the history.*] *To set forth in order a declaration*, is so antiquated a phrase, that it would hardly be understood any where but here; at least I am sure, none could, by reading it, so much as guess at the elegance and propriety of St. Luke's words, ανατεξασθαι διηγησιν, which may more literally, and I think far more justly, be rendered *to compose a history*: And I doubt not but our English word *compose*, may express as much regularity in the order of facts, as the Evangelist meant to intimate.

c *Confirmed among us with the fullest evidence.*] I think πεπληροφορημενων is rather to be understood, as referring to the *fulness of* that *evidence* with which the facts were *attended*, than to the *confidence* with which they were *believed*. This seems most honourable to the Gospel; but as I know the word is ambiguous, and often used in the latter sense, I have chosen to express that also in the *Paraphrase*. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 5. 17. *Gr.*

d *Of the word.*] Some have conjectured, that λογος, *the word*, here signifies *Christ*, as in the beginning of St. John's Gospel: Perhaps it may; but I did not think it so evident, as to venture fixing it to that sense.

e *Having accurately traced all these things.*] The original, παρηκολουθηκοσι πασιν ακριβως plainly signifies that *accuracy of investigation*, on which the *perfect understanding* of his subject was built.

f *From their first rise.*] Some very pious and learned writers have pleaded this text, as an argument for the inspiration of St. Luke's Gospel, and consequently of the rest; because the word ανωθεν sometimes signifies *from above*, or *from Heaven*; as it plainly doth, John iii. 31. Jam. i. 17. iii. 15, 17. But Luke so evidently uses it in the sense here given, Acts xxvi. 5. and that sense is so common elsewhere, and seems so absolutely necessary in this connection with παρηκολουθηκοσι, that I cannot think this text at all to the purpose. The argument I mention, is one of those, which, like pieces of superfluous armour, encumber rather than defend; and the more I am concerned about the conclusion, here or elsewhere, the more cautious shall I always be, that I may not draw it from such premises.

g *To write an orderly account of them*, καθεξης σοι γραψαι.] It is chiefly on the authority of this clause, that M. Le Clerc, and many other modern harmonizers have thought (as Beza also did,) that all the other Gospels are to be reduced to the order of Luke, wherever they differ from it: a conclusion which, I apprehend, for reasons that shall afterwards be given at large, to be an occasion of many errors, and particularly injurious to the character of St. Matthew. I would only here observe, that the foundation of it is very precarious; since it is evident, this Evangelist might, with great propriety, be said to have given *an orderly account* of the History of Christ, as the leading facts are in their due series, though some particulars are transposed.

SECT. 1. LUKE I.

inscribe it *to thee, O most noble Theophilus*;[h] because, though thou art already in the general acquainted with them, yet I cannot but be concerned, *that thou mayest* more fully, and circumstantially, *know the* exact and *certain truth of those things, in which thou hast* formerly *been instructed*[i] by those who were the happy instruments of initiating thee into the Christian faith; and I am persuaded, thou wilt be greatly confirmed in it, by the attentive perusal of that history, with which I here present thee.

unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,
4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us humbly adore the divine goodness, that facts of so great importance, as these now to be laid before us, were not left to the uncertainty of oral tradition; but delivered to the church in writing, by persons who had so
Ver. 2 many opportunities of learning the truth, and have given such full proof of their integrity in relating it. Let us be thankful, that we have not only one such history, but that several undertook this excellent and necessary work, by whose united testimony the whole is confirmed; while it is also illustrated by the variety of their nar-
1 rations, each inserting some considerable circumstance which the rest have omitted. Let us rejoice in that providential care, which hath preserved this invaluable treasure through so many succeeding ages, and some of them periods of the grossest darkness, and the hottest persecution.

3 While we study this *orderly series* of sacred story, let us be concerned, that our faith may be established by it, and our other graces proportionably advanced; maintaining a continual dependence on that blessed Spirit, by whose instruction it was written, to lead us into wise and pious reflections upon it.

To conclude; from the care which this holy Evangelist expresseth, for the edification and comfort of his friend
4 Theophilus, let us learn to regard it as one of the most important offices of friendship, to labour for the spiritual advantage of each other; by endeavouring, not only to awaken and instruct those that are entirely unacquainted or unaffected with divine things, but also, as we have opportunity, to confirm the faith, and quicken the zeal, of the most established Christians with whom we converse. Happy the men, whose tongues, and whose pens, are employed in so good a work: may they never, in the remotest ages, fail of some *excellent Theophilus*, to welcome and encourage their pious attempts!

SECTION II.

St. John begins his Gospel with a very sublime and emphatical account of the deity and incarnation of Christ; and of those glorious and important purposes, for which he condescended to appear among us in the human nature. John i. 1—14.

JOHN i. 1.

SECT. 2. JOHN I.

IN the beginning, before the foundation of the world, or the first production of any created being, a glorious person *existed*, who (on account of the perfections of his nature, and his being in time the medium of divine manifestations to us,) may properly be called *the Word* of God.[a] *And the Word was* originally *with God*, the father of all; so that to him the words of Solomon might justly be applied, Prov. viii. 30. "He was by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight." Nay, by a generation which none can declare, *and* an union which none can fully conceive, *the Word was* himself *God*,[b] that is,
2 possessed of a nature truly and properly divine. I repeat it again, that the condescension of his incarnation may be more attentively considered, *this* divine [*Word*] *was in the* very *beginning with God*, and by virtue of his most intimate union with him, was possessed

JOHN i. 1.
IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

h *O most noble Theophilus.*] That Theophilus is the name of a particular person, eminent in the church in those early days, and not, (as Salvian thought it,) a general title applicable to every Christian as a lover of God, Dr. Whitby, after many others, hath abundantly proved. What his rank in life was, we do not indeed certainly know; but it seems, that it was pretty considerable, for Κρατιστε was then, as *Excellency* among us is, a title of honour and respect usual in addressing noble personages: (See Acts xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3. xxvi. 25.) And it might with some peculiar propriety be applied here, as Theophilus was so worthy the name he bore, which signifies a true *lover of God.*

i *Hast been instructed*, περι ων κατηχηθης.] The word doth with great accuracy express the instructions given to those who were training up for an admission to the Christian Church; whose name of *Catechumens* was, as it is well known, derived from hence, and applied, without any particular regard to the age of the persons concerned. Compare Acts xviii. 25. Rom. ii. 18. I endeavour to express this in the paraphrase, but it would be very improper to use the English word which most literally answers to the Greek, because that is now almost wholly appropriated to children.

a *The word of God.*] The Greek *Logos* is now become so familiar to an English ear, that I doubt not but most of my readers would have understood me, had I retained it in my *translation*; which, on account of the singularity of the idea here signified by it, I should have done, had I not feared it might have been unintelligible to a few at least, and so have impaired the pleasure they might find in so excellent a passage. I know that some of the Fathers render *Logos*, *Reason*, as M. Le Clerc doth; though I apprehend they mean it in a very different sense from him, who seems to understand it only as a strong Eastern phrase, to signify the consummate wisdom of the Gospel scheme. See his *Harmony*, p. 44. But this will entirely enervate, and destroy the sense of ver. 14, as well as of those texts which speak of Christ's *coming out from God, enjoying glory with him before the world was, &c.*

b *The Word was God.*] I know how eagerly many have contended, that the word *God* is used here in an inferior sense; the necessary consequence of which is, (as indeed some have expressly avowed it,) that this clause should be rendered, *the Word was a God*, that is, a kind of inferior deity, as *governors* are called *gods*. See John x. 34. and 1 Cor. viii. 5. But it is impossible he should here be so called merely as a *governor*, because he is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom he could govern: and it is to me most incredible, that when the *Jews* were so exceeding averse to idolatry, and the *Gentiles* so unhappily prone to it, such a plain writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling-block on the very threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine, that *in the beginning* of all things there were *two Gods*, one supreme, and the other subordinate: a difficulty which, if possible, would be farther increased, by recollecting what so many ancient writers assert, that this Gospel was written with a particular view of opposing the *Corinthians* and *Ebionites*; (See *Iren. l.* i. *c.* 26. *l.* iii. *c.* 11. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l.* vi. *c.* 14.) on which account a greater accuracy of expression must have been necessary. There are so many instances in the writings of this apostle, and even in this chapter, (see ver. 6, 12, 13, 18.) where Θεος without the article is used to signify God in the highest sense of the word, that it is something surprising, such a stress should be laid on the want of that article, as a proof that it is used only in a subordinate sense.—On the other hand, to conceive of *Christ* as a *distinct* and *co-ordinate God*, would be equally inconsistent with the most express declarations of Scripture, and far more irreconcileable with *reason*. Nothing I have said above, can by any means be justly interpreted in such a sense: and I here solemnly disclaim the least intention of insinuating one thought of that kind, by any thing I have ever written, here or elsewhere.—The order of the words in the original, (Θεος ην ο λογος) is such, that some have thought the clause might more exactly be translated, *God was the word.* But there are almost every where so many instances of such a construction, as our version supposes, that I chose rather

SECT. 2.

JOHN I.

3 All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

of infinite glory and felicity. And when it pleased God to begin his work of creation, *all things* in the whole compass of nature *were made by him*,[c] even by this almighty Word; *and without him was not* any thing *made*, not *so much as one single being*,[d] whether among the noblest, or the meanest of God's various works. *That* fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity, *which was in him*, *was* the fountain of life[e] to the whole creation: *and* it is in particular our concern to remember, that *the life* which was in him, *was the light of men*, as all the light of reason and revelation was the effect of his energy on the mind. *And the light* long shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses, and it still *shineth in darkness*, even on the minds of the most ignorant and prejudiced part of mankind; *and* yet *the darkness* was so gross, that it opposed its passage, and such was the prevailing degeneracy of their hearts, that they *did not apprehend it*,[f] or regard its dictates, in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led them.

As this was the case for many ages, the divine wisdom was pleased to interpose in these latter days, by a clearer and fuller discovery; and for this purpose *a man*, *whose name was John*, afterwards called the Baptist, *was sent* as a messenger *from God;* of whose miraculous conception and important ministry a more particular account is elsewhere given: but here it may be sufficient to observe in general, that though he was himself, in an inferior sense, "a burning and shining light;" (compare John v. 35.) yet *he came* only under the character of a servant, and *for a witness*, *that he might testify concerning* Christ, *the* true *light*, *that all* who heard his discourses, *might by his means* be engaged to *believe* and follow that divine illumination. And accordingly he most readily confessed, that *he* himself *was not that light*, *but* only [*came*] *to bear witness concerning it*. *The true light* of which he spake, *was* Christ,[g] even *that* sun of righteousness and source of truth, *which*, *coming into the world*, *enlighteneth every man*,[h] dispersing his beams, as it were, from one end of the heavens to the other, to the Gentile world, which was in midnight darkness, as well as to the Jews, who enjoyed but a kind of twilight. *He was in the world* in a human form; *and* though *the world was made by him*,[i] *yet the world knew* and acknowledged *him not*. Yea, *he came into his own* [*territories*,] even

6 7 8 9 10

to follow it, than to vary from it unnecessarily, in this important passage.---I am deeply sensible of the sublime and mysterious nature of the doctrine of *Christ's deity*, as here declared: but it would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into a large discussion of that great foundation of our faith; it has often been done by much abler hands. It was, however, matter of conscience with me, on the one hand, thus strongly to declare my belief of it, and on the other hand, to leave it as far as I could in the simplicity of Scripture expressions. I shall only add, in the words, or at least the sense of Bishop Burnet, "That had not St. John, and the other "Apostles, thought it a doctrine of great importance in the Gospel "scheme, they would rather have waved, than have asserted and "insisted upon it, considering the critical circumstances in which they wrote." See Burnet on the *Articles*, p. 40.

c *All things were made by him.*] It would be the work of a treatise, rather than a note, to represent the *Jewish* doctrine of the creation of all things by the divine *Logos;* to which, (rather than the *Platonic*,) there may be some reference here. They who have no opportunity of examining the original Authors, may see what those learned men have said, to whom Dr. A. Taylor refers, in his *Treatise* on the *Trinity*, p. 258, to which add, Dr. Pearson on the *Creed*, p. 118. Dr. Scott's *Christian Life*, vol. iii. p. 565, *&c. fol.* and Dr. Watts's *Dissert.* on the *Trinity*, No. iv. § 3.---There is, however, a remarkable passage I shall mention to this purpose, as a specimen of the rest; and the rather, because it is omitted in most of the collections I have seen on this head, and not fully cited and explained in what I take to be its exact sense in any. *Philo Judæus*, (*de Profug. p.* 465.) speaking of the *cherubims on the mercy-seat* as symbolical representations of what he calls the *creating and governing powers*, makes this additional reflection: "The divine word (*Logos*) is above these, of whom we can have "no idea by the sight, or any other sense; he being himself *the* "*image of God*, the eldest of all intelligible beings, sitting nearest "to him who is truly THE ONLY ONE, there being no distance "between them:" (alluding, I suppose, to the form of those antient chariots, where, as in the chairs we use upon the road, the driver sat close to the person driven; which was not the case in all; compare Acts viii. 38.) "And therefore he (that is, God) "says, *I will speak unto thee from the mercy-seat between the two* "*cherubims;* thereby representing the *Logos*, as the charioteer by "whom the motion of these powers is directed; and himself who "speaks to him, as the rider (or person carried,) who commands "the charioteer how he is to manage the reins." Ο δε υπερκυψ τουτων (scil. δυναμεως ποιητικης και βασιλικης) ΛΟΓΟΣ ΘΕΙΟΣ, εις ορατην ουκ ελθειν δυναμενος ιδεαν, αλλ μηδενι των κατ' αισθησιν εμφερης ων, αλλ' αυτος εικων υπαρχων Θεου, των νοητων απας απαντων ο πρεσβυτατος, ο εγγυτατος, μηδενος οντος μεθοριου διαστηματος, ΤΟΥ ΜΟΝΟΥ ο εστιν αψευδως αψιδρυμενος. Λεγεται γαρ, Λαληση σοι ανωθεν του Ιλαστηριου ανα μεσον των δυοιν Χερουβειμ· ωσθ' ηνιοχον μεν ειναι των δυναμεων τον ΛΟΓΟΝ, επομενον δε τον κυκλουμενον τω ηνιοχω τα προς ορθην του παντος ηνιοχησιν. I insert this, as a key to a great many other passages in *Philo;* and shall only mention one more: (*De Agricult.* p. 195.) Where he represents God, as "governing the whole "course of nature both in heaven and earth, as the great Shepherd "and King, by wise and righteous laws; having constituted his "unerring Word, his only-begotten Son, to preside as his viceroy "over this holy flock:" for the illustration of which he quotes those remarkable words, Exod. xxiii. 23, though in a form something different from our reading and version, "*Behold, I am; I* "*will send my angel before thy face to keep thee in the way.*" Την και υδωρ κ. τ. λ.------τα μεν ενυπαρχοντα δε θειαι, (a remarkable distribution) ως ποιμην και βασιλευς ο Θεος αγει και κατ' δικην και νομον, περιεστηκεν τον ορθον αυτου ΛΟΓΟΝ προσαγορευσας υιον, ος την επιμελειαν της ιερας ταυτης αγελης, ωι τι μεγαλου βασιλεως υπαρχος δικαιοξεξει. Και γαρ ειρηται που, Ιδου, εγω ειμι, αποστελω αγγελον μου εις προσωπον σου του φυλαξαι σε εν τη οδω.

d *Not so much as one single being.*] There is an emphasis in the words ουδε εν, which I thought it proper to express in the version, than which nothing can be more literal.

e *That which was in him was life.*] The most antient fathers, that quote this text, so generally join the words ο γεγονεν, with this *fourth verse*, that I cannot but apprehend this to be the true reading. (See Dr. Mill's *Proleg.*) But if any think it improbable that γεγονε should have different senses here, and in the *third verse*, they will please to observe, that the full sense of our version is expressed in the paraphrase, and that the alteration here made is of very small importance. That the heathens sometimes speak of their deities and heroes, as the light and life of mankind, Elsner hath shown on this text.

f *Did not apprehend it,* ου κατελαβεν.] It might not seem so strange, that the world did not fully *comprehend* the spiritual, since it certainly doth not fully *comprehend* the *material* light, nor indeed any of the most familiar objects it discovers: but the word is capable of other senses, and is sometimes used for *apprehending*, or laying hold of a thing, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Phil. iii. 12, 13. and sometimes for *perceiving* it, Acts iv. 13. x. 34. Compare Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 25. Rom. i. 20. which all illustrate the Evangelist's assertion.

g *The true light was* Christ.] The original yet more clearly expresses the antithesis between this and the former verse: I have endeavoured to follow it in my *version*, without supposing αυτος understood here, to answer to εκεινος there. I cannot but think the conjecture of the learned Heinsius very elegant, that the ην at the beginning of this verse, might belong to the end of the former: the exact construction then would be, *he*, viz. John, *was not that light, but he was*, (that is, he existed and came,) *that he might bear witness to that light: the true light*, &c. *was in the world*, &c. See Heins. *in loc.*

h *Which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.*] So I chuse to render it, though I acknowledge that our version may be consistent with the truth, and that it most exactly suits the order of the words in the original; but the other is also very grammatical, φως ερχομενον εις τον κοσμον, and suggests an idea more distinct from ver. 4. Not to urge, that the phrase of *coming into the world*, is, with peculiar emphasis, used of Christ, and especially under the notion of a *light*. Compare John xii. 46. *I am come a light into the world.* John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.*

i *The world was made by him.*] Some have supposed this particularly levelled against the Gnosticks, who maintained that the world was made by an evil Genius; and that the God of the Old Testament, and the New, were different and contrary persons. It is certain, that Irenæus, and several others of the fathers, with great propriety, have urged this text against that mad notion.------Eusebius exposes these wretches in a very just and lively manner, and makes use of words which, if he had been our contemporary, might have seemed directly levelled at a late unhappy writer, who

SECT. 2. JOHN I.

to the Jewish nation, which was under such distinguished obligations to him, and to whom he had been so expressly promised as their great Messiah; *yet his own* [*people*] *did not receive him*[k] as they ought; but on the contrary treated him in the most contemptuous and ungrateful manner. *Nevertheless* the detriment was theirs, and it was indeed unspeakably great to them; for *to as many as received him, and* by a firm and lively faith *believed on his name*, [*even*] *to* all of *them*, without any exception of even the poorest or the vilest, *he granted the* glorious *privilege of becoming the sons of God;* that is, he adopted them into God's family, so that they became entitled to the present immunities, and the future eternal inheritance of his children. And they *who* thus believed on him *were* possessed of these privileges, *not* in consequence of their being *born of blood*, of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision, and the blood of the sacrifices; *nor* could they ascribe it merely to *the will of the flesh*, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness, as if by the power of corrupted nature alone they had made themselves to differ; *nor* to *the will of man*, or to the wisest advice, and most powerful exhortations, which their fellow-creatures might address to them; *but* must humbly acknowledge, that they were born *of God*,[l] and indebted to the efficacious influences of his regenerating grace, for all their privileges, and for all their hopes. Compare John iii. 1—8. Tit. iii. 3—7. and Jam. i. 18.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name.

13 Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 *And* in order to raise us sinful creatures to such illustrious dignity and happiness, *the* divine and eternal *Word*, that glorious person whom we mentioned above, by a most amazing condescension, *was made flesh*,[m] that is, united himself to our inferior and miserable nature with all its innocent infirmities; *and* he not only made us a transient visit, for an hour, or a day, but for a considerable time *pitched his tabernacle among us*[n] on earth; *and we* who are now recording these things *contemplated his glory*, (compare 1 John i. 1.) with so strict an attention, that, from our own personal knowledge, we can bear our testimony to it, that it was in every respect *such a glory as became the only-begotten of the Father:* for it shone forth, not merely in that radiant appearance which invested him on the mount of transfiguration, and in the splendor of his continued miracles, but in all his temper, ministration, and conduct, through the whole series of his life, in which he appeared *full of grace and truth*;[o] that is, as he was in himself most benevolent and upright, so he made the amplest discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not possibly do, and exhibited the most important and substantial blessings,[p] whereas that was at best but "a shadow of good things to come." Compare Heb. x. 1.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

JUSTLY hath our Redeemer said, *Blessed is the man that is not offended in me:* and we may peculiarly apply the words to that great and glorious doctrine of *the deity of Christ*, which is here before us. A thousand high and curious thoughts will naturally arise in our corrupt hearts, on this view of it; but may divine grace subdue them all to the obedience of an humble faith; so that, with Thomas, we may each of us fall down at his feet, and cry with sincere and unreserved devotion, *My Lord, and my God!*

Let us adore him as the creator and preserver of all, the overflowing fountain of *light* and *life*. Let us with unutterable pleasure hail this *sun of righteousness*, whose rays, *by the tender-mercies* of the Father, have *visited* our benighted world, to *guide our feet into the way of peace:* and while we lament that *the darkness* hath not *apprehended* and received him, let us earnestly pray, that he may ere long penetrate every cloud of ignorance and mist of error, and may diffuse among all the nations knowledge and grace, purity and joy. Let us especially pray, that he may penetrate our beclouded souls; and that they may, in holy correspondence

strangely took it into his head to call himself *The Moral Philosopher*. But alas, every succeeding age has had its moral philosophers, who have attempted to remove that burthensome stone, the Bible, and have found it returning upon them, so as to *grind them*, and their schemes, and their confidence, *to powder*. The words in my view are these: (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. v. cap. 28. *in fin.*) Ἄτοπος ἀρνητέον τὸν τε νόμον καὶ τοὺς προφήτας, ἀνόμου καὶ ἀθέου διδασκαλίας, προφάσει χάριτος, εἰς ἐσχάτην ἀπωλείας ὀλεθρον κατολισθήσαν. "Some," (who yet it seems pretended to be Christians,) "absolutely rejecting the "law and the prophets, by a licentious and atheistical doctrine, "which they introduced under a pretence of magnifying the "Divine Goodness, or the Gospel," (for χαρίτος, Grace, may signify either,) "have plunged themselves into the lowest gulf of perdition."

k *He came into his own* [*territories*] *yet his own* [*people*] *did not receive him.*] It is so difficult to express the difference between εἰς τα ἰδια, and οἱ ἰδιοι, that few versions have attempted it; yet, as Grotius hath well observed, the energy of the text cannot be understood without attending to it. That the Jewish nation was, in some peculiar sense, under the care and guardianship of Christ before his incarnation, this passage seems strongly to intimate, and many learned men have shewn it, in what appears to me a convincing light.

l *Who were not born of blood, &c. but of God.*] I am sensible, this verse is liable to great difficulty and ambiguity. It is an amazing liberty the author of the *New Translation*, published 1727, has taken with it, in explaining it of *a birth, which they had, not from circumcision, nor from the constitution of the body, nor from the institution of man, but from God.* I readily allow, that ἐξ αιμάτων, *of bloods*, may include circumcision, but cannot confine it to that patriarchal descent, and the blood of sacrifices, were so much depended upon by the Jews, that one would suppose them included. Dr. Whitby, with many others, takes *the will of the flesh* to signify carnal descent, and the *will of man*, adoption; which I should prefer to the opinion of Mess. L'Enfant and Beausobre, who, without any reason assigned, understand by those *born of the will of man*, proselytes, as opposed to native Jews; a sense, in which I never could find the phrase used. The paraphrase I have given, keeps the ideas distinct; answers the frequent signification of *flesh* elsewhere; (compare John iii. 6. Rom. vii. 25. viii. 3, 8, 12, and Gal. v. 17.) and conveys an important and edifying sense, very agreeable to the tenor of Scripture. But I submit it to the reader, without pretending that it is the only interpretation the words will bear. I hope he will always carefully distinguish between the *text* and the *paraphrase*, and remember how very different a regard is owing to the one and the other.

m *Was made flesh.*] *Flesh* often signifies man in this infirm and calamitous state. Compare Gen. vi. 12. Numb. xvi. 22. Deut. v. 26. Psalm cxlv. 21. Isa. xlix. 26. Acts ii. 17. 1 Cor. i. 29. and many other places.

n *Pitched his tabernacle among us.*] There is so visible a reference in the word εσκηνωσεν, to the dwelling of the Shekinah in the Tabernacle of Moses, that it was very proper to render it by the word I have used.

o *Full of grace and truth.*] It is plain, that those words, *and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*, are to be considered as a parenthesis; and these are to be joined with the preceding, thus, *he dwelt among us---full of grace and truth.* But the length of the paraphrase made it inconvenient to transpose them.

p The most substantial blessings.] That *truth* is sometimes used, not so much in opposition to falsehood, as to hieroglyphics, shadows, and types, an attentive reader must often have observed. See Heb. viii. 2. ix. 24, and Dan. vii. 16. Compare Col. ii. 17.

to the purposes of his appearing, be *turned as clay to the seal*,[q] Job xxxviii. 14. *The world knew him not;* SECT. 2.
but may we know him, and give him that honourable and grateful reception, which so great a favour may
justly demand!---Yet what returns can be proportionable to his condescension, *in becoming flesh* for us, and
pitching his tabernacle among miserable and sinful mortals?---Happy apostles, that *beheld his glory!* And Ver. 14.
surely there are in his word such reflections of it, as we may also *behold*, and as will oblige us to acknowledge
it to be *a glory* that *became the only-begotten of the Father.*

Let us cordially receive him, as *full of grace and truth*, that we also may stand entitled to the privileges 12
of *God's children.* And if we are already of that happy number, let us not arrogate the glory of it to ourselves; or ascribe it entirely to those who have been the instruments of this important change; but remember,
that *of his own will God hath begotten us by the word of his power*, and that *of him we are in Christ* 13
Jesus: to him then let us refer the ultimate praise, if that divine and almighty Saviour be *made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30.

SECTION III.

An Angel appears to Zacharias, to give him notice of the birth of John the Baptist; and his mother, on her conception, retires. Luke i. 5---25.

LUKE i. 5.

THERE was, in the days of Herod, the King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God, in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense, when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son,

LUKE i. 5.

IN the days of Herod the Great, whom the Romans had made *king of Judea, there* SECT. 3.
was a priest named Zacharias, who belonged to that course of priests in the Temple,
which was called the *course of Abiah;* as Abiah was the head of one of the twenty-four
courses into which David distributed the priests, (compare 1 Chron. xxiii. 6. and xxiv. 10.) LUKE i.
whose memory was still kept up, though none of his line returned from the captivity.
And his wife, (that is, the wife of Zacharias,) *was one of the daughters* of the honourable family *of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both* of them 6
persons of a very fair character among men: and not only so, but sincerely and eminently
righteous in the sight of God, walking before him in the simplicity of their hearts, *in* a
faithful observance of *all the* moral *commands*, as well as ceremonial ordinances *and institutions*[a] *of the Lord*, in a very *blameless* and exemplary manner. *And they had* 7
no child, because Elisabeth was barren; and so pious a man as Zacharias was, would
not, on any terms, think of taking another wife, while she lived:[b] *and* indeed there was
no human prospect that their family would ever be built up, because *they were both*
very far *advanced in years.*

And it came to pass, that when he was at Jerusalem, *performing the priest's office* 8
before God, in the order of his course, or of the class to which he belonged, *according* 9
to the custom of assigning the respective offices *of the priesthood* to particular persons
then in waiting, which was done by lot; it so happened, that *his lot was* then to
perform the most honourable service of daily ministration, that is, *to burn incense* on the
golden altar, which was before the Lord, contiguous to the holy of holies. (Exod. xxx. 7.
xl. 5, 26.) This he accordingly did, *when he went into the temple of the Lord*,
either at the time of morning or evening sacrifice. *And the whole multitude* of pious 10
Jews assembled for divine worship, (according to the usual custom *of the people* at that
time,) *were praying without*, in the courts of the temple *at the time of incense*,[c] to
declare their concurrence with the priest in that intercession which he was making to
God on their account. Compare Rev. viii. 3, 4.

And while Zacharias was in the midst of his devotions, on a sudden *there appeared* 11
to him a person, whom, by the form and manner of his appearance, he immediately
knew to be *an angel of the Lord;* and he was *standing at the right of the altar of*
incense, before which he was then ministering. *And Zacharias seeing* [*him*,] though 12
he was a man of such remarkable and experienced piety, *was greatly discomposed, and*
an unusual *terror fell upon him.*

But the angel immediately scattered his fears, and *said unto him* with great gentleness 13
of aspect and voice, *Fear not, Zacharias; for* I come unto thee with no message of
terror; but, on the contrary, am sent to assure thee, that *thy* frequently repeated *prayer*
for the redemption of Israel, as well as that which thou hast formerly offered for a blessing

q *Turned as clay to the seal.*] This beautiful metaphor of the inspired writer seems, by a very expressive contrast, to illustrate the meaning of οὐ κατέλαβεν, in the fifth verse. It was for want of this, *the darkness did not apprehend*, or receive *the light;* did not form itself into a due correspondence to it, so as to put on its habit, and clothe itself with the lustre of its reflected beams. How glorious and happy is that soul, on which the knowledge of Christ hath that genuine influence!

a Moral *commands*, as well as ceremonial *institutions.*] Some have thought this distinction too nice: but it is certain, the word δικαιωμα is sometimes used to signify *ceremonial institutions;* (see Heb. ix. 1, 10.) though it is often taken in a much more extensive sense. It is however evident, that all expressed in the paraphrase must be intended in the text, since, under the Jewish dispensation, they could not have approved themselves *upright before God*, without an obedient regard to the ceremonial law.

b Taking another wife, while she lived.] *Polygamy*, as well as *Divorce*, were, for the hardness of their hearts, tolerated among the *Jews;* but they seem both to have been, in this age at least, disapproved by persons of the best character. Compare Mal. ii. 14---16. and 1 Tim. iii. 2.

c *Were praying without, at the time of Incense.*] This was the foundation of that elegant figure, by which *prayer* is so often compared to *Incense;* (see Psal. cxli. 2. Mal. i. 11. Rev. viii. 3, 4.) and perhaps, one reason of ordaining *Incense* might be, to intimate the acceptableness of those pious *prayers*, which were to accompany it. And indeed, burning fragrant perfumes was, and in the Eastern nations still is, so important a part of the entertainment of illustrious families, that one might well expect it in the house of God. It is so plain that this was only an office of *daily ministration*, and that *Zacharias* was one of the *ordinary priests*, that one cannot but be surprised, that any one should ever conclude from this circumstance of the story, that *Zacharias* was *Sagan*, or assistant to the high-priest, and was now performing his grand office on the day of atonement, and so on this foundation should calculate the birth of *John the Baptist*, and of *Christ*, and all the other feasts which depend upon them: yet this is done in the Calendars, both of the *Roman* and *Greek* church.

SECT. 3. LUKE I.

on thine own family, *is* at length *heard*:[d] *and* in proof of it, I add, that *Elisabeth thy wife shall* ere long *bear thee a son*, to comfort thee in this thy declining age; *and* in token of the gracious regard of God to him, *thou shalt call his name John*,[e] that is, the grace and favour of God; to intimate, that the divine grace shall, in a very eminent manner, be upon him. *And* this intimation shall be abundantly answered; for he shall be a person of so distinguished a character, that *thou shalt have joy and transport* in him;[f] *and many* others *shall* also have reason to *rejoice* with thee, *on occasion of his birth. For he shall be great*, not in circumstances of outward dignity and splendor, but, what is infinitely more important, *in the sight of the Lord*, even Jehovah his God, whose approbation is the highest glory: *and* in token of his being in a peculiar manner separated to his service, (like the antient Nazarites, Num. vi. 3.) *he shall drink neither wine, nor* any other sort of *intoxicating liquor; and he shall be* so early remarkable for wisdom and piety, that he shall appear to be *filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb. And* thus trained up, and animated for service, *he shall*, when he appears under a public character, *turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God;* whose ways they have so generally forsaken, even while they are professing themselves to be his peculiar people, and boasting in such an extraordinary relation to him. *And* to prepare them to receive the Lord their God, appearing in the person of the Messiah, *he shall go before him*, as an illustrious harbinger *in the spirit and power of Elijah*, that is, animated by the same sanctity, courage, and zeal for reformation, which appeared so remarkable in that celebrated prophet: and, according to that prediction of Malachi, (with which the sacred Canon concludes, Mal. iv. 6.) he shall meet with such glorious success in his ministry, as *to convert the hearts of the fathers, with* those of *the children*;[g] that is, he shall bring many, both of the rising, and the declining age, to that real piety towards God, which will be the surest band of their mutual duty towards each other: *and* many of *those who have* hitherto *been disobedient to the wisdom of the just*, that is, insensible of the obligations to real religion, which is the greatest wisdom, *shall he make ready*, as *a people prepared for the Lord*, raising in their minds an expectation of the Messiah, and a disposition to welcome him when he shall appear. *And Zacharias* then *said to the angel, by what* sign *shall I know* that *this* desirable and wonderful event shall be accomplished? *For* in the course of nature it seems most improbable: since *I am an old man, and my wife* is also considerably *advanced in years. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God*, and near the throne of his Majesty, as one of the chief officers in his celestial court; of whose appearance to Daniel thou hast so frequently read: (Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21.) *and* it is by a peculiar favour, that *I am* now *sent to speak to thee*, in this form of unusual condescension, *and to tell thee these joyful tidings.* My very appearance ought therefore to have been owned as a sufficient confirmation of the truth of my message; especially by thee, who canst not but know, how frequently, in Israel, the most illustrious persons have been raised up from parents who had long been barren.[h] *And* since thou dost not acquiesce in this, God will give thee a sign; which, while it confirms thy faith, shall also intimate his displeasure against this sinful mixture of unbelief; for *behold, thou shalt* from this moment *be silent, and unable to speak* any more, *till the day in which these things shall be accomplished*, even till the day in which the child shall be born; *because thou hast not* immediately *believed my words, which* yet, through the divine indulgence and favour to thee, *shall be* assuredly *fulfilled in their season*, that is, as soon as thou canst reasonably expect, after thy return home. *And the people*, who stood without, *were waiting for Zacharias*, that he might dismiss them with his blessing; (Numb. vi. 23—27. and Lev. ix. 22, 23.) *and* they

and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel, answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

d *Thy prayer is heard.*] No doubt he had often prayed for children; but as he seems now to have given up all expectations of that kind, it is reasonable to conclude, that these words chiefly relate to his prayers for the deliverance of *Israel* by the *Messiah*, whose appearance was then expected by pious persons, conversant in the sacred writings; (Luke ii. 25, 38. xix. 11. xxiii. 51.) and the more earnestly desired just at this time, as they suffered so many grievous things, by the oppression of the *Romans*, and the tyranny of *Herod*, which, toward the close of his reign, grew more and more insupportable.

e *Thou shalt call his name John.*] It was the office of the father to *name the child*; compare verse 62. It is well known, that this name, in *Hebrew* יוחנן, *Johanan*, (which occurs near thirty times in the *Old Testament*, though the *English* reader is not aware that it is the same,) is derived from חנן, and יה, and properly signifies *the grace and favour of the Lord. Elhanan*, and many of the other proper names among the *Hebrews*, had such a kind of signification, and probably were given in token of their good wishes to the infant that received them.

f *Joy and Transport.*] Αγαλλιασις properly answers to the word *exultation*, or *leaping for joy*, and is far more expressive than *gladness*. Compare 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13. and Mat. v. 12. in which last places we render it, by being *exceeding glad*.

g *To convert the hearts of the fathers, with* those of *the children*; επιστρεψαι καρδιας πατερων επι τεκνα.] Here is a plain allusion to Mal. iv. 6. where it is said, (as we render it,) that *Elijah shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*: לב אבות על בנים, which the *seventy* render, καρδιας πατερος προς υιον; in which words it is quoted Ecclus. xlviii. 10. But *St. Luke's* version seems as agreeable to the *Hebrew*. I thought Sir Norton Knatchbull's reason sufficient to justify my rendering it as I have done; which is just as our translators have rendered the like phrase, Judith ix. 10. ὁλον επ' αρχοντι, και αρχοντα επι δεκανῃ, *the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant.* But, as Mr. L'Enfant and others, not without some probability, render it, *to reconcile fathers and children*, supposing it may relate to domestic dissensions inseparable from the variety of religious sects then amongst the Jews, I was willing to comprehend that sense in my paraphrase.—Sir Norton Knatchbull's manner of pointing the last clause of the verse appeared to me so elegant, that I could not but follow it. Elsner would render it nearly in the same sense, *By the wisdom of the just, to prepare the disobedient as a people furnished for the Lord*, or formed for him. (Compare Isa. xlii. 7. Septuag.) See Elsner. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 170—173.

h From parents who had been long barren.] Zacharias being so pious a priest, could not but often have read the account which the scripture gives of the birth of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, &c. who were all descended from mothers that had been long barren. The resemblance in circumstances might well have produced a peculiar regard to them; and one would have imagined he must immediately have recollected the story of the angel's appearance to Manoah in particular, when the same scene was acted over before his own eyes, and some of the same expressions used by the celestial messenger. Compare Judg. xiii. 2—11.

wondered that he continued so long in the temple,[i] beyond the usual time: for he staid a while after the angel disappeared, to present before God such humiliations and thanksgivings as this extraordinary circumstance required. *But when he came out he was not able to speak to them;* and by the consternation in which he appeared, *they perceived, that he saw a vision in the temple; and he himself by signs intimated* [*it*] *to them: and* he *continued deaf and dumb,*[k] during the remainder of his stay at Jerusalem; a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence, to awaken a greater and more general expectation, as to the event of so strange an occurrence. SECT. 3. LUKE I. 22

22 And when he came out he could not speak unto them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

And after this appearance of the angel to him, *it came to pass that when the* remaining *days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed to his own house.* 23

23 And it came to pass that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And quickly *after these days* were ended, *Elisabeth his wife conceived,* according to the prediction of the angel; *and* apprehending her condition, she *concealed herself five months* in an obscure retirement; not only that her conception might more certainly appear, but chiefly, that she might enjoy opportunity for those extraordinary devotions which this wonderful favour of Providence demanded: nor could she, under such a circumstance, refrain from *saying,* 24

24 And after these days, his wife Elisabeth conceived and hid herself five months, saying,

The most solemn acknowledgments well become me, because *the Lord* himself *hath thus* miraculously interposed, and *done* this great work *for me,* in his own good time, even *in the days in which he hath* graciously *looked* down *upon me, to take away my reproach* of barrenness *among men.*[l] For barrenness was accounted a peculiar reproach among the Jews, who looked upon it as a singular happiness to be instrumental in multiplying the holy seed, according to the promises which God had made them relating to it. 25

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the character of this pious pair, who were found *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless!* May our behaviour be thus unblameable, and our obedience thus sincere, and universal! And let those whose office leads them nearer to God than others, remember their peculiar obligation to imitate such an example. Ver. 6

Let us observe with pleasure, that the *prayers* which such worshippers offer, *come up with acceptance* before God; to whom no costly perfume is so sweet as the fragrance of a character like this. *An answer of peace* was here returned, when the case seemed to be most helpless. Let us learn to *wait patiently for the Lord,* and leave it to his own infinite wisdom to chuse the time and manner in which he shall appear for us. 13

Zacharias, accustomed as he was to converse with the God of heaven, was nevertheless, as we see, thrown into great consternation, at the appearance of his angelic messenger. And may we not regard it, therefore, as an instance of the goodness as well as wisdom of God, that he determines that the services which these heavenly spirits render us should be generally invisible?—It is delightful to observe that amiable condescension with which Gabriel, the courtier of heaven, behaved on this occasion. Let it teach us, with pleasure to pursue the humblest offices of duty and love which God may assign us, towards any of our fellow-servants, even in the lowest stations. 12, 13, 19

Happy was the holy Baptist in being employed in this blessed work of preparing men's hearts to receive a Saviour, and reducing *the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.* May we be inspired with some degree of zeal like his, in our proper sphere, to pursue so noble a design! 17

We see in the instance of Zacharias, that some remainders of unbelief may be found even in a faithful heart: let us guard against them, as remembering they will be displeasing to God, and hurtful to ourselves.—And to conclude, when providence favours us with any peculiarly gracious interpositions, let us attentively remark the hand of God in them; and let religious retirement leave room for serious recollection and devout acknowledgments. 18, 20, 24

SECTION IV.

The angel Gabriel is sent to the Virgin Mary, to inform her of the conception of Christ by her, in which she humbly acquiesces. Luke i. 26—38.

LUKE i. 26.

AND in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of Da-

LUKE i. 26.

IN the sixth month after Elisabeth had conceived, *the* same *angel Gabriel,* who had been the messenger of such good news to Zacharias, *was sent from God to a* small and inconsiderable *city of Galilee,* which was *called Nazareth*[a]; being charged with an important commission *to a virgin,* who was *contracted,* according to the Jewish method of espousals, *to a man whose name was Joseph,* a descendant *of the* royal *house of David;* which 27 SECT. 4. LUKE I.

i *So long in the temple.*] All that is here recorded might have passed in a few minutes: it seems probable, therefore, that since the people took notice of his continuing so much longer than ordinary in the holy place, he spent some time in secret devotion, where, in a mixture of holy affections rising on so great and extraordinary an occasion, he might easily forget how fast the moments passed away.

k *Deaf and dumb.*] As κωφος signifies *deaf,* (Matt. xi. 5; Mark vii. 32, 37; ix. 25; and Luke vii. 22.) as well as *dumb,* (Matt. ix. 33; xii. 22; xv. 31; and Luke xi. 14.) So it is plain from verse 62, that Zacharias lost his hearing with his speech, during this interval.

l *My reproach among men.*] That *barrenness* was so amongst the Jews, appears from Gen. xxx. 23; 1 Sam. i. 11; Isa. iv. 1; liv. 1, 4; and many other passages. That a branch of the family of Aaron should fail, would also be looked upon as a particular calamity, and might, by ignorant and uncharitable people, be interpreted as a judgment: and so much the rather, considering the many promises God had made to increase the families of his obedient people, Exod. xxxii. 13; Lev. xxvi. 9; Deut. vii. 13; and Psal. cxxvii. 3—5. I will here digress so far as to observe, that, considering how the whole *Jewish policy* was interwoven with those *acts of religion* which were to be performed by the priests *alone,* it might seem wonderful that no provision at all should be made for *entailing the priesthood* on any other family, if that of Aaron should happen to be *extinct.* Leaving this contingency unprovided for, was in effect putting the whole credit of the Jewish religion upon the perpetual continuance of the male branches of that family: an issue on which no man of Moses' prudence, nor indeed of common sense, would have rested his legislation if he had not been truly conscious of its divine original; especially after two of Aaron's four sons had been cut off in one day for a rash act in the execution of their office, as soon as they were initiated into it, and died *without any children,* Num. iii. 4.

a *Nazareth.*] A city in the tribe of Zabulon, which was reduced

SECT. 4. LUKE I.

illustrious family was now reduced to so low a condition, that Joseph followed the employment of a carpenter: *and the virgin's name was Mary,* of the same lineage. *And the angel entered in* to the room, in which she was alone; and standing before her, surrounded with an extraordinary lustre, he addressed himself *unto her, and said, Hail, O thou*
28 distinguished *favourite* of heaven! I congratulate thy happiness; *for the Lord is with thee,* and is about to manifest his condescending regard in a manner which shall oblige all around thee to acknowledge that *thou art blessed among women,* the greatest and happiest of thy sex.

29 *Now* the pious and modest virgin, *when she saw* this appearance of [*the angel,*] and heard his message, as *she* plainly perceived it to be something of a very extraordinary nature, *was* much *disturbed at his discourse*;[b] *and,* not imagining herself at all worthy of such applause and congratulation, she *reasoned with herself,* for a while, *what kind of salutation this could be,*[c] and from what original it could proceed.

30 *And the angel,* immediately perceiving it, to disperse the doubt she was in, *said unto her* again, *Fear not, Mary; for* I am a messenger sent from heaven to tell thee that *thou*
31 *hast found* signal *favour with God. And behold,* and observe it with due regard, for I assure thee, in his name, that from this very time, *thou shalt be with child, and* at the proper season shalt *be delivered of a son, and shalt call his name Jesus,* the divine Saviour; for he shall come on that important errand, to save men from the tyranny of sin and the
32 displeasure of God. *He shall be* incomparably *great and* glorious, insomuch that he *shall* justly *be called the Son of the Most High* God; *and the Lord shall give him the throne of David his father,* from whom thou art descended; so that, like David, he shall be the Sovereign of God's chosen people, and possess that extensive empire which was promised to the seed of that holy patriarch: (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Psal. ii. 7, 8; and Psal. cxxxii. 11, 12.)
33 *And he* shall inherit the kingdom; with this circumstance of superior glory, that, whereas David is now sleeping with his fathers, this exalted Prince *shall rule over the house of Jacob,* even all the true Israel of God, *for ever; and,* though the most potent monarchies of the earth will be successively dissolved, yet *of his kingdom there shall be no end,* even as long as the sun and moon endure. See Psal. lxxii. 5, 17; Isa. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 14.

34 *And Mary replied to the angel,* O thou heavenly messenger, permit me to ask, *How can this* possibly *be* from this time, as thou hast intimated to me, *since I am as yet a virgin?*[d]

35 *And the angel, answering, said unto her,* There is nothing in that objection, great as it may seem, for this whole affair is to be a scene of miracle: *the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High* God *shall* thus *overshadow thee* by an amazing energy, to produce an effect hitherto, from the foundation of the earth, unknown: *and therefore that holy Offspring of thine shall,* with regard to this miraculous conception,
36 as well as another and yet greater consideration, *be called the Son of God. And behold,* to confirm thy faith in a declaration which might seem so incredible, I farther assure thee that *thy cousin Elisabeth also hath,* by the miraculous power of God, *conceived a son,* though she be now *in her old age; and this is the sixth month* of pregnancy *with her who hath* long *been called barren,*[e] and spoken of as one who could have no hope of being a mother.
37 And scruple not to believe what I have told thee with regard to thyself as well as her; *for* thou well knowest, that *nothing* is, or ever *will be, impossible to God,* whose almighty power operates with equal ease in the most miraculous as in the most common productions.

38 *And,* strange as the message was, *Mary* firmly believed it,[f] and *said,* with the most amiable humility and piety, *Behold* I am *the handmaid of the Lord,* and would approve myself faithful and obedient; *may it be unto me according to thy word!* I thankfully accept the honour of which I confess I am unworthy; and humbly resign my reputation, and even my life,[g] to the divine care and providence, while I wait the accomplishment of thy prediction.

Then the angel, having executed his commission, *departed from her,* and returned to his abode in the heavenly regions.

vid; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that art highly favoured; the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him* she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

to so low and contemptible a condition, that no good thing was expected from thence. John i. 46.

b *She was disturbed at his discourse.*] Some would render επι τω λογω αυτου, *on account of him;* and Heinsius hath abundantly shewn how common this manner of speaking is in the sacred writings.

c *What kind of salutation.*] She seems to have suspected it might possibly proceed from the artifice of some evil spirit, to inspire her with sentiments of vanity and pride.

d *How can this be—since I am as yet a virgin?*] Some would render this, *What! shall this be if I have no intercourse with a man?* as if she would be resolved whether this birth were to be produced in a common or a miraculous manner. But I think it is more natural to suppose that she understood the former words as an intimation that the effect was immediately to take place, to which her present circumstance seemed, humanly speaking, an invincible objection. Our English version, *I know not a man,* is more literal than what is here given; but I do not apprehend that the strictest fidelity requires to render the Hebraism so exactly; the sense is evidently the same.

e *Who hath been called barren.*] I cannot think (with some learned and judicious persons) that *to be called,* and *to be,* signify entirely the same thing, so as that the former should be thought a mere pleonasm, and rendered just as the latter. The phrase seems to signify, in the language of scripture, not only that the thing shall really *be* what it is *called,* but also that it shall be *taken notice of* in that view: which, I think, will appear from an attentive consideration of the chief *texts* which have been produced to establish the opposite opinion. Compare Isa. i. 26. ix. 6; xxxv. 8; xlvii. 1, 5; lvi. 7; lxi. 3, 6; Matt. v. 9, 19; xxi. 13; Mark xi. 17; 1 John iii. 1.

f *Mary* firmly believed it.] It is worthy of our remark, that Mary, though a young virgin, should so readily believe an event, in itself so much more wonderful than that which Zacharias, though an aged priest, had found it so difficult to credit. And it may be observed, that the sacred writers are particularly careful to record instances of this kind in which God doth, as it were, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings perfect his praise.*

g Resign my reputation, and even my life.] For both these, humanly speaking, might have been in danger, considering the severity of the Mosaic law against those who have violated the faith of their espousals. (Compare Deut. xxii. 23, 24.) And though so impious a prince as Herod, who was then on the Jewish throne, undoubtedly controlled many of the laws of God, yet the natural severity and extravagant jealousy of his temper would probably engage him to execute this in its full terror.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 4.

With what holy wonder and pleasure should we trace this notice of an incarnate Redeemer! and how thankfully should we adore his condescending goodness, that for us men, and for our salvation, he did not despise the womb of so obscure a virgin!

Ver. 28

We too are ready in our thoughts, with Gabriel, to congratulate her on so distinguished an honour, and to say, as one did to Christ in the days of his flesh, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee*, O Lord, *and the breasts which thou hast sucked!* (Luke xi. 27.) But let us remember there is yet a nobler blessedness than this, attending those in whose hearts he is so formed by divine grace, that they *hear his word, and do it.*

31, 32 33

Let us hear it, with joy, that he is Jesus the Saviour; but let us also consider that he is Christ the anointed Sovereign, who is to rule over God's people for ever. Remember, O my soul, that *of his kingdom there shall be no end;* and esteem it thine unspeakable honour and happiness to be enrolled among his faithful subjects.

37

The glories promised to such, in the future state, are so far beyond experience, or even imagination, that they might, to sense, appear as incredible as the message which Mary received: but let us remember the eternal truth of what Gabriel suggested to her, that *nothing is impossible to God.* He can therefore ripen our imperfect souls to all the improvement and pleasures of the heavenly state, as easily as he produces the meanest vegetable on the earth.

38

Let the temper of the blessed virgin, on this great occasion, be therefore the beautiful model of ours: so, when the purposes of the Divine Love are declared to us, may we resign ourselves unto the Lord; and with such calm tranquillity, firm faith, and joyful acquiescence, may we wait the accomplishment of his gracious promise, and say, *Behold the servants of the Lord! be it unto us according to his word!* So do thou, O Lord, animate and support us! and the weakest of thy children shall not stumble at the greatest of thy promises *through unbelief;* but, *being strong in faith,* shall *give glory to God.*

SECTION V.

Mary visits Elisabeth; her faith is confirmed by it, and she breaks out into a song of praise. Luke i. 39—56.

Luke i. 39.

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda,

Luke i. 39.

SECT. 5.

In those days, or soon after the time that she received the extraordinary message mentioned above, *Mary arose* from Nazareth, where she then was, *and went*[a] *with* all the *expedition* she conveniently could, *to* what was called *the hill-country,* which lay towards the south of Canaan; and came *into a city of Judah,* where Zacharias dwelt, with a comfortable expectation that this visit might tend both to confirm her faith and vindicate her character. *And* accordingly, she *entered into the house of* her kinsman *Zacharias, and,* to the pleasing surprise of her friend, *saluted Elisabeth.*

LUKE I.

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

And it came to pass, that as soon as Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant in her womb did, with a most unusual emotion, *leap* for joy, as sensible of the approach of him whose forerunner he was appointed to be. *And Elisabeth was* directed to consider it in this view; for she was immediately *filled with* an extraordinary degree of divine inspiration, by the influences of *the Holy Spirit.* And, far from envying the superior honour of her young cousin, she, in very exalted language, congratulated her on the occasion; *and, crying out with a loud voice,* as in a sacred kind of transport, *she said,* in the very words which Gabriel had before used to the virgin,

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

Most *blessed art thou,* O Mary, *among all the women* in the whole world; *and* most *blessed is the* sacred and miraculous *fruit of thy womb. And* indeed, when I consider the matter attentively, I cannot but cry out, in amazement, *Whence is this* honour done *to me, that* she who is so highly honoured as to be *the mother of* that wonderful and divine child, whom I would with all humility own as *my Lord, should come unto me* as a guest under my roof; to whom I should rather have hastened to pay my homage? And that he, of whom thou art now pregnant, is indeed my Lord the Messiah, I certainly know by what I have now felt; *for, behold, as soon as the* first *voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears,* as thou wast entering into the house, *the* very *infant* within me *leaped in my womb for joy,* with a vigour and sprightliness unknown before; which I am taught to interpret as an homage done to Him before whose face he is to go to prepare his way. *And,* when I consider the whole affair in all its variety of circumstances, I have reason to say, *Happy is she that* so readily *believed*[b] what to sense appeared so utterly incredible, without so much as requiring any miraculous sign of it; *for* surely *there shall be* a very faithful and *an* exact *accomplishment of* all *those things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.*

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord.

Then *Mary also* was filled with a transport of holy joy; and under the direction of the same Spirit, as well as in many of those words which she had learnt from the sacred oracles, she, in the warmth of her devotion, *said,*[c] "*My* very *soul doth* most affectionately *magnify*

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

a *Mary arose and went,* &c.] This was a very wise determination; as it was very probable that, by communicating the vision she had seen, and perhaps also describing the form in which the angel appeared, she might convince Zacharias and Elisabeth that there was something singular in her case, and so might bring in the reputation of such worthy and eminent persons to establish her own, in a circumstance which might otherwise expose her to great suspicion and censure.---I shall only add, that it is not improbable the city here spoken of might be Hebron, a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of Judah, and the hill-country. Josh. xxi. 11.

b *Happy is she that believed,* &c.] I doubt not but here is an oblique reference to the unhappiness of Zacharias, who had not immediately believed the promise of God to him, and thereby had incurred so sensible a mark of the divine displeasure. I have gently touched upon it in the paraphrase; but I was cautious of being too express, lest I should violate that great decorum which the Spirit of God, as well as the rules of modesty and piety, taught her to observe, when the faults of a husband were in question.—It may be added, that these words shewed her knowledge of Mary's immediate belief of the promise made to her: a knowledge which she could only gain by divine revelation, and which, therefore, would be a mutual confirmation of the faith of both.

c *Mary also said.*] It is observable that most of these phrases are borrowed from the Old Testament, with which the pious virgin seems to have been very conversant; especially from the Song of Hannah, in which there were so many passages remarkably suitable to her own case. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 1—10; Gen. xxx. 13; Psal. ciii. 17; xcviii. 1; lxxxix. 10; cvii. 9; and Mic. vii. 20.

SECT. 5. LUKE I.

" and extol *the Lord, And my spirit*, with all its most exalted powers, *rejoiceth in God* as
" *my Saviour;* who, I trust, is granting me my own share in that gospel which, by the ap-
" pearance of this his dear Son, he is sending to so many others: *For* notwithstanding all
" the meanness of my circumstances, and the obscure condition in which I live, yet *he hath*
" *looked* with a distinguishing regard, and most surprising condescension *upon the low es-*
48 " *tate of his handmaid; for, behold*, he hath conferred such an honour upon me, that I
" am fully persuaded, according to his word by the angel, that not only the present age, but
" *all future generations, shall call me happy*,[d] and shall admire the peculiar grace and
49 " favour that the Lord hath shewn me. *For he who is powerful* beyond all our concep-
" tions, even the Almighty God, to whom this strange event is not only possible, but easy,
" *hath done* these *great* and unheard-of *things for me; and his name* and nature [*is*] so
" *holy*, that I cannot suspect the accomplishment of any thing that he hath promised.
50 " *His mercy also* hath in every age been the hope and confidence of his people; and I
51 " well know that it [*is*] *from generation to generation on them that fear him. He hath*
" often *wrought* the most glorious displays of *strength by his* irresistible *arm: he hath*
" often *dispersed the haughty* sinners that exalt themselves against him, and confounded them
52 " *in* those schemes which were *the* most laboured *imagination of their* own *hearts*.[e] *He*
" *hath* often *brought down mighty potentates from their thrones* of dignity and power,
" *and*, by some singular interposition of his providence, *hath exalted the lowly* from their
53 " obscurest state, as he is now doing with respect to me. *He hath* often *filled the hungry*
" *with* a variety of *good things, and hath sent away the rich* and luxurious sinner *empty*;[f]
" having stripped him of all his plenty, and turned him out of all those possessions in which
" he was once so confident. And, as a glorious instance of his condescension and his power,
54 " though our condition be so low in comparison of what it once was, *he hath* now *suc-*
" *coured Israel*,[g] and taken him as *his child* into paternal protection: and all this he hath
55 " graciously done *in remembrance of his everlasting mercy*.[h] *Even as he* long ago *spoke*
" *to our fathers*, and promised it *to Abraham and to his seed*, throughout all generations:
" and we the heirs of those promises shall now behold them happily fulfilled in all the ful-
" ness of their extent and glory."

56 *Then Mary abode with her* cousin Elisabeth *about three months*, till very near the time of her delivery; *and* then *returned to her own house*, and lived privately there; concealing, but not forgetting, these extraordinary things, which had so powerful a tendency to establish and animate her mind.[i]

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy *is* his name:

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him, from generation to generation.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree:

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy,

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 40, 41, 42 How natural is it for those, who have themselves received mercy of the Lord, to communicate their joy to others, and to seek the society of their *fellow-saints*, whom he hath honoured with the signal manifestations of his favour!—Happy they, whose friendship is confirmed and heightened by such endearing ties! And thrice happy the humble and generous souls who can thus, like Elisabeth, lose the thoughts of private honour and interest in a cordial concern for the glory of God and the good of men; rejoicing to see others, perhaps in some respects their inferiors, raised to stations of service more distinguished than their own!

43 If this pious matron thought herself so highly honoured in receiving *a visit* from *the mother* of our *infant Saviour*, how much more doth it become us to admire the condescension of our glorious *Lord*, that he will represent himself as graciously *knocking at the door* of our hearts, and ready not only to make us a transient *visit*, but to take up his stated abode with us!

45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 54, 55, 50 May our faith, like that of the *blessed virgin*, delightfully rest on all the promises he makes, as firmly believing that *there shall be an accomplishment of these things which are spoken!* And, while that accomplishment is delayed, may the pleasing expectation of it tune our voice to a *song of praise* like hers!—Let *our souls* also *magnify the Lord*, and *our spirits rejoice* in that *God*, whom we hope, through grace, to be *our Saviour;* whose condescension hath *regarded* us in such low circumstances; and whose almighty power and everlasting love *have done* such *great things* for us.—He hath provided heavenly food to satisfy our *hungry souls;* and hath raised us to *enjoy the mercies* which, in more obscure intimations only, he *promised to the* pious *patriarchs.*—*His mercy* is on all that *fear him*, through succeeding generations.—May such distinguished favours animate our hearts with those sentiments of devotion and zeal which they are so well qualified to excite! Otherwise the joy of the Old Testament saints, in the distant and imperfect prospect of these blessings, will testify against our insensibility in the superior advantages with which we are favoured.

d *Shall call me happy*, μακαριουσι.] I think there are several other texts where μακαριος should rather be rendered *happy* than *blessed*, which is the proper signification of ευλογητος: (See 1 Tim. i. 11; vi. 15; and Rev. xx. 6.) yet I cannot say that the distinction is always material, nor do I always observe it in the following *version*.

e *He hath dispersed the haughty*, &c. διεσκορπισεν υπερηφανους διανοια καρδιας αυτων.] I know this may be rendered, *He hath scattered those that prided themselves in the imagination*, or thought, *of their hearts:* but I apprehended the words would well bear the yet more emphatical sense I have here given them. And thus they are peculiarly applicable to the gospel, in which God doth not only *cast down imaginations and every high thing*, &c. (2 Cor. x. 5.) by the humbling scheme of his recovering grace, but hath remarkably confounded his most insolent enemies in their own most elaborate projects, and established his sacred cause by the violent attempts they have made to suppress it. (Compare Psal. ii. 1—3.) A triumph of divine wisdom, of which succeeding ages furnish out memorable and frequent instances at home and abroad.

f *Sent away the rich empty.*] Εξαπεστειλε strictly signifies, *hath sent* or *turned them out of doors;* and very beautifully represents God as the great proprietor of all, and the greatest of men as his tenants at will, whom he can strip and turn out whenever he pleases.

g *He hath succoured Israel.*] That the word αντιλαβεσθαι properly signifies to interpose in favour of a person in great necessity, or extreme danger, Elsner hath abundantly proved, *Observ.* Vol. i. p. 175.

h *In remembrance of his everlasting mercy.*] The beginning of the 55th verse should, I think, be included in a parenthesis. It makes an easier and stronger sense to suppose that this *remembrance of his mercy for ever* refers to his everlasting mercies promised to the patriarchs. (Compare Gen. xvii. 19; Isa. lv. 3; Rom. xi. 29.) Yet I acknowledge those blessings might be said to be promised *to them and their seed for ever*, which were entailed on their remotest generations. (Compare Gen. xii. 15; xviii. 8, &c.) Care is therefore taken to express both in the paraphrase.

i Animate her mind.] Many of the things which had passed in this journey, and especially that rapturous inspiration which she

SECTION VI.

The Birth and Circumcision of John the Baptist. Luke i. 57—66.

LUKE i. 57.

NOW Elisabeth's full time came, that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not *so;* but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed:* and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that had heard *them*, laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

LUKE i. 57.

SECT. 6.

AND when the full time for Elisabeth's delivery was come, she brought forth a son, exactly according to the prediction of the angel to Zacharias. *And her neighbours and her relations* were acquainted with it; and having *heard that the Lord,* in so illustrious and remarkable a manner, *had magnified* and displayed *his mercy to her,* they ran to testify their joy, *and* sincerely *congratulated her* on the happy occasion. LUKE I. 58

And, in particular, *it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came* together in some considerable numbers, *to circumcise the child,* according to the law (Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3.) *and,* as it was then customary to give it a name,[a] *they* that were present would have *called him Zacharias, after the name of his father: But his mother,* who had been more particularly informed by her husband of what had passed between him and the angel in the temple, *answered and said, Nay,* my friends, it must not be so; *but he shall be called John. And* when *they* objected to this, and *said unto her, None of thy kindred,* either by birth or marriage, *is called by this name,* in order to determine the question, *and* to be fully satisfied, *they made signs to his father,* to know *what he would have him called. And he,* by signs, *asked for a writing tablet;*[b] *and* when he had received it, he *wrote, saying, His name is John;* thereby declaring it a settled point, that would admit of no farther debate. *And they were all amazed* at the determination. But greater still was their astonishment to find his tongue at liberty, *and* his speech restored; for *his mouth was immediately opened, and his tongue* [*loosed;*] *and he spake* audibly and distinctly; beginning, as it was most reasonable, with *praising God,*[c] in that sublime hymn which we shall presently record. 59 60 61 62 63 64

And a religious awful kind of *dread fell,* not only on those that were present, but *on all that dwelt near them: and all these things,* in a very particular detail of circumstances, *were published,* and became the great topic of conversation *over the whole hill-country of Judea. And all* wise and pious persons *that heard* [*them,*] *laid them up* carefully *in their hearts,* as matters highly worthy their future consideration, *saying, What kind of a child will this be,* who is ushered into the world in so extraordinary a way? *And* their expectations were further raised by observing, that, as he grew up, *the hand of the Lord was* signally *with him;* and, through the divine blessing, he appeared not only a healthful and thriving, but likewise, on other and higher accounts, a very hopeful child. 65 66

IMPROVEMENT.

So sure are the promises of God, and so certainly will the full accomplishment of them another day shame our suspicious unbelieving hearts, and awaken the tongues of his servants to *songs of praise!* Happy the souls who, by a lively faith in them, are anticipating that blessed day, and whose minds, kept in tune by these pleasing views, are opening themselves to the most tender sympathy with others, and, like the *kindred* of this pious pair, are making the religious joys of others their own; so sharing rather than envying the superior favour bestowed upon them! Ver. 57 58

Let us learn, with them, wisely to observe what God is doing around us, and *to lay up* remarkable occurrences *in our hearts:* that, by comparing one step of divine conduct with another, we may the better *understand the loving-kindness of the Lord,* and be engaged to act with more regular obedience in a holy subserviency to his gracious purposes. 65, 66

When, like good Zacharias and Elisabeth, we have the pleasure to see our infant offspring growing up in safety and cheerfulness, with healthy constitutions of body, and towardly dispositions of mind too, let us ascribe it to *the hand of the Lord,* which is *upon them for good.* Let us remember, that we are at best but the instruments of the divine care and favour to them; and that our families would soon become scenes of desolation, did not God watch over them in a thousand circumstances of danger and distress, which no prudence of ours could have foreseen, and which no care of ours could have been able to provide against.

SECTION VII.

Zacharias, on the birth of his son, breaks out into a sublime anthem of praise. Luke i. 67, *to the end.*

SECT. 7.

LUKE i. 67.

AND his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

LUKE i. 67.

NOW John being born, as we have before described it, *Zacharias his father,* when he first spake after the birth of this extraordinary child, *was filled with* the influences of *the Holy Spirit; and,* in an exalted strain of sacred rapture, he *prophesied, saying,* LUKE I. 67

had herself experienced, and which till now was probably unknown to her, must elevate her thoughts to a very sublime pitch, and enkindle in her attentive, reflecting mind high expectations and glorious hopes. See Luke ii. 19, 51, and compare note b, page 9.

a As it was then customary to give it a name.] The giving the child its *name* was no more a part of the original intent of *circumcision* than of *baptism;* it was an incidental circumstance which custom had added. And I cannot forbear saying, that in administering the Christian ordinance, I think care should be taken to order the voice so, that it may plainly appear we only then speak to the child by the *name* which hath been already given it.—That the *father* among the antients used to name the children, and that it was customary often to give them the *name* of their immediate ancestors, Elsner has shewn on this text.

b *A writing tablet,* πινακίδιον.] We have so few diminutives in our language, that I was not willing to lose this, which much more exactly answers the original than *table.*

c *And his tongue* [*loosed;*] *and he spake, praising God.*] I entirely agree with the learned Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Herod.* pages 219, 220.) that Elsner's criticism (*Observ.* Vol. I. pages 178, 179.) is not to be admitted, which would render it, *And his tongue also spake, praising God.* It would then have been ευλογουτα, instead of ευλογων; and Raphelius has given unanswerable instances, in the most approved writers, of a *verb* joined with *two nouns,* when in

SECT. 7. LUKE I.

"*Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, because* he hath now owned the relation in "so signal a manner; for *he hath graciously looked* down *upon his people* in their dis- "tress, *and wrought out* an illustrious and complete *redemption* for them: *And* he *hath* "*raised up for us a horn of salvation,*[a] even an honourable and powerful Saviour, who "is already conceived, and will quickly be born, according to our long expectation, *in* 70 "*the family of his servant David: As he hath spoken* by the inspiration of his Spirit, "and given frequent intimations to us *by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have* 71 "*been from the beginning of time.*[b] It now appears, that none of those predictions are "forgotten by him, since he is preparing for us such a glorious deliverance, *that we may* "thus *obtain salvation from* the power of the most formidable of *our enemies, and* may 72 "at length be rescued by his redeeming grace, *from the hand of all that hate us:*[c] And "this gracious messenger hath God now sent, *that he may* faithfully *perform the mercy* "which he [*promised*] *to our fathers,*[d] the blessed effects of which extend also to them; "*and* by him shall God appear to *be mindful of his holy covenant,* which hath passed 73 "through so many various dispensations, yet still in the main continues the same: It being "indeed no other than *the oath which he* so solemnly *sware unto Abraham*[e] *our father,* 74 "(Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) According *to* the tenor of which, he will now *grant us* the favour "of an opportunity, and a heart *to serve him without fear, being delivered out of the* 75 "*hands of our enemies;* [*and to walk*] *before him,* under a religious sense of his presence, "*all the days of our life, in* the paths of the strictest *holiness and righteousness.*"[f]

76 Then turning to his new-born son, he added, "*And thou,* my dear *child, shalt* have "the honour to *be* justly *called, The prophet of the Most High* God; an illustrious pro- "phet indeed! *for thou* art he who, according to the prediction of Isaiah, (Isa. xl. 3.) "*shalt go before the face of the Lord,* even of our divine Messiah, to give notice of his 77 "approach, and *to prepare his ways.* It shall be thine honourable and delightful office, "not merely to bring the tidings of some temporal deliverance, but *to give the knowledge* "*of* eternal *salvation to his people, in* directing them how they are to obtain *the forgive-* 78 "*ness of their sins:* Which, how great soever they have been, may now be obtained "*through the tender compassions of our God,*[g] whose bowels of mercy have yearned over "his backsliding children; *by* virtue of *which* compassions, *the dawning of* the celestial 79 "*day*[h] *hath visited us from on high:* And the Sun of Righteousness is shortly arising, "to spread sacred knowledge and joy over the regions of ignorance and misery, *to en-* "*lighten those that sit in darkness, and,* as it were, *in the* very *shadow of death*[i] itself, "or in the most gloomy and dangerous condition, and *to direct our* wandering *feet into* "*the way of peace* and felicity."

80 Thus was John the Baptist ushered into the world, and thus were his infant days graced with wonders. *And the child grew up and became strong in spirit,* giving early tokens both of an heroic genius and a pious disposition, through the work of God's Spirit upon him. (Compare Judg. xiii. 24, 25.) *And,* his pious parents dying while he *was* young, or being peculiarly directed by a divine revelation in this affair, he did not appear in the service of the temple, even when he came to the age *in* which the priests began their ministrations; but by divine dispensation and direction, was led to retire into *desert places,* and to continue there *till the day of his being* publicly *manifested to Israel,* and, as it were, inaugurated among them under his prophetic character; for which the austerity and devotion of this solitude was a happy preparation.[k]

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant,

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercies of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

strict propriety it can only belong to one of them. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 2; where the original is, Γαλα υμας εποτισα, και ου βρωμα. *I have given you milk to drink, and not meat.*

a *A horn of salvation.*] As *a horn* is often used, for the most obvious reasons, to express *strength* and *dignity*, it being the ornament and defence of the creature that wears it; so it is sometimes used in the Old Testament with a peculiar reference to the Messiah. Compare Psalm cxxxii. 17; lxxxix. 24; 1 Sam. ii. 10; and 2 Sam. xxii. 3.

b *From the beginning of time.*] It cannot certainly be inferred from hence, as some have argued, that there was, *from the beginning of the world,* a series of prophets, or that every individual prophet spoke of the Messiah, which can never be proved without doing great violence to the remaining writings of some amongst them. The words of Zacharias only amount to this, that the generality of prophecies, in all ages, refer to this great event. Compare Acts x. 43.

c Be rescued by his redeeming grace *from the hand of all that hate us.*] This seems to have been the mind of the Spirit, as appears by the whole tenor of scripture; but it is impossible to say, whether Zacharias fully understood his own words, which, it is certain, the older prophets, in some cases, did not. See 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

d *Perform the mercy* [*promised*] *to our fathers.*] Ποιησαι ελεος μετα των πατερων ημων most literally signifies *to exercise mercy towards our fathers;* and might perhaps intimate, that the mercy extended to the pious patriarchs was owing to Christ, who was afterwards to appear. Compare Rom. iii. 25. I cannot recollect any other place where ποιησαι ελεος is *to perform a promise.*

e *The oath which he sware unto Abraham.*] In vindication of our *version* from any objection which might arise to a learned reader from the construction of that *original,* μνησθηναι διαθηκης—ορκον ον ωμοσε κ. τ. λ. see Bos, *Exercit.* p. 35. and Elsner, *in loc.*

f And to walk *in holiness and righteousness.*] This, as well as deliverance from enemies, being spoken of as the merciful grant of God, I cannot but conclude, it refers to those passages in which God promised to pour out extraordinary degrees of a pious spirit on his people under the reign of the Messiah. Compare Isa. xliv. 1—5; Jer. xxxi. 31—34; and Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

g *Tender compassions of our God.*] Σπλαγχνα ελεους, his *bowels of mercy:* A strong *Hebraism;* which, though I have not literally retained it in my *version,* I have expressed in the *paraphrase;* and it is a method I shall often take in like cases. Compare Jer. xxxi. 18—20.

h *The dawning of the day.*] It is true that αναβολη may signify, as some here render it, *the rising sun:* and I doubt not but here is a reference to such texts as Mal. iv. 2; and Isa. lx. 1—3; and, possibly, considering the known ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word צמח, which also signifies *a branch,* there may be some allusion to Jer. xxiii. 5; and Zech. iii. 8. But it is strange that any should have thought Zacharias, a *Jewish* priest, hath here referred to the *Greek version* of those texts. It is well known, the word properly signifies that part of the heavens where the light begins to arise, and the first shining of that light. (Compare Rev. vii. 2.) *The dawning of the day* seemed therefore a very literal version; and, I apprehend, it more beautifully describes the state of things just at this interval, than if the sun had been represented as actually risen.

i *The shadow of death.*] Such phrases as these do, with peculiar propriety, describe the ignorant and miserable state of the *Gentile* world, and perhaps this former part of the verse may refer to them; but, as Christ's preaching to the Jews in Galilee, (for it was only to the *Jews* he applied, Matt. xv. 24, x. 5, 6; and Rom. xv. 8.) is said, Matt. iv. 14—16, to be an accomplishment of Isa. ix. 1, 2; to which Zacharias here probably refers, I was not willing in the *paraphrase* to fix it to the *Gentiles.* The sad character and circumstances of the *Jews* at this time, as described by Josephus, too well suit the representation here made.

k This solitude was a happy preparation.] It may further be observed, that such a retirement also contributed to his acceptance

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what sacred joy should we join in this *hymn of praise!* The blessings celebrated in it were not peculiar to the family of Zacharias, or to the house of Israel; but we, through the Divine goodness, have our share in them: *The Lord God of Israel hath visited and redeemed* us. He hath *remembered his covenant* with the pious patriarchs, in favour of millions who are their seed only as *heirs of the faith of Abraham.*——To us hath he accomplished the words he had *spoken by his holy prophets*, and *through his tender mercies* hath caused the *Sun of Righteousness* to arise upon us; upon *us*, who were once indeed *sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death;* and whose ancestors, for many succeeding generations, were lost in ignorance, idolatry, and wickedness. Let us bless the Lord, who hath given us light; and make it our daily prayer that it may be the happy means of *guiding our feet into the way of peace.*——Let us, with pleasure and thankfulness, receive the *knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins*, without which we shall never see it but at an unapproachable distance. SECT. 7. Ver. 68. 72, 73 70, 78 79 77

Let us repose our cheerful confidence in this Almighty Saviour, this *horn of salvation*, which God's own right hand hath *raised up for us:* through him let us seek the pardon of our sins, and *deliverance* from all the *enemies* of our souls. And let a grateful sense of his redeeming love engage us resolutely to walk in the strictest *holiness and righteousness*, as in the presence of God, and carefully to maintain *before him* a conscience void of offence *all the days of our lives.* 69 74

May we carry this temper along with us into solitude and retirement: may it animate us in the busiest scenes of life; and in every particular instance, may it determine us in our choice of either, and regulate our conduct in both. 80

SECTION VIII.

Joseph's suspicions concerning Mary removed by the appearance of an angel to him. Matt. i. 18, *to the end.*

MATT. i. 18.

NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

MATT. i. 18.

AND *now*, having given an account of *the birth* of John, afterwards surnamed the Baptist, we proceed to that *of Jesus Christ*, the great subject of our history, which was attended with the most surprising circumstances, and *was thus* introduced. *His mother Mary being contracted to Joseph*, according to the method of the Jewish espousals, *before they came* to cohabit *together* as man and wife, *she was found* to be *with child;* and this pregnancy was, (as we have been informed above,) *by* the miraculous operation of *the Holy Spirit. Now Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man,*[a] perceiving there was something very extraordinary in the case, *and being by no means willing to expose her unto public infamy*[b] by any severe prosecution, nevertheless was so confounded with the concurrence of the strange circumstances that attended this affair, as that, in order to secure the honour of his own character, and to behave with all the tenderness that might be to a person that he loved, he *purposed* to himself *to have divorced her* as *privately* as the law of Moses would have allowed, that is, only in the presence of two witnesses, and without assigning any particular cause. SECT. 8. MATT. 1. 18 19

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

And as he was revolving these things in his mind during the night-season, full of the thoughts of what he was to do, he fell asleep; and, *behold, an angel of the Lord*[c] *appeared to him in a dream, and said* unto him, *Joseph, thou son of David*, (as being lineally descended from him) *fear not to take home Mary thy wife*, according to the espousals that have passed between you, though there may seem some danger of bringing a reflection on thyself and family; *for that which is begotten* and formed *in her, is* of no human original, but was produced by the miraculous and unexampled operation *of the Holy Spirit* himself. *And*, in consequence of it, when her time is fulfilled, *she shall bring forth a Son; and thou*, under whose protection and care he shall be placed during his infancy, *shalt call his name Jesus*,[d] that is, God the Saviour; *for he shall* prove that glorious and divine person intended by God to *save his people*, even all that truly believe in him, both *from* the punishment and the dominion of *their sins*, by procuring an ample pardon for them, and raising them, after a life of holiness on earth, to a state of complete perfection and happiness. 20 21

20 But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

by raising a character for eminent mortification and sanctity; inured him to the oppositions he was to expect in his work; and naturally prevented any such intimacy with Christ, in their childhood and youth, as might possibly have occasioned some suspicion as to the impartiality of the testimony which John afterwards bore to him. (Compare John i. 31.)——Elsner hath shewn, as Schmidius had before observed, that the word ανακρισις often signifies the *inauguration* of a public officer. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 183.

a *A righteous man.*] It is without any just reason that this text is often assigned as an instance where the word δικαιος is used to signify *merciful*, and some accordingly have here translated it *a good-natured man.* If we consider the information which Joseph might have received from persons of such an extraordinary character as Zacharias and Elisabeth, (who would certainly think themselves obliged to interpose on such an occasion, and whose story so remarkably carried its own evidence along with it,) besides the intimation the prophecy of Isaiah gave, and the satisfaction he undoubtedly had, in the virtuous character of Mary herself, we must conclude, that he had acted a very severe and *unrighteous* part, had he proceeded to extremities without serious deliberation, and that *putting her away privately* would, in these circumstances, have been the hardest measure which justice would have suffered him to take.

b *To expose her unto public infamy.*] It is very possible παραδειγματισαι may here refer to that exemplary punishment which the law inflicted on those who had violated the faith of their espousals before the marriage was completed, (Deut. xxii. 23, 24;) where it is expressly ordered, that *a betrothed virgin*, if she lay with another man, *should be stoned.* We may suppose, however, that the infamy of a *public divorce*, though she had not been *stoned*, may also be expressed by the same word. But then there was, besides, a *private* kind of divorce, in which no reason was assigned, and the dowry was not forfeited, as in the former case; and by this she would not have been so defamed. See Selden. *Ux. Heb. lib.* iii. *cap.* xvi. p. 302, 365, 366. and Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

c *An angel of the Lord.*] Probably Gabriel, who had been sent to Zacharias and Mary. That Joseph's scruple did not proceed, as some of the fathers supposed, merely from veneration, appears from the reason given why he should take Mary, which in that case would have been the only reason against it.

d *Call his name Jesus.*] Bishop Pearson seems to have set the etymology of this name in the clearest light, in his large discourse on it, (Pearson on the *Creed*, p. 69—71.) in which he endeavours to prove that JAH, one of the names of God, enters into the composition of the Hebrew name *Jehoshua*, to which *Jesus* answers. (Compare Heb. iv. 8; where, by the way, I think it should have been rendered, *if Joshua had given them rest.*) This derivation most plainly shews how Christ's being called Jesus was in effect an accomplishment of the prophecy that he should be called *Emmanuel.*

SECT 8. MATT. I.

Now all this was done, (that is, this miraculous conception, together with all the circumstances proper to attend it, was effected,) that *this* celebrated prophecy *might be accomplished,*[e] *which the Lord had* so long before *spoken by the prophet* Isaiah, (Isa. vii. 14.) *who said* to the house of David in the reign of Ahaz, when it seemed in the utmost danger of being destroyed, "*Behold,* and attend to it with *a* becoming regard, 23 "while I assure you that God will accomplish a yet nobler work than what he is ready to "perform in your deliverance from Pekah and the son of Tabeal; for an unspotted "*virgin,* descended many ages hence from this royal family now to be rescued, *shall,* in "a miraculous manner, *conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name* "*Emmanuel;*" *which, being translated, signifies, God with us;* that is, God dwelling in our nature, on the most gracious and important design; a name in signification nearly equivalent to that of Jesus.

22 (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.)

24 *Then Joseph arising from his sleep,* with entire satisfaction and humble acknowledgment, *did as the angel of the Lord had appointed him; and,* without any farther 25 delay, *took home* Mary *his wife.* Nevertheless, in expectation of this wonderful event, *and* out of reverence to this sacred birth, *he knew her not* as a wife, though she dwelt under his roof: but she continued a pure virgin even *till she had brought forth her* divinely-begotten *Son,* who, on account of his distinguished glories, with peculiar propriety might be called *the first-born:*[f] *And,* according to the direction of the angel, *he called his name Jesus.* But several other circumstances, relating to this important event, will afterwards be recounted.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son; and he called his name Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19. WE see here, in Joseph, an excellent pattern of gentleness and prudence. In an affair which appeared dubious, he chose, as we should always do, rather to err on the favourable, than on the severe extreme. He was careful to 20 avoid any precipitate steps; and, in the moments of deliberation, God interposed to guide and determine his resolves.

With what wonder and pleasure did he receive these glad tidings! With what pleasure should we also receive 21 them! For we too are informed of Jesus, who came to save his people from their sins. An important and glorious salvation indeed! *Hosannah to him that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Blessed Jesus! answer thy character in delivering us, not only from sin's condemning, but from its reigning power!

23 Let our souls bow to Emmanuel, our incarnate God: and, while with holy wonder we survey the various scenes of his humiliation, let us remember too his native dignity and his divine glory. By him God hath fulfilled his ancient promises, in the most ample and glorious manner, *in the fulness of time sending forth his Son, made of a woman,* and sprung like a tender shoot from the decayed stock of David his servant.

22 While we study the oracles of the Old-Testament, let us with pleasure trace the notices of the great Messiah there, even of Jesus, to whom all the prophets gave witness. May his name be ever inscribed upon our hearts! In 24 that name may we lift up our banners, and judge those reproaches a glory which we may meet with in his sacred cause![g]

SECTION IX.

The genealogy of Christ from Abraham, as recorded by Matthew; and from Adam, as recorded by Luke. Matt. i. 1—17. Luke iii. 23, *to the end.*

SECT. 9. MATT. I.

MATT. i. 1.

BEFORE we proceed to the birth of this Divine Infant, whose conception was so very remarkable, it will be proper to give some account of his descent according to the flesh. 1 And we shall therefore introduce it with a table of *the genealogy of Jesus Christ;*[a]

MATT. i. 1.

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

e *That this* prophecy *might be accomplished.*] Few are strangers to the objections which have been made against applying this prophecy to Christ, which drove Grotius and many others unhappily to suppose, that it immediately related to the birth of a child of Isaiah's in a natural way, and only in a secondary sense referred to Christ. The controversy is too large for this place. I content myself with observing, that a son's being born of one *then a virgin,* when she was married, was no such miraculous event as to answer such a pompous introduction; and that it seems most reasonable to interpret Isa. vii. 16. as referring to Shearjashab, whom Isaiah was ordered to take in his hand, (ver. 3.) for no other imaginable reason but that something remarkable was to be said of him. So that the general sense, in short, is this: "You have "affronted God by refusing a *sign* now; yet his transcendent "mercy will make your present forfeited deliverance, (by the "death of these confederate kings, which shall happen before "this child in my hand is grown up to the exercise of rea- "son) *a sign* of a much nobler deliverance by the Messiah, who "shall be born of an immaculate *virgin,* and condescend to pass "through the tender scenes of infancy, as other children do." (Compare Isa. vii. 10—16.) And see Bishop Chandler's excellent remarks on this text, in his *Defence of Christianity,* p. 325—331; Mr. Green's 4*th Letter* to Mr. Collins; and Usher's *Annals,* A. M. 3262.

f *Till she had brought forth her Son, the first-born.*] There seems to be some peculiar emphasis in the expression τον υιον αυτης τον πρωτοτοκον, which justifies the turn I have given to the words. (Compare Luke ii. 7. where the very same words are used with a remarkable exactness;) Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15. and Heb. i. 6.—Though I confess the force of the learned and candid Dr. Daniel Scott's remarks on this note to be such as to convince me that this expression might have been used with regard to the *first-born son* of any family, and, consequently, that no certain argument of Christ's superior dignity and glory can be drawn from it; yet, from the pen of one so deeply impressed with the thought of it as Luke as well as Matthew was, I think it may probably contain some reference to it.—On what terms Joseph and Mary afterwards lived, is of so little importance to us, that I cannot but wonder it should have been the subject of so much debate. It is sufficient for us to know that she was a *virgin,* not only at the time of Christ's conception, but at his birth, as the prophecy foretold she should be. The Evangelist, therefore, wisely contented himself with recording this, without affirming any thing farther either way on this delicate subject: I say *either way,* for that the manner of expression here used will not certainly prove that Mary had more children afterwards, appears from comparing Gen. xxviii. 15. 1 Sam. xv. 35. Job xxvii. 5. Psal. cx. 1. cxii. 8. and Matt. xii. 20.

g *In his sacred cause.*] There was, humanly speaking, a probability that Joseph might have brought some suspicion on his character, or reflection on his family, by admitting Mary in these circumstances.

a *The genealogy of Jesus Christ.*] I am well aware that the word γενεσις, and the Hebrew תולדת, which corresponds to it, sometimes signifies the *history* of a person's *life,* (as well as other things) and not merely his *genealogy;* (compare Gen. vi. 9. xxxvii. 2. Judith xii. 18. Jam. i. 23. and iii. 6. Gr.) and that the learned Vitringa understands it so in this place: (See Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* i. *dissert.* i. p. 39.) Yet, as it is much more frequently used in the latter sense, (see Gen. v. 1. x. 1. xi. 10, 27. xxv. 12. xxxvi. 1, 9. Num. i. 20, &c. and Ruth iv. 18; in all which places it is applied to *genealogies;*) I think it best, with the learned Dr. Scott, to render it as above; only giving a little hint of the more extensive sense the word may possibly bear.

which is intended not only as an introduction to his history, but more especially to shew that he was *the son of David*, and *the son of Abraham*, as it was often foretold the Messiah should be. (Compare Psalm cxxxii. 11; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; and Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.)

2 Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.

Now it is well known that *Abraham*, that renowned patriarch and friend of God, from whom the whole Jewish nation had the honour to descend, *begat Isaac* in his old age, that son of Sarah, according to the promise, with whom God's covenant was established; *and Isaac begat Jacob*, on whom also it was entailed in preference to Esau, though his elder brother; *and Jacob begat Judah and his* eleven *brethren*, who became the heads of their respective tribes. 2

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram;

And as Judah was the person to whom that extraordinary promise was made, that his descendants should continue a distinct tribe, with some form of government amongst them, till Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, came,[b] (Gen. xlix. 10.) and as it was from him that Christ descended, we shall confine ourselves to the line of his posterity. We therefore add, that *Judah begat Pharez, and* at the same time *Zara*, his twin-brother, *of Thamar*, who had been his son's wife; *and Pharez begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson*, who was prince of the tribe of Judah when the people were numbered and marshalled at mount Sinai, (Numb. i. 7; x. 14.) *and Naasson begat Salmon*. 3 4

4 And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson, and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jesse;

And, after their settlement in Canaan, *Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab*,[c] who had been a native of that country, but entertained the spies at Jericho, and afterwards embracing the Jewish religion, had the honour to be thus incorporated with this noble family; *and Boaz* their son *begat Obed of Ruth*, the Moabitess,[d] who had so resolutely chosen to adhere to the God and people of Israel; *and Obed*, in a very advanced age, *begat Jesse*:[e] *And Jesse begat*, besides several elder children, *David, the* celebrated *king* of Israel, who was favoured with the title of "The man after God's own heart," and had an express promise that the Messiah should descend from him; (compare 2 Sam. vii. 12—16; and Acts ii. 30.) *And David the king begat Solomon of* Bathsheba, who had before been [*the wife*] *of Uriah* the Hittite: and though that holy man, in this unhappy affair, acted in a way most unworthy his character, yet God, on his deep repentance, graciously forgave him, and entailed the promise on his seed by her. 5 6

6 And Jesse begat David the king, and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Asa;

And, to go forward therefore with the genealogy according to this line, *Solomon begat Rehoboam*, from whose government the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam the son of Nebat; *and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa*, whose reign was so long and prosperous: *And Asa begat* the good *Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram*, who unhappily dishonoured the holy family by an alliance with Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, 2 Kings viii. 18. 7 8

8 And Asa begat Josaphat, and Josaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias;

And (to omit Ahaziah, the son of that wicked woman, whose impieties and cruelties rendered her so infamous, 2 Chron. xxiv. 7; the ungrateful Joash, her grandson, who murdered Zechariah the prophet, the son of his great benefactor Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22; and Amaziah, his son, who succeeded him) *Jehoram*,[f] at the distance of the fourth generation, may be said to have *begat Uzziah* the leper. *And Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat* that wicked *Ahaz*, who, instead of being reformed by the chastising hand of God, trespassed yet more and more against him, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. *and Ahaz begat* the religious *Hezekiah*, that distinguished favourite of heaven: *And Hezekiah begat Manasseh*, so remarkable once for his enormous wickedness, and afterwards for his humble repentance; *and Manasseh begat* that infamous and hardened sinner *Amon; and Amon begat Josiah*, that eminently pious prince, whose heart was so early and so tenderly impressed with an apprehension of God's approaching judgments: *And Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his* royal *brethren*, Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, who both of them were kings of Judah, the former predecessor to Jehoiakim, and the latter the successor of his son:[g] 9 10 11

9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses, and Manasses begat Amon, and Amon begat Josias;

11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon;

b Till Shiloh, that is, the Messiah came.] This sense of Jacob's prophecy is so beautifully illustrated, and so strongly asserted by the learned Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, in his *Discourses on Prophecy*, Dissert. iii. p. 317, &c, that, if I was writing on this passage of the Old Testament, I should have little to do but to refer my reader to it.

c *Of Rahab.*] It is not indeed expressly said, she was Rahab of Jericho, commonly called *the harlot;* but I think there can be no room to doubt it, as we know she was contemporary with Salmon, and may conclude, that she (this Rahab) was, as all the other women mentioned in this list, a remarkable person. Now there was no other of that name, especially of this age, of whom the compiler of this table could (so far as we can judge) suppose his reader to have any knowledge.

d *Boaz begat Obed of Ruth*, the Moabitess.] The son of a *Moabite*, by an *Israelitish woman*, could never be allowed to *enter into the congregation of the Lord;* that is, at least he was rendered incapable of being a *prince in Israel*, and perhaps even of being *naturalized by circumcision;* which may be the meaning of the phrase, Deut. xxiii. 3. (See Mr. Lowman's *Hebrew Government*, p. 130, *et seq.*) But it evidently appears, from this celebrated instance, that *this precept* was not understood as excluding the descendants of an *Israelite* by a *Moabitish woman* from any hereditary honours and privileges; otherwise, surely, Salmon, the son of Naasson, prince of Judah, would never have married Rahab, one of the accursed people of Canaan; nor would the kinsman of Boaz have wanted a much better reason than he assigned, (Ruth iv. 6.) for refusing to marry Ruth when she became a widow.

e *Obed*, in a very advanced age, *begat Jesse.*] That Salmon, Boaz, and Obed, must each of them have been about an hundred years old at the birth of his son here recorded, hath been observed by many, and is well accounted for by Dr. Whitby in particular: *Annot.* on ver. 4.

f *Jehoram* may be said to have *begat Uzziah.*] It is undeniably evident, from 2 Chron. chap. xxii. *and following*, that three princes are here omitted. If this *table* was taken from any public records amongst the Jews, the Evangelist does not seem responsible for the exactness of it: but, if he himself drew it up, I think it will be but modest in us to suppose, that it was by some peculiar divine direction that the sin of Jehoram is thus animadverted upon, even to the *fourth generation;* his intermediate descendants being thus blotted out of the records of Christ's family, and overlooked as if they had never been.

g The successor of his son.] On the death of Josiah, the people took Jehoahaz, otherwise called *Shallum*, though a younger brother, and made him king in his father's stead, (2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31;) but Pharaoh-Necho, in three months' time, deposed him, and carried him captive to Egypt, according to the prediction of the prophet concerning him, (Jer. xxii. 10—12, compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34.) And having thus deposed him, he made Jehoiakim, the elder brother, who was formerly called *Eliakim*, king in his room. But this Jehoiakim was soon subdued by the king of Ba-

SECT. 9. *and, about the time of the Babylonish captivity, Jehoiakim begat* Jehoiachin, otherwise called *Jeconiah*,[h] who was so long the prisoner of the Chaldeans.

MATT. I. *And, after the Babylonish captivity* commenced, this *Jeconiah begat Salathiel*;[i] *and Salathiel begat Zerubbabel*,[k] that illustrious instrument of restoring and settling the Jewish commonwealth on their return from the captivity: *And Zerubbabel begat Abiud*;[l] 14 *and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor: And Azor begat Zadok; and* 15 *Zadok begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud: And Eliud begat Eleazar; and* 16 *Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob: And* this *Jacob begat Joseph*, who was *the husband of Mary*, that blessed virgin, *of whom was born* by the immediate power of God, *Jesus, who is* commonly *called Christ*, as he was indeed God's Messiah, or anointed One; the great Sovereign, and Prophet, and High-Priest of his Church, completely furnished for the discharge of all those offices by a most plentiful effusion of the Spirit, which was given not by measure to him.

17 This is the genealogy of his reputed father; *so that* we see, as it here stands, that *all the generations*, in the first interval or class of this illustrious family *from Abraham to David*, when we may look upon it as in its rising state, *are fourteen generations: and* after these, in the next class, *from David to the Babylonish captivity*, when it was seated on the throne, and may be reckoned as in its flourishing state, we may compute them as amounting to the same number; and, to consider them as they are represented here, they may again be counted *fourteen generations*:[m] *and*, in like manner, in the last class, *from the Babylonish captivity to Christ*, when by degrees it sunk into obscurity, and manifestly was in its declining state, then also we may reckon them as *fourteen generations*.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;
13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor;
14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud.
15 And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob;
16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.
17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ, *are* fourteen generations.

Luke iii. 23.

LUKE III. 23 But, though we have thus given the legal genealogy of Christ, from Abraham, as derived from Joseph his reputed father, we shall yet add another that ascends to Adam; *and* this is the account which Luke hath given us in his gospel; where, after he had spoken of the baptism of *Jesus when* he was *beginning* [*his* public *ministry*,] and *was about thirty years of age*, he traces his descent in the line of Mary,[n] whose father Heli adopting

Luke iii. 23.
And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

bylon, who, after his conquest, suffered him for a while to continue on the throne; but, on his revolt to the king of Egypt again, he was slain by the Chaldeans, (2 Kings xxiv. 1, 2.) and thrown out unburied, as Josephus tells us, (*Antiq. lib.* x. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 3. Havercamp.) agreeable to what the prophet had foretold, Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30. After his death, his son Jehoiachin, by some called *Jehoiakim the Second*, was put in his place; and this is he who is elsewhere called *Jeconiah*, 1 Chron. iii. 16; and *Coniah*, Jer. xxii 24. But after a reign of three months, he was taken captive and imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxiv. 8—16; (according to the prophecy, Jer. xxii. 24—26.) and after thirty-seven years released, 2 Kings xxv. 27. In the mean time, upon his being deposed, his uncle Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah, was raised to the throne; but after a reign of eleven years, his eyes were put out, and he was carried captive to Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed, 2 Kings xxiv. 17, 18; xxv. 7.—I have traced and stated the matter thus particularly, chiefly because it is a key, not only to the *paraphrase* on this text, but to much of the book of Jeremiah, which, as it is plain that several *chapters* of it are displaced, cannot be well understood without a very exact knowledge of the preceding history.

h *Jehoiakim begat Jeconiah*.] I here follow the reading of the Bodleian and other manuscripts, (notice of which is taken in the margin of our Bibles) Ιωσιας δε εγεννησε τον Ιωακειμ· Ιωακειμ δε εγεννησε τον Ιεχονιαν. And this indeed seems absolutely necessary to keep up the number of *fourteen generations*; unless we suppose, that the Jeconiah here is a different person from that Jeconiah mentioned in the next verse, which seems a very unreasonable supposition, since it is certain, that throughout this whole *table*, each person is mentioned twice, first as the son of the preceding, and then as the father of the following.—I am obliged to the candid animadversion of Dr. Scott, for the small alteration I have made in my reading of this *verse*, from what was published in the first edition.

i *Jeconiah begat Salathiel*.] I cannot take upon me certainly to determine whether Salathiel was the son of Jeconiah by descent or adoption. It is certain, that Luke (chap. iii. 27.) derives Salathiel from David, by Nathan, and not by Solomon, whose line might possibly fail in Jeconiah. And this would be most evidently congruous to Jerem. xxii. 30; where it is said, that Jeconiah should be *written childless*, as we render it: But, as the dispersion of Jeconiah's seed is there threatened, and at least *seven sons* of his are reckoned up elsewhere, 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18, (supposing *Assir*, as the word signifies, to be only a kind of surname of *Jeconiah the captive*,) a greater number than one could suppose so unhappy a prince would adopt in his imprisonment, I should rather think the word ערירי translated *childless* in the fore-cited prophecy signifies, (as the Seventy suppose who have translated it) ακληρωτον, *naked, stripped*, or *rooted up*; and the more so, because it seems harsh to suppose εγεννησε should signify only *he adopted*: Yet I own it is something strange, that Salathiel, who on this supposition was a descendant of Solomon, should be adopted by Neri, a descendant of Nathan, a younger and much inferior branch of David's family; or that it should be said by Jeremiah that *none of Jeconiah's seed should rule any more in Judah*, if Zerubbabel, their first ruler after the captivity, was at farthest but his great-grandson. On the whole, I submit so difficult a question to the determination of abler judges, and content myself with thus hinting at what I found most material on either side. If the two *genealogies* do not speak of different persons that were named alike, I should conjecture that Salathiel, the son of Neri, might marry the daughter of Jeconiah, and might possibly, on that account, be also *adopted* by him. The attentive reader will see, that this hypothesis at least softens the difficulties inseparable from either of the former.

k *Salathiel begat Zerubbabel*.] This illustrious person, Zerubbabel, is so often said to have been the son of *Salathiel*, or *Shealtiel*, which is so nearly the same, (and accordingly the Syriac here reads *Schaltiel*,) see Ezra iii. 2, 8; v. 2. Hag. i. 1, 12, 14; ii. 23; that I incline more and more to think, with Brennius, that the Zerubbabel mentioned 1 Chron. iii. 17—19, as the son of Pedaiah the brother of Salathiel, was a different person from this. As the name *Zerubbabel* signifies a *stranger in Babylon*, it is no wonder that it should be given to several children born in the captivity.—If this solution be not allowed, I see not how the known difficulty here can be removed, unless by acknowledging that the books of Chronicles (the author of which is unknown,) may have suffered by the injuries of time, so that the *present reading* of some passages may be incorrect; which is very consistent with owning the plenary *inspiration* of those books. By allowing this, we should fairly get rid of *two parts in three* of the seeming contradictions in the writings of the *Old Testament*, (I speak on an accurate review of them,) and should be free from the sad necessity of such *evasive criticisms* as are more likely to pain a candid heart than to satisfy an attentive and penetrating mind. The omission of a word or two in a *genealogical table*, and sometimes the mistake of a letter or two in *transcribing*, especially with regard to names or numbers, occasions many inextricable difficulties, where, in the *original reading*, all might be perfectly clear.

l *Zerubbabel begat Abiud*.] Rhesa, mentioned by Luke, chap. iii. ver. 27, was probably another son of Zerubbabel. Abiud might possibly be the same with Meshullam, whose name is mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 12; or perhaps he and his descendants falling into obscurity, their names might be no where preserved but in this *genealogy* of Joseph's family, which the *Evangelist* transcribed as he found it.

m They may be counted *fourteen generations*.] I express it with this latitude, as it is manifest that three persons are omitted in the *second class* between Jehoram and Uzziah, ver. 8; and it is only by counting them as here represented that they make *fourteen generations*. And if, according to the reading of the Bodleian, Jehoiakim be introduced in ver. 11, and considered as the last of this class, (which seems the better reading, as Jeconiah does not appear to have had any brethren,) Jeconiah will thus be reserved for the *third class*, which otherwise would want one person to complete the number.

n In the line of Mary.] I am aware that Mr. Le Clerc and many other learned men have thought that Joseph was begotten by Heli, and adopted by Jacob: but I much rather conclude, that he was adopted by Heli, or rather taken by him for his son upon the marriage of his daughter, and that Heli was the father of Mary; because an ancient Jewish Rabbi expressly calls her the *daughter of Heli*; and chiefly because else we have indeed no true *genealogy* of *Christ* at all, but only two different views of the line of Joseph,

24 Which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph, 25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge, 26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda, 27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri, 28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er, 29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, 30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim, 31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David, 32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson, 33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Judah, 34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor, 35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala, 36 Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech, 37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

Joseph, whom he made his son-in-law, the descent of Joseph may on that account be reckoned from him, and so is in effect the same with that of Mary. Christ therefore *being* born of Mary after her espousals, may be considered, upon this account, to be *(as* at that time he commonly *was reckoned) the son of Joseph*, who, by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son *of Heli*,[o] The son *of Matthat*, the son *of Levi*, the son *of Melchi*, the son *of Jannah*, the son *of Joseph*, The son *of Mattathias*, the son *of Amos*, the son *of Nahum*, the son *of Eli*, the son *of Naggia*, The son *of Maath*, the son *of Mattathias*, the son *of Shimei*, the son *of Joseph*, the son *of Judah*, The son *of Johannah*, the son *of Rhesa*, the son *of Zerubbabel*, the son *of Salathiel*, the son *of Neri*,[p] The son *of Melchi*, the son *of Addi*, the son *of Cosam*, the son *of Elmodam*, the son *of Er*, The son *of Joses*, the son *of Eliezer*, the son *of Jorim*, the son *of Matthat*, the son *of Levi*, The son *of Simeon*, the son *of Judah*, the son *of Joseph*, the son *of Jonan*, the son *of Eliakim*, The son of *Melcah*, the son *of Mainon*, the son *of Mattathas*, the son *of Nathan*, the son *of* that celebrated king of Israel, *David*, the man after God's own heart, The son *of Jesse*, the son *of Obed*, the son *of Boaz*, the son *of Salmon*, the son *of Naasson*, The son *of Aminadab*, the son *of Aram*, the son *of Esrom*, the son *of Pharez*, the son *of Judah*, The son *of Jacob*, the son *of Isaac*, who was, according to the promise, the son *of* that honourable patriarch *Abraham*, the son *of Terah*, the son *of Nahor*, The son *of Serug*, the son *of* Ragau, or *Reu*, the son *of Peleg*, the son *of Heber*, the son *of Salah*, The son *of Cainan*,[q] the son *of Arphaxad*, the son *of Shem*, the son *of Noah*, with whom he was preserved in the ark; and it was well known that Noah was the son *of Lamech*, The son *of Methuselah*, the son *of Enoch*, who was translated without dying, and was the son *of Jared*, the son *of Mahalaleel*, the son *of Cainan*, The son *of Enos*, the son *of Seth*, the son *of Adam*, who, being descended from no human parents, but formed by the immediate power of a Divine Creating Hand, might, with peculiar propriety, be called [*the son*] *of God*, in his original state the heir of immortality and glory.

SECT 9.

LUKE III.

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37

IMPROVEMENT.

When we survey any such series of generations, it is obvious to reflect how, *like the leaves of a tree, one passeth away and another cometh;* yet *the earth still abideth*, and with it the goodness of the Lord, which runs on, from generation to generation, the common hope of parents and children.

MATT I. 1

Of those who formerly lived upon earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figure among the children of men, how many have there been whose names have perished with them! and how many of whom nothing but their names are remaining! Thus are we passing away, and thus shall we be shortly forgotten. Happy if, while we are forgotten of men, we are remembered by God, and our *names* are found *written in the book of life!* There they will make a much brighter appearance than in the records of fame, or than they would do even in such a catalogue of those who were related to *Christ according to the flesh;* whose memory is here preserved, when that of many, who were once the wonder and terror of the mighty in the land of the living, is lost in perpetual oblivion.

et seq 13 *et seq* LUKE III. 24 *et seq.*

We observe, among these ancestors of Christ, some that were heathens, and others that, on different accounts, were of infamous characters; and perhaps it might be the design of Providence that we should learn from it, or at least should, on reading it, take occasion to reflect, that persons of all nations, and even *the chief of sinners* amongst them, are encouraged to trust in him as their Saviour. To him therefore let us look, even from *the ends of the earth*, yea, from the depths of guilt and distress, and the consequence will be happy beyond all expression or conception.

MATT. I. 3, 5, 6

Adam, though originally *the son of God*, lost that inheritance of life and glory which, in consequence of such a relation, he might reasonably have expected: but the second Adam repairs the loss which we had sustained by the transgression of the first. We are now *predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ*, and raised by him to the hope of a fairer inheritance than the terrestrial Paradise. Let it be our daily labour to secure this invaluable blessing; that so, as we have *borne the image of the earthly Adam*, we may in due time *bear the image of the heavenly*, and at length attain to the perfect *manifestation of the sons of God.*

LUKE III. *ult*

his reputed father; which would by no means prove that *Christ*, who was only by adoption his son, was of *the seed of Abraham* and of *the house of David*. Yet the apostle speaks of it as *evident*, that *Christ* was descended from Judah, Heb. vii. 14; in which, if this gospel were (as antiquity assures us,) written by the direction of Paul, perhaps he may refer to this very *table* before us. (See Mr. Whiston's *Harmony* of the Four Evangelists, Prop. xvi. p. 175, *et seq.)*

o *Joseph*, who by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son *of Heli*.] It is necessary to take the words in this latitude, because the true *father of Joseph* appears to have been Jacob or James, the son of Matthan. (See Matt. i. 15, 16.)

p The son *of Neri*.] See the latter end of note i, page 16.

q The son *of Cainan*.] There is no mention made of this Cainan in either of the *genealogies* that Moses gives us, (Gen. x. 24; and xi. 12;) but Salah is there said to be the son of Arphaxad. Cainan must therefore have been introduced here from the *translation* of the *seventy interpreters*, who have inserted him in both these places in the same order as we find him here; and, as this *translation* was then commonly used, and was more generally understood than the *Hebrew*, it is probable that some transcriber of this gospel added Cainan from that version, unless we suppose that Luke himself might choose, in writing this *genealogy*, to follow the Septuagint, as he appears to do in several other passages that he has quoted from the Old Testament. Nor is it, after all, a point of any consequence, as the design of the Evangelist was only to present us with the *genealogy of Christ* in its ascent to Adam, which is equally clear, whether we reckon Salah as the immediate

SECTION X.

Christ is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed by an angel to some shepherds in the neighbourhood of that town; and he is circumcised on the eighth day. Luke ii. 1—21.

Luke ii. 1.

SECT. 10. LUKE II.

NOW it came to pass in those days, or about the time in which John the Baptist was born, and Christ conceived in the manner related above, *that* the Roman emperor, *Augustus Cæsar, published an edict*, or decree, *that all the land*[a] of Judea, which was then united under one prince, and governed by Herod, *should be* publicly *enrolled;* or
1 that the number of its inhabitants, both male and female, with their families and estates, should be registered. This he ordered, as a token of his particular displeasure against Herod
2 their king, and as an intimation that he intended quickly to lay them under a tax. *And* here we may observe by the way, that *this was the first enrolment* of the Jews, and was committed to the care *of Cyrenius*, or, as the Latins write it, Quirinius, a Roman senator; who, being [*afterwards*] *governor of Syria*,[b] made a second enrolment or taxation, which
3 was so famous in the Jewish history for the tumults that attended it. *And all* the inhabitants of Judea were obliged to obey the edict, and *went each of them to his own* native *city*, or the place where his paternal inheritance lay,[c] *to be enrolled:* a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence, to verify the truth of ancient prophecies, and introduce the promised Messiah; as, by their coming to be thus registered among the subjects of the Roman empire, the subjection of the Jews to the Romans very remarkably appeared.
4 *And* thus the parents of Christ were providentially brought to Bethlehem, the place where the Messiah was to be born, without leaving any room to suspect them of artifice and design: for, being thus obliged by the emperor's authority, *Joseph went up from Galilee*, even *out of the city of Nazareth*, where he then dwelt, *into* the land of *Judea*, most properly so called, *to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem*, which was the town where his ancestors had formerly been settled: *(for*, notwithstanding Joseph was reduced so low as to follow the trade of a carpenter, yet *he was* originally *of the family and* royal
5 *household of David:)*[d] It was to Bethlehem therefore that he went up *to be enrolled;* and thither he took *with* him, by divine direction,[e] *Mary his espoused wife, who was* now *big with child*, and very near the time of her delivery.
6 But the town was so crowded on this occasion, that they were obliged to lodge in the stable of a public-house, though in her present circumstances, it was so very inconvenient

Luke ii. 1.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,)

5 To be taxed, with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that while they were there, the

descendant of Arphaxad, or whether we consider him as his grandson by Cainan. And much less reason is there to object to the apparent difference there is between the *names* that Luke has given us, and those we meet with of the same persons in the *Old Testament:* This is no more than what is usual when the same names are mentioned in a different language; nor will the *Greek* admit them to be so expressed, as to agree exactly with the *Hebrew*. But, to avoid confusion, I have rather chosen, both in the former *genealogy* and this, to give the *names* that are delivered in the *Old Testament* as they are written in the *Hebrew*, to which our language will admit us to come nearer than the *Greek* could do, and which must be allowed to be the more exact and truer method of pronouncing them. (Compare Gen. v. 3. *et seq.* xi. 10—27; and 1 Chron. i. 1—27.

a *All the land.*] Though οικουμενη doth undoubtedly sometimes signify *the whole world*, (Acts xvii. 31; Rom. x. 18; and Heb. i. 6.) and sometimes probably the *Roman empire*, (as more especially in Rev. iii. 10; and xvi. 14. see Elsner, *in loc.)* yet I think the learned and ingenious Dr. Lardner hath fully proved that it is to be taken in a more limited sense both here and Acts xi. 28. as it plainly is, Luke xxi. 26. (See Lardn. *Credib. of Gosp. Hist.* Part I. Vol. i. p. 542; and Vol. ii. p. 574, *et seq.)* It is with peculiar propriety called *the whole land*, as it was soon after dismembered; and Nazareth, where Christ's parents dwelt, was in a different division from Bethlehem, as Dr. Lardner well observes.—That απογραφη signifies a *public enrolment*, Elsner, on this text, hath evidently shewn.

b *And this was the first enrolment of Cyrenius*, afterwards *governor of Syria*, Αυτη απογραφη πρωτη εγενετο ηγεμονευοντος της Συριας Κυρηνιου.] The worthy person whom I mentioned above, Dr. Lardner, in his unequalled criticisms on this text, (Part I. Vol. ii. page 718, *et seq.)* has given the reasons at large which determined me to prefer that literal version I have inserted. Our own is plainly mistaken, and is indeed hardly intelligible. The words might perhaps have been rendered, *This enrolment was before Cyrenius was governor of Syria:* which, to be sure, is a true assertion, and may perhaps, after all, be vindicated; but I think the *original* expresses something more. Others have chosen to render it, *And the taxation* that was consequent upon this enrolment *was first executed when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*—If none of the solutions proposed could be allowed, (as I think either of these justly may,) it would be a thousand times more reasonable to suppose a word omitted by some early transcriber, (perhaps η δευτερα, after εγενετο,) than to think that so accurate a writer as Luke, were he to be considered only as a common historian, should make such a gross mistake as to confound this *enrolment*, in the reign of Herod, with that *taxation* which happened several years after, on the banishment of his son Archelaus. A fact of this kind was too obvious, and, I may add, too mortifying to the whole Jewish nation, to be so soon forgot; not to say, that so strict a Pharisee as St. Paul, (who probably reviewed this gospel,) educated by Gamaliel, would be sure to remember it with some peculiar emotion.—Of the tumults that happened *in the days of the taxing*, which was afterwards made by Cyrenius, (when, on the banishment of Archelaus, Judea was reduced to the form of a province, and annexed to Syria under the government of Cyrenius,) in opposition to which, a disturbance was raised by Judas of Galilee, see Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xvii. *in fin. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1. § 1. *Bel. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8. § 1. and Acts v. 37.

c Where his paternal inheritance lay.] Some have conjectured that Joseph might have a small estate here: but that is, at best, very uncertain; at least it is improbable that Jesus inherited it, (Matt. viii. 20.) or that his mother enjoyed it during her widowhood. See John xix. 26, 27.—It is true, indeed, that had the original settlement of the divine law been duly regarded, *estates* in the land of promise would have been *unalienable;* and every male descended from Jacob, and not of the tribe of Levi, must have been born heir to a certain portion of land, allotted to some of his ancestors when the division was first made; on which, however, it might have been *mortgaged:* he must, if his father were dead, have entered at the next *jubilee*, if he lived to see it. But things were now fallen into confusion. The small remains of the *ten tribes* who were brought back at all were, after their return from the captivity, incorporated together in the neighbourhood of Judea, while *strangers* were in possession of large tracts of land once theirs; and the whole country of Samaria was in the hands of those whom the Jews looked upon *as the vilest kind of Gentiles*, that is, the *Samaritans*.—All that appears as to the circumstance now before us is, that every one was obliged to be *enrolled* at the place to which his family belonged; and the obedience of the Jews to this decree is a plain proof that they were now dependent on the Romans, and *the sceptre* was *departing from Judah.* See Lightfoot's *Harmony* on Luke ii. 1; and compare Gen. xlix. 10. and Numb. xxiv. 24.

d *Of the family and* royal *household of David.*] I have here rendered οικος *family, and* πατρια *household;* because I apprehend, with Grotius, that it may refer to the divisions of the tribes into *families* and *households*. Compare Numb. i. 18, *et seq.* and Josh. vii. 17, 18. In this sense of the words, after having told us that Joseph was *of the house of David*, it would have been very unnecessary to add, he was also *of his family;* but it was not at all improper to say, he was of his *family* and *household* too: for all the descendants of Eliab and his other brethren, if there were any such remaining, would have been of *David's family*, yet not of his *household*. If the word *lineage* only signified descendants, it would be exceedingly proper to give Luke's sense; but, as I apprehend it includes collateral branches, I thought fit to change it.

e By divine direction.] One could hardly imagine he would otherwise have exposed her to the hazards of such a journey at so unseasonable a time; for, whatever the emperor's commands were, such a case as Mary's must to be sure have been admitted as an excuse for her not complying with it.

days were accomplished that she should be delivered:

7 And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night:

9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go

for her. *And so it was, that while they were there,* either waiting for the proper officer who was to register the people, or staying till their own turn came, *the days* of her pregnancy *were fulfilled,* and the time came *that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her Son,* even him that justly bears the character of *the First-born*;[f] that glorious and excellent Person, who was the First-born of every creature, and the Heir of all things. *And* she no sooner was delivered, but immediately she *swathed him;* being so miraculously strengthened by God, in this hour of extremity, as to be able to perform that office herself;[g] *and,* having no other conveniency near, she *laid him in a manger* which belonged to one of the stalls there;[h] *because* (as we have just now said) *there was no room for them in* any of the chambers belonging to *the inn.*

And there were some *shepherds in that country* who were then *lying out in the field, and watching,* in their turns, *over their flock by night*;[i] which it was necessary they should do, to guard against the wolves and other beasts of prey which were common there. *And, behold,* on a sudden, *an angel of the Lord came upon them,* and appeared in a visible form, standing in the air over their heads; *and* their eyes were immediately directed to it by *the glory of the Lord,* which *shone round about them* with such incomparable lustre, as had in former ages been the usual symbol of the Divine Presence: *And they were exceedingly terrified* at so uncommon and so awful an appearance. *And,* while they stood in silent amazement, *the angel said unto them,* in the mildest and most condescending manner, *Be not affrighted,* O ye shepherds! *for* the design of my appearance to you hath nothing terrible in it; but, on the contrary, *behold,* and take the most thankful notice of it, *I bring you good news,* and greet you with the tidings *of great* and universal *joy, which shall be* now occasioned, not only to you, but *to all people* in the whole Jewish nation, yea, and to all the human race. *For this* very *day,* this welcome blessed day, *there is born unto you,*[k] and unto all nations, *a* Glorious *Saviour, who is* even *Christ the Lord,* that illustrious Sovereign, whom you have so long been taught to expect, by the title, and under the character of the MESSIAH: He is even now born *in the* neighbouring *city of David* his royal father; and I call you to offer him your earliest homage. Go, therefore, into the town without any farther delay, *and* inquire after him: for *this* [*shall be*] *a sign to you,* by which you will easily know him: *you will find* him *an infant in swaddling-bands, lying in a manger* belonging to one of the inns.

And immediately, to confirm them in the belief of so strange a truth, as that this illustrious Prince should be born in such mean circumstances as he had now described, *there was* seen *with the angel* that spake to them, *a great multitude of the celestial army, praising God, and saying,* in the most cheerful and harmonious accents, *Glory* be *to God in the highest* heavens, *and* let all the angelic legions resound his praises in the most exalted strains: for, with the Redeemer's birth, *peace,* and all kind of happiness comes down to dwell *on earth;* yea, the overflowings of divine *benevolence* and favour are now exercised *towards* sinful *men,*[l] who, through this Saviour, become the objects of his complacential delight. Echo it back, O ye immortal abodes, to ours! "Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! benevolence and favour unto men!"

And it came to pass, that as soon as the angel departed from them, and returned back *into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Come, let us go* immediately *to Bethlehem,*

SECT. 10. LUKE II. 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

f *The First-born.*] See before the paraphrase and note f on Matt. i. 25. § 8. p. 14.

g Being so miraculously strengthened, &c.] I had, in the first edition, here and in many other places, inserted the word *probably* in the *paraphrase:* but, on the whole, considering that in all such performances the *author,* and not the *paraphrast,* is supposed to speak, I judge it more proper here to remind my reader (as I have elsewhere intimated,) that he is to take it for granted I do not pretend in this instance, and a great many others, to speak confidently; but that the *different character,* which distinguishes the divine *text* from my fallible though upright attempts to illustrate it, must guide him in determining what is *certain,* and what only *probable,* and perhaps, after all, *very doubtful.*

h *A manger* which belonged to one of the stalls there.] Though Heinsius has learnedly proved that φατνη sometimes signifies *a stall,* yet it is certain, that more frequently it signifies *a manger;* and the *manger* was the most proper part of the *stall* in which the infant could be laid. If (as tradition says,) this *stable* was cut out of a rock, the coldness of it must, at least by night, have greatly added to its other inconveniences.

i *Watching* in their turns *over their flock by night.*] The *original* φυλασσοντες φυλακας της νυκτος, might more literally be rendered, *keeping the watches of the night;* which intimates their taking it *by turns* to watch, according to the usual divisions of the night. And, as it is not probable that they exposed their flocks to the coldness of winter nights in that climate, where, as Dr. Shaw has shewn, they were so very unwholesome (see Shaw's *Travels,* p. 379.) it may be strongly argued, from this circumstance, that those who have fixed upon December for the birth of Christ, have been mistaken in the time of it.

k *There is born unto you.*] That one of the Bodleian manuscripts reads it ημιν, *to us,* is of very little weight, considering the consent of *copies* on the other side; and affords but a very slender support to Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that this was a glorified *human spirit,* perhaps that of Adam, all whose happy descendants might, he thinks, make up the chorus, (Fleming's *Christology,* Vol. i. p. 80.) I should rather imagine, with Grotius, that this angel was Gabriel.

l *Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth; benevolence* and favour *towards men.*] I am well aware of the ambiguity of these words. I do not mean as to the reading: for though the Alexandrian, and other manuscripts, instead of ευδοκιας, give it ευδοκιαι, as if the angels were proclaiming *peace* to *men of favour and good-will,* or unto those who were the objects of the divine benevolence and complacency; (which is a *reading* that has been approved by many learned men, and in particular by Beza;) yet I think, the authority of that is overborne by the more general consent of the most ancient manuscripts, as well as by the versions of the oldest date, and the quotations of the *fathers* in the most early ages, which almost universally oppose it. (See Mill and Grotius on the place.) But, taking the original as it stands, Δοξα εν υψιστοις θεω, και επι γης ειρηνη, εν ανθρωποις ευδοκια, we must allow it to be capable of different *senses.*—Some chuse to render it, *Glory to God in the highest,* (that is, in heaven,) *and on earth; peace,* yea, *favour towards men:* But then, I think, instead of εν υψιστοις, it rather would have been εν ουρανω; for so it is always usual to express *in heaven and upon earth.* (Compare Matt. vi. 10; Luke xi. 2; 1 Cor. viii. 5; Eph. i. 10; iii. 15; Col. i. 16, 20; Rev. v. 3, 13.)—Others have given, as the sense of it, that *the good-will,* or favour, which is now shewn *to men,* is *the glory of God in the highest, and* is *the peace* or happiness of those that dwell *on earth:* And this indeed is an important sense, and the *original* well enough will bear it. But thus to change the *doxology* into a kind of *proverb* or *aphorism,* seems to destroy much of its beauty.—I rather think, that they are all to be considered as the words of a rejoicing acclamation, and that they strongly represent the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits, and their affectionate good wishes for the prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom. (Compare Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10; and especially Luke xix. 38.) The new translation that has been lately published, where it is rendered, *to men on earth felicity is the divine favour,* does indeed express the sense of the two latter clauses, but by no means with equal ardour. The shouts of a multitude are generally broken into short sentences, and are commonly *elliptic;* which is the only cause of the ambiguity here. As this beauty could not be preserved in a paraphrase, I have repeated the words, after they had been explained.

SECT. 10. LUKE II.

and see this great *thing which is done*, even this wonderful and important event *which the Lord hath* so graciously *made known unto us. And*, accordingly, with one consent, they *came in haste*, before the night was over, leaving their flocks to the care of Providence; *and*, entering into the town, they followed the direction which the angel gave them, and quickly *found Mary and Joseph, and the* new-born *infant* with them, just in the circumstance which had been described, *lying in a manger. And when they had viewed* this scene of wonders, and had attentively considered [*it*,] they humbly paid their dutiful respects unto their new-born Saviour; and having acquainted his parents with the marvellous vision they had seen, *they* immediately *published abroad* a full account of this remarkable occurrence, and gave a particular relation of the whole of *that which had been told them*, in so wonderful a way, *concerning this Child. And*, upon hearing this strange account, there was a general surprise; and, though they were prevented, by the meanness of his birth, from shewing a due regard to one that made no better an appearance, yet *all that heard* [*it*] *were astonished at those things which were related to them by the shepherds* on this subject. *But Mary* in particular *treasured up all these things*, and carefully retained them in her memory; and, though she did not blaze them abroad among the populace, or make any vain boast of such extraordinary favours and testimonies, yet she attentively regarded all these wonderful events, *entering into the meaning* [*of them*] *in* the secret reflections of *her heart*,[m] and improving them all, as a further confirmation of what had been before revealed to her, and a foundation for the early actings of her faith and reverence towards her Divine Son.

And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen at Bethlehem,[n] so perfectly agreeable, in every circumstance, to the account they had received but just before, *as it was told unto them* by the angel; admiring the mercy of God in sending such a Saviour, and his condescension in favouring them with such early discoveries of him.

And when eight days from the birth of this Holy Infant *were fulfilled*, (that is, when the eighth day was come,) his pious parents failed not, according to the Mosaic law, under which they were placed, *to circumcise the child;* that so, though he had not any corruptions of nature to mortify, which was in part represented by that institution, he might nevertheless, in a regular manner, be initiated into the Jewish Church, and thereby be engaged to the duties, and entitled to the privileges, of a son of Abraham, according to that covenant. And *his name was called JESUS*,[o] that is, the Divine Saviour; a name *by which the angel had called him before he was conceived in the womb* of his virgin mother.

even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what humble amazement should we contemplate this first appearance of our Incarnate Redeemer! Surely all the angels of heaven might justly have admired his condescension in assuming such a nature as ours, and wearing a mortal frame, though it had been attended with all the ornaments and splendours earth could have given it. Though, at his entrance into our low world, he had been born of an imperial family, placed under a canopy of velvet and gold, or laid to repose on pillows of down, all this had been deep abasement in the eyes of those who had beheld the glories of his celestial throne, and the honours paid him by cherubims and seraphims: But, behold, the Son of God, and the Heir of all things, is not merely in the abodes of *men*, but in a place destined for *beasts*, and, while wrapped in swaddling-clothes, is *laid in a manger.*

Yet, O blessed Jesus! how much more venerable was that stable and manger, when graced with thy sacred presence, than the most magnificent palace, or most shining throne of earthly princes! How ill doth it become thy disciples to seek for themselves great things in this life, or to be proud of its pomp and grandeur! Give us, O God, the simplicity of children, and make us willing to be conformed to the birth of thy Son, as well as to his death!

Yet, mean as his birth might appear, his Heavenly Father did not leave him without witness. We see him, in this wonderful account that the Evangelist hath given us, surrounded with a brighter lustre than a court or a crown could have afforded. Angelic legions are employed as heralds to proclaim the new-born King. And to whom are they sent? To humble pious shepherds, diligently employed in the duties of their proper calling, and watching by night for the security of their flocks. Who would not gladly have shared in their poverty and fatigue, to have heard with them these *good tidings of great joy?*

Let us observe with what delight these courtiers of heaven undertook the happy embassy to these lowly mortals. Let us with pleasure attend to the anthem of these benevolent spirits. Far from envying the favour that was done us, they ascribe glory to God for it, and take their part in the joy they give. Let this love of the whole heavenly host to us, awaken our love to them, and our longing for that blessed world, where we and they shall surround our dearest Redeemer, not in such a form of abasement as that in which he here appeared, but clothed in that celestial lustre with which God hath rewarded the humiliations of the manger and the cross.

In the mean time, let our more intimate concern in this great salvation engage us more cordially to join with these blessed angels in their hallelujahs; ascribing glory to God in the highest for this peace on earth, this good-

m *Entering into the meaning*, &c.] I apprehend Elsner has abundantly vindicated this sense of the word συμβαλλουσα, in his *note* on this place.

n *Which they had heard and seen* at Bethlehem.] Joseph and Mary would, no doubt, upon such an occasion, give them an account of those particulars, which the sacred historians have recounted above, relating to the conception of this Divine Infant; and this interview must greatly confirm and comfort the minds of all concerned.

o *His name was called Jesus.*] Grotius thinks there might be an assembly of most of the remainders of David's family on this occasion; but surely, had there been many of them inhabitants of Bethlehem, their kinswoman would not, in such circumstances, have been reduced to the necessity of lodging in a stable.

will towards men, the great fountain of our present tranquillity and future hope! Above all, if Divine grace hath conquered all the foolish prejudices of our hearts against Christ, and taught us with humble faith to apply to him, let us, with the shepherds, *bless God for the things* which have been shewn us, and make it our care to *spread abroad* the savour of his name, that others may join with us in paying their homage and their praises to him! Ver. 20

17

SECTION XI.

The purification of Mary, and her offering in the temple; where Christ is presented to God, and has a very memorable testimony given him by Simeon and Anna. Luke ii. 22—39.

LUKE ii. 22.

AND when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord.

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou

LUKE ii. 22.

AND, after Mary had been thus delivered of her son at Bethlehem, *when the* forty *days* appointed *for her purification*,[a] *according to the* time limited by the *law of Moses*, (Lev. xii. 2, 4.) *were fulfilled*,[b] Jesus was taken by his parents from the place where he was born, and in obedience to the Divine command, *they brought him to Jerusalem*, there to *present him* as a first-born son *before the Lord*, in the temple; *According as it is written in the law of the Lord*, (Exod. xiii. 2; Num. viii. 16, 17.) *that* "*every first-born* "*male shall be called holy to the Lord*, and shall be treated as devoted in a peculiar "manner to his service." Agreeably to this precept, they now went up to redeem him,[c] at the price of five shekels, which was the sum appointed to be paid for every eldest son, without any regard to the condition of the family. (Compare Num. xviii. 15, 16.) *And to offer a sacrifice, according to what is enjoined in the law of the Lord*, Lev. xii. 6, 8; where they, whose circumstances were so mean as that they could not conveniently afford a lamb, are ordered to bring *a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons*; which offering suited best the virgin's rank in life, and she did not affect on this occasion to exceed it. SECT. 11. LUKE II. 23 24

And, behold, there was then *at Jerusalem a* certain *man, whose name was Simeon*;[d] *and he* [*was*] one that was *a* singularly *righteous and religious person*, who was *waiting*, with many others at that time, *for* the coming of the Messiah, *the* great expected *consolation of Israel*;[e] *and the Holy Spirit* of prophecy *was* sometimes in an extraordinary manner *upon him: And* among other things *it was* divinely *revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die*[f] *before he had seen the* Great *Anointed of the Lord*, and his eyes had beheld the promised Messiah. 25 26

And he came, under the secret but powerful *impulse of the Spirit, into the temple*, just at the juncture of time *when* [*his*] *parents brought in the child Jesus* into the court of Israel there, *that they might do for him according to the custom* which the authority *of the* divine *law* had required and established in such cases. *And* when the pious Simeon had discovered him by his prophetic gift, and saw that well-known prophecy accomplished, (Hag. ii. 7.) that the desire of all nations should come into that second temple, *he* was transported at the sight of this desirable child, and *took him* with a sacred rapture *into his arms, and praised God, and said*, with the highest elevations of devotion and joy, *Now*, *O* my Sovereign *Lord* and Master, I thankfully acknowledge that *thou dismissest thy* 27 28 29

a *Her purification*; καθαρισμου αὐτης.] The Alexandrian, and some other manuscripts, read αὐτων; and, as it must be owned, that both *mother* and *child*, for a while after the birth, were looked upon as ceremonially *unclean*, it might not be improper, (with Erasmus and some of the most considerable expositors,) to admit this reading, and to render it *their purification*, as referring to them both. For, notwithstanding it is true that Christ had no moral impurity from which he needed to be cleansed, yet we may well enough suppose him, as he *bore our sins*, to have submitted to this ordinance, as well as *circumcision*: and as he came into the world, *made of a woman, made under the law*, he would be ready to comply with any institution of the law, that he might thus *fulfil all righteousness*. But as *the law* that is referred to in this place, speaks only of the *woman*, and of the sacrifice that was appointed to be offered for *her purifying*, I have retained the common reading, and have made no alteration in the version.

b *The* forty *days—were fulfilled*.] Mr. Whiston has supposed, in his *Harmony*, (Prop. xiv. p. 158, *et seq.*) that these *forty days* were not accomplished till their return from Egypt: But although this may give the easiest solution to ver. 39, it crowds so many events into that little space, and so entirely depends on a precarious *hypothesis* that *Christ was born about a month before the death of Herod*, (which I think Mr. Manne has entirely overthrown, in his *Dissertation on the birth of Christ*, p. 42—45.) that it seems evident, upon the whole, that the purification preceded the *flight into Egypt*, as most Harmonizers have thought. But whether *the purification* was *before* or *after* the *visit* of the *wise men*, is not so plain: I have placed it *before*, chiefly that I might not interrupt the thread of the story; and partly because the meanness of the *virgin's* sacrifice makes it probable that she had not then received the *presents* that were offered by *the wise men*. Nevertheless, I acknowledge it very possible, that *the purification* might happen during the interval of Herod's waiting for the return of the *wise men*; and that the holy family might go from Jerusalem to Egypt the very night after Jesus had been presented in the temple; as Garthwaite intimates in his excellent *Harmony*, (chap. xi. xii.) which is so accurately and judiciously composed, that, as far as I can judge, most of the faults in Le Clerc, Whiston, Wells, &c. may be corrected by it. It was first printed at Cambridge, 1634, and is almost entirely the same with that which was afterwards published under the name of Mr. Locke's *Life of Christ*. After all, I shall only observe, that this is one of the many instances in which the order of the sacred story cannot be circumstantially determined with demonstrative evidence.

c They went up to redeem him.] God having acquired a peculiar right to the *first-born of Israel*, by preserving them amidst the destruction brought on the *first-born* of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by this little acknowledgment of *five shekels*, (or about *twelve shillings* and *sixpence* of our money,) which was the price that every *first-born* child must be redeemed at: and in case of an omission here, it might reasonably have been expected that the child should be cut off by some judgment. The *first-born* therefore were *redeemed* by paying of this money, in such a sense as all the people were, when, at the time that they were *numbered*, each of them paid *half a shekel* as *a ransom for their souls, that there might be no plague among them*: as there might otherwise have been, if that acknowledgment of the Divine Goodness had been omitted: Exod. xxx. 12—16. But that the *five shekels* demanded for the *first-born* were paid to *redeem* them from being sacrificed on the altar, is one of the most false and malicious insinuations that ever came even from the most inveterate enemy of revelation.

d *Whose name was Simeon*.] Had Simeon been, as some suppose, the president of the council, and father of the celebrated Gamaliel, St. Luke would probably have inserted so honourable a circumstance.

e *The consolation of Israel*.] This is a phrase that frequently is used, both by the ancient and modern Jews, for a description of the Messiah. *The days of consolation* is a common phrase among them, to signify *the days of the Messiah*: nor is there any thing more usual with them, than to swear *by their desire of seeing this consolation*; as Dr. Lightfoot proves by several instances, *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* And it is easy to observe, that the same way of speaking was made use of by the *prophets*, who often introduced the promise of the Messiah's *coming*, to comfort the people of God in their afflictions. Compare Isa. xlix. 13; liii. 9; lxvi. 13; Jer. xxxi. 13; and Zech. i. 17.

f *That he should not die*.] Our translation, *that he should not see death*, is most literal; but I did not apprehend the antithesis between *seeing death*, and *seeing Christ*, to be intended as at all material, and therefore did not retain the Hebraism.

SECT. 11. LUKE II.

servant to the repose of the grave *in peace*;[g] and I can die with pleasure, since thou hast dealt with me *according to* the gracious engagements of *thy word* to me: *For mine eyes have* at length *beheld* him, whom thou hast appointed as the great instrument of *thy* long expected *salvation*; Even that salvation *which thou hast prepared* to set *before the face of all people*, as the glorious object of their faith and hope: Ordaining him to be *a light* 32 *for the illumination of the Gentiles*, to reveal the way of life to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, as well as giving him to be the consolation *and the glory of thy people Israel*, who have the honour of being peculiarly related to him.

33 *And* when they heard this glorious testimony given to the infant Jesus, *Joseph and his mother were astonished at those things which were spoken of him* by so eminent a prophet; which appeared to them so much the more remarkable, when compared with the miraculous circumstances which had attended his conception and birth.

34 *And Simeon*, in the warmth of his devotion, *blessed them* both, praying affectionately for them, that the favour of God might continually attend them; *and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this* [*Child*] of thine *is appointed for* an occasion of *the fall and rising again of many in Israel*, as he in fact shall be the means of bringing aggravated ruin upon some by their rejecting him, as well as of procuring salvation and recovery to others on their believing in him; *and* his appearance in the world shall be such, as if he was intended and set up *for a mark of contradiction* and reproach,[h] to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to many, while he shall be to others for a sanctuary, (Isa. viii. 14.)

35 *Yea*, with such cruel malice and indignity shall he be treated, that the time will come when *a dart shall* (as it were) *pierce through thine own soul*,[i] and wound thee in the most sensible manner, when thou art witness to those agonies which shall penetrate his. But these strange revolutions shall be permitted, and these mysterious scenes of Providence be opened, *that the* secret thoughts and *reasonings of many hearts may be disclosed*; or that the real characters of men may be discovered, and the sincerity of those who are approved may be made manifest; while the hypocrisy and earthly-mindedness of those who intend only their own secular advantage, under the specious pretence of waiting for the Messiah's kingdom, shall be exposed; who will be soon offended at the obscure form of his appearance, and at the persecutions which shall attend him and his cause.

36 *And there was* also [*one*] *Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel*, a person of some considerable note in *the tribe of Asher*. *She was* now *very far advanced in years, having lived* only *seven years with a husband from* the time of *her virginity*: 37 *And*, as her husband died while *she was* very young, she had now been *a widow about eighty-four years*;[k] *who*, whatever estate she might have in the country, *departed not from* Jerusalem, but kept always so near *the temple*, as to be able to resort thither at the hours of morning and evening sacrifice: *serving* [*God*] *with* frequent *fastings and prayers*, in which this devout matron spent a considerable part of the *night as well as* of 38 the *day*.[l] *And she coming in at that very time*, which was the hour of prayer, joined with Simeon in what he had done, and publicly *made her acknowledgments to the Lord*, that is, to Jesus,[m] who was now present in the temple; *and* afterwards *spake concerning him to all* those of her acquaintance *in Jerusalem that were waiting*, like her, *for* the promised *redemption* of Israel by the Messiah, of whose speedy appearance there was an earnest expectation raised among the pious and the devout, as the appointed period of his coming now evidently approached.[n]

39 *And* the parents of Jesus, *when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord*, departed from Jerusalem: and, full of admiration at the glorious testimonies that were given to their Child, *they* some time afterwards *returned to Galilee*,[o] *to their*

thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation;
31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people:
32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *Child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against:

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
37 And she *was* a widow of about four-score and four years; which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.
38 And she, coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into

g *Thou dismissest thy servant in peace.*] There may perhaps be an allusion here to the custom of saying, especially to an inferior, when parting, *Go in peace.* See note l, on Luke vii. 50. sect. lx.

h *A mark of contradiction* and reproach.] The word σημειον seems here to be used for a *mark* or *butt* to shoot or dart at; which finely intimates the deliberate malice, and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ was assaulted, while he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*, Heb. xii. 3.

i *A dart shall pierce through thine own soul.*] Though ρομφαια seems often to signify *a sword*, as particularly in Rev. i. 16; ii. 12, 16; vi. 8; yet we are assured by Grotius, it properly signifies *a Thracian javelin.* It may perhaps (as L'Enfant observes) be a beautiful allusion to the preceding figure, as if it had been told her, that the darts levelled at her son should be reflected from his breast to hers, in such a manner as to wound her very heart. Whether it be rendered *sword* or *dart*, it must undoubtedly refer to the part the holy *virgin* took in all the reproaches and persecutions which Jesus met with; but never was it so signally fulfilled, as when she stood by the cross, and saw him at once so scornfully insulted and so cruelly murdered. See John xix. 25.

k Had now been *a widow about eighty-four years.*] I know that Grotius and many others interpret this of her whole age; but I think it most natural to suppose, that the time of her *marriage* is opposed to that of her *widowhood.*

l In which she spent a considerable part of the *night as well as* of the *day.*] This is plainly the meaning of *night and day*, nor can the expression possibly signify more. Perhaps she might sometimes attend those anthems which the priests sung in the temple during the *night-watches*, Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 2; to which David may also allude, Ps. cxix. 62.

m *Made her acknowledgments to the Lord*, that is, to Jesus.] Ανθωμολογειτο τω Κυριω. The late English version renders it, *She expressed her thanks to the Lord, and spake of Jesus*; and it must be acknowledged there are in this very section two instances, in which the relative pronoun refers to a remote, and not immediately preceding substantive, ver. 22 and 27. But it is so evident that Christ is often called *the Lord* by Luke, as well as by the other sacred writers, that I can see no necessity for giving this passage such a turn, contrary to all the ordinary rules of language.—And if it be objected that the infant Jesus did not seem capable at that time of receiving her gratitude, as a rational agent, I answer, that Anna might properly be said to *make her acknowledgments to the Lord*, if she addressed herself to the Child, as Simeon had done, confessing him to be *the Messiah.* The original phrase may have a reference to Simeon's speech, and might be intended to intimate, that this of Anna was a kind of *response*, or counterpart to his. But it is also very probable that she, like Simeon, might also address some lofty hymn of praise to the *God of Israel* on this great occasion: and if any one think the word *Lord* is here put for *Jehovah*, though the former interpretation seems to me more just and natural, I shall not oppose it as an error of any importance.

n The period of his coming now evidently approached.] *The sceptre* now appeared to be *departing from Judah*, though it was not actually gone; Daniel's *weeks* were plainly near their period; and the revival of the *spirit of prophecy*, joined with the memorable occurrences relating to the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, could not but encourage and quicken the expectation of pious persons at this time.

o *They* afterwards *returned to Galilee.*] Luke has omitted the account that Matthew gives us of the *visit* of *the wise men*, and of

Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. *own city, Nazareth,*[p] which was the place of their usual residence, and where (as will be seen hereafter) this Blessed Infant passed the days of his childhood and youth. SECT. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE II.

WHO can behold the pious Simeon thus welcoming death, whilst he embraced his Saviour, without wishing to pass over the intermediate moments of life to meet so peaceful a dissolution? May we, like him, approve ourselves Ver. 28
the faithful servants of God; and then we may hope that, when our dismission comes, we shall share in his serenity 29
and joy!

We may comfortably expect it, if our eyes are now opened to behold with wonder and delight the great 30
salvation he has prepared for his people; and if our hearts, with our lips, are frequently praising him for this 31
light which he hath given to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of his people Israel. 32

As such, may Christ be universally owned and adored, both by Jews and Gentiles. In the mean time, while 34
he is set up as a mark of contradiction and contempt, let us not be ashamed of him or of his words; but rather
let those indignities which are offered to him be as a sword to pierce through our own souls. Let us remember 35
that the gospel, with all the difficulties which attend it, is the great touchstone by which God will try the characters of all to whom it comes. May our ready acceptance of it, and our zealous adherence to that sacred cause,
approve the humble sincerity with which we inquire into its evidence; that Christ may not be to us *a stone of*
stumbling and a rock of offence, but rather the means of raising us to God and happiness, even to that redemp- 38
tion for which they that wait shall never be ashamed!

Our circumstances in life are various. There are comparatively few who have such leisure for extraordinary
devotion as was the privilege of the pious Anna: Where it is found let it be valued and improved: But how great 36
and how many soever our engagements and entanglements in life may be, let the care of our souls be still our
chief concern. Let us be serving God, in one sense or another, night and day; with prayers, pouring out our 37
souls before him morning and evening: and at proper seasons adding fasting to prayer, and public solemnities
to private retirements!

To conclude: let the example of these aged saints impress and animate those whose hoary heads, like theirs, 25
are *a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness*, (Prov. xvi. 31.) Let those venerable lips, so 37
soon to be silent in the grave, be now employed in shewing forth the praises of their Redeemer. *Surely days*
should speak, and the multitude of years should teach such *wisdom*, (Job xxxii. 7.) Such fruit may they produce in old age: and may they have the pleasure to see all these pious attempts most thankfully received by the rising generation, and most gratefully improved by them; that they may quit the world with the greater tranquillity, in the view of leaving those behind them, to whom Christ shall be as precious as he hath been to them, and who will be *waiting* for God's salvation, while they are gone to *enjoy* it! Amen.

SECTION XII.

The sages, or wise men, come from the east, under the guidance of a star, to inquire after Christ; and being directed unto Bethlehem, pay him their homage, and offer him their presents there. Matt. ii. 1—12.

MATT. ii. 1.

NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

MATT. ii. 1.

NOW after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, even *in the days of Herod the* Great, who, at the time of Christ's nativity, was *king* of that country, there happened a memorable occurrence, which gave a great alarm to the Jews, and made the era of Christ's birth very remarkable among them. For, *behold*, there were [*certain*] *sages*,[a] that is, wise and learned men, (who, on account of their applying themselves to the study of natural philosophy, were called Magi,) that had observed a bright and unusual luminary in the heavens, which they were taught to understand as an intimation that a very illus- SECT. 12. MATT. II. 1

the holy family's retiring into Egypt; and so has taken no notice of their returning any more to Bethlehem. But there is no sufficient reason to conclude from hence, that these occurrences were antecedent to the *purification of Mary*, and that the holy family immediately returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth. For we have many other instances of a like kind, where events are connected by Luke, and the other Evangelists, which did not immediately follow each other: of which Luke xxiv. 50. is particularly memorable, as will be shewn in its proper place. I have expressed it therefore with some latitude, as it seems to me probable, that upon leaving Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem, where they were visited by *the wise men*; and which, as they had found it to be the place appointed for the birth of Christ, they might suppose also to be the place designed for his education and abode, and might not chuse to remove from thence till God had ordered them to do it. (See Lightfoot's *Harmony*, Matt. ii. *init.*) However, if they now returned to Nazareth, it is more than possible that Providence might bring them afterwards to Bethlehem, upon some occasion or other, that when the *wise men* came to inquire after Jesus, they might find him in the place to which they were directed. See Mr. Manne's *first dissertation on the birth of Christ*, p. 41, 42. and compare note n on Matt. ii. 11. in the next section.

p *To their own city, Nazareth.*] It has been suggested to me by a very learned and ingenious writer, since the publication of the preceding note, that the parents of Christ carried him back from Jerusalem to Bethlehem after the *purification*, and lived there a year or more before the *Magi* came; Joseph probably thinking it his duty to settle there, from the persuasion he had that this wonderful Child was the Messiah, and that the Messiah was to be *educated*, as well as *born* at Bethlehem, David's city. From hence he removed to Egypt; and when he was directed to come back, Joseph appears to have designed to return with Jesus to Bethlehem, had not God commanded him to go to Nazareth, a place which he seems to have esteemed too contemptible to be the abode of so illustrious a person. And this gentleman thinks, that when Nazareth is here called τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν, *their own city*, it intimates an attempt to settle elsewhere in a city that was *not their own*.

a *Certain sages.*] It would be quite foreign to my purpose to enumerate the various conjectures of learned men relating to these Magi. I find not amongst them all so wild an hypothesis as that of Vander Hard, (*New Memoirs of Liter.* Vol. II. p. 62, *et seq.*) that they were learned Jews who came from the colonies carried away by Shalmanezer and Nebuchadnezzar, and were *ambassadors* in the name of the whole body to pay their homage to the Messiah, and to congratulate their brethren on his birth. It is most probable they were Gentile philosophers, who, by the divine influence on their minds, had been led to improve their knowledge of nature, as the means of leading them to that of the one living and true God; and it is not at all unreasonable to suppose, that God had favoured them with some extraordinary revelations of himself, as he did Melchizedek, Abimelech, Job and his friends, and some others, who did not belong to the Abrahamic family, to which he never intended absolutely to confine his favours.—As to the title that is here given them, it is certain that the word Μαγοι was not appropriated in ancient times to such as practised wicked arts, but frequently was used to express *philosophers*, or men of learning; and those particularly that were curious in examining the works of nature, and in observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, (compare Dan. ii. 2, 27. and v. 11. Septuag.) And indeed *Magi* is become a title so familiar to us, and is so far naturalized among us, that I was almost ready to retain it in my version, had I not feared it might excite in common readers something of the same idea with magicians, which always suggests a bad sense.

SECT. 12. MATT. II.

trious person was then born in Judea, who was destined by God to that universal empire, the fame and expectation of which had spread so far in those parts: they therefore *came from the east* country,[b] where they dwelt, *to Jerusalem*, the capital of the Jewish king-
2 dom; and there they began the inquiry which had occasioned them to undertake so long a journey, *saying* to those who, they thought, might be most likely to inform them, *Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen* a beautiful light, which we understand to be *his star, in the east* country,[c] of which we are natives; *and* therefore we *are come*, in humble submission to the will of Providence, *to prostrate ourselves before him*,[d] and to pay our homage to him.

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 *And king Herod*, who was a prince of a very suspicious temper, and whose cruelties had rendered him exceedingly obnoxious to his subjects, *when he heard* [*of this*] inquiry of theirs, *was* very much *troubled; and all Jerusalem* was also in perplexity *with him*, fearing he should make it an occasion of renewing some of those tyrannical actions which had lately filled them with so much horror.[e]

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 *And* therefore, to secure his crown, which Herod was afraid might be in danger from this new-born King, *when he had* called a council, and had *assembled all the chief* of the *priests*,[f] *and* with them *the scribes of the people*, whose peculiar business it was to study and explain the scriptures, *he inquired of them, where* it was, according to the Jewish
5 prophecies, that *the* long-expected *Messiah was to be born?*[g] *And they said unto him*, with one consent, He is certainly to be born *at Bethlehem in Judea; for so it is written*
6 *by the prophet* Micah, chap. v. 2. "*And thou Bethlehem* Ephratah, *in the land of* "*Judah*, inconsiderable as thou mayest now appear, yet *art by no means the least*[h] "*among the* cities belonging to the *princes* or heads *of* thousands in *Judah; for out of* "*thee shall come forth a* great and illustrious *Ruler, who shall feed* and govern *my* "*people Israel*, most wisely and tenderly performing the office of their Great Shepherd."

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.

7 *Then Herod, having secretly called the sages* to an audience, *got exact information from them*[i] *about what time the star*, which they had seen, and which proved the occasion of their journey, first *appeared* to them; that he might thereby make some conjecture concerning the age of the child to whose birth it referred. (Compare ver. 16.)

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 *And* after they had satisfied his curiosity, and had informed him of the observations they had made about this star, Herod communicated to them the answer he had received from the priests and scribes; and, *sending them to Bethlehem*, as the place where they might expect to see the new-born Prince, *he said, Go and make a very exact enquiry concerning the Child* you are seeking; *and when you have found him*, return hither directly, and *inform me* of it,[k] *that I also*, who would permit no interests of mine to interfere with the decrees of heaven, *may come* with my family *and* court, to *pay my homage to him*, to which I look upon myself as peculiarly obliged.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young Child, and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

b *Came from the east* country.] I do not venture to determine in the paraphrase, from what part of the *east* these philosophers came. Had they been (as Mr. Fleming supposes in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 392.) a deputation from all the Magi in Persia, Media, Arabia, and Chaldea, or had they been *kings*, as the Papists fancy, so grand a circumstance as either of these would in all probability have been expressly recorded. I rather think, with Grotius, that they came from Arabia, which is often called the *east*, (see Gen. xxv. 6, 18. Job i. 3. Judg. vi. 3. 1 Kings iv. 30. and Jer. xlix. 28.) and was famous for gold, frankincense, and myrrh, (compare ver. 11.) And if so, their journey lay through a barren and scorching country, and they were obliged to pass through deserts infamous for robbery and murder, which much illustrated their piety and zeal.

c *We have seen his star in the east* country.] There is no need of supposing, with some of the fathers, that they knew the signification of this *star*, by comparing it with Balaam's prophecy, Numb. xxiv. 17; or Daniel's, Dan. ii. 44. and ix. 25; nor can we think, as Grotius seems to intimate, that they discovered it by the rules of their *art*. It is much more probable that they learned it by a *Divine revelation*, which it is plain that they were guided by in their return, as we see afterwards at ver. 12.

d *To prostrate ourselves before him.*] This I take to be generally the signification of προσκυνειν. It is a ceremony still used to eastern princes, and hath been of great antiquity. Compare Gen. xlii. 6. and xliii. 26, 28.

e Filled them with so much horror.] Besides that shocking instance of his cruelty which he had formerly given in the slaughter of their Sanhedrim, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 9. [al. 17.] § 4. and *lib.* xv. *cap.* 1. § 2.) his barbarous inhumanity was such, that he had put to death his beloved wife Mariamne by a public execution, (*Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 7. [al. 11.] § 5.) and after this had caused Alexander and Aristobulus, the two sons he had by her, to be strangled in prison, on what appear to be no other than groundless suspicions. (*Antiq. lib.* xvi. *cap.* 11. [al. 16.] § 6.) These and many other instances of his cruelty are related at large by Josephus: and it was probably about this very time that he executed many of the Pharisees, on occasion of some predictions they had given out, that God was about to take away the kingdom from him: and likewise slew every one in his own family who adhered to those things that were said by the Pharisees. (*Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 2. [al. 3.] § 4.) From whence it might be seen there was not any thing so barbarous and horrid which such a cruel tyrant was not capable of doing.

f *All the chief* of the *priests*.] *All the chief-priests* must comprehend here, not only the *high-priest* for the time being, and his *deputy*, with those who formerly had borne that office, but also the *heads* of the *twenty-four courses*, as well as any other persons of peculiar eminence in the priesthood. In this sense Josephus uses the word. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6.] § 8. p. 973. *Edit. Havercamp.*

g *Where the Messiah was to be born.*] How strongly all this story implies a general expectation of the Messiah, I need not say. I would only observe, that Herod seems to have believed that such a person was foretold; and, on the credit of the *chief priests* and *scribes*, that he was to be born in Bethlehem; and yet was, at the same time, contriving to destroy him; which was the height of impious madness as well as cruelty.

h *Art by no means the least.*] When this, and several other *quotations* from the Old Testament which we find in the New, come to be compared with the *original*, and even with the *Septuagint*, it will plainly appear that the *apostles* did not always think it necessary exactly to transcribe the passages they cited, but sometimes contented themselves with giving the general sense in some little diversity of language, as Erasmus has well observed in his memorable *note* on this text. If the clause in Micah, which we render, *though thou be little*, be translated, *art thou small among the thousands of Judah?* &c. it will solve the great difference which there seems to be between the *prophet* and the *evangelist*; and I think it is the easiest solution of it: for the mark of *interrogation* is not always expressed where the sense shews it must be implied. See the Hebrew of Job xli. 1, 2; 1 Kings xxi. 7; and Zech. viii. 6.—I do not urge the learned Dr. Pocock's solution, that the word צעיר signifies both *little* and *great*; which seems by no means so natural and just an account of the matter, though Veil on this place prefers it to all others.

i *Got exact information from them.*] That this is the signification of the word ακριβως, the learned Dr. Scott's note on this place hath abundantly convinced me; and to that I refer for the reason of giving this *version* of it here, and in ver. 16.

k *When you have found him*, return—and *inform me.*] It is really an amazing thing that so suspicious and so artful a prince as Herod should put this important affair on so precarious a foot, when it would have been so easy, if he had not gone himself, under pretence of doing an honour to these learned strangers, to have sent a guard of soldiers with them, who might, humanly speaking, without any difficulty, have slaughtered the child and his parents on the spot. Perhaps he might be unwilling to commit such an act of cruelty in the presence of these sages, lest their report of it might have rendered him infamous abroad; or rather we must refer it to a sacred infatuation, with which God can, whenever he pleases, confound the most sagacious of mankind.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And, being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

SECT. 12. MATT. II.

And, having heard this charge from *the king, they departed* from Jerusalem without the least suspicion of his treacherous and cruel design: *And, behold,* to confirm their faith in him to whom they were going, *the* very same *star,* or meteor,[l] *which they had seen in the east* country, appeared to them again, and *moved on before them* in the air, *till it came* down still nearer to the earth, *and* at length *stood* directly *over* [*the place*] *where the* sacred *Infant was. And when they saw the star,* thus pointing out their way, and at length by its station over it marking the very house in which they were to find him, *they rejoiced with a* transport of *joy* [*which was*] *exceeding great,*[m] to see themselves in so remarkable a manner under the divine direction, and with such certainty conducted to the glorious person whom they came to seek. 10

And when they were come into the house[n] where Mary was lodged, being now something better accommodated than at the time of her delivery, *they found the young child with Mary his mother; and* how different soever this appearance might be from what they expected,[o] they were not at all offended at its meanness; but, *falling down* on their faces before him, *they paid him* their *homage: And,* as it was customary in those countries to offer some present to any illustrious personage th[illegible]e to visit,[p] *they opened their treasures,* which they had brought along with them f[illegible]is very purpose, *and presented him with* the choicest produce of their country, fine *gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*[q] 11

And, after this, they were preparing to go back to Jerusalem, as Herod had desired them; but God, who knew the barbarous intent of the king, interposed for the preservation of his Son, and for their security and comfort. So, *being divinely admonished in a dream, that they should not go back to Herod, they returned into their own country, another* and more direct *way,*[r] not at all solicitous as to the consequence of Herod's resentment. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us observe, with pleasure, this farther honour which God did to his only-begotten Son, in ordering a new star to appear, as the signal of his birth, and in calling these illustrious persons from afar, to pay their early adorations to him. No doubt they thought such a discovery as brought them to the feet of their infant Saviour,[s] an ample recompence for all the fatigue and expense of such a journey. They were exceedingly transported when they saw the star. So let us rejoice in every thing which may be a mean of leading our souls to Christ, and of disposing us to cast ourselves down before him with humility and self-resignation. Ver. 2 10

Let us look upon this circumstance of the sacred story as a beautiful emblem of that more glorious state of the Christian church, when the Gentiles shall come to its light, and sages and kings to the brightness of its rising; when the abundance of the sea shall be converted to it, and the wealth of the Gentiles shall be consecrated to its honour. *The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.* Isa. lx. 3, 5, 6.

How wonderful was the honour conferred upon so obscure a town as Bethlehem, when it was made thus illustrious among the thousands of Judah! Happy they who consecrate not only their gold and their other possessions, but also their souls and their bodies to that Great Ruler, whose office it is to feed and govern the Israel of God; under whose conduct and care they shall receive blessings infinitely more valuable than all the treasures of the East or the West! 6 11

But oh! the fatal power of carnal influence on the heart! This engaged Herod to receive the news of a Redeem- 3

l *The star,* or meteor.] I say, *meteor,* because no *star* could point out not only a town, but a particular house. It is not at all strange Justin Martyr and other Fathers should suppose it was a *comet,* considering how little *astronomy* was known in their days; but one would not have imagined Grotius should have gone so far as in the least to intimate such a suspicion.

m *They rejoiced with a joy which was exceeding great.*] The original phrase, εχαρησαν χαραν μεγαλην σφοδρα, is emphatical beyond any thing which I can think of in our language. *They joyed a great joy very much,* though very bad English, comes nearest to a literal version.

n *When they were come into the house.*] Mr. Bedford observes, in his *Chronology,* p. 740, 741, that it is not expressly said, that *the sages* came to Bethlehem: but, from the series of the account that Matthew gives us, it seems so very plain, that few have questioned it; and it is the less to be doubted, because if Christ (as that author supposes,) had been now at Nazareth, he could hardly have been carried into Egypt, without passing through Herod's dominions. But it is more difficult to determine whether, if *the sages* found him at Bethlehem, (as we have reason to conclude they did,) it was within a few weeks of his birth, or (as Mr. Manne supposes, p. 41.) about a year after, when they had spent some considerable time at Nazareth, and afterwards, on some unknown occasion, made a visit to Bethlehem, where they must have contracted some acquaintance. The latter supposition is undoubtedly favoured by Luke, ii. 39; and Matt. ii. 16; unless we say, that the *star* appeared about the time of Christ's conception. It also suits best with all the arguments brought to prove that Christ was born A. U. C. 747, or 749, and that Herod died A. U. C. 750, or 751, compared with the tradition of the holy family's spending two years in Egypt. (See Munster on Matt. ii. 14.) These reasons have a face of strong probability, but I cannot say they entirely convince me; and therefore in the paraphrase I have determined nothing either way. Compare note o and p, in the last section, on Luke ii. 39. p. 22.

o From what they had expected.] Perhaps they expected this great Prince would have been born in the family of Herod; at least, we may be sure it was some surprise to them to find him accommodated only like *a carpenter's child:* but they wisely considered, that such miraculous honours as the *star* gave him, were far beyond any external circumstance, and therefore paid him their homage as readily as if they had found him in the richest palace. An amiable example of that humble ingenuous temper, which fits a man for the reception of the gospel.

p Customary in those countries, to offer some present to any illustrious personage they came to visit.] That this was customary appears from many passages of the Old Testament. (Gen. xliii. 11—25; 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8; x. 27; 1 Kings x. 2; Psalm lxxii. 10; and Prov. xviii. 16.) And Maundrel, Chardin, and many other modern writers of the best credit, assure us, the custom is yet retained. See also Ælian. *Var. Hist. lib.* i. *cap.* 31, 32, 33.

q *Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*] This was a most seasonable providential assistance, to furnish Joseph and Mary for so long and expensive a journey as that into Egypt; a country where they were entirely strangers, and yet were to abide there for some considerable time.

r *Another* and more direct *way.*] This seems to be intimated in the word αναχωρησαι, which might perhaps more literally have been rendered, *bend back their course.* Herod in the mean while waiting for their return, they had time to get out of his reach before his passion rose, which might have been fatal to them.

s Such a discovery of their *infant Saviour.*] I take it for granted here, that they had some divine intimation or human instruction, (which Joseph and Mary might indeed have given them,) that Christ was to *save his people from their sins,* and was *Emmanuel, God with us.* Surely God would not have guided them in this extraordinary manner, merely to pay a transient compliment to Jesus. Their *prostrations* probably expressed religious adoration as well as civil respect; and it is not unlikely, that their report might in due time make way for the reception of the gospel in the country from whence they came.—And if, as early antiquity reports, (Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib.* i. *cap.* 13.) and both Dr. Cave (*Lit. Hist.* vol. i. p. 2.) and the learned Dr. Grabe (*Spicileg. Patr.* vol. i. p. 1—6.) seem to think, some messages of extraordinary respect were afterwards sent from Abgarus, king of Edessa in Arabia, to our Lord Jesus Christ, (which might be fact, though the *letters* now remaining should be supposed *spurious,*) it is very possible, the report of these *sages,* preserved by *tradition,* (if they were then dead,) might add weight to that of *Christ's miracles* (about thirty years after,) and dispose that prince to take the greater notice of him.

SECT. 12. MATT. II. 12

er's birth with horror; and, with execrable cruelty and vile hypocrisy, to contrive his murder, under the specious form of doing him homage. Vain and self-confounding artifice! Let us rejoice in the thought, that there is no understanding, or wisdom, or counsel against the Lord; no scheme so artfully disguised that he cannot penetrate it, or so politically formed that he cannot with infinite ease confound it.

To what perplexity and grief might these sages have been brought, had they been made even the innocent instruments of an assault on this Holy Child! But God delivered them from such an alarm, and happily guided their return; so that, through his care and favour, they carried home, in the tidings of the new-born Messiah, far richer treasures than they had left behind. Thus shall they, who in all their ways acknowledge God, by one method or another, find that he will graciously direct their paths.

SECTION XIII.

The flight into Egypt: the slaughter of the infants; and the settlement of the holy family at Nazareth after Herod's death. Matt. ii. 13—23.

MATT. ii. 13.

SECT. 13. MATT. II.

AND after the return of the wise men, *when they* had paid their homage unto Christ, and *were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream*, with a message from heaven, *saying, Rise up* without any delay, *and take* with thee *the Infant and his mother, and flee* directly *into* the land of *Egypt*,[a] *and continue there till I shall give thee notice* to return; *for Herod*, alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened,[b] *is about to* make a strict *search for the young Child to destroy him*, lest he in time should prove a formidable rival to his family.

14 *And* Joseph, *rising* from his bed, immediately obeyed the heavenly vision: for *he took the Infant and his mother by night, and withdrew*, with as hasty a flight as their circumstances would allow, *into* the land of *Egypt*, near the borders of which Beth-

15 lehem lay. *And* they *continued there till* after *the death of Herod*, which happened not till several months after;[c] *that what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet* Hosea, on another occasion, *might* thus, as it were, *be fulfilled* anew; and that in this appointment of the place where Christ should take up his abode, there might appear to be a manifest allusion to that *saying*, (Hos. xi. 1.) "*Out of Egypt have I called my Son*;"[d] Christ being in a much higher and nobler sense the Son of God than Israel, of whom the words were originally spoken.

16 *Then Herod, seeing that he was deluded*,[e] and that a great affront (as he imagined) was designed him *by the sages*, as there was now no farther prospect of their returning to him, *was exceedingly enraged; and*, in order to make the destruction of this unknown infant as sure as possible, he *sent forth* a band of murderers, *and* inhumanly *slew all the male children*[f] *that were in Bethlehem, and in all the confines of it, from*

MATT. ii. 13.

AND when they were departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt;

15 And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof,

a *Flee into* the land of *Egypt*.] This circumstance doth not at all agree with the conjecture of Grotius, that this vision might appear after their return to Nazareth; for then (as Le Clerc justly observes) it is much more probable that they would have been ordered to flee into Syria, which was much nearer to Nazareth than Egypt; to which they could not have passed from thence, without going through the very heart of Herod's dominions, unless they had taken a very large circuit, with great expense and danger. —The great number of Jews which resided in Egypt would make their abode there so much the more comfortable.

b Alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened.] When the wise men had come so far to pay their homage to a new-born Prince, the several reports of what had lately happened would, upon this occasion, be revived, and the behaviour of two such celebrated persons as Simeon and Anna, on the presentation of Christ in the temple, which might at first be only taken notice of by a few pious persons, would probably be now reported to Herod, and must add to the alarm which the inquiry of the sages gave him.

c Which happened not till several months after.] I pretend not to say exactly how many, but must content myself with referring the reader for the proof of this to Mr. Manne's most elaborate and elegant *Dissertation on the Birth of Christ*, p. 35—39, which advances very considerable arguments to prove that Christ was born in the spring, A. U. C. 747. *Jul. Per.* 4707, and that Herod died about the Passover, A. U. C. 750. *Jul. Per.* 4710, probably towards the end of March; though, on further examination I rather incline to place the birth of Christ in September or October, A. U. C. 749; and to conclude that Herod died in March. A. U. C. 751. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Part I. Vol. II. p. 796—804, 963 *ad fin.*

d *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*] It is well known that, from the time of Julian at least, the enemies of Christianity have been cavilling at the application here made of *a prophecy* to Christ, which, in its original sense, seems to belong to the people of Israel. Learned men have laboured with great solicitude to prove it literally applicable to Christ. Mr. Pierce's hypothesis, (in his *Dissertation* on this text, added to his paraphrase on Philippians, p. 103, 108.) that the prophet is pursuing two subjects together, and alternately treating of each, which must therefore be read interchangeably, one part referring to the people of Israel, and the other to Christ, (as if it were designed by God, that the prophecy of Christ's being *called out of Egypt* should be obscured by such a method,) appears indeed to be very ingenious: But I fear, if such liberties were to be allowed, it would render the Scripture the most uncertain book in the world.—Bishop Chandler (in his *Defence of Christianity*, p. 294.) supposes that *calling out of Egypt* is a proverbial expression for being delivered from imminent danger; which might have been said to have its accomplishment in Christ's escape, though he had fled into Syria, Arabia, or any other country: But, with all due deference to so great a name, I must observe, that neither Isa. x. 26; Deut. xxviii. 68; or Zach. x. 11; seem sufficient to prove the use of such a phrase; and I apprehend that, if the use of such a proverb were proved, the passage before us would still seem a plainer reference to Hos. xi. 1, than to such a general form of speech; so that the difficulty would still remain.—I once thought the words כי נער ישראל ואהבתיו might be rendered and paraphrased after this manner: "*Though Israel be* "*a child*, that is, wayward and troublesome like a little infant, "*yet I have loved him, and*, in token of my tenderness to him, *will* "*call* (Jesus) *my Son out of Egypt*; having there preserved him "from the dangers which threatened his infancy, that he may at "length accomplish my great intended salvation." I still think that this conjecture deserves some consideration, as much more probable than any other solution of this kind I have ever met with.—But, on the whole, especially considering the context, I chuse to take them, as Grotius, Heinsius, and many of the best critics do, for a mere allusion; and the rather, as I am fully convinced that the next quotation, in ver. 17, must necessarily be taken in this sense.

e *Seeing that he was deluded.*] The word ενεπαιχθη, which properly signifies to be *played with*, well expresses the view in which the pride of Herod taught him to regard this action, as if it were intended to expose him to the derision of his subjects, and to treat him as a child, rather than a prince of so great experience and renown.

f *Sent forth* a band of murderers, *and slew all the male children.*] A very ingenious and learned friend of mine has attempted to account for Josephus's silence as to this remarkable fact, by a conjecture, that instead of sending forth (as it was in the first edition) *a detachment of soldiers*, (of which, he justly urges, nothing is expressly said in the text,) he might only send *private orders* to have the children taken off as secretly as possible; so that it might not make any public noise, and come to the notice of the Jewish historian. But, in answer to this, (not to insist upon the argument from Macrobius, *Saturnal. lib.* ii. *cap.* 4. that the Emperor Augustus had heard of it at Rome,) I would observe, that it is certain nothing of such *privacy* in the dispatch of these children can be inferred from the word ανειλεν, since it is also used to express the crucifixion of our Lord, (Acts ii. 23; x. 39.) the stoning of Stephen, (Acts xxii. 20.) and the beheading of James the Apostle, (Acts xii. 2.) all which were public executions; as well as the intended

from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young Child's life.

21 And he arose, and took the young Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken

their entrance upon the second year,[g] *and under;* as that, *according to the time of which he had got exact information from the sages,* must include all that were born there since the appearance of the star. SECT. 13.

And *then,* as this cruel execution extended itself to the neighbouring places, and in particular to Ramah, a town of Benjamin, which lay near Bethlehem, *that* remarkable saying *was* farther *fulfilled, which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet,* (Jer. xxxi. 15.) for this was plainly an event, to which those words might be applied with more literal propriety than to the captivity of the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, which they were originally intended to describe,[h] when they were first delivered by the prophet, *saying,* "*In Ramah there was a* most doleful *voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and* "*abundant mourning, as* if *Rachel,* that tender mother, who was buried near this place,[i] "had risen out of her grave, and was *bewailing her* lost *children, and refusing to be* "*comforted, because they are not.*" MATT. II. 17 18

But after this, *when Herod was dead,*[k] and an end put to all his cruelties, *behold, an angel of the Lord* again *appeareth in a dream to Joseph,* while he continued to sojourn *in Egypt, saying,* The way is now prepared for thy return from hence, and I am sent according to the intimation that was given thee before, to bring thee notice of it; and therefore now *arise, and take the Infant and his mother, and go* back *to* thine own abode in *the land of Israel; for* thou mayest safely do it, since *they are dead who sought* to destroy *the young Child's life.*[l] 19 20

And Joseph had no sooner heard the message that was brought him by the angel, but *he* immediately *arose, and,* cheerfully confiding in the Divine protection, *took the young Child and his mother,* according to the command he had received, *and came into the land of Israel. But when,* upon his coming to the borders of it, *he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in the room of his father Herod,* knowing him to be the heir of his cruelty,[m] as well as of his kingdom, *he was afraid to go thither* to settle, or so much as to take it in his way; *but, being* again *divinely admonished in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee,* which was under the government of Herod Antipas,[n] a prince of a milder character; and who was then on such hostile terms with Archelaus, that there was no danger of his giving them up to him. *And he went and dwelt in a little city,* on the confines of Zabulon and Issachar, which was *called Nazareth,* where he had formerly resided before he went to Bethlehem; and being thus returned to his own city, Jesus was there brought up and educated in a place so very contemptible among the Jews, that it was grown into a proverb with them, That no good thing could be expected 21 22 23

assassination of Paul by a band of armed men. (Acts xxiii. 15.) And if it be considered, on the one hand, how difficult it is privately to murder children under two years old, as they are hardly ever left alone; and on the other, how ill such a cautious and uncertain procedure would have agreed with the furious disposition of Herod, and the haughty rage in which these orders were given, I believe few will incline to this hypothesis.—As for the *silence* of Josephus, it is to be considered, that Bethlehem was but a small place; and therefore, in a reign of so much cruelty, the slaughter of its infants might not be taken very much notice of. Josephus was not old enough to remember it himself: and if he did not find it in the memoirs of Nicholas of Damascus, (that flattering historian, of whom we know he made great use in compiling the life of Herod,) he might be unwilling to introduce it, even if he were particularly acquainted with it; lest the occasion might have led him to mention what, generally at least, he is solicitous to decline, I mean Christian affairs. On the whole, if we compare contemporary historians of every age, we shall find some material fact or another omitted by each of them; yet that silence of one is never urged as an argument against admitting the express testimony of the rest. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Part i. Vol. ii. book ii. chap. ii. sect. i. p. 746, *et seq.*

g *From their entrance upon the second year.*] The reasons which determined me to render απο διετους thus, may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull's excellent note on this place. It is probable that Herod, in his passion, ordered the slaughter of the infants as soon as he perceived that he was disappointed in his expectation of the return of the wise men, lest otherwise the child he was so jealous of might be removed; and as his cruelty extended even to those who had entered on the second year, which is expressly said to be according to the time of which he had got exact information from the sages, it must be natural to conclude from hence, that it was not till some considerable time after the birth of Christ that he was visited by the wise men, even though we should allow the first appearance of the star to have been (as some suppose) about the time of *Christ's conception.* Compare note n on Matt. ii. 11. p. 25. —For the version of ακριβουν, see note i on ver. 7. p. 24.

h Which they were originally intended to describe.] It is very evident from the following clause, (Jer. xxxi. 17.) *Thy children shall come again to their own border,* that these lamented persons were not *slain,* but carried into captivity; and it is well known, that Ramah was the place where they were assembled to be led away to Babylon, (Jer. xl. 1.) So that it is certain, this can only be an allusion, as it is intimated in the paraphrase. And I look upon this as a sure argument, that a passage in scripture, whether prophetical, historical, or poetical, may, in the language of the New Testament, be said to be *fulfilled,* when an event happens to which it may with great propriety be accommodated. See Dr. Sykes on the *Truth of Christianity,* chap. xiii. p. 217, *et seq.*

i *Rachel,* who was buried near this place.] See Gen. xxxv. 19; and 1 Sam. x. 2.

k *When Herod was dead.*] It is well worth while to read the particular and affecting account which Josephus has given of the terrible death of this inhuman tyrant, whom God so remarkably made *a terror to himself* as well as to all about him. (See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 5; and *Bell. Jud. lib.* 1. *cap.* 33. [al. 21.] § 5, 6, 7.) Eusebius thought it so great an illustration of the gospel-history, that he has inserted it at large, *Eccl. Hist. lib.* 1. *cap.* 8.) with a degree of exactness, which joins with many other instances of the like nature, to show us how cheerfully we may depend upon the many invaluable extracts from a multitude of ancient books now lost, which he has given us both in his *Ecclesiastical History* and in his other writings, especially in his *Præparatio Evangelica.*

l *They are dead who sought* to destroy *the young Child's life.*] It is a very ingenious conjecture of Mr. Manne, that Antipater, the son of Herod, who at the time when Christ was born, was heir-apparent to his crown, and was a prince so cruel and ambitious, that he had procured the death of his two elder brothers, to clear his way to the succession, would very probably be an active counsellor and instrument in seeking the destruction of the new-born Jesus, and in advising to the slaughter of the infants. And, as this Antipater died but five days before Herod, both might be referred to in these words of the angel, *They are dead,* &c. See Manne's *Dissert.* p. 74, 75; and compare Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xvi. *cap.* 8. [al. 11.] § 4. *lib.* xvii. *cap.* 1. & 8. [al. 10.] § 1. *Edit. Havercamp.*

m The heir of his cruelty.] Archelaus, in the very beginning of his reign, massacred three thousand Jews at once in the temple, and was afterwards banished, in the tenth year of his government, to Vienna in Gaul, by Augustus, on a complaint brought against him by the chief of the Jews for his various cruelties. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 9. [al. 11.] § 3. p. 851. and *cap.* 13. [al. 15.] § 2. p. 866.

n *Galilee,*—under the government of Herod Antipas.] Herod the Great divided his dominions by his last will, appointing Archelaus to succeed him as king of Judea, Herod Antipas to be Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, and Philip to be Tetrarch of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 8. [al. 11.] § 1.) But Herod Antipas endeavoured to supplant his brother Archelaus, when application was made to the Romans to confirm the will, and went to Rome with a view of obtaining the kingdom, (which was left to him in a former will,) in which he was supported by the interest of the whole family, who hated Archelaus, and thought his brother to be far more worthy of the kingdom; and, though he did not carry his point, the attempt was such as could not but widen the breach there was before between them, and left no room for any future correspondence. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 9. [al. 11.] § 4. & *cap.* 11. [al. 13.] § 4.

SECT. 13. MATT. II.

from thence; (John i. 46: vii. 52.) so that by this a way was further opened by the providence of God, *that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken* in effect *by* many of *the prophets*, "*He shall be called a Nazarœan*,"[o] that is, he shall appear in mean and despicable circumstances, and be treated as the mark of public contempt and reproach.

by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16 WHAT is our fallen nature, that it can be capable of such enormities as we have now been surveying? or what imaginable circumstances of grandeur and power can free the mind of an ambitious creature from servitude and misery? Who can behold Herod under the agitation of such a barbarous rage, and not see the vanity even of royal dignity, when the man that sways the sceptre over others, *hath no rule over his own spirit?* Surely none of the innocent victims of Herod's wrath felt so much from the sword of their barbarous murderers, as the guilty mind of the tyrant from its own unnatural transports.

The indignation which arises in our minds on the view of so much wickedness, finds a secret satisfaction in this
18 thought. But how grievous is it to reflect on what the parents of these poor babes felt, while the sword that murdered their children in their very sight, pierced through their own bowels! *Happy*, in comparison with these, were *the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck!* Let parents remember, how soon their dearest hopes may be turned into lamentation, and learn to moderate their expectation from their infant offspring, and check too fond a delight in them.

Let us all learn to be very thankful, that we are not under the arbitrary power of a *tyrant*, whose sallies of distracted fury might spread desolation through houses and provinces. Let us not say, Where was the great Regent of the universe, when such a horrible butchery was transacted? His all-wise counsels knew how to bring good out of all the evil of it. The agony of a few moments transmitted these oppressed innocents to peace and joy; while the impotent rage of Herod only heaped on his own head guilt, infamy, and horror. *He conceived mischief, and he brought forth vanity*, (Job xv. 35.) and while he studied to prevent the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, and *set himself*, with impious rage, *against the Lord, and against his Anointed, He that sitteth in the heavens did laugh*, yea *the Lord had him in derision*. (Psal. ii. 2, 4.) That God, who discerns every secret purpose of his enemies, and foresees every intended assault, knows how, whenever he pleases, by a thought, by a dream, to baffle it.

13 The preservation of the holy child Jesus in Egypt, may be considered as a figure of God's care over his church in its greatest danger. God doth not often, as he easily could, strike their persecutors with immediate destruction; but he provides a hiding-place for his people, and, by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves his chosen seed from being swept away, even when *the enemy comes in like a flood.*

14, 15 Egypt, that was once the seat of persecution and oppression to the *Israel of God*, is now a refuge to *his son:* and thus all places will be to us what divine Providence will be pleased to make them. When, like Joseph and Mary, we are cut off from the worship of his temple, and perhaps removed into a strange land, he can be *a little sanctuary* to us, and give us, in his gracious presence, a rich equivalent for all that we have lost.

19 They continued here, till he gave the signal for their departure. Let us, in like manner, remember that it is God's part to direct, and ours to obey; nor can we be out of the way of safety and of comfort, while we are following his directions, and steering our course by the intimations of his pleasure!

20 Jesus survived his persecutors, and returned into the land of Israel again; but such was his condescension, that he
23 abode at Nazareth, which seems to have been allotted him as the most humble station. Let us never be unwilling to bear reproach for him, who from his infancy endured it for us; nor take offence at the meanness of his condition, whose removes were directed by angelic messengers, as immediate envoys from the God of heaven!

SECTION XIV.

Jesus, at the age of twelve years, comes up to the passover at Jerusalem, and there discourses with the doctors in the temple. Luke ii. 40, *to the end.*

LUKE ii. 40.

SECT. 14. LUKE II.

AND the Child Jesus, being returned to Nazareth, was educated in that city under the care of Joseph and his mother, and there *grew up and became strong in spirit*, discovering early marks of a sublime and heavenly genius, and visibly appearing to be *filled with* an uncommon portion and degree of *wisdom; and* it was plainly to be seen, that *the grace of God was* eminently *upon him;* so that he made an extraordinary progress in
40 knowledge and piety betimes, and was thus looked upon as a distinguished favourite of heaven. (Compare Judg. xiii. 24, 25.)

41 *Now his* pious *parents went early to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover;* as it was usual for those families to do that were remarkably religious, though only the adult males were by the law obliged to appear before the Lord on this occasion. (Compare 1 Sam.
42 i. 3, 7, 21.) *And when he was twelve years old*, and so, according to the Jewish maxims, came under the yoke of the law,[a] his parents, when *they went up to Jerusalem*,

LUKE ii. 40.
AND the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went

o *He shall be called a Nazarœan.*] If the solution given in the paraphrase be not allowed, I must acquiesce in Chrysostom's opinion, that the passage referred to is lost: For it is very unnatural to explain this text by Samson's being appointed a Nazarite, Judg. xiii. 5; or the Messiah's being spoken of as *Netzar, the branch*, Isa. xi. 1; or to account for it with Witsius, by God's being called *Notzar, the preserver of men*, Job viii. 20. (See Wits. *Meletem. Diss.* § 16.) The joint sense of many scriptures is thus referred to, John vii. 38; and James iv. 5. And that the Messiah should be treated in a very contemptuous manner, was foretold by David, Psal. xxii. 6, *et seq.* lxix. 9; by Isaiah, chap. lii. and liii. and by Zechariah, chap. xi. 12, 13.

a Came under the yoke of the law.] Though I am not satisfied of the truth of Grotius's assertion, that the Jewish children under this age were called קטנים, or little ones, and afterwards נערים, or children, (since it is certain that the word נער is often used for those under that age; see 1 Sam. i. 24; Judg. xiii. 24; and Hos. xi. 1, 3;) yet I think the fact asserted in the paraphrase is generally allowed by learned men. See Wotton's *Miscel.* Vol. i. p. 320; and Lightf. *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

according to the usual *custom of the feast*, thought it proper to take him with them, to celebrate that glorious deliverance, which God had so many ages ago wrought for his people when he brought them out of Egypt, the memory of which was carefully to be transmitted to every succeeding generation. (Compare Exod. xii. 26, 27.)

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

And when they had finished all the religious solemnities to be observed in *the days* of unleavened bread, *and were returning home, the child Jesus*, charmed with the sacred entertainments of the temple, and eagerly desirous of improving in the knowledge of his Father's law, *staid behind* them *in Jerusalem; and neither Joseph nor his mother were aware* [*of it*.] 43

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

But though they saw he was not with them, yet, knowing his sociable temper, *they supposed he was* somewhere *in the company*, (as several families travelled together on such occasions:) *And* they *went a* whole *day's journey* before they missed him; *and* then, in the evening, *they sought for him amongst their kindred and acquaintance*, who were their companions in the journey, and with whom they concluded he had been. 44

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him:

And, not finding him with them, *they returned* immediately, and came *back to Jerusalem, seeking him* every where with great concern, and ready to suspect that some hostile assault might have been made upon him. 45

46 And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.

And, three days after their setting out,[b] *they found him in* an apartment of *the temple*, where the teachers of the law used to lecture upon it to the people; and where young persons in particular were examined, and had a liberty to ask what questions they thought proper, for their farther information.[c] Here was Jesus *sitting in the midst of the doctors*, whose profession it was to teach on these occasions; for he had placed himself among others at their feet,[d] and was, with all possible diligence, *both attending to them, and asking them* such *questions* as he judged proper, for the farther illustration of what they said. 46

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And all who heard him, considering the tenderness of his age, *were in a* perfect *transport of admiration*[e] *at his understanding*, and at the penetration which he shewed, both in the questions he put to them, *and* also in the *answers* he returned to what they asked him. 47

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And when he was discovered by his parents, and *they saw him* thus employed, *they* likewise *were struck with wonder: and his mother said unto him*, Oh my *son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold*, this is now the third day that *thy father and I have sought thee*, from place to place, *with* inexpressible *anxiety* and distress. 48

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And he said unto them, What is the cause that you have sought me with so much concern? and why is it you were at such a loss where you should find me? *Did ye not know that I ought to be at my Father's?*[f] and that wherever I was, I should be so employed in his service as to be secure of his protection? *And they did not* perfectly *understand the words which he spake unto them* upon this occasion,[g] as being expressed in something of a concise and ambiguous manner. 49, 50

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And he went down into the country *with them, and came to Nazareth*; *and* there he did not assume any air of superiority on account of the extraordinary applause he had met with from the people who had heard him in the temple, but still *continued subject* to his parents, and respectful *to them*, as a most dutiful and obedient child. *And his mother kept all these sayings* and occurrences *in her heart*, and often reflected very seriously upon them. 51

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

And Jesus advanced considerably *in wisdom*, as well as in age *and stature*,[h] *and* grew proportionably *in favour* both *with God and men;* his behaviour being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging, as to gain the friendship and affection of all that were about him. 52

b *Three days after* their setting out.] The first day was spent in their journey homeward, the second in their return to Jerusalem, and the third in searching after Christ there.—The word εγενετο, *it came to pass*, is a mere expletive: and, not imagining that the rules of the most faithful and exact translation would oblige me always to retain it, I have frequently omitted it.

c For their farther information.] All these things are so well illustrated and confirmed by Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Hor. Heb.* on this place, that I cannot but refer the reader thither. See also Drusius's excellent note on this place.

d *Sitting*——at their feet.] I have often thought it a great injury to the character of our blessed Redeemer to represent this story, whether in pictures or words, as if Christ, at this tender age, went up into the seats of the doctors, and there disputed with them. Not one word is said of his disputing by the Evangelist, but only of his asking some questions, and answering others, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies, and indeed the very end of them. All was, no doubt, conducted with the utmost modesty and decorum. And if he were with others at the feet of these teachers, (where learners generally sat, see Luke x. 39; and Acts xxii. 3.) he might be said to be in the midst of them, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their auditors and disciples.

e *Were in a transport of admiration.*] Every learned reader must know that the words εξιστανθο here and εξεπλαγησαν in the next verse, are much more forcible than our translation of them, and much more literally rendered here.

f *I ought to be at my Father's:* εν τοις τε πατρος μω δει εινα με.] There is a known ambiguity in the original. I have chosen with Grotius, Capellus, Fuller, &c. to follow the Syriac version of the words, where it is rendered, *in my Father's house*, which it is certain they will well bear; and so Josephus puts εν τοις τε Διος, for, in Jupiter's temple; *contra Apion. lib.* i. § 18. p. 449. Haverc. (Compare John xix. 27; Esther v. 10; vi. 12; vii. 9. Gr.) And, indeed, though a general apprehension of his being well employed might be a reason (as it is intimated in the paraphrase,) against their excessive anxiety, yet it could not (as the words in this connection seem to imply,) have directed them where to find him. It is to be remembered, this was the first visit Christ had ever made to the temple since he was a child in arms; and it is no wonder therefore that the delight he found there inclined him to prolong it.

g *They did not* perfectly *understand the words which he spake unto them.*] It is strange Grotius should think συνηκαν should here be rendered, *They did not attentively consider what he said*, when the very next verse assures us *Mary kept all these sayings in her heart.* The phrase only implies, that there was something more in Christ's words than at first appeared. He conjectures there might be a reference to his being *the Lord* who was to *come into his temple*, (Mal. iii. 1.) which, if there be, it is indeed very obscure. It seems more probable, it may be an intimation that he had many other important visits to make to his Father's house; which evidently appears by the sequel of the history.

h *In wisdom*, as well as in age *and stature.*] It is well known that ηλικια may signify either *age* or *stature;* but I think the latter is meant here, because the former was too apparent to need the mention. It seems a very just and important remark of Erasmus here, that all the endowments of the *Man Christ Jesus* were owing to the Divine beneficence, and that the *Deity* communicated itself in a gradual manner to that *human nature* which it had assumed.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 14. LUKE II. Let us, who are heads of families, take occasion from the story before us, to renew our resolutions, that *we and our house will serve the Lord*: and remember, that it is a part of our duty, not only to God but to our domestics, to engage them with us in his public worship; the pleasure of which will surely be increased when we see them, and especially our dear children, joining with us in attendance on our great common Father.

Ver. 43, 46 Let children view the example of the holy child Jesus, with an humble desire to copy after it. Let them love the house and ordinances of God, and thirst for the instructions of his good word. Let them think themselves happy, if his servants in the ministry will bestow a part of their important time in those exercises which are especially suited for their instruction; and let them not only be careful to return the properest answers they can, but at convenient times, with modesty and respect, ask such questions as may be likely to improve them in knowledge and grace.

51 Let those children whose genius is most promising and most admired, learn from the blessed Jesus, to behave themselves in an humble and submissive manner to all their elders, and especially to their parents; for though he was *the Lord of all*, yet was he subject, not only to Mary his real mother, but to Joseph, though only supposed to be his father. Such children may well hope that the grace of God will still be upon them; and, growing in 40, 52 wisdom, as they do in stature, they will also advance *in favour with God and men*, and be the darlings of heaven, as well as of earth.

40 47 51 And oh, that the greatest and wisest of us, those of the longest standing, and of the most eminent stations in the church, might learn of this admirable and divine child; that, always remembering our relation to God, and ever intent on learning his will, and promoting his glory, we might, with humble acquiescence, accommodate ourselves to all the disposals of his providence! How easily could he, who discovered such early marks of a sublime genius and a lively wit, have relished the most elegant delights of science, and have eclipsed all the most celebrated poets, orators, and philosophers, of that learned and polite age! But he laid all those views aside, that he might pursue the duties of that humble rank of life which his heavenly Father's infinite wisdom had assigned him: and joined, as it would seem, to assist in maintaining himself, and his parents too, by the daily labour of his hands. Let us learn from hence, that it is the truest greatness of soul to know our own place and office, and to deny ourselves those amusements of the mind,[i] as well as those gratifications of the senses, which are inconsistent with the proper services of our different relations and callings.

SECTION XV.

The opening of John the Baptist's ministry. Mark i. 1—6. Luke iii. 1—6. Matt. iii. 1—6.

MARK. i. 1.

SECT. 15. MARK I. *THE beginning of the gospel*-history *of Jesus Christ, the* only-begotten *Son of God*, as it is recorded by the Evangelist Mark, thus takes its rise from the first opening of John's ministry. It was this John that came under the character of the great forerunner of the Messiah; *as it is written in the prophets*, and particularly in Malachi, (chap. iii. 1.) "*Behold, I* will *send my messenger before thy face*, O my Anointed Son, *who shall* "*prepare thy way before thee:* and, as the harbinger appointed to proclaim thy "coming, shall, with remarkable solemnity, make it the business of his ministry to intro-"duce thy kingdom." So also it was prophesied concerning him by Isaiah, (ch. xl. 3.)
3 "There shall be heard *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*,[a] and solemnly pro-"claiming to this purpose in the deserts of Judea, *Prepare ye* with readiness *the way of* "*the Lord*, and *make his paths straight* and smooth, by removing every thing which "might prove an obstruction to his gracious appearance." These prophecies (as it will presently be seen) received a very signal and remarkable accomplishment in John, who, from his office, was surnamed the Baptist.

MARK. i. 1.
THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God,
2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

LUKE III. 1 Now this eminent person made his first public appearance *in the fifteenth year of the reign of* the emperor *Tiberius Cæsar*, [b] reckoning the beginning of his reign from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire,[b] *when*, Archelaus being banished, and his kingdom reduced into a Roman province, *Pontius Pilate was governor* or procurator *of Judea: and*, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death,[c] *Herod* Antipas, one of his sons, *was tetrarch of Galilee*, or governor of that fourth part of his dominions; *and his brother Philip tetrarch of* another fourth part, which was *the region of Iturea and Trachonitis*, (the name now given to that

LUKE iii. 1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

i Those amusements of the mind.] I hope my younger brethren in the ministry will pardon me, if I bespeak their particular attention to this thought; lest, if the main part of their time be given to the curiosities of learning, and only a few fragments of it to their great work, *the care of souls*, they see cause in their last moments to adopt the words of dying Grotius, perhaps with much greater propriety than he could use them: *Proh! vitam perdidi, operosè nihil agendo*:—Alas! I have thrown away life in doing nothing with a great deal of pains.

a *The voice of one crying in the wilderness.*] Most commentators have imagined these words originally to refer to the proclamation of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity: but there is no imaginable reason for supposing an immediate connection between the conclusion of the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, and the beginning of the fortieth; nor can I observe any thing in the process of this chapter, which may not literally suit the evangelical sense here given it by Mark, as well as Matthew and Luke.

b Reckoning from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire.] Supposing Christ was born A. U. C. 747, (as in note c, p. 26,) it is absolutely necessary to interpret the words thus; because the fifteenth year of Tiberius, if reckoned from the death of Augustus, began in August, A. U. 781, and would thus be the thirty-fourth year of Christ's life, which is plainly inconsistent with Luke iii. 23. See Mann's *Dissert.* p. 136—140.) But if the birth of Christ be placed (as seems most probable) in September, A. U. 749, and Tiberius was admitted to a part in the empire three years before Augustus died in August 764, the fifteenth year of Tiberius on this computation began in August 778. And if John entered on his ministry in the spring following, A. U. 779, in the same year of Tiberius, and after he had preached about twelve months, baptized Jesus in the spring of 780, then Jesus at his baptism would be but thirty years of age and some odd months, which perfectly agrees with what St. Luke says, of his being at that time *about thirty years old*. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Part I. Vol. II. p. 838, 839.

c Divided after his death.] See note n, on Matt. ii. 22. p. 27.

tract of land on the other side Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh: and Lysanias was between[a] Abilene,[a] a fair city of Syria, whose temple was reached even to Lebanon and Damascus, and was peopled with great numbers of Jews.—In these days[b] while Annas and Caiaphas were high-priests,[c] the word of God, by peculiar appointment, came unto John the Baptist,[d] the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had lived for several years retired in the wilderness of Judea. Compare Luke i. 80. p. 12.

And John, at the first opening of his ministry, did preach with great gravity, and solemnity to the multitudes: and, remembering the people inclined to pay an attention bigoted to his doctrine, he did not consider himself to their wishes alone, but came out of the country about Jordan, and went a progress over it, from one place to another, in both sides the river, preaching every where, to be sure along, the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins; earnestly exhorting men to repent of all the transgressions of their lives, and to be baptized, in token of their sincere desire to be washed and cleansed from them; and assuring them, at the same time, that if they complied in the institution in a truly penitent manner, they might consider it as a pledge and token of their being forgiven by God.

And while he was thus urging the exhortation, and saying, *Repent ye*, he pleaded with them a very new and unpolished argument: *For* (said he) *the kingdom of heaven is now approaching*:[e] and God is about to appear, in an extraordinary manner, to erect that kingdom spoken of by Daniel, (chap. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.) to the kingdom of the God of heaven, which he would set up and give to the Son of man, making it finally victorious over all other kingdoms. It is therefore (said the Baptist) of the highest importance, that you should be the subjects of that kingdom, which, without a sincere and universal repentance, you cannot possibly be.

And as this circumstance he failed not to urge, and to insist upon, that passage of scripture, which has in part been just now mentioned, making a written use of it, as it is written in the book of Solomon's sayings and proverbs[f] (chap. xxv. 1—7.) where he is speaking, with a manifest reference to the Messiah's kingdom, "These shall be "found the words of one crying aloud in the wilderness, "*Prepare ye the way of the* "*Lord* with the most thankful readiness, and cheerfully set yourselves to make *His paths* "*straight* and plain, by removing every thing which might prove an obstruction when "he comes on so gracious a design. *Every valley* shall therefore be *filled up*, and *every* "*mountain* and hill shall be *brought down* before him; *even the crooked roads shall* "*be made into a straight way*, and the rough places *shall be laid smooth and level*; "for by the mighty power of his grace, which shall be now remarkably displayed, such a "glorious way shall be made for his gospel, and it shall be propagated with such speed "and success, that it shall seem as if the whole face of nature were miraculously changed; "and mountains and valleys, and forests and rocks were to spread themselves into a "spacious plain before the messenger of it. *And* then not the Jew only, but "*all flesh*, or the whole human race, not excepting the remotest Gentile nations, *shall* "*see* and witness *the great salvation of God*."

Now, that this extraordinary message might meet with the greater regard, God was 7

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[a] *Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene.*] Some have thought this Lysanias could be no other than the son of Ptolemy mentioned in the foregoing note: but it seems much more probable that he was a prince of that name, who had been governor of that country several generations before Josephus. *Antiq. Jud.* lib. xiv. cap. 6. [al. 12.] § 4. p. 722. Hudsonæ.

[b] *In those days.*] This is supplied from Matt. iii. 1. where it is proper to observe, that the parable of the barren fig-tree is a very expressive name for that age of which we are now speaking in the preceding words. Though Jesus remained many thirty years after these wonderful events happened, and things were in a fair train to establish the kingdom of Christ, yet—that the nation as a body might, the greater part, at least, of the present generation, or [illegible] repent under the gentle dispensation of Christ, compared to dressing a barren tree with the utmost care and diligence, and waiting for its fruit; which was however their ruin, and that of their posterity.

[c] *While Annas and Caiaphas were high-priests.*] As it does not appear that Annas ever held the office of high-priest, but only Caiaphas, [illegible] *Antiq. Jud.* lib. xviii. cap. 2. [al. 3.] § 2. p. 877. I cannot suppose it to have been their design to point out the former part of his year and Caiaphas the latter, much less that Luke meant to point to the Jewish constitution, as to suppose that it could be any high priest properly so called. The united relation in these two names appears, and the other the name of dignity, so that this title might, after a very unexceptionable manner, be applied to both. See note c, on Luke iii. 1. p. 186.

[d] *The word of God came unto John the Baptist.*] I would most willingly declare, as expressly as any words can, that John was called to the prophetic work in the wilderness just as Moses, if Mr. Mosheim's supposition prove to be erroneous that the first Christ commanded to give Ethiopia over from a self-willing, and all the miracle, work of Aaron's apostasy could be endured within the compass of one year: which is the [illegible] space, generally speculated. To conclude from the language which Luke here uses, he intends to express the time of Christ's descent, though it did not happen in the same year in which the preaching of John commenced, is to the utmost degree unnatural, and [illegible] that could be thought of. How much more would it be the opinion of a large many [illegible] in the interpretation of Luke iii. 21 circumstances which seem to have prompted that venerable and ingenious writer into a train of [illegible] [illegible] which [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

SECT. 15. MATT. III. pleased to send it by a person on many accounts remarkable, and especially for the temperance, and even the severity of his manner of living. For *this John wore* (as the ancient prophets used to do) *a* rough *garment* which was made *of camel's hair*, and so indeed was but a kind of sackcloth; *and* he had *a leathern girdle about his waist:* (compare 2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4; Rev. vi. 12; and xi. 3.) *And* as for *his food*, 4 it was such as the wilderness afforded, which *was* frequently nothing but a large kind of *locusts*,[k] which the law allowed him to eat; (Lev. xi. 21, 22.) *and wild honey*, often to be found in hollow trees, or in the clefts of the rocks. (Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 26; Judg. xiv. 8; and Psal. lxxxi. 16.)

same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was locusts and wild honey. [Mark i. 6.]

5 These uncommon circumstances of his public appearance concurred with the time of it, to awaken in the people a great regard for his preaching; for their uneasiness under the Roman yoke, which *then* bore hard upon them, raised the most impatient desire of the Messiah's arrival; by whom they expected not only deliverance, but conquest, and universal monarchy. They therefore attentively listened to this proclamation of his approach; so that *the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and* multitudes out of *all the land of Judea, and all* 6 *the region round about Jordan, went out* to hear him, and were attentive *to him*.[l] And great numbers of them were brought under very serious impressions by his faithful remonstrances, expostulations, and warnings: *and* those that were awakened to repentance, *were all baptized by him in the river Jordan;* expressing the convictions they were under, by *confessing their sins*, and, by submitting to this rite, engaging themselves for the future to reformation and obedience.

5 Then went out to him [they of] Jerusalem, and all [the land of] Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. [Mark i. 5.]

6 And were [all] baptized of him in [the river of] Jordan, confessing their sins. [Mark i. 5.]

IMPROVEMENT.

MARK I. 1. With what pleasure should we hear the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God! and with what reverence remember the dignity of his divine nature, amidst all the condescensions of his incarnate state!

MATT. III. 2 It is surely matter of unspeakable thankfulness, that the kingdom of heaven should be erected among men! that the great God should condescend so far as to take to himself a people from our mean and sinful world, and appoint his own Son to be the governor of that kingdom! How happy are we that it is preached among us, and we are called into it! Let it be our great care that we be not only nominal, but real members of it.

6 For this purpose let us remember, and consider that, to become the subjects of this kingdom, we are to enter into it by the way of repentance; humbly confessing our sins, and resolutely forsaking them, if we do indeed desire to find mercy.

LUKE III. 3 Let us bless God, both for the promises of pardon and for the appointment of the seals of it, particularly of baptismal washing; always remembering the obligation it brings upon us to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

4 And, being ourselves become members of Christ's kingdom, let us pray that it may be every where extended.

6 May divine Grace remove every obstruction, and make a free course for his gospel, that it may every where run and be glorified, so that *all flesh may see the salvation of God!*

MATT. III. 4 John, with this awful severity of manners and of doctrine, was sent *before Christ to prepare his way.* Let us learn to reflect how necessary it is that the law should thus introduce the gospel; and let all the terrors of Moses and Elias render the mild and blessed Redeemer so much the more welcome to our souls!

SECTION XVI.

John the Baptist addresses suitable admonitions to those that attended his ministry, and proclaims the approach of the Messiah. Matt. iii. 7—12; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 7—18.

MATT. iii. 7.

SECT. 16. MATT. III. WHEN John opened his ministry, there were two very different sects among the Jews; that of the Pharisees, who were exceeding strict in ceremonial institutions, and in the observation of human traditions; and that of the Sadducees, who, among other very obnoxious notions, denied the existence of spirits, and a future state of rewards and punishments; yet some of both these sects, out of curiosity or popular custom, or for some other unknown 7 reason, attended on the preaching of this holy man: *And when he saw* among the multitudes that came to be baptized by him, that *many*, both *of the Pharisees and Sadducees*,[a] were *coming* to receive *his baptism*;[b] as he well knew the open profaneness of the one, and the

MATT. iii. 7.

BUT when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [Luke iii. 7.]

k A large kind of *locusts*.] Though it may be allowed, on the authority of the accurate Sandys, (see his valuable *Travels*, p. 183.) and many others, that there is in these parts a shrub called the Locust-tree, the buds of which something resemble asparagus; yet, notwithstanding all the pains Sir Norton Knatchbull has taken to prove it, I cannot imagine the word ακριδες is here to be understood as referring to the product of it. It is certain, the word in the Septuagint and elsewhere generally signifies the animal which we call a locust, or a large, winged grasshopper, (see Rev. ix. 3, 7, 9.) which the law allowed the Jews to eat, (Lev. xi. 21, 22.) and which Pliny assures us made a considerable part of the food of the Parthians and Ethiopians. (See Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* xi. *cap.* 29. and *lib.* vi. *cap.* 30.) The matter is excellently illustrated by the learned *notes* of Heinsius, Drusius, and Elsner, on this place: but Erasmus is tediously prolix upon it; and, which is strange, he is very warm too. What need have we to keep a guard upon our spirits, when so great and so good-natured a man could be angry in a debate of so small importance!—I shall add only on this point, with respect to the use of locusts for food, what Dr. Shaw tells us, that, when sprinkled with salt, and fried, they taste much like the river cray-fish; who justly contends for this signification of the word ακριδες in his excellent *Travels*, p. 258: where he also observes that, as the months of April and May are the time when these insects abound, it may probably be conjectured, that John began his ministry about that season of the year; which might also seem more convenient for receiving, and especially for baptizing so great a number of people, than winter could have been.

l *Went out to him.*] The novelty of a prophet's appearance in Israel, the family of John, the circumstances of his birth, and the extraordinary character he had no doubt maintained for strict and undissembled piety, all concurred with the causes mentioned in the paraphrase, to draw such vast multitudes after him.

a *Pharisees and Sadducees.*] The most authentic account of these sects may be seen in Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1. [al. 2.] *et Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8. [al. 7.] Havercamp. All writers of Jewish Antiquities describe them largely; but I think, on the whole, none better than Dr. Prideaux, *Connect.* Vol. ii. p. 335—343.

b *Coming to* receive *his baptism.*] I express it in this manner, for, though some understand the words επι το βαπτισμα αυτου, of their coming *to oppose his baptism*, I think the reasons for that interpre-

secret wickedness of the other, *he* did not flatter them at all in his address, but *said unto them*, as with some surprize, *O ye*-abominable *broods of vipers*,[c] crafty, malignant, mischievous creatures, *who hath* taught you to put on this form of humility and repentance, and *admonished you to flee from the wrath* which is surely and speedily *to come?* What is it that hath moved you to it, when you Pharisees think yourselves so secure from it, on account of the pretended sanctity of your lives; and you Sadducees imagine it to be no other than a mere fable and a dream? Let me exhort you, *therefore*, if you design to be baptized by me, to make it your serious and resolute care to *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*, and to act like those that are penitents indeed, forsaking, as well as confessing, your sins: *And*, if you neglect this, *do not* presumptuously *think* it will be to any purpose for you *to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father*;[d] relying on your descent from that holy patriarch, and your being that seed of his with whom a peculiar covenant was made: *for I* solemnly *say*, and declare it *unto you* as a certain and important truth, *That God is able, of these* very *stones* that are before your eyes,[e] which he can animate and sanctify whenever he sees fit, *to raise up* those who, though not descended from human parents, shall be, in a much nobler sense than you, *children to Abraham*, as being made the heirs of his faith and obedience: and he would sooner work such a miracle as this, than he would suffer his promise to fail, or admit you to the blessings of his approaching kingdom, merely because you have the abused honour to descend from that peculiar favourite of heaven.

SECT. 16. MATT. III.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for [*or* worthy of] repentance: [Luke iii. 8.]

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. [Luke iii. 8.]

8 9

These are truths of constant concern, and now particularly seasonable; for the patience of God will not much longer endure so provoking a people. You think of national deliverance, but beware of national judgments; for I assure you that the hand of God is lifted up, *and the axe* of Divine Justice *is even now*, as it were, *applied to the* very *root of the trees:* and *therefore, every tree that doth not produce good fruit*, (even every one that, while he professeth himself to be one of God's people, contradicts that profession by a life of wickedness, or by the neglect of vital and practical religion,) *is* very certainly and quickly to be *cut down*[f] by death, *and thrown into the fire* of hell.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. [Luke iii. 9.]

10

LUKE III.

Luke iii. 10.
And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

Upon this, many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who expected to have been treated with greater respect, were so provoked, that they turned their backs upon the prophet, and refused to be baptized. (Compare Luke vii. 29, 30; and Matt. xxi. 25.) But it was otherwise with the common people, who were alarmed by what he said, *and the multitudes*, who were more teachable, *asked him, saying, What then shall we do*, that we may be prepared for the kingdom of the Messiah, and may escape this dreadful condemnation and approaching wrath? *And he answereth and saith unto them*, Be careful not only to observe the ceremonies of religion, but to attend to the great duties of justice and of charity too, which are incumbent upon you, as well as on the great and rich: and *he*, for instance, *that hath two coats, let him impart* one of them *to him that hath none; and he that hath* plenty of *food, let him do the like.*

10 11

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Then there *came also* some of the *Publicans to be baptized:* Now these Publicans were a set of men, whose office it was to collect the taxes which the Romans had imposed on the Jews, and to pay them to others, who were called the chief of the Publicans; and these people, being generally persons of an infamous character, for their injustice and oppression, applied themselves to John under a strong conviction of their guilt, *and said unto him, Master, what shall we do* to testify the sincerity of our repentance?

12

12 Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

And he said unto them, Though you are not absolutely required to quit your employment, take care that you *exact nothing more than is enjoined you* by your principals, whose servants you are in collecting the public money.

13

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

And the soldiers also applied themselves to him[g] on the same occasion, and in like manner *asked him, saying, And*, as for us, *what shall we do? And he said unto them, Terrify no man*[h] by a violent overbearing conduct, *nor wrong* [*any*] *by false accusation,*

14

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do

tation not worth mentioning here, and refer my reader to Raphelius, who has given them a larger examination than they deserve. *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 7—11.

c *O ye broods of vipers.*] Some think this is to be understood as if it had been said, *Ye wicked children of wicked parents:* but such a reflection on their parents is not necessarily implied. The *children* of pious Eli are called *sons of Belial*, merely with reference to their own licentious characters, *as they knew not the Lord.* See 1 Sam. ii. 12.—The word γενεματα may be used in the plural number, in reference to the different sentiments, and, if I may be allowed the expression, (familiar enough to the Jewish doctors,) the different families of these sects in question.

d *We have Abraham for our father.*] Dr. Whitby well shews how great the presumption of the Jews on this relation to Abraham was. Munster, on this text, quotes a remarkable passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, "That Abraham sits next the gates of hell, "and doth not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it." These Jews might perhaps pervert the promise in Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. to support this vain and dangerous confidence, in opposition to such a multitude of most express and awful threatenings; particularly Deut. xxxii. 19, *et seq.*

e *Of these* very *stones* that are before your eyes.] The many learned commentators, who refer this to God's calling the Gentiles, supposing some of them to be present here, seem to lose all the beauty of the expression, which I have paraphrased at large, because I think few, if any, have set it in so strong a light as it will well bear. It is but a precarious conjecture, that the stones here referred to, were those set up in Gilgal. Josh. iv. 3, 20.

f *Is* very certainly and quickly to be *cut down.*] It is expressed, in the original, in the present tense; and it may be of some importance to observe here, that in scripture-language, that which is very sure, and very near, is spoken of as if it was *already done.* Thus Christ speaks of himself, as if he was already in possession of his glory, while he was here on earth, John xvii. 24; and sinners too are represented as *condemned already*, John iii. 18; and saints are spoken of as *already glorified*, Eph. ii. 6; and Heb. xii 22, 23.

g *The soldiers* applied themselves to him.] There is no reason to believe that these were Gentile soldiers. Grotius has excellently proved, that the Jews in general did not scruple a military life; and a multitude of passages from Josephus might be added to the same purpose; and though most of the *soldiers* in Judea, which was now a province, might be Romans, yet those belonging to Galilee might probably be Jews. Had these been Gentiles, John would surely have begun his instructions to them with urging the worship of the true God.

h *Terrify no man.*] The word διασεισητε properly signifies "to "take a man by the collar and shake him;" and seems to have been used proverbially for that violent manner in which persons of this station of life are often ready to bully those about them, whom they imagine their inferiors in strength and spirit; though nothing is an argument of a meaner spirit, or more unworthy that true

SECT. 16. in order to get a liberty of living upon him at free quarters; *and be contented with your* legal wages, or *pay*,[i] not raising mutinies and seditions to get it increased.

violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely, and be content with your wages.

And, as the people were in great *suspense, and all were reasoning in their hearts* with much solicitude *concerning John*, debating the matter with themselves, *whether he were the Messiah or not, John answered all* that put the question to him, in the most direct and positive manner, *saying, I indeed baptize you with water*, to engage you *to* the exercise of *repentance*, which, by submitting to that rite, you solemnly profess; *but there is one coming after me*, even the Messiah himself, *who is* much *more powerful* and considerable *than I* can pretend to be; (see John x. 41.) *whose* very *shoes I am not worthy* so much as *to carry* after him, [*or*] *to stoop down and untie the latchet of* [*them*,] but should esteem it as an honour to perform the humblest office of menial service for him. And, if you are indeed his people, *he shall baptize you with* a most plentiful effusion of *the Holy Spirit, and with fire;* causing his Spirit to descend upon his followers in the appearance of a flame of fire, to represent its operating on the heart like fire, to kindle pious and devout affections, and to purify and enliven the souls of believers. (Compare Acts i. 5; and ii. 3.)

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water [unto repentance;] but one mightier than I cometh [after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear,] the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to [MARK, stoop down and] unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: [Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 7, 8.]

17 But you are to remember, this is an awful, as well as an amiable Person, *whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly* winnow and *cleanse* his church, which is, (as it were) *his threshing-floor*, and at present is covered with a mixture of wheat and chaff: for such will be the nature of the doctrine he shall teach, as will effectually discover what is the real disposition of the hearts of men, and perfectly distinguish between the hypocritical and the sincere. *And* happy will it be for those that stand the trial: for he *will* carefully *gather* them, as *the wheat into his granary*, and lay them up in heaven as his peculiar treasure: *but* as for *the chaff* which is found among them, as for those empty vain professors that are now mingled with his people, *he will* then treat them as men do the sweepings and the refuse of the floor, and *burn* them up as worthless and unprofitable trash; and I faithfully warn you, that it will be *with unquenchable fire*:[k] let this excite you therefore to escape so terrible a doom. (Compare Isa. xli. 16; Jer. xv. 7; and Ezek. xxii. 15.)

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. [Matt. iii. 12.]

18 Such was, in general, the tendency and purport of John's preaching: *And, offering many other exhortations* to them to the same effect, *he published to the people these glad tidings*[l] of the Messiah's approach, and endeavoured to prepare them to receive him in a proper manner; as will be more particularly shewn hereafter. (See John i. 15, *et seq.* and iii. 28, *et seq.*)

18 And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people.

IMPROVEMENT.

MATT. III. 7 WHAT an excellent pattern of ministerial service does John exhibit in the passage before us! Blessed is that gospel-preacher who, like him, seeks not his own ease and pleasure, and indulges not to luxurious and sensual inclinations, but cheerfully accommodates himself to the state and circumstances which Providence hath assigned him, as infinitely more intent on the success of his ministry than on any little interest of his own that can interfere with it!—Happy the man who, imitating the impartiality of this faithful servant of God, giveth to every one LUKE III. 10—14 *his portion of meat in due season*, and abhors the thoughts of flattering men in their vices, or buoying them up with delusive hopes in their birth and profession, while they are destitute of real and vital religion!

MATT. III. 9 May this plain and awakening address be felt by every soul that hears it! And, in particular, let the children of religious parents, let those that enjoy the most eminent privileges, and that make even the strictest profession, weigh themselves in this balance of the sanctuary, lest they be found wanting in the awful decisive day. And if 8 the warnings of the gospel have alarmed our hearts, and put us upon *fleeing from the wrath to come*, oh, let the terrors of the Lord engage us, not only to *confess*, but to *forsake* our sins, and to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance!*

Let all to whom the gospel-message comes, most attentively and seriously consider, in what alarming circumstances of danger and extremity impenitent sinners are here represented. The gospel is the last dispensation we 10 must ever expect; the axe is at the root of the unfruitful tree, and it must ere long be cut down and burnt, be its branches ever so diffusive, and its leaves ever so green.

LUKE III. 17. Christ hath *a fan in his hand* to winnow us, as well as the Jews. Oh that we may stand the trial! And oh that, as his wheat, we may be laid up in the store-house of heaven, when *that day cometh* which shall *burn as*

courage which constitutes so essential a part of a good military character.

i *With your* legal wages or *pay*.] The word οψωνιοις is well known to signify *provision* or *food;* but, when applied to soldiers, it is generally used to signify *the pay* that was allotted for their subsistence. (Compare Rom. vi. 23; where it is rendered *wages;* and 1 Cor. ix. 7; where we translate it *charges.*)

k *The chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*] There is in what the Baptist here declares, an evident allusion to the custom of burning the chaff after winnowing, that it might not be blown back again, and so be mingled with the wheat: and, though it may in part refer to the calamities to come upon the Jewish nation for rejecting Christ, (as Bishop Chandler has observed in his *Defence of Christianity*, p. 85.) yet it seems chiefly to intend the final destruction of all sinners in hell, which alone is properly opposed to *the gathering the wheat into the garner:* (compare Matt. xiii. 40—42,) and howsoever it be certain that the word αχυρον in Greek authors does generally signify *all that is left of the corn* when the grain is separated, including *the straw;* (see Raphael. *Annot. ex Xen. in loc.* and Gen. xxiv. 25—32, *Septuag.*) yet I apprehend, that in this place it must be equivalent to χονις, and signifies *chaff* as distinguished from *straw:* since one can hardly imagine either that any thing so useful as *straw* would be made the symbol of these worthless *reprobates*, or that it would be represented as *burnt up.*—As to the phrase of burning the chaff with *unquenchable fire*, Mr. Horberry has observed, with his usual accuracy of judgment, (*Inquiry into the Duration of Future Punishment*, Chap. i. No. 1, 2,) that it is absolutely inconsistent with all the views of the *restoration of the wicked;* and that, however the phrase of being *consumed like chaff* might seem to favour the doctrine of their *annihilation*, (which nevertheless it is certain no punishment of mind or body can of itself effect) the epithet of *unquenchable* given to this *fire*, is so far from proving it, that it cannot, by any easy and just interpretation, be reconciled with it.

l *Published these glad tidings.*] Ευηγγελιζετο has plainly this import; and as it was a very imperfect intimation, rather than a full discovery of the gospel that was given by the Baptist, it does not seem so proper here to render it by *preaching the gospel*, though the word has often that signification; see Matt. xi. 5; Luke iv. 18; and Acts viii. 4, &c.

an oven, and when *all that do wickedly* shall be consumed as *stubble*, and be *burnt up* as *chaff*!' (Mal. iv. 1.) SECT. 16.

And to conclude: that we may be prepared for that final trial, let us be earnest in our applications to our gracious Redeemer, that as we are *baptized with water* in his name, he would also *baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; that, by the operations of his Holy Spirit on our cold and stupid hearts, he would enkindle and quicken that divine life, that sacred love, that flaming, yet well-governed zeal for his glory, which distinguishes the true christian from the hypocritical professor, and is indeed *the seal of God* set upon the heart, to mark it for eternal happiness. Ver. 16

SECTION XVII.

The testimony John the Baptist gave to Christ is taken notice of by John the Evangelist, and his own testimony added to confirm it. John i. 15—18.

JOHN i. 15.

JOHN bare witness of him and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me:

JOHN i. 15.

AS the Messiah now was shortly to appear, and the time just at hand in which he was to enter on his public ministry, the way (as we have seen) was opened for his coming by John the Baptist's being sent to preach the doctrine of repentance: and when the people came in crowds from every part to hear him, *John bore his testimony of him* in a public declaration of the dignity of his person, and of the great design for which he was to come; which, though it was at first expressed in general terms, yet did he afterwards apply it in particular to Jesus of Nazareth, pointing him out to be the person he had spoken of; and, with an earnestness that suited the importance of this grand occasion, he openly proclaimed him to be the promised Messiah, *and cried, saying*, This is the person that I told you of; and *this was he of whom I said* before,[a] (Matt. iii. 11.) *He that cometh after me*, as to the time of his appearance in the world, and of his entrance on the stage of public life, is upon all accounts superior to me, and *is* deservedly *preferred before me; for*, though indeed as to his human birth he is younger than me, and did not come into the world till a little after me, yet, in a much more noble and exalted kind of being, *he existed* long *before me*,[b] or even before the production of any creature whatsoever. SECT. 17. JOHN 1. 15

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

And I, John the apostle, who had the honour of being numbered among his most intimate friends, would, with pleasure, in my own name, and that of my brethren, add my testimony to that of the Baptist,[c] as I and they have the greatest reason to do: for *of his* overflowing *fulness have we all received* whatever we possess, as men, as christians, or as apostles; and he hath given us *even grace upon grace*,[d] a rich abundance and variety of favours, which will ever make his name most dear and precious to our souls. 16

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

For the law was given by Moses, and we own it an honour to our nation to have received it, and to that holy man to have been the messenger of it: yet to the sinner it is a dispensation of death, and passes an awful sentence of condemnation upon him; [*but*] the Redeemer whom we celebrate is worthy of much more affectionate regards; for *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*,[e] who gives us an ample declaration of pardon, and an abundant effusion of the Spirit, those substantial blessings of which the Mosaic dispensation was but a shadow. 17

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

His gospel therefore should be received with the most cheerful consent; for *no man hath ever seen God*, nor indeed can see him, as he is incorporeal, and therefore an invisible Being; but *the only-begotten Son, who is* always *in the bosom of the Father*,[f] and ever favoured with the most endearing and intimate converse with him, *He hath* revealed and *made him known* in a much clearer manner than he was before, by 18

a *This was he of whom I said.*] This probably might happen at the time when Jesus made his first appearance among those that came to be baptized by John; when at his offering to receive his baptism, though John before had been a stranger to him, and *knew him not* by any personal acquaintance with him, yet, by some powerful impression on his mind, he presently discerned that *this was he* whom he before had taught the people to expect, and of whose person he had given them so high a character. For it was plainly from his knowledge of him, that John at first would have declined baptizing him, as an honour of which he looked upon himself to be unworthy. Nor is it to be doubted, but that, when first he knew the person of whose appearance he had raised such expectations by his preaching, he would immediately be ready to acquaint his hearers, that *this was he*, who was intended by him; which they themselves might have been ready to conclude, from the uncommon veneration and respect with which the Baptist treated him, who had been always used to treat men with the greatest plainness. And upon this account it may be proper, that this testimony of him should be introduced (as I have placed it here) before the particular account that the other Evangelists have given of his baptism. Compare Matt. iii. 14; and John i. 27, 30.

b *He existed* long *before me*; πρωτος μου ην.] This must undoubtedly refer to that state of glory in which *Christ existed* before his incarnation, of which the Baptist speaks so plainly, John iii. 31, as abundantly to justify the paraphrase; (Compare note b on John i. 30; § 21.) As for the preceding clause, εμπροσθεν μου γεγονεν, which we render *is preferred before me*, I think Erasmus truly expresses the sense of it, in supposing it to refer to those distinguishing honours which had been paid to Christ in his infancy, by prophets, sages, and angels too, which nothing that had yet occurred in the life of John could by any means equal.

c I add my testimony to that of the Baptist.] It is most evident, that what is said here in this verse, as Chrysostom justly observes, must be considered as the words of the Evangelist. John the Baptist had never yet mentioned the name of Jesus; and the expression *we all*, shews it could not be his words; for those to whom he addressed himself, do not appear to have *received grace* from Christ. The last French version, with great propriety, includes ver. 15 in a parenthesis, and so connects this 16th verse with the 14th;—as if it had been said, *He dwelt among us—full of grace and truth;—and of his fulness have we all received.*

d *Grace upon grace.*] This seems the most easy sense of χαριν αντι χαριτος, as αντ' αντων αντιας is *grief upon grief*. (Theogn. v. 344.) Compare Ecclus. xxvi. 15, 17: and see Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. i. p. 164. Next to this, I should prefer Grotius's interpretation, who would render it, *grace of mere grace*; that is, the freest grace imaginable.

e *Came by Jesus Christ.*] I cannot lay so much stress on the word εγενετο here, as opposed to εδοθη, as to suppose it, with Erasmus, to imply, that whereas Moses was only the *messenger* of the *law*, Christ was the *original* of the *grace and truth* he brought into the world by the *gospel*; since all that is intended by εγενετο is nothing more, than that *it was*, or that *it came by Jesus Christ*, according to the sense in which the word is often used in other places; and δια here is used of Christ as well as of Moses: so that both are represented as *messengers*, though of very different dispensations.

f *In the bosom of the Father.*] Critics generally agree, this is one of the places in which εις is put for εν; but had it here been rendered *near his Father's bosom*, it might as well have answered the design of the original, and would, I think, have been as expressive of that intimate converse and entire friendship, which the phrase implies.—Elsner here cites a passage from Plato, concerning the regard due to the authority of a *Son of* God when speaking of *his Father*; and it is indeed surprizingly apposite. Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. i. p. 296.

SECT. 17. those discoveries of his nature and will, which may have the most powerful tendency to form us to virtue and happiness.

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN I. Ver. 16 HAPPY are they, that, (like this beloved apostle,) when they hear the praises of Christ uttered by others, can echo back the testimony from their own experience, as having themselves *received of his fulness!* May an abundance of grace be communicated from him to us! We are not straitened in him: Oh, may we not be straitened in ourselves; but daily renewing our application to him as our Living Head, may vital influences be continually imparted to our souls from him!

17 With pleasure let us compare the dispensation of Jesus with that of Moses, and observe the excellency of its superior grace and of its brighter truth; but let us remember, as a necessary consequence of this, that *if the despisers of Moses's law died without mercy, they shall be thought worthy of a much sorer punishment,* and a more aggravated condemnation, *who tread under foot the Son of God.* (Heb. x. 28, 29.)

18 May we ever regard him *as the only-begotten of the Father;* and, since he hath condescended so far as to come down from his very *bosom* to instruct us in his nature and will, let us with all humility receive his dictates, and earnestly pray, that under his revelations and teachings, we may so *know God,* as faithfully to serve him now, and at length eternally to enjoy him.

June. 25. 1855

SECTION XVIII.

Christ is baptized by John, and the Holy Spirit descends upon him in a visible form. Mark i. 9—11. Matt. iii. 13, *to the end;* Luke iii. 21—23.

MARK i. 9.

SECT. 18. *AND it came to pass in those days, when* great numbers of *all* ranks and professions among *the* Jewish *people were baptized,*[a] *that Jesus came from* the town of *Nazareth in Galilee,*[b] where he had lived for many years in a retired manner with his parents, to the

MARK I. river Jordan; and applied himself *to John, that he might be baptized by him:*[c] *and was*

9 accordingly *baptized by John, in Jordan,* near Bethabara; (see John i. 28: § 20.)

MATT. III. 14 Now the providence of God had so ordered it, to prevent all appearance of a combination between them, that John was personally a stranger to Christ. (John i. 33.) *But* nevertheless, as soon as he saw him, he received a secret intimation from above, that this was the Messiah, upon whom the Spirit should visibly descend; (see the note on John i. 33; § 21.) And, upon this account, such was the modesty of *John,* that he was ready to decline the service, and *would have hindered him* from doing what he proposed; *and* accordingly *said* unto him, Thou art so much my superior, that *I have need to be baptized by thee* with that far nobler baptism which thou art to administer; *and dost thou come to me* on such an occasion as this? I am confounded at the thought, and cannot but consider it as too

15 high an honour for me. *And Jesus, replying, said unto him,* Though it be really as thou sayest, yet do not go about to hinder me, but *permit* [*it*] *now; for,* however unable thou mayest be at present to enter into the particular reasons of it, yet, in submission to the divine appointments, it is decent for us *thus* to comply with all the duties of religion, and in this manner *it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness:* and upon this account, as it is a part of my duty to attend this institution, it is therefore a part of thine to administer it. *Then,* as John knew that it became him not to debate the matter any farther, *he permitted him* to be baptized.

16 *And after Jesus was baptized, as soon as he ascended out of the water* to the bank of Jordan, *behold, the heavens were* immediately *opened*[d] *unto him,* and in a wondrous way appeared as if they had been rent asunder directly over his head: and at that very instant, *as he was* looking up, and *praying*[e] in a devout and holy rapture; *and* as John was also fixing his eyes upon this wonderful sight, *he saw the Spirit of God,*[f] *in a corporeal*

MARK i. 9.

AND it came to pass in those days [Luke, when all the people were baptized] that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee [unto John, to be baptized of him,] and was baptized of John in Jordan. [Matt. iii. 13; Luke iii. 21.]

Matt. iii. 14. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, [Luke, being baptized, and praying:] and he saw the

a *When all the people were baptized.*] John continued baptizing so long after this, that it is very evident the word *all* must be taken with the restriction used in the paraphrase, as it is oftentimes in other places.

b *Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee.*] The learned Dr. Thomas Jackson, in his elaborate examination of this context, (see his works, Vol. II. p. 515—519.) supposes, that John the Baptist, inquiring into and hearing the name of Jesus, and the place from whence he came, and comparing it in his own mind with that celebrated prophecy, Isa. xi. 1, 2, concluded, that this Jesus, or Divine Saviour, as the word may signify, (see note d, on Matt. i. 21. p. 13.) coming from Nazareth, *the town of Rods,* as the etymology of that name imports, was *the Rod out of the stem of Jesse,* upon whom the *Spirit* should *descend,* and rest like a dove on a branch. And thus he would reconcile John's address to Christ as so extraordinary a person, Matt. iii. 14, with his declaring (John i. 31, 33.) that he *knew him not* before; but this seems a very precarious solution, considering how possible it might be, that in so large a place as Nazareth, there might be several persons of the name of Jesus, or Joshua, so very common among the Jews. It appears therefore much more reasonable to have recourse to the solution given in the paraphrase and note d, on the last cited text, § 21, that he had a secret intimation given him who it was that came to be baptized by him; and all that this very ingenious writer has said, to shew the various marks by which John might *know* Christ, without supposing such a particular *revelation* as is there suggested, does but confirm me the more in the necessity of admitting it.

c *That he might be baptized by him.*] By this he intended to do an honour to John's ministry, and to conform himself to what he appointed to his followers: for which last reason it was, that he drank likewise of the *sacramental cup.* And this we may consider as a plain argument, that *baptism* may be administered to those who are not capable of all the purposes for which it was designed See Dr. Whitby's note on Matt. iii. 16.

d *The heavens were* immediately *opened.*] I think it plain, (as Grotius and Blackwall have observed,) that what is here intended, is to intimate, that directly on his coming up out of the water, the heavens were opened: for it must certainly appear to be a circumstance of small importance, and very little use, for the Evangelist to say that *Jesus went up straightway out of the water, after he was baptized;* but, if we take it in the other way, it very fitly introduces the remarkable account of what directly followed it. There seems to be such a transposition of the word εὐθεως, Mark i. 29; and xi. 2. See Blackwall's *Sacred Classics,* Vol. I. p. 89.

e *As he was praying.*] It is observable that all the three *voices from heaven,* by which the Father bore witness to Christ, were pronounced while he was *praying,* or very quickly after it. Compare Luke ix. 29, 35; and John xii. 28.

f *He saw the Spirit of God.*] There is no question to be made but that this wondrous sight was seen by both of them; for Mark has so expressed it, as plainly to refer the *seeing it* to Christ, and John the Baptist has in another place assured us that *he saw it,* and took particular notice of it as *the sign* he was directed to observe as the distinguishing and certain characteristic of the Messiah, John i. 32, 34. And I have therefore so expressed it in the paraphrase, as not directly to confine the sight of it to either.

Spirit of God descending [Luke, in a bodily shape] like a dove, and lighting upon him. [Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 21, 22.]

Luke iii. 22. And [lo] a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. [Matt. iii. 17. Mark i. 11.]

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

form,[g] as a glorious and splendid appearance of fire, *descending* with a hovering motion *like a dove, and coming upon him*; as a visible token of those secret operations of that Blessed Spirit on his mind, by which, according to the intimations God had given in his word, he was anointed in a peculiar manner, and abundantly fitted for his public work. (Compare Psal. xlv. 7, and Isa. lxi. 1.) SECT. 18. LUKE III.

And, as a farther testimony of the Divine regard to Christ, and of the glorious dignity of his person, this was attended with a very memorable event: for, *behold, a* loud and awful *voice came out of heaven*, when it was thus opened, *which said, Thou art my beloved Son*,[h] *in thee I am well pleased*; that is, I perfectly approve thy character, and acquiesce in thee as the Great Mediator, through whom I will shew myself favourable unto sinful creatures. (Compare Isa. xlii. 1.) 22

And Jesus, at that time *when* he received the baptism of John, and was *beginning* the public exercise of [*his ministry*,] *was about thirty years old*;[i] at which time he chose to quit his retirement, being then in the full vigour of nature, and having attained the age in which the priests used to begin their ministrations in the temple. (Compare Numb. iv 3—47; and 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.) 23

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our Lord's submitting himself to baptism, teach us a holy exactness and care in the observance of those positive institutions which owe their obligation merely to a divine command; for *thus it* also *becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*; lest by *breaking one of the least* of Christ's *commandments, and teaching others to do it*, we become unworthy of a part *in the kingdom of heaven*. (Matt. v. 19.) MATT. III. Ver. 15

Jesus had no sin to confess or wash away, yet he was baptized; and God owned that ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth the Spirit upon him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance on divine appointments? 16

Let us remember in how distinguishing a sense Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God, to whom *the Father hath not given the Spirit by measure*, but hath poured it out upon him in the most abundant degree. Let us trace the workings of this Spirit in Jesus, not only as a spirit of miraculous power, but of the richest grace and holiness; earnestly praying that this holy unction may, from Christ our head, descend upon our souls! May his enlivening Spirit kindle its sacred flame there, with such vigour, that many waters may not be able to quench it, nor floods of temptation and corruption to drown it. MARK I. 10

Behold God's *beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased!* As such let us honour and love him; and as such let our souls acquiesce in him, as in every respect such a Saviour as our wishes might have asked, and our necessities required. LUKE III. 22

With what amazement should we reflect upon it, that the blessed Jesus, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till his thirtieth year! That he deferred his ministry so long, should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations till we are qualified for them, and plainly discover a Divine call: that he deferred it no longer, should be an engagement to us to avoid unnecessary delays, and to give God the prime and vigour of our life. 23

Our great Master attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of his thirty-fifth year, if he so much as entered upon it; yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant, who with any proportionable zeal dispatches the great business of life! so much the more happy, if his sun go down at noon; for the space that is taken from the labours of time, will be added to the rewards of eternity.

SECTION XIX.

Christ's victory over the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. Luke iv. 1—13. Matt. iv. 1—11. Mark i. 12, 13. SECT. 19.

LUKE iv. 1.

AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and [Mark, immediately] was led by

LUKE iv. 1.

THEN Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, with which he had been just anointed in so extraordinary a manner, *returned from Jordan*, where he had been baptized; *and immediately* after this, *was led by the* strong impulse of that *Spirit* on his mind, *into* LUKE IV. 1

g *In a corporeal form.*] This is the exact English of σωματικῷ εἴδει: a phrase which might with propriety have been used, though there had not been (as most understand it) any appearance in the shape of the animal here mentioned, but only a *lambent flame* falling from heaven *with a hovering dove-like motion*, which Dr. Scott (in his *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 66.) supposes to have been all. Dr. Owen and Grotius think it was a *bright flame* in the *shape of a dove*; and Justin Martyr (who adds, that all Jordan shone with the reflection of the light,) says, that it was ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς; and Jerome calls it *Phantasma columbæ, the appearance of a dove*. Both these phrases are much more determinate than the original; but I choose to leave this, and many other things, in the same latitude as I find them.

h *Thou art my beloved Son.*] Both Mark and Luke express it thus; which inclines me to follow those copies of Matthew, which agree with them, rather than the more common reading there, *This is my beloved Son*. Εὐδόκησα properly expresses an *entire acquiescence* in him.

i *And Jesus, when beginning [his ministry] was about thirty years old.*] Of the age of Jesus at this time, see note b, on Luke iii. 1. p. 30.—I can recollect no sufficient authority to justify our translators in rendering ἦν ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος, *began to be about thirty years of age*, or was now entering on his thirtieth year. To express the sense, it should have been ἦν ἀρχόμενος εἶναι, &c. as Epiphanius, probably by a mistake, has quoted it.—The learned author of the Vindication of the beginning of Matthew's and Luke's gospel, extremely dissatisfied with all the common versions and explications of these words, would render them, *And Jesus was obedient*, or lived in subjection [*to his parents*] *about thirty years*: and produces several passages from approved Greek writers, in which ἀρχόμενος signifies *subject*. But in all those places it is used in some connection, or opposition, which determines the sense; and therefore none of them are instances parallel to this. Luke evidently uses ἀρξόμενον, chap. xxi. 28, in the sense we suppose it to have here; and since he had before expressed *our Lord's subjection to his parents* by the word ὑποτασσόμενος, chap. ii. 51, there is great reason to believe he would have used the same word here, had he intended to give us the same idea. And indeed, if ἀρχόμενος be allowed to have the signification which this accurate critic (for such he undoubtedly is) contends for here, since there is nothing in the text to limit it, the phrase would intimate, he was *subject to none* after this time; an assertion which I should think both groundless and dangerous.—This clause of Luke has been already mentioned in another place, where it was only inserted (out of its proper order) to complete the sentence: see § 9. p. 14.

SECT. 19. ——— MARK. I. 13 MATT. IV. 2 3 4 5 6 7

that desolate and solitary place, *the wilderness*;[a] *that he might* there *be* exercised and *tempted by* the most violent assaults of *the devil*; and, by conquering him, might afford an illustrious example of heroic virtue, and lay a foundation for the encouragement and support of his people, in their future combats with that malignant adversary.

And he was there in the wilderness forty days: and during that time he was *tempted by Satan; and* also *was* surrounded *with* a variety of *the* most savage and voracious kinds of *wild beasts*; but they were so overawed by his presence, that (as in the case of Daniel when in the den of lions, Dan. vi. 22.) none of them offered him the least injury:[b] *and in* all *those days he did eat nothing* at all.

And when he had thus *fasted forty days and forty nights*, as Moses the giver of the law, (Exod. xxxiv. 28.) and Elias the great restorer of it, had done before him, (1 Kings xix. 8.) having been thus far miraculously borne above the appetites of nature, *at length he* felt them, and *was* very *hungry*, but was entirely unprovided with any proper food.

And, just at that time, *the tempter coming to him*[c] in a visible form, (putting on a human appearance, as one that desired to inquire farther into the evidences of his mission,) *said, If thou art the Son of God*, in such an extraordinary manner as thou hast been declared to be, and art indeed the promised Messiah, who is expected under that character,[d] *command that these stones become loaves* [*of bread*] to relieve thy hunger; for in such a circumstance it will undoubtedly be done.

But Jesus answered, and said unto him, *It is written* in the sacred volume, (Deut. viii. 3.) "*Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word proceeding out of the "mouth of God*, or by whatever he shall appoint for the preservation of his life." He can therefore support me without bread, as he fed the Israelites in the wilderness;[e] and, on the other hand, even bread itself, if these stones were turned into it, could not nourish me without his blessing; which I could not expect, were I to attempt a miracle of this kind, merely in compliance with thy suggestions, without any intimation of my Father's will.

Then, as *the devil* found it was in vain that he had tempted Christ to a distrust of Providence, he was for trying to persuade him to presumption: and to this end, he *taketh him* along with him[f] *to Jerusalem*, which, being the place where God dwelt in so distinguishing a manner, was commonly called *the Holy City*;[g] *and* there he *setteth him on one of the battlements of the temple*,[h] which, in some parts of it, and particularly over the porch, was so exceeding high, that one could hardly bear to look down from it.[i]

And as he stood upon the brink of this high precipice, the tempter *saith unto him, If thou art* indeed *the Son of God, cast thyself down* courageously *from hence*, and mingle with those that are assembled for the worship of God in yonder court. The sight of such a miracle will undeniably convince them of the truth of thy pretensions; and thou canst have no room to doubt of thy safety; *for* thou well knowest *it is written*, (Psal. xci. 11, 12.) "*He shall give his angels a charge concerning thee, to keep thee*;[k] *and they shall bear "thee up in their hands, lest thou shouldst* by any accident *dash thy foot against a "stone*." And surely the Son of God may depend upon a promise which seems common to all his saints.

And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is also written, to prevent the ungrateful abuse of such gracious promises as these, (Deut. vi. 16.) "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*," by demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain,[l] as

the Spirit [Mark, the Spirit driveth him] into the wilderness [to be tempted of the devil,] [Matt. iv. 1; Mark i. 12.]

Mark i. 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; [and in those days he did eat nothing.] [Luke iv. 2.]

Matt. iv. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. [Luke iv. 2.]

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. [Luke iv. 3.]

4 But [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. [Luke iv. 4.]

5 Then the devil taketh him up into [Jerusalem] the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple; [Luke iv. 9.]

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down [from hence;] for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee [to keep thee;] and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [Luke iv. 9, 10, 11.]

7 [And] Jesus [answering] said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [Luke iv. 12.]

a *Into the wilderness.*] Christ probably intended this as a devout retirement, to which he found himself strongly inclined, that he might give vent to those sacred passions which the late grand occurrences of the *descent* of the *Spirit* upon him, and the miraculous attestation of *a voice from heaven*, had such a tendency to inspire. It seems a very groundless conjecture of Mr. Fleming (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 315.) that he was carried through the air to mount Sinai. Mr. Maundrel's is much more probable, that it might be the *wilderness* near Jordan; which, as he, who travelled through it, assures us, is a miserable and horrid place, consisting of high barren mountains, so that it looks as if nature had suffered some violent convulsions there. (See Maundrel's *Travels*, p. 78.) This is the scene of the *parable* of the *good Samaritan*. (Luke x. 30.) Our Lord probably was assaulted in the northern part of it, near the sea of Galilee, because he is said here to be *returning* or going back to Nazareth, from whence he came to be baptized, Mark i. 9. p. 36.

b None of them offered him the least injury.] It is strange that any should think he was during this time *hunted by the wild beasts*: this is the more improbable, as such a hurry would have been inconsistent with the design of God in leading him thither; which was, that he might be assaulted by Satan, at first probably by secret suggestions, the horror of which would be increased by such a gloomy place. The angels might be the instruments of intimidating the beasts. Could Dr. Lightfoot have proved what he asserts, that this happened in October or November, the cold would have been, as he suggests, an additional circumstance of affliction to our Lord: but it seems rather to have been in the beginning of summer; see note b, on Luke 3. 1. p. 30.; and note k, on Matt. iii. 4. p. 32.

c *The tempter coming to him.*] Our translation, which, in its rendering of these words, is not so literal as the version I have given, seems to intimate, what is not any where asserted in the sacred story, that this was the *first time* the tempter came unto him; a circumstance which can hardly be supposed.

d The promised Messiah, who is expected under that character.] That the Jews supposed the Messiah would be in a very extraordinary manner *the Son of God*, appears from comparing Matt. xiv. 33. xvi. 16. xxvi. 63. John i. 34, 49. xi. 27. xx. 31. and Acts viii. 37.

e As he fed the Israelites in the wilderness.] It is to this the passage that is quoted here hath a plain reference, as it stands in the Old Testament.

f *Taketh him* along with him.] This is the exact English of παραλαμβανει. (See Elsner. *Observ. in loc.*) But whether he did, or did not, *transport him through the air*, cannot, I think, be determined from this passage.

g *The Holy City.*] This is a phrase that frequently, and very properly, is used to express Jerusalem. (Compare Neh. xi. 1. Isa. lii. 1. Dan. ix. 24. and Matt. xxii. 53.) The heathen writers, in like manner, often call those cities *holy*, in which any of their deities were supposed to hold their special residence, and from whence their *oracles* were delivered. (See Elsner. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 17, 18.)

h *One of the battlements of the temple.*] Though *pinnacle* agrees very well with the etymology of the Greek word, yet, according to its use among us, it leads the English reader to imagine, that he stood on the *point of a spire*. The truth is, the roof of the temple was flat, and had a kind of *balustrade* round it; (see Deut. xxii. 8.) and somewhere on the edge of this *battlement*, we may suppose that Satan placed Christ, in his attacking him with this temptation.

i Hardly bear to look down from it.] Josephus gives us this account of it, *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xv. *cap.* 11. [al. 14.] § 5. p. 781. Edit. Havercamp.

k *A charge concerning thee, to keep thee.*] Many (after Jerome) have observed that Satan made his advantage of quoting scripture merely by scraps, leaving out those words, *in all thy ways*. The cause of truth, and sometimes of common sense, hath suffered a great deal by those who have followed his example.

l By demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain.] That this is the purport of the phrase, *tempting God*, is easy to be seen from comparing Exod. xvii. 2, 7 Numb.

my relation to God is, by the miraculous and glorious testimony he hath so lately given me. SECT. 19.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, [in a moment of time.] [Luke iv. 5.]

Luke iv. 6. And the devil said unto him, All this power[All these things] will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. [Matt. iv. 9.]

7 If thou therefore wilt [fall down and] worship me, all shall be thine. [Matt. iv. 9.]

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, [Get thee hence,] Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. [Matt. iv. 10.]

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Matt. iv. 11.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. [Mark i. 13.]

Again, the devil, being resolved once more to attack him by the most dangerous temptation he could devise, *taketh him up into a mountain* in those parts, which was *exceeding high; and* from thence, *in a moment of time, sheweth him,* in an artful visionary representation, *all the* most magnificent *kingdoms of the world, and* all *the* luxury, pomp, and *glory of them;* displaying to his view one of the finest prospects that the most pleasurable and triumphant scenes could furnish out.[m] *And,* with the most egregious impudence and falsehood, *the devil said unto him, All this* extensive *power,* [*and*] *all these* splendid *things, will I give thee, and* all *the glory of them,* which thou hast now before thee; *(for it is* all *delivered to me,*[n] who am the prince of this world, *and I give it to whom I please.)* And great as the gift is, I am so charmed with that wisdom and magnanimity which I have now observed in thee,[o] that I propose to give it thee upon the easiest terms thou canst imagine; for all that I desire is, that thou shouldst pay me homage for it: *if therefore thou wilt* but *fall down and worship me,* upon thy making this little acknowledgment to me, *all* these things *shall be thine.* MATT. IV. 8 LUKE IV. 6 7

Then Jesus, moved with indignation at so blasphemous and horrid a suggestion, *answered and said unto him,* with becoming resentment and abhorrence, *Get thee hence, Satan,*[p] and begone out of my sight, for I will no longer endure thee near me: *for it is written,* as a fundamental precept of the law, (Deut. vi. 13.) "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*" It would therefore be unlawful thus to worship thee, who art no other than a mere creature, even though thou wast indeed his deputy on earth; and how much more then must it be so, as thou art in reality the great avowed enemy of God and man?[q] for such, under all thy disguise, I well know thee to be. 8

And when the devil had ended all the temptation we have given an account of, being so baffled and confounded as not to be able to present any others which seemed more likely to succeed, *he departed from him for a season;* yet secretly meditating some future assault. (Compare John xiv. 30.) 13

And, *then the devil having left him, behold,* a detachment of *angels came and waited upon him,*[r] furnishing him with proper supplies for his hunger, and congratulating so illustrious a victory over the prince of darkness. MATT. IV. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can read this account without amazement, when he compares the insolence and malice of the *prince of darkness,* with the condescension and grace of the *Son of God!* MATT IV.

What was it that animated and emboldened Satan to undertake such a work? Was it the easy victory he had obtained over the first Adam in Paradise? or was it the remembrance of his own fall, from whence he arrogantly concluded, that no heart could stand against the temptations of pride and ambition? Could he, who afterwards proclaimed Christ to be *the Son of the Most High God,* and had perhaps but lately heard him owned as such by *a voice from heaven,* make any doubt of his Divinity? Or, if he actually believed it, could he expect to vanquish him; we may rather conclude that he did not expect it; but, mad with rage and despair, he was determined at least to worry that *Lamb of God,* which he knew he could not devour; and to vex with his hellish suggestions that innocent and holy soul, which he knew he could never seduce. Wretched degeneracy! *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!* to be thus eagerly driving on thine own repulse and disgrace! Ver. 1 *et seq.*

But, on the other hand, how highly are we obliged to our Great Deliverer, who hath brought forth *meat out of the eater,* and *sweetness out of the strong?* Who can sufficiently adore thy condescension, O blessed Jesus! who wouldst permit thyself to be thus assaulted and led from place to place by an infernal spirit, whom thou couldst in a moment have remanded back to hell, to be bound *in chains of darkness,* and overwhelmed with flaming ruin! 5, 8

xiv. 22. Psal. lxxviii. 18. and Psal. cvi. 14. See Limborch, *Theolog. lib.* v. *cap.* 22. § 16.

m One of the finest prospects that the most pleasurable and triumphant scenes could furnish out.] As Christ was probably attacked with this temptation upon some mountain in the *wilderness,* this beautiful and taking prospect that was represented to him, being set off by the horror of the place he was in, would in such a contrast appear peculiarly charming; see note a, p. 38.

n *For it is* all *delivered to me.*] Grotius has well observed, that this contains a vile insinuation, that God had done what none that truly understands the nature of God and the creature can suppose possible, namely, that he had parted with the government of the world out of his own hands. And we add to this, that in the text which Christ has quoted, there is enough to overthrow that notion; since God's appropriating to himself the *worship* of all his creatures plainly implies his universal empire and dominion over all, and the regard he has to the religious adoration and obedience of all the subjects of his kingdom.—It is remarkable, that, among other things which several heathen writers learnt of the primitive Christians, this was one, to represent evil spirits as tempting men from their duty by views of *worldly riches and grandeur;* over which, Porphyry in particular says, they often would pretend to much more power than they really have. See Elsner. *Observ.* Vol. i. p. 18, 19.

o I am so charmed with that—which I have now observed in thee.] This seems the most plausible view in which the temptation could be introduced.—It is plain from the next verse, that this was the *last temptation;* but Luke makes it the *second;* whence it evidently appears that Luke did not confine himself exactly to observe the *order of time* in his story; a remark of vast importance for settling the *Harmony.* See note g, on Luke i. 3. p. 1.

p *Get thee hence, Satan.*] The word υπαγε plainly expresses his authority over Satan, as well as his detestation of so vile a suggestion.

q The great avowed enemy of God and man.] This odious character is intimated in the name of Satan, which our Lord gives him, by which he made it to appear he knew him, however he might seek to be disguised. If we suppose him now to have worn the form of *an angel of light,* (as 2 Cor. xi. 14.) it will make both this and the former temptation look more plausible: for thus he might pretend, in the former, to take the charge of Christ in his fall, as one of his celestial guards; and in this, to resign him a province which God had committed to *his* administration and care. And this may be consistent with supposing, that he first appeared as *a man,* (it may be, as a hungry traveller, who pretended to ask the miracle of turning *stones* into *loaves* for his own supply;) for *angels* under the Old Testament had often worn a *human form.* Compare Gen. xviii. 2. xix. 1, 10, 16. Josh. v. 13, 14. Judg. vi. 11, 12. and xiii. 3, 8, 10.

r *Angels came and waited upon him.*] The word διακονειν does often signify *to wait at table:* see Matt. viii. 15; Luke xvii. 8; xxii. 27; and John xii. 2.—As *one celestial spirit* might have been abundantly sufficient for the relief of our Lord's necessities, it is reasonable to suppose, that the appearance of *a number of them* upon this occasion was to do him the more illustrious honour, after this horrible combat with Satan; to which, for wise and gracious reasons, he was pleased to condescend.

SECT. 19. MATT. IV.

The apostle tells us why he permitted this: it was *that, having himself suffered, being tempted, he might,* by this experience that he had of Satan's subtilty, and of the strength of his temptations, contract an additional tenderness, and be the more inclined, as well as better *able, to succour us* when *we are tempted.* (Heb. ii. 18.) Let this embolden us to *come unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.* (Heb. iv. 16.)

Let us remember and imitate the conduct of the great *Captain of our salvation:* and, like him, let us learn to
Ver. 3 *resist Satan,* that he may *flee from us.* Like Christ, let us maintain such an humble dependence on the divine
blessing, as never to venture out of the way of it, be the necessity ever so urgent; nor let us ever expose ourselves to
6 unnecessary danger, in expectation of extraordinary deliverance. Like him, let us learn to *overcome the world,* and
8, 9 to despise all its pomps and vanities, when offered at the price of our innocence.
4, 7 To furnish us for such a combat, let us take *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Let us not only
10 make ourselves familiarly acquainted with the words of scripture, but let us study to enter into the true design and
meaning of it; that so, if Satan should attempt to draw his artillery from thence, we may be able to guard against
6 that most dangerous stratagem, and to answer perverted passages of holy writ, by others more justly applied.

Once more; when the suggestions of Satan grow most horrible, let us not conclude that we are utterly abandon-
9 ed by God, because we are proved by such a trial; since Christ himself was tempted even to worship the infernal
tyrant. But in such cases let us resolutely repel the solicitation, rather than parley with it, and say, in imitation of
10 our Lord's example, and with a dependence on his grace, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*
11 If our conflict be thus maintained, the struggle will ere long be over; and angels who are now the spectators of the combat, will at length congratulate our victory.

SECTION XX.

John the Baptist being examined by the great men among the Jews, acknowledges that he was not the Christ; and refers them to one among them, whom he confesses to be vastly his superior. John i. 19—28.

JOHN i. 19.

SECT. 20. JOHN I.

WE have already taken notice of the honourable testimonies that were given by John in a more general way to the Messiah in his discourses to the people, before Jesus was baptized. We shall proceed to others that were more particular, which followed after that event; *and this* that we shall now produce *is the testimony of John, when* the sanhedrim, or grand
19 council of *the Jews, at Jerusalem, sent* some who were reckoned among the most venerable and holy men of the nation, even some of the *priests and Levites, to inquire of him,* saying, Tell us plainly, *who art thou,* that drawest such a crowd of people after thee, and pretendest to something so uncommon?

JOHN i. 19.

AND this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

20 *And* John, according to the natural plainness of his temper, presently replied to their inquiry; and with the utmost freedom, *he* most readily *acknowledged, and did not* at all affect either to *deny* or to disguise his real character; *but* in the strongest terms he solemnly *protested,*[a] *I am not the Messiah,* nor would I in the least pretend to arrogate to myself the honours which are due to none but him.

20 And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 *And,* upon this, *they* farther *asked him, What* art thou *then* if thou art not the promised Messiah? *Art thou* the celebrated *Elijah,*[b] come down from that abode in heaven, to which he was miraculously translated, (2 Kings ii. 11.) to introduce the great and terrible day of the Lord? (Mal. iv. 5.) *And,* in reply to this, *he said,* with the same plainness as before, Though it is true that I am come in the spirit and power of Elijah, yet *I am not* he. And they again inquired of him, *Art thou a prophet* of the former generation raised from the dead?[c] *And he* directly *answered, No.*

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Now as it only was in negatives that he had hitherto replied, *they said unto him therefore* yet once more, Tell us then plainly, *Who art thou? that we may,* in a more direct and satisfactory manner, *give an answer to them that sent us: What dost thou say con-*
23 *cerning thyself?* And, that they might not be mistaken in his character, and might be wholly left without excuse, if they regarded not the end for which he came, *he said, I am* (what I have frequently before declared myself to be) *the voice of one crying* here *in the wilderness,*[d] and saying, *Make the way of the Lord* clear and *straight,* by removing

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord; as said the prophet Esaias.

a Solemnly *protested.*] The word ωμολογησεν is the same which is rendered *acknowledged* in the former clause; but being thus repeated, its signification seems to be heightened, especially by its opposition to ουκ ηρνησατο, *he denied not.*

b *Art thou* the celebrated *Elijah?*] It is plain by this question, that they were strangers to the parentage of *John the Baptist.* And with regard to the reply he makes to this inquiry, there is no scruple to be made, but that *the Baptist* might justly deny that he was Elijah, as he indeed was not that prophet, though he *came in his spirit.* See Luke i. 17, p. 6.

c *Art thou a prophet* of the former generation raised from the dead?] It is necessary that this question should be understood with such a limitation, because *John the Baptist* was really a very illustrious *prophet,* as we may plainly see from what is said by Christ himself, Matt. xi. 9. And this interpretation (which is largely vindicated by Castalio) seems much preferable to that of Theophylact and Erasmus, who, because of the *article* ο προφητης, would render it as we do, *that prophet;* concluding without any proof, that the Jews understood Deut. xviii. 18, not of the Messiah himself, but of some *prophet* of considerable note, who was to introduce him: and Grotius has supposed the question that they offer to refer to Jeremiah, of whose return to life there was a mighty rumour that prevailed among the Jews. (Compare Matt. xvi. 14.) But I can see no reason to restrict it to a particular *prophet;* and since (as Limborch well observes in his *dispute* with Orobio the Jew) that text in Deuteronomy was the clearest and strongest in all the Mosaic writings to enforce the necessity of submitting to the Messiah, it is probable John would have corrected so great a mistake, if they had put the question to him upon this presumption. The best French versions render it as I have done; and indeed it seems to me that the word *prophet* in the *Evangelists* generally signifies one of those holy men who were the messengers of God to Israel of old; which especially appears from Mark vi. 15, where *to be a prophet,* and to be *as one of the prophets,* are spoken of as distinct, which they could not be but on this interpretation: and if the *alternative* η be left out, and it be read as it is in some manuscripts and printed copies, *He is a prophet like one of the prophets,* there will be a foundation for the same remark, and *one of the prophets* must signify *one of the ancient prophets.*

d *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*] The late Archbishop of Cambray beautifully illustrates the humility of this reply, as if this illustrious prophet had said, "Far from being the "*Messiah,* or *Elias,* or one of the *old prophets,* I am nothing but *a* "*voice;* a sound that, as soon as it hath expressed the thought of "which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more." See Fenel. *Œuvres Philos.* Vol. II. p. 193.

every obstruction; for he is now appearing for such gracious purposes, as demand the most cheerful reception; *as Isaiah the prophet said*, in a passage which you cannot but be acquainted with. (Isa. xl. 3.) SECT. 20.

24 And they which were sent, were of the Pharisees:

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you whom ye know not;

27 He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

JOHN I.

Now the messengers that came on this errand *were* of the sect *of the Pharisees;* who, as on the one hand they professed a great regard for the prophets, and believed their existence in a future state, so on the other hand they strenuously opposed any innovations in religion, which were not warranted by the tradition of the elders. *And* therefore, upon hearing this account that John the Baptist gave them of himself, *they asked him* again, *and said unto him* with some warmth, *Why then dost thou* take upon thee thus to *baptize*[e] all that appear to be awakened by thy preaching, in token of the forgiveness of their sins; *since*, by thine own confession, *thou art neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor* even *a prophet* of lower rank raised from the dead? 25

And *John answered them*, by repeating the testimony he had formerly borne to the people, (Luke iii. 16. p. 34.) *saying, I* indeed *baptize* you *with water; but there is one* that for sometime *has stood in the midst of you*, and is now coming to be daily conversant among you, *whom* as yet *you know not* to be so eminent a person, who will administer a much more noble baptism, attended with such miraculous effects as will abundantly justify mine. And *this is he, that cometh after me*, as to the time of his appearance in the world, whom yet I have declared to have existed long before me; and *who is* therefore upon all accounts deservedly *preferred before me*, as being one whose glorious dignity is such, as that I freely own him to be vastly my superior; *of whom I am not worthy* to be employed in any office as his menial servant, not even *to unloose the latchet of his shoe*, or to untie the string with which his sandals are bound on. 26, 27

These things passed on the other side Jordan, at a place called *Bethabara*, or the house of passage, which lay near that part of the river which was miraculously dried up, that the Israelites under the command of Joshua might pass over into Canaan, (see Josh. iii. 16, and Judges xii. 6.) which was the place *where John was* now *baptizing*. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

How remarkably were the words of our blessed Redeemer fulfilled in John, *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted!* (Luke xviii. 14.) He declined assuming the name of any of the servants of God among the prophets; and yet our Lord bore testimony to him, as of a higher rank than any of the prophets, than whom there was *none greater among those*, that had in a natural way been *born of women*. (Luke vii. 28.) Ver. 20, 21

Did John, this great and illustrious saint, speak of himself as unworthy to untie even the sandals of Christ; what reverence then do we owe him? and what reason have we to admire his condescension, that he should honour us, who are so much more unworthy, with the title of his servants? 27

Let not any, the most distinguished of that happy number, wonder if they be unknown by the world, and perhaps too, slighted and despised; since it appears that even Jesus himself, not only at his first appearance, stood unknown among the Jews, but afterwards was rejected by them, when his claim was solemnly entered, and his miracles most publicly wrought. 26

Vain, and worse than vain, was this message and inquiry which, when answered, was soon overlooked and forgot. May Divine grace teach us to inquire as those that are in earnest in our search! and *then shall we know* to saving purposes, *if we* thus *follow on to know the Lord*. (Hos. vi. 3.) 19, &c.

SECTION XXI.

John the Baptist bears a repeated testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God; which proves an occasion of introducing some of his disciples into an acquaintance with him. John i. 29—42.

JOHN i. 29.

JOHN i. 29.

THE next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

THE next day, after *John* had returned this answer to the priests and Levites who were sent to inquire into his character and mission, he *seeth Jesus* (who was now returned from his temptation in the desert) *coming towards him; and says* to them that were near him, *Behold*, with the strictest attention and regard, that innocent and holy Person, who may properly be called *the Lamb of God;* as it is he that is the great atoning sacrifice, of which the lambs that by divine command are daily offered in the temple were intended to be types; *which* expiates and *takes away the sin*[a] *of the* whole *world*, and is set forth to be a propitiation, not only for the Jews, for whom alone the SECT. 21. JOHN I. 29

e *Why then dost thou* take upon thee thus to *baptize?*] It is not to be certainly determined from this text, whether the *baptism of proselytes* was then in use among the Jews, or not. The words indeed will make a very strong and well-adapted sense, should they be understood, as if it had been said, Why is it then that thou dost institute such a *new rite* as this? But surely too they will be very proper in the other sense, if we should take them to imply, Why is it then that thou dost take upon thee, without any commission from the Sanhedrim, to administer *baptism?* and that, not only (as is usual) unto those who before this were *heathens*, but even to *the Jews?* And this (for reasons which it would not be proper here to enter upon at large) I take to be the more probable sense, and so suppose John's use of this ceremony in such a manner, to be a strong intimation that Jews as well as Gentiles must become proselytes to the new dispensation that was then opening to the world; and howsoever holy they imagined themselves to be, yet they all stood in absolute need of being washed from their sins; as he before had most emphatically declared. Matt. iii. 8, 9. p. 33.

a *The Lamb of God, which* expiates and *takes away sin.*] It is well observed by the author of that excellent treatise called *Christ the Mediator*, that this is the only sense in which *a lamb* can be said to *take away sin*. Many suppose this refers to the *paschal lamb;* but that was not in its chief intention so much an *expiatory*, as an *eucharistical sacrifice*. Grotius strangely enervates the force of this text, by chusing to explain it of that reformation of the lives of men, to which Christ did not only press them by the doctrine that he taught, but gave them an example of it in his death, *redeeming them* (as it is said) *from their vain conversation with his own precious blood;* (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) Whereas there is not any thing more evident, than that the great design for which he died was to *atone for* sin, and to exempt us from the punishment that our iniquities deserved; that, having *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, we

SECT. 21. JOHN I.

sacrifices of the law were offered, but for the Gentiles too, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, may receive remission of sins. And I now point him out, and tell you, *This is he of whom I* formerly have *said*, That *after me there comes a man who is* to be *preferred* abundantly *before me*, as being one that is incomparably greater and more excellent than I; *for he existed* long *before me*.[b] (Compare John i. 15, 27. p. 35, 41.) *And*, till the time of his appearance in a public way, *I* was a stranger to him, and *did not* personally *know him;* for it was ordered so by Providence, that notwithstanding the relation which there was between us, we were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other;[c] *yet* in the general I was aware of his intended approach; and it was chiefly *for this end*, with a particular regard to him, that *I came* (as you see) *baptizing with water, that he might* thus *be* more remarkably *made manifest to Israel*, and might be introduced with greater solemnity.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me;

31 And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

And John proceeded at the same time, while Jesus was before him, and *bore* his *testimony* to him, *saying*, This must be certainly the Son of God; for I declare that when he was baptized, *I* plainly *saw the* Holy *Spirit*, in a surprizing token of his presence, *descending* with a hovering motion *like a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him. And* that you may not suspect any confederacy between us, I repeat the assurance which I but just now gave you, that *I did not* personally *know him: but* as he was approaching to me, I had a secret intimation given me,[d] that it was he, whom I should see to be distinguished by this sign; for *he that sent me to baptize with water*, as an earnest of that nobler baptism which is now soon to be expected, even that God whose messenger I am, *he said unto me* by an unquestionable revelation, This is the sign that I will give thee, that *upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending* in a corporeal and miraculous appearance, *and remaining upon him, this is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw* this sign with my own eyes; *and* upon this convincing evidence it is, that I *have testified* already, and still go on to testify, *that this is* really *the Son of God*, who is come into the world in a human form, to accomplish the great work of redemption and salvation; who is therefore most reverently and affectionately to be received by us, as we regard his Father's protection and favour.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him;

33 And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

Again it came to pass *on the next day*, that *John was standing* near the same place, *and two of his disciples* at that time were with him:[e] *And looking stedfastly on Jesus*,[f] *as he was walking* at some little distance, *he* takes occasion to repeat his former declaration, and *says* to his disciples, that he might lead them to a due regard to Christ, *Behold the Lamb of God*, whom I before have represented as the great expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men.

35 Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.

And when the two disciples that were with him *heard him speak* such high and honourable things of Christ, they took such notice of it, that *they* immediately went on and *followed Jesus*, who was then returning to a lodging which he had at a small distance from that place.[g] *And Jesus turning back, and seeing them* intent on *following* and coming after [*him*,] *says to them*, not to discountenance and turn them back, but to encourage and invite them to a free converse with him, *What do you seek?* and what may be the business that you have with me? And *they said to him*, with the greatest reverence and respect, *Rabbi, (which being translated* from the Syriac, which was the language that was then spoken by the Jews, *is* the same with *Master,)* may we have leave to ask thee, *where dost thou dwell?* for we are desirous of making thee a visit, that we may enter into some conversation with thee, which would not be so proper or convenient in this public way. And, pleased to hear of the inquiry they made, *he says unto them, Come* with me now, *and see* where it is I lodge; for you shall both be welcome to attend me home. And *they* most readily complied with his kind invitation, and *came and saw where he dwelt*, taking particular notice of the place; and they went in, *and continued with him* all the remainder of *that day; it being* then *about the tenth hour, or* four in the afternoon; so that they had an opportunity of spending the whole evening in conversation with him, abundantly to their delight and satisfaction.

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour.

might have *redemption through his blood*, even *the forgiveness of our sins*. Compare Heb. ix. 26, 28; Eph. i. 7; and Col. i. 14.

b *For he existed before me.*] Dr. Hammond abundantly vindicates this interpretation. Had πρωτος here, as in some other places, signified *chief*, ες, not πν, would have been joined with it, and *John* the Baptist would have said *he is*, and not *he was my chief*, which would apparently have been a very flat tautology, instead of a reason; whereas *Christ having existed before John*, though he was *born after him*, was a most convincing proof that he was a very extraordinary person, and was the strongest reason that could well have been assigned, to shew that he was worthy of their superior regard. Compare note b, on John i. 15. p. 35.

c We were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other.] This was very surprising, considering how nearly related they were to each other, and how remarkable the conception and birth of both of them had been, as well as what frequent interviews they might have had at the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. There seems to have been a particular hand of Providence, in thus preventing that acquaintance that might otherwise have grown up to an intimacy and tenderness of friendship, which, in the eyes of a prejudiced and censorious world, might have rendered John's testimony to Christ something suspected. It is probable that both Zacharias and Elisabeth died while John was very young; and then he might soon forget Jesus, though he had seen him in his infancy.

d I had a secret intimation given me.] The supposition of this, which is so perfectly agreeable to John's prophetic character, easily reconciles this text with John's respectful speech to Christ when he came to be baptized; (Matt. iii. 14. p. 36.) as Jansenius, and before him Chrysostom, observed.

e *Two of his disciples* were with him.] It plainly appears by ver. 40, that Andrew was one of these; and perhaps John, the beloved apostle, might be the other, who being the penman of this gospel, does frequently conceal his name. Compare John xiii. 23; and xx. 2.

f *Looking stedfastly on Jesus.*] This seems the most exact signification of the word εμβλεψας, and I have thus translated it again in ver. 42.

g A lodging at a small distance from that place.] As Jesus was a person who had no attendants, and was a stranger in this country, we may conclude, that he had only some obscure and private *lodging* here; which must have been at no great distance from the place where John baptized, as may be gathered from his appearing there from day to day. And by this means he did an honour to John's ministry, and had an opportunity of receiving his testimony.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, (which is, being interpreted, the Christ.)

42 And he brought him to Jesus: and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, (which is, by interpretation, a stone.)

Now *Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter*, who will make so considerable a figure in this history, *was one of the two* disciples *that heard John* [*speak of Jesus*] in the manner we have before related, *and followed him*. And so exceedingly was he transported with the pleasure that he found in his acquaintance with him, that he was ready to impart the joyful news to others, to whom he knew it would be welcome; and hastening to communicate it to his friends, as the most acceptable tidings he could bring them, *he first findeth his own brother Simon*,[h] *and tells him* with the greatest joy, *We* certainly *have found the* promised *Messiah; (which being translated* from the Hebrew or the Syriac tongue, *is the Christ*, or the Anointed One.) 41

And, that his brother Simon might be satisfied of the truth of what he told him, *he brought him unto Jesus: and Jesus looking stedfastly upon him*, as if he had read in his countenance the traces of his character, and of his future service in the church, *said*, at his coming to him, *Thou art Simon the son of Jonas*;[i] and *thou shalt* also *be called Cephas; (which* in the Greek may be expressed by Peter, and *signifies a rock;)* a name well adapted to his character, upon account of that resolute and patient firmness with which he should maintain the cause of the gospel; and which also expressed the use which should afterwards be made of him, as he should prove, in subordination to Christ, one of the great foundations of the church. 42

SECT. 21. JOHN I.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our faith daily behold Jesus under the character of *the Lamb of God*, a Lamb indeed *without blemish and without spot*; by whose precious blood we are redeemed, as by an infinitely more valuable ransom than *silver and gold*. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) As such let us humbly apply to him to *take away our sins*, and rejoice that (as the apostle John elsewhere expresses it) *he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world*; all ages and nations being interested in the benefit of his atonement. (1 John ii. 2.) Ver. 29

Let us consider him as anointed by the Holy Spirit, and as baptizing his church with it; and learn, after the example of John the Baptist, to bear our testimony to him again and again, with continued steadiness and growing zeal. 33 *et seq.*

Our satisfaction in him as the great and only Saviour, will surely grow in proportion to our acquaintance with him. If Divine grace hath discovered him to us, and taught us to repose the confidence of our souls upon him, let us, like Andrew in the passage before us, be concerned to make him known to others; and especially to lead our nearest relatives and our most intimate friends into that acquaintance with him which is so absolutely necessary to their eternal happiness! 39 41

Let the condescending readiness with which our blessed Redeemer accepted, and even invited the visit of these two disciples, engage every preacher of righteousness most willingly to give his private, as well as his public labours, and his time (valuable as that treasure is) to the service of those who are seriously affected with the concerns of their souls, and are inquiring after the way to salvation. We are sufficiently honoured if, by any means, and by all, we may be instrumental in promoting that cause which employed the daily labours of God's incarnate Son, and at length cost him his very blood! 39

SECTION XXII.

The calling of Philip, and the interview of Christ with Nathaniel. John i. 43, *to the end.*

JOHN i. 43.

THE day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him

JOHN i. 43.

THE next day after he had met with Peter, *Jesus determined to depart from thence*[a] *to Galilee*, and there to enter on his public ministry; *and* at his coming thither he *findeth Philip*, whom he intended for one of his most intimate companions, *and says unto him, Follow me*; which, being secretly influenced by his grace,[b] he accordingly did. *Now Philip was* an inhabitant *of Bethsaida*, which was a town of Galilee on the sea of Tiberias, and was also *the city of Andrew and Peter*, who have already been particularly mentioned; and by his calling these disciples, he gave an intimation of his purpose of making some longer stay in that country. 44

And *Philip*, after he was thus become a follower of Christ, *findeth* his pious friend *Nathaniel*, who was also of Galilee, and lived in a town of it which was called Cana, 45

SECT. 22. JOHN I.

h *He first findeth his own brother Simon.*] This is a much more literal translation of Ευρισκει ουτος πρωτος αδελφον τον ιδιον Σιμωνα, than that of the new translation in 1727, which renders it, *The first that he found, or happened to meet with, was Peter.*—He may perhaps be called *his own brother*, to distinguish him from some other that belonged to the family, who possibly might be his brother-in-law, or was related to him only in half-blood.—Peter was so remarkable a person, that it might be proper to tell us, who was the first means of bringing him acquainted with Christ; and if John was the other disciple that is here referred to, he might mean this as an humble intimation that Andrew's zeal was in this respect greater than his own.—We may observe here by the way, that Peter was not *the first* of Christ's disciples, (in which the Papists would have been ready to have gloried,) but that another was the means of bringing him to an acquaintance with Jesus.

i *Thou art Simon.*] Some have thought, that Christ intended an allusion here to his name Simon, which may signify *a hearer*, intimating the candour and impartiality with which he was willing to hear Christ's instructions; (see Dr. Clarke's *note*.) But I did not express this in the paraphrase, because it is not certain. Perhaps our Lord only meant to shew, that though he had never seen him before, he knew his name and his family. Compare ver. 48; and John iv. 16, 19.

a *Determined to depart from thence;* ηθελησεν εξελθειν.] The force of the word θελω seems to be something greater than our translation expresses; and there are several other texts which may suggest the same remark. (Compare Matt. xiv. 5; xix. 17; xx. 14; Luke iv. 6; xxiii. 20; John iii. 8; v. 21, 40; vii. 17; viii. 44; xvii. 24; xxi. 22; and 2 Tim. iii. 12.) Perhaps it may here intimate, that our Lord on this occasion broke through the importunity of some, who would rather have persuaded him to continue at Bethabara, for the advantage of farther testimonies from the Baptist, or to have gone to Jerusalem, where they might imagine that his ministry would have been opened more honourably than in Galilee. Compare John vii. 3, 4.

b Being secretly influenced by his grace.] When we consider how suddenly some of Christ's disciples left their stated employments to follow him, (according as we read, Matt. iv. 18—22; Luke v. 27, 28; and xix. 5, 6.) it seems reasonable to allow some singular kind of impression on their mind, (as there was in the calling of Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 19—21.) which though for the present it superseded the necessity of arguments, yet did not exclude their attend-

SECT. 22. JOHN 1.

(John xxi. 2.) *and says unto him, We have found him* who has so long been earnestly expected by us, even that illustrious and extraordinary Person, *whom Moses* gave us an account of *in the law, and* whom *the prophets* also *have described*[c] in such a strong and lively manner; and with the greatest joy I am come to tell thee, I know him who he is, [*even*] *Jesus the son of Joseph*, who comes *from Nazareth*, and is undoubtedly 45 the promised Messiah.

of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 *And* when *Nathaniel* heard that he was one of Nazareth, his prejudice against the place was such, that he was ready to conclude that Philip was mistaken; and he therefore *said unto him, Can any good thing* at all, and especially any such great and glorious blessing as this, *come out of* a place so infamous as *Nazareth?*[d] And *Philip says unto him*, Do not suffer yourself to be borne away by a vain popular prejudice, but *come and see;* converse with him yourself, and you will soon be satisfied.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Now when *Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards him*, (though there was no personal acquaintance between them,) at the first sight of him he presently discerns what was his real character, *and says, concerning him*, so loud that he might easily hear it, *Behold* here cometh *one* [*that is*] *truly an Israelite*, (compare Rev. iii. 9; and John viii. 39.) a person that indeed deserves the honourable title of one of God's people, and is worthy of his descent from Jacob, his pious ancestor, as being a plain and upright man, *in whom there is no deceit*, either towards God or man. (See Gen. xxv. 27.)

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 *Nathaniel*, perfectly surprised at such an unexpected testimony, presently *says*, with all the natural frankness of his temper, *to him, Whence dost thou know me*, or how canst thou at once thus undertake to answer for the most secret part of a stranger's character? *Jesus replied, and said unto him*, I am not so entirely a stranger to thy character as thou art ready to suppose, nor do I take it merely from uncertain report; for *before Philip called thee, I saw thee when thou wast* alone *under the fig-tree*;[e] and as I was present in spirit to observe what passed in that secret retirement, I know how well thou deservest the testimony which I have now borne to thine integrity.

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 *Nathaniel* was so struck with this express reference to what he knew none could be witness to but God and his own conscience, that all his prejudices were at once removed; and he immediately *replied* to Christ, *and says*, with all that openness and candour that was so natural *to him, Rabbi*, from this one circumstance I cannot but believe all that my friend hath told me concerning thee; and therefore I not only honour thee as a wise and holy teacher, but am convinced that *thou art the Son of God;* yea, that *thou art* the promised Messiah, whom we so earnestly have been expecting as *the King of Israel;* for surely such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person.[f]

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.

50 And *Jesus* upon this *replied, and said unto him, Dost thou believe* me to be the promised Messiah, and the Son of God, merely *because I told thee*, that *I saw thee under the fig-tree? Thou*, who discoverest so honest and teachable a temper, *shalt see* much 51 *greater things than these* to prove it. *And he* accordingly proceeds and *says*, not only *unto him*, but unto all that were then present with him, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*,[g] and solemnly declare it as a most certain truth, to be regarded with the most diligent attention, and received as coming from the mouth of one who is truth itself, That *from this time you shall see* such a surprising train of miracles[h] wrought by me, in the whole course of my succeeding ministry, that it shall seem as if *heaven* was *opened, and all the angels of God* were continually (as they appeared in vision to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 12.) *ascending and descending*[i] [*to wait*] *upon the Son of man*, and to receive and execute his orders:

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

ing to that afterwards, which might be necessary to defend their conduct to others.

c *Whom Moses—and the Prophets have described:* ον εγραψε Μωσης και οι προφηται.] This is a very literal translation: for γραφω frequently is used in the same sense elsewhere, and in particular is justly rendered thus, Rom. x. 5. (Compare Josh. xviii. 9; Judg. viii. 14; and Ezra vii. 22. Septuag.)

d A place so infamous as *Nazareth.*] As Nathaniel was a native of Galilee, it appears from hence, that the Galileans themselves had but an ill opinion of Nazareth, as worse than the rest of that country; and indeed, by the figure its inhabitants make in the Evangelists, they seem to have deserved it. See Luke iv. 16, 28, 29; and Matt. xiii. 54, *et seq.*

e *When thou wast under the fig-tree.*] I see no reason at all to think, with Heinsius, that the conviction produced by these words in the mind of Nathaniel, proceeded from the allusion he perceived them to bear to Zech. iii. 10. *In that day ye shall call every man his neighbour, under the vine, and under the fig-tree.* It was Christ's saying that he *saw him there*, that struck his mind in so powerful a manner; and it is very probable that he was then employed in some secret devout meditations. See Dr. Evans's *Christian Temper*, Vol. II. p. 343.

f Such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person.] Just thus the *woman of Samaria* argued, John iv. 29. *Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* which plainly intimates, that they supposed the Messiah would be endowed with the most perfect knowledge, and have the gift of prophecy in the highest degree.—There was a great deal of courage in Nathaniel's making such a declaration, if it was before a mixed company; for Christ's assuming the title of *the Son of God*, was afterwards interpreted to be no less than blasphemy. John x. 36; and xix. 7.

g *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* αμην, αμην, λεγω υμιν.] There is no doubt but that these words are to be taken for a solemn affirmation; in which it is observable, that John has constantly repeated the *amen*, while it is only mentioned once by the other Evangelists. And this we may suppose him to have done either to excite the greater attention, or in a more emphatical and stronger manner to assert the *truth*, not only of the thing affirmed, but of the person that affirms it. For as *amen* in Hebrew signifies *truth*, (Isa. lxv. 16.) so Christ, as being *the true and faithful witness*, is called *the Amen.* (Rev. iii. 14.) This repeated asseveration therefore may be considered as an intimation to us, not only that the saying unto which it is prefixed *is true*, but that we should regard it as proceeding from *the true and faithful Witness.* See Dr. Lightfoot's *Harmony*, and *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

h *From this time you shall see* a train of miracles.] Accordingly, within *three days* one glorious miracle was performed by Christ at Cana of Galilee; which being the town to which Nathaniel belonged, there is great reason to believe he was present with the rest of Christ's disciples at it. Compare John ii. 2, 11. sect. 23.

i *The angels of God ascending and descending.*] If Nathaniel was, as some have thought, the person afterwards called Bartholomew, and made an apostle, (see Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebra.* on Matt. x. 3.) he must regard the vision of *angels* attending *Christ's ascension* as a glorious accomplishment of these words; as his final appearance at the day of *judgment, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him*, will yet more eminently be. Compare Matt. xxvi. 64. where απ' αρτι so plainly signifies *hereafter*, that I much question whether it might not justly have been rendered so here; but where I am dubious, I always chuse the more extensive sense, in which (as here) the more limited is generally comprehended.

and thus you will be furnished with a most convincing proof that, humble as the form of my present appearance is,[k] I am indeed the illustrious Person foretold under that title, and am intended for that glorious throne, around which the highest angels shall account it their honour to appear as humble attendants, when the whole world shall be convened before it. SECT. 22. JOHN I.

IMPROVEMENT.

How cautiously should we guard against popular prejudices, which possessed so honest a heart as that of Nathaniel, and led him to suspect that the blessed Jesus himself was an impostor, and that *no good* could be expected from him, because he had been brought up at Nazareth! But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the conviction of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discovery. Ver. 46

How amiable is the character here given of Nathaniel: *An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!* May the attainment of so excellent a character, and a resemblance to him in it, be the daily aim and emulation of all who have the honour to be called into the Israel of God! 47

A constant intercourse with God in secret devotion will be a happy expression of one branch of this sincerity, and an effectual means of promoting the rest. Let it therefore be our care that the eye of him that *seeth in secret*, may often behold us in religious retirement, pouring out our souls before God, and humbly consecrating them to his service. The day will come, when those scenes of duty which were most cautiously concealed, shall be commemorated with public honour; and when he who now discerns them, and is a constant witness to the most private exercises of the closet, *will reward them openly.* (Matt. vi. 6.) 48

Happy were those who saw the miracles performed by the Son of man while he was here on earth! and happy those favourite spirits of heaven which were *ascending and descending* as *ministers of his to do his pleasure!* But in some degree yet happier are they *who, having not seen, have believed;* John xx. 29. As their faith is peculiarly acceptable, it shall ere long be turned into sight. They shall behold much greater things than ever were seen below, and more extraordinary manifestations of his glory than they can now conceive; and, being brought with all his people to surround his throne, shall join in those nobler services which attendant angels render him above. 51

SECTION XXIII.

Christ attends a marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee, and miraculously changes water into wine. John ii. 1—11.

JOHN ii. 1.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

2 And both Jesus was called and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

JOHN ii. 1.

NOW the third day after Christ's coming into Galilee, and discoursing there with Nathaniel, in the manner we have related above, *there was a marriage at Cana*, a town *in Galilee*,[a] which originally belonged to the tribe of Asher, (Josh. xix. 28.) *and* Mary *the mother of Jesus was there*;[b] it being the marriage of a near relation, or an intimate friend of her's. *And Jesus, and* those of *his disciples* that were with him, (namely, the two disciples that had followed him from the banks of Jordan, with Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel,) being known to be in the neighbourhood, *were invited to the marriage:* and Jesus, not affecting the austerities which became the character and ministry of John the Baptist, freely accepted of the invitation, and favoured them with his instructive presence. SECT. 23. JOHN II. 2

Now, as it was known that Jesus would be present at the feast, this, in conjunction with the events which had lately arisen, occasioned a greater resort of company than was expected; *and when the wine* provided for the entertainment of the guests *fell short, the mother of Jesus*, who either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received from him some hint of his intention, now[c] thought proper to inform him of it, and *says unto him*, Son, dost thou observe *they have no wine* to carry on the feast? 3

But *Jesus*, not approving it that she should take upon her to direct him in the exercise of his miraculous power, *says* freely *to her*, with an air of serious rebuke, and in a plainness of language suited to the simplicity of those ages and countries, *O Woman*,[d] *what hast thou* 4

k Humble as the form of my present appearance is.] Though it be very true, as Dr. Sykes has excellently proved at large, that the phrase *Son of man* does generally refer to the glorious *kingdom* over which Christ was to preside, according to the prophecies of Daniel, yet I think it equally evident, that it is originally used in the Old Testament in a sense that carries something of humiliation in it. See Job xxv. 6; Psal. viii. 4; cxliv. 3; Isa. li. 12; and especially Psal. lxii. 9; where we justly translate בני אדם, *men of low degree.* A multitude of texts as well as this before us, appear with great advantage, when this remark is attended to; though Le Clerc cannot by any means be vindicated in confining his interpretation so entirely to this latter view.

a *Cana*, a town *in Galilee.*] It lay toward the southern part of the land of Asher, (Josh. xix. 28.) and might be called *Cana in Galilee*, to distinguish it from another town of that name in Celosyria, mentioned by Josephus. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xv. *cap.* 5. [al. 6.] § 1. p. 751. Havercamp.

b *The mother of Jesus was there.*] Some have supposed this marriage to be celebrated at the house of Cleopas or Alpheus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord, (John xix. 25.) and one of whose sons was *Simon the Canaanite*, whom some have thought to be so called, from his being an inhabitant of this Cana. (Mark iii. 18.) And this may be considered as the more probable, as Mary was not only present at the feast, but was concerned about supplying them with wine; and when the feast was over, we are told at ver. 12, that Jesus was attended, at his leaving Cana, not only with his own disciples, but with his brethren, or his nearest kinsmen, who probably came thither as relations, to be present at the marriage.—As Mary here is spoken of alone, it may be reasonable to conclude, that Joseph was now dead, and that he lived not to the time when Jesus entered on his public ministry, especially as he is nowhere mentioned in the gospel afterwards. See Dr. Lightfoot's *Harmony, in loc.*

c Either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received some hint, &c.] Without supposing the one or the other of these, one can hardly imagine why she should thus apply to him on this occasion. For she could scarce suppose he had money to buy any large quantity; nor would it have been so proper to have done it, if he had, lest it should have been interpreted as an affront to the bridegroom. But the supply that she expected from him, was by his working of a *miracle;* and it is plain that, notwithstanding the rebuke she justly met with, yet she had still a view to this, by her directions to the servants afterwards, ver. 5, to do whatever he should order them.

d *O Woman.*] We have no reason to conclude that there was any rudeness in his addressing to his mother thus. For though indeed it is a manner of expression that is very unusual among us, to call a person *woman*, when we are speaking to her, if she be one to whom we think that any respect is due; yet some of the politest writers of antiquity make the most well-bred and accomplished princes use it, in their addressing unto ladies of the highest quality; and even servants too are sometimes represented as speaking to their mistresses in the same language. There are some instances of this referred to in Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 206; to which many more might easily be added.

SECT. 23. JOHN II.

to do with me,[c] thus to direct me how and when my miracles are to be wrought? Let me now say it once for all, this is a thing that does not lie within thy proper sphere; and in particular, for what is now proposed, *my time* of doing it *is not yet come*,[f] but it is best to wait a little longer, and leave it to my conduct to determine when it will be the fittest and the most convenient season for me to interpose.

5 In this *his mother* readily acquiesced, as conscious to herself that she had been over-hasty in the proposal; but yet, as she inferred from his answer that he intended them some extraordinary supply, she *says unto the servants*, with some degree of authority, as being in part concerned in managing the feast, *Whatever he shall order you*, see that you carefully *do* [*it*;] for he may have reasons for it, beyond what you imagine.

6 *Now there were set there*, near the room in which the feast was kept, *six water-pots*, or jars *of stone*, from whence the water might be taken that was made use of by the guests to wash their hands and feet, and that was necessary for the washing of the cups and other vessels that were used at table, *according to the Jewish custom of purifying*, which in some instances was grown to such a superstitious nicety,[g] as to require a considerable quantity of water to be ready upon such occasions: these jars were therefore of a con-
7 siderable bigness, *containing each of them two or three measures*.[h] And *Jesus* chusing, for wise reasons, to make use of these[i] rather than the vessels in which the wine had before been contained, after some convenient pause, that the failing of the wine might be the more observed, goes to the servants that were waiting, and *says to them*, *Fill* up *those jars with*
8 *water*. *And they filled them up to the* very *brim*. *And*, having presently transformed the water by his divine power into excellent wine, *he says unto them*, *Now draw* some of it *out*, *and carry it to the president of the feast*. *And*, in obedience to the orders Jesus gave them, *they carried* [*it*] to him.

9 *Now when the president of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it came, (though the servants that drew the water* very well *knew,)* observing that it had a finer flavour than any they had drank before, *the president of the feast calls for the bridegroom*, at whose expense he reckoned that this wine had
10 been provided; *And says unto him*, thou hast acted to-day in a very uncommon manner: for *every man* that makes a feast, *first sets out the good wine*, *and when they have drank plentifully*,[k] so that their taste is not so delicate as before, *then* brings out *that which is worse*; [*but*] *thou hast kept the good wine until now*, and towards the conclusion of the feast surprisest us with what is much better than we have yet tasted. This naturally gave the bridegroom an opportunity of declaring that he knew nothing of this new supply; which occasioned an examination of the servants, and so a discovery of what Christ had done in it.

11 *This* was the *beginning of* his public *miracles*,[l] which *Jesus wrought* (as we have now related) *in Cana of Galilee*, *and* thereby *manifested his glory*; *and* that in such

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was; (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested

c *What hast thou to do with me?*] Some have thought, τι εμοι και σοι, might be rendered, *What is that to me and thee?* "What does it "signify to us, or what concern is it of ours, if they want wine?" But Jesus was of so benevolent a temper, and Mary seems to be so far concerned as a relation, that it does not in this sense appear to be so proper a reply. It seems rather to be intended as a rebuke to Mary; and it was surely expedient she should know, that Jesus was not upon such occasions to be directed by her. And nothing is more evident, than that the phrase in other places has the meaning that our version gives it. See Matt. viii. 29; and Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xvii. 18; 2 Kings iii. 13; and ix. 19. *Septuag.*

f *My time is not yet come.*] Some are for adding a note of interrogation here, (as Gregory Nyssen does,) and so would render it, *Is not my time yet come?* As if he had said, "Am I not old enough to "know when to work *miracles?* and now that I have entered on "my public ministry, *is it not time* that I should be exempt from "thine authority, and should be left to govern my own actions "without any direction?" But I conceive the sense in which it is generally taken, to be more natural and easy: and I would rather chuse to understand it of the *time* when he intended to perform *this miracle*, for which the proper moment, though very near, was not yet quite come, than to refer it in a more general way to the *time* of his *doing miracles in public*, or more particularly to restrain it to the *time* of his *sufferings*, which Christ indeed has elsewhere called *his hour*, and which M. L'Enfant supposes him here to intimate, that he would not anticipate by provoking the Jews too soon; for thus it would have implied a denial of his mother's request, which it is plain, from ver. 5. she did not apprehend, and which the event shows that Christ did not design.

g *Was grown to such a superstitious nicety.*] Besides the *purifications* that were appointed by the law of God, there was a multitude of others that were then practised in compliance with the tradition of the elders. Compare Mark vii. 3, 4; and see Godwin's *Moses and Aaron*, *lib.* iii. *cap.* 11. § 4.

h *Two or three measures.*] The measures of the ancients are so very uncertain, that it is hardly possible to determine the exact content of these vessels. Some have computed them to contain about two or three hogsheads; and it is rendered so in our translation as to make them contain above a hundred gallons. But it is hardly probable the vessels were so large; and as the word μετρητας signifies no more than measures, it is much better we should leave it as we find it, unless the quantity could be determined with more certainty. It seems most probable that as the Jewish bath was the most common measure that was used in liquids, this is the quantity designed, where measures are expressed without any limitation. And as the Jewish bath is reckoned to contain four gallons and a half, the content of these vessels, if they are computed only at two measures each, will amount to no less than fifty-four gallons, which may be reckoned a sufficient quantity. See Dr. Lightfoot's *Harmony*, *in loc.* and Godwin's *Moses and Aaron*, *lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. *ad fin.*

i *Chusing to make use of these.*] Jesus might rather chuse to make use of these *large vessels*, thus to add to the dignity of the *miracle*, by the liberal quantity of *wine* produced, which we have no reason to believe was all drank that day. If the feast, as was usual, lasted several days, (Gen. xxix. 27, 28; and Judg. xiv. 12, 17.) a considerable expence might by this means be saved, and an equivalent given for the additional charge of entertaining so many of his disciples. Not to say, that this would prevent any suspicion that the tincture or taste of the *water* might be derived from any remainder of *wine* in the vessels; for indeed the goodness of the wine thus made, would be sufficient to obviate such a thought.

k *When they have drank plentifully.*] Though μεθυειν often signifies, *to drink to excess*, yet it would be very unjust and absurd to suppose, that it implies here that these guests had already transgressed the rules of temperance. None can seriously imagine the Evangelist so destitute of common sense, as to represent Christ as *displaying his glory*, by miraculously furnishing the company with wine to prolong a drunken revel. It is much more reasonable to conclude, that it signifies here (as it does in Gen. xliii. 34; Cant. v. 1; and Hag. i. 6. *Septuag.*) only *to drink so freely*, as innocently to exhilarate the spirits. And even this perhaps might only be the case of some of them, and particularly not of those who, drawn by a desire to converse with Jesus, might be but lately come in.

l *This beginning of* his public *miracles.*] This interpretation seems much preferable to that of Grotius, who only supposes that this was the *first miracle* wrought at Cana, another being afterwards mentioned, (John iv. 46. ℈ 31.) for it is plain there must have been a long series of *miracles* wrought here, to justify such a manner of speaking, which doth not at all appear to have been the case. It rather seems to be here represented only as *the first* of his *public miracles*; for it seems probable that the necessities of the family might sometimes have engaged him to have done something miraculous for its relief in *private*. See note c, p. 45.

forth his glory: and his disciples believed on him. an illustrious manner that *his disciples believed on him* more stedfastly than before, as the fact was so certain and so remarkable. SECT. 23.

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN II.

We have here the first of Christ's public miracles, which we find was not wrought till about his thirtieth year. How much sooner could he have glorified himself, and amazed the world by the display of his divine power! But he waited his Father's call, and the delay added at length to the lustre of his works.

It was performed to grace a nuptial solemnity: and who doth not see, that it was in effect a testimony borne Ver. 1
to the honour and purity of that happy state, on which so much of the comfort of the present generation, and the existence of the future, regularly depends?

How happy were these guests while Jesus was among them! and how condescending did he appear, in making 2
one on the occasion! His social and obliging temper should sweeten ours, and be a lesson to his followers, that they avoid every thing sour and morose, and do not censure others for innocent liberties, at proper seasons of festivity and joy.

If his mother met with so just a rebuke for attempting to direct his administrations in the days of his flesh, how 3, 4
absurd is it for any to address her, as if she had a right to command him on the throne of his glory! And how indecent for us to direct his supreme wisdom as to the time and manner in which he shall appear for us in any of the exigencies of life!

Her submission and faith manifested on this occasion are truly amiable: and with this we have surely reason 5
to admire the benignity and generosity of Christ in this miracle before us, who consulted the pleasure and entertainment, as well as the necessity of his followers; and by this abundant supply amply repaid any extraordinary expense which he might have occasioned to the family.

How easily could he, who thus *turned water into wine*, have transformed every entertainment of a common 7, 8
table into the greatest delicacies, and have regaled himself daily with royal dainties! But, far superior to such animal gratifications, he chose the severities of a much plainer life. Blessed Jesus! who can say whether thou art greater in what thou didst, or in what thou didst not do? May none of us thy followers be too intent on indulging our taste, or any of our other senses; but pursuing those intellectual and devotional pleasures which 10
were thy meat and thy drink on earth, may we wait for that good wine which thou reservest for thy people to the last, and for those richer dainties with which thou wilt feast those who shall *drink it with thee in thy Father's kingdom!* (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

SECTION XXIV.

Our Lord celebrates the first passover of his public ministry at Jerusalem; and vindicates the outer court of the temple from the profanation of those that bought and sold there. John ii. 12, *to the end.*

JOHN ii. 12.

AFTER this, he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days.

NOW, *after* Jesus had attended at *this* marriage, where he miraculously turned the water into wine, *he and his mother, and his brethren,* (or his near relations,) *and his disciples,* who were now ready to attend him wheresoever he should go, *went down* from Cana *to Capernaum*, a city that lay near the north part of the sea of Galilee, on the south border of the land of Naphtali; *and* at this time the stay they made was but short, for *they continued there not many days.* SECT. 24. JOHN II.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

And the reason of their leaving it so soon was, that *the passover of the Jews drew near*,[a] when it was ordered by the law of Moses, that all the males should appear before the Lord; (Exod. xxiii. 17; and Deut. xvi. 16.) *and* therefore *Jesus*, who maintained a religious regard to the ceremonial as well as the moral part of the law, *went up to Jerusalem* to worship at the temple. 13

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting:

And, at his coming thither, *he found in the* outer court and cloisters of the *temple*, *those that*, under a pretence of accommodating such as came to worship there with proper sacrifices, *sold oxen, and sheep, and doves*;[b] *and* he also saw there *the money-changers sitting* at their tables, who, for a certain profit, changed any foreign coin into that which was current, and larger pieces of money into half-shekels, which were on some occasions to be paid into the sacred treasury. (Exod. xxx. 15.) 14

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured

Now, at the sight of this, Jesus was moved with a just indignation, to think that so sacred a place, honoured with such peculiar tokens of the Divine presence, should be profaned in this audacious manner, and so great an affront be put on the devout Gentiles, in whose court this market 15

a *The passover of the Jews drew near.*] As the Evangelists have not expressly determined the number of passovers which happened between the baptism and death of Christ, or during the course of his public ministry, so it is well known that learned men have been much divided in their opinions about them. By far the greater part have supposed there were *four*; reckoning this the first; the *feast* mentioned John v. 1. the second; the *passover* spoken of, John vi. 4. as the third; and that at which Christ suffered the fourth. But there are others of a different opinion.—The celebrated Sir Isaac Newton reckons *five*; the first, this which is now before us; the second, according to him, happened four months after Christ's discourse with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 35; the third, a few days before the story of the *disciples rubbing the ears of corn*, Luke vi. 1; the fourth, a little after the *feeding of the five thousand*; and the last at the time of our Lord's *crucifixion*. The reasons for this the reader will find at large in Sir Isaac Newton's *Observat. on Proph.* Part I. chap. 11; and the most considerable of them will be touched upon in their proper places.—Mr. Manne has with great learning and ingenuity attempted to revive a long exploded notion, that *Christ's ministry continued but sixteen months*; (see Manne's second *Dissertation*, p. 146, *et seq.*) so that there were but *two passovers* during the whole course of it. Mr. Whiston's reasoning against this hypothesis, in the sixth of his late *Dissertations*, appears to me unanswerable. For he there shews that if this was true, Christ must have travelled on an average near *ten miles a-day* during the course of his ministry. Besides, the transpositions in scripture which this would introduce, seem very unwarrantable and dangerous; and, among other difficulties, it is none of the least, that Mr. Manne is obliged to suppose that Christ only *purged the temple* at his *last passover*, and consequently that St. John has misplaced this story; though ver. 24 of this chapter, and ver. 22, 23, 24, of the next, (sect. 27.) afford such strong arguments to the contrary. Compare note c, and note m, of this section.

b *Sold oxen, and sheep, and doves.*] There must have been a grand market for these animals at such times; for Josephus tells us that no less than 256,500 victims were offered at *one passover*; see Joseph. *de Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. (al. vii. 17; sect. iii. p. 399.) Edit. Havercamp.

SECT. 24. JOHN II.

was kept; *and* therefore, *having made a whip of* the *small cords*, (with which they were used to tie the beasts to some rings fixed in the pavement for that purpose,) *he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen*, which they had brought into it; *and* he also *poured out the money of the exchangers, and overturned the tables* at which they were sitting. *And* he *said to them that sold doves, Take* all *these things away* 16 *from hence* directly; [*and*] *do not*, for shame, *make my Father's house*, by such scandalous practices as these, *an house of* public *traffic*, and turn it to a common market-place, or exchange. Now, by his saying thus, he openly proclaimed that God was his Father,[c] and made such a declaration of his divine mission as could not but be greatly observed by 17 the multitude. *And his disciples*, when they saw so meek a person in such an unusual transport of just displeasure, *remembered that it was written* of David,[d] in words which well expressed the character of Christ on this occasion, (Psal. lxix. 9.) "*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*;" as if it were said, A regard for the honour of thy sanctuary, like a secret flame glowing in my bosom, preys upon my spirits, and would have consumed me had I not given it vent.

18 A fact so public and remarkable as this, could not but immediately come to the knowledge of the priests and rulers of *the Jews*,[e] whose supreme council sat in a magnificent chamber belonging to the temple:[f] some of them, *therefore*, when they heard of it, *answered and said unto him*, By what authority dost thou thus take upon thee to reform what is amiss here, and *what sign dost thou shew us, seeing that thou dost these things* to prove thy having a divine commission, since it is certain thou hast none from the go-19 vernment? *Jesus answered and said unto them*, You shall not want any convincing evidence that I have an authority far superior to what man can give me; for if you *demolish this temple*, I promise *and* assure you, *I will raise it up again in three days*.[g] 20 *Then said* unto him, in proud derision and contempt of what they did not understand, *This temple hath been* no less than *six and forty years building*,[h] (for it is now so long since Herod began to repair it,) and notwithstanding many thousand men have been employed upon it, it is not yet entirely finished; *and wilt thou* undertake to *raise it up in three days?* None certainly will be foolish enough to pull it down, to try the expe-21 riment. *But* they were quite mistaken in the sense of what he said; for what they understood him to have spoken of the temple of Jerusalem, *he spake of the* much more sacred *temple of his* own *body*, in which the Deity dwelt, in a far nobler manner than in their holy place, (Col. ii. 9.) and he might give some intimation of it in the gesture that he used 22 in speaking. *When therefore he was risen from the dead*, just on the third day after his crucifixion, *his disciples remembered that he had said this to them; and they* yet more firmly *believed the scripture*, in all its prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom, *and* their faith in him was confirmed by *the word which Jesus had spoken;* for such a won-

out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the

c **He openly proclaimed that God was his Father.**] The most considerable argument which Mr. Manne has brought to prove that this *expulsion of the merchants* from the *temple* happened only in *our Lord's last passover*, and consequently that it is here *transposed*, is, that such an open declaration, that *the Temple* was *his Father's house*, would have put him too much into the power of his enemies, and would have been inconsistent with the prudent reserve which Christ kept on this head. (See Manne's *Dissert.* p. 179, 180, and compare Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 91, *et seq.* as well as with the reflection of his brethren; John vii. 3, *et seq.* the notes on which place, in § 98, may be consulted here.)—But, in reply to this objection, I would beg leave to observe, 1. That for Jesus to call the temple *his Father's house*, did not amount to an express declaration that he was the Messiah; since the Jews in general spake of God as *their Father*, John viii. 41. (see John x. 24, 25, with the note there, § 134.) And, 2. That though in the circumstances that here attended it, there was an oblique intimation of something extraordinary, it might not be so dangerous now as afterwards; because *our Lord* not having opened the *spiritual* nature of his *kingdom*, or as yet rendered himself obnoxious to the Pharisees by such just invectives as he afterwards used, they who expected the Messiah to appear about this time, and longed for his appearance, might be inclinable for a while to wait the issue of Christ's pretensions, and so much the rather, as he now wrought some wonderful miracles. (Compare ver. 23, and chap. iii. 2.) Accordingly we find in the beginning of the next chapter one of the chief among the Pharisees comes privately to confer with Christ in a very respectful manner. It seems necessary to acquiesce in these solutions, because the conference which refers to the miracles wrought at this feast, is expressly said to have been before John the Baptist was imprisoned. Compare John iii. 22—24. § 27.

d *Remembered that it was written* of David.] That these words were originally spoken of David, and not of Christ, is plain from the *fifth verse* of the lxixth Psalm: *O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee;* which cannot be applied to Christ. Abundance of other scriptures are quoted with such a beautiful accommodation as this.

e Rulers of *the Jews*.] It seems most probable that the Jews here mentioned were *rulers*, because we know that the great assembly of Jewish rulers (that is, *the sanhedrim*,) sat in the temple, and that the chief of them often attended public worship there. This action of Christ (in *driving out the buyers and sellers*) must undoubtedly come to their knowledge; and as their office would seem to authorize them to call him to an account, we are sure their prejudices against him would incline them to it.

f **A magnificent chamber belonging to the temple.**] This fine *rotunda* was called, from its beautiful pavement, *Lishcath-Haggazith*, and stood on the wall of the temple, part of it within and part of it without its sacred precincts. See Calmet's *Dictionary*, at the word Sanhedrim; Lightfoot's *Description of the Temple*, chap. 9; and Witsii *Miscell. Sacr. lib.* i. Diss. iii. § 66.

g *Demolish this temple, and I will raise it up in three days*.] It is most evident that Christ intended nothing more in these words than the paraphrase expresses, and did not mean to *command* them to *demolish the temple;* though his enemies indeed did, some years after, misrepresent this saying, as if he had intimated a purpose of doing it himself. Compare Mark xiv. 58. § 185.

h *This temple hath been six and forty years building*.] Mr. Whiston (in his *View of the Harmony*, p. 143.) would render it, *Forty and six years hath this temple been built:* but as it would have been absurd to argue from the time since the temple was built, to the time it would require to rebuild it, this sense must certainly be wrong; and Dr. Lightfoot has well shewn, that the word ωκοδομηθη may signify (as we render it) it hath been so long building. *Hor. Heb. in loc.*—Mr. Fleming's calculation, (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 366—371.) to prove that the *second temple* was *forty-six years building*, is not only very precarious, but also very unnecessary; for the words refer to the time since Herod began to rebuild it, which he first proposed to the people in the eighteenth year of his reign, (Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xv. *cap.* 11. [al. 14.] § 1. Havercamp,) and though he finished what he proposed in eight or nine years, it seems (as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Lardner have judiciously observed) that the Jews still went on improving and adorning it: for long after this, under the government of Florus, (about the year of Christ 65,) Josephus speaks of the temple's being finished, and the workmen dismissed: so that it seems they were at work upon it all the time of Christ's ministry and life. (Compare John viii. 59; § 105; John x. 31; § 134; and see Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xx. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 7. p. 978; and Lardner's *Credib.* Part I. Vol. I. p. 534—539; and Vol. II. p. 856—860.)—Now, as the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, from the death of Antigonus, began some time in A. U. C. 734, and his proposal to rebuild the temple might then be made to the Jews at the feast of tabernacles, it will from thence be but a few months more than *forty-six years* to the *passover*, A. U. C. 781. Or, since a year or more might probably be spent in preparing for the work before he actually began it, it may thus be brought down to A. U. C. 782 or 783, which is the lowest time to which this *passover* can be referred.

scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

derful event as the resurrection of Christ, considered in its connection with this solemn prediction,[i] justly appeared as the fullest conceivable proof of his Divine mission. SECT. 24.

And while he was at the passover in Jerusalem, on the feast-day, many of the Jews who were then present there, *seeing the miracles which he wrought*,[k] *believed in him*,[l] and were inwardly persuaded that he was the Messiah: *But Jesus did not* care to *trust himself to them*,[m] so far as to acknowledge it expressly, that he was actually the promised Messiah; and, by confessing who he was, to put himself into their power, *because he knew* them *all: And had no need that any one should testify* or tell him any thing of the character *of* any *man*, though ever so much a stranger to him: *for he* himself, by an immediate and unerring penetration, *knew what was in* the heart of every *man*; and consequently knew that those people had such gross notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that there was no room for him to confide in them, or to expect them to be faithful to him. JOHN II. 24 25

IMPROVEMENT.

How powerful is the love of this world, when it could engage even the priests and the Pharisees to let out the temple itself for a market-place! though a professed zeal for the honour of it made so great a part of the righteousness of which they boasted before God. But our Lord beheld the scene with just indignation; as that displeasure is indeed just which arises from a sense of dishonour done to God, and contempt poured on the institutions of his worship. Happy shall we be in the warmest emotions of zeal which do not transport us beyond the rules of prudence and love, and make us forget those stations in life, which require the same principles to shew themselves in widely different effects! Ver. 14 15, 16

Methinks the state of the temple, when these traders had erected their seats and their stalls in it, and turned the courts of God's house into a market, is too just an emblem of the state of our hearts, when we appear in the sanctuary distracted with worldly cares, to the neglect of that *one thing needful*, which then demands our most attentive regards. Would to God that in this sense our Father's house were not often made a house of merchandise! Let us pray that Jesus, by his good Spirit, would assert it to himself, and drive out those intruders which break in upon our truest enjoyments, in proportion to that degree in which they entrench on our devotion! 16

After a thousand proofs of his divine mission, the Jews were wicked and desperate enough, with sacrilegious hands to destroy the temple of Christ's body: but let us be thankful for the undoubted evidence we have, that as an everlasting monument of his power and truth, he *raised it again in three days.* 19

Happy will it be for us, if we cordially believe a gospel so gloriously attested; but most vain will that belief be which doth not penetrate and influence the heart. Let us remember, that we have to do with him that formed our nature, and is most intimately acquainted with all its recesses. He knows what is in man: may he see nothing in us which shall not be thoroughly agreeable to the profession we make, of being his faithful disciples! 23, 25

To conclude: let us learn, from the caution which Jesus used, not rashly to put ourselves and our usefulness into the power of others; but to study a wise and happy medium between that universal prejudice and suspicion which, while it wrongs the best and the most worthy characters, would deprive us of all the pleasures of an intimate friendship, and that undistinguishing easiness and openness of temper, which might make us the property of every hypocritical pretender to kindness and respect. 24

SECTION XXV.

The former part of our Lord's conference with Nicodemus, in which he states the nature and necessity of regeneration. John iii. 1—10.

JOHN iii. 1.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.

JOHN iii. 1.

NOW, while our Lord was thus attending at Jerusalem to keep the passover, *there was a* certain *man of the* sect of the *Pharisees, whose name was Nicodemus, a magistrate of the Jews*, and a member of the great sanhedrim, (John vii. 50.) who, being alarmed, as many of his brethren were, and filled with wonder at the miracles that Jesus wrought, made him a visit in person, that he might more distinctly be informed of the nature of his doctrine, and of the true intent and purpose of his coming. But, lest any offence should be taken at his conversing openly with him, *he* secretly *came to Jesus by night*, in order to a private conference with him at his own lodgings; *and*, with the greatest reverence and respect, he *said unto him*, in his own name, as well as in the name of several of his brethren, *Rabbi*,[a] the wonders thou hast done have been related to us; and, having seriously considered the account that has been given us, *we know*, and cannot but allow, *that thou art a teacher come* with a commission *from God; for* we are thoroughly convinced that *none can* ever *do these* wondrous *miracles*, that are in all respects so beneficial and divine, *which* we perceive *thou dost, unless* he be invested with a power from on high, and *God* himself *be with him* in an extraordinary manner. (See John ix. 30, 33.) I am SECT. 25. JOHN III. 2

i The resurrection of Christ, considered in its connection with this solemn prediction.] This important thought is set in a very strong light by Dr. Jenkins, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 25, 26.

k *Seeing the miracles which he wrought.*] These words, as also those in John iii. 2; and iv. 45, plainly refer to some miracles wrought by Christ, the particulars of which are not transmitted to us.

l *Believed in him.*] It is in the original, *believed in his name*; a Hebraism which it did not seem necessary to retain. Nothing is more common than to put the *name* of a person for the *person* himself. Compare John i. 12. xx. 31. Psal. lxxv. 1. Acts i. 15. and Rev. iii. 4.

m *Did not trust himself to them.*] I look upon this as a demonstration that the *passover* here spoken of, was not that at which *Christ suffered*; for then there had been no need of such a precaution, and indeed no room for it.

a *Said unto him, Rabbi.*] This title cannot but appear very remarkable, as given by a person of so great dignity to one who, with regard to his education and rank in secular life, made so low an appearance as our blessed Lord did.

SECT. 25. come therefore to desire a more particular account[b] from thine own mouth, both of the doctrine which thou teachest, and of the kingdom which, thou declarest, God is about to erect.

JOHN III. *Jesus*, knowing the prejudices he laboured under, both as a Jew and a Pharisee, judged it necessary immediately to acquaint him with the absolute necessity of a thorough
3 change, by divine grace, both in heart and life; a change so great, as might appear like coming into a new world, and would bring the greatest and most learned men to the simplicity of little children. (Compare Matt. xviii. 3.) He therefore *answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, and declare it with the utmost solemnity, as a truth of the highest importance, that whatever great privileges any may inherit by his natural birth, or how exact and strict soever he may be in ceremonial observances, *unless a man be born again*,[c] *he cannot* possibly *see the kingdom of God*, in such a manner as to secure an interest in its invaluable blessings.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Now, as this form of speech was figurative and concise, *Nicodemus* did not understand what it meant; and therefore *says unto him, How can a man be born* again, *when he is old*, as I now am? *Can he* possibly *enter a second time into his mother's womb, and* so *be born* over again? It would be perfectly absurd to think that thou intendest this should be taken in a literal sense; and I confess, I am at a loss to know what figurative interpretation is to be put upon it.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

5 Then *Jesus*, to explain his former meaning, *answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, and again repeat it, That *unless a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;* or, in plain terms, whosoever would become a regular member of it, he must not only be baptized, but as ever he desires to share in its spiritual and eternal blessings, he must experience the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit on his soul, to cleanse it from the power of corruption, and to animate it
6 to a divine and spiritual life. For were it possible for a man to be born again, in the literal sense that you have mentioned, by entering a second time into his mother's womb, such a second birth would do no more to qualify him for the kingdom of God, than the first: for *that which is born of the flesh, is* only *flesh; and* what proceeds and is produced from parents that are sinful and corrupt, is sinful and corrupt as they are;[d] but *that which is born of the Spirit, is* formed to a resemblance of that blessed *Spirit*, whose office it is to infuse a divine life into the soul.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.

7 *Wonder not*, therefore, *that I said unto thee*, and have declared it as a truth that you are all concerned in, That *you* yourselves, even though you are Jews, and Pharisees, and rulers of the people, yet *must be born again;* since the degeneracy of the human nature is of so universal an extent, as to be common to you all. Nor have you any cause to be surprized, if there be some things in this doctrine of regeneration, which are of an obscure and unsearchable nature; for even in the natural world, many things are so:
8 *The wind*, for instance, *bloweth where it will*, sometimes one way and sometimes another, and is not subject to the direction or command of man; *and* though *thou hearest the sound thereof*, and feelest its sensible and powerful effects, *yet thou canst not* exactly *tell* from *whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;* for whatever general principles may be laid down concerning it, when you come to account for its particular variations, the greatest philosophers often find themselves at a loss; and in like manner, *so* it *is* with *every one that is born of the Spirit:* and you are so far from being capable of accounting for it, that it is easy to be seen there is a sovereign freedom in that divine agency, which makes it oftentimes impossible to say, why it is imparted to one, rather than to another; and there is a secret in the manner of its operation on the mind, which it is neither necessary to know, nor possible to explain.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 But *Nicodemus*, who had been accustomed to the pomp and ceremony of an external religion, *answered and said unto him, How can these things be?* for, after all this ex-

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

b I am come to desire a more particular account, &c.] Our Lord's answer intimates, that he either expressly made, or secretly intended, such an inquiry, and it is impossible to enter into the beauty of this discourse, without considering it in this view. Our Lord touches on the following grand points, in which it was of the utmost importance that Nicodemus and his brethren should be informed:—That no external profession, nor any ceremonial observances, or privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the *Messiah's kingdom*;—that an entire change of heart and life was necessary to that purpose;—that this must be accomplished by a divine influence on the mind;—that mankind was in a state of condemnation and misery;—that the free mercy of God had given his Son to deliver them from it, and to raise them to a blessed immortality, which was the great design and purpose of his coming;—that all mankind, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews, were to share in the benefits of his undertaking;—that they were to be procured by his being lifted up on the cross, and to be received by faith in him;—but that if they rejected him, there was no other remedy, and their eternal aggravated condemnation would be the certain consequence of it.—Our Lord might enlarge more copiously on these heads, which it might be the more proper to do, as some of them were directly contrary to the notions commonly entertained by the Jews concerning the *Messiah's kingdom*.

c *Unless a man be born again*; εαν μη τις γεννηθη ανωθεν.] Some would render ανωθεν, *from above*; but it is plain that Nicodemus did not take it so; for he thought that, without *entering a second time into his mother's womb*, there was no being *born* in the manner Christ spoke of, ανωθεν, that is, *again*.—What is added at ver. 5, explains what was before undetermined as to the *original* of this *birth*. Dr. Owen with great propriety observes, "That if *regene-* "*ration* here mean only *reformation of life*, our Lord, instead of "making any new discovery, has only thrown a great deal of "obscurity on what was before plain and obvious, and known not "only to the Jews, but the wiser heathens. And indeed, (says "he immediately after) this is the main article in dispute between "many. Some think all things in scripture are expressed in "condescension to our capacities, so that there is still to be con- "ceived in many of them an inexpressible grandeur; while, on "the other hand, others suppose that, under the pomp and gran- "deur of the most hyperbolical expressions, things of a low and "ordinary sense are to be understood." See Dr. Owen *on the Spirit*, p. 175.—For the full import of the phrases used in this verse, see my *Sermons on Regeneration*, Nos. iv. and v.

d *Is* sinful and corrupt as they are.] The many passages in which *flesh* is put for a *corrupt degenerate nature*, enslaved to animal appetites and pursuits, seemed to me to justify this interpretation: and would to God, fact and experience did not so plainly vindicate it! Compare Gen. vi. 3; Rom. viii. 8; Gal. v. 17, 24; and Jude, ver. 23.) Indeed it seems to me impossible to clear up either the beauty of the antithesis, or even the truth of the assertion, on any other interpretation.

plication, I am still at a loss to understand what this being born of the Spirit means, and therefore cannot conceive how it should be so absolutely necessary. SECT. 25.

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Jesus then *answered and said unto him*, How, Nicodemus! *art thou a teacher of Israel*,[e] of so distinguished a rank and character, *and dost thou not know these things!* when so much is every where said in the scripture, of the purifying and quickening operations of the divine Spirit on men's hearts? (Compare Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; and Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) It is high time thou shouldst be better informed concerning them. JOHN III. 10

IMPROVEMENT.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear with attention what the blessed Redeemer said on this great occasion. It is surely a matter of universal concern: for who would not desire to enter into the kingdom of God? to be an acceptable member of Christ's church now, and an heir of glory beyond the grave?—But how is this blessing to be expected and secured? Thus saith the Lord himself, *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*—Let us remember therefore, that it is not enough that a new name be given us, or that a new profession be assumed; it is not enough that we are descended from the most pious ancestors, that we have been externally devoted to God by the early seal of his covenant, or that we openly have made a solemn and express profession of our own faith and obedience, and have been born of baptismal water in our riper years! There must be a new nature implanted, a new creation formed in our souls, by the almighty energy of the eternal Spirit, or it had been better for us that we had never been born at all. Ver. 3.

That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and as we all proceed from a corrupt original, we do not more evidently bear the image of the earthly Adam, in the infirmities of a mortal body, than in the degeneracy of a corrupted mind. Oh, let us earnestly entreat that, being born of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, we may bear the image of the heavenly! And to these influences let us with all humility and thankfulness be ready to yield up our souls, as remembering, that they are of a free and sovereign nature, like the wind that bloweth where it will, and does not stay for the command of the children of men. 6 8

Let none of us indulge a vain and useless curiosity with respect to the manner of the Spirit's operations, or wonder that we meet with some things that are secret and unknown, in matters of a spiritual nature; when we see daily, there are so many things unknown in the common appearances of the natural world, and indeed so few that we can perfectly understand. 7, 8

May the pride of a falsely pretended reason, be subdued to the authority of faith! And more especially, may such as are teachers in Israel, or who are designed for that important office, take their instructions with all humility, from this teacher sent from God! For it must surely be not only their calamity, but that too of the church in general, if its guides continue ignorant of those sublime and spiritual truths which Christ came down from heaven to reveal, or are so biassed by the carnal reasonings of a depraved mind, as to be indisposed and backward to receive them. 10 2

SECTION XXVI.

The latter part of our Lord's conference with Nicodemus, in which he opens the design of his coming into the world, and shews the absolute necessity of faith in him. John iii. 11—21.

JOHN iii. 11.

VERILY, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

JOHN iii. 11.

JESUS, pursuing his discourse with Nicodemus, said, I find that you are stumbled at this doctrine of regeneration, which I have now been opening to you: but howsoever it may still appear to be obscure and strange, yet labour to subdue the prejudices that arise against it; for, *verily, verily, I say unto thee*, That in the doctrine we have now delivered, *we speak* nothing but *what we* certainly *know*,[a] *and testify* no other than *that which we have seen*,[b] and can declare upon the surest grounds to be a most important truth, and to be perfectly agreeable to what we have received in commission from God himself; *and* yet, the disposition of the Jewish rulers and people is generally such, that *ye receive not our testimony*, and are likely still to reject it: For these things which I have already told you are but the first principles, to make way for what is yet more marvellous. Now, *if I* hitherto *have told you* things which have been capable of being represented to you in a familiar way, and being illustrated by obvious and well-known similitudes; so that by SECT. 26. JOHN III. 11

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? 12

e *Art thou a teacher of Israel, and dost thou not know these things?*] Could it be proved that the Jewish Rabbis, so early as Christ's time, called a *baptized person*, one *born again*, or *born of water*, that would strongly illustrate the passage before us. But though Dr. Claget and Mr. Locke, and after them Dr. Clarke, give the words this turn, the fact did not appear to me so evident, as to allow of my inserting it in the paraphrase.—However, it is strange to me, that any should doubt whether *proselytes* were admitted into the Jewish church by *baptism*, that is, by *washing*; when it is plain from express passages in the Jewish law, that no Jew who had lived like a *Gentile* for one single day, could be restored to the communion of their church without it. Compare Numb. xix. 19, 20, and many other *precepts* relating to *ceremonial pollutions*; by which the Jews were rendered incapable of appearing before God in the tabernacle or temple, till they were *washed* either by *bathing* or *sprinkling*.

a *We speak what we know.*] Some have supposed that, as Christ speaks here in the *plural number*, he may refer not only to the doctrine that was delivered by *himself*, but to the testimony that was given to the truth of it by John the Baptist, and to the preaching also of his own *disciples*, who all concurred in testifying the same things; the certainty of which they were assured of by the teachings of the *Spirit*, and by their own experience, while it was known to Christ by his omniscience, and by the intimate acquaintance that he had with all the councils of the Father.—And others have supposed, that he includes here, with *himself*, the *Father* and the *Spirit*, who are expressly spoken of in other passages, as *bearing witness* to the truth of what he said, and as *agreeing* with him in the testimony that he gave. (Compare John viii. 18: xiv. 20, 26; and 1 John v. 6, 8.)—But there is no necessity we should suppose him to refer to any other than *himself*; since nothing is more usual than for a person of authority to speak of himself in the *plural number*, as Christ may be observed to have done elsewhere; (Mark iv. 30.) and in the next verse he appears to have restrained it to *himself*, where he says only in the *singular number*, *If I have told you earthly things*, &c. See Lightfoot's *Harmony, in loc.*

b *And testify that which we have seen.*] Christ seems here to allude to what was mentioned in the *law* as qualifying a man to be a *witness*, that he was able to declare of what he testified, that *he had seen or known it.* (Levit. v. 1.) And as he therefore had a clear perception, and a certain knowledge of the truth of what he said, there was the highest reason to receive his *testimony*, and to regard him as a *true and faithful witness*.

SECT. 26. JOHN III.

reason of their plainness, and of the frequent references to them in the Old Testament, they may be called *earthly things, and ye believe not* even these: *how* then *would you believe, if I* should yet go on to *tell you* other doctrines, which are not capable of being thus explained; and which indeed are so much more mysterious and sublime, that, in comparison of what has been already told you, they may be called *heavenly things?*[c] (Compare Heb. vi. 1, 2; Psal. ciii. 11; and Isa. lv. 9.) Yet even these you will have no just reason to suspect, when you consider whence they come, *and* who it is that 13 reveals them to you: for *no one* has *ever ascended up to heaven*, to search into the secret counsels, and to obtain an intimate and perfect knowledge of the truths of God;[d] *unless*, as you will see hereafter, *he* has done it, *who is* really *descended from heaven; [even] the Son of man who is in heaven*, as there is the place of his stated abode, whither he shortly will return, and as he now is present there by his divine nature, which fills both heaven and earth.

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, which is in heaven.

14 *And* now I mention the Son of man, let me rectify that grand mistake of yours concerning his kingdom, which otherwise may be attended with such fatal consequences. You expect to see him raised on a magnificent throne, and not only breaking off the yoke from the Jewish nation, but leading them on to conquer and destroy the Gentiles: but I must assure you, that *as Moses lifted up the* brazen *serpent* on a pole *in the wilderness*, to heal those that were dying by the venom of the fiery serpents there, (see Numb. xxi. 8, 9.) *so* also *must the Son of man be* first *lifted up* on a cross, (compare John viii. 28; xii. 32, 34.) and then publicly exhibited in the preaching of the gospel, 15 that sinners may by him receive a far more noble and important cure:[e] Even *that whoever believeth on him may not perish*, as all in their natural state would otherwise do,[f] 16 *but may* obtain so perfect a recovery, as certainly to *have eternal life. For* this is indeed the summary of that important message which I bring to the children of men, that *God so loved the world*,[g] apostate and miserable as it was; yea, to such an amazing and unutterable a degree did he love it, *that he gave* even *his only-begotten Son* from his embraces, *that whoever believeth on him*, whatever be the nation he belongs to, or whatever his guilt be, he *may not perish* under the sentence of divine justice, *but may* 17 *have everlasting life* and glory. *For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world*, and to execute that vengeance upon them which their guilt might have taught them to fear; nor did he send him to destroy the Gentile nations, as your Jewish prejudices are ready to represent it; *but that the world* of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, *might be saved by him*, even all without exception who will listen to the overtures of his gospel. And therefore, on the one hand, *he that believeth on him*, how 18 great soever his sins may have been, and however unpardonable according to the tenor of the Mosaic law, yet *shall not be* finally *condemned*, *but* shall obtain a complete pardon: and on the other hand, *he that believeth not*, whatever his external profession and privileges may be, *is condemned already*, remaining under the sentence of his former guilt, yea, and subjecting himself by his refusal of the only remedy to greater and more aggravated woe; *because he hath not believed in the* illustrious *name*[h] *of the only-begotten Son of God*, though expressly revealed to him on so glorious and important an occasion.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

19 *Now*, through the great perverseness of mankind, I certainly foresee that this will be the case with multitudes; for *this is the* great *condemnation*, the crime that fills up the measure of men's iniquities, and proves the surest cause of their final and speedy ruin, *that* a divine *light is come into the world, and* yet *men have loved darkness rather than light*, and have chosen to remain ignorant, rather than to submit themselves to the teachings of this heavenly revelation; and the reason is plainly this, *because their deeds were*

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

c *Heavenly things.*] This has been understood by some, of those sublime and heavenly doctrines that were afterwards revealed,—of the *eternal generation of the Son*, and of the *fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*,—and of those other *mysteries of godliness*, that are above the reach of human reason, and cannot be illustrated by *earthly things:* (see Lightfoot's *Harmony, in loc.*) Though it would rather seem, that our Lord does more immediately refer to the doctrines which he mentions in the remaining part of his discourse to Nicodemus,—of his descent from heaven to instruct us in the things of God, and be united to the human nature here below, while by his divine nature he still continued to be present above:—of the design for which he came into the world, to be lifted up upon the cross, that he might save us from our sins;—of everlasting life and happiness to be obtained by faith in his death;—and of the condemnation of all those that should reject him: which may be counted as *the deep things of God*, which he *reveals unto us by his Spirit*, and which *the natural man* who disregards that Spirit, *receiveth not, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;* 1 Cor. ii. 10, 14.

d *Ascended up to heaven* to search into—the truths of God.] The phrase of *ascending into heaven* is plainly used in this sense, Deut. xxx. 12; Rom. x. 6; and Prov. xxx. 4.—As for the turn here given to the particle ει μη, see the note on John xvii. 12; § 179.

e A far more noble and important cure.] The grand point of *similitude* here, is in the *manner* of performing the *cure*, that is, by *believing regards* to something *lifted up* for that purpose, by a *divine appointment*. It would be blasphemy to run a parallel between Christ and that which gave us the deadly wound: and to talk, as Grotius and Dr. Clarke here do, of the resemblance between him and the image of the *serpent*, as he was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh*, seems in this connection to be foreign to the purpose.

f As all in their natural state would otherwise do.] This is strongly implied here, and yet more strongly in ver. 18, where all that *do not believe* are said to be *condemned already:* and till men enter deeply into this important truth, the gospel may indeed be their amusement, but I see not how it is like to be their joy or their cure.

g *God so loved the world.*] It is not only a very arbitrary criticism, by which Erasmus makes these the words of the Evangelist, rather than of Christ, but if it were admitted, it would destroy much of the beauty and energy of that awful admonition which our Lord gives to Nicodemus, and by him to his brethren, in this his first entrance on his ministry. No doubt, many of them attended him to learn the result of this conference, which to the best of his understanding we may conclude he honestly reported: and it is sad to think, what an aggravation it was of the unbelief and impenitence of that grand council, who afterwards treated Christ with so much contempt and malignity.

h *Believed in the* illustrious *name.*] Though the name of a person be often put for *the person* himself, yet I think it is farther intimated in that expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent; and therefore it is generally used to express either *God the Father*, or our *Lord Jesus Christ.*

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

evil, and they have not virtue enough to resolve on a thorough reformation. *For every one who* is conscious to himself that he *doeth evil*, and will persist in his wickedness, *hateth the light*, as the cause of anguish and shame to his guilty mind; *and* he *cometh not to the* light, *lest his actions should be reproved* by it, and so his character exposed, and his conscience disquieted. (Compare Eph. v. 13.) *But he that practises truth*[i] and virtue, sincerely endeavouring to adjust his actions according to the eternal law of righteousness, or the nature and obligation of things, *comes to the light* with confidence and pleasure, and takes all opportunities of improving his knowledge, *that his actions may be made manifest*, as in open day; knowing it will appear *that they are wrought in God*,[k] that is, that they are agreeable to the Divine nature and will, and the consequence of that union of soul with him, which is the highest dignity and happiness of a rational creature. Be it therefore known unto you all, that this gospel which I preach, is the great touchstone of men's true characters; and, as nothing but a corruption of heart can oppose it, so I faithfully warn you, that if you reject it, it is at the peril of your souls.

SECT. 26. JOHN III. 21

This was the purport of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus; and it appears by some following circumstances of the story, that it made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. See John vii. 50. and xix. 39.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy is it for us that, since none of the children of men ever ascended up into heaven, to learn the mysteries of Divine knowledge there, *the only-begotten Son of God* has been pleased to come down from thence, that he might instruct us! He spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen: Oh, that men were so wise as to receive his testimony, be the discoveries ever so new, or the doctrines ever so sublime! Ver. 13. 11

Let us with peculiar pleasure attend unto that abstract of the gospel, which he exhibited in this profitable and comprehensive discourse with Nicodemus.—It presents to our view Christ, and him crucified. It opens the treasures of Divine beneficence and compassion, and shews us the Father of mercies *so loving a world*, which he might justly have abhorred and destroyed, as to *give his only-begotten Son* to be a ransom for it. 16

Let us behold him lifted up on the cross, as the great attractive, to whom all were to be drawn! In him shall we find the divine cure for our souls, infected as they are with the poison of sin, if we behold him not merely with a curious, but a believing eye. Whatever our wounds be, if in the exercise of faith we look to him, we shall not die of them; but it is owing to our own obstinacy and impenitence if we yet perish. 14, 15

He might justly have appeared in a different form for the condemnation of sinners rather than their salvation. The Son of God might have come into an apostate world, armed with thunderbolts of flaming vengeance, to punish the violation of his Father's law; but his hands are filled with eternal blessings. 17

As we love our own souls, let us apply to him in time for this salvation. Let us dread the aggravated condemnation of those who, when light is come into the world, prefer darkness to it, and obstinately shut their eyes against it, though it be the dawnings of an eternal day. 19

May integrity and uprightness preserve us! (Psal. xxv. 21.) And, conscious of a real desire to govern ourselves according to the light we have, may we cheerfully lay ourselves in the way of more; that in the last awful day, when the sentence of Divine wrath shall be executed on all the servants of sin, and their character shall stand disclosed in the most odious colours, ours may shine out beautiful and fair, and the good deeds that we have done, being now wrought in God, may then not only be accepted and applauded, but, through the grace of the Redeemer, abundantly rewarded by him. 20, 21

SECTION XXVII.

John the Baptist's last testimony to Christ, on occasion of a dispute concerning his baptism, and that administered by our Lord's disciples.—John iii. 22, *to the end.*

JOHN iii. 22.

22 AFTER these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

JOHN iii. 22.

AFTER these things, Jesus and his disciples came from Jerusalem, where they had kept the passover together, *into* a part of *the land of Judea*, at some distance from the capital city; *and there he continued with him, and* by their ministry, though not in his own person, *baptized*. (See John iv. 2.) SECT. 27. JOHN III. 22

And John was also at that time *baptizing at Enon*, which was a place *near Salim*, a town on the west side of Jordan; and he particularly chose that place, *because there was a great quantity of water there*,[a] which made it very convenient for his purpose: *and they came* from all parts, *and were baptized* by him. *For* the reader will observe, that *John* the Baptist *was not yet thrown into prison*;[b] as he was a few months after, by the injustice of Herod, in whose territories that place lay. 23, 24

i *He that practises truth:* ο ποιων την αληθειαν.] This phrase often occurs as the character of a *good man:* (Compare Psal. cxix. 30; Isa. xxvi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 22; 1 John i. 6; and 2 John, ver. 4.) And it is used with great propriety, since there is as really a *truth* or *falsehood* in *actions*, as in *words*; as Mr. Woollaston in particular has shewn at large: See *Relig. of Nature, chap.* i.—Of the same kind is the phrase ποιων ψευδος, used more than once by St. John, perhaps in a beautiful *opposition* to this before us; and should it be rendered, *practiseth a lie*, that *opposition* would be more apparent; see Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15.

k *That they are wrought in God:* ειργασμενα.] Grotius thinks, that εν is here used for κατα, and that it only signifies, *agreeable to the Divine nature:* this is certainly comprehended, but it is not all it expresses. His instance of the like use of the particle, in 1 Cor. vii. 39, seems insufficient; for *to marry* εν τω Κυριω, *in the Lord*, signifies there, the *marrying* one who is *in Christ*, that is, a *Christian*.

a *At Enon,—because there was a great quantity of water there.*] It is exceeding difficult to determine the true situation of this place, about which geographical writers are not at all agreed. We may conclude, however, from ver. 26, that it was *on the west side of Jordan*, as Bethabara, where John had baptized before, was *on the other side*.—But nothing surely can be more evident, than that υδατα πολλα, *many waters*, signifies *a large quantity of water*, it being sometimes used for the Euphrates, Jer. li. 13. *Septuagint*. To which, I suppose, there may also be an allusion, Rev. xvii. 1. Compare Ezek. xliii. 2; and Rev. i. 15; xiv. 2; xix. 6; where *the voice of many waters* does plainly signify the roaring of a high sea.

b *John was not yet thrown into prison.*] I think it probable from hence, as well as from tradition, and many other passages in this

SECT. 27. JOHN III.

And there was about this time, *a* warm *dispute* [*between some*] *of the disciples of John and a* [*certain*] *Jew*,[c] who had been baptized by Christ, *about* this right of *purifying*, or baptism, which was administered in different parts by these two divine teachers; for notwithstanding their commissions and administrations were so harmonious, yet some, through ignorance and weakness, were ready to oppose them to each other.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying.

26 *And* such was the concern of John's disciples upon this occasion, that *they came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi*, we are solicitous for thy honour in the present conjuncture of affairs: for *he that was* lately *with thee on the other side Jordan*, and *to whom thou gavest* such an honourable *testimony* there, *behold, he* now *baptizeth, and* people from *all* parts, yea even such as have before received thy baptism, *come unto him;* which, as we fear, may cause thy baptism to be neglected, and tend to the injury of thy character; since some are already making very invidious comparisons between him and thee.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 But *John replied* to his disciples, with an humility and integrity agreeable to the rest of his character, *and said*, in order to convince them farther of the superior honours due to the blessed Jesus, Do not give way to such vain partiality and fondness for me: for *a man can* indeed *receive*, and therefore ought to assume *nothing* to himself, *unless it be given him from heaven;* but we are just what God is pleased to make us, and must stand in that rank which his infinite wisdom has seen fit to assign us.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.

28 Nor have you any reason to be surprised at the report you bring me, or to imagine I shall regard it as a matter of complaint: for *you yourselves*, in what you now have said, *bear witness to me*,[d] and cannot but remember *that*, even from the very first of my appearance, *I* expressly *said*, and was on all occasions ready to repeat it, *that I am not the Christ; but that I am sent* as an harbinger *before him;* and therefore am so far from being in any opposite and separate interest, that his success is my greatest joy. *It is the bridegroom* only *that hath the bride;* and it is his peculiar right to enjoy her as his own: *but* as for *the* intimate *friend of the bridegroom, who standeth* near him, *and heareth him* express his delight and complacency in her,[e] he is so far from envying and repining at it, that, if he really deserves the name of a friend, he rather *rejoiceth with* exceeding *great joy on account of the bridegroom's voice.* Such *therefore* is the friendship and the high regard I have for Jesus, that *this* that you have told me is *my joy;* which is so far from being at all impaired, that it *is* heightened and *completed* on this happy occasion, which you should rather have been ready to congratulate, than to have made it matter of complaint.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 I know that as to him, *he* daily *must increase*, and, like the growing moon, appear continually more and more glorious: *but I must* gradually wane and *decline*, till I entirely disappear from hence: (for the end of my ministry is now in a great measure answered, and therefore I quickly expect to be dismissed from it.) And it is fit it should be so: for *he that cometh from above*, as Jesus did, *is* far *above all* the children of men, and so undoubtedly is above me; while, on the other hand, *he that* originally *was of the earth*,[f] being born, like me, in a natural way, *is* still *of the earth*, mean and imperfect, and can never hope, by any refinements and improvements, to equal what is heavenly and divine; but what he says will correspond with his original, *and* being earthly in his rise, he *speaketh of the earth:* the subjects of his discourse are comparatively low, or howsoever noble and sublime they be, there is a mixture of infirmity and weakness in his way of treating them; whereas *he who* originally *cometh from heaven*, and who has shown so wonderful a condescension in his visiting this lower world, *is* still, in the midst of all his voluntary abasement, in comparably *above all* that dwell upon earth, not only in the dignity and glory of his person, but in the spiritual and heavenly nature of his doctrine. *And* I declare it to you with the greatest confidence, that *what he hath seen and heard*, or what he knows to the utmost degree of certainty, *that does he testify* and publish to the world; *and* I exceedingly lament it, that notwithstanding all that eagerness of curiosity with which the multitudes are flocking now about him, yet *no man* cordially *receives his testimony;* and among all that hear him, there are very few who are duly affected with what he delivers, and yield as they ought to its divine evidence and importance. But *he who hath* indeed *received his testimony*, acts a most wise and happy part, and *hath*, as it were, *set his seal* [*to it,*] *that God is true;* acknowledging his hand in these credentials given to his Son, and his veracity, in sending him thus furnished to fulfil his ancient promises to his people. *For he whom God hath sent* into the world as the promised Messiah, *speaketh*

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31 He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God

gospel itself, that St. John wrote it as a supplement to the rest. For he speaks of the Baptist's imprisonment as a thing generally known, and yet says nothing of his *martyrdom*, though he had given so large an account of his ministry. We cannot suppose he would have omitted so material a fact, had he not known that the other Evangelists had recorded it at large; as will be seen in the next section, and in sect. 77.

c *A certain Jew.*] The many copies which read it thus, as well as the authority of the Syriac version, and the citations of some of the *fathers*, determine me to prefer this reading, which I think gives rather an easier sense; as a single Jew might most properly be opposed to John's disciples, who were Jews themselves; and as a considerable part of the nation had entered themselves into that number, at least so far as *receiving his baptism* was a token of it.

d *You yourselves bear witness to me:* αυτοι υμεις μοι μαρτυρειτε.] There seems to be an intimation in these words, that what they themselves had just been saying, was a sufficient proof of what the Baptist was going to declare; for they had described Jesus by the character of *him to whom John had borne witness.*

e *Heareth him* express his delight and complacency in her.] Some have supposed that this alludes to a peculiar ceremony attending the *marriages* among the Jews; which the reader may find in Dr. Hammond, *in loc.* and Selden. *Uxor. Heb. lib.* ii. *cap.* 16. But perhaps it may be a more general reference to any of the natural expressions of *joy* on such an occasion.—I pretend not to determine how far Bishop Patrick may be right in supposing, "that this is an allusion to the *cabalistic doctrine*, that Tipheret, the *Great Adam*, or the Messiah, is married to Malcuth, *the congregation of Israel*, as the terrestrial Adam was to Eve." See his *Preface* to Canticles, § 4.

f *He that was of the earth.*] To render ο ων εκ της γης thus, prevents the appearance of a tautology in the following words, εκ της γης εστι, which would otherwise seem unavoidable.

hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him.*

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

the words of God, and all that he reveals should be regarded as divine oracles: *for God giveth not the* powers and the inspiration of his *Spirit* [*to him*] *by measure*, under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers;[g] but it dwells in him by a constant presence, and operates by a perpetual energy. For *the* Almighty *Father loveth the Son* incomparably beyond the most faithful of his servants; *and hath* not only established him as the great Teacher of his church, but *hath given* the government of *all things into his hand*, that he may be regarded as the universal Lord. SECT. 27. JOHN III. 35

So that instead of repining at his growing glories, you should rather be solicitous to secure an interest in his favour: for this is the substance, and this is the end of my whole testimony,[h] that *he who believeth on the Son, hath* a sure title to *eternal life*, and hath already the beginnings of it wrought in his soul; *but he that is disobedient to the Son,*[i] and obstinately persists in his unbelief and impenitence, *shall not see* and enjoy that *life; but*, on the contrary, is so far from it, that *the wrath of God*, and the unpardoned aggravated guilt of all his sins, *abideth* even now *upon him*, and will quickly sink him into final condemnation and ruin. 36

Thus did that holy man John the Baptist conclude those testimonies to Christ which are recorded in the gospel, and was quickly after imprisoned by Herod the tetrarch; as the course of this history will presently shew.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is indeed too true that the spirit which naturally dwelleth in us all, lusteth to envy, (Jam. iv. 5.) and it is far from being a low attainment in religion to look with complacency and thankfulness on the superior abilities and acceptance of others, especially of those who once appeared in an inferior rank. But for the cure of this unreasonable and restless passion, so contrary to the true spirit of the gospel, let us remember that a man can receive nothing at all except it be given him from heaven. It is God that makes one man to differ from another; and surely nothing can be more unreasonable than that, when we ourselves have received all from his bounty, our eyes should be evil because he is good. (Matt. xx. 15.) Ver. 26 27

If we are indeed the friends of Christ, we shall rejoice to see his interest advance, and especially to see souls espoused to him as the great Bridegroom of the church, whoever are the instruments of promoting so happy a work. Would to God, that in this sense all the Lord's people were even as the greatest of the prophets, or as the very chief of the apostles! (Numb. xi. 29.) 29

But if indeed they were so, yet, like those brightest luminaries of the church, they must in time have their change and their wane. If God does not darken their glories by a sudden eclipse, yet they who are now, like the Baptist, burning and shining lights, must, like him, gradually decrease, while others are increasing about them; as they, in their turns, grew up amidst the decays of the former generation. Let us know how to set as well as to rise; and let it comfort our declining days, to trace in those that are like to succeed us in our work, the openings of yet greater usefulness. So shall we grow in our meetness for that world where all the righteous shall shine forth together, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, in a bright resemblance of him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. 30

As the surest means of guiding us to that happy world, let us make it our great care, by receiving the testimony of Christ, to set our seal to the truth of God, engaged in his cause.—With how much pleasure should we do it, and with what joy should we reflect, that the Father so loveth the Son, that he has not only given him the rich and unmeasurable communications of the Spirit, but has committed also into his hands the reins of government! Let his faithful servants remember it with joy, and cheerfully commit their concerns to him who is made head over all things for the benefit of his church. (Eph. i. 22.) 33 34, 35

And to conclude: let it engage us to see to the sincerity of our faith in him, and subjection to him; since it is not a light matter, but our life, even the very life of our souls. May God awaken those on whom his wrath now abideth to a sense of their danger, and may he strengthen in each of our souls that faith which is the pledge of a happy immortality! 36

SECTION XXVIII.

John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. Luke iii. 19, 20. Mark vi. 17—20. Matt. xiv. 3—5.

LUKE iii. 19.

BUT Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him, for Herodias' [sake] his brother Philip's wife, [Mark, for he had married her;] and for all the evils which Herod had done. [Matt. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 17.]

LUKE iii. 19.

THUS John went on to prosecute the great design of his appearance, and to prepare the way for the reception of Jesus: *but* much about this time, it pleased God to permit the course of his ministry to be interrupted, and his life itself to be quickly after brought to its period. For *Herod* Antipas, *the tetrarch* of Galilee, having out of curiosity sent for him to his court, this holy man thought it his duty to admonish him in regard to the public scandals of his life and reign. Now Herod *being* thus plainly and faithfully *reproved by him*, both *on account of Herodias his brother Philip's wife, (for,* to the infamy and scandal of his character, *he had* ungenerously taken her from her husband, and publicly *married* SECT. 28. LUKE III. 19

g Under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers.] With what limitations and interruptions the extraordinary *gifts of the Spirit* were given, even to the greatest of the children of men, we shall have repeated occasion to observe in the process of this work.

h This is the substance, and this the end of my whole testimony.] Erasmus here destroys (as he had done before, at ver. 16.) the beauty of this discourse, by supposing that the latter part of it is to be considered as the reflection and attestation of the Evangelist, upon occasion of the testimony that was given by the Baptist; though he seems himself at a loss to fix the clause at which this supposed *change* of the *person speaking* begins.

i *He that is disobedient to the Son.*] I think it is of great importance to preserve a difference in the translation, correspondent to that in the original, between ο απειθων εις τον υιον, and ο απειθων τω υιω; because the latter phrase explains the former, and shews that the *faith* to which the promise of *life* is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved *obedience*; and it is impossible to

SECT. 28. *her*,[a] in contempt of all laws human and divine,[b]) *and* also *for all the other evils that Herod had done*, which were many and great, that haughty prince was so exasperated, that, instead of falling under the admonition, he meditated revenge: And though for the pre-

MARK VI. sent he dismissed him,[c] it was not long before he prosecuted his design, and *added yet this* act of wickedness *to all* [*the rest*] of his enormous crimes, *that he* confined and

17 *shut up John in prison. For Herod himself*[d] *sent* officers after him, *and seized John*, who had returned to prosecute his ministry in a place which lay within the territories of Galilee; *and* having thus got him into his power, he *bound him* with chains,[e] *and put him in prison*; though his confinement there was not so close but that his disciples were sometimes suffered to converse with him; (compare Matt. xi. 2, 4. and Luke vii. 19, 22; sect. lvii.)

18 And though he might assign other political reasons to excuse his conduct, as if his growing popularity rendered him dangerous to the state,[f] yet the true reason *for* which he did it was this, that *John* had treated him with such a freedom as he knew not how to bear, and *had told Herod* to his very face, *It is not lawful for thee that thou shouldst take it upon thee as thou dost, to have thy brother's wife*, nor canst thou ever

19 have any solid peace of conscience while thou continuest to retain her. *And* for this cause *Herodias* also was yet more furiously incensed against him, and with an unrelenting cruelty still *hung upon him*;[g] *and* not contented with what he suffered in his imprisonment, *would* fain *have put him to death, but she could not* immediately compass that

20 design: *For Herod*, notwithstanding all his resentment, still *reverenced John*[h] in his heart; *knowing that he was a righteous and holy man*, of which the fidelity of his reproofs was a very convincing evidence. *And* therefore calling him to frequent audiences, *he heard him* discourse *with attention*[i] *and pleasure: and* was so far influenced by it, that he *did many things* according to his exhortations.[k]

MATT. XIV. 5 But as John was still pressing him to dismiss Herodias, and telling him the insufficiency of any other reformation while he continued his infamous commerce with her, *and* she in the mean time wearied Herod with her importunity; *when* he at length was so far wrought upon, that *he would* gladly *have* consented to *put him to death*, he was so apprehensive of the consequences of it, that he durst not do it, since *he feared the multitude; because* he knew that *they* respected John, and *looked upon him as a prophet*,[l] and he did not think it safe to provoke such a factious people by an action so extremely unpopular.

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Mark vi. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him [and put *him*] in prison. [Matt. xiv. 3.]

18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. [Matt. xiv. 4.]

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him, but she could not.

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Matt. xiv. 5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE III. 19, 20 What dangerous things are grandeur and power, if Divine grace does not secure the hearts of those who possess them! How unhappy are they whose fatal prerogative it is to be able to oppress with impunity, and to render it hazardous even to reprove them!

MARK VI. 18 John well deserved the veneration and esteem of Herod, when he thus took the freedom to perform this dangerous office of friendship, and to manifest a fidelity so seldom to be found in courts, and indeed so often wanting elsewhere. A wise prince would have courted his friendship, and sought his advice; but he is at length rewarded with imprisonment and death.

make one part of *scripture* consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of *saving faith*; as I have shewn at large in the first of my *Sermons on Salvation by Grace through Faith*.

a *On account of Herodias—for he had married her.*] Josephus gives us an account of this *incestuous marriage*, which proved the occasion of the Baptist's imprisonment and death, (*Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. [al. 7.] § 1, 4. Havercamp.) from whence it appears, that this Herodias was daughter to Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod the Great, and consequently was niece both to Philip her former husband, and to Herod Antipas the tetrarch, her latter. By Philip, whom Josephus also calls Herod, (as princes had often several names,) she had one daughter, whose name was Salome, (*ibid.* p. 885.) who probably was the young lady afterwards mentioned, § 77. as instructed by her mother to ask the head of John the Baptist. And that historian informs us, that Herod the tetrarch, to make way for his marriage with Herodias, divorced his former wife, the daughter of Aretas: which made this commerce a kind of *double adultery*, and was the occasion of a war between those two princes, in which Herod's forces were defeated.

b In contempt of all laws human and divine.] The only case in which *the law* allowed of *marrying* one who had been a *brother's wife*, was, when the brother *died childless*, (Lev. xviii. 16; xx. 21; and Deut. xxv. 5.) whereas in this instance Philip was yet *living*, and had a *daughter* by Herodias. It was also in violation of all the rites of *hospitality*, that Herod, while a guest in his brother's house, seduced his wife; as Josephus expressly observes, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. § 1. p. 883.

c Though for the present he dismissed him.] Else there would have been no need for his *sending to seize him*, as we are presently told he did.

d *Herod himself.*] There seems to be a peculiar emphasis in this expression, which probably may be designed to intimate, that *his seizing John* was not merely the effect of Herodias's solicitations, but of his own resentment.—The *place* where he seized him might probably be Enon, where John had lately baptized, and where he again might return to his work; and if so, Enon must have been in Herod's jurisdiction. Compare Note a, on John iii. 23, p. 53.

e *Bound him* with chains.] It is plain from Matthew's manner of expressing this, *that he bound him, and put him in prison*, that *chains* were added to his confinement, as usual in such cases; (compare Acts xii. 6. and xxviii. 20.) so that those versions which consider εδησεν as an expletive, lose part of the sense.

f Dangerous to the state.] Josephus expressly says, that Herod was afraid the authority of so great a man should occasion a revolt among his subjects; and that he thought it better to take him off, than to venture the danger of such a revolution as he might have occasioned, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. § 2, p. 884. He there adds, that he first confined him in the castle of Macheris.

g *Herodias hung upon him.*] This seems to me the import of the phrase ενειχεν αυτω, which is with peculiar propriety applied to a dog's fastening his teeth into his prey, and holding it down. See *De Dieu, in loc.* and compare Luke xi. 53. There seems an opposition seldom remarked between *this* and ver. 17. Herod *himself* seized him, but Herodias went still farther.—Josephus gives a very bad character of this Herodias, and assures us that her ambitious and envious spirit was at last the cause of Herod's ruin and her own, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 7. [al. 9.]

h *Reverenced John*, εφοβειτο.] The same word is justly so translated, Eph. v. 33, and there are many other passages where it has the same sense. See Luke xii. 5. and Rev. xi. 18; xiv. 7.

i *Heard him with attention.*] So I chuse to render συνετηρει αυτον, rather than *preserved* or *protected him*, (compare Luke ii. 19. *Gr.*) though I know that the word sometimes signifies *to preserve*. (Matt. ix. 17.) Our English version of this passage appears to be improper; and I hope the little transposition I have made here will be forgiven, since it makes not the least alteration in the sense, and suits best with the genius of our language. Such little liberties elsewhere seem not so considerable as to need a more particular apology.

k *Did many things.*] Grotius would have it rendered, that *he had heard him formerly with pleasure, and had done many things*; supposing this refers to what had passed before his imprisonment, but such a change doth not appear necessary, as the *paraphrase* plainly shews.

l *Looked upon him as a prophet.*] Accordingly Josephus says, (in the place quoted above in note f,) that the Jews in general looked on the succeeding calamities of Herod's reign as a *judgment* from God for his injustice to this holy man.

This good man was taken from his work, and laid aside in the midst of his days and his usefulness; but he calmly acquiesced in the disposals of Providence, and no doubt carried along with him to his prison incomparably more happiness than his persecutors could find on the throne. SECT. 28.

In this confinement the prophet was not forgotten; but as if Herod had studied to increase his own torment, he must be sent for again and again to discourse before him. That he reverenced a man of such approved integrity, none can wonder: but while he would not be entirely reformed by his remonstrances, that he should hear him with pleasure, and do many things, is very surprising. Delusive pleasure! unprofitable reformation! while, whatsoever instances he gave of his regarding him, Herodias was yet retained. May divine grace preserve us from such fatal partiality! since, did we keep the whole law, and offend allowedly but in one point, we should become guilty of all. James ii. 10. MARK VI. 20

We cannot wonder if a reformation thus insincere and partial was but short-lived, and was followed at length by a grosser apostacy. *More bitter than death is the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands bands;* (Eccles. vii. 26.) To what may not the artifices of such an abandoned creature work up the wretch that is entangled with her charms! Such was the influence of Herodias over him, that at her instigation Herod is prevailed upon to seek the death of that righteous and holy man, whose virtues he revered, and whose preaching he had attended with pleasure.

But the fear of the people restrained him, though he was destitute of the fear of God, and had not any generous regard to men. Thus does God govern the world, and thus does he protect his church, by often making it the interest, even of the worst of men, to forbear those injuries and cruelties which the malignity of their natures might otherwise dictate. Let us courageously commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as firmly believing that, whatever hazards we may be exposed to, the wrath of man shall on the whole be found to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath shall he restrain. Psal. lxxvi. 10. MATT. XIV. 5

SECTION XXIX.

Christ going from Judea to Galilee, meets with a woman of Samaria, and enters into a conference with her, in which he discovers himself to her as the Messiah. John iv. 1—26.

JOHN iv. 1.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well; *and* it was about the sixth hour.

JOHN iv. 1.

THE testimony which the Baptist had given to Christ, together with the miracles he himself had wrought at Jerusalem during the passover, (see John ii. 23. and iii. 2.) impressed the minds of the people to such a degree, that, during his long abode in those parts, vast numbers were continually flocking around him; which gave great umbrage to the Jewish rulers. *When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees*, whose interest in the sanhedrim was so considerable, *had heard* with great concern what began to be so much talked of abroad, *that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John* the Baptist himself had done;[a] *(Though* indeed *Jesus himself*, for wise reasons, *did not* chuse to *baptize* any with his own hands,[b] *but* left some of *his disciples* to do it in the name of a Messiah shortly to be manifested.) In order to avoid both their envy and their curiosity, *he left Judea*, after having continued there about eight months,[c] *and departed again into Galilee*, his former abode, where the influence and power of the council were not so great. SECT. 29. JOHN IV. 1 2 3

Now, unless he would have taken such a circuit through Judea, and the neighbouring parts, as in his present circumstances was very inconvenient, *he was obliged to go through* the country of *Samaria*. *He cometh therefore* in his way, *to a city of Samaria*, originally *called* Sichem, but now, especially by the Jews, *Sichar;* which name they used as a term of reproach,[d] intimating thereby that it was the seat of drunkards: (see Isa. xxviii. 1.) and it was *near that piece of ground which Jacob* (having purchased it of the children of Hamor, Gen. xxxiii. 19.) by a particular grant *gave to Joseph his* beloved *son;* (compare Gen. xlviii. 22. and Josh. xxiv. 32.) *And there was* a well belonging to it, called *Jacob's well;* it having been used by him and his family while they dwelt in these parts; (see Gen. xxxiii. 18; xxxv. 4.) *Now Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat down immediately*[e] *by* the side of *the well; [and] it was* then *about the sixth hour*, or just high noon; so that the heat, joined with the fatigue of the journey, helped to increase both his thirst and faintness.[f] 4 5 6

a *More disciples than John* the Baptist himself had done.] I am not certain whether this happened *before* John's imprisonment or *after;* but if I had been sure it happened *before*, I should still have thought it proper to add the account of that event (as I have done in the preceding section) immediately after his last testimony, though some other facts might possibly intervene; but if (which seems most probable) Matt. iv. 12. and Mark i. 14. § 31. *init.* refer to *this journey*, they both, in plain words, assert it was *after John's imprisonment*.—I cannot forbear saying, it is astonishing that a person of Mr. Whiston's learning and sagacity should place all these events *before the baptism and temptation of Christ*. Were his arguments to confirm his *eighth proposition* far more specious than they are, they would never solve or balance the flagrant absurdity of making John declare, (John i. 32, 34.) that *he saw the Spirit descending on Christ*, above a year before it did so descend; yet this ingenious writer has forgotten himself so far, as to represent the matter in this contradictory view; (see Whiston's *Harmony*, p. 135—139, and p. 227, compared with p. 242.) The interpretation given above of Matt. iii. 14. and Luke iii. 21. (p. 36, 37.) may solve some of the chief arguments on which he builds this singular hypothesis.

b *Jesus himself did not* chuse to *baptize* any with his own hands.] This might be partly to avoid importunate inquiries whether he was the Messiah, and partly to prevent those prejudices which might have arisen against the more perfect form of *baptism* afterwards instituted, if any had received this less perfect *baptism* from *Christ himself*.

c After having continued there about eight months.] This appears from ver. 35, for *harvest* began quickly after the *passover;* Lev. xxiii. 10, 15. Christ therefore staid in Judea from *one passover* till within four months of the *other;* that is, near *eight months;* so that this journey into Galilee must be made near the middle of *winter*, probably about the beginning of our December. See Sir Isaac Newton, *On Prophecy*, p. 147, 148.

d A term of reproach.] It is remarkable, as Mr. L'Enfant observes, that *Sichar* in the Syriac language signifies *a drunkard* and *a liar*.

e *Sat down immediately.*] Εκαθιζετο ουτως, that is, *weary as he was*, says Dr. Whitby. I think Mr. Blackwall has not sufficiently proved that ουτως sometimes signifies *therefore*, or, *for this cause*, though he has attempted it in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 143, 144. The particle seems to have much the sense I have here given it, Acts xx. 11. and may often be rendered, *accordingly*, *upon that*, or *after which;* see Acts vii. 8. xvii. 33. xxvii. 44. and John viii. 59. Compare Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 303.

f The heat, joined with the fatigue, &c.] It is well known that

SECT. 29. JOHN IV.

And at this very juncture of time, *there comes a* certain *woman of Samaria to draw water:* and *Jesus* (on purpose to introduce a discourse by which he graciously intended her conversion and salvation) *says unto her*, I desire you would *give me* [*some*] *water to drink. For his disciples were* not near to assist him, but were *gone to the* neighbouring *city to buy food.*

9 *Then says the woman of Samaria to him, How is it that thou who art,* as appears by thy habit and dialect, *a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? for* the reader must observe, that *the Jews have no friendly intercourse with the Samaritans,*[g] nor so much as care to receive any favour from them, looking upon them as an impure and accursed nation.

10 *Jesus,* to convince her that he was not under the power of such common prejudices, and to awaken her farther inquiries, *answered and said unto her, If thou hadst known the* great *gift of God,* which he is now bestowing upon the children of men by his Son, *and who it is that says unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst* not only have complied with his request, but wouldst ere this time *surely have asked him,*[h] *and he,* without objecting to thee on account of the people to whom thou belongest, *would readily have given thee living water,*[i] far better than what thou art now drawing. By which our Lord intimated his ability and readiness to communicate those influences of God's holy Spirit, which afford the noblest refreshment to the soul, and therefore are often described by water.

11 But *the woman,* who understood him only in a common sense of fresh spring water, *says to him* with greater respect than before, (as being struck both with the piety and kindness of his former reply,) *Sir, thou hast no bucket,*[k] nor any thing else to draw with, *and the well* before thee, which is the only spring hereabouts, *is very deep; whence hast thou then this living water,* of which thou speakest; or what is the extraordinary supply,

12 which thou declarest may be had from thee? *Art thou greater* and wiser *than our father Jacob, who gave us this well,* leaving it to his descendants as a legacy of importance; *and* while he lived, he *drank of it himself, with his children, and his cattle,* as the best water in these parts?

13 *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whoever drinketh of this water,* how much soever it may be esteemed, though it refresh the body for a little while, *will* quickly *thirst again:*

14 *But he that drinketh of the water which I shall give him,* will find it so reviving to the soul, that he *will never thirst,*[l] or be in danger any more of perishing for want; *but the water which I shall give him* will be a never-failing source for his supply, and *will be in him as a fountain of water* that will continually be *springing up,* and flowing on, *to everlasting life:* for that which I shall communicate to him, will bring him to everlasting composure and satisfaction of mind now, and will be the earnest and principle of eternal happiness.

15 *The woman,* still ignorant of his spiritual meaning, and understanding him only of natural water, *says unto him, Sir,* I claim thy promise, and desire thou wouldst *give me this* extraordinary *water, that I may not thirst* any more, *nor* have the trouble to *come hither* daily, *to draw* it, as I now do.

16 *Jesus,* perceiving her ignorance, and willing to discover himself to her, in a manner that might more immediately touch her conscience, *says unto her, Go* home, and *call thy*

17 *husband* to me, *and* then *come hither* again. *The woman,* sensible of the way in which she lived, and thinking to conceal her shame, *answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus says to her, Thou hast* answered *well,* in that thou hast said, *I have no husband:*

18 *For* I know that *thou hast had five husbands, and* that *he whom thou hast now* with thee, as thou hast never been lawfully married to him, *is not thy husband;*[m] in *this* respect *thou hast spoken truly* and properly.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city, to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

in the latitude in which Jerusalem lies, the weather sometimes in December is exceedingly hot at noon, even on days when the cold has been very severe in the morning.

g *The Jews have no friendly intercourse with the Samaritans.*] This must be the import of συγχρωνται here; for it is evident from ver. 8, that the Jews *had some dealings* with them. It has been frequently observed, that many causes concurred to occasion this inveterate hatred of the Jews to the Samaritans; such as—not only their foreign extract, and the early mixture of superstition and idolatry in their religion, (2 Kings xvii. 24, 33—41.) but also the injurious manner in which they treated the Jews after their return from the captivity, (Ezra iv. 1—6. Neh. vi. 1—14.)—and especially their building a *temple* on mount Gerizim, which they made the centre of their worship, in opposition to that at Jerusalem, Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xi. *cap.* 8.—And perhaps nothing contributed more to expose them to the contempt and abhorrence of the Jews, than that infamous offer they made to Antiochus, of dedicating that temple to Jupiter, and admitting the rites of his idolatrous worship, at a time when the Jews were suffering the utmost extremities in defence of their religion; see Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xii. *cap.* 5. [al. 7.] § 5. Havercamp.—The reader may find several passages in Whitby, and Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb. in loc.* that express the mutual aversion of the two nations to each other.

h *Thou wouldst surely have asked him.*] This seems exactly to express the force of the phrase, συ αν ητησας αυτον.

i *He would have given thee living water.*] It is certain that the phrase *living water* does in many good authors signify *spring water,* or *running water,* in opposition to that which stagnates, and so quickly grows not only *flat,* or, as we commonly express it, *dead,* but at length *corrupt;* (see Elsner, *in loc.* and compare Gen. xxvi. 19; Lev. xiv. 6; Jer. ii. 13.) Yet, as our Lord elsewhere, in a remarkable passage recorded by this Evangelist, (John vi. 51.) calls himself *living bread,* because by feeding upon him *life* is to be obtained, it seemed convenient literally to adhere to the original in this version; though I own it is very probable, this woman understood our Lord of some fine *spring water* which flowed so easily as not to need the pains of *drawing,* and was, on this account at least, preferable to that of Jacob's well. And our Lord's reply, ver. 13, 14, shews that the simile would hold in that respect.

k *Thou hast no bucket.*] This, as it is the most material instrument for *drawing water,* answers the Greek αντλημα better than any single English word I recollect. And we find afterwards, upon the woman's returning in haste to the city, that she left *her* water-pot or pail behind her, ver. 28, which was the vessel she had brought to draw with.—Mr. Maundrell tells us, that the well now shewn as Jacob's, is *thirty-five yards* deep. Maund. *Journey to Jerusalem,* p. 63.

l *Will never thirst.*] Some would render ου μη διψηση εις τον αιωνα, *shall not thirst for ever:* but not to urge how much this spoils the antithesis, the expression used John vi. 35, ου μη διψηση πωποτε, is not liable to any such ambiguity. The force and truth of our Lord's assertion seems to lie in this, that the most impatient and restless desires of the soul being satisfied, when it is fixed on God as its supreme happiness, other *thirst* was not worth being mentioned; see John viii. 51, 52. § 105; John xi. 26. § 140; with the notes on those places; and John xiii. 10. § 169.

m *Is not thy husband.*] This can imply no less, than that she was

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

The *woman*, surprised at such an extraordinary instance of his knowledge, (yet desirous at the same time, to turn off the discourse from a subject so much to her confusion,) *says to him, Sir, I perceive*, by thy discovering the circumstances of my life so truly, though I am a perfect stranger to thee, *that thou art a prophet;* and therefore, I would gladly take this opportunity of being informed concerning that great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations.[n] 19

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

It is well known from the Mosaic writings, that *our fathers worshipped on this mountain*,[o] which we think a circumstance of considerable weight in our favour; *whereas you* Jews *say, that* the temple *at Jerusalem is the* ~~great~~ *place, where we* should all present our sacrifices unto God, and *ought to* attend upon the duties of his *worship*, and whither all the tribes are to resort three times a-year. I would beg therefore to be informed by thee in this important case, which of the two I should believe, and which is really the place most acceptable unto God. 20

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

In answer to this case of conscience, *Jesus says to her, Woman, believe me*, and attend to what I say, *The hour is* now *coming, when* this controversy shall be entirely over, and *neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father*, in the same manner as ye now do; for God is going now to introduce such a pure and spiritual dispensation, as will remove all manner of distinctions as to the place in which he would be worshipped, and supersede the ceremonies practised here or there. 21

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.

But as to this dispute which has so long been carried on between the Jews and you, it is apparent, on the principles of the Mosaic religion, that you Samaritans are in a gross mistake; and with respect not only to the place, but in a great measure to the object also, and the manner of your services, *you worship you know not what:* whereas *we* Jews are much better instructed in these things, and *know* whom, and on *what* authority, *we worship: for* truly the *salvation* God has promised to his people *is* to arise *from the Jews*, and the way of obtaining it is with the greatest advantage to be learned among them. 22

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Nevertheless, as I said before, I assure you again, *the hour approaches, and now is* just arrived, *when the true* and acceptable *worshippers shall worship the* great *Father* of all, not with these external rites on which you lay so much stress, but *in spirit and in truth*,[p] or in a more devotional and rational manner, to which these corporeal and typical ordinances must soon give way; *for the Father seeketh such to worship him*, as that kind of homage is most suited to his own nature, as well as peculiarly delightful and useful to the pious mind. 23

24 God *is* a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

For *God is* himself *a* pure *Spirit; and* therefore, *they that worship him, ought to worship* him *in spirit and in truth:* and, as some degree of spirituality and sincerity is necessary under every dispensation, you need not wonder, if at length he set aside those external rites, which were never principally regarded by him. 24

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming and will soon appear; [*and*] *when he is* actually *come, he will* undoubtedly *teach us all* these sublime truths at which you have been hinting, and whatever other *things* it is necessary for us to know.[q] 25

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

Upon her mentioning this, as *Jesus* was not apprehensive of those inconveniences here, which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews,[r] he plainly and directly *tells her* in so many words, *I that am* now *speaking to thee am he:* a declaration which, no doubt, she heard with great amazement: but before she could answer him, the disciples appeared, which for the present put an end to the conference. 26

not married to the man she lived with now, at all; for Christ seems to allow the other *five* to have been *husbands*, though her separation from some of the former, and her marriage with the rest, had probably been unlawful; which quite overthrows that argument, which Jerome would draw from hence, against the lawfulness of *marrying more than once*. See Heinsius, *in loc.*

n That great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations.] It is well known, and necessary to be recollected here, that Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a temple upon mount Gerizim, for Manasseh his son-in-law, who, for marrying Sanballat's daughter, was expelled from the priesthood, and from Jerusalem; (see Neh. xiii. 28; and Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* ix. *cap.* 8.) This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship, in opposition to Jerusalem; and it was so near Sichem, the scene of this story, that a man's voice might be heard from the one to the other; Judg. ix. 7.

o *Our fathers worshipped on this mountain.*] As the Samaritans pretended to deduce their genealogy from Jacob, so it is evident that this refers to Abraham, and to Jacob, who *erected altars* in this place, (Gen. xii. 6, 7; and xxxiii. 18, 20.) and possibly to the *whole congregation*, who were directed when they came into the land of Canaan, to *put the blessing upon mount Gerizim*, Deut. xi. 29.—And though Hyrcanus the son of Simon, who succeeded his father as high-priest and prince of the Jews, had long ago destroyed the temple which Sanballat built here, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 9. [al. 17.] sect. 1.) yet it is plain that the Samaritans still resorted thither, having, no doubt, rebuilt it, though probably in a meaner manner.

p *Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*] *Truth* is elsewhere opposed to types and ceremonies, John i. 14, 17. Heb. viii. 2. ix. 24. This important sentiment, as likewise what is said in ver. 24, is well illustrated by many fine quotations from ancient writers by Grotius, *in loc.* And all that know any thing of that learned commentator, know that he has a thousand rich collections of this kind, which do a great honour to scripture, by illustrating its superior beauties: but it would be quite foreign to the design of this work, either to transcribe such collections, or to attempt any supplement to them.

q *Teach us all things* it is necessary for us to know.] This (as well as ver. 29, 42.) plainly proves, both that the Samaritans expected the Messiah, and that they concluded he would be a prophet.

r Not apprehensive of those inconveniences here which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews.] That Christ was very cautious of acknowledging himself to be the promised Messiah, in his conversing with the Jews, is very apparent; (compare Matt. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 29, 30; Luke xxii. 67. and John x. 24.) and the reason was, that the Jews had such notions of the *temporal kingdom* of the Messiah, that they would have construed an open declaration of himself under that character, as a claim to the *throne of David;* in consequence of which, many would have taken up arms in the cause, (John vi. 15.) and others would have accused him to the Roman governor, as a rebel against Cæsar, (Luke xx. 20.) as they afterwards did, Luke xxiii. 2.—This Mr. Locke has stated at large in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 59—77. Yet I think there was a nicety in Christ's conduct, beyond what is there represented: for our Lord in effect declared the thing, while he declined that particular title; and in a multitude of places, represents himself as the Son of man, and the Son of God, which were both equivalent phrases, and generally understood by the Jews, though a Roman would not so easily have entered into the force of them. Accordingly we find this interpretation was in fact given to them, John vii. 31, 41. and ix. 22.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 29. JOHN IV.

CONDESCENDING and compassionate Redeemer! who would thus graciously converse with a Samaritan, with a woman of an infamous reputation too, from whom, on various accounts, a haughty Pharisee would have turned away in proud disdain! and could forget his thirst, pressing as that appetite is, that he might instruct and lead her to the waters of life!

Ver. 15 Gracious gift of God to the children of men! how noble and how lasting a delight does it administer! Let it be our language, "Lord, evermore give us this living water!" Oh, pour out this enlivening spirit on us, which 13 alone can allay the thirst of our souls, and give us that lasting satisfaction, which we in vain would seek from 14 these broken cisterns, from these precarious streams; till at length the fountain springs up in Paradise, and flows on to life everlasting!

23 May this good Spirit anticipate those immortal delights to our souls, by leading us into that spirituality of worship which the nature of God demands, and which the gospel dispensation is so eminently calculated to pro- 24 mote! Let it be inscribed on our hearts that God is a Spirit; and let it teach us to worship him in spirit and in truth. Such worshippers the Father seeks; such may he ever find in us!

20, 21 May all intemperate zeal for matters of doubtful disputation, all sentiments of bigotry and severity against our brethren, be happily swallowed up in this infinitely greater concern; and while others contend about places and forms of worship, may we pour out our hearts before him, and feel the love of God and man shed abroad in them, by his Spirit given unto us! (Rom. v. 5.)

SECTION XXX.

Christ's discourse with his disciples at Jacob's well, his visit to the Samaritans, and their regards to him. John iv. 27—42.

JOHN iv. 27.

SECT. 30. JOHN IV.

THUS expressly did Jesus declare to the woman of Samaria, that he was the Messiah; *and* immediately *upon this, his disciples* (who, as we said before, were gone into the city to buy food,) *came* to this well, where Jesus had appointed them to meet him; *and they wondered that he was* thus *talking* in so friendly a manner *with the woman*,[a] whom they knew to be one of that nation so peculiarly obnoxious to the Jews. But 27 though it gave them some uneasiness, *yet* they had such a reverence for him, that *none* of them *said, What dost thou seek* from this Samaritan? *or why dost thou talk with her?*

28 *Then the woman*, seeing other company coming up to interrupt the discourse, immediately *left her water-pot* or pail behind her, as her thoughts were taken up with matters of far greater importance; *and went away* in haste *to the* neighbouring *city, and says* 29 *to the men* of her acquaintance there, *Come* directly to Jacob's well, and you may there *see a* wonderful *man, who has told me*, in a manner, *all that ever I did*, even some of the most secret circumstances of my past life: *is not this the* expected *Messiah?* I assure you it seems exceeding probable to me that he is: and he himself has told me so in so many words.

30 *They therefore*, struck with so great a name, in concurrence with so strange an event, *went* in great numbers *out of the city, and came to him*, who still continued where the woman left him.

31 *In the mean time, the disciples entreated him* to refresh himself, *saying, Rabbi, eat* 32 of the provisions we have brought thee.[b] *But he*, referring to the conversation he had lately had with the woman, and to the preparation making for the conversion of the Samaritans, *said unto them*, with an air of great satisfaction, *I have meat to eat that ye know not of*, which gives me a much better entertainment than you can bring me.

33 *The disciples therefore*, not understanding his words in that spiritual sense in which he intended them, *said one to another*, with some surprise, considering where he was, *Has* 34 *any one* been with him in our absence, and *brought him* any [*food*] *to eat* here? *Jesus*, who knew the loss they were at to understand his meaning, *says*, to explain it *to them*, *My* most refreshing and delightful *food is to do the will of him that sent me* into the world, *and to finish his work* as fast as possible, in the conversion of souls, and in the propagation of his kingdom; and I with pleasure can assure you that it is now going 35 on successfully. *Do not you say, there are yet four months, and harvest cometh?*[c]

JOHN iv. 27.

AND upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean-while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are

a *With the woman*, μετα γυναικος.] As the article is wanting, the Prussian Testament, and many others, render it, *with a woman*; and Dr. Lightfoot, in his *note* on this place, has produced a great many unaccountable, and some of them very stupid passages, from the *Talmud* and other Rabbinical writers, to prove that it was reckoned scandalous for a man of distinction *to talk publicly with a woman*; (see Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebra. in loc.*) But the disciples surely knew that Jacob and Moses, and others of their greatest and holiest prophets, had done it; and some of them in circumstances remarkably resembling this, in which the *woman came to draw water*; (compare Gen. xxix. 9—12; Exod. ii. 15—17. See also 1 Sam. ix. 11—14.) It is plain the *wonder* here was, that he talked with a Samaritan.—As for the omission of the article, see note b, on John i. 1. p. 2. and the end of note d, in this section, on John iv. 36.

b *Eat* of the provisions we have brought thee.] Their bringing back the provisions to him here, makes it probable that he did not intend, had it not been on this occasion, to have gone into the town; and so (as it was said in the paraphrase, ver. 27.) ordered his disciples to meet him at this place, which was undoubtedly well known to travellers.

c *There are yet four months, and harvest cometh.*] Dr. Whitby and Grotius, and many others, understand this, as if our Lord had said, "It is a proverbial expression for the encouragement of hus "bandmen, that there are but *four months* between *seed-time* and "*harvest*." And the author of the late English translation therefore renders it, (in his paraphrastic manner,) *You commonly say, T'other four months and the harvest will come.* But I cannot acquiesce in this interpretation: 1. Because none of the learned writers mentioned above, nor Dr. Lightfoot, who is large on this text, could produce any such proverb. 2. Because indeed there could be no foundation for it, since the distance between *seed-time* and *harvest* must differ, according to the different kinds of grain in question. And, 3. Because if there had been such a proverb

yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Nay, but *behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes* even now, *and survey the fields* round about you; *for they are already* laden with a plentiful crop, and appear *white unto the harvest:* alluding to the disposition of the people in general, and more particularly to the multitude of Samaritans, who, struck with the report of the woman, were coming to inquire after him as the Messiah; and unto whom he pointed, and directed them to look, as being then within their view. SECT. 30. JOHN IV.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

And he yet farther added, It is your happiness to be employed in such a work as this: for *he that* faithfully *reaps* the harvest of which I now speak, *receiveth* far more valuable *wages* than men can give, *and* has the great additional satisfaction of thinking, that he *gathers in the fruit unto eternal life;*[d] *so that,* on this account, *both he that sows, and he that reaps, may rejoice together;* and those souls to whose salvation they have in different ways contributed, will be to both a crown of honour, and objects of everlasting complacency and delight. 36

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth.

For in this sense it may be justly said, that *herein is that* proverbial *saying* remarkably *true, One soweth and another reapeth;* for after he has sown his field, it often happens, that a man dies before he gathers in the harvest, and so leaves it to another, who enjoys the advantage of his pains. 37

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

And thus it is, that *I* have *sent you* forth *to reap* the fruit of *that on which you have not laboured,* either to till or sow the ground: the prophets and other holy men of former ages having toiled, as it were, to cultivate the field, and thereby made your work a great deal easier than it would otherwise have been. So that the success of my preaching this day in your absence, is an emblem of what God has wisely ordered in the course of his Providence: *others have laboured, and you are entered into* the field on which *their labour* has been carefully employed.[e] Let this engage you, therefore, to apply yourselves in earnest to your work, with a becoming spirit, and a ready cheerfulness. 38

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Now when the woman had informed the people of the discourse which she had had with Jesus, *many of the Samaritans from that city believed on him* as some extraordinary person, *by reason of that saying of the woman, who testified* concerning him, *he told me all that ever I did. When therefore the Samaritans* had heard the wonderful account the woman gave of Jesus, and *were come* with her to the well *to* see *him,* they were so taken with the manner of his deportment, and the strain of his discourses, that *they entreated him to tarry with them* for some time, as being desirous of a farther acquaintance with him, and of receiving farther benefit from his instructions: *and,* ready to lay hold of every opportunity of doing good, *he* went with them to their city, and *continued there two days.*[f] 39, 40

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed, because of his own word;

And there were *many more,* who in this time *believed* on him,[g] *on account of his own discourse,* which they might also see confirmed by some extraordinary works. 41

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

And they said to the woman, Now we believe, and that *not* merely, nor yet chiefly, *on account of what thou hast spoken* of him; *for we ourselves have heard him* teach, and have examined his credentials; *and,* by the most convincing evidence, we *know that this is really the Christ, the Saviour of the world,*[h] even the expected Messiah, and are determined to regard him as such. 42

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us behold with pleasure the glorious example of our blessed Redeemer, and learn to imitate his zeal. It was his *meat and drink to pursue his Father's work,* to glorify God, and do good to souls: and ought it not to be ours? Let us bless God for every opportunity of applying to it, and every field of service which Providence opens to us. Ver. 34

Let gospel-ministers, especially, be thankful for all that hath been done to introduce their services, not only by the ministrations of the prophets under the Old Testament, but by the apostles also under the New, and by succeeding servants of Christ in every age of the church. In this sense, with regard to us, is that proverb true, *One soweth and another reapeth.* We have *entered into the labours of others:* May others in time enter into ours! May the work be delivered over from one faithful hand to another, and be carried on by each with growing zeal and success! Blessed time, when all the workmen shall meet and join their songs; and each of the souls gathered in to eternal life shall be, to all concerned in their conversion or edification, an ornament of glory, and a source of pleasure! 38, 37, 36

Surely, if we know Christ ourselves, we shall, like this woman of Samaria, be solicitous to communicate the knowledge to others, and shall sometimes forget our little worldly interests to attend to this vast superior care. May 29, 28

it would have been improper to apply it here; since our Lord was not speaking of the period of time between *the prophets' sowing* and *the apostles' reaping,* (to which *four months* has no analogy,) but only means to tell them, that though they reckoned yet *four months* to the *earthly harvest,* the *spiritual harvest* was *now ripe.* So that I chuse, as Sir Isaac Newton does, to take the words in their plainest sense, as an intimation that it was then *four months* to the beginning of *harvest;* see note c, on ver. 3. p. 57. And I take this passage to be of very great importance for settling the chronology of Christ's ministry.

d *Gathers in the fruit unto eternal life.*] I apprehend our Lord's thought here to have been more comprehensive than commentators have been aware. He seems to compare the case of a Christian minister to that of a considerate *reaper,* who is supported in his fatigue, not only by a reward of his own *wages,* but to the advantage which the public receives by the *harvest* he gathers in. This the expression συναγει καρπον εις ζωην αιωνιον seems plainly to import, and so is nearly parallel to Jam. v. 20, and suggests a most forcible consideration to diligence and zeal.—Καρπον here seems to be put for τον καρπον, *the fruit,* that is, *the souls* he gathers in.

e The field on which *their labour* has been employed.] This seems the signification of κοπον here, as Grotius well proves. Compare 2 Cor. x. 15.

f *Continued there two days.*] This was a proper medium between entirely neglecting them, and giving them so much of his time and company, as would have broken in upon the design of his journey into Galilee, or might have given umbrage to the Jews.

g *Many more believed* on him.] This was the more extraordinary, as they not only had a national prejudice against him as a Jew, but, living near Mount Gerizim, had a particular interest in maintaining the usual worship there, which must be very advantageous to the neighbourhood. Perhaps on this they would no longer worship there, which might irritate the rest of the Samaritans, and might in part provoke the ill usage that Christ afterwards met with in this country. Luke ix. 52, 53.

h *The Saviour of the world.*] They might probably collect from what was prophesied by Jacob of the Messiah, Gen. xlix. 10, *To him shall the gathering of the people be:* that the *Gentile nations* were to receive some benefit by the Messiah's coming, and one way or another to be subjected to him; and Christ's discourse might confirm that

SECT. 30. we believe in him, not merely on the report and testimony of others, but on our own experience; that, having *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, we may bear a more lively and effectual testimony to him!

Let us watchfully observe the leadings of Providence; and, whatever our own schemes may have been, let us JOHN IV. still adjust our conduct by the intimations of present duty; and, especially where we have reason to believe that God is by his Spirit beginning to work on men's hearts, let us be ambitious of being *workers together with him*. A Ver. 40 word spoken in such a season is remarkably good, and it is a great part of Christian and ministerial prudence, to observe and improve those tender times. October 2. 1655

SECTION XXXI.

Christ comes from Samaria into Galilee; and while at Cana cures a nobleman's son, who lay at the point of death in Capernaum. Mark i. 14, 15. Matt. iv. 12. John iv. 43, *to the end.*

Mark i. 14.

SECT. 31. *NOW after John was cast into prison, and Jesus had heard* [*of it*] in Judea where he then was, *he withdrew* from thence, [*and*] *came into Galilee*,[a] (as was said before, John iv. 3, sect. 29.) being willing to take the advantage of those impressions which the ministry MARK I. of John might have made on the minds of the people there, who had so signal an esteem for him; an esteem which would be heightened, rather than abated, by the injurious things 14 which they saw him suffer. Jesus came therefore into that country,[b] *preaching the good news of the kingdom of God*, which was speedily to be erected by the Messiah, whom 15 God had appointed to raise and govern it; *And saying, Behold, the time* fixed by the ancient prophets *is* now *fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near;* see to it therefore that you cordially *repent* of all your sins, *and believe the gospel* which I publish to you, that you may secure an interest in the blessings of it.

JOHN IV. *And* having been prevailed upon (as we have seen before) to stop at Sichar in his way, *after* he had continued there *two days*, with the Samaritans, *he departed* from *thence, and* 43 *went* (as has been just now said) *into Galilee*. And he chose to make a journey through a considerable part of it, before he returned to Nazareth, that the reputation he gained elsewhere might be some balance to those prejudices which the inhabitants of that place would 44 naturally entertain against him: *for Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honour in his own country*;[c] where those that knew him in his childhood and youth can hardly be persuaded to look upon him with the reverence due to a messenger from God.

45 *When therefore he came into Galilee, the Galileans received* and entertained *him* with a great deal of pleasure; (compare Luke iv. 14, 15.) for many of them had been witnesses to his surprising miracles, *having seen all the* wonderful *things that he did at Jerusalem during the feast* of the passover, *(for they also came to the feast,)* and they 46 had now an expectation of seeing some of them renewed. *Jesus, therefore*, encouraged by this readiness of theirs to attend his ministry, pursued his journey till he *came again* to *Cana of Galilee*, which was the place *where he* before *had made the water wine.*

And while he staid at Cana, *there was a certain nobleman* belonging to king Herod's 47 court,[d] *whose son was* dangerously *ill at Capernaum; [Who] when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, went* in person at least a day's journey[e] cross the country *to him, and* earnestly *entreated him that he would come down* to Capernaum, *and cure his son, for he was* given over by the physicians, and seemed *just ready to die.* 48 *Jesus said therefore unto him*, and them that were about him, I perceive that, though the Samaritans shewed so great a regard to my word, and the report of my miracles, *unless you see* with your own eyes some remarkable and repeated *signs and wonders, you will not believe;* thereby justly reproving him and them for that mixture of suspicion and slow- 49 ness of faith which he discerned in their minds.[f] *The nobleman*, weak as his faith was, determined nevertheless to urge the matter to the utmost; and therefore, without any ex-

MARK i. 14.
NOW after that John was put in prison, [when Jesus had heard that,—he departed, *and*] came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; [Matt. iv. 12.]

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.

John iv. 43.
Now after two days, he departed thence, [*that is, from Sichar,*] and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then, when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith

apprehension: but there is no reason at all to believe, they perfectly understood the doctrine of the *calling of the idolatrous Gentiles*, which was so long a *mystery* even to the *apostles themselves.*

a *After John was cast into prison, Jesus withdrew and came into Galilee.*] It is strange that Mr. Whiston, and some others, should represent it as an argument against the order we have followed here, that it would have been imprudent and inconvenient for Christ to have gone immediately into Herod's territories, just after he had seized John; when two of the Evangelists assure us, this was the very *reason* of his journey. The cause of *John's imprisonment* was particular; and the reasons assigned in the paraphrase seem considerable, besides that already mentioned, John iv. 1—3. See note a, p. 57.

b Jesus came therefore into that country.] Mr. Le Clerc supposes, (in his *Harmony*, p. 75.) that Jesus went from Sichar directly to Nazareth, and that this visit which he made to Cana (at ver. 46.) was some time after he was expelled from Nazareth, and had dwelt at Capernaum. But that he took a circuit elsewhere before he went to Nazareth, is certain from John iv. 43, 44, compared with Luke iv. 14—16. And though we cannot positively say, whether the visit to Cana was made in this first journey, or in the other which is mentioned afterwards, (Luke iv. 44; Matt. iv. 23; and Mark i. 38, 39, § 36.) yet I have introduced it here, because John mentions it immediately after his coming from Sichar; and it has been a maxim with me in this work, to take all the stories and discourses in the *order* they lie, if there be not (from other Evangelists) a plain reason for *transposing* them.

c *For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honour in his own country.*] There is no manner of occasion here, to render γαρ *although;* for it is plain, that this is spoken as the reason why he rather chose to travel into those parts of Galilee, and not to go directly to Nazareth; which is particularly called *his own country*, in distinction from Galilee, and even from Capernaum, Luke iv. 23.

d *A certain nobleman* belonging to king Herod's court.] Though Herod was only tetrarch of Galilee, yet was he commonly distinguished by the title of king: (see Matt. xiv. 9. and Mark vi. 14. sect. 77.) and as Capernaum lay in his dominions, it is probable that this was one belonging to his court, who was *a nobleman* of some distinction. For this is properly the signification of βασιλικος, which the Syriac and Arabic versions render *a minister*, or *servant of the king;* and many have conjectured, that the person who is here spoken of was Chuza, Herod's *steward*, whose *wife* is thought to have been converted on this occasion, and became afterwards an attendant on Christ. Luke viii. 3.

e At least a day's journey.] This may be very fairly inferred from ver. 52, as well as from the accounts the best geographers give of the situation of Cana and Capernaum.

f Reproving him and them for that mixture of suspicion, &c.] It is necessary to suppose some such reference to illustrate the justice of this reproof; for in the general it was very reasonable to expect

unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

plication or apology on that head, *says to him, Sir*, I beseech thee to *come down before my child die;* for the case is so extreme, that a delay may be attended with the most fatal consequences. Upon which *Jesus*, to shew that it was not necessary for him to go in person to accomplish the cure, *says to him, Go thy way* home, for I assure thee that *thy son* is living, and at this instant, while I am speaking to thee, *is recovered* from his illness. *And the man*, though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case,[g] *believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him, and went away* without any further importunity. SECT. 31. JOHN IV. 50

Now the day after he had taken his leave of Jesus, *as he was going down* to Capernaum, some of *his servants met him* on the road, eager to bring him such acceptable news, *and told* [*him,*] *saying, Thy son* who was so dangerously ill, *is* now *recovered.* And *therefore*, to compare it with the account that Jesus gave, *he* presently *enquired of them*, what was *the hour when he began to mend: and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour*, or at one in the afternoon, *the fever left him* at once, and he grew well on a sudden. *The father therefore knew that* [*it was*] *at the very hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son is recovered: and* when he came to reflect on the astonishing circumstances of the case, *he and his whole family believed* that the person by whom so convincing and beneficent a miracle was wrought, must be not only, as he before supposed, some great prophet, but even the Messiah himself. 51 52 53

This is again the second miracle which Jesus performed at Cana; and he wrought it *when he came out of Judea into Galilee;* a circumstance in which it agreed with the former.[h] 54

IMPROVEMENT.

How unreasonable are the passions and prejudices of mankind; and this in particular, that a prophet should have no honour in his own country! One would have imagined, that Jesus at least, free as he was from all the follies of childhood and youth, should have been an exception; nay, indeed, that he should have been peculiarly honoured there, where his early wisdom and piety could not but be observed. Ver. 44

Our Lord however intended them a visit, even at Nazareth; and it is the duty of his ministers to bear their testimony, *whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.* Yet should they learn of their great Master to study as much as they can to obviate those prejudices which might prevent their usefulness, and should use the most prudent and gentle methods to vanquish them. 43

Such was this beneficial miracle of our Lord; which may afford us many particulars worthy of our notice. With what affection and zeal does this tender parent apply to Christ, on the sickness of his child! Let us not be less importunate, when soliciting spiritual blessings in behalf of our dear offspring: and so much the rather, as their lives are so precarious, and we know not how soon these lovely flowers may be cut down, and all farther petitions for them be for ever superseded. 47 49

Our Lord, while at a distance from the patient, wrought and perfected the cure. And has he not still the same divine power, though he does not exert it in the same miraculous way? Let not his bodily absence abate our faith, while praying for others, or for ourselves. 50, 51

Salvation now came to this house, and blessings infinitely more valuable than noble blood, or ample possessions, or royal favour, or recovered health could give; for the cure wrought on the *body* of one, was a means of producing faith in the *hearts* of all. Blessed Jesus! thy power was no less employed in the latter, than in the former. Oh may that power work in such a manner on our souls, as that we may all be disposed cordially to receive thee, and cheerfully to venture our eternal all upon thee! May we and our houses concur in so wise and happy a resolution; and, not insisting upon evidence beyond what thy gracious wisdom has thought fit to give us, may we candidly receive the light we have, and faithfully improve it, so as to be at length entitled to the blessedness of those *who have not seen, and yet have believed!* (John xx. 29.) 53 48

SECTION XXXII.

Christ preaching at Nazareth, is at first admired, but immediately after rejected; the people there making an attempt upon his life, he leaves them, and comes to Capernaum. Luke iv. 14—30.

LUKE iv. 14.

AND Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

LUKE iv. 14.

IT has already been observed, that after John the Baptist was imprisoned, *and Jesus* was acquainted with it, he left Judea, and *returned into Galilee;* and from what follows it will be plainly seen, that he went thither under the guidance, and *in the power of the Spirit;*[a] for as a mighty impulse on his own mind determined him to undertake the journey, so an amazing divine energy attended his progress through it; *and his renown* was spread abroad, as soon as he arrived in Galilee, and *went through all the neighbouring region. And*, ready to embrace all opportunities that offered to instruct the people, *he* went from place to place, and *taught in their synagogues, with universal* admiration and *applause.*[b] SECT. 32. LUKE IV. 14 15

that Christ should *work miracles* in proof of his divine mission, as he himself does plainly intimate elsewhere; see John xv. 24. Who can tell, but the very person now applying to him, might have made some such declaration, that he would never *believe* such things, till he *saw* them with his own eyes? Christ might mean by this reflection to humble him, and to shew him a specimen of his extraordinary knowledge, as well as power.

g Though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case.] It is plain he had heard of *Christ's miracles*, but this is the *first* recorded in which he cured the patient *at a distance*, and probably was hitherto in this respect unequalled.

h A circumstance in which it agreed with the former.] Compare John i. 43. and ii. 1. That the words must be taken with such a limitation, evidently appears from what John had before said of the many *miracles* which Christ had already wrought elsewhere; see John ii. 23. and iii. 2.

a *In the power of the Spirit.*] It seems a very wild thought of Mr. Fleming's that this intimates Christ was transported through the air hither, after his *temptation* in the wilderness. See Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 315.

b *With universal applause;* δοξαζομενος υπο παντων.] Our transla-

SECT. 32. LUKE IV.

And having thus prepared his way, *he came* at length *to Nazareth, where* it has been observed before (Matt. ii. 23; and Luke ii. 51.) that *he was educated; and, according to his custom*, which he constantly observed there and elsewhere, *he entered into the synagogue on the sabbath-day; and*, out of regard to the high reputation he had lately gained, being desired by the ruler of it to officiate,[c] he *stood up to read* the scriptures, which made a constant part of their public worship; (see Acts xv. 21.)

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.

17 *And the book of Isaiah the prophet was delivered to him*, a paragraph of the law having been read before; *and unrolling* the volume of *the book*,[d] *he found that place* 18 of it, (Isa. lxi. 1—3.) *where it was written* to this effect: [e] "*The Spirit of the Lord* "*is upon me* in an abundant degree *for the* important *purpose to which he hath* "*anointed me*,[f] and solemnly set me apart; and important indeed it is, [*for*] *he hath* "*sent me to preach good news to the poor* and afflicted,[g] *to heal those whose hearts* "*are broken* with sorrow, *to proclaim* free *dismission to* wretched *captives, even the* "*recovery of sight to them that are blind* in prison; [*and*] *to set those at liberty* 19 "*who are bruised* with the heavy load of their fetters:[h] In a word, *to proclaim*, as by "the sound of a trumpet, *that welcome year of the Lord*,[i] which the year of jubilee, "pleasing and grateful as it is, can but imperfectly represent, though debts are then "forgiven, and slaves released, and inheritances restored to their original owners."

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 *And having rolled up the book*, which was a long scroll of parchment, *he delivered it to the servant* of the synagogue whose proper office it was to take care of it; *and* then, according to the custom of the Jewish rabbies, *sat down* to preach, (see Matt. v. 1; xxiii. 2, 3; xxvi. 55; and John viii. 2.) *and the eyes of all in the synagogue were attentively fixed upon him*, as they were very curious to know what he would say on a scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah.[k]

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 *And he began* to speak at large from this excellent and suitable passage; and the main tendency and purport of his discourse was *to say to them, To-day this scripture* I have now been reading *is* remarkably *fulfilled in your hearing*; for I am the person foretold under this character, and sent with such ample powers to fulfil these purposes of the Divine mercy.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 *And*, strong as their prejudices were against him, *they all*, by their very countenances, (see Job xxix. 11.) *bore* their *testimony to him* as a most excellent preacher, *and were astonished at those graceful* as well as comfortable *words*[l] *which proceeded out of his mouth*; so that they could not forbear *saying* to each other, even while he spoke, *Is not this* he that was brought up among us, *the son of Joseph* the carpenter? And if it be, how is it possible that a man of so mean an education should be able to discourse thus excellently well?

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 *And he said to them*, farther, *You will undoubtedly say to me* in the words of *that* common *proverb, Physician, cure thyself; [and]* for the satisfaction of thy own relations and neighbours, if thou art really so extraordinary a person, *do also here* at home, *in thine own country, those* miraculous *works which*, as *we have heard, were done at Capernaum* and elsewhere.[m] *But* to expose the vanity of this suggestion, *he* went on

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

tion, which has rendered it, *being glorified of all*, is indeed more literal: but *to glorify a preacher* is an uncommon phrase in English; and that I have used is so plainly equivalent to the other in signification, that I hope it may be allowed as very just.

c Being desired by the ruler of it to officiate.] One cannot but be amazed at the ignorance of Suidas, in arguing from hence that Christ was a *priest*. It is well known that any man of gravity and reputation might, at the request of the ruler, officiate on such occasions; (compare Acts xiii. 15.)

d *Unrolling* the volume of *the book*.] So ανελιξας properly signifies; and I chuse to retain it, that the *form* of the books then used may thus be recollected: they were, as the copies of the Old Testament in the Jewish synagogues now are, *long scrolls of parchment*, that were rolled upon two sticks. The reader may see an excellent account of them in Mr. Jer. Jones's *Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel*, chap. xv. p. 151—170. And this form of their book shews, in the most convincing manner, how improbable such *transpositions* are as those learned harmonizers, Mr. Whiston and Mr. Manne, make the foundation of their respective hypotheses.

e *It was written* to this effect.] It is evident that the *quotation*, as it stands here, does neither exactly agree with the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. The many *old copies* in which that clause, ιατασθαι τους συντετριμμενους την καρδιαν, *to heal the broken-hearted*, is wanting, has inclined many learned critics, with Grotius, to suppose it added from the Hebrew; but one would rather conclude that Christ read the passage as it was, and that these words might accidentally be dropped by some early transcriber.

f *For the purpose to which he hath anointed me*: ου ενεκεν εχρισε με.] It is very difficult to explain the *connection* of the *two clauses* in this passage, if we render ου ενεκεν either *because*, or *therefore*; and I cannot recollect that it ever signifies *because*. But the *translation* I propose seems to remove the difficulty; see Acts xix. 32.

g *Poor* and afflicted.] Grotius well observes that it is probable *some copies* might read עניים, *the poor*, instead of ענוים, *the meek*, which is the word made use of in Isaiah. And as to that clause of *restoring sight to the blind*, which is omitted in Isaiah, I am not able to determine whether our Lord in his discourse borrowed this clause from Isa. xlii. 7. by way of illustration; or whether (as Dr. Prideaux supposes in his *Connection*, Vol. II. p. 547.) it was taken from some *Chaldee Targum* which is now lost.

h *Sight to them that are blind, and to set those at liberty who are bruised*.] It is beautifully observed by the judicious Mr. Cradock, in his excellent book *On the Evangelists*, that the former clause seems an *allusion* to the wretched state of those prisoners who, according to the inhuman custom still retained in the *eastern countries*, had *their eyes put out*: and with regard to such as these, this Great Deliverer is represented as *restoring them*, a work far beyond all human power. See Cradock's *Harm.* p. 69.—I take them to be the same with those who are spoken of in the next clause as *bruised* with the weight of their *fetters*; for it is plain that even *blind captives* were sometimes loaded with them; as was the case with Samson, Judges xvi. 21; and with Zedekiah, 2 Kings xxv. 7.

i *That welcome year of the Lord*.] It is strange that any *ancient* or *modern* writers should argue from hence that *Christ's ministry* lasted but *one year*, or a little more. One might as well plead, from 2 Cor. vi. 2. that *the day of salvation* included but *one natural day*.—Here is a plain *allusion* to the *Jubilee*; compare Lev. xxv. 9, 10; and Psal. lxxxix. 15.

k A scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah.] Though many *commentators* of note apply Isa. lxi. 1. to the *good news* of the dismission of the Jews from Babylon, I refer it to the impartial reader to judge whether it be not much more probable that ver. 4, 5, 6, (where the *prophet* speaks of *repairing the waste cities, planting vineyards, &c.)* may be either meant in a *spiritual sense*, or literally predict the *temporal prosperity of the church* after the *conversion of the Jews*, than that Christ should mistake the true *sense* of the text, or build his argument on a mere *allusion*; see Dr. Sykes's *Vindication of Christianity*, p. 259, and Jeffery's *True Grounds*, p. 120.

l *Astonished at those graceful words*.] The phrase in the original, λογοις της χαριτος, literally signifies *words of grace*; which, it is probable, may refer to the *agreeable manner* of Christ's discourse, as well as to the *matter* of it: and as they could not but take notice of the majesty and grace with which he spoke, so it must naturally fill them with *astonishment*, considering the meanness of his birth and education; see Elsner, *in loc.*

m *At Capernaum* and elsewhere.] It is strange that Dr. Clarke and many others should lay so much stress as they do on this, as an argument to prove that this visit to Nazareth was made after that

24 And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land.

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.

and *said, Verily, I say unto you, that no prophet is acceptable in his own country,* (compare John iv. 44, p. 62.) and therefore I know that you who have been acquainted with me from my infancy, will, through envy and prejudice, refuse me an opportunity of working such miracles, and would indeed be still as obstinate and unbelieving as before, if you should see them. *But* let it be remembered by you, that God sometimes punishes men for this unreasonable temper, by directing his prophets to confer those favours on strangers, of which their countrymen and neighbours have rendered themselves so unworthy. For thus *I tell you as a* certain *truth*, which well deserves your consideration, That *there were many* poor *widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was*, as it were, *shut up for three years and six months*,[n] *so that* there was no rain, and *a great famine prevailed in all the land: And* yet *Elijah was sent to none of them* with a miraculous supply of meal and oil, *but to a widow woman at Sarepta;* [*a city*] of the Gentiles, in the country *of Sidon.* (1 Kings xvii. 9.) *And there were* also *many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; yet none of them was* miraculously *cleansed, but* that singular favour was bestowed on *Naaman the Syrian*,[o] a Gentile, and one of a hostile nation. (2 Kings v. 15.) Presume not therefore on your being my countrymen and neighbours, so as on that account to reject my message, lest you provoke God to send those blessings to strangers, and even to Gentiles, of which such infidelity and ingratitude would render you unworthy.

SECT. 32. LUKE IV. 25 26 27

Nothing could be more disagreeable to them than such an intimation: *and all that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with* the most outrageous *fury: And rising up* at once, in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, or any sense of justice or common humanity, *they* violently *cast him* out of the synagogue, and *out of the city* too; *and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong*, and dash him to pieces. *But* Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner, that *he passed through the midst of them* unknown,[p] *and went away* to the neighbouring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time. 28 29 30

IMPROVEMENT.

We see that it was the custom of our blessed Saviour to frequent the synagogues every sabbath-day: how well therefore does it become his servants to be constant in their attendance on public ordinances; especially since those of the gospel are in many respects so much nobler than any which the Mosaic institution would admit! Ver. 16

In the synagogues the scriptures were constantly read; and it is matter of pleasing reflection, that in all ages of the Christian church, the reading of them hath usually been made a part of the service in most of its solemn assemblies. Let it still be so with us, for this reason, among others, that so glorious a testimony to the genuineness of scripture may not be impaired in our hands, but transmitted to those that shall arise after us. 17

And surely the Old Testament, as well as the New, deserves our attentive perusal; in which, if we are not strangely negligent, or strangely prejudiced, we must often meet with remarkable prophecies of Christ shining with a pleasing lustre, like *lights in a dark place.* (2 Pet. i. 19.) How amiable a view of him is given in that which he now opened! Let us seriously attend to it. It is a moving representation that is here made of the deplorable state in which the gospel finds us! The helpless prisoners of divine justice, the wretched captives of Satan, stripped and wounded, the eyes of our understanding blinded, and the powers of our souls enfeebled, and, as it were, bruised with those chains which prejudice and vice have fastened upon them! But in these miserable circumstances, Jesus appears to open the doors of our prison, to strike off our fetters, and even to restore our sight. He comes to enrich our impoverished souls, and to preach a far better jubilee than Moses could proclaim; the free forgiveness of all our sins, and the recovery of an inheritance of eternal glory. Surely it should be to us a most acceptable time. *Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance!* (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) 18, 19

In some sense *this* instructive and comfortable *scripture is this day fulfilled in our ears* likewise. Let us also 21, 22

to Capernaum, in which *those miracles* were wrought which are recorded Mark i. 21—34; and Luke iv. 33—41. (§ 35, 36.) when Luke himself so plainly says that *he came down from Nazareth to Capernaum*, and then gives an account of *those miracles*, (Luke iv. 30, *et seq.*) and Matthew also introduces the history of them with saying, (Matt. iv. 13.) that *leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt at Capernaum.*—We are expressly told by John, that Jesus, after the miracle which he wrought at Cana in Galilee, went with his mother and his brethren and disciples to Capernaum, and continued some time, though not very long there, (John ii. 12. § 24.) and it is very possible he might visit it again in his passing through Galilee, (John iv. 43, 44, § 31.) which if he did after the *cure* wrought on the *nobleman's son* there, (which undoubtedly preceded this visit to Nazareth,) he would certainly meet with some extraordinary regard, as the *cure* was performed *at a distance*, and many other miracles might then be wrought there: so that this passage may refer to these and other *miracles* not particularly recorded by Luke; as we have seen before that John refers to others (John ii. 23; and iii. 2.) which neither he himself had mentioned, nor indeed any of the rest of the *Evangelists.*—If it be asked why Christ did not perform such miracles *here* as elsewhere? we answer—that this whole discourse is intended to prove that God might dispense these extraordinary favours as he pleased; and they do not appear to have *brought their sick* to him, and seem to have suspected his power; (compare Matt. xiii. 58; and Mark vi. 5, § 73.) a suspicion, the unreasonableness of which was greatly aggravated by the credible report of what he had done in the neighbourhood, and by the knowledge they had of his early piety and exemplary behaviour.

n *The heaven was shut up for three years and six months.*] This is again asserted by the apostle James, (chap. v. 16.) either as grounded on *our Lord's authority* here, or as a circumstance established by *tradition;* for in both places it is spoken of as a thing well known: nor can we doubt but the account is very exact, though the particular time is not determined in the Old Testament, nor is it certainly deducible from it.—Lightfoot and others have observed, that there is somewhat here remarkable in this circumstance of *time*, as it agrees with the continuance of *Christ's public ministry;* that as *Elijah shut up heaven* by his prayer, so that *it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months*, so from the baptism to the *death of Christ, the heavens were opened* for the like space of time, and *his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew.* (Deut. xxxii. 2.) See Lightfoot's *Harmony*, and Grotius, *in loc.*

o *None of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian.*] Of the force of the particle ει μη here, and in some other remarkable places, see the note on John xvii. 12. § 179.

p *Passed through the midst of them* unknown.] Whether the *miracle* lay in rendering himself entirely *invisible*, or in putting on some *other form*, or in affecting their eyes or minds in such a manner that they should not *know him*, we cannot certainly determine: but it seems evident that there was something *miraculous* in the case. Compare John viii. 59; Luke xxiv. 16; and 2 Kings vi. 18—20.

SECT. 32. bear our testimony to the gracious words of this welcome messenger, whom God hath anointed for such happy purposes!

One would have imagined that while the eyes of his auditors were fixed upon him, their souls should have drank LUKE IV. in this doctrine, as the thirsty earth sucks up the rain, and that every heart should have been open to embrace him. But, O blessed Jesus, while thou art preaching these glad tidings of great joy, what a return dost thou find! Thou 28, 29 art ungratefully rejected, thou art impiously assaulted; and had their rage and malice been able to prevail, the joyful sound would have died into empty air as soon as it began, and this thy first sermon at Nazareth had been thy last.

Thus disdainfully art thou still rejected by multitudes who still hear the same message echoing from thy word. And is there not a malignity in the hearts of sinners which might lead those of our own days to the outrageous wickedness of these Nazarenes, were their opportunities the same, rather than they would bow their stubborn hearts to the obedience of faith? But while they are crucifying thee afresh by their sins, and putting thee to open shame, may we honour thee as the Son of God, the Saviour of men; and labour by the ardour of our love, and the steadiness of our obedience, in some measure to balance the ingratitude of those who, while they are opposing thee, are destroying themselves!

SECTION XXXIII.

Christ goes to Capernaum, and teaches in the synagogue there with great acceptance; and calls Peter and Andrew, and James and John, to a more stated attendance upon him. Matt. iv. 13—22. Luke iv. 31, 32. Mark i. 16—20.

MATT. iv. 13.

SECT. 33. *AND* Jesus, *leaving Nazareth,* from whence *he* was expelled and driven out in the ungrateful manner that was before described, *came and dwelt* for a while *at Capernaum,* which was *a* considerable *city of Galilee, that lay on the sea-coast,* even on the MATT. IV. northern shore of the lake of Gennesareth, *in the confines of Zebulon and Naphtali;* and from thence he made several small excursions to visit the neighbouring places. And this 14 was ordered by a special Divine Providence, *that what was said by the prophet Isaiah* 15 (chap. ix. 1, 2.) *might be fulfilled,*[a] When, speaking of *the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea,* and the country *about* those parts of *Jordan,*[b] which is called by the general name of *Galilee of the Gentiles,*[c] (because so many Gentiles were early settled there, and had filled it with a variety of superstitions,) he says, "That though God had once made these nations vile, yet he would hereafter render them "glorious;[d] since even there, by the settlement and preaching of the Messiah among them, 16 "*The people that sat in darkness saw* (that is, should surely see) *a great* and glorious "*light,* to disperse that ignorance and vice which before clouded them; *and,* even *to* "*them that sat* miserable and helpless *in the* dark *region and* gloomy *shadow of death* "itself, in the most melancholy and the most dangerous condition, *light has* remarkably "*sprung up,*[e] to cheer their hearts, and guide them into the ways of peace and happi-"ness."

17 And *from that time* of his departure into Galilee,[f] *Jesus began to preach* in all the places that he came to in a more public manner, *and to say, Repent,* and turn unto the Lord, *for* he is now fulfilling his ancient promises, and *the kingdom of heaven is at* LUKE IV. *hand.*[g] *And* this was the doctrine which *he was teaching them* during the time of his abode at Capernaum, and this he made the subject of his preaching in their synagogue *on* 31 *the sabbath-days;* not being discouraged by the ill usage that he met with at Nazareth 32 upon his preaching of the same doctrine there. *And they were* powerfully *struck,*[h] and very much affected *with his doctrine; for his word was* attended *with* an air of *authority* and majesty, which incomparably exceeded that low and servile manner of preaching

MATT. iv. 13.

AND leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, [a city of Galilee,] which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: [Luke iv. 31.]

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke iv. 31. And [he] taught them on the sabbath-days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

a *That what was said by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.*] The common translation is word for word, correspondent to the original; but the sense, as it stands here, is so entirely the same, that I was unwilling to spoil the structure of the paraphrase by crowding in the word *saying;* nor do I think such an exactness necessary in order to render a version perfectly faithful.

b *About* those parts of *Jordan.*] That περαν sometimes has this signification, will appear by comparing Josh. xii. 1, 7; and Numb. xxxii. 19. *Septuag.*

c *Galilee of the Gentiles.*] The learned Drusius has given a large account of the reason of this name, and concludes it was the upper Galilee in the land of Naphtali, whereas the lower lay in Zebulon, and Capernaum was situated on the confines of both. Grotius traces the name up to Gen. xiv. 1. but most commentators refer it to 1 Kings ix. 11—13, supposing that Solomon's giving a tract of land here to Hiram, occasioned it to be filled with foreigners, and to be peopled with a mixture of Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Arabians; according to the account that Strabo gives, *Geograph. lib.* xvi. p. 523.

d Though God had made them vile, yet he would hereafter render them glorious.] I follow Mr. Mede's just and beautiful version and interpretation of Isa. ix. 1. See Mede's *Works,* p. 101, 102; and Jeffery's *Review,* p. 125, 126; where that interpretation is both vindicated and improved: and I see no reason to doubt but that it is *originally* meant of the *illumination* and *honour* these afflicted countries should receive by the presence and preaching of Christ.

e *Light has sprung up.*] The *heathen* writers represented the arrival of some great public benefactor in a place, as *a new light* sprung up in the midst of darkness; see Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 19.

f *From that time* of his departure into Galilee.] It is but just before that Matthew speaks of *Christ's departure into Galilee,* (ver. 12.) and it is much more probable that he refers in general to *this,* than to the time of his *leaving Nazareth,* (which he has mentioned in ver. 13,) as it is evident from Luke iv. 14, 15; and John iv. 43—45, that *Christ began to preach* in the synagogues of Galilee before he went to Nazareth. And thus I might have introduced *this text* as parallel to Mark i. 15, but that I would avoid as much as possible breaking the thread of the narration; compare notes b and c, in § 31. p. 62.—The attentive reader will easily perceive that I suppose our Lord made only *one tour* about Galilee in the four or five last months preceding his *second passover,* of which Matthew gives a general account below, Matt. iv. 23—25. § 36. Nor can I see that Sir Isaac Newton had any just reason to conclude it *a second circuit* quite distinct from the former. It is true indeed that our Lord is said, Matt. iv. 13, after *leaving Nazareth* to have *come and dwelt at Capernaum:* but if that should be allowed to imply his making this the place of his more stated residence so as to call it *his home,* it is evidently intimated that he *did not stay long* in it at first; and shortly after it is spoken of only as *one of the cities* in which he was *sent to preach,* Mark i. 38. Nor can I find that, after he began to preach, he ever *continued long* in any one place.

g *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*] See note h, on Matt. iii. 2, p. 31.

h Powerfully *struck.*] See Luke ii. 47, 48, note e, p. 29.

which the Scribes and Pharisees commonly used in retailing their precarious traditions and insipid comments to the people. SECT. 33.

Mark i. 16. Now as [Jesus] walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw [two brethren] Simon [called Peter] and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers: [Matt. iv. 18.]

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. [Matt. iv. 19.]

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. [Matt. iv. 20.]

19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw [other two brethren] James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship [with Zebedee their father] mending their nets. [Matt. iv. 21.]

20 And straightway he called them: and they [immediately] left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. [Matt. iv. 21, 22.]

And it was about this time that, *as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren*, that have been already mentioned,[i] *Simon*, who was also *called Peter*, *and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for* by their occupation *they were fishers.* *And* after some circumstances, an account of which will presently be given, (sect. 34.) *Jesus said to them, Come after me, and* from henceforth attend me constantly in the course of my ministry, and *I will make you to become fishers of men*, and give you such abundant success in your ministry, that the number of souls converted by you shall be greater than that of the fish you have been used to catch. *And they*, being struck with a very wonderful miracle,[k] the particulars of which will presently be related, *immediately forsook their nets*, though the fishing trade was all they had to depend upon in life, *and followed him.* MARK I. 17 18

And going a little way from thence, he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; and they were in a ship by the sea-side, *with Zebedee their father*, employed in *mending their nets*, which had been broken by the vast draught of fishes they had taken just before. *And he immediately* applied to them, as he had done before to Peter and Andrew, and *called them* to follow him: *and they* no sooner had received his orders, but *presently* they *left their father Zebedee with the hired servants in the ship, and*, in consequence of the secret energy which attended that call, they joined with Peter and Andrew, and with the greatest cheerfulness and readiness *went after him*, being determined to continue with him as his stated attendants: and they were all afterwards honoured with extraordinary favours from their Master; especially John, who was his bosom friend, and came to be called, by way of eminence, The disciple whom Jesus loved. 19 20

IMPROVEMENT.

Such was the zeal and courage of our blessed Redeemer, that he no sooner had been persecuted and assaulted at Nazareth, but he went and preached at the synagogue at Capernaum. Thus may all the opposition that we meet with in the course of our duty animate, rather than overbear, our resolution in performing it! LUKE IV. 31

How happy was the land of Zebulon and Naphtali in the visits of such a guest! And may we not add too, how happy is our own land in being visited by the everlasting gospel, which is now much more clearly discovered to us than it was to these coasts while Christ began to open his ministry among their inhabitants. MATT. IV. 15

In us is this prophecy of Isaiah eminently fulfilled: We but a few ages ago *sat in darkness;* and behold we *see a great light.* Our country, amidst all the advantages of its soil and situation, was, in a spiritual sense, *the region and the shadow of death;* but the *Sun of Righteousness is risen upon us*, nor do we only behold his rising beams, but his meridian lustre. May we not be so ungrateful as obstinately to shut our eyes against it, lest the valley of vision, and Emanuel's land, should on the whole prove to us the land of destruction, and the valley of death itself! 16

That this may never be our case, let us diligently attend to this divine Teacher, who speaks with such authority, and whose words are so weighty and powerful. May we feel the energy and authority of them! May they call us off from every undue attachment to the business or the pleasures of life! And if he should ever see fit to try us, as he did these his servants, with a command to forsake our nearest relations, and our earthly all, for his service, let us do it with pleasure; remembering on the one hand, that *he who loves father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him;* and on the other hand, that he who abandons these engagements *for his sake, shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* (Matt. x. 37, and Mark x. 29, 30.) LUKE IV. 32 MARK I. 17

[i] *Two brethren*, that have been already mentioned.] John gives us an account (chap. i. 40—42. § 21.) that Andrew and Simon had before been *called* to the knowledge of Christ upon the banks of Jordan, and that the *name of Peter* had been then given to Simon: and it is probable that, from their first acquaintance with him, they *followed Jesus* for some time, and went with him to Cana and Capernaum, (John ii. 2, 12. § 23, 24.) and afterwards to Jerusalem, (John ii. 13, 17. § 24.) and tarried with him while he continued in Judea, (John iii. 22. § 27.) But when the Pharisees grew jealous of the number of his followers, and Herod was offended at the popularity of John, we may suppose, that Jesus at his return to Galilee might think it prudent to dismiss *his disciples* for a time, till he himself had gone about from place to place to preach the gospel, and had informed the people more particularly of the character of his person, and the nature of his doctrine: or possibly they might *leave him* at the time when the Samaritans prevailed upon him to go with them to their city, (John iv. 40. § 30,) for after this we read no more of *his disciples* being *with him* till he now found them at the *sea of Galilee*. For they no sooner were gone home but they returned again to their old employment, and continued in it till they were now taken off from any further regard to their worldly business, and were particularly *called* by Christ to a constant and stated attendance upon him; see Lightfoot's *Harmony* on Luke v. 3.

[k] Being struck with a very wonderful miracle.] The account of *this miracle* (which is recorded by Luke, chap. v. 1—11.) I shall consider in the next section, and shall there give my reasons in note a, for supposing it happened at this time, and was not, as Mr. Whiston would have it, the occasion of another call to *these disciples*. But I would here observe, that besides him, some who agree with me in this particular, yet out of regard to the supposed *regularity* of St. Luke's narration, place *this call of the four disciples* after the *ejection of the devil*, and the *cure of Peter's mother-in-law* at Capernaum, and Christ's travels through Galilee, which are recorded, Matt. viii. 14, 15; iv. 23—25; and Mark i. 21—39. (§ 35, 36.) See Cradock, Le Clerc, Wells, Clarke, and L'Enfant, in their *Harmonies*. But they seem to have forgotten that St. Mark expressly asserts, (chap. i. 21.) that after the calling of these four disciples, *they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the* ensuing *sabbath he entered into the synagogue*, and there *cast out the devil*, &c. and then (ver. 29.) *forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John*, and *Simon's mother was cured*.—Now it seems one of the most important *rules* for settling the *harmony* of the *evangelists*, that where any one of them has expressly asserted that he follows the *order of time*, we should in regard to him, *transpose* others who do not assert equal exactness in that particular; (see Jones's *Vindication of Matthew*, p. 111, 112.) This is the case here; and therefore I have here *transposed* not only Luke, but also Matthew, who uses *notes of time* much more frequently, and seems to me in the main more exact in the *series* of his story than Luke.

SECTION XXXIV.

St. Luke gives a more particular account of a miraculous draught of fishes, by which Peter and his three partners were prevailed upon statedly to follow Christ. Luke v. 1—11.

LUKE v. 1.

SECT. 34.

LUKE V.

THE calling of those four celebrated apostles, Peter and Andrew, and James and John, was briefly related above; but, considering the important part which most of them bear in the following history, we shall here give a more particular account of it.[a] *Now it came to pass, that* while Jesus continued to reside at Capernaum, *when the multitude pressed upon him* with eagerness *to hear the word of God, as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth,*[b] on the banks of which he had been walking, (Mark i. 16. sect. xxxiii.) *He saw two* little *vessels standing by* the side of *the lake, but* with no person in them; for *the fishermen,* after the labour of a very unsuccessful night, *were gone out of them, and were washing their nets* in the sea, as they stood on the shore. *And entering into one of the vessels, which belonged to Simon* Peter, with whom, as well as with his brother Andrew,[c] we have already seen that he had formed some acquaintance on the banks of Jordan,[d] while John was baptising there, (John i. 37—42. sect. xxi.) *he desired him that he would put out a little way from land,* that he might thus avoid the crowd, and at the same time be more conveniently heard: *and* at a proper distance *he sat down, and taught the multitude out of the vessel.*

And when he had made an end of speaking to the people, *he said to Simon, Put out* yet farther *into the deep* water, *and* then *let down your nets* into the lake *for a draught* of fishes. *And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have been labouring all night, and have caught nothing: nevertheless I will let down the net,* and make another trial *at thy word,* both in obedience to it, and in dependence on it. *And* accordingly *when they had done it, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; so that their net brake* in several places as they were drawing them up. *And they beckoned to their partners* James and John, *who were* at some distance from them *in the other vessel, to come and assist them; and they came, and filled both the vessels, so that they were* overloaden, and drew so much water that they seemed *ready to sink.*

Now Simon Peter seeing [*this,*] *fell down before the knees of Jesus* in amazement, *and,* covered with confusion, *said,* Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst come into my vessel to me? let me entreat thee now to *go out from me; for I am* such *a sinful man, O Lord,*[e] that I am utterly unworthy to receive and entertain thee, nor dare I to continue in the presence of so great and holy a prophet. *For* this amazing proof that Jesus had now given of his power was such, that *astonishment seized him and all that were with him, on account of the* vast *draught of fishes which they had taken: And in like manner also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners* in the trade *with Simon,* were struck with wonder and amazement at the sight of this surprising miracle. *And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear;* for, instead of doing thee any harm, I *from this time* design to employ thee in much nobler work, in which I will give thee such happy success, that *thou shalt captivate men*[f] in greater abundance than those fishes which thou now hast caught.

LUKE v. 1.

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it,* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

a We shall here give a more particular account of it.] Mr. Whiston (in his *Harmony*, p. 251 and 254.) supposes, with some others, that this is a distinct story from that of *the calling of these disciples*, which we have in the preceding *section*, and that they were *then* called only to an *occasional*, but *now* to a *stated*, attendance on Christ. But I could not acquiesce in this, for the following reasons: 1. There are many leading circumstances *the same* in the narrations of both; as for instance, that *Peter, Andrew, James*, and *John, left their ships, their nets*, and *their father*; or, as Luke expresses it, *left all* to follow Christ, on his promise that he would make them *fishers of men*. 2. There is no circumstance of the story we have now before us which may not be reconciled with the other; as the attentive reader will perceive by my *paraphrase*, especially on ver. 11; where (as in many other cases) I have chosen in a few words to suggest the solution of seeming inconsistencies, rather than to state the difficulties and answers at large. 3. If this interpretation be not allowed, then neither Matthew nor Mark have given us any account of Christ's calling these four illustrious persons and intimate friends of Matthew to a *stated* attendance on him. And, 4. There seems no reason to believe that these *four disciples* forsook Christ again within a *few days*, or even a *few hours*, after that *call* which Matthew and Mark have recorded. Yet this Mr. Whiston must suppose; for it is plain Christ left Capernaum and proceeded on his progress the very *next day after those cures* which so directly followed *that call* of these disciples which is related by those two evangelists; see note k, on Mark i. 18. p. 67; and compare Mark i. 35—39; and Luke iv. 42—44, § 36.

b *The lake of Gennesareth.*] This is the same with what is elsewhere called *the sea of Galilee*, (Mark i. 16.) and *the sea of Tiberias*, (John vi. 1.) being distinguished by these names, as it was situated on the borders of Galilee, and the city of Tiberias lay on the western shore of it. And for its other name Gennesareth, as Herod had a palace near Tiberias, there were delightful gardens on the banks of it, which possibly might be the reason of this name, which some would have to be derived from גני סרים, *the gardens of princes*; though others rather think it to be only a corruption of the word *Cinnereth*, or *Cinneroth*, which is the *name* by which *the sea* was called in the Old Testament, (Numb. xxxiv. 11; and Josh. xii. 3.) It was a large collection of waters, through which the river Jordan passed, and was continually supplying it with a fresh quantity of water. Josephus tells us it was an hundred and forty furlongs long, and forty broad; (Joseph. *de Bell. Jud. lib.* iii. *cap.* 10. [al. 18.] § 7. p. 257. Havercamp.) And it was usual with the Jews to call such places seas where there was such a large extent of water; see Lightfoot's *Harmony*, and Drusius, *in loc.*

c His brother Andrew.] The name of Andrew is omitted by St. Luke in the relation that he gives us of this story; but it is plain, from the account of it that we have just now had from Matthew and Mark in the foregoing section, that Andrew was then present with Simon, and that they both were called at the same time.

d He had formed some acquaintance on the banks of Jordan.] See note i, on Matt. iv. 18. p. 67.

e *Go out from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*] Peter could not but conclude there was some peculiar presence of God with a person who could perform such a miracle; and a consciousness of sin made him afraid to appear in the presence of such an one, lest some infirmity or offence should expose him to some more than ordinary punishment. (Compare Judg. vi. 22; xiii. 22; and 1 Kings xvii. 18.)—It is also well known that the ancients thought it improper and unsafe (where it could be avoided) for good men to be in the same ship with persons of an infamous character: nor would the heathens sometimes permit the very images of their deities to be carried in the vessel with such, or even with those concerning whom there was any strong suspicion. See Elsner. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 202, 203.

f *Thou shalt captivate men.*] This is the exact English of ζωγρων, which is so translated, 2 Tim. ii. 26. To *catch* implies something more of *artifice* than the word carries in it, or the occasion seems to require.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

And when they had brought their vessels to land, they, (that is, first Peter and Andrew, and presently after them, James and John, who were mending their broken nets with Zebedee their father,) upon Christ's repeating the call, *left* their vessels and nets, with the fish they had taken, even *all* they had in the world, *and followed him;* being now determined to attend statedly upon his ministry, that they might thus be fitted for the great work in which he intended to employ them. SECT. 34. LUKE V. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

How wonderful a choice does Jesus make of those who were to be the chief ministers in his kingdom! Surely the same divine power which prevailed on these honest fishermen to leave their little all to follow him, could with equal ease have subdued the hearts of the greatest and wisest of the nation, and have engaged them to have attended him in all his progress through the country, with the exactest observance and the humblest reverence: but he chose rather to preserve the humble form in which he at first appeared, that thus he might answer the schemes of Providence, and by *the weak things of the world, confound them that are mighty.* (1 Cor. i. 27.) Ver. 11

Yet we may observe that he does not go to call them that stood all the day idle; but, on the contrary, confers this honour upon honest industry; on them that had been toiling all the night in the proper duties of their station and profession in life. Let us pursue our business with vigilance and resolution; assuring ourselves that, however mean it be, Christ will graciously accept us in it; and let us fix our dependence on his blessing, as absolutely necessary to our success. 4, 5

These pious fishermen let down their nets at Christ's word, and it was not in vain. How vast was that power which brought such a *multitude of fishes* into it! but how much greater and more apparently divine was the energy which, by the ministration of one of these illiterate men, converted at once a much greater number of souls, and turned the despisers and murderers of Christ into his adorers! (See Acts ii. 41.) 6

Blessed Jesus! we would humbly bow ourselves before thee as the Lord of nature and of grace; and, instead of saying with Peter, *Depart from us, for we are sinful men,* we would rather say, "Lord, for that very reason, "while we own ourselves most unworthy of thy presence, we most importunately entreat it: Come unto me, "*O Lord, for I am a sinful man;* and if thou stand at a distance from me, I perish! Come, and recover my "heart from the tyranny of sin; come, and possess and fix it for thyself!" 8

That secret power which these good men felt on their souls while the words of Christ were sounding in their ears, would be to them *a token for good* as to the success of their ministry upon others. Surely we cannot wish any thing of greater importance for the edification of the church, than that the persons who are employed in its public offices may themselves experimentally know the power of divine grace, and be brought to a determination to follow Christ whithersoever he goeth, before they undertake to invite and persuade others to do it. 9, 10

SECTION XXXV.

Christ entering into Capernaum, teaches in the synagogue, and casts out a devil; and coming into Peter's house, cures his mother-in-law of a fever. Mark i. 21—31. Matt. viii. 14, 15. Luke iv. 33—39.

MARK i. 21.

AND they went into Capernaum: and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke iv. 33. And in [their] synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, let us alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. [Mark. i. 24.]

MARK i. 21.

WHEN our Lord had thus called Peter and Andrew, *and* James and John, *they* all left the side of the lake, and *entered* with him *into* the city of *Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath-day,*[a] *going,* according to his custom, *into the synagogue, he taught* [*them*] the important truths which he was in so extraordinary a manner commissioned to vindicate, or to reveal. *And they were* again *struck with amazement*[b] *at* the sublimity and excellency of *his doctrine, for he was* continually *teaching them* in such a manner *as one who had* an immediate *authority* from God to dictate to them; *and not as the scribes,* their established teachers, who dealt in precarious traditions and fanciful allegories,—the amusement of light minds, but utterly unfit to alarm the conscience, and to captivate the heart. SECT. 35. MARK I. 22

And there was in their synagogue a man that had the spirit of an unclean demon,[c] or fallen angel, possessing him, by which he was miserably distorted and agitated; *and he,* either compelled to bear an unwilling testimony to Christ, or desirous by malicious praises to bring him into suspicion as a confederate with those infernal spirits, *cried out with a loud voice, Saying,* in the name of all the rest, *Let us alone; what hast thou to do with us, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us,* by driving us out of our abodes on earth, to the regions of darkness? *I* well *know thee,* and, under all the disadvantages of thy present appearance, can sufficiently discern *who thou art;* and therefore dread thee as *the Holy One of God,* whom he hath sanctified and sent into the LUKE IV. 33, 34

a *And immediately on the sabbath-day.*] It is in the *original* τοῖς σαββάτοις, in the *plural number;* and it is frequently expressed in the same manner where it is plainly to be understood of a particular day, as Matt. xii. 1. xxviii. 1. Acts xiii. 14. and elsewhere. There is no doubt but it is spoken here of the *next sabbath,* and probably of the very *next day* after his coming back with his disciples to Capernaum; see note k, on Mark i. 18. p. 67.

b *They were* again *struck with amazement.*] It has already been observed, that they were thus amazed at his first coming to preach among them, (Luke iv. 32. ℣ 33.) and there seems also to have been something in the discourses, as well as in the miracles of this last sabbath that he spent among them at this time, which raised their wonder, and affected them in a peculiar manner; as appears from the multitude of *sick people* which were brought to him that evening. See Mark i. 32, 33 Luke iv. 40. and Matt. viii. 16, in the next section.

c *The spirit of an unclean demon.*] It is well known that a late learned and ingenious writer hath revived the notion long since maintained by Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Bekker, that these supposed demoniacs were only lunatics or epileptics: but on the most impartial perusal of what has passed between him and his learned antagonists, I am fully convinced that there is no sufficient reason for departing from the received interpretation; and I should think this story alone a convincing proof on the side of it. It is most incredible that an Evangelist should have been left to ascribe this man's disorder to the spirit of an unclean demon, if it were only lunacy or the falling-sickness; or that a physician of common sense should speak of it as a memorable circumstance, that such a distemper did not hurt a man by leaving him: see ver. 35.—I retain the word demon, as the epithet unclean seems to have little force when joined with devil, being necessarily implied in it.

SECT. 35. world for the destruction of my kingdom in it; but take notice that I do not begin the quarrel by offering thee any injury or affront.

LUKE IV. *But Jesus,* scorning praises from so impure a mouth, *rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him; and,* upon this, *the demon having thrown him* violently from his seat *into the midst* of the assembly, [*and*] *having* terribly *convulsed him,*[d] *cried with a* 35 *loud voice,* [*and*] *came out of him; but* was so restrained by the divine power and mercy, that he *did him no* farther *harm;*[e] and the man immediately recovered, and was perfectly well.

MARK I. *And they were all* exceedingly *amazed* at so miraculous a cure, *so that they inquired of each other, and said, What an* extraordinary *event is this?* [*and*] *what* a *new* and un- 27 exampled *doctrine is this? for* behold he does not only distinguish himself by his incomparable manner of teaching, but *with* majestic *authority and* efficacious *power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they* instantly *obey him, and come out* of the pos- 28 sessed, shewing thereby that they are subject to him. *And his fame* was so raised by this signal miracle, that it *went forth immediately through all the region of Galilee,* and made way for his reception in the progress he afterwards took *into every place of the neighbouring country.*

29 *And presently* after this miraculous cure, Jesus *going out of the synagogue* with his disciples, *they came, with James and John* in their company, *into the house of Simon* 30 *and Andrew,* who, being brothers, did then live together: *And Simon's wife's mother* was dangerously ill, and *kept her bed*[f] *of a violent fever; and* having seen the miracle which he had wrought but just before in the synagogue, *they presently tell him of her, and en-* 31 *treated him* that he would be pleased to interpose *for her* recovery. *And coming* into the room where she lay, *and standing near her, he took her by the hand, and raised her up* in her bed, *and,* with an air of majesty, *rebuked the fever,*[g] *and immediately the fever left her* at once: *and she* was instantly restored to such a degree of strength, that she *arose and waited upon them;* being so far from needing the assistance of others, as she had done before, that she became capable of taking her part in the business of the family.

[and rebuked the fever;] and immediately the fever left her, and she [arose, and] ministered unto them. [Luke iv. 39. Matt. viii. 14, 15.]

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, [*and* torn him,] he [cried with a loud voice, *and*] came out of him, and hurt him not. [Mark i. 25, 26.]

Mark i. 27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority [and power] commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him, [and come out.] [Luke iv. 36.]

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee, [into every place of the country round about.] [Luke iv. 37.]

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a [great] fever; and anon they tell him of her, [and besought him for her.] [Luke iv. 38.]

31 And he came, [and stood over her,] and took her by the hand, and lifted her up,

IMPROVEMENT.

MARK I. 27 JUSTLY may we join our astonishment with that of the inhabitants of Capernaum, and say, *What manner of teaching is this?* and with what regard should it be received, when the devils themselves, and the most desperate diseases, are thus apparently subject to him that uses it?

LUKE IV. 33 We see the malice of Satan in possessing and tormenting the bodies of men. God then permitted it, to render Christ's triumph over him so much the more illustrious, and the appearance of that great Deliverer so much the more welcome.[h] Such diabolical operations as these are now restrained; and it is matter of great thankfulness that they are. But would to God that malignant enemy did not, in a yet more fatal manner, possess the souls of men, and *work in the children of disobedience!* Yet there can the power of Jesus prevail to *bind the strong man, and spoil his goods.*

34, 35 Wisely did Christ silence the suspicious praises of an unclean spirit; and vain is all the hope which men build merely on those orthodox professions of the most important truths, in which Satan himself could vie with them.

MARK I. 29, 30, 31 LUKE IV. 39 Christ returning from the synagogue, finds the mother-in-law of Peter detained from the solemn assemblies, a prisoner at home under an afflictive Providence, which that circumstance of confinement probably rendered yet more afflictive to her. But the mercy which the evening brought with it was a rich equivalent for all the sorrows of the day. Jesus, their welcome guest, appears as the great Physician both of soul and body; a touch of his hand assuages the tumult in her veins, and at his voice the distemper leaves her. Surely, as the great Lord in the kingdom of Providence, he performs those cures which are now wrought by natural means, and is to be owned in them. Must not each of us thankfully acknowledge how often he hath rebuked fevers and other distempers by the skill of

d *Having* terribly *convulsed him.*] This seems to be the proper meaning of the word σπαραξαν that is used by Mark here, which signifies to shake or move with violence: and to this purpose Grotius has observed, that σπαραγμος is sometimes used to signify a convulsion. And it is much more natural to understand it thus, than to suppose the devil to have *torn him,* (according to the common translation,) which leads the reader to imagine that he grievously *wounded him,* when Luke expressly says that he *hurt him not.*

e *Did him no* farther *harm.*] This is properly the sense of μηδεν βλαψαν αυτον; for while the convulsion continued, it must have given some pain, and might have been attended with lasting disorder, had not the restraining and healing power of Christ prevented.

f *Kept her bed.*] This seems the proper meaning of the word κατεκειτο.

g *Rebuked the fever.*] There could be no inconvenience in the Evangelist's using this phrase, more than in saying he rebuked the winds and the sea, (see Matt. viii. 26.) for it is hardly to be thought the Jews would imagine the fever a real person; but it was quite otherwise as to their notion of demons.

h The appearance of that great Deliverer so much the more welcome.] It would be very foolish to imagine that God suffered these unhappy persons to be *possessed,* merely that Christ might have the honour of *curing* them: but it is to be considered that the view under which Christ is most frequently represented, is as the great *antagonist* to the *prince of darkness,* and the *gospel* has its foundation in the *victory* which Satan has gained over mankind; compare Gen. iii. 15; Matt. xii. 28, 29; 1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14; and Rom. xvi. 20; (as also Matt. vi. 13; John xvii. 15; Eph. vi. 16; and 1 John ii. 13, 14; iii. 12; v. 18, 19; in all which places ο πονηρος seems to signify the *wicked one,* that is, *the devil,* whose powerful influence over men is intimated or expressed in each of them:) and it appears from Wisd. ii. 24, that the Jews before Christ's time had something of this notion, and considered the wicked in general as taking part with the *devil:* the words are, *Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they that do hold of his side do find it.* The inspired *texts* above shew that the expression is just; and it was certainly on this account a most wise and gracious dispensation to permit the *devil* about this time to give some unusual proofs of his existence, power, and malice, in thus attacking *men's bodies;* which would naturally convince them what a dangerous enemy he was to their *souls,* and what need they had of the patronage of Christ; as the sensible *victory of Christ* in these *dispossessions* would be a proof and specimen of that illustrious and complete triumph over him and his confederate powers in which *our Lord's mediatorial kingdom* is to end. No kind of *miracles* therefore could be more fit to attest his *mission,* and to promote his *interest* among men; and hence it is that hardly any are more frequently and circumstantially described.—This seems a sufficient answer to the difficulty proposed by Mr. Mede, (see his *Works,* p. 28,) and a clear proof that we shall do no service to *Christianity* by endeavouring to disprove the reality of these *possessions,* or by dropping the mention of the *infernal powers* in our preaching, how fashionable soever such omissions may grow.

physicians, and the efficacy of medicines; so that they have departed from us perhaps when we esteemed them desperate, and had received the sentence of death in ourselves. SECT. 35.

Let us learn to imitate the pious gratitude of this good woman; who, when recovered, immediately arose and ministered unto Christ. Thus let it be our care that those lives which are spared by his goodness, and that strength which is renewed by his power, may be faithfully and affectionately devoted to his service. LUKE IV.

SECTION XXXVI.

Christ having performed several cures on the evening of the Sabbath-day, retires early the next morning to his devotions; and declining a longer abode at Capernaum, takes a circuit about Galilee, preaching and working miracles. Mark i. 32—39. Luke iv. 40, *to the end.* Matt. viii. 16, 17. *and* iv. 23, *to the end.*

MARK i. 32.

MARK i. 32.
AND at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and [many] that were possessed with devils. [Matt. viii. 16.—Luke iv. 40.]

Luke iv. 40. All they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he [cast out the spirits with his word, and] laid his hands on every one of them, and healed [all that were sick.] [Matt. viii. 16.—Mark i. 34.]

Matt. viii. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

Mark i. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

Luke iv. 41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ. [Mark i. 34.]

Mark i. 35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, [when it was day] he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. [Luke iv. 42.]

36. And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had

THE remainder of the day Jesus spent in Peter's house; *and in the evening when the sun was set,* and consequently the sabbath was ended,[a] *they brought unto him,* on their beds and couches, which they scrupled before to carry,[b] *all that were ill, and many that were possessed with devils:* Yea, *all that had any* persons in their houses *sick of various distempers, brought them unto him* for relief: *and he* sent none of them away with a denial, but with a sovereign authority *cast out the* [*evil*] *spirits with a word: and* treating those that were diseased in the most gracious and compassionate manner, he *laid his hands on every one of them, and healed all that were sick,* without the use of any means, how inveterate and desperate soever their distemper was: *That* thus *it might* appear to *be accomplished* in some measure *which was spoken* of him in a more noble and important sense *by the prophet Isaiah,*[c] *saying,* (chap. liii. 4.) "*He himself* graciously *took our infirmities* up- "on him, *and* with incredible labour, self-denial, and compassion, *bore* [*away*] the burden "of *our diseases,*[d] and happily delivered us from those miseries which our corruption and "depravity had introduced." *And* this occasioned such a concourse of people, that in a manner *the whole city* of Capernaum *was gathered together at the door* of the house in which Jesus was; some coming as humble petitioners for themselves or their friends, and others as curious spectators of the surprising miracles he wrought. SECT. 36. MARK I. LUKE IV. MATT. VIII. MARK I.

And there were *devils also* that *came out of many, crying out* with great violence, (as that before had done which had been cast out by him in the synagogue,) *and saying,* as that other did, We know thee who *thou art, the* promised *Messiah,* and *the Son of God. But he severely chid them, and did not suffer them to speak* these things so frequently and largely as they would otherwise have done; *for they* well *knew that he was the Messiah:* but as wise reasons made him, in his own discourses, often to decline the opportunities he had of expressly avowing that title and character, so they engaged him in a much stronger manner to be more particularly cautious with respect to evil spirits, of receiving it from them.[e] LUKE IV.

Thus was it that the day was spent in preaching, and the evening in working miracles: *and* after all this labour and fatigue, Jesus allowed himself but a very short repose; for *in the morning he rose before it was light,*[f] *and as the day was coming on, he went out* of the house where he had lodged, to avoid the concourse of the people, or any interruption from the family, *and* privately *departed to a desert place* in the neighbourhood; *and there prayed* to his heavenly Father in secret, pouring out his soul in the most copious and affectionate manner. MARK I.

And when the day was something advanced, and crowds of people came to inquire after him, *Simon* Peter, *and they that were with him,* (who have been already mentioned as his partners and companions,) guessing where Jesus was, went out and *followed after him. And when they had found him* at his private devotions, *they said unto him,* Master, the

a *When* the sabbath was ended.] It is well known that the Jews reckoned their *day* from evening to evening, and that the *sabbath* begun and ended at *sun-set.* See Lev. xxiii. 32.

b Which they scrupled before to carry.] We have a memorable instance of this *scruple* in John v. 10—16; § 46.

c In a more noble and important sense *by the prophet Isaiah.*] It seems evident that Isaiah, in the place here referred to, speaks of the *sufferings* which Christ endured for us: for on account of these only could he be *esteemed* (as it is added in the end of the verse) *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* So that the Evangelist has only introduced it as an allusion to those words, as being capable of the sense here given in themselves; though we are certainly to understand them in a more exalted sense when we consider them in their connection. Or if they should be understood by any as if it had been said, "Though he miraculously cured our diseases, yet "he was thus ungratefully censured;" it must be then allowed on this less natural interpretation, that Peter uses them allusively when he applies them to the *crucifixion of Christ,* as he evidently does, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Such instances are frequent in the sacred writers; and they are elegances and beauties rather than imperfections. Had it been argued from this text that the Messiah must have *healed the sick,* there had been then indeed some room for an objection.

d *Bore away* the burden of *our diseases.*] Grotius has well observed the emphasis of the word εβαστασεν, which signifies, to *carry a heavy load,* (Rom. xv. i; Gal. vi. 2.) and so does well express the indefatigable *labours of Christ,* spending the evening in *healing the sick,* probably with many intermingled discourses, after he had employed the day in *preaching.* I have endeavoured to suggest this idea in the paraphrase.

e Cautious of receiving it from them.] It is probable that if it was not by mere constraint that these evil spirits made this confession, it was (as was hinted before on Luke iv. 33, p. 69.) with an artful design to bring our Lord into suspicion as acting in confederacy with them: and the perverse Pharisees might perhaps lay hold of this occasion of fixing on Christ that impious and senseless calumny, that *he did not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils,* Matt. xii. 24.

f *In the morning—before it was light:* πρωι εννυχον λιαν.] This does sufficiently express the sense of the original: for εννυχον λιαν does properly signify, *when the night was very far advanced,* or *when it was yet deep night;* and either of these interpretations, in this connection, implies that the *dawning of the day* was near at hand. And thus it may be easily reconciled with Luke; for γενομενης ημερας, which the common translation renders, *when it was day,* might as well have been rendered, *as the day was coming on:* for γενομενης may be understood (as Grotius has observed) not only as expressive of the time that is *already come,* but as implying what is *near at hand,* or what is forming now, and ready to approach: (compare John xiii. 2. and the note there, § 169.)—Some have indeed maintained that different facts are referred to in the texts of Mark and Luke before us; the former referring to Christ's *rising,* the latter to *his going out;* but it seems that Mark connects *his going out* so immediately with *his rising,* that no stress can be laid on such a distinction.

SECT. 36. providence of God calls thee now to more public service; for *all the people* of the city *are* assembled yonder, and are *seeking after thee.*[g]

LUKE IV. 42 *And* what they said was immediately confirmed; for *the multitudes sought after him* with so much diligence, that they traced the steps of Peter and his companions, *and* while they were speaking, *came* even *to* the place in which they had found *him; and* they *would* fain *have detained him* a while, and pleaded in a very importunate manner *that he should not depart from them.* But they could not prevail: *and he said to them* that

MARK I. 38 were his constant attendants, *Let us go* directly *into the neighbouring towns, that I may preach there also,* without returning back to Capernaum at present; *for,* though we have many friends and well-wishers there, *I must* by all means *preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, as for that purpose I am sent* into the world by my Father, with the most extensive designs of usefulness, [*and*] *therefore I came forth* from his more immediate presence.

MATT. IV. 23 *And* thus *Jesus took a circuit* with his disciples *through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,* wherever he had an opportunity, *and preaching the good news of the kingdom* which God was about to erect; *and* he confirmed and illustrated what he said,[h] by *casting out devils, and healing every disease and every malady of the people* among whom he came.

24 *And his fame went through all* the neighbouring country of *Syria; and they brought to him* from thence, as well as from nearer places, *all,* that is, great numbers of *sick people,*[i] *that were seized with a variety of distempers and* most *tormenting* and incurable *pains, even demoniacs, and lunatics, and paralytics;*[k] *and he healed them,*

25 not excepting those whose cases were the most deplorable and helpless. *And* these miraculous cures, together with his excellent manner of preaching, rendered him so popular, that *great multitudes* of people *followed him from* all the towns of *Galilee, and* from the region of *Decapolis,*[l] *and* even from *Jerusalem, and* the rest of *Judea,*[m] *and* all [*the country*] *about Jordan,*[n] both on its eastern and western banks.

found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

Luke iv. 42. And the people sought him, and came unto him and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

Mark i. 38. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for [I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent,] therefore came I forth. [Luke iv. 43.]

Matt. iv. 23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, [and cast out devils,] teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. [Mark i. 39; Luke iv. 44.]

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments; and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

IMPROVEMENT.

MARK I. 32, 33 How delightfully were the Sabbaths of Christ spent in the midst of all his fatigues! How pleasantly did the sun go down upon him, when he had been imitating that heavenly luminary in his steady and constant course; scattering a brighter light and more beneficial influences upon all about him!

35 And when the Sabbath had been spent in these labours of piety and love, how happily were the fruits of it carried into the ensuing week! The first morning of it, that it might be most pleasantly and most profitably begun, Jesus rose before it was light, that he might enjoy God and himself in religious retirement. It surely becomes us sometimes willingly to deny ourselves the gratifications of sleep, that we may have the better opportunity for devotion. And it should be the peculiar care of those who are employed in God's public service, to cultivate communion with him in private, lest, while they keep the vineyard of others, their own be neglected and impoverished. (Cant. i. 6.)

LUKE IV. 42 Our Lord's retirement is interrupted by the people who came to inquire after him, and desired to have detained him longer among them: and who, that has ever known the pleasure of conversing with him, would not desire that it might be longer continued, and frequently renewed? But in this instance, their request must be denied; the great purposes of his ministry required his presence elsewhere, and he breaks through all that importunity which would have broken in upon his schemes of usefulness: a resolution which we must learn in some cases to imitate,

43 if we would prosecute the business of life with vigour and success. Let us often reflect wherefore we were sent,

MATT. IV. 23, 25 and judge by that where God would have us to be; that by the intimations of his pleasure every motion may be regulated, and every abode determined.

Wherever Christ removes, he still goes about doing good, publishing the gospel, and confirming it by the most amazing works of power and of mercy. How well were these miracles suited to awaken men's attention, and to convince their consciences of his divine mission! Well might his fame go over the whole country: may it extend

g *All the people are seeking after thee.*] It is very likely that Peter and they that were with him, warm as they were with the expectations of a temporal kingdom, might think this a very favourable opportunity of increasing Christ's popularity, on which those hopes were built.

h Confirmed and illustrated what he said.] It is justly and beautifully observed by the author of a late *Discourse on the Miracles of Christ,* that they were not only a proof, but a specimen of the power he claimed as the Messiah. Thus his *giving sight to the blind* illustrated his power of enlightening the prejudiced minds of men; his *healing their bodies* shewed how able he was to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sin, as it was in part an actual removal of its punishment; his *casting out devils* was an emblem of his final victory over Satan; and his *raising* particular persons *from the dead* was a convincing display of his power to accomplish a general resurrection.

i *All,* that is, great numbers of *sick people.*] It would be endless to enumerate the texts where common sense requires us to take the word *all* in this general manner, see Mark i. 37; Luke iii. 21; John iv. 29; xiv. 26; 1 Cor. ix. 22; and Phil. ii. 21.

k *Even demoniacs, and lunatics, and paralytics.*] Possession, madness, and the palsy, are justly reckoned as cases of great misery and little hope; the Evangelist therefore properly instanced in these. It is an evident proof that these were thought distinct cases; for the different readings are so ill supported as not to deserve a particular mention.

l From *Decapolis.*] This is well known to have been a tract of land on the east side of the sea of Galilee, in which ten cities were situated near each other, and formed into a distinct district. It formerly belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh.

m From *Jerusalem and Judea.*] Hence Sir Isaac Newton concludes that Christ had been at Jerusalem at his second passover; and that these people had attended him from thence: (see Newton *on Prophecy,* p. 151.) The circuit described above might indeed have been the employment of four months, and probably took up most of that time; but Matthew might have used this expression, if persons who came from Jerusalem followed Christ here, though he himself had never been there at all. On the whole, however ingenious and probable the hypothesis of this learned author is, it is liable to so many objections, that, on the maturest deliberation, I durst not venture to build upon it the structure of an *harmony,* entirely different from that of all other commentators except Osiander, which (if I mistake not) in most places agrees with his maxims. I rather chuse to add an appendix, representing the order in which the sections are to be read according to him; which will, to the more curious part of my readers, be sufficient, and will excuse me from the necessity of swelling these notes in such a manner as I must otherwise have done.

n *About Jordan.*] See note b, on Matt. iv. 15. p. 66.

itself now to the remotest regions, that *all the ends of the earth* may *look unto him and be saved,* (Isa. xlv. 22.) while he displays a healing power over their spirits proportionable to that which he here exerted on their bodies!

SECTION XXXVII.

Christ begins his sermon on the mount with the beatitudes and general exhortations to exemplary piety. Matt. v. 1—16.

MATT. v. 1.

MATT. v. 1.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

AND [*Jesus,*] in his circuit through Galilee, *seeing the* vast *multitudes* which flocked around him from all parts, thought it proper to inform them more largely than he had hitherto done concerning the nature of his doctrine and the design of his appearance, that he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom[a] which so generally prevailed, and which would prove so pernicious to those who were governed by them. He therefore *went up to a mountain,*[b] that he might be the better heard by the crowds which surrounded him; *and when,* according to the custom of the Jewish rabbies in their sermons, *he was set down* to teach them, they that were already *his disciples,* and others that were disposed to receive information, *came near to him. And opening his* 2
mouth,[c] with an air of great solemnity, to intimate the importance of what he was going to deliver, *he taught them* the most suitable and excellent lessons. And as happiness was the great end to which the wisest philosophers undertook to conduct their hearers, our Lord began his discourse with several weighty, though uncommon remarks, as to the surest method of obtaining it: *saying,*

SECT. 37.

MATT. V.

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You naturally congratulate the rich and the great; and expect, under the reign of the 3
Messiah, to be advanced to wealth, and dignity, and power: but *happy*[d] *are the poor in spirit,*[e] those humble souls that, deeply conscious of their ignorance and guilt, can quietly resign to divine teachings and divine disposals, and accommodate themselves to the lowest circumstances which Providence shall appoint them; *for* howsoever they may be despised and trampled on by men, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* they will be most likely to embrace the gospel, and they alone will be entitled to its most important blessings for time and eternity.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

You admire the gay and jovial part of mankind, and please yourselves with the hopes 4
of joy and festivity: but I say unto you, *Happy are* the men of a more serious temper, and especially *they that* now *mourn* under a penitent sense of their sins;[f] *for they shall* ere long *be comforted* with the discoveries of God's forgiving love, and be cheered with the reviving rays of his everlasting favour.

5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

You imagine that military courage and martial exploits are to introduce the kingdom 5
now to be erected, and to raise men to distinguished stations in it: but I rather say, *Happy are the* men who are *meek* and gentle under injuries and provocations, and are cautious in offering, but patient in bearing them; *for they* shall weather many a storm which would bear down the rugged and obstinate, and at length (as the Psalmist expresses it, Psal. xxxvii. 11.) "*shall inherit the earth,* and delight themselves in the abundance "of peace," which can only have its seat in such gentle bosoms.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Happy are they that, instead of desiring insatiably the possessions of others, and 6
endeavouring to obtain them by violence or deceit, eagerly *hunger and thirst after righteousness,*[g] and make it the delightful business of life to improve in all the branches

a That he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom.] In order to enter into the beauty of this discourse, it is necessary to consider it as addressed not merely to the apostles, (who were not yet chosen under that character,) but to his disciples in general, and to vast numbers of people who, affected with the sight or fame of his miracles, were now assembled around him; probably expecting that he would immediately declare himself the Messiah, and full of those false notions of his kingdom which so generally prevailed. Mr. Blair, in his excellent *Discourses,* on this chapter, has shewn (I think beyond all others) how directly the beginning of this sermon is levelled against these *prejudices.* He has also observed (as it is very necessary to do) what a beautiful *correspondence* there is between the *characters* described in these *beatitudes,* and the *blessings* connected with them.

b *Went up to a mountain.*] It does not appear in what part of Galilee this mountain was situated; and (if the cure of the leper, which Christ performed at his descending from it, was wrought in the confines of some other city, and not of Capernaum,) there is no reason to suppose, as most expositors do, that it was in the neighbourhood of Capernaum; (see Matt. viii. 1, 2; and note b, on Luke v. 12; § 44.) Mr. Maundrel says, that what is now called The Mount of the Beatitudes, is a little to the north of Mount Tabor, (*Trav.* p. 115,) and if this be its true situation, it must be at some considerable distance from Capernaum.—I shall elsewhere give some hints of the reasons which have led me to conclude that this discourse was different from, and previous to that which Luke has given us in the sixth chapter of his gospel, (ver. 20, *et seq.*) though many of the sentiments and expressions are the same; (see note a, on Luke vi. 20. § 53.)

c *Opening his mouth.*] I do not take the expression of *opening his mouth,* to be always a *pleonasm;* the manner in which it is used elsewhere may sufficiently prove the contrary; compare Judg. xi. 35, 36; Job iii. 1; xxxiii. 2; and Acts viii. 35; x. 34. And thus the ancient Greek and Roman writers used it, as Elsner proves, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 20, 21.

d *Happy.*] I have here used the word *happy* rather than *blessed,* as more exactly answering to μακαριοι, as the other does to ευλογημενοι; and I the rather chose to render it thus, because our Lord seems to intimate by it, not only that the dispositions here recommended would be the way to future blessedness, but that they would immediately be attended with the truest happiness and the most noble pleasures.

e *The poor in spirit.*] Though I cannot think with Mr. Joseph Mede, (p. 25,) that this chiefly refers to a disposition to *part with their possessions* for charitable purposes; or confine it, with Grotius and Baxter, to a disposition to bear poverty with resolution, submission, and cheerfulness: yet I doubt not but the latter of these is comprehended in that humility which is here expressed by *poverty of spirit;* which is a temper that indeed is absolutely necessary in order to our being cordially reconciled to the gospel method of salvation.

f *They that mourn* under a penitent sense of their sins.] It seems proper to restrain it within these limits, since there is *a sorrow of the world* which ends in *death,* 2 Cor. viii. 10; and though *mourning* for the calamities of life be often allowable and commendable, yet it is so natural an affection, and sometimes in its degree so sinful, that one can hardly suppose our Lord here pronounced *a blessing* upon it in such general terms.

g *That hunger and thirst after righteousness.*] The very pious and judicious writer I mentioned above, in note a, has taken a great deal of pains to prove that these words are chiefly designed to recommend *a love of justice* towards our fellow-creatures; and is for rendering χορτασθησονται, *they shall be fed to the full,* while those who are violent and rapacious as young lions, may *lack and suffer hunger;* Psal. xxxiv. 10. But the phrase *of hungering and thirsting after righteousness,* must surely be expressive of much

SECT. 37. of virtue and goodness; *for they shall* never be disappointed in these pious pursuits, but *be* abundantly *satisfied* with the righteousness they seek, (compare Prov. xxi. 21.) and be competently supplied with every necessary inferior good. (See Matt. vi. 33.)

MATT. V. Far from framing you up to delight in scenes of desolation and slaughter, I rather declare, *Happy are the merciful* and compassionate, that feel the sorrows of others as their
7 own, and with tender sympathy hasten to relieve him; *for they shall obtain* that *mercy* from God which the best and happiest of mankind need, and on which they continually and entirely depend.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Indulge not a thought of those licentious gratifications which are often mingled with victory, and are accounted as the pleasures of the great: *happy are the* men that not only abstain from these gross enormities, but are concerned that they may be *pure in heart* too,[h] avoiding every irregular desire and mortifying every unruly passion: this resolute self-denial shall be the source of nobler and more lasting pleasure; *for they shall see God*:[i] and, thus purified and refined, shall enjoy him in his ordinances now, and dwell with him for ever in heaven.

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 I come not, as you may fondly suppose, to lead you forward to the field of battle, or to teach you to propagate religion by the sword; but, on the contrary, I declare unto you, *Happy are the peace-makers*, who not only avoid contention, but labour to extinguish it wherever it prevails; *for*, though mistaken men may ascribe such a gentle disposition to cowardice and meanness of spirit, *they shall* have the honour to *be called the children of* the *God* of peace,[k] and be owned by him in that dear relation, as they resemble him in the benevolence of their characters.

9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Instead of these pomps and pleasures, these victories and triumphs, (in expectation of which you may now be crowding around me,) my followers must prepare themselves for the severity of suffering: but *happy are they that are persecuted for the sake of righteousness*, and courageously endure the greatest extremities, for the testimony of their consciences: their richest treasure is beyond the reach of their most inveterate enemies; *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, and they shall reign with God in everlasting glory.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 And on these principles, *happy are ye*, my sincere disciples and faithful friends, *when men shall* injuriously *reproach you and persecute you, and shall falsely say every thing that is evil* and scandalous *of you for my sake*, and because of your professed relation to
12 me. Be not discouraged under all this load of infamy and oppression; but rather *rejoice, and triumphantly exult*,[l] *because your reward in heaven* [*will be*] proportionably *great* and distinguished: *for* this has in all ages been the portion and the proof of the most eminent saints; and you particularly know from the sacred records, that it was *thus they persecuted the prophets* of their own nation,[m] *who were* long *before you* the ambassadors from God to them; and as you now share in the tribulation of those holy men, you shall ere long share in their glory.

11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Let it be, in the mean time, your care to imitate their piety and zeal, as remembering that *you*, my disciples, *are* to be as it were *the salt of the earth*, the means of preventing or curing the growth of that corruption which prevails in it, and of seasoning men's minds with wisdom and grace: *but* it would be most unhappy for yourselves, as well as for them, if you should be destitute of those blessed principles; for *if the salt be grown insipid*,[n] *with what can it* possibly *be seasoned? It is no farther of any avail*, or significancy at all; *but*, as an useless thing, is left *to be thrown out of doors, and to be trampled on by men*, as the common dirt of the streets: thus worthless and contemptible will you, my disciples, be, even in the most eminent stations, if you lose your character for real and vital religion.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men.

14 And therefore, that this may not be the case with you, consider the distinguished circumstances in which you are placed: *you are*, like the sun, to be *the light of the world*; and how conspicuous and bright should you appear under that character! Even *a city that*, like yonder town, *is situated on a mountain*,[o] *cannot be hid*, but will attract men's eyes

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

more, than merely a steady care to treat all mankind equitably, and to avoid what would be injurious and oppressive; and we may rather understand it as a just and beautiful description of a holy ardour of soul, in pursuit of the most eminent attainments in *universal goodness*, which will end in complete *satisfaction*, as the necessary consequence of perfect holiness in a future state.—These different views of the *future blessedness* sufficiently vindicate our Lord from the charge of tautology, though we should suppose (as, after all that Mr. Blair has said to the contrary, I think we must,) that our Lord leads the minds of his disciples upwards, in almost each of these *beatitudes*.

h *Happy are the pure in heart.*] Mr. Blair supposes this may refer to the expectation they had of possessing themselves of *beautiful captives*, in those wars by which they fancied that the *Messiah's kingdom* would be raised and established. The large seraglios of eastern princes and great men, which, by a very mistaken taste, were regarded as matters of state and grandeur, gave too much countenance to such a wild and extravagant notion: but as the hint is at most but obliquely intimated, I thought it convenient to touch upon it only in a very transient and general manner.

i *For they shall see God.*] Elsner has illustrated this text by shewing, that the Pagans thought a good man might *see their deities* in some circumstances, when to the wicked they were invisible, (Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 22, 23.) But this, in their theology, might be intended to subserve some fraudulent views, from which the nature of Christianity is most abhorrent. The remark, however, may in some degree shew how natural the thought is, in the words before us.

k *The children of* the *God* of peace.] So God is often called, Rom. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 9; and Heb. xiii. 20. (Compare Ecclus. iv. 10.) *To be called God's children*, signifies to be really so, and to have a right to have that name conferred upon us by a divine adoption; see 1 John iii. 1; and John i. 12.

l *Triumphantly exult.*] Of the emphatical signification of the word αγαλλιασθε, see note f, on Luke i. 14. p. 6.

m *Thus they persecuted the prophets* of their own nation.] This is abundantly evident from the known histories of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, &c. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16; Matt. xxiii. 29—35; Acts vii. 51, 52; and Heb. xi. 36, 37.

n *If the salt be grown insipid.*] Mr. Le Clerc sinks the meaning of this noble passage very low, when he supposes our Lord only intends to compare *his disciples* to *salt-ashes* used in manuring the ground, (see Luke xiv. 34, 35.) That passage in which Livy calls Greece *Sal Gentium*, the salt of all the nations, on account of all those intellectual improvements they learned from thence, might easily have suggested a much nobler sense, which the paraphrase expresses. The word μωρανθη has a peculiar beauty and strength here, and might literally be rendered, *if it be infatuated*, or *grown foolish*, alluding to the common figure, in which sense and spirit are expressed by *salt*: but I thought the metaphor too strong to be literally retained in the version, and therefore contented myself with a distant imitation, as we call a flat lifeless discourse *insipid*. Compare Job vi. 6, and Col. iv. 6.

o *A city that*, like yonder town, *is situated on a mountain.*] Mr. Maundrel tells us that there is a city called Saphet, supposed to be

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

from a considerable distance. *Neither do men light* so much as *a* common *lamp, and* SECT. *put it under a bushel*, and conceal it there; *but* they rather set it *on a stand, and it* 37.
giveth light to all that are in the house. How much less will it become you, whom I
have compared to the sun,[p] to hide, or to suppress your rays? On the contrary, *let* it be MATT.
your care, that *your light* may *so shine before men, that they may* continually *see your* V.
good works in every circumstance and relation of life, *and* may thereby be engaged to 16
glorify your Father who is in heaven; not only praising him for sending such a religion
into the world, but also themselves embracing your faith and imitating your holy example.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT abundant reason have we to bless God, that this large and edifying discourse of our blessed Redeemer is Ver. 1
thus particularly recorded by the sacred historian. Let every one that hath ears to hear, attend to it; for surely 2
never man spake as our Lord here doth. Let us fix our souls in a posture of humble attention, that we may receive the law from his mouth.

He opened it with blessings, repeated and most important blessings. But on whom are they pronounced? and 3—12
whom are we taught to think the happiest of mankind? The meek and the humble, the penitent and the merciful, the peaceful and the pure, those that *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, those that labour but faint not under persecution! Blessed Jesus! how different are thy maxims from those of the children of this world! They call the proud happy, and admire the gay, the rich, the powerful, and the victorious. But let a vain world take its gaudy trifles, and dress up the foolish creatures that pursue them. May our souls share in that happiness which the Son of God came to recommend and to procure! May we obtain mercy of the Lord; may we be owned as his children; may we see his face; and may we inherit his kingdom! With these enjoyments, and these hopes, we will cheerfully welcome the lowest or the most painful circumstances.

Let us awaken and stir up our souls to the cultivation of those amiable virtues which are here recommended to our pursuit; this humility and meekness, the penitent sense of sin, this ardent desire after righteousness, this compassion and purity, this peacefulness and fortitude of soul, and, in a word, this universal goodness which becomes us as we sustain the character of *the salt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*.

Is there not reason to lament it, that we answer the character no more? Is there not reason to cry out, with a 13, 14
good man in former times,* "Blessed Jesus! either these are not thy words, or we are not Christians!" Oh, season our hearts more effectually with thy grace! Pour forth that divine oil on our lamps! Then shall the flame brighten; then shall the ancient honours of thy religion be revived; and multitudes be awakened and animated 16
by the lustre of it, *to glorify our Father in heaven*! Amen.

* Linacer.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Our Lord declares his purpose of establishing and vindicating the moral law, and enters on his divine exposition of it. Matt. v. 17—26.

MATT. v. 17.

17 Think not, that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

MATT. v. 17.

THAT the great design of our Lord's appearance might be more fully understood by the SECT. multitudes that were now assembled around him, he proceeded in his discourse, and said, 38.
Suppose not that I am come to dissolve that goodly fabric of holy precepts contained in
the sacred writings of *the law or the prophets;* for I solemnly assure you, That *I am not* MATT.
come to dissolve, but rather *to* vindicate and illustrate, to *complete* and adorn [*them,*[a]] both V.
by my example and discourses, as well as to answer the highest ends of the ceremonial in- 17
stitutions. *For verily I say unto you*, That as their original is divine, their honours shall 18
be perpetual; so that, *till heaven and earth pass away*, and the whole visible frame of
nature be disjointed, *not one jot or one tittle shall pass* or perish *from the law,*[b] *till all*
things which it requires or foretels *shall be effected.*[c] *Whoever therefore shall* himself 19
transgress or *violate one of the least of these commandments* which are contained therein;
and especially, whoever *shall teach* other *men so* to do, whether by his licentious principles or irregular example, *he shall be accounted* [*one of*] *the least* and unworthiest members *in the kingdom of heaven*, or in the church of the Messiah; and shall soon be entirely
cut off from it, as unfit for so holy a society; *but whosoever shall do* them, *and teach*

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach *them*, the same shall be

the ancient Bethulia, which, standing on a high hill, might easily be seen from the *mountain* on which Christ made this discourse; and probably supposes he might point out to that here, as afterwards he did to the *birds* and the *lilies:* Matt. vi. 26—28. (Maundrel's *Travels*, p. 115.) Many writers have justly observed, that our Lord, like Socrates, takes his similes from the most obvious things, familiarly known to his hearers, and often before their eyes, even while he was speaking; a thought most largely illustrated by Sir Isaac Newton *On the Prophecies*, p. 148, 149.

p How much less will it become you, whom I have compared to the sun, &c.] That this is the sense and spirit of this beautiful passage, Mr. Pierce has well shewn in his fourth *Dissertation*.

a To vindicate and illustrate, to *complete* and adorn *them.*] I was willing to take the word πληρωσαι in its most extensive sense, as comprehending what Christ has done to answer the end of the *ceremonial law*, as well as to vindicate and enforce the *moral:* yet by the connection, it seems that the *latter* was chiefly intended; and this phrase, *the law and the prophets*, is used in this sense, Matt. xxii. 40. It is strange, that any should have questioned whether the precepts of Moses required such *spirituality* of obedience as Christ here demands. That great command, of *loving the Lord God with all the heart*, &c. and, *our neighbour as ourself*, (Matt. xxii. 37.) must surely comprehend all this. I shall only add, that Vitringa's interpretation of πληρω, who supposes it here to answer to the Chaldee קים, which signifies to paraphrase, illustrate, open, or explain, seems to me worthy of consideration. (Compare Rom. xv. 19; πεπληρωκεναι το ευαγγελιον, *I have fully explained the gospel;* and Col. iv. 12; πεπληρωμενοι εν θεληματι του Θεου, *completely instructed in the will of God.*) See Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* i. *Dissert.* iii. *cap.* 5. § 3.

b *One jot or one tittle.*] The word יוד which we render *jot*, undoubtedly answers to the Hebrew letter *jod*, whence the English word here used seems to be derived, and which being the least letter of their alphabet, might properly be used proverbially on this occasion.—Κερεια, which we render *tittle*, properly signifies one of those little ornamental curvatures, or flourishes, which, when Hebrew is elegantly written, are generally used at the beginning and end of a letter, and sometimes at the corners too.—I think it might well have been rendered, *not the least letter or stroke*, &c. and so much the rather, as *jot* and *tittle* in English signify much the same.

c *Till all things* which it requires or foretels shall *be effected:* εως αν παντα γενηται. The translation here given is most literal and comprehensive. The law has its effect, when its sanctions are executed, as well as when its precepts are obeyed.

SECT. 38. MATT. V.

[*them*] with that advantage which nothing but the authority of a good example can give, *he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*, and be treated with distinguished honour and favour, in proportion to his zeal in so good a cause. Let this therefore be the care of all that hear me this day: *for I say unto you*, with all the solemnity that so important an affair requires, *That unless your righteousness abound* far *more than* [*that*] 20 which is apparent in the lives, or even required in the precepts *of the scribes and Pharisees*,[d] as highly as they are generally esteemed, *ye shall* be so far from making any illustrious figure, that ye shall *not by any means enter into the kingdom of heaven*,[e] or be owned by the Son of man as truly his subjects.

called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the *righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 To illustrate this, I will now proceed to explain some of those precepts of the law, which these Pharisaical teachers have, by their perverse glosses, enervated and dishonoured; and I will begin with the sixth commandment. *You have heard that it was said to the ancients*,[f] and particularly to your fathers at mount Sinai, *Thou shalt not kill*:[g] *and* you have been taught, that the only design of it was to restrain men from actual murder; and accordingly it has been added, That *whosoever shall* unlawfully *kill* another, *shall be obnoxious to the judgment*,[h] and be capitally punished in the common courts of judica-

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment.

22 ture. *But I say unto you, That* it was the design of God, in this precept, to prohibit extravagant passions and abusive language, as well as the most fatal effects of them in destroying the lives of each other: so that *whosoever shall, without* just *cause*,[i] *be angry with his brother*, so as secretly to wish him evil, *shall be obnoxious to the judgment*, or shall be liable to a worse punishment from God, than any that your common courts of judicature can inflict:[k] *and whosoever* to his secret anger shall add opprobrious and contemptuous words; or, for instance, *shall say to his brother, Raca*, that is, Thou worthless empty fellow,[l] *shall be* exposed to yet more terrible effects of the divine resentment, and be *obnoxious to* a yet severer punishment, that will as far exceed the former as that inflicted by *the sanhedrim*, which extends to stoning, does that which follows on the judgment of the inferior courts, which only have the power of the sword; *but whosoever*, in his unreasonable passion, *shall* presume to *say* unto his brother, *Thou fool*, that is, Thou graceless wicked villain,[m] thereby impeaching his moral character, as well as reflecting on his intellectual, *shall be obnoxious to the fire of hell*, or to a future punishment more dreadful even than that of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom,[n] from whence you borrow the name of those infernal regions.

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

23 Remember *therefore* to lay aside all your animosities, and to live in peace and love, as ever you would escape God's wrath, and secure his favour. Without this, your most expensive sacrifices would be so vain, that I must inculcate it on every one of you as a most necessary caution, *If thou art bringing thy gift*, however costly and free,[o] even *to the* very *altar, and there recollectest that thy brother has any* just cause of [*complaint*]

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

d Apparent in the lives, or even required in the precepts *of the scribes and Pharisees.*] As our Lord levels his following discourse, not so much against the corrupt lives of these Jewish teachers as against their doctrines, I conclude, that the text chiefly refers to the *latter*; yet since their lives were yet worse than their maxims, it must comprehend the *former*. They seem (so far as we can judge by this sermon, and other scriptures,) to have taught—that the *precepts of the law* extended only to the outward actions—that a zeal in the *ceremonial* parts of religion would excuse *moral* defects and irregularities—and that some important *privileges* were inseparably connected with a descent from Abraham, &c.

e *Ye shall not by any means enter into the kingdom of heaven.*] This must greatly surprise Christ's hearers, if the proverb, which has since prevailed, were of so ancient a date; for it has been commonly said by the Jews, that "if but *two men* were to enter into "the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Pharisee and the "other a scribe."

f *You have heard that it was said to the ancients.*] Thus are the words ἐῤῥέθη τοις ἀρχαιοις, to be rendered; see Grotius and Whitby, *in loc.*

g *Thou shalt not kill.*] I might have rendered Ου φονευσεις, *Thou shalt not commit murder*, as Dr. Scott has very properly done; but I chose to retain the words of the commandments, as they are usually expressed among us, that it might at first hearing be more apparent to every reader, that what follows each is our Lord's commentary upon it.

h *Shall be obnoxious to the judgment.*] To understand this and the following verse, it is necessary to observe, that the Jews had a common court of *twenty-three men*, wherein capital sentences might be passed, on which a malefactor might be strangled or beheaded; this was called *the judgment*; but the sanhedrim, or council, was the supreme Jewish court, consisting of *seventy-two*, in which the highest crimes were tried, which they, and they alone, punished with stoning, which was thought a more terrible death than the former. See Grotius's excellent *note* on this text, of which the best commentaries upon it since him, are little more than transcripts. (See Bishop Hopkin's *Works*, p. 65, 66.)—As murder was undoubtedly a capital crime, Dr. Lightfoot, and after him, Dr. Whitby, must be mistaken in supposing that *judgment* here signifies *punishment from the* immediate *hand of God*, as in a case which *human laws* would not reach. See Lightf. *Hor. Hebr.* and Whitby on Matt. v. 22.

i *Without just cause.*] Though εικη, *without cause*, be wanting in some old versions and manuscripts, the sense plainly implies it. See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

k To a worse punishment from God, &c.] That *judgment* must here signify *punishment from God*, is plain, because this *causeless anger* might be so concealed in the heart, as not to admit of conviction before men.

l *Raca*, that is, thou worthless empty fellow.] Drusius gives the most learned and accurate account of the etymology and import of this word, which seems pretty exactly to answer to COXCOMB in our language.

m *Thou fool*, that is, thou graceless wicked villain.] Mr. Blair thinks that μωρε, *thou fool*, answers to RAKEHELL; but that being only applied to a debauchee, seems too contracted. Wicked men are so often called fools in the Old Testament, especially in the writings of David and Solomon, that the appellation in the Jewish language signifies, not so much a weak thoughtless creature, as a man deliberately guilty of some heinous crime, or, in one word, a VILLAIN. On this account, I cannot but think it wrong that κενοτε, Luke xxiv. 25. or αφρον, 1 Cor. xv. 36. should, by so harsh a translation as ours, have been confounded with such an infamous word as this.

n Burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.] Though it is so well known to the learned, I must beg leave to remind my English reader, that the *valley of Hinnom*, or *Tophet*, had been the scene of those detestable sacrifices, in which children were burnt alive to Molech, (compare 2 Kings xxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; and Jer. xix. 2—5; xxxii. 35.) and was afterwards defiled by Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. and made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where fires were kept continually burning to consume it: and it is probable, that if any criminals were executed on the statute, Lev. xx. 14, or xxi. 9. this accursed and horrible place might be the spot of ground on which they were consumed. However that were, it seemed, both with regard to its former and latter state, a fit emblem of hell itself, (see Isa. xxx. 33. and Jer. xix. 11—13.) which, in the Syriac language, takes its name from thence, and was commonly called *Gehenna* by the Jews: (See Lightf. *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* and *Preface* to his *Har. of the New Test.*)—It must here signify a degree of *future punishment*, as much more dreadful than that incurred in the former case, as *burning alive* was more terrible than *stoning*; for I apprehend the *punishment* of each degree of *anger* and fury here mentioned, is to be referred to the *invisible world*, or else our Lord's words would not be generally true.

o *If thou art bringing thy gift*, however costly and free.] Δωρον, *a gift*, implies that it was a *free-will offering*; which adds great strength to the sentence, beyond what it would have had, if the word had been θυσιαν, *sacrifice*.

against thee, do not content thyself with a secret, and it may be a treacherous purpose, SECT. 38.
24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

that thou wilt hereafter accommodate the affair, but bring it to an immediate issue; And, *leaving thy gift there*, in the hand of those that are ministering *before the altar, go away, and first* make it thy care to *be reconciled to thy brother* by an acknowledgment of thy fault, and by a readiness to make him any reasonable satisfaction; *and then come and offer thy gift*,[p] which thou mayest then cheerfully hope God will accept at thine hands. MATT. V. 24

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

And it will be prudence, as well as humanity, to apply this advice to suits-at-law, if you are so unhappy as to be engaged in them: my counsel then to each of you is, That thou shouldst make it thine endeavour to *come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary*[q] *quickly, while thou art in the way* going *with him* to a magistrate; *lest the adversary* should *deliver thee to* be tried before *the judge; and the judge* deciding the cause against thee, *deliver thee to the officer* of the court, to keep thee in custody till payment be made; *and thou*, not having enough by thee to discharge an account inflamed with so many additional articles of expense, shouldst *be cast into prison: Verily I say unto thee*, Thy antagonist, when he has got thee at such an advantage, will be more rigorous in his demands than before; and *thou shalt not by any means come out from thence, till thou hast discharged the very last farthing* of thy debt. And surely if, by impenitent wickedness, thou makest thyself the prisoner of the divine justice,[r] thy case will be yet more deplorable and hopeless. 25

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. 26

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us seriously consider, and often recollect, the purposes of Christ's appearance: *he came not to destroy the law and the prophets*, or to dissolve men's obligation to observe them: but rather to enforce, as well as to fulfil them. How fatally shall we pervert the purposes of his coming, if we regard him as the minister of sin! How ungratefully shall we abuse the merciful constitution of his gospel, should we take encouragement from thence to violate his law! Dangerous as well as ungrateful abuse indeed! For God's eye will be watchful over its honours, and his hand exerted to maintain them; so that *heaven and earth shall pass away*, before it shall fail of its accomplishment in being either obeyed, or avenged on the impenitent sinner. May it be our constant care to keep it ourselves, and to teach others to observe it! May we teach it by our lives as well as our lips; and let our daily conversation demonstrate how practicable and how amiable its precepts are! So shall we be *great in the kingdom of heaven*, in the pursuit of which we may give full scope to the noblest ambition of which human nature is capable. Ver. 17, 18, 19

Let our hearts own, and feel, the spiritual sense of God's law, that we may rise to a more sincere and more extensive righteousness, than that of the scribes and pharisees. May we *delight in it after the inward man*, and learn to regulate our thoughts and our passions, as well as our external behaviour, by it! 20

Especially let us avoid all the malignant and ill-natured passions, all thoughts of rash and immoderate anger, all words of contumely and reproach. If we would maintain communion with the *God of love*, let love govern in our hearts; and when we come to present our devotions to him, let us *lift up holy hands without wrath*, as well as *without doubting*, (1 Tim. ii. 8.) so may we promise ourselves a gracious welcome; so shall we carry away the most valuable blessings! 21, 22, 23

But are none of us strangers to this blessed state? Are none of us obnoxious to the divine displeasure? If we are so, with what a holy solicitude of soul should we labour to make up the controversy, and come to an agreement, while we are yet in the way with this awful adversary! lest we be immediately hurried before the tribunal of the *righteous judge of all the world*, and be delivered into the hands of justice, to be reserved in everlasting chains, beyond the possibility of redemption. 25

Lord, we were all the debtors, and, in one sense, the prisoners of thy justice; and of ourselves we are most incapable, not only of *paying the uttermost farthing*, but even of discharging the least part of the debt! We bless thee for that generous surety, who has undertaken and discharged it for us; and by the price of whose atoning blood we are delivered from the chains of darkness, and are *translated into the glorious liberty of thy children*. 26

SECTION XXXIX.

Our Lord proceeds in his exposition of the law, strictly prohibiting uncleanness, divorce, contention, and revenge; and urging the contrary virtues. Matt. v. 27, *to the end.*

MATT. v. 27. SECT. 39.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

JESUS proceeded in his sermon to the seventh commandment, and observed, *You have* often *heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery;* and that law has been explained, as if it related only to the grossest acts of uncleanness: MATT. V.

28 But I say unto you, *But I say unto you, That* it extends not only to unchaste actions and words, but even 28

p *First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*] It is observable, that Philo, (*de Sacrif.* p. 844.) explaining the law of the trespass-offering, tells us, "That when a man had "injured his brother, and, repenting of his fault, voluntarily acknowledged it, (in which case, both *restitution* and *sacrifice* were "required,) he was first to make *restitution*, and then to come into "the temple *presenting his sacrifice*, and asking pardon." This is a very just and natural account of the matter; and adds a great illustration to this text; especially when it is considered, that our Lord supposes in this case, not a *trespass-offering*, but *a voluntary gift* presented before the altar; and yet declares, that this will not be accepted, while there is a consciousness of having wronged a brother, and not made him reparation.

q *Come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary.*] The word αντιδικος properly signifies a person who is *going to law* with another. I have rendered ιθι ευνοων, *come to a friendly agreement*, because the original seems to imply, not only *peace*, but *benevolence*.

r If thou makest thyself the prisoner of the divine justice.] This thought is a natural reflection on what was said before; but it is rather intimated than expressed in our Lord's words, which so naturally lead to the sense given in the paraphrase, that, to those who are unacquainted with the Popish manner of managing controversies, it might seem surprising they should ever be urged in favour of *purgatory*. The vanity and inconsistency of it is well exposed by Bishop Burnet *On the Articles*, p. 169. and Limborch, *Theolog. lib.* vi. *cap.* 10. § 22.

SECT. 39. MATT. V.

to looks, and the very thoughts of the heart; for *whosoever shall gaze on a woman*[a] *to lust after her*, and thus cherish and indulge the secret workings of irregular desire in his mind, *has already committed* that *adultery with her in his heart*,[b] which this commandment was designed to forbid, and thereby rendered himself, in the sight of God, guilty of the breach of it.

That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 You will think me severe in requiring you so strictly to mortify all the irregular propensities of nature, but you will find it, on the whole, as much for your interest as it is to part with a gangrened member to prevent the death of the whole body; yea, indeed, it is infinitely more so. *And if*, therefore, *thy right eye offend* or ensnare *thee*,[c] or any thing dear as thy right eye would be the occasion of leading thee into sin, *pluck it out* with inexorable resolution, *and cast it* far *from thee* with abhorrence: *for it is advantageous to thee, that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell;* which yet must be the fatal consequence of indulging the most favourite

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 lust. *Yea, if thy right hand offend* or ensnare *thee*,[d] though it be so useful and necessary a part, do not spare it, but immediately *cut it off and cast it from thee; for* I renew the declaration, That *it is* highly *advantageous to thee, that* any *one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell*,[e] to be the companion of thy guilty soul there, in everlasting horror and misery.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 *It has been said*, (Deut. xxiv. 1.) *Whoever would dismiss his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce:* and this precept, which was indeed intended to prevent the frequency of such dismissions, by making it so solemn and irrevocable a thing, has perversely been

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.

32 interpreted as a warrant to have recourse to it upon every trifling occasion. *But* such a practice is directly contrary to the original design of marriage, and highly injurious to the common good of mankind: *I* therefore think it necessary to restrain so dangerous a liberty, and *say unto you, That whosoever shall dismiss his wife, except* it be *on the account of whoredom*,[f] *causeth her*, by a second marriage, *to commit adultery*, or at least exposeth her to great danger of doing it; *and whoever shall marry her that is* thus unlawfully *dismissed*,[g] *committeth adultery*, since the bond of the former marriage does in the account of God remain undissolved.

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

33 *Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients*, (Lev. xix. 12; Deut. xxiii. 21.) *Thou shalt not perjure* or forswear *thyself, but shalt* diligently *perform unto the Lord thine oaths* and vows: and this has been expounded as extending merely to those oaths in which the name of God is expressly used, and only prohibiting the violation of such, but tolerating the use of them, even on slight occasions, so it be not in confirmation

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

34 of a falsehood. *But I say unto you, Swear not at all* in your common discourse with each other,[h] even so much as by the creatures; *either by heaven*,[i] *for it is the throne of* the

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

35 glorious and holy *God; Or by the earth, for it is* under his dominion, and subject to him as *his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King* of Israel and of the

35 Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.

36 universe; *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou* art so far from having an absolute power over it, that thou *canst not make* the colour of *one hair* of it *white or black:* so that these oaths by the creatures, if they have any sense at all, are an implicit appeal to God.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 *But* I charge you to avoid the customary use of all such oaths, as well as of those in which the name of God is directly expressed; and *let your conversation be* all plain and simple: when you affirm, say, *Yes, yes;* and when you deny, *No, no: for* if you conduct yourselves as you ought, this will be sufficient to gain you credit; and you may be assured, that *whatever is more than these, cometh from the evil one*,[k] who artfully contrives, by the

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay; for whatsoever *is* more than these, cometh of evil.

a *Whosoever shall gaze on a woman:* ο βλεπων γυναικα.] There are several other places where the βλεπω signifies *to look* on an object *with great attention*, or to *fix the eye* upon it. See Matt. vii. 3; xviii. 10; Luke vii. 44; viii. 18; Acts i. 9; iii. 4; 1 Cor. iii. 10; x. 12; Phil. iii. 2; and Rev. xvii. 8.

b *Committed adultery with her in his heart.*] In the first edition I had rendered it *debauched her*, because it is plain εμοιχευσεν must extend to single as well as married persons; but, on the animadversion of a learned friend, I am convinced that the spirit of our Lord's meaning is best expressed by retaining the word used in the *seventh commandment*, and giving the passage such a turn as I have now given it in the paraphrase, which does not at all limit the sense. But to render γυναικα *a married woman*, would be a limitation, I think, not to be justified.

c *Offend* or ensnare *thee.*] It is well known that this is the force of the word σκανδαλιζω, which most literally signifies, to be a stumbling-block in a person's way, or an occasion of his fall; and so implies much more than merely to displease. I mention this remark, obvious as it is, because the sense of so many texts depends on attending to it. See Rom. xi. 9; xiv. 13, 21; xvi. 17; 1 Cor. viii. 13; Gal. v. 11; and Rev. ii. 14.

d *If thy right hand offend* or ensnare *thee.*] The greatest part of Christ's auditors were poor people who lived by their daily labour; and to these the loss of a *right hand* would be a much greater calamity than that of a *right eye:* so that there is a gradation and force in this passage, beyond what has generally been observed.

e *Rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell.*] This plainly implied the doctrine of a *resurrection*, though Christ had not yet expressly taught it.

f *On the account of whoredom.*] It is very evident that πορνεια, as here used, must have a more ambiguous and larger sense than the English word *fornication*, which generally answers to it; and must be understood here of *adultery*.

g *Shall marry her that is* unlawfully *dismissed.*] Mr. Blair (in the third volume of his *Sermons*, p. 111, 112.) explains this clause, as intended to forbid women *divorced for adultery to marry*, which he thinks an additional punishment inflicted on persons guilty of so enormous a crime, and a wise provision for preventing bad women from committing adultery in hopes of opening their way to another more agreeable marriage. But I prefer the sense here given, because it makes this latter clause more correspondent to the former, and prevents the necessity of supposing μοιχευω to be used in two different senses so near together.

h *Swear not at all* in your common discourse with each other.] The opposition between this verse and the 37th, limits the prohibition to this sense; and, waving that, it would be necessary to interpret it as a restrictive, rather than an universal precept, and to consider it as more particularly levelled at the common practice of the Jews, who reckoned *swearing by the creatures* to be far more excusable than *swearing by the name of God*, and made but little scruple of the frequent use of it. For that *all swearing* is not here condemned as a thing absolutely evil, is fully evident from other passages of scripture, and of necessity must be allowed to vindicate the conduct of Christ and his apostles. Compare Mark viii. 12; Matt. xxvi. 64; Rom. i. 9; ix. 1; Gal. i. 20; 2 Cor. i. 11; and Heb. vi. 16.

i *Either by heaven.*] Though I allow, with the learned Heinsius, that the words μη ομοσαι ολως, may be rendered, *By no means swear, either by heaven, earth*, or the like; yet it will not follow that the words only forbid *swearing by creatures*, since ver. 37 forbids *whatever is more than yea or nay.* So that it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to some other solution of this *prohibition*, as well as of that in Jam. v. 12, where *any other oath* is forbidden; and nothing is more natural and easy than to understand it in both places as a prohibition of the use of *oaths* in common conversation.

k *Cometh from the evil one.*] Εκ του πονηρου εστιν will properly bear

habitual use of swearing even by the creatures, to lessen your reverence for the solemnity of an oath, and to lead you at length to take the name of God in vain, even by perjury itself. SECT. 39.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

You have heard that it has been said in the law, (Deut. xix. 21.) *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:* and this statute, which was only intended to direct judges as to the penalties to be inflicted in case of violent and barbarous assaults, has been interpreted as encouraging a rigorous, severe revenge of every injury a man might receive. MATT. V. 38

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

But I say unto you, That when you meet with ill usage in the world, *you do not* immediately *set yourselves against the injurious person*[l] in a posture of hostile opposition, and with a resolution to return evil for evil; *but,* where the damage is not great, chuse rather to pass it by, though possibly it might on that account be repeated, than to enter into a rigorous prosecution of the offender. On these principles, *if any man strike thee on thy right cheek,* patiently *turn the other to him also.*[m] 39

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

And if any one be resolved to sue thee at law, and to take away thy vest, permit him to take thy mantle too;[n] for the loss of both would be but a trifle, in comparison of those vexations, snares, and expenses which would probably attend the continuance of the suit. 40

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

And if any press thee to go with him *one mile,* obliging thee and thy carriages to attend him on a public account,[o] rather *go with him two* more, than disturb the peace by a forcible opposition; for in many such cases as these, it will be more for your own comfort, as well as the credit of your profession, to submit, than contend. 41

42 Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

When thou seest any one in real necessity, and hast it in the power of thine hand to do it, *give to him that asketh thee* thy charity;[p] *and do not turn away,* with a severe denial, *him that would borrow of thee;*[q] for in some cases a seasonable loan may be as valuable a kindness as a gift. 42

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

By such condescensions and favours, you will generally gain the friendship of those with whom you converse; but if any should be so base as, notwithstanding all, to persist in using you ill, do not indulge to sentiments of revenge. I know *you have heard that it was said* to our fathers, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour;* (Lev. xix. 18.) *and* from thence, though in direct contradiction to many other scriptures, (Exod. xxiii. 45; Lev. xix. 17; and Prov. xxv. 21.) some have argued, as if it had been added, Thou *shalt hate thine enemy;* and the precepts for destroying the Canaanites, (Deut. vii. 16, and the like,) have been abused to countenance such an addition.[r] 43

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

But instead of favouring this pernicious maxim, *I say unto you, love your enemies,* and whatsoever you may suffer by them, while you abhor their sinful practices, shew a concern for the true welfare of their persons; *bless them that* in the bitterest manner *curse you,* (whether by profane execrations in their common discourse, or by unjust anathemas in their ecclesiastical assemblies,) be ready to *do good to them that hate you, and pray for* the conversion of *them that insult you,*[s] *and persecute you; That you may* thus approve yourselves to *be the children of* 44

45 That ye may be the

this version; and some copies read διαβολε, *cometh from the devil.* I would observe, that whether this version or the common one be admitted, the clause before us contains a demonstration that ver. 34. is to be explained with the limitation proposed: for it is evident that *oaths* were in some cases not only allowed, but required by the *Mosaic law;* (see Exod. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. Numb. v. 19, 21. and Deut. xxix. 12, 14.) So that if Christ's prohibition had here referred to *swearing* in *solemn and judicial* cases, he would in these words have charged the *divine law* with establishing an immorality, which it is most absurd to suppose; and I cannot but wonder that so obvious and decisive a thought should not have been more insisted upon in this controversy.

l *Do not set yourselves against the injurious person.*] So the phrase αντιστηναι τω πονηρω may exactly be rendered; (compare 2 Tim. iii. 8.) Had our Lord meant to intimate, that we should rather suffer ourselves to be murdered, and our families to be ruined, than resist the villain that attempts it, he would have laid down so strange a precept in the strongest terms: and it is very unreasonable to infer it from this passage, which speaks of so trifling an injury as a *slap on the face,* or suing a man for the value of a *waistcoat* or *cloak.*—If it be asked, whether we are universally forbidden to resist on these occasions? I answer, we are; unless we be in our consciences convinced that, in present circumstances, to stand on our defence will be more for the public good; and in those cases, this particular precept is superseded by the general law of universal benevolence. But I apprehend these expressions intimate, that, on the whole, it will generally be for the best to wave rigorous prosecutions on such slight occasions.

m *Turn the other to him also.*] This is a proverbial phrase, to express a meek submission to injuries and affronts. See Isa. l. 6. and Lam. iii. 30.

n *Thy mantle too.*] *Vest* and *mantle* more exactly answer to χιτων and ιματιον than *coat* and *cloak;* (compare John xix. 23. and see Casaubon, *in loc.*) and are parts of dress, under different names, still retained in Barbary, Egypt, and the Levant. See Dr. Shaw's *Travels,* p. 289—292. The mantle being much larger than the vest, must probably be more valuable; and as it would be natural for a robber on the highway to take the outer garment first, I look on this manner of expressing it as a good argument for retaining our translation of κριθηναι, and rendering it *sue thee at law,* rather than take it in a more general way, as signifying to *strive* or *contend:* though I know it has sometimes this last signification, as Lud. Cappellus urges.

o *Press thee to go* with him, &c.] The word *press* seems best to answer the original αγγαρευω, which is well known to be derived from the name of those officers who were commissioned for this purpose by the Persian emperors when Judea was one of their provinces. See Drusius, *in loc.* (Compare Matt. xxvii. 32.) Among the Jews, the disciples of their wise men were excused from such services; but Christ advises his disciples not to insist on that exemption. See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

p *Give to him that asketh thee* thy charity: τω αιτουντι σε διδε.] Mr. Blair would refer this to πονηρω, in ver. 39. and render it, *Give to the injurious person what he asketh thee;* and has a very beautiful discourse upon it in that view: but it is plainly unnecessary to limit it; and I think that, on this interpretation, it would too much coincide with ver. 44. In whatever sense it be taken, it must admit of some exceptions, or it will not only be inconsistent with such precepts as require us to take care of our families, (as 1 Tim. v. 8.) but with natural justice and common sense. It is amazing, therefore, that any who do not think themselves obliged, by the literal sense of this precept, to *give* or *lend* to every idle importunate creature whatever he asks, should insist on a rigorous interpretation of the preceding passage, from ver. 34—41.

q *Do not turn away him that would borrow of thee.*] Τον θελοντα απο σου δανεισασθαι μη αποστραφης, is thus most literally rendered.

r The precepts for destroying the Canaanites have been abused, &c.] These precepts were of a peculiar nature; and that in particular, Deut. xxiii. 6. *Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever,* relates to avoiding throughout all generations any association with the Moabites; which was an everlasting *brand of infamy* set upon them, for the affront which, *in the matter of Peor,* they had offered to God himself, under whose conduct the Israelites were. But though it forbids any *national alliance* with them, it seems that the settlement of Ruth in Israel, when she embraced the Jewish religion, (Ruth i. 16.) and the permission given to the Moabites to live as tributaries under David after the conquest of their country, (2 Sam. viii. 2.) were not at all inconsistent with this law.

s *That insult you;* επηρεαζοντων υμας.] As this word, according to the judgment of Erasmus, Beza, and several other able critics, is derived from Αρης, the name of Mars, it may perhaps strictly answer to *dragooning* in our modern language: but as it is plainly used by St. Peter to express *abusive language,* (1 Pet. iii. 16.) I chose to render it *insult,* which may be applied either to *injurious words* or *actions.* To *iraduce* does by no means express the force of the idea. Nor can I think, with the learned Elsner, (Vol. I. p. 30, 31.) that this clause is to be interpreted chiefly of malicious

SECT. 39. *your heavenly Father; for*, with the most diffusive kindness and beneficence, *he causeth his sun to arise on the evil and the good, and showereth down rain on the just and the unjust;* so that his enemies share in his providential bounties, and subsist on his daily care.

children of your Father which *is* in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

MATT. V

Let it be therefore your concern to imitate this extensive goodness: *for if you* only love
46 *them that love you, what reward have ye?* or what extraordinary praise can you expect? *Do not even the* most infamous and scandalous sinners, such as the very *publicans,*
47 *do the same? And if ye salute* and embrace *your brethren only,*[t] or those of the same sect, party, and interest with yourselves, *what extraordinary thing do you* practise more than the rest of mankind, though your advantages are so much greater than theirs? *Do not even the* heathens and *publicans do so?* And will not common humanity teach even the very worst of men civility to those that treat them with respect, and excite them to some sentiments of gratitude to their friends and benefactors?

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* Do not even the publicans so?

48 You who stand in so near a relation to God, as my professed disciples, should far excel them: *be ye therefore,* in these instances of undeserved and forfeited goodness,[u] and in all other respects, as far as frail mortality will admit, *perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect;*[x] whose name you will most effectually honour, and whose favour you will most happily secure, by a care to imitate him to the utmost in all the moral perfections of his nature. (Compare Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1.)

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 48 ALAS! how may we blush to call God our Father, while we resemble him so little! And what reason is there,
47 on a survey of these directions of our Lord, to acknowledge our deficiencies and our faults! Let us review the many advantages we enjoy as Christians, and the engagements we are under, in the particular circumstances in which Divine Providence has placed us; and blush to think, that we do so little more than others, perhaps in many instances falling short even of the virtues of heathens.

43—45 Let us particularly be instructed by these lessons of our Divine Master, to recompense good for evil: lessons which come with peculiar grace from his mouth, as he was himself the kindest friend to his most inveterate enemies, and bore and forgave more than any but himself could possibly do.

38—42 Let us, who are his disciples, abhor contention and revenge. Let us not prosecute every little injury to the utmost, nor govern ourselves by those false maxims of prudence and honour, which pride and self-love have introduced on the ruins of real Christianity. Let us not, even in the most legal methods, seek the punishment of those who have wronged us, except in circumstances in which we are in our conscience persuaded it will, on the whole, be greater charity to animadvert on the offence than to pass it by; and even then, let us act in a calm and dispassionate manner, pitying and loving the persons of the injurious, even while, for the sake of society, we prosecute their crimes.

46 If this be our duty towards our enemies, how inexcusable are we, if we are cold and insensible to our friends! and how much worse than publicans themselves, if we do not love them that love us, and do good to those from whom we have received it. Happy is that Christian, to whom the God of nature hath given a heart so turned to sentiments of benevolence, that, in all these instances, love is a law unto itself!

Yet let us remember that the whole of our duty is not comprehended in these social regards. The great Author of our being, who hath endowed us with rational faculties, justly requires that we assert their empire over the
27 meaner powers of appetite and passion. We see that he forbids not only gross enormities, as adultery, (which,
28 though so unaccountably spared by the laws of many Christian countries, the heathens themselves have condemned as a capital crime, and which some of the most barbarous nations have esteemed infamous,) but the unchastity of the eye, and of the heart. Let us then earnestly pray that God would *create in us a clean heart, and renew a right*
29 *spirit within us;* (Psal. li. 10.) and let us maintain a most resolute guard over our senses and our thoughts, remembering that there is no other alternative, but that the dearest of our lusts must be mortified and subdued, or our whole persons be cast into hell.

30 Elevate our affections, O Lord, to nobler objects than those which are suited merely to animal nature! Teach us to *keep under the body, and bring it into subjection,* (1 Cor. ix. 27.) that we may not finally be cast away from thy presence, and fall into that dreadful state where every drop of sinful pleasure will be recompensed with full vials of misery and despair!

prosecutions in judicial courts, though that be a sort of *insult* and *persecution*, undoubtedly comprehended among many others, and often expressed by the Greek words here used.

t *If ye salute* and embrace *your brethren only.*] The word ασπασησθε alludes to the custom of *saluting by embracing.* And when Christ cautions against confining their regards to brethren, he may perhaps obliquely glance at those prejudices which different sects had against each other, and intimate that he would not have his followers imbibe that *narrow spirit.* Would to God the hint had been more attended to among the unhappy *subdivisions* into which his church has been crumbled; and that we might at least advance so far, as cordially to embrace our brethren in Christ, of whatever party or denomination they are!

u In these instances of undeserved and forfeited goodness.] The *love to friends*, enjoined by the scribes and Pharisees, was very imperfect: we are to labour after a more complete resemblance to God, in *loving enemies.* Our Lord therefore afterwards expressed it in a parallel discourse, by saying, *Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful*, Luke vi. 36; but it is probable he used a greater latitude of expression here, to remind us of our obligations to imitate the Divine Being in all his moral perfections.

x *Perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.*] Many authorities are produced by Elsner, in his *note* on this text, to prove, not only that the heathens gave the epithet of τελειος, or *perfect*, to many of their gods, especially the chief; but that some of their writers describe *clemency* and *goodness to enemies* as a virtue by which mortals make the nearest approach to divine perfection.—These words conclude Christ's excellent vindication of the law from the corrupt glosses of the Jewish teachers. I know it has been objected to it, that, considering the many figurative expressions used in it, we might as easily trace out the duties recommended by the *light of reason* alone, as adjust the sense of such obscure and hyperbolical precepts. But if it were really so, (which I cannot grant) it is to be remembered, that the chief design of the gospel is not to inform us what is *justice, humanity*, and *charity*, in particular cases, (which a view of present circumstances can alone discover,) but to awaken a regard to the known, though neglected, dictates of *natural religion* on these heads; and this may be most effectually done by such animated and sprightly exhortations as these, especially when considered as coming from a Person whose authority and love concur to demand our attention and obedience.

SECTION XL.

Our Lord having thus vindicated the Mosaic law, proceeds, in his divine discourse on the Mount, to caution his disciples against vain-glory in alms-deeds, prayer, and fasting. Matt. vi. 1—18.

MATT. vi. 1.

1 TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

MATT. vi. 1.

OUR Lord, proceeding in his discourse to caution them against vain-glory, said unto them, *Take heed*, in general, *that you practise not your righteousness*,[a] or perform not any religious action in an ostentatious manner *before men*, making it your chief end *to be viewed* and admired *by them:* or *otherwise*, if this caution be neglected, *you* will *have no reward from your heavenly Father*, who knows all the secret principles of your heart, and indispensably requires the greatest uprightness and sincerity there. SECT. 40. MATT. VI.

2 Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

The caution is so important, that I shall illustrate it in various particulars. *When*, 2 *therefore*, for instance, *thou performest* [*thine*] *alms-deeds, do not*, as it were, *sound a trumpet before thee*, and make proclamation to all around, to induce them to take notice of it; *as* it is customary for *the hypocrites* to *do in the public assemblies*,[b] *and in the streets, that*, acting their part as on an open theatre,[c] *they may be applauded of men*, who are the spectators of their liberality: *verily I say unto you*, That in this empty sound of human praise, *they have their* poor *reward*,[d] and must expect no acceptance and recompense from God.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

But when thou art doing [*thine*] *alms*, use the utmost 3 privacy; and, if it be possible, *let not thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing*,[e] when it is stretched out to these charitable purposes; and far from publishing it with vain affectation, conceal it, as far as may be, from thy nearest friends: *That thine alms may* 4

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

be performed *in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret*, and knows every circumstance of your most retired actions, *will himself* be ready to honour and *reward thee* another day, and that openly before the assembled world.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

And again, *when thou prayest*, (as, if thou art my disciple indeed, thou often wilt,) 5 *thou shalt not be as the hypocrites*, who discover on all occasions the vanity of their hearts; *for* even when performing their particular, and those that ought to be their secret, devotions, *they love to pray standing in the public assemblies* in sight of numbers of people, *and* fixing them exactly to one constant hour, contrive to be catched, as it were, just at that sacred time;[f] not only in the common places of resort, but *in the corners of the streets*, where several ways meet; *that they may* thus *be* sure of being *viewed by* a great number of beholders; but howsoever, upon this account, they may indeed be admired of *men*, as persons of singular piety, yet *verily I say unto you, That* in this admiration of those that observe them, *they have* all *their reward.*

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

But thou, O my 6 disciple, whoever thou art, *when thou prayest*, and dost not intend it as social exercise of devotion, withdraw from the sight and intercourse of men, and *enter into thy closet*, or any other retired apartment;[g] *and having shut thy door*, to prevent interruption and exclude spectators, *pray* with a holy freedom of soul *to thy Father who is* with thee *in secret; and thy Father, who* always *sees in secret* as distinctly as in the most open scene of action, *will* regard these addresses with peculiar pleasure, as the emotions of a pious and sincere heart; and will another day *reward thee openly* for those duties, which were so entirely referred to the views of honouring and pleasing him.

7 But when ye pray, use

But when you pray, do not use a vain multiplicity of words,[h] *as* it is usual for *the* 7

a *Practise not your righteousness.*] As some copies and very ancient versions read δικαιοσυνην, *righteousness*, instead of ελεημοσυνην, *alms-deeds*, and several of the fathers quote it so, I chuse, with Beza, to follow that reading; because it prevents the appearance of a tautology in the following words, and makes this verse a general and very proper introduction to the remaining part of the section, in which the caution is branched out into the particular heads of *alms, prayer*, and *fasting*. (See Dr. Mill, *in loc.*)—Nevertheless I by no means insist on the change: but if it be admitted, I cannot acquiesce in the criticism of a learned friend, who would explain *righteousness* as here signifying *charity*, or *liberality*; because, though I am well aware it has that signification sometimes, (I think not so often as some have supposed,) yet admitting it here would destroy that beautiful variety between this and the following verse, which I have endeavoured to illustrate in the paraphrase, and which makes it so proper an introduction to this part of our Lord's sermon.

b *In the public assemblies.*] It is certain that the word συναγωγη may be taken in this extent; and though it is most probable it may even here refer to *religious assemblies*, yet we may recollect on this occasion, that it is a known custom in the eastern nations to distribute alms when they are going to enter on public councils.—The phrase of *sounding a trumpet before them* seems only a figurative expression to represent their doing it in a noisy, ostentatious way; as it is certain, that to do a thing *with the sound of a trumpet* is sometimes used proverbially to express a public ostentation. See Elsner, *in loc.*

c Acting their part as on an open theatre.] Erasmus and Beza very justly observe, that θεαθηναι in the verse before is a theatrical word; and υποκριται is well known to signify *players disguised* (as the Grecian actors used to be) *in masks*; not to say that the *sounding a trumpet* may allude to the *music* of the stage. I have endeavoured to express this in the phrases here used in the paraphrase.

d *They have their reward.*] Sir Norton Knatchbull earnestly contends that απεχουσι τον μισθον αυτων, ought to be rendered, *they fall short of their reward:* but the word απεχω is plainly used in the sense in which our translators take it, Luke vi. 24; Philip. iv. 18, and Philem. ver. 15; and it is with peculiar propriety, that *human applause* is here called *their reward*, as being that which they chuse and seek. See Beza's elegant *note* on the words.

e *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing.*] It is said, that the poor's chest stood on the right hand as they entered the synagogues, to which some suppose the words to allude. It is plainly a proverbial expression of strict care to conceal an action.

f Contrive to be catched at that sacred time.] Thus the late pious and eloquent Mr. Grove explains, and finely illustrates this text in his *Discourse on Secret Prayer*, p. 3, 4. It is plain this custom still prevails among the Mahometans; as Pfeiffer has observed, *Theolog. Mohammed.; Oper.* p. 848, 974; and Bohovius, in his *Turkish Liturgy*, § 1. See a remarkable illustration of it in Mr. Addison's *Freeholder*, No. 59.

g *Enter into thy closet*, or any other retired apartment.] Ταμειον signifies closet, chamber, wardrobe, warehouse, or any other separate place; and Mr. Blair piously conjectures, that Christ might use a word of such latitude, that none might omit *secret prayer* for want of so convenient an apartment as they could wish to retire into. It will, I hope, be observed, that many remarks of this kind proceed on a supposition, that the Spirit of God directed the apostles in their writings to chuse such Greek words as most exactly corresponded to those in the Jewish language which Christ used.

h *Do not use a vain multiplicity of words:* μη βαττολογησητε.] Beza has well explained the etymology of the word; and Dr. Hammond shews how applicable it was to the devotion of the Gentiles. (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 26; and Acts xix. 34.) It is plain that the Jews were running into the same fault, if we may judge by their oldest *Liturgies*. (See Le Clerc, *in loc.* and Selden, *de Synod. lib.* i. *cap.* xii. p. 467, *et seq.*) And Dr. Wotton has illustrated the text so well, if it be considered as referring to them,

SECT. 40. MATT. VI.

heathens to *do* in the invocation of their deities; *for they* foolishly *think they shall be heard* in their addresses to them *for their speaking much. Be not ye therefore* in this respect *like them*, since you are so much better instructed in the divine nature than they, and cannot but know that your prayers are intended to affect your own hearts, that they may be fit to receive blessings, and not to inform or work upon the heart of God:

not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 *for your* heavenly *Father* is ready to bestow his blessings on you, and always *knows what you* really *want*, even *before you ask him*; which therefore should teach you to avoid whatever may look like prescribing to him, by too minute and repeated a detail of particulars.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 *Thus therefore pray ye*, or to this effect at least, and in this plain, concise, and humble manner, if not in these very words: "*Our Father, who art* seated on a throne of glory "*in* the highest *heaven*; while we bow before thine awful presence with the humblest "reverence, we would nevertheless approach thee with a filial confidence, as our boun- "tiful and compassionate Parent; uniting our supplications to thee, with hearts full of "brotherly love, and asking for each other the blessings we seek for ourselves. We would "so remember our relation to thee, as to be above all things concerned for thy glory: and "therefore make it our first petition, *May thy* illustrious *name be sanctified!* May the "whole race of mankind, yea, the whole world of intelligent creatures, pay that dutiful "veneration to thy divine majesty,[i] which thy matchless perfections so justly require!

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

10 "And for this purpose, *may* that *thy kingdom*, which thou art now introducing among "men, more perfectly *come*,[k] may it be established with greater efficacy, be more clearly "discovered, and more resolutely pursued! *May thy will*, always wise and always gra- "cious, *be done, as in heaven, so likewise upon earth*; and may we mortals be taught "to regard it with a resignation, acquiescence, and obedience,[l] resembling that of the

10 Thy kingdom come: thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven:

11 "heavenly spirits! And as for ourselves, O Lord, we would not seek the great things "of life, we would not be anxious about its distant futurities, but humbly entreat thou "wouldst open that bountiful hand on which we continually depend, and wouldst *give "us this day our daily bread*,[m] providing a competent supply for our present necessi-

11 Give us this day our daily bread:

12 "ties, and teaching us to refer the rest to thy continual paternal care! *And* though we "have in many respects been disobedient and ungrateful children, yet we beseech thee, "O most compassionate Father, to *forgive us our* offences, whereby we stand charge- "able, as it were, in thy book, with *debts* which we can never clear: yet do thou freely "forgive them all, *as we also* desire to *forgive our debtors*, even all that have in any "respect offended and injured us: yea, such pardon may we receive from thee, our God,

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:

13 "as we are willing to impart to them![n] *And do not bring us into* circumstances of "pressing *temptation*, lest our virtue should be vanquished, and our souls endangered by "them; *but* if we must be thus tried, do thou graciously *rescue us from* the power of "*the evil one*,[o] that he may not triumph in our sin and ruin! These things we know "that thou canst do for thy children, and we are humbly bold to hope thou wilt do them "for us: *for thine is the kingdom* of universal nature,[p] *and the* fulness of almighty "*power, and the glory* of infinite perfection; and to thee be the praise of all ascribed "*for ever. Amen.* So may it be! We most sincerely and earnestly desire that thou "mayst be glorified, and our petitions heard and accepted."

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 Let this be the model of your prayers, for these are the most important blessings you can ask. And let me particularly charge you to remember the view and connection in which I have taught you to ask the pardon of your sins: *for if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you*, supposing that forgiveness to proceed from

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

that one could wish he had produced some better authorities than he has done for reading υποχειται rather than εθνικοι, See Wot. *Misc.* Vol. I. p. 186—188.

i That dutiful veneration to thy divine majesty.] The *name* of God seems a phrase nearly answering to that of *majesty*, when applied to an earthly sovereign; as Mr. Blair has justly observed, *Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 42.

k More perfectly *come*.] It is reasonable to believe *this petition* had a sense peculiar to the period in which it was prescribed, and that we, under this perfect revelation of the gospel, cannot properly use it precisely with the same meaning: but so extensive a phrase may justly admit of other senses, at least by *accommodation*, as the *Assembly's Catechism*, with great propriety, illustrates it; and I believe there are few who decline the use of *this prayer* on this account, who do not often use scripture phrases with a much greater latitude.

l Resignation, acquiescence, and obedience.] I have here joined these several expressions, because I am not able certainly to determine which was most directly intended. There is a great deal of beauty and spirit in the interpretation which Mr. Addison gives of this petition: *Spectat.* Vol. III. No. 207.

m *Our daily bread*: τον αρτον ημων τον επιουσιον.] I can see no reason for changing our received translation, and cannot but acquiesce in Mr. Mede's remark, that επιουσιος signifies what is *sufficient* for our *present support* and subsistence, as περιουσιος signifies *abundant*: so that *this petition* is nearly parallel to that of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. (See Mede's *Works*, p. 125.) This is a most excellent lesson to teach us, on the one hand, moderation in our desires, and on the other, an humble dependence on Divine Providence for the most necessary supplies, be our possessions or our abilities ever so great.

n Such pardon—as we are willing to impart to them.] It is hardly possible to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote the *forgiveness* of injuries than this, of making it a part of our *daily prayer* to ask *such pardon* from God as we impart to our offending brother. For in this circumstance, every malicious purpose against him would turn *this petition* into an *imprecation*, by which we should, as it were, bind down the wrath and vengeance of God upon ourselves.

o *Rescue us from the evil one*.] Ρυσαι ημας απο του πονηρου may literally be rendered thus. For this signification of ο πονηρος, see note h, p. 70.

p *For thine is the kingdom, &c.*] Though I am sensible there is some reason to doubt of the genuineness of this *doxology*, notwithstanding all that Mr. Jones (in his *History of the Canon*, Vol. I. p. 141, 142.) has urged in its defence, (See Dr. Mill, *in loc.* and Mr. Hallet, in his *Notes on Scripture*, Vol. I. p. 133, *et seq.*) yet it is certainly very ancient; and, as Bishop Hopkins, Mr. Blair, and other excellent writers, have well observed, so admirably suits and enforces every preceding petition, that I could not persuade myself to omit it. And I hope the learned reader will excuse me, if, in matters of moment, I sometimes seem over-cautious of omitting some passages which are indeed wanting in many ancient manuscripts, and omitted by some celebrated commentators, ancient as well as modern. I apprehend I shall have done my part, in thus hinting at the doubt which learned men have entertained concerning them, where I conceive the reasons for such doubt to be considerable.—For the word *amen*, as it signifies *truth*, see note g, on John i. 51. p. 44, when added to the conclusion of our prayers, it is intended to express the sincerity and earnestness with which we desire the blessing we ask, with some cheerfulness of hope as to the success of our petitions.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

a truly religious principle: *But if you do not forgive men their offences*, but continue to cherish resentment, and to seek revenge, *neither will* that God whom you call *your* heavenly *Father* own you for his genuine offspring, and *forgive* you *your offences*; but by using the petition I have now been prescribing, you will in effect bind down a curse upon yourselves. SECT. 40. MATT. VI.

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

I would also apply the general advice I before gave to fasting as well as to prayer; and would *again* exhort you, That *when you keep a* private *fast*, (as I conclude my disciples will often do,) you *be not like the hypocrites*, going about with a dejected, melancholy face, and *putting on a dismal air; for* upon these occasions *they* emaciate, contract, and *deform their countenances*,[q] *that*, by their sad and mournful looks, *they may appear to men to fast*, and may be esteemed as persons of unusual mortification and holiness: *verily I say unto you, That* in this notice that is taken of them by their fellow-creatures, *they have* all *their reward*, and have not any to expect from God. 16

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face:

But thou, O my disciple, *when thou keepest* such *a fast*, and comest from thy devout retirement, dress thyself just as thou dost at other times; *anoint thy head* with oil, *and wash thy face*,[r] instead of fouling it with ashes: 17

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

That thou mayest not appear to men as one that fasteth, but only *to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret*, and observes what passes in retirement, as the surest test of men's true characters, *will* not fail to *reward thee openly* for thy genuine and unaffected devotion. 18

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from these repeated admonitions of our blessed Redeemer, what is the only acceptable principle of every religious action; namely, a desire to approve ourselves to God in it: and let us particularly bring it into the instances in which it is here recommended. Ver. 1 5, 16

Our Lord takes it for granted, that his disciples would be both charitable and devout. Let us cultivate both these branches of the Christian temper, and avoid ostentation in both; as remembering the day approaches, when every one of us must be made manifest in his true character before the tribunal of Christ.—And oh, what discoveries will then be opened upon the world! How many specious masks will be plucked off, that the hypocrite's character may appear in its native deformity! And, on the other hand, how many secret acts of piety and benevolence, which have been industriously concealed from human observation, will then shine forth in all their glory, celebrated and rewarded by God himself, *who sees in secret*, and whose eye penetrates all the recesses of our houses and our hearts! 2, 6 18

There may our praise and our portion be! In the mean time, let us with humble pleasure obey the call of our divine Master, and be often addressing our heavenly Father in such language as he hath taught us; entering for secret exercises of devotion into our closet, and shutting our door, excluding, as far as possible, every thought which would interrupt us in these sacred and happy moments. From thence let our *prayers* daily come before the throne *like incense, and the lifting up of our hands be as* the morning and *the evening sacrifice*. (Psal. cxli. 2.) 6

Christ himself has condescended to teach us to pray. Attentive to his precepts, animated by his example, and emboldened by his intercession, let us learn and practise the lesson. *Shed abroad on our hearts*, O Lord, thy *Spirit of Adoption*, which may *teach us to cry, Abba, Father!* to draw nigh to thee with filial reverence and confidence, and with fraternal charity for each other even for the whole family, to whom thou graciously ownest the relation! Inspire us with that zeal for thy glory, which may render the honour of thy name, the prosperity of thy kingdom, and the accomplishment of thy will, far dearer to us than any interest of our own! On thee may we maintain a cheerful dependence for *our daily bread*, and *having food and raiment, be therewith content!* (1 Tim. vi. 8.) most solicitously seeking the pardon of our past sins, and the influences of thy grace to preserve us from future temptations, or to secure us in them! And may our sense of that need in which we stand of forgiveness from thee, dispose us cordially to *forgive each other*, especially as thou hast wisely and graciously made this the necessary means of receiving our own pardon! Our corrupted hearts are too little disposed for these sentiments; but may God's almighty power produce and cherish them in us! and while the comfort is ours, may all the glory be his, *through Jesus Christ our Lord!* Amen. 9—13 14, 15

SECTION XLI.

Our Lord cautions his disciples against the love of the present world, and urges a variety of lively and convincing arguments to dissuade them from anxiety about the morrow. Matt. vi. 19, *to the end.*

MATT. vi. 19.

LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

MATT. vi. 19.

I WOULD also take this opportunity of cautioning you, my hearers, against that covetous temper, which the Pharisees are so ready to indulge, (compare Luke xvi. 14; and Matt. xxiii. 14.) and therefore add, *Do not* make it your great care to *lay up for yourselves treasures* here *on earth*, where so many accidents may deprive you of them; *where the moth*, for instance, may spoil your finest garments, *and* a devouring *canker* may *consume* your corn, or may corrupt the very metals you have hoarded;[a] *and where thieves* may 19 SECT. 41. MATT. VI.

q Emaciate, contract, and *deform their countenances.*] I know not any word in our language which exactly answers to αφανιζουσι in this connection. It is rendered *corrupt*, in ver. 20. (compare Acts xiii. 41; Heb. viii. 13; and James iv. 14.) and properly signifies to *change, spoil*, and *consume*; and is with peculiar elegance applicable to such an *alteration* of the natural countenance as proceeded from their *emaciating* themselves, and contracting their faces into a *dismal form*.—The learned author of *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 13—22, has rendered it unnecessary for me to add any thing more on this or the following verse.

r *Anoint thy head* with oil, *and wash thy face.*] This was usual among the Jews, not only at *feasts*, but at other times. Compare Ruth iii. 3; 2 Sam. xiv. 2; and Judith xvi. 8. On the other hand, *dust and ashes* were often used in times of deep *mourning*, or public *fasting*, which must sadly *deform the countenance*; see 2 Sam. xiii. 19; Esth. iv. 1, 3; Isa. lxi. 3; Dan. ix. 3: and Jonah iii. 6.

a *Canker* may *consume* your corn, or corrupt the very metals you have hoarded.] The word βρωσις is by some translated *smut*, or *weavil*, and is supposed to signify any little insect that gets into corn and eats it. Mr. Blair seems to understand it so, and thinks our

SECT. 41. MATT. VI.

dig through the strongest walls that you have raised about them, *and* may *steal* them away. *But* build your happiness on a nobler and more certain foundation, and *store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, where none of these accidents can happen; *where neither moth nor canker can consume* them, *and where thieves cannot break in, nor steal* them away; but the arms of everlasting power and love shall secure you from every calamity and invasion.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.

21 The influence which this advice will have on your whole conduct, should engage you to attend more diligently to it; *for where* that which you account *your* chief *treasure is, there will your heart also be*, and thither will the tendency and series of your actions be referred. See therefore that you form a right judgment on so important an article, and do not over-value the world and its enjoyments. For as *the eye is the lamp of the* whole *body*: and *therefore*, on the one hand, *if thine eye be clear*,[b] and free from any vitiating humour, *thy whole body will be full of light: But*, on the other hand, *if thine eye be distempered, thy whole body will be full of darkness:* so it is with respect to the practical judgment you form as to the worth of earthly and heavenly enjoyments. *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* and if the maxims you lay down to yourselves are wrong, how very erroneous must your conduct be!

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light:

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness: if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 And do not impose upon yourselves so far as to imagine that your hearts can be equally divided between heaven and earth: for as *no man can serve two masters* whose interests and commands are directly contrary to each other; *but will* quickly appear *either* comparatively to *hate the one, and love the other; or*, by degrees at least, *will* grow weary of so disagreeable a situation, so as to *adhere* entirely *to the one, and* quite neglect and abandon *the other:* so you will find *you cannot* at the same time *serve God and Mammon*,[c] that unworthy idol to which so many are devoting their hearts and their pursuits.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

25 And I would charge you *therefore* to take heed that your affections be not engaged in a service so inconsistent with religion and true happiness; and in particular, *I say unto you*,[d] *Be not* distressed with *anxious* cares *about your* subsistence in *life*,[e] *what you shall eat, and what you shall drink*, when your present stock of provisions is gone; *nor, with respect to your body, what you shall put on* when the garments you have are worn out. *Is not life* a better and *more* valuable gift *than food, and the body than raiment?* And if it be, why should you not trust that almighty and gracious Being who formed your bodies, and inspired them with life, to maintain the work of his own hands?

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 You may surely do it, when you reflect on his care of the inferior creatures. *Look on the birds of the air*, for instance, that are now flying around you:[f] *for* though they are gay and cheerful to a proverb, yet do *they neither sow nor reap: nor* do they, like some other animals, *gather* a stock of food *into hoards*, to lay up for winter; *and yet* the rich providence of *your heavenly Father* plentifully *feedeth them:* and *are not you* his children, *much more valuable* in his sight *than they;* as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves?[g] Why then should you at any time suspect his care?

26 Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?

27 And after all, this immoderate carefulness is useless, as well as unnecessary; for *which of you can, by* [*all his*] *anxiety, add to his age* or vigour[h] so much as *one cubit*, or even the smallest measure or moment beyond what God shall appoint? Nay, it is

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Lord here refers to clothes, grain, and gold, as the chief treasures respectively obnoxious to moth, smut, and thieves; which may seem the more probable, as a different word, ιος, is used for *rust*, Jam. v. 3. But as δηγμις properly signifies any thing that *eats into* another substance, I rather chose to render it *canker*, which has much the same ambiguity; and to paraphrase it in a manner including both the senses.

b *If thine eye be clear*, &c.] Some commentators have explained this, as if our Lord intended here to urge the practice of *liberality*, as what would have a great influence on the whole of a man's character and conduct; and suppose it illustrated by all those passages where *an evil eye* signifies a grudging temper, and *a good eye* a bountiful disposition, (compare Deut. 15. 9. Prov. xxiii. 6. xxviii. 22. and xxii. 9. Hebr.) and also by those texts in which *simplicity* is put for *liberality*, (Rom. xii. 8. and 2 Cor. viii. 2. ix. 11, 13. Gr.) See Hammond, Whitby, L'Enfant, and Beausobre, *in loc.* But the sense given above appears most natural, as well as most extensive.—I have rendered απλους *clear*, rather than *single*, as less ambiguous, and with more evident propriety applied to the *eye:* it is opposed to an eye overgrown with a *film*, which would obstruct the sight.

c *God and Mammon.*] *Mammon* is a Syriac word for *riches*, which our Lord beautifully represents as a person whom the folly of men had deified. It is well known the Greeks had a fictitious *god of wealth;* but I cannot find that he was ever directly worshipped in Syria under the name of *Mammon*.

d *Therefore I say unto you*, &c.] A late writer, who takes upon him, by the strength of his own reason, to reject at pleasure what the apostles believed and taught, strangely complains of a want of connection between this and the preceding verse. But can there be any better reason assigned against immoderate *anxiety* than *this*, that such a subjection to *Mammon* as this expresses, is utterly inconsistent with the love and service of God?

e *Be not anxious about your* subsistence in *life.*] It is certain that the word μεριμναω generally signifies an *excessive anxiety;* (see Luke x. 41. xii. 11. xxi. 34. and Phil. iv. 6. and indeed almost every other place where it is used; which is agreeable to the derivation of it. There is no need therefore to say, (as Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 255. and Dr. Clarke in his *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 116, *et seq.* do,) that our Lord only addresses this to his apostles, who were to cast themselves on an extraordinary providence, without being any ways concerned themselves for their support. Mr. Blair has well proved the contrary at large in his excellent *Appendix* to his fourth *Sermon*, Vol. I. p. 55, *et seq.* and it is easy to observe, that the arguments our Lord urges contain nothing peculiar to their case, but are built on considerations applicable to *all Christians*. Compare Phil. iv. 6. and 1 Pet. v. 7. as also Luke xxii. 35, 36. and Acts xx. 34. from whence it appears that the *apostles themselves* were not entirely to neglect a prudent care for their own subsistence, in dependence on miraculous provisions.

f *The birds of the air* now flying around you.] It is not so proper to render πετεινα *fowls*, as that word generally signifies the *larger kind of birds*, and especially those under the care of men.—For mentioning *the birds* as then in their sight, see the latter part of note o, on Matt. v. 14. p. 75.

g *Are not you much more valuable than they*, as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves?] Ουχ υμεις μαλλον διαφερετε αυτων, may be rendered, *Have not you greatly the advantage of them?* which may refer to men's being capable of *sowing, reaping*, and *gathering into barns*, which the *birds* are not: and though I rather prefer the former sense, I thought it not improper to hint at the other; as I have done in many other places where such ambiguities have occurred.

h *Can add to his age.*] It is well known, that this is frequently the signification of the word ηλικια; there being many places where it is evident that it is used for *age*, (as John ix. 21, 23. and Heb. xi. 11.) and certainly it makes the best sense here: for it is seldom found that persons are solicitous about growing *a cubit taller*.—I confess *a cubit of age* is not a common phrase among us, though *an inch of time* be sometimes used; and in this view had I rendered *cubit* by *moment*, as a learned friend who remarked on this passage advised, it would have been very justifiable.

much more probable you should rather impair than strengthen your constitution by indulging such a temper, which sometimes brings on grey hairs and death before their time. SERM. 41.

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

And as for raiment, why are you anxious [*about that?*] Observe not only the animal, but what is yet much lower, the vegetable part of the creation; and particularly, *consider* there *the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not* to prepare the materials of their covering, *nor do they spin* or weave them into garments: *Yet I say unto you, That even* the magnificent *Solomon, in all his* royal *glory*, when sitting on his throne of ivory and gold, (1 Kings x. 18.) *was not arrayed* in garments of so pure a white,[i] and of such curious workmanship, *as one of these* lilies presents to your view. *And if God so clothe the grass of the field*, and shelters and adorns the flower[k] that grows wild amongst it, *which is* [*flourishing*] *to-day, and* perhaps *to-morrow is thrown into the furnace* or the still,[l] [*will he*] *not much more* [*clothe*] *you*, his servants and his children, *O ye of little faith!* that you should be so diffident as to distrust his care, or in the least to doubt of it! MATT. VI. 29 30

Be not ye therefore any more distracted, and torn in pieces (as it were) with *anxious* and unbelieving thoughts, *saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink?* How is it we shall be provided for, *or what shall we wear*, in the remainder of our lives? (*For* it is really beneath your character, as my disciples, thus to distress yourselves on this account: *the heathen*, who are strangers to the promises of God's covenant, and to the hopes of his glory, do indeed *seek after all these things;* and it is no wonder that their minds are taken up with them: but you have greater business to employ you, and higher hopes to animate and encourage you;) *for* you may be assured, that as *your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things* while you dwell in the body, he will not fail to provide them for you. 31 32

But I exhort you, that you turn your cares into a nobler channel, and *seek*, in the *first* place, and with the greatest earnestness and concern, *the kingdom of God and his righteousness*;[m] labouring to secure an interest in the promises of the gospel yourselves, and to promote its reception among others, that by the submitting to the righteousness of God, you may be thus accepted as righteous before him: in that you will be sure of success; *and* as for *all these* little *things* of which I have now been speaking, they *shall be added to you over and above*,[n] and, as it were, thrown in amidst a crowd of far more valuable blessings. And *therefore*, while you faithfully attend to this, *be not anxious* even *for the morrow*, and much less for future years: *for* indeed *the morrow shall provide for itself;* that Providence which hath taken care of you formerly, shall send in new supplies, and suggest new expedients, as new necessities and difficulties require them: and, in the mean time, you need not anticipate future trials; for without such an addition, *sufficient for the* present *day* [*is*] *the evil of it*, and it is well if you have wisdom and grace proportionable even to that. 33 34

IMPROVEMENT.

How kind are these precepts of our blessed Redeemer! the substance of which is indeed but this, Do thyself no harm. Let us not be so ungrateful to him, and so injurious to ourselves, as to harass and oppress our minds with that burthen of anxiety which he has so graciously taken off. Every verse and clause we have been reading, speaks at once to the understanding and the heart. We will not therefore indulge these unnecessary, these useless, these mischievous cares; we will not borrow the anxieties and distresses of the morrow, to aggravate those of the present day: but rather will we cheerfully repose ourselves on that heavenly Father who knows that we need these things, and has given us life, which is more than meat, and the body, which is more than raiment; and, thus instructed in the philosophy of our heavenly Master, will learn a lesson of faith and cheerfulness from every bird of the air, and every flower of the field. Ver. 34 31, 32 34 25 26, 28

Let the Gentiles that know not God, perplex their minds with unworthy suspicions, or bow them down to the ignoble servitude of Mammon, that base rival of our living Jehovah: but we, far from desiring to share our hearts and our services between two such contrary masters, will cheerfully devote them to him, whose right to them is so infinitely beyond all room for any contest. Let us *take heed and beware of covetousness*, and make it our business not to hoard up earthly and corruptible treasures, but *first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness;* so shall other things be added for present subsistence; and so shall we lay up in store an 24 19, 20 33

i *Was not arrayed* in garments of so pure a white.] As the eastern princes were often clothed in white robes, and they were generally counted a magnificent apparel, (compare Esth. viii. 15. and Dan. vii. 9.) I think it more natural to explain the words thus, (as Calmet does in his *Dissert.* Vol. II. p. 230.) than to suppose with Ray (*on the Creation*, p. 107.) that κρινα signified tulips of various colours, or a purple kind of lily. Some have indeed quoted Cant. v. 13. in support of the last interpretation; but that text may refer to the fragrancy of those flowers, rather than their hue.

k Shelters and adorns the flower.] The word αμφιεννυσιν, which we render *clothe*, properly expresses the putting on a complete dress that surrounds the body on all sides, and is used with peculiar beauty for that elegant, yet strong, external membrane, which (like the skin in the human body) at once adorns the tender structure of the vegetable, and likewise guards it from the injuries of the weather. Every microscope in which a flower is viewed, affords a lively comment on this text.

l *Is thrown into the furnace* or the still.] I apprehend that this may be as properly the signification of the word κλιβανον as *oven*, and that the sense will thus appear to be more easy; for it can hardly be supposed that grass or flowers should be thrown into the oven the day after they are cut down; unless it was the custom to heat their ovens with *new hay*, which seems not very natural. Elsner indeed renders χορτον *stubble;* but that seems not to suit the context.

m *The kingdom of God and his righteousness.*] By *righteousness*, Dr. Sykes here understands the Messiah, *the righteous Branch*, who was to *rule in righteousness*, and in whose days *the righteous were to flourish:* (see Dr. Sykes *On Christianity*, p. 35, 36.) But it seems more natural to interpret it, of that way of *becoming righteous* which the gospel proposes, and which St. Paul, by a phrase exactly equivalent to this, calls *the righteousness of God*. Compare Rom. x. 3. and Phil. iii. 9.

n *Added over and above.*] This seems to be the exact import of the word προστεθησεται, than which expression nothing could have been more proper; for these *temporal blessings* are by no means essential to the stipulations of the *covenant of grace*, but are entirely to be referred to the Divine good pleasure, to add or withhold, as God shall see fit. Compare 1 Kings iii. 11—13.

SECT. 41. incorruptible treasure in heaven, in which we shall be rich and happy, when the riches of this world are consumed with their owners, and the whole fashion of it is passed away.

MATT. VI. While these divine maxims are spreading their light about us, let our eye be clear to behold them, and our heart open to receive them; and let us cautiously guard against those deceitful principles of action, which would give a wrong bias to all our pursuits, and turn the light which is in us into a fatal and incurable darkness.

SECTION XLII.

Our Lord proceeds in his discourse to caution his disciples against rash judgment, and to exhort them to impartiality, prudence, prayer, and resolution; and warns them against seducers. Matt. vii. 1—20

MATT. vii. 1.

SECT. 42. YOU, my disciples, live in a very censorious age, and the scribes and Pharisees, who are in the highest esteem for the strictness of their lives, place a great part of their own religion in condemning others;[a] but see to it, that you *do not judge* those about you in this rigorous and severe manner, nor pass such unnecessary or uncharitable censures upon them, *that you may not* yourselves *be judged* with the like severity. *For* in this respect you will find, that *according to the judgment with which you judge* others, *you shall be judged: and by that* very *measure* that *ye mete* to them, *it shall be measured back to you:* God and man will make great allowances to the character of the candid and benevolent; but they must expect "judgment without mercy, who have shewed no mercy;" nor can they deny the equity of such treatment. (Jam. ii. 13.)

MATT. VII.

3 The caution I have mentioned is more apparently necessary, considering how prone men are to be partial to themselves: *but why dost thou*, whoever thou art, *look at* that little infirmity which is but like *a mote in thy brother's eye, while thou observest not the* much 4 greater fault, which is like a *beam in thine own eye?*[b] *Or how canst thou say to thy brother*, with any appearance of justice, or any degree of assurance, *Hold still*, [*and*] *I will take the mote out of thine eye:*[c] *while, behold*, it is much more visible that [*there is*] *a* 5 *beam in thine own eye? Thou* partial *hypocrite*, begin thy reformation at home, and make it thy *first* care to *clear out the beam from thine own eye*, or to correct the errors of thy judgment, and the enormities of thy life; *and then wilt thou* better *discern* [*how*] *to remove the mote out of thy brother's eye*, and mayst attempt it with more decency, as well as greater probability of success.

6 I would farther remind you, that how unexceptionable soever your own characters may be, there is some caution to be used in attempting to reprove, or even to inform others; or you may expose your admonitions to contempt, and yourselves to abuse. *Give not* that *holy* [*food*] *to dogs*, or to such profane, furious, and persecuting wretches as deserve no better a name; *nor cast your* precious *pearls* of heavenly wisdom *before* such profligate sensualists, as resemble *swine* rather than men; *lest*, as those brutal creatures might do if jewels were thrown before them, *they trample them under their feet* with scorn, *and turning* [*upon you,*] as if they had received an injury rather than a favour, fasten on you, and *tear you:*[d] for so extremely sordid and malignant will you find many in these degenerate days.

7 Now, whether you want wisdom to guide you in these difficulties, or fortitude to animate you against such hardships; or, in a word, whatever your exigencies or necessities may be, *ask* the divine assistance in prayer, *and it shall be given you; seek* it, *and you shall find* it: and if it be a while delayed, *knock* with repeated importunity at the door of mercy, 8 *and it shall* at length *be* graciously *opened to you.* To this you are encouraged by the experience of every praying soul; *for every one that asketh* aright, *receiveth: and he that* diligently *seeketh, findeth: and to him that* patiently *knocketh*, [*the door*] *shall be opened.*

9 *And indeed*[e] it is no inconsiderable encouragement, which you may derive from that natural affection to your offspring which a merciful God has infused into the hearts of

MATT. vii. 1.
JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

a Place a great part of their own religion in condemning others.] Though Christ does not so directly level his discourse against the Pharisees in this chapter, as in the two foregoing, he seems to glance upon them in this and other expressions which he uses in it. That they were culpable on this head appears from such passages as Luke xviii. 9—14; xvi. 15, 16; and John vii. 47, 49. (Compare Isa. lxv. 5.) Their unjust censures of Christ are the strongest instances of it that can be conceived.

b *Look at a mote in thy brother's eye, while thou observest not the beam in thine own eye.*] Dr. Lightfoot (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) has shewn, that this expression, as well as that in ver. 2. was a proverb among the Jews. The word κάρφος, which we render *mote*, is well explained by Hesychius, who tells us it signifies *a little splinter of wood*; (though others understand it of *a small seed*;) and thus it is opposed to δοκὸν, a large *beam*, with great propriety. But as it is impossible that such a thing as *a beam of wood* should be lodged in the eye, I am ready to imagine, that these words might signify different kinds of *distempers* to which that tender part is subject; the former of which might be no more, in comparison of the latter, than a *grain*, or *splinter*, to *a beam*.

c *Hold still* [*and*] *I will take the mote out of thine eye.*] This seems to be the exact meaning of ἄφες ἐκβάλω, which I chose to translate thus literally, as I think it elegantly intimates how ready men are to shrink back from reproof. The simile here used implies, that it is as absurd for a *bad man* to set up for a *reprover* of others, as it would be for one that is almost *blind* himself to pretend to perform operations on other men's eyes.

d *And turning* [*upon you*] *tear you.* I cannot blame the translation of 1727, which follows Castalio, and renders it, *lest these* (that is, the swine,) *trample them underfoot, and those* (that is, the dogs,) *turn upon you and tear you.* This may perhaps be our Lord's meaning, but it did not seem necessary to alter the version, as it is possible that dogs might trample upon jewels, and swine might be ready to wound those that disturbed them.—That the figure here supposed is sometimes used, does indeed appear by comparing Matt. xii. 22, 1 Cor. xi. 11; 2 Cor. ii. 15; and Philem. ver. 5. But I think the order of the words, as they stand in the original, may very well be retained in the translation of these places; for the transposition of words, even where there is a trajection in the sense, is so dangerous a thing where sacred writers are in question, that no small advantage gained in elegance or perspicuity seems sufficient to counterbalance it.

e *And indeed.*] Dr. Whitby thinks, that where the particle ν is placed at the beginning of a sentence, it is intended merely for a mark of interrogation; and in this way it is that, he supposes, we are to understand it here, and likewise in Matt. xx. 15; and 1 Cor. xiv. 36. But as the sense will very fitly bear it, I conceive that in each of these places it may be rendered *indeed*.

those of you that are parents; for *what one man is there among you,*[f] in all this numerous assembly, *who, if his son should ask him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he ask* him *for a fish will give him a serpent?* Can you imagine any father could be so unnatural as to deny the necessary supplies of life to his hungry child; and instead of these, to give him what would starve or poison him? *If therefore you,* imperfect and *evil as you are,* and some of you perhaps tenacious, froward, and unkind, yet *know how to give good gifts to your children;* if you find your hearts disposed and ready to communicate the best of what you have for their relief and sustenance, *how much more will your* almighty and all-bountiful *Father in heaven,* who has a perfect sight of all your wants, and can with perfect ease supply them, and who himself has wrought into your hearts these benevolent affections, be ready to exceed you in expressing his kindness, so as freely to *give good things to those that ask* them of *him* by fervent and constant prayer? SECT. 42. MATT. VII. 10 11

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Being animated *therefore* by his goodness,[g] study to express your gratitude for it, by your integrity and kindness to your fellow-creatures; and take it as a most sacred rule, *All things which ye would be willing that men should do to you, do ye also in like manner to them:* treat them in every instance just as you would think it reasonable to be treated by them, if you were in their circumstances, and they in yours; *for this is,* in effect, a summary and abstract of all the humane and social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of *the law and the prophets;* and it was one of the greatest ends of both[h] to bring men to this equitable and amiable temper. 12

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

It will indeed be very difficult thus to overcome the prejudices of self-love, and to subdue those other corruptions of the heart which oppose themselves to the obedience of the divine laws; and the persecutions to which good men are often exposed will increase the difficulty:[i] but I would press you to exert a becoming resolution, and courageously to *enter in through the strait gate* of self-denial and holiness; *for wide is the gate, and* smooth and *spacious the way which leads to destruction; and there are many who enter* into destruction *by it:* And this they do, *because* they are discouraged by the hardships which attend the entrance on a religious life, or must be expected in a progress in it; as they see that *strait is the gate, and rugged* and painful *the way which leads to* eternal *life; and they who find it,* and with a holy ardency and resolution press into it, so as to arrive at that blessed end, *are* comparatively *few:* see to it, therefore, that you be of that little number. 13 14

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.

And it concerns you so much the rather to be careful about it, as the falsehood of many who set up for religious teachers, will in some degree increase the difficulty and danger. *Be* therefore *on your guard against* those *false prophets, who come to you* indeed *in the clothing of sheep,*[k] in the most specious forms of humility, innocence, and piety; *but inwardly are ravening wolves,* which seek nothing but to feed themselves by the destruction of the flock. And you will find, on a more accurate observation of their actions, that *you may* generally *know them by their fruits,*[l] and discover, through all 15 16

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves:

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men

f *What one man is there among you?*] This seems to be the emphasis of τις εστιν εξ υμων ανθρωπος; some think it also to imply the same as if it had been said, *Which of you is there, though but a man?* And as what is added in the *eleventh verse* plainly expresses this sense, perhaps it might also be intended here.—Young preachers will, I hope, observe how much life and force it adds to these discourses of our Lord, that they so closely are directed, through the whole of them, as an immediate address to his hearers; and are not loose and general harangues, in the manner of those essays which are now grown so fashionable in pulpits. If any are grown too polite to learn true oratory from Christ, I wish they would at least learn it from Demosthenes, who, I doubt not, would have admired the eloquence of this sermon.

g Being animated *therefore* by his goodness.] Some would have us to consider the particle ουν in this passage as a mere expletive; but there is certainly a force in the connection, beyond what most have observed. See the excellent *Discourses* of Bishop Atterbury and Dr. Evans upon it; which illustrate the sense, reasonableness, and use of this golden law, in a manner that deserves the most attentive perusal.

h One of the greatest ends of both.] I say *one of the greatest,* that this may be reconciled with our Lord's declaring the *love of God* to be *the first and great commandment;* (Matt. xxii. 38.) and it is indeed a most absurd and fatal error to imagine that *the regulation of social life is the only end of religion.* I fear many good-natured deists will perish by taking this one principle for granted, and my heart is wounded with the sad apprehension of it.

i Persecutions—will increase the difficulty.] In order to reconcile what is here advanced with those passages which assert *Christ's yoke* to be *easy,* and *the ways of wisdom* to be *ways of pleasantness,* &c. a late learned writer thinks it necessary to suppose that this text refers entirely to the case of persecution; and that the *strait gate* is a violent death, which lay at the end of the *narrow way,* and concluded the injuries and calamities which persecutors would bring upon Christians. (See Mr. Hallet's *Disc.* Vol. III. p. 24—29.) But nothing is more certain than that Christ requires from all his disciples, in all ages and places, a life of *mortification* and *self-denial;* which, though it is mingled with, and introductory to, pleasures abundantly sufficient to counterbalance it, yet to corrupt nature is difficult and painful; (see Matt. v. 29, 30; xvi. 24; Rom. vi. 6 viii. 13; Col. iii. 5; Gal. v. 16, 17; and 1 Cor ix. 26, 27.) However, therefore, I allow that persecutions are to be included among other difficulties, yet I can see no reason to believe that *martyrdom* was so common in the age of those to whom Christ addressed himself, as to be spoken of in such general language as *the gate leading to life:* not to insist upon it, that our Lord now speaks of what then *was,* and not what *would be* the case in future years; and that he mentions the gate before the way; whereas I think Mr. Hallet's interpretation would have required a different order.—When Grotius refers the *straitness of the gate* to the difficulty of virtue in itself, and the *ruggedness of the way* to accidental oppositions, he seems to refine too much.—Many parallel passages from heathen writers may be seen in him and Dr. Whitby.

k *Who come to you in the clothing of sheep.*] It is a very low thought to suppose that our Lord here refers to the *rough habit* worn by *false prophets* of old; for which purpose so many critics quote Zech. xiii. 4; and, very unaccountably, Heb. xi. 37. For, not to insist on the probability there is that those *rough garments* might be made of *goat's* or *camel's hair,* rather than *wool,* (compare 2 Kings i. 8; and Matt. iii. 4.) the beauty of the simile is lost by this interpretation. A wolf in sheep's clothing is grown into a proverb for a wicked man that makes a great profession of religion, yet cannot dissemble so well as not to be discovered by attentive observation; which was just the character of the Pharisees in our Saviour's days; see Matt. xxiii. 23—28; and Luke xi. 39—42.

l *You may know them by their fruits.*] The characters of men are not to be discovered by the doctrines that they teach; and therefore this cannot (as some have thought) be the meaning of *knowing them,* who were their teachers, *by their fruits.* It is more reasonable to explain it of their *actions,* which are often called *fruits;* (compare Matt. iii. 8; xxi. 43; John xv. 2, 5; and Col. i. 6.)—It will be objected, that *bad men* may teach *good doctrines,* and even the worst have been known to do it in some instances. But as to this, I answer, that our Lord does not exhort his disciples to reject whatever such men taught, but only to *be upon their guard against them,* that they might not credit any thing merely on their authority.—I only add, that this caution would, by a parity of reason, extend to all that set up for *teachers,* as well as to *prophets;* (not to insist on the latitude in which that word is used;) so that it would at least obliquely glance on the Pharisees, whose influence over the people was so injurious to the gospel, and

SECT. 42. MATT. VII.

their disguise, that base character which lurks beneath, and which may justly render you suspicious as to their doctrines: (2 Tim. iii. 5—9.) For *do men* look to *gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?*[m] Or can it be expected by you, in a common way, that you should gather spiritual advantage, or should obtain religious improvement, from the lessons of wicked men? Their influence, on the whole, will be more likely to
17 debauch than edify your minds; for as the fruit will be agreeable in its nature and kind to the tree that produces it, *even so, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces bad fruit;* and in like manner will the fruits that men produce be answer-
18 able to the habitual frame and disposition of their hearts. Nor can it indeed be otherwise in the usual course of things; for as *a good tree cannot bear evil fruit*, so *neither can a*
19 *corrupt tree bear good fruit;* (compare Matt. xii. 33—35. sect. lxii.) And therefore, by the way, to prevent such false pretenders to religion from being a lasting incumbrance and mischief, they shall assuredly be overtaken by the righteous judgment of God: and as you see, that *every tree which*, after a competent trial, *beareth not good fruit*, how fair and flourishing soever it may seem, *is cut down, and cast into the fire;* such too will be the end of hypocritical professors and ungodly men, which it becomes you all seriously to
20 consider. Upon the whole, it will be found that there is now a difference in men's characters correspondent to the great difference to be made in their future estate; *so that* I had reason to say that *you shall* generally *know them by their fruits:* the disguise will fall off in an unguarded moment, and it will be your wisdom to observe and improve the signal.

gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

IMPROVEMENT.

When will the happy time come, in which Christians shall form themselves on these important maxims of their great Master! When shall they be known to be his disciples, by the candour of their sentiments, the equity of their conduct, and the beneficence of their actions, as well as by the articles of their faith, and the forms of their worship! Let us all apply these charges to ourselves, in the dear and awful name of Him that gave them.

Ver. 1 What can be more dreadful to us than to think of being severely judged by that God, without whose hourly
2 forbearance and gracious indulgence we are all undone? Let us then exercise that mercy which we need; and to
3, 5 form our minds to this most reasonable temper, let us often be thinking of our own many infirmities, and be humbling ourselves before God on account of them.

7, 8 Animated by the gracious invitations and the precious promises which are here given, with earnest importunity let us make our daily addresses to his throne; asking, that we may receive; seeking, that we may find; and knock-
9, 11 ing, that the door of mercy may be opened to us. And while any of us feel in our hearts the workings of parental tenderness towards our infant offspring, let us consider it as a delightful emblem of yet greater readiness in our heavenly Father, to pity and relieve his children.

May universal righteousness and charity be practised by us in the whole of our behaviour, and may we *always exercise ourselves herein to have a conscience void of* offence, *both towards God and towards men!* (Acts xxiv. 16.) May we avoid all manner of injustice, and guard against the sallies of a proud and overbearing temper! May we be upright and benevolent in all our conduct; and make it our constant care to govern our actions by
12 that most equitable rule, Of *doing to others as we* would reasonably *desire they should do to us*, on a change of our circumstances and theirs! Happy those generous souls, in whom the bias of self-love is so rectified, that they can in this instance hold the balance between themselves and others with an impartial and unwavering hand!

20 On the whole, let us remember that we ourselves are at last to be tried by the rule by which we are here directed
17, 18 to judge of others, even by the fruits which we produce. May God by his grace make the tree good, that the productions of it may be found to his glory and the refreshment of all around us, that we may not be *cut down as*
19 *cumberers of the ground, and cast into the fire!*

The way of life which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us in such precepts as these, may indeed to
13 corrupt nature appear rugged and narrow, and the gate strait through which we are to pass: but let us encourage
14 ourselves against all these difficulties, by considering that immortal life and glory to which they infallibly lead. Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most painful way of piety and virtue, though with yet fewer companions than we might reasonably expect, to all those flowery and frequented paths of vice which *go down to the chambers of death.*

SECTION XLIII.

Our Lord concludes his sermon on the mount with a lively representation of the absolute necessity of a practical regard to his precepts. Matt. vii. 21, *to the end.*

Matt. vii. 21.

SECT. 43. MATT. VII.

These are the precepts I thought proper to give you; and you must govern your lives by them, if ever you hope to find your account in the most diligent attendance on my ministry: for it is *not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord*, who is ready now in words to acknowledge me as his Master, or who at last with the most passionate
21 and earnest cries entreats my mercy, that *shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*,[a] and

Matt. vii. 21.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

so exceeding mischievous to those who had a veneration for them, that our Lord found it necessary often to repeat such cautions. See Matt. xv. 12, 13, xvi. 6; xxiii. 2, *et seq.* Mark viii. 15; and Luke xii. 1.

m *Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?*] These words suppose the plant was *known* to be a *thorn* or a *thistle*, and represent the folly of looking for *grapes* or *figs* from plants that had it not in their nature to bear them, or of expecting *good* from persons that were vicious and corrupt. Had Christ meant what has commonly been supposed, he would rather have said, *You do not find thorns on a vine, or thistles on a fig-tree.*

a *Shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*] Here *the kingdom of heaven* must signify, that *of glory* above; for calling Christ, *Lord*, is the very circumstance which constitutes us the subjects of his

SECT. 43.

be admitted to the complete felicity in which the administration I am now opening shall finally terminate; *but he* only shall be entitled to that privilege, *who* conscientiously *performs*, in the main series of his life, *the* holy *will of my Father who is in heaven.*

MATT. VII.

It will be your wisdom to attend to these things; for though you now see me in what may seem a mean and despicable form, the time will certainly come, when I shall appear as the Universal Judge: and I now forewarn you, that *many will say to me in that day*, 22 when their eternal state is to be determined, *Lord, Lord, have we not* been employed in distinguished offices in thy church, and been furnished for them even by miraculous endowments? and in pursuance of them, have we not taught and *prophesied in thy name? and in* the authority of *thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And*, nevertheless, *I will then* openly *declare unto them, I never knew* 23 *you*, or never approved of your character,[b] even when you made the most florid profession;[c] and therefore *depart from me ye workers of iniquity*:[d] and whatever you that hear me may now imagine, that separation from me will be their everlasting destruction.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Hear *therefore* the conclusion of the whole matter, and seriously attend to it. *Every* 24 *one*, whoever he be, and how great soever his former irregularities may have been, *who heareth these my words, and doeth them*; or in the main course of his life governs his temper and his actions by them, lays a solid foundation for present comfort, and everlasting security and joy: *I will compare him* therefore *to a prudent man, who built his house upon a* firm *rock; And the* stormy *rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds* 25 *blew, and beat* with violence *upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded on a* solid *rock*. And thus shall the good man's hopes be established, when they come, as all must come, to the strictest trial. *But every one that heareth these my sayings, and* 26 *doeth them not*, how constantly soever he may attend them, and whatever zeal he may profess for them, *may* justly *be compared to a foolish man, who*, without any care to secure the foundation, *built his house upon the sand; And the* stormy *rain descended*, 27 *and the floods came, and the winds blew* with a tempestuous violence, *and struck* directly *on that house; and it fell* at once, *and its ruin was great* and wide, as the building had been: a lively emblem of the ruin which will another day overwhelm the unhappy man who trusts to an outward profession and form of godliness, when he does not sincerely and practically regard it.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock;

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand;

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these excellent *sayings*,[e] *the mul-* 28 *titudes* that heard him *were struck with amazement at his doctrine. For* in this, and 29 his other sermons, *he was* still *teaching them*[f] *as one that had* a divine *authority* to dictate in his own name, *and not as the scribes*, their established teachers; who generally contented themselves with quoting the name and authority of some celebrated doctors of the former age, and that frequently to confirm some trifling remark or useless ceremony of human device;[g] whereas the discourses of Christ were weighty and convincing, and always delivered with an air of seriousness, dignity, and majesty, becoming the great Prophet and King of his church, and the immediate delegate from God to men.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

IMPROVEMENT.

How justly may our admiration concur with theirs that heard these sayings of our Lord, while we have the Ver. 28 honour and pleasure of attending these discourses as the inspired penmen have recorded them, by the assistance of that Spirit who was to *bring all things to their remembrance!* Are we not struck with the authority of this Divine Teacher, so as to bear our witness to the gracious and edifying *words that proceeded out of his mouth?* (Luke iv. 22.)

Let us not content ourselves with applauding what we have heard, but let us go away and practise it. Shortly 24—27 will that stormy day arise which must try the foundation of our hopes. *God will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.* How thankful should we be that *God has laid in Zion, for a foundation, a chief Corner-stone, elect and precious;* with an assurance, that *he that believeth on him shall not be confounded!* (Compare Isa. xxviii. 16. *et seq.* and 1 Peter ii. 6.) *But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon;* lest the weight of his ruin be proportionable to the height of his hopes. (1 Cor. iii. 10.)

We say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord;* but let us remember this will not secure our *entering into his heavenly* 21 *kingdom*. Whatever be our profession, or whatever our office in his church, the most splendid and honourable 22, 23

earthly kingdom, or members of his visible church. Compare Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28; and 1 Cor. xv. 50.

b *I never knew you*, or never approved of your character.] The word *know* is plainly used in this sense, Psal. i. 6; Matt. xxv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 19; John x. 14; Rom. vii. 15; and perhaps 1 Cor. viii. 3.

c Even when you made the most florid profession.] This is a very remarkable circumstance, that is strongly implied in the words, *I NEVER knew you.*

d *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*] There is an incomparable dignity in this whole passage, which I have endeavoured a little to illustrate in the paraphrase. The poor despised Jesus not only calls God *his Father*, but speaks as the *Eternal Judge*, before whom men should beg and plead for their very lives, dreading banishment from him as their final destruction.

e *When Jesus had finished these* excellent *sayings.*] This plainly intimates that all this discourse was delivered at once, and consequently, that several passages related by Luke as spoken at different times, are *repetitions* of it; compare Matt. v. 3. *et seq.* with Luke vi. 20. *et seq.*—Matt. v. 13. with Luke xiv. 34, 35.—Matt. v. 25. with Luke xii. 58.—Matt. vi. 9. *et seq.* with Luke xi. 2. *et seq.*—Mat. vi. 20, 21. with Luke xii. 33, 34.—Mat. vi. 24. with Luke xvi. 13.—Matt. vii. 1. *et seq.* with Luke vi. 37. *et seq.*—and Matt. vii. 12—14. with Luke xiii. 24.

f *He was* still *teaching them.*] Beza has well observed, that these words ην διδασκων refer to the continued course and general character of his *teaching*, of which this discourse is a noble specimen, indeed so glorious a one, that I persuade myself the reader will pardon my having paraphrased it in so copious a manner.

g To confirm some trifling remark, or useless ceremony of human device.] If we may judge of the teachings of the scribes in Christ's days, by the Jewish Talmuds, or even by their Mishnah, this was so eminently the character of it, that nothing could be more justly contemptible; and their frigid and insipid comments and lessons could no more be compared with those strains of divine eloquence, with which our Lord's discourses abounded, than a glow-worm can be compared to the sun.

SECT. 43. MATT. VII.

of our works will be vain, if we are found workers of iniquity; for our great Master will then disown us, as those whom he has never approved. Blessed Jesus! it will then be in vain to fly to thee with the importunity of prayer, and to repeat the most earnest addresses. We would now, while yet there is room for it, fall down before thee, entreating thee to add the teachings of thy Spirit to those of thy word, that we may be effectually engaged to *do the will of thine heavenly Father*, that we may finally be confessed and owned by thee, and be admitted *into the joy of our Lord!*

SECTION XLIV.

Jesus, descending from the mount, cleanses a leper who applied to him for a cure. Matt. viii. 1—4; Luke v. 12—16. Mark i. 40, *to the end.*

MATT. viii. 1.

SECT. 44. MATT. VIII. 1 LUKE V. 12 MARK I. 41 42 43 44 LUKE V. 15

NOW when Jesus had finished this large and excellent discourse, *as he was coming down from the mountain*[a] on which he delivered it, *great multitudes* of people, impressed and charmed with what they had already heard, *followed him* to the town towards which he went, in hopes of farther instruction and edification.

And when he was just *in* the confines of *a certain city*,[b] in the neighbourhood of that mountain, *behold, a man full of leprosy*, and dreadfully overrun with that sad disease, *seeing Jesus*, and having been informed of the many miraculous cures which he had done, *came to him*, most earnestly *entreating him* to have pity on his wretched case; *and*, first *kneeling down to him*, he then *fell prostrate* before him, *and worshipped him, saying, Lord*, though my distemper be to human power incurable, (2 Kings v. 7.) yet I know assuredly that, *if thou wilt, thou canst cleanse me* from it.

And Jesus, pleased with so strong a degree of faith, performed the cure, and did it also in the most condescending manner; for, *being moved with compassion* at so melancholy a sight, he took him aside from the multitude,[c] and *stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying unto him, I will* that thy petition be granted, and from this moment therefore *be thou clean. And* the almighty power of his commanding word *immediately* took place, and *as soon as he had spoken, the leprosy departed from him; and* it appeared by the alteration of his countenance, that *he was* entirely *cleansed* from that loathsome and inveterate disease.

And Jesus had no sooner wrought this miracle, but, *having strictly charged him* not to divulge the matter,[d] *he despatched him presently away: Saying unto him*, as he departed from him, *See* that at present *thou say nothing unto any one* of my having performed this cure;[e] *but* make it thy first business to *go* directly to Jerusalem, and there *shew thyself to the priest*, whose office it is legally to pronounce thee clean; *and offer the gift* of birds and lambs, [*and*] all *those things which Moses has commanded for thy purification*, (Lev. xiv. 1—32.) that it may be *for a testimony to them* that the cure is really perfected; and that, if I should ever be heard of as the author of it, they may see my regard even to the ceremonial precepts of the law. *But* such was the impression that was made upon the leper by so great an instance of divine mercy to him, and he was so transported with joy at his miraculous deliverance, that *he went out* into the neighbouring country, *and began to publish it much, and to proclaim the matter* wherever he came.

And the more Jesus avoided the ostentation of such works, *so much the more there went a fame of him abroad* through all the country; *and great multitudes from all parts came together to him, to hear* him preach the gospel, *and to be healed of their infirmities by him.*

MATT. viii. 1.

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

Luke v. 12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus, [Mark, came to him, beseeching him; and kneeling down to him,] fell on *his* face, [Matt. and worshipped him,] saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. [Matt. viii. 2. Mark i. 40.]

Mark i. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. [Matt. viii. 3. Luke v. 13.]

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. [Matt. viii. 3. Luke v. 13.]

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things [Matt. the gift] which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. [Matt. viii. 4. Luke v. 14.]

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.—

Luke v. 15. [And] so much the more there went a fame abroad of him; and great multitudes came together [to him, from every quarter,] to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. [Mark i. 45.]

a *As he was coming down from the mountain.*] I think this is a sufficient warrant for fixing this story where we introduce it; though it be contrary to the order in which many learned men have placed it. Neither Mark nor Luke are, in this respect, by any means so express in the connection of it. Yet an attentive reader will observe, that I have not in this instance transposed either of them. The erroneous opinion that Luke vi. contained the *sermon on the mount*, and fixed it to an *order* different from Matthew's, is that by which so many have been led into a mistake here.

b *In a certain city:* εν μια των πολεων.] As Luke expresses it thus, I am apt to think it was not Capernaum, which Luke had so often named before; and consequently, that the mountain on which Christ's sermon was delivered lay at some distance from thence; whereas the plain on which some of it was repeated, was contiguous to Capernaum, into which, as Luke says, he entered at the close of it; (see Luke vii. 8. § 55. and compare note b, on Matt. v. 1. p 73.)—I speak of *the confines of this city*, whatever it was; because *lepers* were not allowed to live in towns. Compare Numb. v. 2. 2 Kings vii. 3. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. and Luke xvii. 12.

c He took him aside from the multitude.] Else, I think, there could have been no room for the *charge of secrecy* given below; and the supposition of *such a circumstance*, which certainly happened in another cure, (compare Mark viii. 23. § 88.) will be a sufficient answer to the objections which Mr. Whiston has urged against following the order of St. Matthew here. See his *Harmony*, p. 107. and Jones's *Vindication*, p. 112—121.

d *Having strictly charged him* not to divulge the matter.] Some have supposed that εμβριμησαμενος αυτω implies that *Christ reproved him sharply* for the sin for which he had been visited with this disease, and *threatened him* with the fatal consequence of it if he returned to sin again: and in this case, the probability of what we have supposed is strengthened, that this was spoken to him in *private*, and was delivered in the same manner as the like caution was which Christ afterwards gave to the impotent man. (Compare John v. 14. § 46.) But as the word is generally used to signify the *giving of a strict injunction*, or *a solemn charge*, (as Phavorinus, Suidas, and Hesychius, have explained it,) I rather chuse to understand it of *the strict charge* that Christ gave to the *leper* not to divulge the manner of his cure, which is expressly mentioned in the following verse; and in which sense it is evident that the same word is used, Matt. ix. 30. § 72. where the same charge is given to the two blind men that Christ restored to sight.

e *See thou say nothing unto any one* of my having performed this cure.] Christ probably designed by this, not only to avoid the shew of any ostentation of his miraculous power, but to prevent the malice of the priests, who might have been unwilling to pronounce this leper clean, and have been ready to deny the cure, if they were told that he was healed by one they were so strongly prejudiced against; or might perhaps have censured Christ as having usurped an office that belonged to them, and taken upon him to *pronounce a leprous person clean.* Christ therefore would not have him to make known the circumstances of his cure to any, till he had first of all been with the priest; and, upon this account, *despatched him presently away*, or *sent him off in haste*, that he might reach Jerusalem before the priests had any information of this miracle; as seems to be implied in the force of those words in ver. 43. ευθεως εξεβαλεν αυτον. See Grotius on Matt. viii. 4. and Lightfoot's *Harmony, in loc.*

Mark i. 45.——Insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places:—

Luke v. 16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

And after some interval of time, the resort to him was *so* great, *that he could no longer openly enter into the city*, without drawing a multitude of attendants after him, *but was* obliged for a while to be chiefly *without in desert places*. *And*, to avoid the interruptions of the crowd, *he* frequently *withdrew into the wilderness, and prayed;* chusing, in these circumstances, to spend some time in more than ordinary devotion, that he might engage a blessing on the truths he had so largely delivered, and obtain that success which this eagerness of the people seemed to promise to his gospel. SECT. 44. LUKE V. 16

IMPROVEMENT.

Our souls are overspread with the leprosy of sin: and where should we apply for help, but to the healing power and recovering grace of the great Redeemer! Be the malady ever so deep, spreading, or inveterate, we may surely adopt the words of the leper before us, and say, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* And how much reason have we to hope his compassion will be moved in our favour, and his power exerted in our cure! Ver. 12

If we have received that favour, we are under the obligation of no command to conceal it. It is, on the contrary, our duty most gratefully to publish it abroad, for the honour of our Benefactor, and the advantage of those who may be encouraged to make the same application, in humble hope of the same success. MARK I. 43, 44

But when will the happy time come, that men shall be as solicitous about their spiritual welfare as about the health of this mortal body! Almighty Physician, exert thine energy in this instance, as a token of farther favours! Convince men of their pollution and danger, and bow their stubborn knee, that it may bend in submissive and importunate supplication. 41 MARK I. 41

Let the compassionate air with which this cure was wrought be considered by all spiritual physicians as a lesson of condescension and tenderness; and let the modesty with which it was conducted engage us to avoid every appearance of ostentation and vain-glory. LUKE V. 16

To conclude: since Christ himself found it proper to retire into a desert place to pray, when crowds of admirers were flocking in upon him, let it teach those who are engaged in the scenes of public business, and fill them up with the greatest applause, yet resolutely to command some seasons for retirement; as remembering, that the more various and important our public labours are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succour by ardent prayer, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them.

SECTION XLV.

Christ, returning to Capernaum, heals a man quite disabled by the palsy; vindicates his power of forgiving sins; and calls Matthew the publican to attend him. Mark ii. 1—14. Luke v. 17—28. Matt. ix. 2—9.

MARK ii. 1.

AND again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

Luke v. 17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

MARK ii. 1.

AND after Jesus had spent [*some*] *days*[a] in devout retirement, *he* appeared *again* in public, and *entered into Capernaum; and it was* quickly taken notice of, and great numbers of people soon *heard that he was in the house* where he formerly dwelt; and as he had been some time abroad, and greatly increased his reputation both by his miracles and preaching, they flocked around him with the greatest eagerness. SECT. 45. MARK II. 1

And it happened on a certain day, while he continued here, that, as he *was teaching* the people, [*several*] of the *Pharisees and doctors of the law were sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and* even *of Judea, and* particularly [*from*] *Jerusalem*;[b] and by appointment met here to attend his doctrine and observe his miracles; at which the governors of the Jewish church began now to be greatly alarmed. But notwithstanding the malicious views with which they came, Jesus went on as usual in his work, *and the* miraculous *power of the Lord was* [*present*] *to heal them*,[c] who then applied to him for the cure of their diseases. LUKE V. 17

a *And after* Jesus had spent *some days*.] Matthew has recorded so many events *between* the cure of the *leper* and the *paralytic*, that I should not have connected them, had not Mark so expressly asserted that some of those events, especially *the dispossession of the legion*, happened *long after* (see Mark iv. 35. note a, § 69. and Mark v. 1. § 70.) and Luke strongly intimates the same concerning the other story of *the centurion's servant*. (See Luke vii. 1, 2. *et seq.* § 55.) Now I think the honour of the New Testament requires,—that when *one of the Evangelists* does expressly assert the *order* in which he places facts in question, and the *other* does not so expressly assert it, (which is the case with Matthew here,) the *order* of the *latter*, though an apostle and eye-witness, should be changed out of regard to the *former*. As likewise,—that if *none of the three* assert their *order*, that in which *any two* agree to place a fact in question, should be chosen rather than that of *the third*. And on these *two rules* I have proceeded in many instances. But that the *order* of Matthew should be changed for that of Luke, when neither of them *assert* any thing concerning *that order*, is what I think no inference from Luke i. 3. can justify. (See note g, on that text, p. 1.) Much less can it be allowable expressly to contradict Matthew, for the sake of keeping to the *order* of Luke, which yet most *harmonizers* seem to have done, even when he was relating what passed in his own house and presence. See note a, on Matt. ix. 18. § 72.) Could I have persuaded myself to take such liberties with any of the sacred writers, I should not have doubted to follow Matthew and John in *their order* universally, as Sir Isaac Newton doth, and to transpose Mark and Luke wherever they disagree with either of them; for I cannot observe that *those two* do in any instance disagree with each other in any of the facts in question.—As to the story of the *paralytic* here before us, Mark strongly connects it with that of the *leper*, as happening *some days after it;* though Matthew does not mention it till the *next chapter*, and places several events between them; while Luke, according to his frequent custom, mentions it only as happening *on a certain day*. This therefore seems to be the proper place to introduce it, and Matthew's order may be changed for the reasons given above.

b *From Jerusalem*.] If this happened, as most commentators suppose, a little before *Christ's second passover*, (John v. 1.) some of these might be sent from the *sanhedrim* with a view of gaining some information concerning Jesus, to guide their resolves concerning him at the *ensuing feast*, in which they *persecuted him, and sought to slay him*, John v. 16. It is very probable, that the scribes at Jerusalem, hearing how expressly he had attacked their interpretation of the law, some days before, in his celebrated sermon on the mount, (which, so far as we can learn, was the first time he did it,) might summon their brethren in the neighbouring country to meet them at Capernaum, in order to attend on the next of Christ's public discourses, wherever it might happen to be.

c *The power of the Lord was present to heal them*.] According to the common method of construction, this may seem to intimate, that the *healing power of Christ* was exerted on *some of the Pharisees:* but as they came from distant parts to attend Christ as *spies*, it is not probable they were *diseased* persons; or that, if any of them, being advanced in years, might labour under *some infirmities*, they were so *great* and *visible*, that *a cure* would be immediately remarked; and least of all can we suppose, they had *that faith in Christ* which he required in those whom he intended to heal; (see Mark vi. 5; and compare John vii. 48.) It is more reasonable therefore to conclude, on all these accounts, that this is *one* of those few places where the relative *them* is referred to a *remoter antecedent* than that which is immediately before it. Compare, in the *original*,

SECT. 45. MARK II. 2 *And immediately so many* of the neighbouring inhabitants *were assembled, that there was not room to receive* [*them*] in the house, or *even about the door;* so desirous were they to hear how Jesus would acquit himself in the presence of such curious, critical, and prejudiced inquirers as those that were then sitting around him. *And he preached the word* of the gospel *to them*, with his usual plainness, seriousness, and authority, and confirmed it by various miracles.

Mark ii. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 *And behold*, among many others in most deplorable circumstances, who were cured by him, *they came unto him, bringing a man seized with the palsy*, and quite disabled by it, so that he was obliged, in order to his being presented to Jesus, to be *laid on a bed*, or couch, *and carried by four* men. *And they endeavoured to bring him in and lay him* down *before him*, hoping that so melancholy a sight would affect his compassionate temper, and engage his assistance.

3 And [behold,] they come unto him, bringing [a man] sick of the palsy, which [lying on a bed] was borne of four: [Luke, and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.] [Matt. ix. 2. Luke v. 18.]

LUKE V. 19 *And when they could not find any way to bring him in, and could not* so much as *come near* enough to speak to Jesus *because of the crowd*, and feared a delay might lose so precious an opportunity, they carried him round to a back passage by which *they went up to the top of the house*, (compare Mark xiii. 15.) which, according to the Jewish custom, was made flat; (Deut. xxii. 8.) *and uncovered the roof* of the apartment *where* [*Jesus*] *was*, (which was a room that had no chamber over it,) opening a way into the house by lifting up a kind of lattice or trap-door; (compare 2 Kings i. 2.) *and when they had pulled* [*it*] *up*, or had removed the frame of it to make the passage wider,[d] *they let down* [*the paralytic*,] *with his couch, through the tiles* with which the other part of the roof was paved, *into the midst*[e] of the company assembled, and so laid him *before Jesus.*

Luke v. 19. And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in, [and could not come nigh] because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and [uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they] let him down through the tiling, with *his* couch, into the midst before Jesus. [Mark ii. 4.]

MATT. IX. *And Jesus, seeing their faith*, and graciously excusing the inconveniences into which their affection had transported them, *said to the man that had the palsy, Take courage, son*,[f] for *thy sins are forgiven thee;* and in token of it, I assure thee thy distemper shall be removed.

Matt. ix. 2. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. [Mark ii. 5. Luke v. 20.]

MARK II. *But behold*, such was the perverseness of *some of the scribes and Pharisees*, who *were then sitting there*, that on his saying to the man, in such an absolute and sovereign way, 6 Thy sins are forgiven thee, they took offence at the expression; *and reasoning in their hearts* upon it, *they said within themselves*, maliciously reflecting on him, *This man* 7 most certainly *blasphemeth: Who is this* that pretends to such an authority? [*and*] *why does this* arrogant *man thus* allow himself to *speak* such *blasphemies as these?* Such a speech as this surely deserves the name; for *who can* undertake to *forgive sins but God alone*, the awful Majesty of heaven, who is affronted and dishonoured by committing them?

Mark ii. 6. But [behold,] there were certain of the scribes [Luke, and the Pharisees] sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, [*they* said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.] [Matt. ix. 3. Luke v. 21.]

7 [Who is this?] Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies! Who can forgive sins but God only? [Luke v. 21.]

8 *And immediately, when Jesus, who* perfectly well *knew* the secret workings of *their thoughts, perceived in his* own *mind that they reasoned thus in themselves*, though they did not openly declare their dissatisfaction and censure, *he said to them, Why do you reason thus in your hearts*, and so maliciously reflect upon me? [*and*] *wherefore do* 9 *you think* [*such*] *evil things* of what I have now been saying? I shall be at no loss to vindicate the reasonableness of it: for *which is easier, to say to this paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say* to him, *Arise, and take up thy couch, and walk* away with it? May it not justly be concluded, that if I have a power efficaciously to say the one, I may without any usurpation say the other likewise; and declare the sin forgiven, when 10 I can thus miraculously remove the punishment of it? *But that you may know* the case I put is not a vain presumptuous boast, but *that the Son of man* here *on earth*, though appearing in so humble and obscure a form, *has* yet a divine *authority to forgive* men's 11 *sins, (he* turns about, and *says to the paralytic,)* O man, *I say unto thee, Arise* immediately; *and* to shew thou art perfectly healed at once, *take up thy couch* on which thou liest, *and*, bearing it on thy shoulders, *go thy way to thine own house*, for at this instant I will enable thee to do it.

8 And immediately, when Jesus [knowing their thoughts] perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things [Wherefore think ye evil] in your hearts? [Matt. ix. 4. Luke v. 22.]

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? [Matt. ix. 5. Luke v. 23.]

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) [Matt. ix. 6. Luke v. 24.]

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. [Matt. ix. 6. Luke v. 24.]

Matt. xi. 1; xii. 9; Luke v. 30; John viii. 44; Acts viii. 26; and Heb. xii. 17. See *Gloss. Philolog. Sacr.* p. 513—515.

d *When they had pulled it up*, or had removed the frame, &c.] Ἐξορύξαντες, which we render *broken up*, plainly signifies *pulling out.* (Gal. iv. 15.) And no man in his senses can suppose the Evangelist meant to say, that they *tore up the beams* and rafters of the house upon this occasion; and yet this has been made the foundation of great objections against this story. We have a right to suppose this *removal of the frame* was done *with care;* because the circumstances plainly require such *care*, and common sense would suggest it. Woolston's perverse attack on this miracle is as plausible as any thing he has written against Christianity; but I have endeavoured, in as few words as possible, to suggest an answer to the chief of his objections; and it may be considered as a specimen of the manner in which I shall proceed in other cases of the like nature: for it would be very improper to enter on the controversy at large here, especially after all the convincing and unanswerable treatises which have lately been written in defence of the Evangelists; among which I apprehend none more valuable than that called *The Miracles of Christ Vindicated*, in four parts; to which I with great pleasure refer for a larger account of this story, and the others handled by the excellent author of it.

e *They let down the paralytic—into the midst.*] What is suggested in the paraphrase is the most probable account of the matter, if we suppose *our Lord* to have been in any *covered room* of the house. But Dr. Shaw's hypothesis, which goes on principles which were quite unknown to me till I had the pleasure (since the first edition of this work) of reading his excellent Travels, seems to me yet more natural. From considering what is now the form of the houses in Barbary and the Levant, he supposes that τὸ μεσον signifies the *court-yard* round about which the house was built; and that our Lord was there. He thinks that, crowded as this area was, the bearers of the paralytic might get in at the gateway, (where perhaps Christ could neither be seen nor heard) and might carry him up *the stairs* which commonly go up from thence; and being got to the *flat roof*, might take down inwards a part of the *balustrade* or *parapet-wall*, and so *let down the bed* with cords by the side of the glazed and perhaps painted *tiles*, which might beautify the walls of the house towards *this court.* Many of his quotations from the ancients do, in a very agreeable manner, at once illustrate this account, and receive new light from it. See Dr. Shaw's *Travels*, p. 373—380.

f *Take courage, son.*] Few can need to be told, that *son* is a title of condescension and tenderness, by which superiors addressed inferiors that were not properly *their children;* (compare Josh. vii. 19; Eccles. xii. 12; and 2 Tim. ii. 1.) as *father* was a correspondent title of respect. (Compare 2 Kings v. 13; vi. 21; xiii. 14.) Yet it seems probable, from the use of it here, that the patient was a *young man*, considering that Christ himself was but a little above *thirty;* and if it were so, it made the case the more pitiable. Luke

Luke v. 25. And immediately he rose up before them [all] and took up [the bed] whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. [Mark ii. 12. Matt. ix. 7.]

26 And [Matt. when the multitude saw *it*,] they were all amazed, and they glorified God, [Matt. which had given such power unto men;] and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day; [We never saw it on this fashion.] [Mark ii. 12. Matt. ix. 8.]

Mark ii. 13. And he went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

Matt. ix. 9. And [Luke, after these things,] as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man [Luke, a publican,] named Matthew, [*or* Levi, *the son* of Alpheus,] sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, [Luke, and left all,] and followed him. [Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27, 28.]

And immediately he was so strengthened by a secret power which went along with the word, that, believing the virtue and efficacy of it, *he rose up before them all, and taking up the couch on which he lay*, though before he was utterly weak and helpless, *he went forth*, vigorous and cheerful, *to his own house*, humbly *glorifying* and adoring *God* for that extraordinary cure which he had now received. SECT. 45. LUKE V.

And when the multitude saw [*it*,] *they were all amazed, and* with united acclamations *glorified God, who had given such* mighty and beneficent *power to men*, and raised up so eminent a Prophet to his people. *And they were filled with* such a reverential kind of *fear* and dread, under the apprehension of so marvellous a proof of the divine presence among them, that they could not forbear *saying* one to another, *We have* indeed *seen* most extraordinary *strange things to-day:* and after all the wonders we have known, *We never* before *saw any thing like it*, nor have we heard of any such event as this in the days of our fathers. 26

And when the evening advanced, and the day grew cooler, *he went forth again by the sea-shore; and all the multitude* who had before attended in, or about the house, and many more who could not get near enough to see and hear what passed there, *resorted to him, and he* cheerfully went on with his work, and *taught them* here, after all the former labours of the day. MARK II. 13

And after these things, as Jesus passed out from thence, (that is, from the house in which the paralytic had been cured,) and was going down to the sea-side, *he saw a man*, (who was indeed *a publican*,[g] that collected the customs there,) *whose name was Matthew*, [*or*,] as he was otherwise called, *Levi, the son of Alpheus*, the brother of James; (compare Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.) and he was then *sitting at the custom-house*:[h] *and* calling him to be one of his disciples, *he said unto him, Follow me. And* immediately consigning his books and cash to some careful hand, *he arose, and left all* the care and profits of his employment, *and followed him*, with most grateful acknowledgments of his condescension, in admitting a person of his station of life into the number of his stated attendants. MATT. IX. 9

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a pleasure to reflect upon it, that Christ was attended by such vast numbers of people, and that they who were teachers of others, should themselves sit down to hear him. But it is melancholy to reflect on the perverse purposes with which many of them came; and how few did, on the whole, *receive his word into their hearts*, so as to *bring forth fruit unto perfection*. Curiosity led some, and interest others; and some came to find occasion of hurting him, whose whole business in life was to do good. Yet these low, these vile purposes did not prevent his preaching, and working miracles before them, and being ready to exert his power for their benefit. Thus courageous and resolute let us be in the discharge of our duty; thus solicitous that we may not *be overcome of evil*, but may which, on the whole, is always in some degree practicable,) *overcome evil with good.* (Rom. xii. 21.) LUKE V. 17 MARK II. 2 *et seq.*

How industrious were the attendants and friends of this poor paralytic, to obtain a cure for him! What contrivance, what labour did they use, to find a proper opportunity to bring him in, and lay him before Jesus! Ought we not to be as tender and zealous, in all the offices of the truest friendship; and to imitate, so far as suits the difference of circumstances, their importunate application, and their lively faith? LUKE V. 19

Theirs had its praise, and its reward. Our Lord said to this distempered person, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* He *pardoned all his iniquities*, while he *healed all his diseases.* (Psal. ciii. 3.) This was a blessing that would render the cure yet incomparably more valuable; and this reviving declaration had the Son of God a power to add, and to pronounce. The scribes and Pharisees, ignorant and prejudiced as they were, considered such a declaration as blasphemy. Their principle indeed was right, that *God alone has power to forgive sins*, and it is impious for men to claim it; but their application was evidently wrong. The miraculous effect plainly shewed the divine authority of the blessed Jesus. And he was still *the key of David: he openeth and no man shutteth: and shutteth and no man openeth.* (Rev. iii. 7.) Almighty Saviour, may we each of us receive from thee forgiveness of our sins; and we will not complain, though our sicknesses should not immediately be removed! Let us glorify God, who has given this power to his Son; and thankfully acknowledge, that we are ourselves, in many respects, the monuments both of his pardoning and healing mercy. MATT. IX. 2 MARK II. 6, 7 10, 11 12 LUKE V. 26

To conclude; let us view, with humble wonder and pleasure, this farther instance of the condescension and grace of the Redeemer, in the call of Matthew: his condescension in calling to so near an attendance, and so intimate a friendship, a man who was a publican, infamous as that employment was; and his grace, which could immediately inspire him with so firm a resolution of quitting all the profits of it, that he might reduce himself to circumstances of life as precarious as those of his Divine Master. Many, no doubt, censured him as a rash enthusiast, or a lunatic, rather than a sober convert; but he is even now reaping the abundant reward; his loss is gain, and his contempt glory. MATT. IX. 9

ses the word *man* on the occasion; and Christ might possibly use oth; as the Apostle joins men and fathers, Acts vii. 2. and men and rethren, or, literally, men, brethren, Acts i. 16; ii. 29; xv. 7, 13; xiii. 1; and xxviii. 17.

g *A publican.*] This was a very *odious name* among the Jews, nd their employment was attended with so much corruption and emptation, that there were few among them that were honest men; ut they were generally persons of so infamous and vile a character, that *publicans* and *sinners* are often joined together as synonimous terms. (Matt. ix. 11; xi. 19; and elsewhere.) See the paraphrase on Luke iii. 12. p. 33.

h *At the custom-house.*] So τελωνιον properly signifies. Some have rendered it *talbooth*; and I should have followed them, had I not apprehended that the word might have suggested some modern idea, for which there is in the original no foundation.

SECTION XLVI.

Christ goes up to a feast at Jerusalem, (generally supposed to be his second passover,) and there cures a poor impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. John v. 1—16.

JOHN v. 1.

SECT. 46. JOHN V.

AFTER this, there was a great *feast of the Jews*, even the feast of the passover ;[a] *and Jesus*, according to his custom, *went up to Jerusalem*, both that he might pay a religious regard to the ceremonial law, and that he might take an opportunity of teaching considerable numbers of people, assembled from distant parts and countries where he did not appear in person.

JOHN v. 1.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 *Now*, it is well known, that *there is at Jerusalem, near the sheep-*[*market*],[b] *a pool*, or great reservoir of water,[c] *which is called in the Hebrew language, Bethesda*, or the House of Mercy ; and was indeed, as the name intimates, a kind of hospital, *having five porticos*, or cloisters,[d] built round it, to accommodate and shelter those who might resort to it for pleasure, convenience, or cure : for the water was highly esteemed on account of some medicinal virtues which attended it, and the benefit many had received by bathing in it ; and its reputation was greatly advanced, since those miraculous circumstances had been observed which we shall presently mention.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-*market*, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 *In these* cloisters *were laid a great number of sick* and diseased *persons*, such as were either *blind*, or *lame*, or had any part of their body *withered ;* who either came, or were brought thither, in expectation of a cure, and lay there *waiting for the moving of*

4 *the water*. For God, to add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, as well as to shew that his ancient people were not entirely forgotten by him,[e] had been pleased of late to perform some supernatural cures at this place. *For at a certain season*,[f] which returned at some particular periods, an unusual motion was discovered in the water ; and from the marvellous effects of it, it was rightly concluded, that at that time *an angel descended into the pool, and stirred the water*,[g] by which a healing virtue was communicated to it ;

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

a *A feast of the Jews*, even the feast of the passover.] It is certain from Luke vi. 1. (note b, § 49.) that a *passover* happened soon after the facts recorded in the preceding section ; and most critics (after the example of Irenæus, *lib.* ii. *cap.* 39.) conclude that *this* was it. And indeed, as the passover was the greatest of all their feasts, it is sometimes denoted by the word εορτη, even without the *article*. (See Mark xv. 6 ; and Luke xxiii. 17.) This chapter may, at least, be as well introduced here as any where else : and one has little temptation to recede from this order in favour of Mr. Manne's singular hypothesis ; who supposes, that *the feast* here spoken of was the *feast of Pentecost*, and that this whole chapter is transposed, and should come in at the end of the sixth. How little this is capable of defence, we shall endeavour to shew in the notes on John vi. 1, and 4 : see § 78. note b and e.

b *Near the sheep-market.*] I chuse to retain the common translation of *sheep-market* rather than *gate ;* because, if the report of the best travellers is to be credited, the place shewn for the pool of Bethesda is much nearer the temple than the sheep-gate could be. (Compare Neh. iii. 1 ; and xii. 39.)

c *A pool*, or great reservoir of water.] The etymology of the word κολυμβηθρα intimates, it was *a place to swim in ;* so that it seems to me to have been a kind of bath, like those near Jericho, where Aristobulus was drowned by Herod's order as he was swimming ; (Joseph. Antiq. *lib.* xv. *cap.* 3. § 3.) I do not find any satisfactory proof, (though many have asserted it,) that the sheep to be sacrificed were washed here, or that the blood of the sacrifices ran into it : yet this is the foundation of that strange conjecture of Dr. Hammond, which we shall presently mention.

d *Having five porticos*, or cloisters.] It is a very probable thought of Dr. Lightfoot, [in his *Harmony*, *in loc.*] that the bason itself might be in the form of a pentagon, and that these cloisters might correspond to its five sides.

e To add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, &c.] These reasons are suggested, and well illustrated, in Mr. Calvin's judicious notes on this story.

f *At a certain season.*] Though κατα καιρον might be sometimes rendered *at that time*, (as Rom. v. 6.) and some have therefore thought the passover, or the feast that was mentioned just before, to be the season when *the angel came and stirred the water ;* yet, as the words will very justly bear the sense that has been given them in our translation, there is no reason why we should suppose it to have only been *an annual miracle*, which would but needlessly increase the difficulty. Indeed the expectation of the people intimates it was at some particular periods, though probably they were not fixed in such a way as that they certainly could tell the stated times of their return, at least we know not what they were, nor can it be determined from this indefinite expression. And if it be thus taken to refer to a certain hour of the day, or day of the week, (perhaps *the sabbath*, which was the day that they were now expecting it,) κατα καιρον will signify, at every such time, as κατ' ενιαυτον, every year, Heb. x. 1 ; and κατ' ημεραν, every day, Acts ii. 46, 47.

g *An angel descended into the pool, and stirred the water.*] The late English version renders it *a messenger*, agreeable to the strange hypothesis of Dr. Hammond ; who thinks that *this water* had contracted a *natural virtue* by *washing the carcases and entrails of the sacrifices* in this pool ; and that *on stirring it up*, that virtue exerted itself the more ; so that a proper officer was appointed for that purpose : a thought so unphilosophical, as well as ungrounded in history and antiquity, that one would wonder how so learned a man could fall upon it.—Mr. Fleming, to avoid the apparent difficulties of the literal interpretation, concludes, that the latter part of the third, and the whole fourth verse, is a spurious addition of some ignorant monk, in the eighth or ninth century ; because that part is wanting in Beza's manuscript, and is written by a later hand in the margin of that in the French king's library, which Lamy in his *Harmony* so much extols. But I cannot acquiesce in this omission, since the passage in question is found in all the other most celebrated manuscripts, as also in the Syriac version, and all the rest in the Polyglott Bible : and besides this, the seventh verse (which none dispute) implies, that there was a *miraculous virtue* in the water *after it was troubled*, which extended only to the *first* that went, and cured his disease, whatever it were ; so that the chief difficulties would still remain, were Mr. Fleming's criticism to be allowed, (see his *Christology*, Vol. I. p. 13—15.)—I cannot here discuss the matter at large ; but beg leave, in a few words, to hint at what seems to me the easiest solution of this *greatest of difficulties* in the history of the Evangelists, in which, of all others, the learned answerers of Mr. Woolston have generally given me the least satisfaction, and which few commentators enter into ; and I am pleased to find, long since I wrote this note, that the ingenious Dr. Pearce agrees with me in the most material circumstances of this hypothesis. (See his excellent *Vindication of Christ's Miracles*, p. 68. *et seq.*)—I imagine *this pool* might have been remarkable for some *mineral virtue* attending the water ; which is the more probable, as Jerome tells us, it was of a very high colour : this, together with its being so very *near the temple*, where a *bath* was so much needed for religious purposes, may account for the building such stately *cloisters* round it, *three* of which remain to this day ; (see Maundrel's *Travels*, p. 108.) Some time before *this passover*, an extraordinary *commotion* was probably observed in the water ; and Providence so ordered it, that the next person who accidentally bathed here, being under some great disorder, found an immediate and unexpected *cure :* the like phenomenon in some other desperate case was probably observed on a second commotion : and these commotions and cures might happen periodically, perhaps every sabbath, (for that it was yearly none can prove,) for some weeks or months. This the Jews would naturally ascribe to some *angelic power*, as they did afterwards *the voice from heaven*, (John xii. 29.) though no *angel* appeared. And they and St. John had reason to do it, as it was the *scripture scheme* that these benevolent *spirits* had been, and frequently are, the invisible instruments of good to the children of men ; (see Psal. xxxiv. 7 ; xci. 11 ; Dan iii. 28 ; and vi. 22.) On their making so ungrateful a return to Christ for this miracle, and those wrought at the former passover, and in the intermediate space, this *celestial visitant* probably from this time returned no more ; and therefore it may be observed that though the Evangelist speaks of *the pool* as *still* at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the *descent of the angel* as a thing which *had been*, but not as still continuing, (compare ver. 2, and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus, in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened ; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as in the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to fact ; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his *Letter* relating to Maillard's cure,) hav

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and *the first* person *therefore that went in, after the stirring of the water, was* instantly *cured*,[h] *whatever the distemper was that he* before *was seized with.*

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

And it now happened, that *a certain man was* lying *there, who had been thirty-eight years disabled* by an illness which had seized his nerves, and taken away the use of all his limbs. *Jesus* then *seeing him, as he lay* by the side of the pool, *and knowing that he had been now a long time* [*in this* melancholy *condition*,] *says to him*, with a view to stir up his attention to himself, and to engage him to reflect on his own helpless state, and on the greatness of the mercy he designed him, *Dost thou desire to be cured* of thine infirmity? *The* poor *disabled man answered him, Sir*, I cannot but earnestly desire it, but am now ready to despair of being so happy; for I am poor as well as lame; and *I have no man to* wait on me, and *put me into the pool when the water is stirred; and* my own motions are so slow that, *while I am coming* towards it, *another descends before me*, and enjoys the benefit of the miracle.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Upon this, *Jesus says to him*, with an air of divine majesty and authority, *Arise, take up thy couch* on thy shoulders, *and walk* away with it, to shew how perfectly thou art recovered. *And* such virtue attended these words, that *the man immediately became well; and*, leaping up in a transport of wonder and joy, he *took up his couch, and walked* away with it to his own house, through some of the most public parts of the city.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

Now on that day that this miraculous cure was wrought, *it was the sabbath:* yet Christ commanded him, even on that day, to carry his couch, both to shew his own authority, and to exercise the faith and obedience of his patient. *The Jews therefore*, who saw him pass by in this manner, *said to him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day;* and therefore *it is not lawful for thee* thus *to carry a couch*, or to bear any burthen whatsoever. (Compare Jer. xvii. 21, 22; and Neh. xiii. 15—19.) How is it then, that thou art so presumptuous as to profane this holy day? But *he answered them*, by giving an account of his cure, and only added, *He that* miraculously healed and *made me well*, and restored me with a word to this health and strength, *even he*[i] *said to me, Take up thy couch, and walk* away with it; and I could not question his authority to dispense with such a ceremonial precept. And upon this, dropping all mention of the cure, and only fixing on what seemed liable to exception,[k] *they asked him then, Who is the man that said unto thee*, on this sacred day, *Take up thy couch, and walk* away with it? *Now he that was healed did not* at that time *know who it was* that had cured him; *for as there was a crowd of people in the place, Jesus had* modestly *slipped away*[l] among them, as soon as he had spoken the healing word.

—And on the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

But *afterwards Jesus findeth him in* the court of *the temple, and said unto him*, *Behold*, by the singular mercy of God, *thou art* now *recovered* to health and vigour; but take heed that thou *sin no more, lest something* yet *worse befal thee;* for thou knowest in thine own conscience, that the iniquities of thy youth brought this calamity upon thee,[m] and the deliverance thou hast now received will be a dreadful aggravation of thy future guilt.

14 Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

The man then informed himself of those that stood by, who it was that spoke to him; and knowing him to be the person to whom he was obliged for his cure, he *went away* from the temple, *and told the Jews* who had before examined him, *that it was Jesus* of Nazareth *who had restored him to health:* expecting, no doubt, by this discovery, to have procured him that honour and respect which was due to so much power and goodness. *And* yet *the Jews* were so far from paying him any just acknowledgments, that, on the contrary, they *persecuted Jesus on this account, and endeavoured to put him to death*, as an impious transgressor of the law, *because he had done these things on the sabbath-day:* and, in pursuance of that unrighteous and barbarous purpose, they brought an accusation against him before the sanhedrim,[n] which occasioned the large and excellent apology related in the two following sections.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

recourse to some indigested and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of imagination: or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusting his Pagan readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise *the passage through the Red Sea*, and *the Divine voice from Mount Sinai*, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.

h *The first that went in—was cured.*] This may be well considered as a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence, to illustrate the superior power and goodness of *the Son of God*, who, not at *distant periods* of time, but *every day*, not only performed *a single cure*, but *healed whole multitudes* that resorted to him.

i *Even he.*] There seems to be this emphasis in the word εκεινος, in this connection after ο ποιησας. It is very far from being an *expletive*, though few versions take any notice of it.

k Only fixing on what seemed liable to exception.] They do not ask, *Who is it that has made the well?* but, *Who is it that bade thee to take up thy couch* upon the sabbath-day? though he had just told them it was the author of his cure that gave him that command; for all that they proposed was, not to hear of any good that had been done, to engage their admiration and applause, but to lay hold of some occasion to find fault, to gratify the pride and malice of a censorious temper.—I am obliged to Grotius for this delicate remark, which well illustrates their partiality and malignity.

l Modestly *slipped away.*] The word εξενευσεν (as Casaubon observes in his learned note on the place) is an elegant metaphor borrowed from *swimming;* and we may thus observe, how well it expresses the easy unobserved manner in which he, as it were, *glided* through them, while, like a stream of water, they opened before him, and immediately closed again, leaving no trace of the way he had taken.

m The iniquities of thy youth brought this calamity upon thee.] Our Lord seems not merely to have referred to a general notion, that *diseases* were the *punishments of sin*, but to glance at some irregularities of the man's younger years, which, though they were committed before Christ was born, (for we are told, ver. 5. that this disabled man had laboured under his disorder *thirty-eight years,*) yet were perfectly known to him.

n Before the sanhedrim.] See the reason for this conjecture in the next section, ver. 17. note a, compared with ver. 33.

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WHAT reason have we humbly to adore that Almighty Being who *kills and makes alive*, who *wounds and heals!* (Deut. xxxii. 39.) If the Jews had cause of thankfulness for this miraculous interposition, surely those virtues which God has in a natural way bestowed on medicines, and that sagacity which he has given to men for the discovery of those virtues, are matter of much greater acknowledgment, as the blessing is so much more extensive and lasting.

But how much greater still are our obligations to him for the blessings of his gospel, and the ordinances of his worship, those waters of life by which our spiritual maladies are healed, and vigour restored to our enfeebled souls! Let us humbly attend them; yet, during that attendance, let us look beyond them: for surely the efficacy of this pool of Bethesda did not more depend upon the descent of the angel, than the efficacy of the noblest ordinances depends on that blessed Spirit which operates in and by them.

3 Multitudes were continually attending at this pool: and why then is the house of God forsaken, where not one alone, but many, at the same moment, may receive spiritual sight and strength; yea, and life from the dead?

6 Yet alas! under the diseases of the soul, how few desire to be made whole! Blessed Jesus! if thou hast awakened that desire in us, we would adore thee for it, as a token for good; and would lift up our believing eyes to thee, in humble expectation that thou wilt graciously fulfil it.

14 The man who was lately languishing on his couch, we quickly after find in the temple: and where should they be found, who have been raised up from beds of weakness, and brought out from chambers of confinement, but in the sanctuary, rendering their praises to the God of their mercies? How reasonable is the caution which our Lord gave him there! *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* May we see sin as the root of all our afflictions; and, by the bitterness of them, may sin be embittered to us, and our hearts fortified against relapsing into it, especially when we have been chastised, and restored again!

15 One would have expected that, when this grateful creature published the name of his Benefactor, crowds should have thronged about Jesus, to have heard the words of his mouth, and to have received the blessings of his gospel: and that the whole nation should have gloried in the presence of such a person, as far more valuable than the descent of a heavenly spirit at some particular seasons for the cure of their diseases, or even the abode of an incarnate angel among them would have been. But instead of this, behold the malignity of our fallen nature, and 16 the force of stubborn prejudice! They surround him with an hostile intent; they even conspire against his beneficial life; and for an imagined transgression in a point of ceremony, would have put out this light in Israel. Let us not wonder then, if *our good be evil spoken of:* (Rom. xiv. 16.) Let us not wonder if even candour, benevolence, and usefulness do not wholly disarm the enmity of some; especially of those who have been taught to prefer sacrifice to mercy; and who, disrelishing the genuine contents of the gospel, naturally seek occasion to slander and persecute the professors, and especially the defenders of it. Oct. 11. 1755.

SECTION XLVII.

Christ vindicates the miracle which he had wrought at the pool on the sabbath-day, and solemnly declares the dignity of his person and office. John v. 17—30.

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THE miracle which he had just performed, was a plain evidence of his divine authority and power: *but Jesus* being questioned by the Jews, and, as it seems, examined before their most solemn council,[a] for the cure he had wrought on the sabbath-day, he took the opportunity of declaring at large the dignity of his person, the evidence of his mission, and the absolute necessity of faith in him to their eternal salvation;[b] while, in reply to the malicious charge which they brought against him, he *answered them* as follows: *My* heavenly *Father*, in the administration of his providential kingdom, *worketh* continually from the beginning of the world *even till now;* and upon sabbath-days, as well as others, he exerts that unremitting and unwearied energy which is the life of the creation: *and*, in like manner, *I also work*, in obedience to the intimations of his will, and in subserviency to his glory. And in this very action I have given you so visible a proof that I am directed and assisted by him, that you ought humbly to acquiesce in it, without presuming to cavil at what is so evidently divine, or to limit the Majesty of heaven by those rules which he has prescribed to his creatures.

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BUT Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hither to, and I work.

18 But upon hearing this suggested by our Lord in vindication of himself, they were so far from yielding to the argument, that, *for this* very *reason*, the resentment of his adversaries was increased; and being *therefore* more incensed against him than before, the rulers of *the Jews endeavoured the more* eagerly *to put him to death, because* (as they imagined) *he had not only violated the sabbath, but had* now *also* gone so far as even to have *called God his own Father*,[c] in *so* peculiar and appropriating a sense, *as* in effect *to make himself equal with God:* while he thus argued his own right to work on the sabbath-day, from God's working upon it; though this was evidently no argument with

18 Therefore the Jew sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

a Before their most solemn council.] I here follow Mr. Fleming's opinion, (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 296.) which seems to be confirmed by ver. 33; and there appears a great deal of additional propriety and beauty in the discourse, when it is considered in this view.

b He took the opportunity of declaring at large the dignity of his person, &c.] Christ had hinted at several of these things in his *conference with Nicodemus*, (John iii. 13—21. § 26.) who had probably reported them to his brethren. But he here expatiates more largely on some of them; and, no doubt, if Nicodemus, as a member of the council, was now present, he heard him with great pleasure and improvement.

c *Called God his own Father.*] This is the plain and literal sense of the original, πατέρα ἴδιον. The whole nation of the Jews thought *God their Father:* (John viii. 41.) and they could not therefore have accounted it *blasphemy* to have used the phrase, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriating a sense.

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respect to mankind in general, nor had ever been pleaded by the greatest of the prophets in such a view.

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Jesus, therefore, to explain the matter more fully to them, and to leave them yet more inexcusable in their malicious opposition to him, *answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,* and do most faithfully and solemnly declare, That *the Son* of God, great and glorious as he is, now acts in an avowed subjection to the authority of the Father, and *can do nothing of himself,*[d] in pursuance of any distinct schemes or separate interest of his own, *unless he see the Father doing it,*[e] or perceive him intimating it as his pleasure that it should be done: *for whatsoever* are the *things* that *he* (that is, the Father,) *doeth, even these likewise doeth the Son* in a most intimate conjunction with him; at all times cheerfully complying with his purposes, and esteeming it his honour always to be employed in his service. 19

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

For the Father loveth the Son, and that with so entire an affection, that he *sheweth him all things that he himself doeth,*[f] letting him into the secret of his councils, and teaching him in the most wonderful and divine manner, to act in prosecution of them; *and he will shew,* or point out to *him,* far *greater works than these* which he has hitherto performed; which shall hereafter be accomplished by him, *that you may* all be filled with *wonder,* though you will not be open to conviction. 20

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them;* even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

You have now seen the cure of one who had been long disabled by a disease, but I have not yet raised any from the dead: yet you shall quickly see that it is not for want of power; *for as the Father,* whenever he pleases, *raises up and animates the dead, so also* you shall have sufficient evidence that *the Son animates whom he will.* 21

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Nor is it to be wondered at, that he should have so great a power lodged in him; *for the Father* now in his own person *judges no man but has given* the administration of *all judgment to the Son,* before whom all men are at last to appear, and by whom they are to be assigned to their final and eternal state. 22

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

And this important power God has committed to me,[g] *that* notwithstanding the humble form in which I now appear, *all may* be engaged to *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father* himself: yielding an unreserved homage and obedience to him, as what is necessary to approve their duty and fidelity to God: for *he that,* in such a circumstance, and on such a discovery, *honoureth not the Son,* as worthy of the highest veneration, *honoureth not the Father that sent him;* but affronting him in the person of so dear and so great an ambassador, must expect to be treated as an enemy and a rebel. 23

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

This is a truth of the utmost consequence to your final happiness, and therefore I insist the more largely upon it: see then that none of you presume to pass it slightly over: for *verily, verily, I say unto you,* and solemnly declare it in the presence of you all, *He that heareth my word* with an attentive regard, *and* truly *believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life:* he is already entitled to it, yea, it is already begun in his soul; *and* he shall shortly possess it in its full perfection, and *shall not come into condemnation* for any former offences; *but is passed from* that state of *death* in which men naturally are, *to* a state of *life,* security, and felicity. 24

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Think not this an incredible assertion; for *verily, verily, I say unto you,* and in the strongest terms renew the important declaration,[h] That *the season cometh, and is now* just at hand, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear* [*it*] *shall* immediately *live:* for within these few months there shall be some dead bodies raised to life by the word of his power, (see Mark v. 41; Luke vii. 14; John xi. 43; and compare Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.) and many souls that are dead in sin shall, by his grace, be quickened and made spiritually alive.[i] 25

26 For as the Father hath

For as the Father has 26

d *The Son can do nothing of himself.*] I cannot forbear mentioning a remarkable note of the learned Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 307. *et seq.*) in which he shews by a great variety of instances, that the later heathen writers seem to have ascribed to Minerva, as the daughter of Jupiter, many things which our sacred scriptures speak of Christ, as the Son of God.

e *Unless he see the Father doing it.*] Whether our Lord here means in the general, *unless he see it to be correspondent to the Father's schemes,* or whether he refers to any peculiar divine impulse which he sometimes felt upon his mind, leading him to exert his miraculous power in this or that instance, I cannot certainly determine; but rather incline to the latter, which might also be comprehended in ver. 17.—The particle εαν μη, which is exactly the same in signification with ει μη, is here also used in a less proper sense. See the note on John xvii. 12. § 179, and compare John viii. 38. § 104.

f *Sheweth him all things that he himself doeth.*] The editors of the Prussian Testament say that the word δεικνυσιν, which we have rendered *sheweth,* signifies here to *teach* or *form to* any thing, as a *master forms his scholar* to do what he himself doeth, and teaches him the secrets of his art or profession: but I cannot acquiesce in this sense, as expressing the whole meaning of the phrase. It rather refers to the ample and comprehensive knowledge which the Son has of the whole plan of the Father's councils, in all their mutual relations and dependencies; whereas the prophets and the apostles too, had, in comparison of this, but very limited and contracted views. Compare Isa. xl. 10. where it is said (as we have no room to doubt) of Christ, and probably in this sense—*his work is before him.*—Dr. Whitby refers αυτος to *the Son;* and understands it as if it had been said, *Whatever the Son doeth, is by the direction of the Father:* but I think the genius of the Greek language would not in that sense have allowed the repetition of αυτος, but it would rather have been said, παντα α ποιει δεικνυιν αυτω: not to insist upon it, that the sense in which I have explained it is much nobler, and not so nearly the same with what Christ had said in the preceding verse.

g This important power God has committed to me.] Though our Lord here speaks of himself in the *third person,* yet afterwards, in ver. 30. *et seq.* he speaks in the *first;* and common sense would teach all that heard him, that by *the Son* he here meant *himself.* Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person to judge, whether our Lord's making such a declaration as this before the Jewish rulers, and probably in full council, was not far more liable to exception, than merely his calling the temple his Father's house (John ii. 16.) at his first passover; in the same manner as he long before had done, in calling God *his Father,* even when he was but *twelve years old.* (Luke ii. 49.) So little is there in Mr. Manne's argument from that text. (See note c, on John ii. 16. p. 48.)—And it is also to be remembered that, according to Mr. Manne's Scheme of the *Harmony,* he makes this to have happened about *ten months before Christ's death,* and long before many of those charges to his disciples *not to make him known;* from whence this gentleman argues, that the forecited words in John ii. 16. could not be spoken till his *last passover.*

h Renew the important declaration.] These repetitions of this solemn asseveration are by no means vain, considering the vast importance of the truth; and how incredible it would appear, that he who stood before them in so humble a form, was in reality the Lord of Life, and the universal Judge. See note g, on John i. 51. p. 44.

i Some dead bodies raised to life, and many souls made spiritually alive.] I express it thus ambiguously, because I am something doubtful whether it may not refer to the *conversion* of sinners by *Christ's ministry,* rather than the *resurrection* of a few by his *miraculous power.* It is well known, sinners are often represented in scripture as *dead;* (Matt. viii. 22; Eph. ii. 1; v. 14; 1 Tim. v. 6; and Jude, ver. 12.) and if the expression, οι ακουσαντες, is to be taken

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originally and essentially *life in himself, so he has also given to the Son, that he should,* for these purposes of glorious and divine operation, *have* a principle of *life in himself* to be communicated unto whom he will. (See 1 Cor. xv. 45.) *And he has given him authority,* not only to quicken men now, but *also to execute* final *judgment, because he is the Son of man;* and as he has voluntarily humbled himself to so lowly a form, (see Phil. ii. 5—11.) God will accomplish to him all those glorious predictions which represent him as possessed of universal and perpetual dominion, and coming in the clouds of heaven, in that day when the judgment is set, and the books are opened. (See Dan. vii. 9—14; Phil. ii. 8, 9; and Heb. xii. 2.)

life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

And therefore, *wonder not at this* which I have now declared concerning the resurrection of a few, shortly to be expected; *for the hour is coming, in which all that are* dead and buried now, and all that shall then be lying *in the graves,* though mouldered away and consumed there, *shall hear his voice, And shall come forth* out of the dust, *they that have done good, to the resurrection of* eternal *life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of* final *damnation.* See to it, therefore, that you shew a due regard to him, before whom you yourselves are to stand; and do not rashly condemn a Person, from whose lips you are to receive your decisive sentence. Not that any corrupt bias of partial resentment will be brought into the proceedings of that day, or into any of my conduct; for *I can of myself do nothing,* but now act by a delegated power as the minister of a righteous God: and therefore *as I hear I judge,* pronouncing according to the evidence of facts before me; *and* upon this account it must appear that *my judgment is just; because I seek not any* distinct *will* or separate interest *of my own,*[k] *but the* wise and holy *will of the Father who sent me;* which is, that every man should be treated according to his real character, and be the object of favour or of wrath, as his temper and conduct have been upright or wicked.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what humble prostration of soul should we bow before the Lord Jesus Christ, while we read such words Ver. 12 as these! Though he appeared under the form of a servant, and, as man and mediator, confessed a holy subjection 20 to his Father and his God, yet is he his own, his only-begotten Son, the Son whom he loves, whom he honours, 23 whom he commands all men to honour even as himself, and to whom such power and authority are committed, 26 that he is the principle of life, and the administrator of judgment. Let us adore the wisdom of such a contrivance, 27 that he who humbled himself thus low, should be so highly exalted. Let us labour to secure an interest in him; treating him with that submission, duty, and obedience which becomes at once the divinity of his nature, and the dignity of his office.

25 May we be enabled by divine grace so to hear the voice of his gospel, that we may arise to a life of holy 28 obedience; that we may another day hear him with joy calling forth our sleeping dust, and arise to the resurrection of life; while those that have despised and rejected him, shall find themselves the helpless prisoners of his justice, and with reluctance and terror come forth to the resurrection of damnation!

SECTION XLVIII.

Christ having declared to the Jews (and, as it seems, to the sanhedrim,) the dignity of his person, office, and character, goes on to represent the proofs of his mission; and concludes his discourse with proper admonitions and cautions. John v. 31, *to the end.*

John v. 31.

SECT. 48. JOHN V.

Our Lord proceeded in his discourse to the Jews, and said, I have certainly entered a very high claim, and represented myself as a person of great dignity and authority; nor do I say it without sufficient proof. Indeed, *If I bear* this *witness of myself* alone, it must be acknowledged that *my testimony is not* immediately [*to be admitted as*] *true*:[a] you have a right to insist on other evidence; and a variety of it arises from the testimony 31 of John, from the power of my miracles, from the testimony of the Father, and from innumerable passages in your own sacred writings.

John v. 31.

If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 I would then first observe, that, besides what I have told you of myself, *there is another* of undoubted reputation and veracity *that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true* and credible; and well remember, by the happiest tokens, the great fact on which it especially turned:[b] nor can you reasonably take upon you to dispute it; for the person I refer to is John the Baptist, whom your whole nation 33 agreed to reverence as a prophet: And you know, that *you* yourselves *sent* messengers on purpose from your own court *unto* this *John,* (John i. 19—27. sect. xx.) *and he,* in the most express terms, *bore* a faithful and honourable *testimony to the truth* of what I have now attested and referred to, assuring you that he saw the Spirit in a visible form descend

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

as we render it, with the most literal exactness, for *they that hear,* or they, and they alone, that so attend unto the *voice* of Christ as to believe in him—it will then limit it to this sense; which seems also favoured by ver. 24. where *death* plainly signifies a *state of sin and condemnation.*

k *I seek not any* distinct *will* or separate interest *of my own.*] This limitation the sense evidently requires. See Heb. x. 9, 10; Matt. xxvi. 39, and note h, on Matt. xii. 7. § 49.

a *Is not* [*to be admitted as*] *true.*] That this is the sense of the word *true* here, is very evident; and appears in part from comparing John viii. 13, 17. § 103.

b The great fact on which it especially turned.] The propriety and spirit of our Lord's expression, *I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true,* is much illustrated, by supposing that here is an oblique reference to that great event, *the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ at his baptism,* on which John so expressly grounded the testimony he bore to Christ the very next day after their messengers came to him, who probably staid some time to make their remarks on his preaching and conduct. (See John i. 29—34. § 21.) And the blessed effects of *this effusion* on Christ still continued, and incessantly wrought in him.

SECT. 48.

JOHN V.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

upon me. *I do not indeed receive* the chief *testimony* on which I rest the credit of my mission, *from man; nevertheless, I say these things* to you on your own principles, out of a tender and compassionate concern for your conviction, *that you*, who are now conspiring against my life, *may be saved* from that destruction which he foretold as the portion of those who should reject me, and which the greatest of them shall not be able to escape. (Matt. iii. 10, 12. sect. xvi.)

35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

He was indeed *a burning and a shining light*, (Ecclus. xlviii. 1.) who, to his bright and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, joined a most fervent zeal in bearing his testimony to them; *and for a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light*;[c] but you did not express that continued regard to his preaching, which at his first appearance you seemed to promise.

36 But I have a greater witness than *that* of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

I will not therefore insist farther on this topic, *but* proceed to other evidence. And *I have* indeed *a testimony* which is much *greater* still *than* [*that*] *of John; for the works* of wonder and mercy *which the Father has assigned* and given in commission to *me, that* according to his wise and gracious purposes, *I might accomplish them* among you, *even these* miraculous *works which I* daily *perform*, are also witnesses in my behalf, and *bear* a most convincing *testimony to me, that the Father hath sent me* as his Ambassador to men, with the most ample commission to reveal his will.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And indeed I may say with the greatest propriety, that by these miracles, as well as by the public testimony that he gave me at my baptism, *the Father who has sent me* has with the strongest evidence confirmed my mission, and *has himself borne witness to me:* nor have you any reason to dispute the testimony that he thus hath given me, [*though*] *you have never either heard his voice, nor seen his form*, as being one whom no man hath seen, nor can see; for he has testified the same concerning me in his word,

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

where he has spoken of me in the clearest manner. But, notwithstanding the submission you profess to his authority, you will not be persuaded to receive the testimony he has given; *and* after all that he has said, it is still evident that *you have not his word* cordially *abiding in you*,[d] nor do you shew a due regard even to those former revelations which you acknowledge as Divine; *for* notwithstanding all the reasons that are there given to induce you to it, *you do not believe him whom he hath sent* with a much fuller and clearer discovery of himself than any of his former messengers have brought.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

You make it your employment and your study to peruse and *search the scriptures*,[e] and enter into deep inquiries concerning the contents of them; *because you* very rightly *apprehend that you have* the doctrine of *eternal life in them*, that they contain the promises, and instruct you in the way of obtaining it; *and these* now *are* [*the very writings*] *which* in numberless passages *bear* a most important *testimony to me.*

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

And yet the obstinacy of your hearts is such, that, notwithstanding you profess so great a regard for them, *you will not come to me, that you may have* that eternal *life* which they direct you to obtain in this method, but rather chuse to die under the force of your inveterate prejudices.

41 I receive not honour from men.

I speak of your coming to me: but let me remind you that it is not out of an ambition of drawing multitudes about me, to follow and applaud my teaching; for the whole of

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

my conduct proves, that *I receive not glory from men*.[f] *But* I say it out of a tender regard for your instruction and reformation; for notwithstanding your distinguished profession of piety, and the eminent station in which you are placed, *I know you*, and have observed it for some time concerning you, *that you have not the love of God in you*, that great and only principle of true religion and happiness.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

For *I am come* to you *in my Father's name, and* with evident credentials from him; yet *you receive me not;* which, if you had really loved him, you would undoubtedly have done: whereas *if another should come in his own name*,[g] without such credentials, and set up a scheme of temporal grandeur and dominion, *him you would* readily *receive*, in pursuit of those worldly principles which, though directly contrary to the love of God, yet bear the rule in your corrupt hearts. But *how* indeed *can you believe* in me, and fall in with such an humbling and self-denying scheme as that of my gospel, *while*, with an ambitious emulation, *you are receiving honour of each other*,[h] *and seek not that* true *honour*

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only!

c *For a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light.*] Our Lord might speak thus of John though he was yet living, as *his light* was now in a great measure extinguished by his *imprisonment;* so that the argument from this text, for transposing this chapter, seems inconclusive. Had the sanhedrim, as some have supposed, imprisoned John before he was seized by Herod, (see the preface to the Prussian Testament, p. 244.) our Lord would hardly have failed to reprove them for it on so natural an occasion as this.

d *You have not his word abiding in you.*] Some would render it, *You have not his LOGOS*, that is, me, *residing among you* for any continuance of time, (see Mr. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 65.) and refer it to Christ's making so *short an abode* at Jerusalem; but I prefer the more obvious sense. Compare John xv. 7.

e *You search the scriptures.*] There is a known ambiguity in the word ἐραυνατε, which may justify either this translation or the common one; nor is it very material which is preferred. I thought the following words, which express their high opinion of the scriptures, rather suited the former; and it is exceeding probable that, at a time when the Pharisees were so impatient of the Roman yoke, they would with great diligence search the sacred oracles for predictions relating to the Messiah; though it is too plain, they had an unhappy bias on their minds, which prevented the good effects which might have been expected from that inquiry, had it been impartial.—It is also well known, that refined criticisms on their sacred writings made the most fashionable branch of learning among the Jews; in comparison of which, profane literature was held in great contempt, and indeed by many of their zealots in great abhorrence: see Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xx. *cap. ult.* & *ult.* and Mr. Biscoe's *Sermons*, at Boyle's Lecture, p. 89, 90.

f *I receive not glory from men.*] The whole series of this discourse excellently shews how far our Lord was from soothing the vanity of great and learned men, in order to obtain their favour.

g *If another should come in his own name.*] Some think here is a reference to Barchochebas, a noted impostor in the following age, for adhering to whom the Jews were severely chastised by Adrian. (Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib.* iv. *cap.* 6.) But it is certain there were many other *pretended Messiahs* who wrought *no miracles*, and yet met with a much better reception from the Pharisees than Christ did; and I doubt not but Christ meant to include, at least, all those who appeared while the sanhedrim existed.

h *You are receiving honour of each other.*] This has much more

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which [*comes*] *from* the approbation of *God alone*, and from the testimony of your consciences in his sight?

Nevertheless, remember this, that you will another day appear self-condemned for this your infidelity: and *do not think that*, to convict you in his presence, *I will accuse you to the Father;* it will not be necessary that I should do it; for even now, *that Moses* 45 *in whom you trust* as your great lawgiver and patron, *is* (as it were) *your accuser* 46 before God,[i] and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of me. *For if you had believed Moses*, and really had that regard to him which you profess to have, *you* likewise surely *would have believed me; for he wrote concerning me*, in many most 47 memorable passages.[k] *But* I will now conclude my discourse; for *if you do not believe his writings*, which are daily in your hands, and the divine authority which you so strenuously assert, *how shall* I expect that, under the power of such prejudices, *you* shall *believe my words?*

When our Lord had thus spoken, he withdrew; and they were so overawed with the majesty of his presence, and the unanswerable force of his discourse, that they did not attempt to seize or detain him.

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 32, 37, 39 How various is the evidence of our Redeemer's mission, and with what pleasure should we trace it in the testimony which John bore, the miracles which himself wrought, the testimony of the Father to him, and the predictions which the prophets uttered and recorded! To confirm our faith in all, let us be daily searching the scriptures, as the oracles of God, and the great fountains of life and salvation. We profess a regard to them: may 45 that regard never be our condemnation! or the blessed penmen witness against us, as Moses against those who gloried in his writings, and yet wanted a true faith in them!

In proportion to the degree in which we are convinced of the truth of Christ's religion, let us set ourselves to 41 cultivate the temper which he exercised. He sought not glory from men, but made his Father's will the rule of his actions, and his Father's honour the end of them. Let us not greedily catch at human applause, but aim at an 44 infinitely nobler object, even *the honour that cometh from God alone*, the only true judge of actions and characters, because the only discerner of hearts.

42 May we have not only his word in our hands, but his love remaining in us; that thereby our natural aversion 40 to the methods of his saving grace in the gospel may be subdued, that notwithstanding the obstinacy of our degenerate wills, we may come unto Christ, that we may have life! May we receive him with the greatest 43 readiness, as coming to us in his Father's name; and not only for a season rejoice in his light, but stedfastly continue in his word, as *made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;* that the advantages which we enjoy may not be found to aggravate our guilt, and to condemn us with the unbelieving Jews!

Christ shewed the tenderness of his compassion even in the severity of his rebukes, and spoke these awful and 34 awakening words, that these his unjust and inveterate enemies might be saved. May they be the *power of God* 38 *unto our salvation!* as they will be, if we *believe in him whom he hath sent.*

SECTION XLIX.

Christ vindicates his disciples from the censure of the Pharisees, for rubbing the ears of corn in their hands, as they passed through the fields on a sabbath-day. Luke vi. 1—5; Matt. xii. 1—8; Mark ii. 23, *to the end.*

LUKE vi. 1.

SECT. 49. LUKE VI.

AFTER the preceding conference with the Jews, our Lord departed from Jerusalem, where he had met with such an ungrateful reception, and returned towards Galilee;[a] *And it came to pass, that about this time, on the first sabbath after the second* [*day of unleavened bread,*[b]] *Jesus*, attended as usual by a train of followers, (who had been with

LUKE vi. 1.

AND it came to pass, [at that time,] on the second sabbath after the first, that [Jesus] went through the corn-fields; and his disci-

spirit, if we consider it as applied to the members of the sanhedrim, who had such distinguished *titles of honour*, than if we only take it as spoken to a mixed multitude, who might happen to surround Christ in the temple: the taste of the populace seldom lies that way.

i *That Moses in whom you trust is your accuser.*] This is one of the most expressive passages that can be imagined, in which Moses, their great lawgiver, is represented as looking down with *indignation* upon these *elders* who gloried in being the most distinguished of *his disciples;* and seeing how injuriously they treated Jesus the great Prophet, turning himself to God with a severe accusation against them, and urging his own predictions as an aggravation of their inexcusable infidelity.

k *He wrote concerning me* in many most memorable passages.] Christ might perhaps intend to refer to what Moses had written,—of *the seed of the woman:* (Gen. iii. 15.)—of *the seed of Abraham, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed;* (Gen. xxii. 18.)—of *the Shiloh who should come to gather the people;* (Gen. xlix. 10.)—and of *the prophet whom God should raise up unto them from among their brethren:* (Deut. xviii. 18.)—as well as to the many *ceremonial institutions* which had their final accomplishment in him.

a Returned towards Galilee.] We may reasonably conclude this, because both Mark and Luke mention his being there quickly after this story. Compare Mark iii. 7. and Luke vi. 12, 13. with vii. 1.

b *The first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread.*] So I venture to render δευτεροπρωτον, the word used by Luke; yet not without much hesitation; for it is so singular an expression, that (as Erasmus long since did) I despair of seeing its sense exactly ascertained.—Could Theophylact, or his very learned followers, Scaliger, Lightfoot, and Whitby, produce any instance of δευτεροδευτερον being used for the *second*, or δευτεροτριτον for the *third* of the sabbaths between the passover and pentecost, I should entirely acquiesce in the translation here given; which supposes, this was the first of those seven sabbaths which followed the *second day of unleavened bread*, from whence the *fifty days* of *pentecost* were to be computed; see Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.—On the other hand, could the great Grotius, or his followers, Woltzogenius and Brennius, have produced an instance in which σαββατοπρωτον, or τεσσαροπρωτον, occurs, there would have been reason to conclude with them, that there were *three prime sabbaths*, which were accounted sabbaths of peculiar solemnity; the *first*, that after the day of the *passover;* the *second*, which is the day here mentioned, that after *pentecost;* and the *third*, that after the *feast of tabernacles*.—For want of sufficient authorities to support either of these interpretations, Sir Isaac Newton, (*On Proph.* p. 154.) after Epiphanius and Beza, has advanced another yet less probable than either; which is, that it was the *second of the two great feasts of the passover;* as we call *Easter-day* itself *High Easter*, and its *octave*, *Low Easter*, or *Low Sunday*. But though the *seventh day of unleavened bread* was to be *a holy convocation*, yet *the law* expressly allowed the Jews to *dress victuals* on it; (Exod. xii. 16.) which would have afforded so direct an answer to the Pharisees' objection, that one can hardly suppose Christ would have failed to urge it.—On either of these *two last* suppositions, it must be rendered, *the second prime sabbath;* but as I could not translate it at all, without fixing it one way or the other, I chose the former rendering, for these *two* reasons: 1. Because I cannot find that there is any divine command to observe the *sabbaths* which followed the day of the *three great feasts*, and particularly that of *pentecost*, with any such peculiar solemnity, as to afford sufficient reason for this

ples [were an hungered,] and began [Mark, as they went,] to pluck the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in their hands. [Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23.]

2 And certain of the Pharisees [when they saw *it*,] said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? [Matt. xii. 2.]

Matt. xii. 2. [And] they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day. [Mark ii. 24.]

Luke vi. 3. And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when [Mark, he had need and] was an hungered, [Mark, he,] and they which were with him? [Matt. xii. 3.—Mark ii. 25.]

4 How he went into the house of God [Mark, in the days of Abiathar the high-priest,] and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him, [which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them,] but for the priests alone! [Matt. xii. 4. Mark ii. 26.]

Matt. xii. 5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

Mark ii. 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.—[Luke vi. 5.]

Matt. xii. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

him at the feast,) *went through the corn-fields; and* as *his disciples were hungry,* SECT. *and* the barley was now ripe, they *began, as they went, to pull off* some of *the ears of* 49.
corn;[c] *and rubbing them in their hands* to break off the beards and the husk, *did eat* the grain. LUKE VI.

And some of the Pharisees, who were employed by the rulers to follow him from place to place, as malicious spies on all his discourses and actions, *when they saw it,* were offended at the time and circumstances of the action,[d] and reproving his disciples, *said to them, Why do ye* thus gather and rub out the grain; for *that* is a kind of servile work, *which it is not lawful* for any one *to do on the sabbath-days?* *And* that they might involve their Master also in the same charge, though he did not himself join with them in it, *they said to him, Behold,* these *thy disciples,* in thy very presence, *do that which it is not lawful* for any one *to do on the sabbath;* and wilt thou permit it to pass without a reproof? MATT. XII.

And Jesus said in answer to them, Have you, that value yourselves so much on your acquaintance with the sacred writings, and set up for the expositors of them to others, *never read that which David did, in his* extreme *necessity, when he and they that were with him were hungry? How he went into* the tabernacle, which is *the house of God,* *in the days of Abiathar,* who was afterwards *the high-priest,*[e] *and* then officiated for his father Ahimelech; (see 1 Sam. xxi. 3. *et seq.)* Have you forgot that this faithful servant of God, this man after his own heart, *took and eat the shew-bread,* which had that very day been taken from the holy table, *and gave* it *also to those that attended him; which it was neither lawful for him nor them to eat,* nor even for the Levites themselves, *but for the priests alone?* Yet in this case, their necessity was judged a sufficient excuse for dispensing with the observance of such a ceremonial institution. (See Lev. xxiv. 6—9.) LUKE VI.

Or have you not read in the law, that by those sacrifices which are appointed for the sabbath-day, and some of them peculiar to it, *the priests* themselves, who minister *in the temple,* are obliged to perform very servile works *on the sabbath-days,* in making up the fires, killing, flaying, and dressing the sacrifices, and the like, by which others would be justly reckoned to *profane the sabbath; and* yet, doing it with an immediate reference to the service of God, they *are* accounted *blameless,* and really are so? *Now I say unto you, that there is* [*something*] *greater than the temple here,*[f] and of much more importance than the service of it. My disciples therefore may surely be vindicated on such an occasion as this, when, in attendance upon me, in prosecution of my service, they do what is so much less laborious than the offices which you allow there in the priests. MATT. XII.

And he said unto them farther on this occasion, *The sabbath was made for* the benefit of *man,* subservient to the rest and relief of his body, as well as to be spent in religious improvement; *and not man for the* observation of the *sabbath,* or of any other ceremonial institution whatsoever. MARK II.

But if you had known the intent of that scripture, Hos. vi. 6. and had considered *what this meaneth,* "*I require mercy and not sacrifice;*[g] that is, I always prefer acts of "charity to matters of positive institution, when in any instance they interfere with each "other;"[h] *you would not have condemned the innocent,* as you have now done, merely for rubbing out a handful of corn to refresh them in my service. MATT. XII.

distinguishing title; though large sacrifices were to be offered *every day* for *seven days* after the *passover,* and for *eight* during the *feast of tabernacles;* which are distinctly prescribed, Numb. xxviii. 16—25, and xxix. 12. *et seq.* And 2, Because, considering what Philo and Isidorus assert, and Josephus intimates, of *corn being ripe* in Judea about the time of the *passover,* (see Petav. *Var. Diss. lib.* ii. *cap.* 11. Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 18. and Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* iii. *cap.* 10. § 5.) and *the law* of presenting the *loaves* made of *new wheat* on the day of *pentecost,* (Lev. xxiii. 17.) it seems probable the *harvest* was generally concluded *before that day.* (See also Scalig. *Emend. Temp. Proleg.* p. 25, 26. and *lib.* vi. p. 557, 558.) —I suppose these considerations, or the authority of such great names, may have determined most harmonizers to introduce this story immediately after the fifth chapter of John: nor do I see any reason to vary from them herein. And the order would be the same, if Reland's conjecture were to be admitted, that the πρωτοπρωτον was the *first sabbath* in the *civil,* and the δευτεροπρωτον the *first* in the *ecclesiastical year.* (See Reland *Antiq. Heb. lib.* iv. *cap.* 9.) But this is a conjecture which has so little to support it even in hypothesis, as scarcely to deserve a mention.

c *To pull off* some of *the ears of corn.*] The word στάχυας, here used, may indifferently signify ears of any kind of grain; but it might probably be barley, that being first ripe in those parts. (Compare Exod. ix. 31, 32.) Sir Isaac Newton lays a great deal of stress on this, for fixing the time of Christ's death; concluding *this passover* must happen *late,* and that it was *two years* before *that* in which our Lord was crucified; and consequently that Christ's death must be fixed to such a time, that *the passover two years before it* may be a *late one.* But I fear the argument is not so conclusive as one could wish, considering with what ingenuity and labour it is pursued. For that great man seems to have forgot how expressly Maimonides and the other rabbies assert, that the Jews did not always fix their passover by the *vernal equinox;* but, in case of a backward spring, added an *intercalary month* between *that* and *Abib.* (See Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. xii. 1.) If this be credible, it shews how little we can ascertain the Jewish passovers by astronomical calculations; and if it be not, why did Sir Isaac proceed in his computations on those rules for the translation of feasts, which we have only by late *rabbinical tradition?* See Bochart. *Hieroz. lib.* ii. *cap.* 50.

d Offended at the time and circumstances of the action.] The law so expressly allowed to *pluck ears of corn* as one passed through a field, that, malignant as they were, they pretended not to find fault with the thing itself; (see Deut. xxiii. 25.) but they were perverse enough to think this a kind of *reaping* and *dressing* the grain, which was indeed forbidden on the *sabbath.*

e *Abiathar,* who was afterwards *the high-priest.*] If our present reading (which Beza suspects, though older than the Syriac version,) be allowed as genuine, here is a remarkable instance of a person being designated by an office, which he did not bear till *after* the date of the event referred to; in like manner as Cyrenius (Luke ii. 2.) is called governor of Syria, because he was so *after the enrolment.* It seems indeed that Ahimelech was *High-Priest* when David took the shew-bread, though in all the story he is only called *the Priest;* and as it is merely an arbitrary supposition, that the father was sometimes called Abiathar, or the son Ahimelech, it seems impossible to defend the received reading, otherwise than by supposing, with Grotius, that as Abiathar was a much more celebrated person than his father, our Lord mentions his name in preference to the other. He was probably present, and, for any thing we certainly know, his aged father might act by his advice in the affair referred to, which if he did, it was exceeding proper to mention him here.

f *Something greater than the temple.*] So many manuscripts, with Theophylact, read μειζον, *something greater,* instead of μειζων, *one greater,* (see Dr. Mill, *in loc.*) and in this view the opposition seems so natural that I prefer this reading. Our Lord might perhaps point to *his own body,* the noblest temple of the Deity; (compare John ii. 21. § 24.) or it might refer to the *work* then going on; but the former sense is much more natural.

g *I require mercy and not sacrifice.*] So θελω evidently signifies, when it expresses the *will* of a superior; and this the original Hebrew word imports, which seems here to answer to that modern phrase used by princes, Such is our pleasure.

h I always prefer acts of charity, &c.] I must here repeat a very obvious remark, because the sense of so many important scriptures

SECT. 49. MATT. XII.

You are therefore, on the whole, greatly to blame, to censure them; and would be so, if they had only my dispensation for what they do, and were defended by no farther arguments; *for the Son of man* is a person of so great dignity and authority, that he indeed *is Lord*[i] *even of the sabbath [itself]*;[k] and he may hereafter give you far more surprising instances of his power over it.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day. [Mark ii. 28. Luke vi. 5.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WITH pleasure we observe the zeal which these attendants of Christ express who chose on a sacred festival to expose themselves to hunger as well as toil, rather than they would lose the benefit of his instructions, which, like the heavenly manna on the day preceding the sabbath, were then poured out in a double plenty. But what 2 numerous auditory is so candid as to contain none who come, like these Pharisees, with a desire to cavil rather than to learn! The malignity of their temper sufficiently appeared in taking exception at so small a circumstance: hypocrites that could thus *strain at a gnat* and yet *swallow a camel*, (Matt. xxiii. 24.) scrupling to rub out a few grains of corn, while they sought to devour widows' houses; and were, under this grave mask of the strictest piety, *inwardly full of rapine and all wickedness!* (Luke xx. 47. and xi. 39.)

6, 8 Let us attend to the apology Christ makes for his disciples. It speaks his own authority, as greater than the temple, and Lord of the sabbath: and well might he, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, without the least presumption, use such language as this. It likewise declares much of the genius of his religion, which deals not in forms and ceremonies, and dispenses even with rituals of a Divine appointment, when humanity and 7 benevolence interfere with the observance of them. Since God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, let us abhor the perverseness and wickedness of those who sacrifice mercy itself, not merely to ceremonies of a Divine original, but to their own arbitrary inventions, superstitious dreams, and precarious though confident determinations. Let us practise habitual caution and candour, lest, before we are aware, we condemn the innocent and the pious, and become guilty of what is much more displeasing in the sight of God than the faults which a peevish and censorious temper may fancy it discovers in our brethren. Oct. 12. 1855.

SECTION L.

Christ, on a following sabbath, cures a man whose hand was withered; and vindicates that action from the cavils of the Pharisees. Luke vi. 6—11. Matt. xii. 9—15. Mark iii 1—7.

LUKE vi. 6.

SECT. 50. LUKE VI.

WE have just mentioned an instance of the Pharisees cavilling at a very innocent action of the disciples; we shall *now* proceed to another, in which they charged our Lord himself with the violation of the same sacred rest, in a yet more malicious and unreasonable manner. For *it came to pass also, when he was departed from thence*,[a] (that is, from the 6 town in whose neighbouring fields they had rubbed out the ears of corn,) *that on another sabbath he entered again*, as he was used to do, *into the synagogue*, in some other city which lay in his way through Galilee, *and taught* his heavenly doctrine there. *And behold*, a remarkable circumstance occurred; for *there was a man present whose right hand was withered*, the nerves and sinews of it being so shrunk up that it was entirely useless.

LUKE vi. 6.

AND it came to pass also, [when he was departed thence,] on another sabbath, that he entered [Mark, again] into the synagogue, and taught: and [behold,] there was a man [Mark, there,] whose right hand was withered. [Matt. xii. 9, 10. Mark iii. 1.]

7 *And the scribes and Pharisees*, who were there also present with him, *watched him*, to observe *whether he would* again *heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find* some new matter for *an accusation against him*, having succeeded so ill in the former attempt, and plainly perceiving that his reputation grew more and more among the people.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day, that they might find an accusation against him. [Mark iii. 2.]

8 *But* when the synagogue-worship was despatched, and our Lord's sermon was also concluded, *he, knowing* the malignity and wickedness of *their thoughts* and views, instead of being discouraged by the design they had against him, *said to the man who had the*

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the wither-

depends upon it, viz. that, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, one thing seems to be *forbidden*, and another *commanded*, when the meaning only is, that the latter is *greatly to be preferred* to the former. The text before us is a remarkable instance of this; as likewise Joel ii. 13; Matt. vi. 19, 20; John vi. 27; Luke xii. 4, 5; and Col. iii. 2. And it is evident, that Gen. xlv. 8; Exod. xvi. 8; John v. 30; vii. 19. and many more passages, are to be expounded in the same comparative sense.—A late ingenious writer says, "Our Lord does not compare *moral* and *positive* duties together here, but only the commandments of men with the commandments of God." But it is plain, the series of our Lord's arguments here is intended to prove, that *circumstances of necessity* dispense with some *ceremonial observances* which were in the general commanded by God, and manifestly goes upon this foundation, that ceremonial institutions being the means of religion, if circumstances occurred in which they interfered with the end of it, they were suspended of course; and when this is the case, the conscience of particular persons is to judge as in the sight of God.

i *For the Son of man is Lord*, &c.] The author of the new translation renders it in Matthew, *The sabbath is subservient to man*; though he paraphrases it as it stands in Mark, *The Son of man has a power of dispensing with the law of the sabbath*; which is undoubtedly the true sense: for I cannot find that *the Son of man* does, in the New Testament, signify any one but Christ; and were the words (which are exactly the same) to be translated in Mark as he has rendered them in Matthew, they would be a mere repetition of ver. 27. *The sabbath was made for man*, &c.—It is worthy of our notice, that Matthew introduces these words with γαρ, *for*, and Mark with ωστε, *therefore*, or *so that*: and both connections may be justified. Yet, as it is hardly to be imagined *both* were equally intended, I look upon this to be a considerable proof that the sacred writers were not always critically exact in the use of their particles; a remark which I apprehend to be of great importance, both for clearing their sense and vindicating their character. Whoever considers the ambiguity of many of those Hebrew particles which correspond to the Greek, will find little reason to wonder at it. Compare Luke xi. 36. § 64. and note d, there.

k *Even of the sabbath itself;* και του σαββατου.] This certainly implies, that the sabbath was an institution of great and distinguished importance; and may perhaps also refer to that signal authority which Christ by the ministry of his apostles should exert over it, in changing it from the *seventh* to the *first day of the week*.

a *When he was departed from thence.*] There can be no doubt as to the connection of this story with the preceding, in which all the Evangelists agree; and indeed, had not Luke told us it was *on another sabbath*, the words of Matthew would have led us to imagine it had been the *same day*. Perhaps he might spend most of the week in the town to which the fields mentioned above belonged.—Beza's favourite manuscript, now at Cambridge, as well as one of Stephen's, adds the following words in Luke, immediately before this story: *The same day seeing a certain man at work on the sabbath, he said to him, O man, if thou knowest what thou dost thou art happy; but if thou dost not know it thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law.* This is undoubtedly *a spurious addition*, for had the Pharisees heard any thing like this from Christ, they would have followed him no farther, and observed him no more, to find matter even of *capital accusation* against him. And indeed it goes on a very false supposition, that the *ceremonial law* was already abrogated.

ed hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. [Mark iii. 3.]

Matt. xii. 10.—And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.

Luke vi. 9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to [kill, *and*] destroy *it?* [Mark iii. 4.]

Mark iii. 4. But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about [Luke, upon them all] with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. [Matt. xii. 13.—Luke vi. 10.]

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. [Matt. xii. 14.]

Luke vi. 11. And they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Matt. xii. 15. But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence, [with his disciples to the sea.] [Mark iii. 7.]

withered hand, Rise up from thy seat, *and stand in the midst* of the assembly: *and he* cheerfully *arose and stood* in the most conspicuous part of the synagogue, hoping to receive the favour of a cure. SECT. 50.

And as the Pharisees saw what Jesus intended, *they asked him, saying, Is it* then to be taken for granted that it is *lawful to cure on sabbath-days* as well as at other times? And they put the question in that general form,[b] on purpose *that they might* have an opportunity to *accuse him*, and not from any desire of instruction. *And he said to them*, in reply to that ensnaring question, *What man is there of you* in all this assembly, *who, if he have but one sheep that on the sabbath-day should fall into a pit*,[c] and be in danger of perishing there, *would not lay hold of it* without delay, *and* make no scruple of attempting presently to *raise it up* from thence, though it would be a work of some labour and difficulty? *Now* I leave it to your own consciences to reflect, *how much is a man better than a sheep: So that* you must, on your own principles, allow that *it is lawful to do well*, and to perform the lovely acts of charity and mercy[d] even on *sabbath-days:* and you must own, for instance, that if a man should fall into a pit, it would be lawful on that day to pull him out; and consequently too, it must be lawful, if he labours under a disease, to apply any proper remedies for his cure; much more then must it be so, to cure a person without any laborious application, merely by speaking a word. MATT. XII. 10 11 12

Then Jesus said farther *to them*, To end the controversy in a few words, *I will ask you one thing* more; *Is it lawful to do good on sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy* [*and*] even *kill* the innocent? thereby secretly referring to the purpose of destroying his life,[e] which, while they were thus scrupulous about the observation of the sabbath, they were even then forming in their hearts. *But they were silent;* being convinced in their own minds of the reasonableness of what he said, and stung with secret remorse of conscience, yet unwilling to confess what they saw and felt. LUKE VI. 9 MARK III. 4

And when he had looked round upon them all with a just *indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts*, and for that condemnation and ruin which he knew it would bring upon them, as well as for the mischief it might occasion to others, *he says to the man* that laboured under the calamity which was mentioned before, *Stretch forth thine hand. And* accordingly *he stretched it out, and* was not only strengthened for that particular motion of which he was before incapable, but *his hand was* perfectly *restored*, and was *well* and strong *as the other.* 5

And the Pharisees were so incensed at the affront which they imagined they had received, in our Lord's neglecting their censure, and intimating his knowledge of the evil purposes of their hearts, that they were no longer able to bear the place; but *went out* of the synagogue, *and immediately took counsel* together *with the Herodians*,[f] who, different as their civil and religious notions were from those of the Pharisees, joined with them in their enmity to Christ, and zealously united in a conspiracy *against him, how they might destroy him*, either by a public prosecution or a private assassination. *And they were filled with madness* and rage against him, *and discoursed* over the point at large *with each other*, to determine *what they might do to* prevent the growing reputation of *Jesus* among the people, and to put a period at once to his labours and his life. 6 LUKE VI. 11

But Jesus knowing [*it*,] that nothing might hinder him from fulfilling his ministry, *withdrew himself from thence*, and went *with his disciples to the sea* of Galilee, on the shore of which he frequently preached to the people. MATT XII. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT actions are so fair and lovely, that malice cannot turn them into reproach? What characters are so unblemished, what so exemplary, that uncharitableness cannot revile and condemn them? While the eyes of distressed multitudes were turned to Christ as their only Physician and most valuable Friend, the eyes of the Pharisees are continually upon him for evil: and they behold his wondrous miracles, not for their own convic- LUKE VI. 7

b They put the question in that general form.] The word θεραπευειν is very extensive, and properly includes all the *care, labour*, and *attendance* which the case of any distempered or wounded person can require; as I apprehend our English word *cure* also does; though, through the poverty of our language, we are forced to apply it to those miraculous effects which were so instantaneously produced by the healing word of our blessed Redeemer. What Syriac word they might use I know not; but it is plain the question is put in very *general terms*, which best favoured their base purpose of founding an *accusation* on our Lord's answer.

c *If he have but one sheep that should fall into a pit.*] The common version is more literal; but that which I have given plainly suits our English idiom better, and appears to me perfectly faithful: for the stress of the thought cannot lie on supposing a man to have *but one sheep* in all, but in this, that *one only fell into the pit;* yet for the comparatively small value of *that one*, he would not scruple to undertake the labour of helping it out *on the sabbath.*

d *To do well*, and to perform the lovely acts of charity and mercy.] This is the meaning of that phrase, καλως ποιειν; in the use of which the Evangelist might intimate an appeal to some remainders of a moral sense, distinguishing the natural beauty of such actions, which these worst of men could not totally eradicate.

e Secretly referring to the purpose of destroying his life.] I appeal to every reader of taste, whether there be not another kind of spirit in these words, on this supposition of such a reference, than we could find in them by any forced attempt to prove, that *not to have cured a withered hand* in these circumstances would have been, in a sense, *destroying life.* Such cold and unnatural criticisms have been a great dishonour to scripture, and I persuade myself, the authors of them have not seen whither they tended.

f *With the Herodians.*] The Herodians were a sect of men who, so far as we can judge by their name, seem to have distinguished themselves by their zeal for the family of Herod, whom they might perhaps compliment with the title of the Messiah, though it is plain that neither Herod himself, nor the generality of the people, fell in with this extravagant opinion: (See Matt. ii. 1—4.) However, from their high regard to Herod, these men would naturally be zealous for the authority of the Romans, by whose means Herod was made and continued *king;* and it is probable, as Dr. Prideaux conjectures, (*Connect.* Vol. II. part 2. book 5. *ad fin.*) that they might incline to conform to them in some particulars which the law would not allow of; and particularly in the admission of *images*, though not in the *religious*, or rather *idolatrous* use of them. Herod's attempt to set up a *golden eagle* over the east gate of the temple is well known; (see Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 1—3.) these complaisant courtiers would, no doubt, defend it: and the same temper might discover itself in many other instances. On all these accounts they were most diametrically opposite to the Pharisees; so that the conjunction of their counsels against Christ is a very memorable proof of the keenness of that malice which could thus cause them to forget so deep a quarrel with each other.

SECT. 50. tion, but that they may, if possible, turn them into the means of his destruction. So ineffectual are the most obvious and demonstrative arguments, till divine grace conquer men's natural aversion to a Redeemer's kingdom, and captivate their hearts to the obedience of faith!

MARK III. 6 To have reviled and dishonoured Christ, and to have endeavoured to prevent the success of his ministry, had been a daring crime: but these desperate wretches conspire against his life; and, different as their principles and interests were, form a transient friendship, to be cemented by his blood. Blessed Jesus! well mightest thou say, *Many good works have I shewn you, and for which of them would you* murder *me?* (John x. 32.)

MATT. XII. 11, 12 What reasoning could be more plain and forcible than this which our Lord used? and yet, like deaf adders, they stop their ears, and harden their hearts against it. Inhuman creatures, that were more concerned for the safety of a sheep, than the happiness of a man! Yet would to God that unworthy temper had died with them; for surely there are those, even among professing Christians, who regard their cattle more than even the souls committed by providence to their care, and therefore, no doubt, more than their own too!

MARK III. 5. MATT. XII. 13. LUKE VI. 11 The indignation which Christ felt on this occasion was a just and amiable passion. Happy they whose anger, like his, is only awakened by sin, and burns only to destroy that accursed thing! The malice of the Pharisees did not restrain the benevolence of our compassionate Saviour, nor deprive the poor patient of his cure. Such let our conduct be! Let us *not be overcome of evil;* let not the most unjust censures, or the most malicious opposition break our spirits, so as to prevent us from doing our duty. If others are mad with persecuting rage, let us pity them; and let all their fury against the cause of God be improved as a motive to excite our most zealous and courageous endeavours for its service.

SECTION LI.

Christ, retiring to the sea-side, cures great multitudes with such modesty and gentleness, as was agreeable to Isaiah's prophetic description of his conduct. Mark iii. 7—12. Matt. xii. 15—21.

MARK iii. 7.

SECT. 51. IT was before observed, that Jesus retired from the synagogue, where he had cured the man that had a withered hand, and went with his disciples to the sea-shore: we now pursue the story,[a] *and* add, that he was there attended by *a great multitude* of people,

MARK III. who *followed him from Galilee, and* even *from Judea; And* particularly *from Jerusalem,* where that extraordinary cure lately wrought at the pool of Bethesda, and that 8 excellent defence with which it was followed, had greatly increased his popularity: nay, there were some that came yet farther from the south, *and* were *from Idumea;* the natives of which country being long since obliged to become Jews,[b] had many of them seen Jesus at the feasts: *and* others too attended him *from* the eastern regions, which lay *beyond Jordan: and* also *a great multitude* from the western parts, even as far as *from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon, having heard what great* and glorious *things he did, came to him.*

9 *And he spoke to his disciples, that a little vessel should be in readiness near him, because of the multitude* that was now flocking around him; *that they might not throng* in upon *him* in a manner which would have been very inconvenient to him, and 10 would have prevented great numbers of them from seeing and hearing what passed. *For he had healed many, and* [*indeed*] *all* that applied to him; *so that they* eagerly *rushed in upon him,*[c] even *as many as were under any* remarkable *scourge* of God's afflicting hand, *that they might touch him,* and so partake of that healing virtue which went out 11 from him. *And* they who were possessed with *impure spirits, as soon as* ever *they saw him,* though they before were perfect strangers to him, immediately *fell down before him* in a posture of submission and homage; *and* such a terror seized the demons that possessed them, that they *cried out,* with all the appearances of horror and confusion, *saying,* We know that *thou art* the Messiah, *the Son of* the most high *God.*[d]

12 But our Lord preserved the usual modesty of his temper on these occasions, as well as others; *and,* being desirous to occasion as little disturbance and offence as possible, *he charged them with strictness,* and some appearance of severity,[e] *that they should not make him known:* for, intending to visit several of those parts himself, he was unwilling to give an unnecessary alarm to his enemies; and he always chose to avoid every degree of ostentation.

MATT. XII. 17. So *that* in him *it might be* evidently seen to be *accomplished which was spoken by*

MARK iii. 7.
AND a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, [Matt. xii. 15.]

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake unto his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many, [and he healed them all,] insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. [Matt. xii. 15.]

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known. [Matt. xii. 16.]

Matt. xii. 17. That it

a *We now pursue the story.*] The connection of this section with the preceding, both in Matthew and Mark, is express: and I desire the reader would once for all observe, that when I give no reason for placing the sections in the order in which they stand, it is because I am not aware there is any difficulty or controversy about them. And their following each other in the Evangelists, though without any express note of exact connection, I always reckon a good reason for continuing that order, unless there be some weighty argument inducing us to change it.

b *Obliged to become Jews.*] That Hyrcanus had obliged them to this, about *an hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ,* we are assured by the account Josephus gives us, *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 9. (al. 17.) § 1.

c *Rushed in upon him.*] This the phrase επιπιπτειν αυτω yet more strongly expresses; which signifies, that they were ready to drive each other upon him, so that those nearer him could hardly stand, being pressed forward by those behind.

d *Thou art* the Messiah, *the Son of* the most high *God.*] The Leicester manuscript reads it, Συ ει ο Χς, υιος τ Θυ; *Thou art Christ, the Son of God:* which I mention, not that I think the authority of that sufficient to justify a change in the received reading, but only as one remarkable instance among many others which I could easily give, of the negligence with which that manuscript was collated by Dr. Mill's correspondent; since this reading, memorable as it is, is omitted by the Doctor. But I hope the world will ere long be favoured with a far more exact account, not only of that manuscript, but of several others much more valuable than that, some quite omitted by Dr. Mill, and others very imperfectly collated. This we are encouraged to expect from the reverend, accurate, and indefatigable Mr. Wasse of Ayno, whose obliging readiness to assist me in this work, I do myself the honour of acknowledging with the utmost gratitude.——His death, since the publication of the first edition of this volume, is a calamity to the learned world long to be lamented.

e *He charged them with strictness,* and some appearance of severity.] This we may take to be included in the force of that expression, πολλα επετιμα αυτοις.

might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

SECT. 51. MATT. XII.

Isaiah the prophet,[f] (Isa. xlii. 1—4.) *saying,* "*Behold* the great Messiah, *my servant,* "*whom I have chosen* for the great work of redeeming and saving my people; he is "*my Beloved, in whom my* very *soul does* entirely *acquiesce,* as every way qualified to "perform it: for *I will put my Spirit upon him; and he shall proclaim judgment,* "that is, the great law of religion, righteousness, and truth, even *to* the most distant of "*the heathen* nations. *He shall not contend* with martial violence, *nor cry out* in a 19
"clamorous and turbulent manner; *nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets,* as
"giving a loud and disquieting alarm: But he shall manage his administration with so 20
"much gentleness and sweetness, with so much caution and tenderness, that (as it is
"proverbially expressed) *he shall not break* even *a bruised reed* or cane, which snaps
"asunder immediately when pressed with any considerable weight; *nor* shall he *extin-*
"*guish* even *the smoking flax,*[g] or the wick of a lamp, which, when it is first beginning
"to kindle, is put out by every little motion: with such kind and condescending regards
"to the weakest of his people, and to the first openings and symptoms of a hopeful
"character, shall he proceed, *till he send forth judgment to victory,*[h] or till he make
"his righteous cause gloriously triumphant over all opposition. *And* this gentle and 21
"gracious administration shall charm mankind in so sensible and irresistible a manner,
"that *the Gentiles shall confide in his* illustrious *name;*[i] and distant, yea barbarous
"nations, shall seek their refuge and salvation in his grace; though Israel may ungrate-
"fully reject him, and therefore be justly abandoned by God."

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY face does not more exactly answer to face in water, than the character of Christ drawn by the prophet Ver. 17
to his temper and conduct as described by the Evangelists. How should Zion rejoice, and the daughter of Jerusalem shout, that such a *King cometh unto her, meek and having salvation!* (Zech. ix. 9.) Let us with pleasure trace his gentle administration, and with a cheerful confidence commit our souls to so kind and so faithful a hand: far from breaking, he will strengthen the bruised reed; far from quenching the smoking flax, he will 20
rather blow it up into a flame.

How well does it become the disciples of Christ, and especially, how well does it become his ministers, to imitate what was so amiable in their Lord, and not to *despise the day of small things!* Let us not strive nor 19
cry, but, laying aside all unnecessary contentions and angry debates, let us *receive one another as Christ hath received us,* (Rom. xv. 7.) and, avoiding all vain ostentation, let us silently and meekly attend, each of us, to the discharge of his proper office. So may we hope that the cause of religion will go on successfully around us, and that righteousness will in due time be brought forth to complete victory over all opposition, and, by its own 20
genuine influences, be happily established in the earth.

The Gentiles trust in a Redeemer's name, and the British isles are numbered among those that *wait for his law.* 21
May our souls with humble submission bow themselves to receive it, and observe it with such faithful care and obedient regards, that our example, wherever it is seen, may promote the reception of it among those that as yet are strangers to it!

SECTION LII.

Our Lord having spent the night in prayer on a mountain, in the morning chuses the twelve apostles; and then comes down to the multitude assembled in the plain, and performs a great number of miracles among them. Luke vi. 12—19. Mark iii. 13—19.

LUKE vi. 12.

AND it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.—[Mark iii. 13.]

SECT. 52. LUKE VI.

LUKE vi. 12.

AND it came to pass in those days[a] of his teaching near the sea of Galilee, *that* Jesus, seeing the general notice which was taken of his appearance, and the inclination which multitudes had to be farther informed concerning him, determined to chuse a number of persons, who should assist and succeed him in his ministerial work. And as the office to which he intended to assign them was of so great importance, even to the remotest ages, 12
previous to the choice of them *he went forth to a* neighbouring *mountain to pray; and* his heart was so much enlarged on this momentous occasion, that, notwithstanding all the labours of the preceding day, he *continued all night* at his devotions, *in an oratory* [*devoted to the service*] *of God,*[b] where he had some opportunity of being sheltered by the trees which were planted round it.

f *By Isaiah the prophet.*] I refer the learned reader to Grotius and Heinsius, for the difference between the original and the quotation here, which chiefly lies in the clause of *sending forth judgment unto victory.*

g *He shall not break a bruised reed, nor extinguish the smoking flax.*] The immense pains Zegerus and some other commentators have taken to shew on what accounts either the Pharisees or the multitudes, or the Jews or Gentiles, might be compared to a *bruised reed* or *smoking flax,* seem very wide of the purpose. They seem to be only proverbial expressions, to signify a person of a most gentle character, (as I illustrate them above,) and something to resemble the proverb among the Spanish Jews to the same purpose, *If such a one were to walk on a pavement of eggs, he would not break them:* (see Pol. *Synops. in loc.*) To suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, it signifies he shall not make so much noise as breaking *a bruised reed* does, or pouring water on *smoking flax,* sinks the idea too low.

h *Till he send forth judgment to victory.*] Isaiah says, *to truth;* and we may take the words to signify, *till he make* the cause of *righteousness* and *truth* completely *victorious;* or, *till* at length *he take a righteous* and speedy *vengeance* on the Jews for rejecting him, to verify and fulfil the truth of his predictions.—I have expressed it in a manner which may suit either; but I think the former much preferable, since then the words describe the general character of Christ's administration in all ages, and especially as it best agrees with the sense of the original, *He shall bring forth judgment unto truth: He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set* or established *judgment in the earth:* which phrases explain each other, and the sense of each is abridged here.

i *And the Gentiles shall confide in his name.*] Isaiah's saying, chap. xlii. 4. *The isles shall wait for his law,* is illustrated and explained by this correspondent phrase which Matthew uses.

a *In those days.*] There can be no doubt of the place of this section, since this choice of the twelve apostles is mentioned both by Mark and Luke just in this connection; and Matthew does not mention it at all, till he comes to speak of the mission of the twelve, which is plainly a different thing, and happened some time after. Compare Luke ix. 1, 2. with Matt. x. 1—5. § 74.

b *In an oratory* [*devoted to the service*] *of God;* εν τη προσευχη του

SECT. 52. LUKE VI. MARK III. LUKE VI.

And when it was day, early in the morning, *he called his disciples to him*, [*even*] *those whom he pleased*, (compare John xv. 16.) *and they* cheerfully *came to him* upon his summons: *and out of them he chose* [*and*] *constituted twelve*,[c] *whom he also named* his *apostles*, or envoys; a name which well expressed the office for which they were designed: these he now fixed upon, *that* for some time *they should* continually *be with* 13 *him*, not only to attend upon his public ministry, but to enjoy the benefit of his private conversation; that he might furnish them the better for the great work in which they were to be employed; *and that*, at length, after suitable preparation, *he might* with more advantage *send them abroad to preach* his gospel, and thereby make way for his own visits to some more distant parts, where he had not yet been. *And*, to enable them the more effectually to do it, he determined that they should then *have power to heal distempers*, 15 *and to cast out demons* from those unhappy people who were possessed by them; well knowing such endowments would command a regard, notwithstanding the meanness of their appearance.

16 *And* the twelve persons who were so signally honoured by him, and whose names (excepting that of Judas Iscariot) will be ever venerable in the Christian church, as being, next to Christ, the great foundations of it, (Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.) were these: *Simon*, whom (it has been observed before, John i. 42. p. 43.) *he sirnamed Peter*,[d] that is, a rock, on account of his remarkable steadiness and intrepidity of temper, (see Isa. l. 7.) as well as the 17 peculiar use to be made of him: *And James* [*the son*] *of Zebedee*, the fisherman; *and John* the beloved disciple, who was *the brother of James: and he sirnamed them Boanerges, which signifies, Sons of Thunder*:[e] thereby intimating, with what victorious and resistless power they should bear down all opposition, and, with divine eloquence and 18 mighty miracles, confound the enemies of his gospel: *And Andrew, and Philip*, of whose first acquaintance with Christ we were before informed; (John i. 40, 43.) *and Bartholomew, and Matthew*, or Levi, who had lately been called from the infamous employment of a publican; (Matt. ix. 9. p. 93.) *and Thomas*, who was also called Didymus, as having a twin brother; *and James* [*the son*] *of Alpheus*, called James the less; (Mark xv. 40.) *and* Lebbeus, whose sirname was *Thaddeus*, and who was [*also called*] *Judas*, or Jude, [*the brother*] *of James*;[f] *and Simon the Canaanite, called* also *Zelotes*,[g] or the Zealot, 19 as having before professed a distinguishing zeal for the law: *And*, worthy of being mentioned in the last place, or rather unworthy of being mentioned at all, otherwise than with the greatest abhorrence, was *Judas Iscariot*, or a man of Carioth, (Josh. xv. 25.) that infamous, abandoned wretch, *who also was the traitor that* afterwards was so ungrateful to his Lord, that he *even betrayed him*[h] into the hands of his bloody enemies: he had professed himself, with secular and worldly views, a disciple of Christ; and though our Lord well knew him, yet, as his character was free from any visible ground of suspicion, in order to accomplish what was delivered in the sacred oracles, he was pleased to invest him with this holy office, and to place him among his apostles: (Compare John xiii. 18.)

And, after he had acquainted these twelve persons with his design, and had given them such private instructions as he judged convenient, to render their attendance upon him 17 subservient to the execution of their important office, *he came down* from the mountain *with them, and stood in the* neighbouring *plain, and* as the morning was now pretty far advanced, *the crowd of his disciples* [*gathered round him*;] *and* besides those that had followed him for some time, and were now persuaded of his divine mission, there was also

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, [whom he would;] and they came unto him: and of them he chose [*and* ordained] twelve, whom also he named apostles; [that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach;] [Mark iii. 13, 14.]

Mark iii. 15. And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And Simon he sirnamed Peter; [Luke vi. 14.]

17 And James *the son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; (and he sirnamed them Boanerges, which is, The Sons of Thunder;) [Luke vi. 14.]

18 And Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, [*or* Judas *the brother* of James,] and Simon the Canaanite, [called Zelotes;]—[Luke vi. 14, 15, 16.]

19 And Judas Iscariot, [which also was the traitor,] which also betrayed him.—[Luke vi. 16.]

Luke vi. 17. And he came down with them; and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon,

Θεὸν.] This is so singular an expression, that I cannot agree with our translation; but rather conclude with Drusius, Prideaux, Whitby, Hammond, and many other good critics, that we are to understand it of an *oratory*, or *proseucha*, or *prayer-house*, as Dr. Watts chuses to render it, (in his late ingenious *Discourse* on the Holiness of Places, p. 111.) and as the word seems also to be used, Acts xvi. 13. (see Hammond, *in loc.*) Descriptions of these places may be found in most writers of Jewish Antiquities, and in none that I know of better than in Calmet, (at the word *Proseucha*,) and in Prideaux's *Connection*, Vol. I. p. 387—389. It is well known, they were open at the top, and planted round with trees; as well as often situate by the side of seas or rivers, as was probably the case here. I did not chuse, with Dr. Whitby, to render it *in God's house of prayer*, that phrase having been so peculiarly appropriated to the *temple*. See Matt. xxi. 13.

c *Constituted twelve.*] So I chuse to render εποιησε, rather than *ordained; ordination to the ministry* carrying along with it an idea by no means suiting what passed now, which was so long before their entering on the office. The word is used elsewhere, for *appointing to an office*; 1 Sam. xii. 6. Gr. and Heb. iii. 2.—It is probable our Lord chose twelve apostles in reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, (see Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30; Rev. xxi. 12, 14; and compare Exod. xxiv. 4; Deut. i. 23; and Josh. iv. 2, 3.) and therefore care was taken, on the death of Judas, to chuse another to make up the number. (Acts i. 21, 22, 26.) Which seems to have been a piece of respect paid to the Jews, previous to the grand offer of the gospel to them; whereas when they had generally rejected it, two more, Paul and Barnabas, were added, without any regard to the particular number of *twelve*.

d *He sirnamed Peter.*] *To sirname*, here plainly signifies to give an *additional name*: επεθηκε τω Σιμωνι ονομα Πετρον.

e *Boanerges, which signifies, Sons of Thunder.*] As it stands in this form, it is plainly a corruption of בני רגש. Considering the remarkable gentleness of John's temper and manner of writing, it is more reasonable to interpret this title as in the paraphrase, than to refer it to any thing peculiarly *awful* or *awakening* in their manner of address, beyond what was to be found in the other apostles.

f Lebbeus, whose sirname was *Thaddeus*, and who was *also called Judas*, or Jude, *the brother of James*.] That this person had all these names, appears from comparing the catalogues given us in the places before us, and in Matt. x. 2—4. and Acts. i. 13. Lebbeus being derived from לב, which signifies the *heart*, and Thaddeus probably from תד, a Syro-chaldaic word, which, as some critics tell us, signifies *the breast*, seem equivalent names, and may signify *the hearty Judas*, perhaps to distinguish him from that other Judas whose faithless *breast* and foul *heart* had brought a kind of infamy on the name; so that neither Matthew nor Mark use it when speaking of this apostle; and John takes particular care to prevent the confusion which might arise from the ambiguity of it. John xiv. 22.

g *Simon the Canaanite, called* also *Zelotes.*] It is matter of some doubt with me, whether he was called *the Canaanite*, as being a native of Cana in Galilee, as some have thought; or whether it be derived, as Dr. Hammond thinks, from the Hebrew קנא, and signifies the same with *Zelotes*. But though we have many instances of extraordinary zeal in Phinehas, Elijah, the Maccabees, &c. and read in ancient Jewish writers of the *judgment of zeal* by which Stephen was murdered, Paul assaulted, &c. yet I cannot find any sect of men distinguished by that name, till mentioned by Josephus, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* iv. *cap.* 3. [al. 5.] § 9.) a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. If Simon had the additional name of *Zelotes* given him on account of his personal zeal for the law, (which is possible,) he might probably be a Pharisee: but Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that he was the *father of Judas Iscariot*, who is called *the son of Simon*, (John xii. 4.) seems very precarious, considering how common the name of Simon was. See Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 167.

h *That even betrayed him.*] It is plain that και has great force here, if it be rendered *even*; or else it seems a mere expletive.

which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

still waiting upon him (as we observed above, Mark iii. 7, 8. p. 104.) *a great multitude of people from all* parts of *Judea, and* particularly from *Jerusalem, and* even *from the shore of Tyre and Sidon*, which lay on the Mediterranean sea; *who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: And they* also *who were infested with unclean* and wicked *spirits*,[i] made their application to him; *and they were cured* of the terrible disorders which those malignant beings occasioned. *And the whole multitude* of these unhappy people *endeavoured* at least *to touch him; for* so extraordinary were the miracles of this day, that in some instances, where our Lord did not so much as take any apparent notice of the case, *yet there went* a divine, though secret, *virtue out of him, and* wrought so powerfully on those that touched him, that it *healed them all*, how desperate soever their distempers were. SECT. 52. LUKE VI. 18 19

IMPROVEMENT.

When we consider how much the church in all ages has been indebted to the labours of the apostles, and how much we ourselves owe to them, we shall see great reason of thankfulness to our wise and gracious Master, who was pleased to assign this work to his servants, and so eminently to qualify them for it. It is observable, that before he sent them forth, he chose them to be with him in a more constant attendance on his person and ministry. May all who succeed them as preachers of the gospel, be such as have intimately known Christ themselves, and have been accustomed to spiritual converse with him; that they may, with the greater ability, zeal, and efficacy, recommend him to others! MARK III. 14

We may assure ourselves, that these, his future ministers, had no inconsiderable share in those petitions in which, with unabating fervour and intenseness of devotion, our Redeemer spent this memorable night. And if we have any regard for the support of religion in the rising age, let us likewise be earnestly praying, both for them that are already in the ministry, and for such as are preparing for it. This surely ought to be the frequent care, not only of those who have the tremendous charge of educating such as are, ere long, to be intrusted with the honour of the gospel, and the care of souls, but of those who are now struggling with the glorious labours and trials of that important office, and even of all those private Christians who cordially love the interest of their Master, and wish the salvation of their fellow-creatures. LUKE VI. 12

Let us unite our cries to him, who has engaged to be always with his church, even to the end of the world, and say, "Light up, O Lord, a brighter and a stronger flame in the lamps of thy sanctuary! Polish these arrows of thy "quiver, that they may pierce deep into the consciences of men! Let thy priests be clothed with salvation, that thy "saints may shout aloud for joy! And pour forth upon them so plenteous an unction of thine Holy Spirit, that the "odours of thy grace may by their means be diffused around, throughout all thy tabernacles; like that of the fra- "grant oil, which was poured on the head of Aaron, in such rich abundance, that it not only ran down on his beard, "but reached even to the skirts of his garments! Amen, and Amen."

SECTION LIII.

Christ, in the audience of his new-chosen disciples, and of the multitude, repeats in the plain many remarkable passages of his sermon before delivered on the mount. Luke vi. 20—36.

LUKE vi. 20.

AND he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate

LUKE vi. 20.

AND [*Jesus*] *lifting up his eyes on his disciples*, who surrounded him, and more especially directing them to his apostles whom he had lately chosen, *said* unto them,[a] *Happy are you* who are enriched with divine knowledge and grace, though your circumstances in this world are *poor* and mean; *for the kingdom of God*, in all its transcendent and eternal glories, *is yours*, and you are hastening on to the full possession of it. *Happy are you who are now hungry* and destitute of all the comfortable accommodations of life, if you feel that nobler appetite by which the religious soul longs after improvements in holiness,[b] *(for you shall* ere long *be filled* with the most substantial and valuable blessings. *Happy are you who now mourn* under a sense of sin, or under that wholesome discipline of affliction by which God reduces his wandering children, and trains them up to superior virtue; *for* all your sorrow shall pass away like a dream, and *you shall* ere long *laugh* and rejoice in a complete deliverance from it. (See Matt. v. 4.) *Happy are you when men shall hate you, and* persecute you; *when they shall separate you* [*from* SECT. 53. LUKE VI. 21 22

i *Unclean spirits.*] It seems to me an excessive refinement in the learned editors of the Prussian Testament, to distinguish (as they do in their note on Matt. x. 1.) *unclean spirits* from other *evil spirits* which might possess men; supposing the word only to signify such kind of *spirits* as drove men to *dwell among the tombs*, by which they became *ceremonially unclean*. How little it can be supported from Luke iv. 33. see the note there, p. 69. It is evident *unclean* and *evil* spirits are generally used as nearly synonimous terms, referring to the moral impurity and malignity of their natures. Compare Matt. xii. 43; Luke xi. 24. and Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

a *Said* unto them.] Hardly any thing that I have observed in the common Harmonies surprises me more, than that so many of them make this discourse to be the very *sermon on the mount* recorded at large by Matthew in his fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters. *That* was delivered by *Christ, sitting on a mountain;* (Matt. v. 1.) *this*, (as it seems from ver. 17.) *standing* in a plain; and, which weighs yet much more with me, there is such a *difference* in the expression, when the parallel passages come to be compared, that it seems evident, the Evangelists have not related it exactly, if they meant to give us *the same*. On the other hand, there appears not the least difficulty in supposing that Christ might here repeat a part of what he had delivered some months before to another auditory, and probably at some greater distance than just in the same neighbourhood. (See note b, on Luke v. 12. p. 90. and note b, on Matt. v. 1. p. 73.) For it is plain from other instances, that this is nothing more than what he often had occasion to do. (Compare Matt. ix. 32—34. with Matt. xii. 22—24. and xvi. 21. with xvii. 22, 23. and xx. 17—19.) And indeed, since it is certain from Matt. vii. 28, 29. that what that Evangelist has recorded as the *sermon on the mount* was all delivered *at once;* they who suppose *this* the *very same*, must grant, that great part of it was repeated at different times, and on different occasions. (See note e, on Matt. vii. 28. p. 89.) Dr. Whitby and Mr. Blair agree with me in this account of the matter, chiefly on the reasons I have here assigned.

b *Who are now hungry*—if you feel that nobler appetite, &c.] Compare note g, on Matt. v. 6. p. 73. And let it be observed in general, that the sense of the more dubious expressions in this discourse, may be much illustrated by comparing parallel passages in the sermon on the mount; to which I have accordingly referred, not judging it necessary to repeat, in the notes here, what I had said there.

SECT. 53. LUKE VI.

their assemblies,[c] as unworthy of communion with them; *and shall reproach you* in their private conversation, *and cast out your names as* infamously *evil* in their public acts of civil or ecclesiastical judgment, *on account of* your professed adherence to *the Son of man*, (see John ix. 22, 34.) for that glorious and sacred person is able abundantly to repay all you can suffer for him: And therefore, far from being dismayed and overwhelmed with trouble and distress at such abuses and assaults, *be glad in that day, and* with holy alacrity even *leap for joy; for, behold, your reward in heaven is great* in proportion to your sufferings on earth: *For thus their fathers did to the prophets* of old, who now are in seats of distinguished glory. (See Matt. v. 11, 12.)

24 *But* there is, generally speaking,[d] cause to denounce a *woe to you who are rich; for* so ensnaring are the circumstances in which you are placed, that it is much to be feared *you have* already *received* all *your consolation*, (compare Luke xvi. 25.) and will be so taken up with the transient pleasures of time, as to forget and forfeit everlasting blessedness.

25 There is generally reason to say, *Woe unto you who are* now *filled* to the full, and pampered with all the most luxurious dainties! *for you shall* ere long *suffer hunger*, and fall into a state of indigence, and misery, aggravated by all the plenty which you have enjoyed and abused. *Woe unto you who* spend your lives in mirth and gaiety, and are so vain as *now* to *laugh* off every solemn and awful thought! *for you* have reason to expect a portion in those doleful regions where, without intermission and without end, you *shall mourn and*

26 *lament*. And again, I may generally say, in so corrupt an age as this, *Woe unto you when all men speak well of you! for* such universal applause is seldom to be gained without sinful compliances; and *thus did their fathers to the false prophets* of old, who soothed them in their idolatries and other crimes, with smooth addresses, and vain assurances of security and happiness.

27 You, my disciples, if you would approve your fidelity to God and to me, must act in a very different manner, by which you will certainly expose yourselves to hatred and persecution: *But I say unto you*, and to all *that hear* me this day, Far from entertaining sentiments of malice and purposes of revenge, *love* even *your enemies*, and *do good to*

28 *them that hate you: Bless them that* in the malignity of their hearts revile and *curse you; and* cordially and fervently *pray for them that* most *spitefully* harass and *abuse you*. (See Matt. v. 44.)

29 *And*, as ever you would attain to such exalted degrees of fortitude and goodness, accustom yourselves patiently to bear the common injuries of life, which a false sense of honour and interest renders so much more intolerable than they really are. *If*, for instance, *a man smite thee on the* [*one*] *cheek*, rather than return the blow, *offer also the other to him; and if he take away thy mantle, do not* by violence attempt to *hinder him* [*from taking*] *also thy vest*. (See the notes on Matt. v. 39. p. 79.)

30 I would also charge it upon you to labour after a diffusive liberality, as well as exemplary meekness: be ready then to *give to every one that asketh thee* for an alms, where thou hast reason to believe it is charity to do it; *and from him that taketh away thy possessions* in an injurious manner, *do not* immediately *demand them back* in the forms of law, but

31 rather endeavour by gentler methods to reduce the offender to reason. *And* do not by any means imagine, that the injuries you receive from others will cancel the bonds of common humanity to them: but *as you would* reasonably desire *that men should do to you, do you also in like manner to them*, and, by putting yourselves, as it were, in their places, endeavour to form your minds to an impartial judgment. (See note on Matt. vii. 12. p. 87.)

32 *And* indeed, *if you* only *love them that love you, what* great *thanks are due to you* upon that account? *For* there are some sentiments of gratitude common *even* to the worst of men, which incline the most scandalous *sinners* to *love those that love them*, and to profess an affectionate regard for those by whom they have been treated with respect and

33 kindness. *And if you do good* offices only *to them that are your benefactors, what* mighty *thanks are due to you* for that? *For even* the most infamous *sinners*, either from instinct, or from mere self-love, may often be observed to *do the same*. (Compare Matt.

34 v. 46, 47. p. 80.) *And if you lend* only *to them from whom you hope to receive*, and that, perhaps, with considerable advantage to yourselves, what favour do you shew in that, or *what* extraordinary *thanks are due to you* on that account? *For even* the greatest *sinners lend* other *sinners* like themselves, *that*, when there is occasion, *they may receive the like* assistance in return from them.

35 *But* I exhort you to *love your enemies, and* to *do good, and lend* in cases of great necessity, even *when you can hope for nothing again*:[e] *and* so *your reward* in heaven *will be great, and you will* appear to *be the sons of the Most High* God; *for* in the course of his daily providence *he is kind to the ungrateful and evil*, causing the undeserved benefits of the sun and rain to descend upon them, and filling their insensible

36 hearts with food and gladness. (Compare Matt. v. 44, 45. and Acts xiv. 17.) *Be ye*

you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake:

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies; do good to them which hate you;

28 Bless them that curse you; and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merci

c *Separate you from their assemblies.*] Grotius's excellent note on this clause well deserves a most attentive reading; containing a most learned dissertation on the various kinds of excommunication among the Jews.

d Generally speaking.] Compare Matt. xix. 23, 24. It is most evident, that such expressions as these in scripture are to be taken with some limitations, otherwise they would be contrary to fact in some instances.

e *When you can hope for nothing again.*] I cannot think (as De Dieu and some others have done, agreeable to the Syriac and Arabic versions,) that μηδεν απελπιζοντες should be rendered, *causing none to despair*; since neither the phrase itself, nor the opposition in which

ful, as your Father also is merciful.

therefore merciful, as he *also* whom you call *your* heavenly *Father is merciful:* and unto whom indeed you cannot stand related as his children, if you have no concern to imitate and to obey him. (Compare Matt. v. 48. p. 80.) SECT. 53. LUKE VI.

IMPROVEMENT.

How necessary is it that our forgetful hearts should have *line upon line, and precept upon precept!* If Christ did not think it improper to repeat this discourse, surely it will not be needless for us to renew our attention to it. Oh that every word of it were engraven on our hearts as with the point of a diamond, that we might learn, in spite of all the foolish wisdom of this world, to form ourselves on these maxims, as the surest guide to present and to eternal felicity! Ver. 20

Our Lord again pronounces the poor and the hungry, the mournful and the persecuted, happy; and represents those as miserable, who are rich and full, joyous and applauded: not that this is universally the case, but because prosperous circumstances are so frequently a sweet poison, and affliction a healing, though bitter medicine. Let the thought reconcile us to adversity, and awaken our caution when the world smiles upon us; when a plentiful table is spread before us, and our cup runneth over; when our spirits are gay and sprightly; or when we hear, what to corrupted nature is too harmonious music, that of our own praise from men. Oh that we may secure what is of infinitely greater importance, the praise of our heavenly Master, by a constant obediential regard to these his precepts! 21—26

May we be happy proficients in the art of bearing and forgiving injuries! May we be ready to every good word and work! maintaining an eye quick to observe, a heart tender to feel, a hand open to relieve the calamities and necessities of friends, of strangers, and of enemies: giving to some; and where, perhaps, there may be little prospect of a return, lending to others; which, if it engage them to greater industry, is as real a benefit as if the loan were a gift. 27—34

On the whole, let us not presume to call God our Father, if we do not labour to resemble him; nor dare to challenge the peculiar honour and privileges of Christ's disciples, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others by the charity of our tempers and the usefulness of our lives, as well as by the articles of our faith and the forms of our worship. 35, 36

SECTION LIV.

Our Lord goes on to repeat many remarkable passages of his sermon on the mount, with some proper additions relating to the same subjects. Luke vi. 37, *to the end.*

LUKE vi. 37.

JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

LUKE vi. 37.

JUDGE not others with rigour and severity, *and you* may hope that you *shall not* yourselves *be judged* with that severity which you must otherwise expect from God, and which the most innocent and virtuous characters would not be able to bear: *Condemn not* others with a rash censoriousness, *and you shall not be condemned: Forgive* others their offences; *and* if you do it from a truly religious principle,[a] *you shall* also *be forgiven* by God those offences against him, which are infinitely greater than any you can possibly receive from your fellow-creatures. (See Matt. vii. 1. p. 86.) SECT. 54. LUKE VI. 37

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

Give liberally to those that need your assistance, *and it shall be given* back *to you* in a rich abundance: for it will gain you so much love and respect, that God will so influence men's hearts in your favour, that *men shall,* as it were, *pour into your lap*[b] *good measure,* ~~blessings~~ *pressed down, and shaken together, and* even *running over;* *for* it may be taken as a general rule, that *by the same measure that you measure with* to others, *it will* in return *be measured back to you.* (See Matt. vii. 2. p. 86.) 38

39 And he spake a parable unto them: Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

He spake also, at the same time, *a parable to them,* (which he afterwards repeated, Matt. xv. 14.) to caution them against submitting with an implicit faith to the conduct of ignorant or vicious men, who might set up for religious teachers; and said, *Can the blind* undertake to *guide the blind? Will they not both,* in such a case, be likely to *fall into a pit* or ditch, which may happen to lie in their way? And, in like manner, you have nothing to expect from following such men but to perish with them. There is little reason to hope that, under their instruction, you should be wiser and better than they: for it is, you know, a common proverb, That *the scholar is not above his teacher; but* all that can reasonably be expected is, that *every* one who is a *finished* [*scholar*] should come up to him that teaches him; and it is this that he *will* principally aim at, to *be as his master:* It is of great importance therefore that you should well consider whom you take to be your teachers; for it is necessary that your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, if you expect a share in the kingdom of heaven. (See Matt. v. 20. and x. 24, 25.) 39

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother,

Yet, on the other hand, I would not have you to be forward in blaming them, or any other, while you neglect a due regulation of your own temper *and* conduct: for *why dost thou look at the* little *mote which is in thy brother's eye, and observest not the* much greater disorder which is like a *beam in thine own eye? Or how canst thou,* with any decency, or to any purpose, *say to thy brother, Brother, hold still* [*and*] *I will take* 41, 42

it stands to ver. 34, will admit such an interpretation. See Dr. Whitby's note here.

a If you do it from a truly religious principle.] This must be supposed, to make it consistent with those passages in which *love to God,* and *faith in Christ,* as well as other branches of the Christian temper, are insisted upon as so absolutely necessary, that without them the greatest *lenity* and *indulgence* to our fellow-creatures cannot give us a claim to the promises of pardon and salvation.

b *Into your lap.*] Here is an evident reference to the *mantles* which the Jews wore, into which a considerable quantity of corn might be received. Compare Ruth iii. 15; 2 Kings iv. 39; Neh. v. 13; Prov. xvi. 33.

SECT. 54. LUKE VI.

out the mote which is in thine eye; while thou art at the same time so blind and partial, 42 that *thou seest not the beam which is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite,* who falsely pretendest that zeal for the honour of religion which, while thou art thus careless of thyself, thou canst not really have, *first cast out the beam from thine own eye, and then thou wilt discern* [*how*] *to take out the mote that is in thy brother's eye;* which is an office that requires greater wisdom and conduct than in thy present circumstances thou canst be supposed to have. (See the notes on Matt. vii. 3, 4. p. 86.)

let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 Till thou shalt thus reform thyself, there is not much to be expected from thine endeavours to reform others: *for* as *there is no good tree which produces bad fruit,* so *neither* 44 *is* there *any tree bad which produces good fruit: For* all the world is agreed that *every tree is* to be *known by its proper fruit: men, for instance,*[c] *do not gather figs of thorns, nor do they gather a cluster of grapes from a bramble.* (Compare Matt. vii. 16. p. 87.)

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes.

45 And indeed, where men converse with any degree of intimacy, they may be known and judged of by their words as well as by their actions. *A good man,* maintaining an habitual sense of the Divine Presence, and feeling in his own soul a spring of habitual and diffusive benevolence to his fellow-creatures, naturally *produces that which is good, out of the good treasure of* grace and love which is laid up in *his heart: and* on the other hand, *a bad man out of the bad treasure of* evil principles and corrupt affections which is laid up in *his heart, produces that which is bad,* which often breaks out before he is aware, and discovers his character, even contrary to his intention; *for his mouth* naturally *speaks from the overflowing of the heart,* and no man has so much artifice as to command it entirely, so that it shall never discover itself in some unguarded moment. (Compare Matt. xii. 34, 35. sect. lxii.)

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 Yet remember, it is not merely by men's words that their character will finally be judged, *and* their estate fixed; especially, that it will not be determined by a few pious and devotional forms of speech, which in themselves are of very little worth: for *why do ye call me, Lord, Lord,* or what imaginable purpose does that profession serve, if in your practice you are regardless of my will, *and do not the things which I say* and command to all that call themselves my disciples? (Compare Matt. vii. 21.)

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say!

47 This is a vanity of which I have formerly warned you: and to repeat the warning, *I will shew you,* on the other hand, *to whom that man is like, who comes to me, and hears my words, and practises* agreeably to *them:* and, on the other hand, to whom 48 it is that he may be resembled, who hears my words and doeth them not. As to the former, *he is like a* prudent *man, that built an house* on the river-side; *and,* considering the importance of the undertaking, and the difficulty of the situation, *dug deep* through the sand, and marle, and gravel, till he came to the solid stone, *and placed the foundation* of his house *upon a rock: and* afterwards he was abundantly repaid for all his labour and expense; for *when the inundation came, the current* of the river with an impetuous torrent *violently broke upon that house, and* yet *was not able to shake it, because it was founded upon a rock:* thus securely will the practical hearer stand the shock of 49 temptations, and the trial of death and of the judgment-day. *But,* on the other hand, *he that hears* my words, *and does not practise* them, *is like a* foolish *man, that built an house on the* bare surface of the *ground, without* any care to secure *a foundation; against which the* impetuous *stream did violently break* with the same fury, *and,* being unable to withstand the shock, *it presently fell down; and the ruin of that house was* irreparably *great,* and its inhabitants were all crushed under it. (Compare Matt. vii. 24—27. sect. xliii.)

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and, when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth: against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 37 LET a frequent reflection on our own faults teach us candour; and let a sense of our continued dependence on the Divine liberality make us liberal towards those that need our assistance; lest we lose the comfort so justly 38 forfeited, and abused mercies be another day repaid with measures of wrath, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

We are another day to give an account of ourselves before God: let us, then, judge for ourselves in matters of 39 religion; and be very careful that we do not stupidly follow blind guides, till we fall with them into destruction. "*Lead us,* O Lord, *in the way everlasting!* Form us to a more perfect resemblance of our great Master! Make 40 " us severe to ourselves, and, so far as it is real charity, indulgent to others! Sanctify our hearts by thy grace, that 41, 44 " they may be as *trees bringing forth good fruit,* or as fountains pouring out wholesome streams! There may 45 " a good treasure be laid up, from whence good things may be abundantly produced! There may those holy and " benevolent affections continually spring up, which may flow forth with unaffected freedom to refresh the souls " and animate the graces of all that are around us!"

46—49 May these beautiful, striking, repeated admonitions, which our Saviour gives us of the vanity of every profession which does not influence the practice, be attended to with reverence and fear! We are *building for eternity* may we never grudge the time and labour of a most serious inquiry into the great fundamental principles of religion! May we discover the sure foundation, and raise upon it a noble superstructure, which shall stand fair and glorious when hypocrites are swept away into everlasting ruin, *in that awful day* in which *heaven and earth shall flee away from the face of him that sits upon the throne!* (Rev. xx. 11.)

c. *Men, for instance.*] This is one of those many places where the *reason* of something before asserted, but merely intimates a the word γαρ (*for*) has not its usual signification, of introducing illustration of it.

SECTION LV.

Christ, after preaching in the plain, goes to Capernaum, and miraculously cures, even at a distance, the centurion's servant that was sick of a palsy. Luke vii. 1—10. Matt. viii. 5—13.

LUKE vii. 1.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

LUKE vii. 1.

IN the two former sections we have heard the excellent discourse that Jesus made; and *now when he had finished all* these *his sayings*, which, though immediately addressed to his disciples, he had delivered *in the hearing of the people* who stood round him in the plain, having dismissed the assembly, *he* quickly after *entered into Capernaum* again. SECT. 55. LUKE VII.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

And at that time *the servant of a certain* Roman officer in that city, (called a *centurion*, from his having the command of a company of soldiers consisting of a hundred men,) *who was* dear to his master, and *greatly esteemed by him, was* exceeding *ill, and in* great *danger of death.* 2

3 And when he heard of Jesus, [when Jesus was entered into Capernaum,] he [came unto him; *having first*] sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant: [Matt. viii. 5.]

And hearing of Jesus, when he entered into Capernaum, where the nobleman's son was miraculously cured by him at a distance, (John iv. 46. sect. xxxi.) such was the faith of the centurion in his power to help him, that *he came to him*[a] with a very humble and respectful application; which indeed he did not directly presume to make in his own person, [*but first*] *sent unto him the elders of the Jews*, or some of the most considerable of them that dwelt in this city, in whom his generosity had procured a considerable interest; humbly *entreating him* by them, *that he would* condescend to *come and* set him free from the distress that he was in, not doubting his ability to *heal his servant; And saying, Lord, my* faithful and beloved *servant lies* at home *in* [*my*] *house* in a very deplorable condition, being *seized with the palsy;* which, though it has quite disabled him from motion, yet has left him sensible of pain, with which he is so *dread-fully tormented* that he can take no rest. 3 MATT. VIII. 6

Matt. viii. 6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And such was the regard the elders of the Jews had for him, that, *being come to Jesus, they entreated him with great importunity, saying, He* in whose name we now address thee, *is* one who is *worthy of this favour.*[b] *For* though he be a Gentile, and a stranger among us, yet *he* is a worshipper of the true God, and greatly *loves our nation;* so that he takes many opportunities of doing good in the neighbourhood, (compare Acts x. 2.) *and* has carried his generosity so far, that *he hath built us a synagogue* for public worship, at his own expense. LUKE VII. 4 5

Luke vii. 4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

And Jesus, willing to pay some distinguishing respect to a person of so worthy a character, *saith unto him*, or sent him word by those who had petitioned for him, *I will* immediately *come* down to the centurion's house, to see the servant he is so concerned about, *and heal him.* MATT. VIII. 7

Matt. viii. 7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

And accordingly, *Jesus went with them; and now* as he was going thither, *when he was not a great way from the house, the centurion sent* some other *friends to him*, and at last came himself in person, *and answered* the kind message which Jesus had sent him, *saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself* to come any farther; *for I am not worthy that thou*, who art so holy and honourable a person, *shouldst enter under my roof; Wherefore*, indeed, *neither did I think myself*, who am an alien from this holy nation, *worthy to come* immediately *to thee;* but first chose to make use of the elders of the place, and of these my other friends: and all that I would now presume to ask is, That thou wouldst *but* please *only* to *speak the word, and* I know that *my servant shall* immediately *be healed. For even I*, [*who*] *am* only a centurion, *a man ranged under* the *authority* of my commanding officer,[c] yet as I *have soldiers under myself*, order and govern them by the intimations of my will, whether present or absent; *and I say to one, Go* to such a place, *and he goeth; and to another, Come* hither, *and he cometh; and to my slave*,[d] *Do this, and he* immediately *doeth it:* now I firmly believe thou hast yet a more absolute power over the strongest and most desperate diseases, and canst at pleasure command them off from the afflicted, when thou art either near, or at a distance; and I shall thankfully accept this cure in the manner that may be least inconvenient to thyself. LUKE VII. 6 7 8

Luke vii. 6. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, [and answered,] saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: [Matt. viii. 8.]

7 Wherefore, neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, [speak the word only,] and my servant shall be healed. [Matt. viii. 8.]

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. [Matt. viii. 9.]

And Jesus hearing these things, admired him on account of his great humility, and the strength of his faith; *and, turning about, he said to the multitude that followed him, Verily, I declare unto you, That* through all my journies and converse, *I have not found, even in* all *Israel, such* an illustrious degree of *faith* as now appears in this stranger, who only sojourns among you. *But I say unto you* with great solemnity, *That many shall* at last *come*, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even *from* the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to *the east and west*[e] of its utmost boundaries, 9 MATT. VIII. 11

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, [Verily,] I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. [Matt. viii. 10.]

Matt. viii. 11. And I say

a *He came to him.*] It is very plain, from Luke's larger and more circumstantial representation of the case, that *the centurion* did not come at first in his own person, (see Luke vii. 6, 7.) but he might properly be said to do that which he directed *the elders* to do in his name: and nothing is more frequent, even to this day, in our courts of law, than to say that a person comes into the court and asks a thing, which he asks perhaps only at third hand, by the counsel whom his solicitor has employed in his cause.

b *Worthy of this favour.*] By far the greater number of copies read it as it stands in our version, *Worthy for whom he should do this:* yet the connection seems to intimate that the original reading was πάσχειν, *Thou shouldst do this.* I have chosen to render it in such a manner as will suit either.

c *Ranged under the authority* of my commanding officer.] It is well known, that the Roman centurions were subject to the command of their respective tribunes; as our captains are to that of their colonels.

d *Slave.*] As the word δοῦλος generally signifies *a slave* rather than *a hired servant*, I chose to render it thus here, as thinking it most expressive of the authority to which the speech refers.

e *From the east and west.*] Perhaps this may be only a proverbial phrase to signify coming from the most distant parts. But I cannot forbear observing here, that the gospel spread much more to the *east* and *west* of *Judea*, than to the *north* and *south* of it: though it seems rather to be spoken as a general expression, as will appear by comparing it with Luke xiii. 29. and Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

SECT. 55. *and shall sit down with* your pious ancestors, *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,* to share with them *in* the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of *the kingdom of heaven.*[f] *But* many of *the children of the kingdom,* who were born within the sacred inclosure, MATT. VIII. and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, *shall be* rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be *cast out* 12 *into that* gloomy *darkness which is without:*[g] *there shall be* perpetual *weeping* for sorrow, *and gnashing of the teeth* with envy at such an enraging sight.

13 *And,* having uttered these words for the admonition of the Jews, and for the encouragement of this pious stranger and his friends, *Jesus said to the centurion,* who now stood by, *Go thy way* home[h] in peace; *and be it unto thee,* and to thy servant, *according to thy faith. And in that very hour* that he spake these words, just at that instant, *was his servant healed.*

LUKE VII. *And they who had been sent* from the centurion as his messengers to Christ, *returning* with him *to the house,* were eye-witnesses of the cure, and *found the servant that had* 10 *been sick, restored to perfect health* and vigour.[i] This might occasion the conversion of the family; and was a miracle that greatly raised the fame of Jesus, and made the multitude more eager in their pressing after him.

unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

Luke vii. 10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2 3 5 It is pleasant to think of this good centurion, who, amidst all the temptations of a military life, retained the principles, not only of liberality and humanity, but of piety too; and probably amidst the raillery of his irreligious and idolatrous brethren, had the courage to frequent, and even to build a synagogue. Surely his devotion did not enervate, but rather invigorate and establish his valour; nor did he find himself less dutifully regarded by the MATT. VIII. soldiers under his command for this parental tenderness to his afflicted servant, which brought him thus humbly to 6, 9 petition Christ in his favour. Such may our officers be! and we may hope that the hosts of heaven will with pleasure cover their heads in the day of battle, and obedient troops be formed, by their example and their care, to the discipline of virtue as well as of war.

LUKE VII. 4, 5 We see the force of real goodness to conquer the most inveterate prejudices: the elders of the Jews at Capernaum turn petitioners for a Gentile, for a Roman centurion: so may we disarm the virulence of a party spirit, and conciliate the friendship of those who otherwise might have their eyes upon us for evil!

MATT. VIII. 8 In plentiful circumstances and an honourable station, how great is the humility of this worthy man! How low are the thoughts that he has of himself! And with what veneration and respect does he address himself to Christ! And, had this centurion been even a tribune or a general, this humble address would well have become him when he was thus applying unto Christ. And how well does it become us, when entreating the blessed Jesus to exert LUKE VII. his healing power on our hearts, to bow with deep humility before him, and to say, "*Lord, I am not worthy* 6, 7 "*that thou shouldst come under my roof,* or worthy the honour of appearing in thy presence!" *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,* (Luke xviii. 14.) nor do we ever stand fairer for the praise of Christ than when we see ourselves undeserving even of his notice.

MATT. VIII. 10, 11 12 Behold an instance of faith in a *stranger to the commonwealth of Israel,* by which their unbelief was condemned! O that the virtues of heathens may not another day rise up to our condemnation, notwithstanding an higher profession and much nobler advantages! We cannot but rejoice to hear that *many shall come from the east and west, to sit down with the pious patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven:* but how deplorable is the case of those children of the kingdom who, with all their towering expectations, shall be cast out, and doomed to hopeless sorrow and to everlasting darkness!

May almighty grace awaken those who are now ignorant of the value and importance of the blessings of the gospel; and excite those holy desires after them which may prevent that impatience and envy, that rage and despair, with which they must otherwise view them at an unapproachable distance; yea, view them possessed by multitudes whom they are now most ready to despise!

SECTION LVI.

After having quitted the multitude who crowded in upon him, and reposed himself that night at Capernaum, Jesus goes the next day to Naim, and raises the son of a poor widow from the dead. Mark iii. 19—21. Luke vii. 11—17.

MARK iii. 19.

SECT. 56. NOW after Jesus had performed this miracle, *and* was prevented thus from going to the centurion's, before he left Capernaum with his twelve new-chosen apostles, *they went into* MARK III. 19 *an house,*[a] where he commonly resided while he was in that city. *And the multitude* that had been standing in the plain *assembled again* about the doors and windows of

MARK iii. 19. AND they went into an house.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so

f Final blessedness of *the kingdom of heaven.*] So the phrase must here be explained; for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy patriarchs share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel state, or that the *Jews weep and wail,* on account of their being *excluded* from them.

g Gloomy *darkness which is without:* το σκοτος το εξωτερον.] It has justly been observed by many commentators, that this phrase, which is often used after *the kingdom of heaven* has been compared to a banquet, contains a beautiful allusion to the lustre of those illuminated rooms in which such feasts were generally celebrated, as opposed to that *darkness* which surrounded those who by night were turned out: but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the persons excluded are supposed to be thrown into a dark dungeon. Compare Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 30; and Jude, ver. 13.

h *Go thy way* home.] This most evidently proves that the centurion was at length *come out of his house,* probably on hearing that Jesus was nearer to it than he apprehended when he sent the second message by his friends.

i *Restored to perfect health* and vigour.] This the word υγιαινοντα seems to import; nor did it suit the honour and goodness of Christ to leave the *cure incomplete.* Compare Matt. viii. 15.

a *They went into an house.*] We must conclude, from the manner in which Mark connects this with the names of the apostles, that it happened very quickly *after their being chosen.* The other Evangelists inform us of some previous events which happened in the mean time, but they might be despatched in a few hours. This therefore is undoubtedly the proper place for these verses; and it is strange that Le Clerc and others should have placed them before the sermon in the plain. (See Luke vi. 17—20. p. 106, 107.) I suppose this was after the cure of the centurion's servant, as the

that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And, when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Luke vii. 11. And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still,) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

the house; and, animated by the illustrious miracle he had just performed on the centurion's servant, they pressed *so* eagerly upon him, *that they* of the family *could not so much as eat bread*, though it was the proper hour for it. *And, when his friends heard [of it,]* that he was so intent upon his work as to go out of doors again to preach to the people, *they went out* after him, *to lay hold on him*, and importune him to come in; *for they said, He is transported too far*,[b] not to allow himself time for his meals, after all the watchings of the last night, and the fatigue of this day.[c] SECT. 56. MARK III. 21

And, Jesus having so far yielded to their importunity as to repose himself that evening there, *it came to pass on the next day, that he went* from Capernaum *to a city called Naim*;[d] *and many of his disciples went* thither *with him, and a great multitude* of others. *And, when he approached the gate of the city*, a circumstance happened, which proved the occasion of one of the most memorable miracles of his life. For *behold*, the corpse of *a dead person was carried out* in funeral procession, (according to their manner of burying without the walls of their cities,) and the deceased was *the only son of his mother, and she was a widow*, which made the case so much the more deplorable; *and* this sad circumstance, together with others which attended it, so influenced the minds of many of her neighbours, that *there was a great multitude of the city with her.* LUKE VII. 11 12

And the Lord, seeing her in this afflicted condition, *was moved with* tender *compassion for her;* so that he prevented any opportunity of solicitation on their part, *and said unto her, Weep not* any longer upon this occasion; for I am come to bring thee consolation and relief. *And* presently *approaching* them, *he touched the bier*, on which, according to the manner of that place and time, the corpse was laid, covered over with a kind of mantle, or winding-sheet; *and the bearers*, who were carrying it upon their shoulders, *stood still: and* with an unaffected freedom and simplicity *he said*, in such a manner as discovered his divine authority, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise! And*, as soon as *he* had spoken these astonishing words, the youth *who had been dead*, awakened by that almighty energy which went along with them, *sat up, and began to speak; and* Jesus, when *he* thus had shewn his power in restoring him to life, discovered too the sympathizing kindness of a friend; and, taking him by the hand, *delivered him to his mother*, in such a manner as to express the pleasure he found in changing her sorrow into a transport of proportionable joy. 13 14 15

And a religious *dread fell upon all* those who were present; *and they glorified God, saying, Truly a great prophet is risen up among us; and God has* again graciously *regarded his* ancient *people*, who were in former ages so often distinguished by his favours. *And this report of him*, and of this glorious miracle which he had wrought, *went forth*, not only through the neighbouring parts of Galilee, but was soon spread *through all Judea, and the whole region* that was *round about;* and greatly heightened and increased the mighty expectations from him which they had long since begun to entertain. 16 17

IMPROVEMENT.

It surely becomes us likewise to glorify God on account of the great Prophet whom he has raised up, not only to his ancient people Israel, but *to be for salvation to the ends of the earth.* (Acts xiii. 47.) Welcome, thou Messenger of the Father's love! How illustrious thy miracles! how important thy doctrine! how beneficent and amiable the whole of thy behaviour! Ver. 16 17

He went from Capernaum to Naim, still on the same blessed errand, to do good to the bodies and the souls of men. Oh that our lives, in their humble sphere, might be such a circle of virtues and graces! that we might thus go about doing good; and might learn, by the happiest of all arts, to make the close of one useful and pious action the beginning of another! 11

Of him may we also learn the most engaging manner of conferring benefits; that lovely mixture of freedom and tenderness, which heightens the sweetness, and doubles the value of every favour! May our hearts imbibe the same temper, and it will diffuse on our actions some proportionable gracefulness! May our bowels, like his, yearn over the afflicted, and our hand be ever ready thus gently to wipe away their tears! But, O gracious Redeemer, how impotent is our pity when compared with thine! with thine, which could call back lamented children from the grave, and turn the sorrows of a weeping parent into a torrent of joy! We are sometimes ready fondly to say, "Oh that thou hadst been near when the darlings of our hearts were snatched away from us, and "we left them in the dust!" But thou indeed wast near; for thou hast the keys of death and the unseen world! 12 14, 15

word εισελθοντι (Matt. viii. 5.) seems to intimate that Christ was then entering Capernaum; and the multitude was not yet dismissed when that cure was wrought. (Matt. viii. 10.)

b *They said, He is transported too far:* οτι εξεστη.] Our manner of rendering these words, *He is beside himself*, or, *He is mad*, is very offensive. One can hardly think Christ's friends would speak so contemptibly and impiously of him; and if that sense must necessarily be retained, it would be much more decent to render the clause, *It* (that is, the multitude mentioned in the verse before,) *is mad*, thus unseasonably to break in upon him. But 2 Cor. v. 13. is the only passage in the New Testament where the word has this signification. It generally signifies to be *greatly transported*, or, as we express it in a word derived from this, to be *thrown into an ecstasy.* (Mark ii. 12; v. 42; vi. 51; Luke viii. 56; and Acts ii. 7, 12; xii. 16.) And, though the Seventy sometimes use it for fainting away, (Gen. xlv. 26; Josh. ii. 11; and Isa. vii. 2.) I do not find it ever signifies that faintness which arises from excess of labour or want of food; but our Lord's attendants seem to have feared lest his zeal and the present *fervency of his spirit* should have been injurious to his health.

c After all the watching of the last night, and the fatigue of this day.] Compare Luke vi. 12. *et seq.* § 52. whence it appears our Lord had sat up the preceding night, and eaten nothing this day; but spent the morning in giving a charge to his new-chosen apostles, and the advance of the day in preaching to a vast auditory, and working many miracles.

d *To a city called Naim.*] If Naim was a city of the tribe of Issachar, and lay at the foot of Mount Tabor, (where most geographers have placed it,) our Lord made a pretty long journey this day, especially considering what was mentioned in the last note; for he must thus have travelled about twelve miles. Lightfoot supposes it to be the same with En-gannim, which is mentioned in Josh. xix. 21. and xxi. 29; but this lay also in the tribe of Issachar, and must have been at no less distance from Capernaum.

SECT. 56. And this we know, that, if our beloved children are sleeping in thee, thy voice shall at length awaken them; and thou wilt deliver them to us, to die no more; and wilt thyself graciously take part in that mutual and lasting joy which thou shalt give to us and to them.

SECTION LVII.

John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus, to inquire whether he was the Messiah; and Jesus answers them in a convincing, though oblique manner. Luke vii. 18—23. Matt. xi. 2—6.

LUKE vii. 18.

SECT. 57. WE have before mentioned the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and given some account of the occasion of it. (Sect. xxviii. p. 55, 56.) *Now the disciples of John* had the courage to resort to him where he was confined, and *informed him of* what

LUKE VII. passed: and they particularly gave him an account of *all these things* which had now lately been performed by Jesus;[a] how he had cured the centurion's servant at a distance,

18 and raised the young man at Naim to life when they were carrying him out to his funeral.

19 *And when John had* thus *heard in* his *prison the works of Christ*, as the very persons that brought him the news of them seemed to have entertained some doubt concerning Jesus, whether he was the promised Messiah or no: for their satisfaction, therefore, rather than his own,[b] *he called two of his disciples to him, and sent them* in his own name *to Jesus, saying unto him*, What dost thou say to this plain question, *Art thou* the great expected Messiah, whom we have so long been used to speak of by the emphatical title of *He that cometh*,[c] *or are we to expect another* under that character? Answer the question as expressly as I formerly bore my testimony to thee.

20 *And when the men* who were employed by John to be his messengers to Jesus upon this important errand *were come to him, they* delivered their message with great exactness; and *said, John the* celebrated *Baptist*, whose courage and faithfulness in his ministerial office have been the occasion of his imprisonment, *has sent us to thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh*, and dost thou own thyself to be indeed the great Messiah, *or are we to expect another* under that character?

21 *Now* Jesus was determined to return an answer to their question, by actions rather than by words; and therefore *in that very hour*, while they were present with him, and were eye-witnesses of what he did, (as the message was on purpose delivered before a large assembly of people, in which, as usual, there were many who came to be healed of various incurable distempers,) *he* exercised the power that he had of working miracles, and *cured many* that were then before him *of their diseases and plagues*,[d] *and* delivered them from the possession *of evil spirits, and* graciously *bestowed sight on many that were blind*.[e]

22 *And* then *Jesus, answering* their demand, *said unto them, Go, and relate to John the things which you* yourselves *have seen and heard* this day, as well as those that you have been informed of by others, who have been eye and ear witnesses of my miracles and discourses: say, in particular, *That the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the* very *dead are raised: and* observe also, that I do not court the rich and the great, as impostors are most apt to do; nor do I bear a commission chiefly directed to them, as some of the prophets did; but, as you see by the auditory now around me, *the poor*, and even the meanest of the people, *have the gospel preached to them;* they have the good news of eternal salvation most freely published

23 among them, and the blessings of it offered to their acceptance. *And* be sure you add farther, that I appear in such circumstances, that there is reason to say, *Happy is he that*

LUKE vii. 18.

AND the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John, [when *he* had heard in the prison the works of Christ,] calling unto him two of his disciples, sent *them* unto Jesus, saying [unto him,] Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? [Matt. xi. 2, 3.]

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, [and] to the poor the gospel is preached. [Matt. xi. 4, 5.]

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me. [Matt. xi. 6.]

(See Lightfoot's *Chorog. ad Luc.* vii. 11. § 3.) The circumstance here recorded might probably happen towards the evening, at which season funerals are commonly celebrated.

a *All these things* which had now lately been performed by Jesus.] This is a plain argument, that this message from John happened quickly after the miracles which Luke had recorded in the preceding part of this chapter. And therefore, though Matthew has mentioned many other facts and discourses before he relates this message, yet, because he asserts nothing at all as to the order and connection of it, (see Matt. xi. 2.) I have, with most other harmonizers, thought myself obliged to follow Luke, on the principles laid down above. See note a, p. 91.

b For their satisfaction, therefore, rather than his own.] Mr. L'Enfant, with some others, thinks (as Justin Martyr and Tertullian did) that John was so discouraged by his own long imprisonment, that he began himself to doubt whether Jesus was the Messiah: and, agreeably to this, he supposes that when our Lord afterwards says, *Happy is he that is not offended in me*, he meant it as a *caution to John*, that he should be upon his guard against so dangerous a temptation. But, considering what clear evidence John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had borne to Jesus, I cannot imagine this to have been possible; especially as he foresaw, and foretold, that he must himself quickly be laid aside. (John iii. 30. p. 54.)—But his disciples might very probably be offended at this circumstance, as well as at the freedom of Christ's conversation, so different from the austerity used among them; and therefore he might think it necessary to put them in the way of farther satisfaction: not to say, that the warmth of John's temper might render him something uneasy at the reserve which Christ maintained; and that he might imagine it agreeable to the general design of his own office, as his forerunner, thus to urge a more express declaration.—For these reasons, I chuse to render and paraphrase it thus, rather than with Limborch (*Theol. Christ. lib.* iii. *cap.* 11. § 14.) to translate it, *Thou art he that should come, and do we look for another?* that is, We do not expect any Messiah but thee: so understanding it as a repeated testimony which John bore by proxy, when he could no longer do it in his own person. All the spirit of Christ's answer would be lost, if we were to understand the message in this sense.

c *He that cometh:* ο ερχομενος.] It seems that, by their speaking of the Messiah by this phrase, (*He that cometh*, or, *He that is coming,*) the pious Jews in the most lively manner expressed their confident expectation of him, and their eager longing for his appearance, as the greatest and most welcome messenger of God to man, and the most desirable person that *ever did*, or *should come* into the world. (See Mark xi. 9, 10; and compare Psal. cxviii. 26; Dan. vii. 13; Hab. ii. 3. Septuag. Isa. lxii. 11; and Zech. ix. 9.) Bishop Pearson justly observes, that *this*, among many other arguments, proves that the notion of two Messiahs, one suffering, and the other triumphant, is a vain dream of the modern Jews, that was altogether unknown to the ancients. See Pearson on the *Creed*, p. 183.

d *Of their diseases and plagues.*] Μαστιγες, *plagues*, or *scourges* may probably signify some of the most grievous distempers, such as leprosies, palsies, inveterate fluxes, &c. (compare Mark iii. 10 and v. 29, 34.) and may allude to their being supposed to be such corrections as intimated the *great displeasure of God* against the persons on whom they were sent. Compare John v. 14. and ix. 2.

e *And* graciously *bestowed sight*, &c.] The original phrase εχαριτατο το βλεπειν, seems to express, both in how generous and in how kind and affectionate a manner *our blessed Redeemer performed these cures.*

is not scandalized or stumbled *at me*:[f] for he must be singularly wise and religious, who is not shocked by the strong popular prejudices which lie against me. Let John consider these things in themselves, and let him compare them with those prophecies[g] which foretel that the Messiah should work such miracles, (Isa. xxv. 5, 6.) that he should preach the gospel to the poor, (Isa. lxi. 1.) and that many should despise and reject him, (Isa. viii. 14; liii. 1—3.) And he, and, by a parity of reason, you, and the rest of his disciples, may easily collect a convincing answer to the question you are come to ask, without any more express declaration from me.[h] SECT. 57. LUKE VII.

IMPROVEMENT.

We have here in John the Baptist a very edifying instance of a most candid and pious temper. How solicitous was he to remove those scruples from the minds of his disciples which, perhaps, their excessive fondness for him might have occasioned! He wisely sends them to converse with Jesus themselves: and surely they who most accurately enquire into the credentials he brings, will be most effectually convinced and impressed by them. Ver. 18 19

Let us, when tempted to doubt of the truth of Christianity, recollect the various and unanswerable proofs of it which are summed up in these comprehensive words: arising from the miracles and character of our Redeemer, and the prophetic testimony that was borne to him. Let us particularly rejoice that the poor have the gospel preached; and that the blessings of it are offered to enrich the souls of those whose bodily necessities we often pity, without having it in our power to relieve them. 22

And, since our Lord pronounces a blessing upon those that shall not be offended in him, let us consider what those things are, in the doctrine or circumstances of Christ, which have proved the most dangerous stumbling-blocks, and endeavour to fortify our souls against those temptations which may arise from them. So the trial of that faith which is a much more valuable treasure than gold which perishes, though tried in the fire, may *be found unto praise, and honour, and glory*, (1 Pet. i. 7.) and we, on the whole, may be advanced in our way by incidents which at first threatened to turn us entirely out of it; as the faith of these disciples of John must surely be confirmed by those doubts which they had for a while entertained. 23

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SECTION LVIII.

Jesus discourses with the multitude concerning John, and justly complains of the perverseness of that generation. Luke vii. 24—35. Matt. xi. 7—19.

LUKE vii. 24.

AND when the messengers of John were departed, [Jesus] began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? [Matt. xi. 7.]

LUKE vii. 24.

NOW when the messengers of John were gone away to inform their master of the things which they had seen and heard, *Jesus began to speak unto the multitude* that still surrounded him, *concerning John* the Baptist, and to enquire into the reason of their having formerly flocked after him as they had done. I know (said he) that many of you were of the number of his hearers, and were baptized by him: now I would seriously ask you, and advise you attentively to ask yourselves, *What went you out into the wilderness* in which he preached, *to behold?* You did not surely go on any trifling occasion, or for a mere amusement: none of you would be so senseless as to undertake a journey to see *a reed* or a bulrush *shaken by the wind;* nor can you say you found him wavering in his conduct, or inconsistent in the testimony that he bore to me. SECT. 58. LUKE VII. 24

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. [Matt. xi. 8.]

But what then *went you out to see?* You could not go with any expectation to find a *man* in such a place, *dressed in soft garments* of the finest silk, and living in an elegant and sumptuous way: for *behold, they that wear a splendid dress, and live luxuriously, are* to be sought *in royal palaces*, rather than in a rough and barren wilderness; and you well knew that John's manner of living was plain and austere, such as suited the message he brought, and illustrated his integrity in delivering it. 25

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. [Matt. xi. 9.]

But once more I would ask you, *What did you* then *go out to see?* Are you not ready to allow that you went out to see *a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a* common *prophet. For this is the* very *person of whom it is written*, (Mal. iii. 1.) "*Behold*, O my Son, *I send my* appointed *messenger before thy face, who* "*shall prepare thy way before thee*, and in a proper manner introduce thee into the "world." 26

27 [For] this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. [Matt. xi. 10.]

Matt. xi. 11. Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a

Wherefore *I assuredly say unto you*, That *among* all *those that have been born of women*, or the whole race of mankind in all former ages, *there hath not arisen a prophet greater than John the Baptist;* for as he is, with regard to his moral and religious character, one of the best of men, so he has some peculiar honours superior to any prophet MATT. XI. 11

f *Happy is he that is not scandalized* or stumbled *at me.*] This was intended as an awful *admonition* to the disciples of John, that they should themselves guard against those prejudices which might prevent their receiving Christ; and contains a strong intimation that their final happiness would be determined by the regards they should pay to him, as well as that these prejudices should generally prevail to men's ruin. See note c, on Matt. v. 29. p. 78.

g Compare them with those prophecies.] Archbishop Tillotson has largely shewn the correspondence between the prophecies and events here referred to; see Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 451. *et seq.*—Dr. Thomas Jackson has laboured the point yet more largely in the second part of his curious discourse on this text. See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 470. *et seq.*

h Without any more express declaration from me.] Nothing could be more apposite, natural, and convincing, than such an answer as this, which took its rise from what Christ was then doing, and rested on the most apparent testimony of God himself in astonishing miracles, to which they knew their master made no pretences; (see John x. 41.) miracles of so beneficent a nature, that no austerities of a retired life were by any means comparable to them; and miracles receiving an additional lustre from their being foretold by a prophet many ages before, (see note i, on John ii. 22. p. 48.) and even by Isaiah the prophet, by whom the Baptist was so particularly described, that, as he himself had frequently referred to him, (Matt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4—6; and John i. 23.) so his disciples must, no doubt, have made themselves peculiarly familiar with his writings.—These, and many other particulars, are set in a most beautiful light by the masterly hand of Bishop Atterbury, in his *Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 41—50. who has very judiciously abridged what is most material in the large discourse of the learned Dr. Jackson referred to in the preceding note.

SECT. 58. LUKE VII.

of former generations:[a] *nevertheless*, there is a sense in which *he that is least in the kingdom of heaven*, not only in its final glories, but even here on earth, *is greater than he;* for my ministers, and people in general, shall receive superior supplies of the Spirit, and know many important truths relating to my gospel which have not been revealed to John himself.

greater [prophet] than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. [Luke vii 28.]

29 He is now laid aside from his ministry, yet I would have you to reflect upon the consequences of his preaching, and to consider the success of it: *and* you must needs remember that when he came and preached the baptism of repentance, and publicly proclaimed that the Messiah was at hand, *all the people* in general *hearing* [*him*] *preach*,[b] *and* even *the publicans* themselves, *justified God*, and testified their approbation of the Divine scheme[c] in sending such an ambassador, by professing to fall in with the design of his appearance, and *being* accordingly *baptized with the baptism of John*, humbly confessing their sins,

Luke vii. 29. And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 and declaring their repentance. *But the* proud *Pharisees, and doctors of the law*, to their own unspeakable detriment, *rejected the* gracious *counsel of God* addressed *to them, not being baptized by him*, when they saw how plainly he dealt with them and their brethren.[d]

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

MATT. XI.

But though these great *and* learned men despised him, yet the good effects of his ministry on others are still apparent; for *from the days of John the Baptist*, or from the time in

Matt. xi. 12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

12 which he bore his public testimony to an approaching Messiah, *even to the present time*,[e] the spirits of men are so raised and animated by a desire after *the kingdom of heaven*, that it *is* (as it were) *attacked with violence*, like a besieged city; men of all sorts are pressing to get into it, *and the violent seize it* with eagerness:[f] multitudes are flocking around me, to be instructed in the nature of my kingdom; and some of most licentious characters, who have been looked upon as little better than ruffians and bravoes, seem resolutely set on securing it; while others of graver and fairer characters are found to neglect it. (Compare Luke xvi. 16.)

13 This is a new and very wonderful event. *For* [*till the time of*] *John* the Baptist, *all the prophets prophesied; and the law* of Moses, as explained by them, was the only revelation of God's will to the people of Israel; which, so far as it related to me, was but an obscure intimation of what men were to expect from my appearance: but John opened

13 For all the prophets, and the law prophesied until John.

14 a much more perfect dispensation. *And* indeed (to speak more plainly than I have commonly done) *if you will* hearken to my testimony, and *receive* [*it*,] *this* John *is* the *Elijah who was to come*,[g] or the person whom Malachi describes under that name, as to

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come.

15 be sent before the coming of the day of the Lord. (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) This is so important an intimation, that I must urge your most attentive regard to it: and therefore, *He that hath ears* able *to hear, let him hear* [*it*,] and let every one that has a mind capable of reflection, reflect seriously upon it; for to understand and regard the character and mission of John aright, will have a most happy tendency to promote your receiving Him whom John was sent to introduce.[h]

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

LUKE VII.

[*And the Lord* Jesus farther *said*,] *To what then shall I* now *compare the men of this generation? and to what* indeed *are they like?* Reflect upon yourselves, and

Luke vii. 31. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? [Matt. xi. 16.]

31 you will surely see the justice of the comparison which I am going to make. *They are like* a company of *little children*,[i] whom you may sometimes have observed, as they

a Superior to any prophet of former generations.] The obvious sense of what is here expressed, together with the following words, does plainly limit it to *them alone*. And it might properly be said that John was *greater* than any of the ancient prophets, on account of his wonderful conception and birth; his excellent knowledge of gospel-mysteries; (see especially John iii. 27. *et seq.* § 27.) his express testimony to the Messiah, and his remarkable success in making way for him: John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the church.

b *All the people* in general *hearing him preach.*] The reader will observe that (with Grotius) I take these to be *the words of Christ*, continuing his discourse; whereas our translation seems rather to intimate they are the reflection of Luke on the sentiments of those who were now *hearing Christ*. I long considered them in this view; but it now seems to me so evident, from the most ancient manuscripts and versions, that the words, *And the Lord said*, at the beginning of ver. 31. were not in the original, that I could not but connect and render them thus. Nevertheless I shall show so much regard to the common reading as to add (in note h, below) the version and paraphrase in that sense and connection; submitting it, on the whole, to the learned reader to judge as he shall think proper; but must first desire him to consult Grotius, Dr. Mill, and the Polyglott.

c *Justified God*, and testified their approbation, &c.] From the *opposition* between those that *justified God* and those that *rejected his counsel*, it is plain, that *to justify* here signifies to *approve and vindicate*. Compare ver. 35. (at the end of this section;) Rom. iii. 4; and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

d How plainly he dealt with them and their brethren.] Of this see the paraphrase on Luke iii. 10. p. 33.

e *From the days of John the Baptist, even to the present time.*] Sir Isaac Newton (*On Prophecy*, p. 159.) urges this as an argument to prove that some considerable time must have elapsed since John's imprisonment. But, on the common hypothesis, it might be near a year; and our Lord might probably include some time of his ministry preceding his imprisonment: so that we cannot be much assisted in our calculations by this text.

f *The kingdom of heaven is attacked with violence—and the violent seize it* with eagerness:—βιαζεται, και βιασται αρπαζουσιν αυτην.] The words of the original are very strong and forcible, and the translation I have given is very literal.—It seems necessary to interpret the latter clause as in the paraphrase, to prevent the appearance of a tautology: Yet I did not venture to render βιασται *ruffians* or *bravoes;* because I think the version should be left in as great a latitude as the original; and I was afraid so great a variation from what is commonly taken to be the meaning of this passage, might have shocked some at the first hearing.—To suppose, as a late ingenious writer has done, that this refers to the first attempts made to *destroy the gospel* in its infancy, and that αρπαζουσιν signifies *tear it to pieces*, does not appear natural in this connection; though the word must be allowed sometimes to have that import.

g *This* John *is* the *Elijah who was to come.*] How little there is in Mr. Collin's objection against thus fixing Malachi's prophecy of Elijah to John the Baptist, many of his learned antagonists have shewn; and I think none in an easier and stronger light than Mr. Bullock: See his *Vindication*, Pref. p. 50.

h Whom John was sent to introduce.] According to the received reading, Luke vii. 29, 30, must be introduced here, and may be paraphrased thus: "29—*And all the people* that were present, "*and the publicans* in particular, *when they heard* [*this*] discourse, "*having* formerly *been baptized with the baptism of John, justified* "and approved the wisdom of *God*, as illustrated in it. 30—*But* "*the Pharisees and doctors of the law*, in whose presence it was de- "livered, disrelished it; and, puffed up with a vain conceit of their "own knowledge and goodness, *rejected the* gracious *counsel of God* "*towards them;* and *not having been baptized by him*, were dis- "pleased to hear so high an encomium given to John. 31—*And* "*the Lord*, knowing how ready they were to cavil both at him and "his forerunner, *said*, with a particular reference to these Pharisees "and doctors, *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this genera-* "*tion? &c.*" Compare note b, in this section.

i *They are like little children.*] It is plain *our Lord's* exact meaning is, that *the men of that generation*, or the cavillers of whom he was now speaking, were *like the children complained of*, and not *like*

were *sitting in the market-place*, to be so froward and perverse in their behaviour to each other, that no contrivance could be found to please them; *and* some of them you may have heard *calling out to their companions, and saying*, What shall we do to please you, and to bring you to join with us in our diversions? We have tried all the ways we can think of: sometimes *we have piped to you* a pleasant tune, *and you have not danced* to the music; and at other times *we have* changed the ditty, and *mourned to you*, or played and sung such dirges as are used at funerals, *and you have not* taken your part, and *lamented* with us; but are always finding fault with every thing we do, and will not be prevailed upon to join with us. Such is that childish obstinacy and perverseness that appears in you, who think yourselves the oracles of wisdom in the present age; and you discover the same froward temper in far more important instances: *for John the Baptist*, of whom I have now been speaking, *came* with an uncommon austerity of behaviour, *neither eating bread*, as others do, *nor drinking wine*, but living on locusts and honey, and water in the wilderness; *and you say, He has a devil*, and acts like a wild distracted demoniac, whom an evil spirit drives from the society of men. On the other hand, *the Son of man is come* without any of this severity, *eating and drinking*, as others do, conversing familiarly among you, and with a temperate freedom sharing in your festivals as well as your common meals; *and you say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a* fit *friend* and companion *of publicans and sinners:* thus ungratefully do you injure his character for that humanity and condescension which you should rather applaud. *But*, nevertheless, true *wisdom has* still *been justified* and vindicated *by all* those who are indeed *her children:* and they who are truly wise and religious must needs approve this beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence; and see that the difference in our manner of living suits the purposes of our respective appearances, and is adapted to promote the general design of God's glory and man's salvation.

SECT. 58. LUKE VII.

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, [unto their fellows,] and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept, [*or* lamented.] [Matt. xi. 16, 17.]

33 For John the Baptist came, neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. [Matt. xi. 18.]

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! [Matt. xi. 19.]

35 But Wisdom is justified of all her children. [Matt. xi. 19.]

32 33 34 35

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy would it be, if we could learn to correct the natural inconsistences of our temper and conduct by wise reflections and considerations! How much more improving would our attendance on the ministrations of God's servants be, were we seriously to ask ourselves, to what purpose we attended!

Ver. 32 24—26

It ought surely to be followed with such considerations, since it is intended to lead us to the kingdom of heaven: a glorious prize! too glorious to be obtained by faint wishes and inactive desires. There is a sense in which it still suffers violence: and how sad is the degeneracy of our natures, that we should exert so little warmth in such a pursuit, and so much for every trifle! Instead of that holy ardour with which men should press into it, they fold their hands in their bosoms, and lose themselves in soft luxurious dreams, till the precious opportunity is for ever gone. May Divine grace display the crowns and palms of victory before our eyes, in so awakening a manner, that we may joyfully seize them, whatever obstacles may lie in our way, whatever must be done, or whatever must be borne to secure them!

MATT. XI. 12

Let us not, as we love our own souls, through a proud self-sufficiency, reject the gracious counsels of God which are addressed to us, lest we should be another day condemned by publicans and sinners. Divine providence and grace are using a variety of methods with us: let not our perverseness and folly, like that of the Jews, frustrate them all: but rather let us shew ourselves the children of wisdom, by falling in with its measures, and improving as well as applauding them.

LUKE VII. 30 35

SECTION LIX.

Our Lord laments over the impenitent cities of Galilee, acknowledges the Divine sovereignty in the dispensations of the gospel, and invites sinners to come to him. Matt. xi. 20, *to the end.*

MATT. xi. 20.

THEN began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

MATT. xi. 20.

THEN, after Jesus had in general reproved the Jews for the perverseness of their carriage under the great advantages that they enjoyed, *he began* particularly *to upbraid the cities in which most of his miracles had been wrought, because they did not repent*, and believe in him:[a] And in the most affectionate and solemn manner he declared, how terrible would be the consequence of their impenitence and unbelief; and said, *Woe unto thee, O Chorazin*, and *woe unto thee, O Bethsaida*, where I so often have conversed and taught! *for* surely *if the miracles which have been wrought in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon* of old, though they were places so remarkable for their luxury, pride, and contempt of religion,[b] *they would long ago have repented* with tokens of the deepest humility, covering themselves *in sackcloth, and* lying in *ashes.*[c] *Wherefore I say unto you*, That as they never had such means of conviction as you have been in-

SECT. 59.

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for

MATT. XI. 21 22

those that made the complaint: but, more especially in Matthew's style, the phrase, *it is like*, often signifies only in general that the thing spoken of may be illustrated by the following similitude. And so the *phrase* must be understood. Matt. xiii. 24, and 45: xviii. 23; xx. 1; and xxii. 2.

a *Because they did not repent* and believe in him.] Our Lord had great reason thus to upbraid them on this occasion, considering how much time he had spent among them, and how many excellent discourses he had delivered, as well as how many surprising miracles he had wrought in these parts; as may be seen in several preceding sections.

b Places so remarkable for their luxury, pride, and contempt of religion.] This is frequently the case with rich trading cities: and that it was so with *these* in particular, may be learned from many passages in the Old Testament, as well as from profane writers. See Judg. xviii. 7; Isa. xxiii. 9; Ezek. xxviii. 2, 5, 17, 22; and Amos i. 9, 10.—May God preserve London in particular from resembling them in character, whom in commerce and grandeur it so much exceeds!

c Covering themselves *in sackcloth, and* lying in *ashes.*] As *covering themselves with sackcloth* (or *hair-cloth*, for such it was,) and *lying in ashes*, were usual expressions of *mourning*; so they particularly were made use of on days of public fasting and deep humiliation for sin; and therefore are justly introduced here, as expressions of sincere repentance and self-abhorrence. Compare Esth. iv. 1, 3; Job xlii. 6; Isa. lviii. 5; Dan. ix. 3; and Jonah iii. 6, 8.

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dulged with, and have ungratefully abused, *the condition* even *of Tyre and Sidon, in the day of* the final and universal *judgment*,[d] *shall be more tolerable than yours*, who will deservedly be exposed to a much heavier weight of vengeance. (Compare Luke x. 13, 14. sect. xcvii.)

Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 *And thou* especially, *O* guilty *Capernaum, who hast been* (as it were) *exalted even to heaven*, not only in wealth and magnificence, (compare Dan. iv. 22.) but, what is infinitely more valuable, in the means of grace, by my long abode in thee, and continued labours among thine inhabitants: such dreadful desolation is appointed for thee, that thou *shalt* (as it were) *be brought down to hell*, being swallowed up in utter irrecoverable destruction: (compare Isa. xiv. 13, 15.) And thy punishment will be apparently just: *for* surely *if the miracles which have been wrought in thee, had been performed* even *in Sodom* itself, licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was,[e] *it would* have been convinced and reformed; so that, instead of being consumed by that shower of flaming vengeance, it might *have continued* in all its glory and beauty *even to this day. Wherefore I say unto you, That the condition* even of the inhabitants *of the land of Sodom in the day of* the final *judgment, shall be more tolerable than yours;* for your condemnation shall rise in proportion to your more aggravated guilt, and to those more valuable mercies and privileges which you have abused.

23 And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 *At that time* also, (as well as at another that will be elsewhere mentioned, Luke x. 21. sect. cvi.) *Jesus took occasion*, from the circumstances which he then observed, *to say*,[f] *I ascribe glory to thee, O Father*,[g] thou supreme *Lord of heaven and earth, that* while *thou hast*, in the course of thy wise, though mysterious providence, *hid these* great *things* of thy gospel *from* those who have the character of *wise and understanding persons*,[h] or from the learned scribes and refined politicians of the age, whom thou hast suffered, through their own pride and folly, to reject them with disdain,—thou hast brought the humble to the knowledge of them, *and hast* graciously *revealed them to* many of the lowest and plainest of mankind, who, in comparison of the former, are but as *infants*.

25 At that time Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Mortifying as such a circumstance might seem, I cordially acquiesce in it, and say, *Be it so, O my Father, since such is thy* sovereign will and *pleasure* thus to exalt thine own glorious name, and to lay the creature in low abasement before thee.

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 And then, turning himself to those that stood near him, he said, Do not be led, by the example of your great and learned men, to slight and despise me; for, humble as my circumstances now appear, *all things are delivered unto me by my* almighty *Father*, who has fully instructed and empowered me for whatever relates to the salvation of men:[i] *And* such are the mysteries and glories of my person and kingdom, that *no one* fully *knows the Son but the Father*;[k] *neither does any* truly *know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him:* For I have that knowledge of him to which no creature can pretend; and it is my great errand to the world, to discover his nature and will, and lead his wandering creatures into a saving acquaintance with him: A work which I undertake with the greatest cheerfulness and delight: and therefore, *come unto me* by faith, *all ye that labour and are heavy burdened*, whether with the distresses of life, or with the sense of guilt, (see Psal. xxxii. 4. xxxviii. 4.) or with the load of ceremonial observances which your unmerciful teachers are so ready to impose, (Matt. xxiii. 4.) *and I will ease you* of the grievous burdens you are sinking under.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28 Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Be persuaded then to *take my yoke upon you, and* to *learn of me*, as my obedient disciples; *for I am meek*, condescending, *and lowly in heart*,[l] *and* will impose no unnecessary hardships upon you: but on such an application to me, *you shall find* that *refreshment to your souls* which you in vain would seek elsewhere; that composure,

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

d *In the day of judgment.*] Dr. Hammond understands this passage as referring to the temporal calamities to come on these places by the Romans, who did indeed shortly after overrun the whole country, and made dreadful ravages in some of these cities. See Joseph. *de Bell. Jud. lib.* iii. *cap.* 6, 7. [al. 5, 6.] *et lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. [al. vii. 17.] But there is no evidence that the destruction of these Jewish cities was more dreadful than that of Tyre and Sidon, and it was certainly less so than that of Sodom and Gomorrah: besides, our Lord plainly speaks of a *judgment* that was *yet to come* on all these places that he mentions.

e Licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was.] It is well known that those abominable cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had long since grown into a proverb for wickedness and misery. See Gen. xiii. 13; xviii. 20; Deut. xxix. 23; xxxii. 32; Isa. i. 9, 10; iii. 9; xiii. 19; Jer. xxiii. 14; xlix. 18; Lam. iv. 6; Amos iv. 11; Zeph. ii. 9; Matt. x. 15; and Rev. xi. 8.

f *Jesus took occasion to say.*] It is in the original, αποκριθεις, ο Ιησους ειπεν; which our translation has literally rendered, *Jesus answered and said:* but when the words so introduced are not a reply to any preceding speech, I apprehend the version here given expresses the sense of them with yet greater exactness.—The words (*at that time*) seem plainly to prove that what follows is to be introduced here, and consequently that Luke x. 21, 22. is a repetition of it on another proper occasion.

g *I ascribe glory to thee, O Father!*] This is one proper meaning of εξομολογουμαι, as appears from comparing Heb. xiii. 15. and Rom. xv. 9.

h *Thou hast hid these things from wise and understanding persons.*] God is often said, in scripture, *to do those things* which he determines to *permit*, and which, he foresees, will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though their wills are laid under no constraint. (Compare Exod. vii. 3, 4; 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12; xxiv. 1: and 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23.) In this sense alone could he be said to *hide those things* from the learned men of this age, which he revealed so plainly, that honest and well-disposed persons, though children in understanding, might come to the knowledge of them. Compare Matt. x. 34, 35.

i Has fully instructed and empowered me, &c.] I cannot, with Mr. L'Enfant, confine the sense of παντα μοι παρεδοθη merely to the instructions Christ had received from the Father: his *exaltation to supreme power and government* was so near, and so sure, that our Lord might with great propriety intend the phrase in that more extensive sense I have given it. Compare John v. 22; and Matt. xviii. 18.

k *No one knows the Son but the Father.*] These words evidently declare that there is something inexplicably mysterious in the *nature* and *person* of Christ; which indeed appears in the most convincing manner from the account elsewhere given of his Deity in scripture.

l *For I am meek*, condescending, *and lowly in heart.*] Some have apprehended that our Lord here intends peculiarly to recommend the imitation of his *humility* and *meekness*, as what would especially tend, in the natural consequence of things, to promote the *repose* and *tranquillity* of their minds; and Dr. Watts, in a very beautiful manner, has paraphrased the words thus in his Hymns. (Book I. Hymn 127.) But I apprehend our Lord chiefly means to remind them of the general *lenity* of his temper, which would engage him to decline all *grievous impositions* and unnecessary *burdens*, and tenderly to instruct them in the way to pardon and life. Compare Matt. xii. 19, 20. § 51.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

satisfaction, and joy, which nothing but humility and meekness, with an entire subjection to me, can give. *For* such is the genius of my gospel, that though it will indeed bring you under some restraints, they are not only tolerable, but, on the whole, desirable; and I may truly say, that *my yoke is easy* and gentle; or, if there be a mixture of difficulty attending it, such assistance *and* encouragements are provided, that with them *my burden is light* and pleasant[m] to those who by divine grace are engaged to submit to it. (Compare 1 John v. 3.) 30

SECT. 59. MATT. XI.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can we imagine more dreadful than the guilt and condemnation of those who hear the gospel only to despise it! How can we read the doom of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, without trembling for ourselves, lest we should incur the like sentence! Such have been our religious advantages and opportunities, that, like them, we have indeed been *lifted up to heaven:* the Lord grant that we may not, by our misimprovement and disobedience, be *cast down to the lowest hell!* that Tyre and Sidon, and even Sodom and Gomorrah, may not at last rise up in judgment against us, and call down on our heads a punishment more intolerable than that which has fallen upon them, or which they must even then feel! Ver. 21—24

Our vain curiosity may perhaps be ready to ask, Why were these advantages given to them that abused them, rather than to those who would have improved them better? But let us impose upon our minds a reverential silence; since the great Lord of heaven and earth *giveth not an account of any of his matters,* (Job xxxiii. 13.) 26
It is *so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight!*

Still we see the gospel hid from many who are esteemed the wisest and most prudent of mankind; and, blessed 25
be God, we still see it revealed to some who, in comparison of them, are but babes. Let not this offend us; but rather, taking our notions from the word of God, let us learn to honour these babes as possessed of the truest wisdom, and adore the riches of Divine grace, if we are in their number, while many of superior capacities are left to stumble at this stone till they fall into final ruin.

Whatever objections are brought against Christ and his ways, may we ever adhere to them, *since all things are* 27
delivered to him by the Father! From him therefore may we seek the true knowledge of God, as ever we desire everlasting life!

We have all our burdens of sin and of sorrow. While we labour under them, let us with pleasure hear the 28
gentle and melodious voice of a Redeemer thus kindly inviting us to come unto him, *that we may find rest to our* 29
souls. Let us with pleasure subject ourselves to him, and go on in our holy course with that improvement and cheerfulness which become those who learn by their own daily experience that his commandments are not grievous, and feel that *his yoke is easy and his burden is light.* 30

Oct. 17. 1655.

SECTION LX.

Jesus accepts an invitation to dine at a Pharisee's house, and vindicates the woman who anointed his feet there. Luke vii. 36, *to the end.*

LUKE vii. 36.

LUKE vii. 36.

AND one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him; and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

AND one of the Pharisees who was present at this discourse,[a] and might feel himself touched by some insinuations which it contained, under a specious pretence of respect to our Lord, though, as it seemed, with an ensnaring design, *invited him to eat with him* that day, taking care to have others of his own sect present to observe what passed. And Jesus, being willing to express his condescension and candour, accepted his invitation; *and entering into the house of the Pharisee, he sat down to table,* without taking any notice of the omission of some usual ceremonies of respect which so great a guest might well have expected. 36

SECT. 60. LUKE VII.

37 And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment;

And behold there was *a woman in that city who had* once *been a* great and scandalous *sinner,* and was still accounted infamous on account of the lewdness and debaucheries of her former life: and, *when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house,* she took encouragement from his late gracious invitation, and determined to give a remarkable token of her reverence and love to so glorious and compassionate a Saviour; and for this purpose she *brought an alabaster vessel* full *of* richly *perfumed ointment;* 37

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

And standing by the couch on which our Lord, according to the custom of those times, lay down to eat, waiting *behind* him in the posture of a servant *at his feet,* her very heart was melted with such pious remorse, that in the presence of the whole company she was unable to refrain from *weeping* in such great abundance, that *she began* even *to water his feet with a shower of tears;*[b] *and,* observing how wet they were, she *wiped* 38

m *My burden is light* and pleasant.]—Ελαφρον properly signifies both *light* and *pleasant:* and χρηστος, *easy,* may be also rendered *gentle* and *agreeable;* and so with great propriety may express that true pleasure and cheerfulness which are the genuine result of a sincere subjection to Christ's government, which is plainly the meaning of *taking his yoke.* (Compare Deut. xxviii. 47, 48; 1 Kings xii. 4; and Isa. x. 27.)—It is observable that the word *yoke* is particularly used for ceremonial impositions, Acts xv. 10; and Gal. v. 1; and the word *burden* is used in the same sense, Matt. xxiii. 4. Compare Matt. xvi. 19. and note h, there, § 88.

a *One of the Pharisees* who was present at this discourse.] Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved *this* to be a *different story* from that of *Mary's anointing Christ's head* a little before his death; (Matt. xxvi. 6—13. § 145.) And indeed the difference is so great and so plain, that it is astonishing so great a critic as Grotius should confound them, and build so many remarks on that gross mistake.

b *To water his feet with a shower of tears.*] This is the proper signification of the word βρεχειν. Compare Matt. v. 45.—We are not to imagine she came with a purpose thus to *wash* and *wipe the feet of Christ;* but, probably, hearing that the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dinner had neglected the usual civility of anointing the head of his divine guest, she was willing to supply the defect; and as she stood near Jesus, she was so *melted* with his discourse, that she *shed* such a *flood of tears* as *wetted his feet,* which lay bare on the couch, his sandals being put off, and observing this, she *wiped them with her hair,* which she now wore *flowing loose* about her shoulders, as *mourners* commonly did; and then, not thinking herself worthy to *anoint his head,* poured out the liquid *perfume* on *his feet.* In this view all appears natural and unaffected.

SECT. 60. LUKE VII.

them with the fine long *tresses of her hair,*[c] which she wore flowing loose about her shoulders; *and* then, to shew the warmth of her affection, *kissed his feet, and anointed them with the perfumed balsam* she brought with her, as not thinking herself worthy to pour it upon his head.

39 *Now the Pharisee who had invited him, observing* [*this,*] which, according to the traditions they maintained, appeared to him a very indecent sight, was so offended, that he *said within himself, This man, if he were* really *a prophet,* as he pretends to be, *would* certainly *have known who and what kind of woman this* vile creature *is that* thus familiarly *toucheth him,* and would immediately have driven her away with a just disdain; *for she is* such *a* scandalous and filthy *sinner,* that her very touch is enough to pollute him.

40 *And Jesus, in reply* to these uncharitable sentiments which he discerned at their first rising in his heart, *said to him, Simon, I have something to say to thee* on this occasion, which deserves thy regard. *And,* with an hypocritical profession of respect, *he says, O* thou great *Teacher,*[d] I am ready to attend; and whatsoever thou wouldst offer,

41 *say* [*it freely.*] Then Jesus immediately delivered this parable as a just, yet mild reproof to his host: *A certain creditor had two debtors, one* of whom *owed* him *five hundred*

42 denarii or Roman *pence,*[e] *and the other* owed him but *fifty: Now as they had not any thing to pay,* so that neither of them could discharge any part of his debt, *he freely forgave them both* the whole of what they respectively owed: and upon this it may be reasonably expected that both would have some sense of his goodness; *say, therefore,*

43 *which of them* do you think *would love him most? And Simon* very readily *replied, and said, I suppose,* so far as I can judge from the circumstances thou hast mentioned, *that he to whom he forgave most* could not but have the greatest affection for him. *And* [*Jesus*] *said to him, Thou hast judged* very *rightly,* and the reflection is evidently suited to the case that we have here before us.

44 *And turning* himself *to the woman, he said to Simon* the Pharisee, *Thou seest this* poor afflicted *woman,* and canst not but take notice of the extraordinary tenderness and affectionate regard to me that she has now discovered. *I came into thine house* as a guest, on thine own express invitation, [*and*] *thou didst not give me any water to* [*wash*] *my feet,*[f] though that be so customary and necessary a refreshment on these occasions; *but she has* plentifully *watered my feet with* her *tears, and wiped them* even *with the*

45 *tresses of her hair. Thou didst not give me* the usual respect of *a kiss,* when I first came under thy roof;[g] *but she, ever since she came in,*[h] *has not ceased,* with the

46 greatest humility and affection, even *to kiss my feet. Thou didst not* so much as *anoint my head with* common *oil,* though few entertainments fail of being attended with that circumstance;[i] *but she,* as thou seest, *has anointed* even *my feet with* this *precious* and

47 fragrant ointment. *Wherefore I say unto thee,* and openly declare it both for her vindication and for thy admonition, *Her many sins,* which I well know have been exceeding heinous, *are* graciously *forgiven;* and *therefore,* as I have been the means of bringing her to repentance and peace, *she* has thus testified the high regard that she has to me, and *has loved* me *much,*[k] as being persuaded that she never can sufficiently express her sense of the obligation: *whereas* thou who art over-confident in thine own righteousness, lookest but slightly upon me; as *he to whom* but *little is forgiven,* or who thinks his debt was but small, is not so much affected with the kindness of the creditor that forgives him, and *loveth* him but *little.*

48 *And,* to renew the kind assurance of the pardon that before was granted to the woman, *he says to her,* in the presence of them all, I know the sincerity of thy repentance; and therefore now, for thy encouragement under this severe treatment, I solemnly declare that

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it,* he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty:

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them with* the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he saith unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

c *With the tresses of her hair.*] So the word θριξὶ properly signifies; and the English word *tresses* might be derived from it. It is well known that long hair was esteemed a great ornament in the female dress, (compare 1 Cor. xi. 15.) and women of pleasure used to nourish and plait it, and to set it off with garlands and jewels, to render themselves agreeable to their lovers.

d *O Teacher.*] So διδασκαλε properly signifies, and I think expresses something more than the English word *master,* especially in the sense in which it is now commonly used. Whether this was mere hypocrisy, or whether it was intended as a sort of *sneer* on our Lord, who, though he professed himself so great a *teacher,* would allow this woman to use such freedoms with him, I pretend not certainly to say.

e *Five hundred* denarii, or Roman *pence.*] It is in the original δηναρια, which is well known to have been a Roman coin, in value about seven-pence halfpenny of our money; so that five hundred of them were nearly equivalent to fifteen of our guineas, and fifty to one guinea and a half.—There is no reason to believe that there was any mystery intended in Christ's fixing on these sums rather than any others that had as great a difference between them.

f *Water to wash my feet.*] Drusius supposes this may be understood as if our Lord had said, "Thou didst not give me so much as "*water to wash my feet;* whereas some guests have their feet "*washed with wine mingled with spices.*" Athenæus does indeed mention such an extravagance; but to be sure our Lord did not intend the least insinuation in favour of it.

g The usual respect of *a kiss,* &c.] How customary it was for the master of the house to receive his guests with such a salutation, to provide them with water to wash their feet, and to anoint their heads with oil, or some liquid perfume, the reader may see in many other commentators, and particularly in Calmet's *Account of the Jewish Feasts.*—It is possible Simon might omit some of these civilities, lest his brethren who sat at table with him should think he paid Jesus too much respect; and, if there was any such *slight* intended, it might be an additional reason for our Lord's taking such particular notice of the neglect.

h *Ever since she came in.*] The Evangelist so expressly tells us, that she heard of Christ's being at dinner with the Pharisee before she came in, (ver. 37.) that I make no doubt of following those copies which read it εισηλθεν, *she came in,* rather than those which have εισηλθον, in the first person, which our translation follows.

i *Anoint my head with oil,* though few entertainments fail, &c.] How common this circumstance was, may be judged by comparing Deut. xxviii. 40; Mic. vi. 15; Psal. xxiii. 5; civ. 15; and cxli. 5.

k *Therefore she has loved* me *much.*] As passionately as Clarius opposes this rendering, and after all the immense pains Grotius has taken to find a sense in that which our translation follows, I cannot but think the connection evidently requires that we should render οτι *therefore,* rather than *for* or *because,* how singular soever such a sense of the particle may be. And so it is the Hebrew particle that answers it is used in Hos. ix. 15. *All their iniquity is in Gilgal; for there I hated them;* or, *therefore there I hated them.* For it cannot be supposed that Israel is said to *sin in Gilgal, because he hated them there;* but on account of the iniquity which they committed here, *therefore* it was, that *there he hated them.* Our Lord, by this answer, plainly shewed his knowledge both of their thoughts and of her character.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?
50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

thy sins are forgiven. And they who were at table with him began to say within themselves, Who is this arrogant and presumptuous man, *that* not only transgresses our rules by permitting a harlot to touch him, but *even* presumes to say that he *forgiveth sins*, which is the peculiar prerogative of God himself? *But*, far from recalling what he had said, *he* openly confirmed the consolation that he before had given, and *said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee;* and as the tenderness and love that thou hast shewn have, in a convincing, though silent manner, testified thy believing regards to me, under the extraordinary character I bear, *go thy way in* serenity and *peace*,[1] and enjoy the comfort of divine forgiveness, without afflicting thyself for the severity with which uncharitable men would treat thee. SECT. 60. LUKE VII. 50

IMPROVEMENT.

How joyful an assurance must this be to a soul thus bowed down and humbled in the very dust, under a sense of sin! How light did the reproaches of men sit upon her when she heard these reviving words from the mouth of the great Saviour, who alone had authority to pronounce them! Ver. 50

Our hearts surely upbraid us with many and aggravated sins; but we hear the tidings of pardon: let us gladly embrace it; and acknowledging that not five hundred pence, nor even ten thousand talents, are sufficient to express the greatness of our debt, let us retain the remembrance of it, even when we hope that God has forgiven it; and let us labour, that the tenderness of our love, the warmth of our zeal, and the steadiness of our obedience, may in some measure be proportionable to it: and, blessed Jesus, how distinguished must they then be! 41, 43, 44

Let us with humble pleasure approach this compassionate Friend of sinners; who, though in one sense separate from them, yet thus freely and graciously encouraged the chief of them to apply to him, though he well knew that condescension would expose him to the censure of the self-conceited Pharisees. May God preserve us from that arrogant confidence in our own righteousness, which, while it leads us to despise some, perhaps much dearer to him than ourselves, would proportionably sink our value for the Saviour, and our love to him! 39, 47

As for what remains, let the candour with which Christ accepted this invitation, and the gentleness and prudence with which he behaved at this ensnaring entertainment, teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence and sweetness of the dove; and neither absolutely to refuse all favours, nor severely to resent all neglects, from those whose friendship might at best be very dubious, and their intimacy by no means safe. 36

To conclude; let us avoid that very ill temper which this Pharisee shewed in upbraiding this poor humble penitent with the scandals of her former life. Where we have reason to believe that sin has been lamented and forsaken, and consequently that God has forgiven it, let us cheerfully receive those whom our holy Master has not rejected; and if the remembrance of former irregularities cannot be entirely lost, let it only engage us to magnify the riches of divine grace towards such persons, and to rejoice with them in the display of it. 39

SECTION LXI.

Our Lord, attended by some pious women, takes another progress, in which he casts out a demon; and, having vindicated himself from the blasphemous charge of a combination with Satan, warns the Pharisees of the danger they were in of committing the unpardonable sin. Luke viii. 1—3; xi. 14, 15, 17—23 Matt. xii. 22—32. Mark iii. 22—30.

LUKE viii. 1.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him:

LUKE viii. 1.

NOW, in pursuance of the great design which Jesus had been prosecuting in his ministry wherever he had been, *it came to pass afterwards* (or after the events related above) *that he travelled through every city and village* in those parts; *preaching* in every place, *and publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*, which he was now about to erect among the children of men; *and the twelve* apostles, whom he had lately chosen, *were with him;* as he thought it proper they should be for some time, that they might be farther instructed for their work, and that their having been thus publicly seen in his train might promote their reception when they afterwards came to any of these places by themselves. *And* there were also *some women* with him, *who had been cured of* grievous disorders brought upon them by *evil spirits, and* of other *illnesses;* [*particularly*] *Mary, who was called Magdalene*, from Magdala, the place of her residence;[a] a remarkable person, *out of whom had been cast* no less than *seven demons*,[b] who, probably for the sins of her former life, were suffered by God to agitate and torment her in such a manner as to render her a spectacle of great horror. *And* there attended him besides, *Joanna, the wife of Chuza, a steward* in the court *of* king *Herod;* who yet did not think such an attendance beneath the dignity of her family: *and* one *Susannah, and many other* [*women;*] *who*, being persons of some considerable rank and circumstances in life, *assisted* SECT. 61. LUKE VIII. 1 2 3

2 And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

1 *Go thy way in peace.*] This was an usual form of dismissing inferiors, and was an expression of the friendship and good wishes of the person speaking: (Gen. xliv. 17; Exod. iv. 18; 1 Sam. i. 17; 2 Sam. xv. 27; Mark v. 34; Luke viii. 48; and Jam. ii. 16.) Compare Luke ii. 29. p. 22. There is an apparent propriety in the phrase here, considering what happened to discompose the tender spirit of this humble penitent.

a *Called Magdalene*, from Magdala, the place of her residence.] As Ιησους Ναζαρηνος, is Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Nazarene, so Μαριαμ Μαγδαληνη, which we are used to render Mary Magdalene, might as well be rendered Mary the Magdalene, or Mary of Magdala, which was a town in Galilee beyond Jordan. See Matt. xv. 39.

b *Out of whom had been cast seven demons.*] This is supposed by Gregory to have been only a proverbial expression, to signify that she was a person of a very bad character, whom Jesus reclaimed; and Mr. L'Enfant advances the same interpretation, as agreeable to the Jewish style: but, as so much is spoken of dispossessions in the proper sense of the word by Luke, it is most natural to suppose this to be referred to here.—Some have thought she was the sinner mentioned Luke vii. 37. but there is no certain proof of it. And the conjecture of those who suppose her to be the sister of Lazarus, whose husband might have lived at Magdala, is rather more improbable: since when Luke and John mention Mary of Bethany, they never intimate that it was Mary Magdalene. See Calmet's *Dictionary*.

SECT. 61. *him with their possessions*, which they cheerfully employed to supply him and his disciples with necessaries, as occasion required.

MATT. XII. While he was making *then* this tour about Galilee and the neighbouring parts, *there was brought to him one possessed by a demon*,[c] who had been rendered by this means both *blind and dumb: and he* immediately expelled the evil spirit, and *cured him* that 22 had been so miserably afflicted by it; *so that it came to pass*, that *when the demon was gone out* at the command of Jesus, *the* person that just before was *blind and dumb, both spake and saw.*[d]

23 *And all the* multitude of *people* round him, perceiving he had healed the poor distressed creature in an instant, *were astonished* at the sight, *and said, Is not this the* Messiah, the long expected *Son of David.*

24 *But the Pharisees* who were with him, *and* particularly *the scribes who came down from Jerusalem*, and still attended his progress to make their remarks on what passed, *hearing* [*this*] natural reflection of the people, and fearing lest their own credit should sink among them, as that of Jesus advanced, gave the most malicious and unreasonable turn to the matter which can be imagined; for they *said*, *This* is so bad a [*man*,] and so notoriously transgresses the traditions of the elders, and the law of God,[e] that he *is* certainly himself *possessed by Beelzebub, and does not cast out demons but* only *by* a secret combination with *Beelzebub*; who being *the prince*, [*or*] *chief of the demons*,[f] with a view to confirm his own interest, expels other inferior spirits under his command, at the word of this Jesus, who therefore deserves to be put to death as a magician, (Exod. xxii. 18.) rather than to be thus extolled as the Messiah.

25 *And Jesus, knowing their thoughts*, though he was not within hearing of these reflections, *called them to* come near *him, and said to them in the following parabolical expressions*, before all the people, *How can* you possibly imagine that, in such circumstances as these, *Satan* should *cast out Satan*.[g] It may surely be laid down as a maxim, That *every kingdom, divided against itself, cannot* long *subsist* in flourishing circumstances, [*but*] quickly sinks into contempt, and *is brought to* utter *desolation; and every* smaller society, if it be but a *city, or* a single *family, divided against itself, shall not* long 26 *stand*, [*but*] *falleth* into inevitable ruin. *And* therefore, *if Satan rise up against himself*, as he certainly does, if he join with me to confirm a doctrine so evidently opposite to his nature, and subversive of his kingdom; *and* if he assist in such a cause to *cast out Satan*,[h] it will be evident from hence that *he is divided against himself; and how then shall his kingdom subsist?* It plainly follows that, in such a case, *he cannot stand, but has* contributed himself to put *a* speedy *period* to his own kingdom. But, as you never can suppose that such a crafty and sagacious spirit would, in so weak a manner, hasten his own confusion and defeat, you, therefore, upon this account, must give up that uncharitable, inconsistent charge you have been ready to insinuate and urge against me, and must appear to have been guilty of the most extravagant absurdity, *because you* scruple not to *say, that I cast out demons by* the help of *Beelzebub.*

27 *And if* indeed you will be still so obstinate as to assert that *I cast out demons by* the assistance of *Beelzebub*, you may as well say that all miracles of this kind are thus performed; and I may particularly refer you to determine *by whom do your* own *children*

Matt. xii. 22. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him; insomuch that [it came to pass, when the devil was gone out,] the blind and dumb both spake and saw. [Luke xi. 14.]

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? [Luke xi. 14.]

24 But when the Pharisees, [and the scribes which came down from Jerusalem,] heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* [hath Beelzebub, and] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince [Luke, *or* the chief] of the devils. [Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 15.]

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, [and he called them unto him,] and said unto them [in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?] Every kingdom divided against itself [cannot stand, *but*] is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand, [Luke, *but* falleth.] [Mark iii. 23—25. Luke xi. 17.]

26 And if Satan [rise up against himself, and] cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? [he cannot stand, but hath an end;] [Luke, because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.] [Mark iii. 26. Luke xi. 18.]

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. [Luke xi. 19.]

c *Then there was brought to him one possessed by a demon.*] This miracle appears to have been performed on the morning of that day on which Christ delivered the parables of the sower, &c. (compare Matt. xiii. 1. *et seq.* § 65.) and on the evening of which he *crossed the sea, stilled the tempest*, and went into the country of the Gadarenes, where he *dispossessed the legion.* (See Mark iv. 35. *et seq.* § 69.) This is the reason of introducing it here, as most critics do; and no other story, not yet inserted, can claim a place before it; therefore Matthew and Luke, in their different order, are transposed to agree with Mark, on that grand foundation laid down in note k, on Mark i. 18, p. 67.

d *The blind and dumb both spake and saw.*] We have before observed, that κωφος often signifies both *deaf and dumb*, (see note k, on Luke i. 22, p. 7) but, as it is not said that Christ gave this man his *hearing*, it is plain he was not *deaf*. And indeed, it appears worthy of remark, that we hardly ever meet with entire blindness and deafness in the same person.

e So notoriously transgresses the traditions of the elders and the law of God.] There is sufficient reason to conclude that the Pharisees must go on this principle in this random charge, which had not the least shadow of a proof; and it was usual with them to esteem a contempt of their traditions as equally criminal with the most express contempt of the law. It is also well known, that they charged Christ both with *sabbath-breaking* and *blasphemy.*

f *Beelzebub, the prince or chief of the demons.*] There is no doubt but this was spoken by the Jews, not merely in a general way of *a prince of the demons*, or of one of their chiefs, but in particular of him whom they considered as *the prince* of the powers of darkness: for in Mark it is τω αρχοντι, though Matthew and Luke express it without the article; and the following words shew, he was supposed to be the same with Satan, the grand adversary. One of the titles given him was *Beelzebub*, or *Baal-zebub*; and a Philistine idol who had his temple at Ekron, (and is supposed by some to answer to the Grecian Pluto, Jurieu, *Hist. des Dogmes*, p. 631.) was plainly called by this name, (see 2 Kings i. 2, 3.) which is well known to signify *The lord of flies*; this idol being worshipped, as some tell us, under the figure of a *fly* or *beetle*, as defending people from these insects; though others think it may allude to the vast multitude of flies with which the slaughter of their sacrifices was infested in the heathen temples, while (as the Jews report) no fly was ever seen to come upon the flesh of any sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. (See Selden. *De Dis Syris*, *Syntag.* ii. *cap.* 6.) But why the Jews should speak of him under this title as *the chief of the devils*, it is difficult to say; unless (as Heinsius conjectures, rather than proves,) the Hebrew word בעל, signified *a deadly kind of insect*, whose sting was mortal, and which was therefore looked upon as a fit emblem of the mischievous hosts commanded by this *prince of the power of the air.*—The title in the Greek is Βεελζεβουλ, *Beelzebul*, which signifies *The lord of a dunghill*, and seems to be a contemptuous change of the former name, by which it was intimated, that the noblest of the heathen deities were fitter to dwell on a dunghill, than to be worshipped in a magnificent *temple.*

g *Satan* should *cast out Satan.*] This answer of our Lord demonstratively proves that Beelzebub and Satan are names for the same person; and, consequently, that Satan was considered as the prince of those demons who were cast out by Christ, and who are elsewhere represented as his angels; so that it must disprove every hypothesis incousistent with this assertion.—It may not be improper to add here, that the Jewish rabbies call every demon by the name of Satan, and often use the name in the plural number. So they call Sammael, which is but another name for Beelzebub, רוש כל משטנים, the head or prince of all the Satans. See Casaubon, *in loc.*

h In such a cause to *cast out Satan.*] It is certain, (as many good writers have observed,) that the force of this argument consists in a tacit appeal to the *genius* and *design of his doctrine*; which evidently appeared so friendly to the interest of true religion, and so destructive to idolatry and vice, in which the kingdom of Satan consisted, that he must really be *his own enemy*, and rise up for the subversion of *his own cause*, before he could become an associate with Jesus. See Archbishop Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 545.

28 But if I cast out devils by [the finger, *or*] the Spirit of God, then [no doubt] the kingdom of God is come unto you. [Luke xi. 20.]

29 Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. [Mark iii. 27.]

Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon *him*, and overcome him, he taketh *from him* all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Matt. xii. 30. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. [Luke xi. 23.]

31 Wherefore [verily] I say unto you, [All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme;] but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. [Mark iii. 28.]

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come; [hath never forgiveness, but

expel them, who practise exorcisms,[i] and are approved and extolled by you on that account, though some of them do it in my name? *Therefore they shall* in this respect *be your judges*, and condemn you of a most partial and unequal conduct. *But if* you must allow that *I cast out demons by the finger* [*or*] *the* power and *Spirit of God, then* it *undoubtedly* follows that *the kingdom of God is* indeed *come unto you*, as I assert; and all the doctrines that I preach are proved by this to be divine, and consequently worthy of your most serious and obedient regard, since it plainly shews my superiority over all the infernal powers. SECT. 61. MATT. XII. 28

Otherwise, it is evident I could not do this: for *how can any one* break and *enter into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods*, while he is actually present to guard them,[k] *unless he first* overpower and *bind the strong man*, who will be sure to do all he can to defend them? *and then* indeed *he may plunder his house* of whatever he pleases; but without this, it will be utterly impossible to do it. And therefore it is plain, from all these instances of dispossessions, that I have power over Satan to control and bind him, and consequently that I act by a divine commission. 29

But still it is not to be thought the contest will be carried on without an opposition from the enemy, nor can it fail of giving some alarm: for *while a strong man, completely armed*,[l] *guards his* castle or *palace* from invasion and attack, *his goods are in* a profound *peace*,[m] and his prisoners, hard as their situation may be, are afraid to make any attempt to regain their liberty; and such is the quiet which there seems to be, while Satan reigns without any control. *But when one stronger than he*, or of more power than the warrior I have mentioned, *invades* his garrison, *and conquers him, he takes away all his complete armory, in which he placed his confidence, and distributes his spoils* among his followers. So shall you see the infernal powers yet more completely baffled and spoiled by me, and my faithful servants adorned by the trophies won from them. LUKE XI. 21 22

While therefore you are animated by such views, you ought not to allow yourselves even in a state of neutrality and indifference: for I must tell you, That *he that is not* cordially *with me* as a friend, *is* indeed *against me*,[n] and will accordingly be treated as one that is an enemy to me; *and he that does not* set himself according to his ability to *gather* subjects into my kingdom *with me, is* but vainly and foolishly *scattering abroad*, and, however otherwise employed, wastes his time and labour in what will at last turn to no solid account.[o] Much more criminal and fatal then, must the character and conduct of those be, who, with deliberate implacable malice, oppose my cause, and are resolved at all adventures to do their utmost to bear it down, as you are attempting to do by these vile insinuations which you have now suggested. MATT. XII. 30

I therefore give you the most solemn and compassionate warning of your danger; for you are on the brink of a most dreadful precipice. That malignity of heart which leads you to ascribe these works of mine to a confederacy with Satan, may incline you to pass the same impious sentence on the greatest and fullest confirmation which is to be given to my gospel, by the effusion of the Spirit on my followers: and *therefore*, to prevent, if possible, such guilt and ruin, *verily I say unto you*, That *all* other *sins shall be forgiven to the children of men, and* even [*all*] the other *blasphemies with which they shall blaspheme; but the blasphemy against the Spirit* of God, in this most glorious dispensation of it,[p] *shall not be forgiven to* those impious and incorrigible *men*, who shall dare to impute to diabolical operation those glorious works of Divine power and goodness. *And* I add, That *whosoever speaks a* contemptuous and impious *word* even *against the Son of man* himself, while here on earth in this obscure form, he may possibly be brought to repentance for it, and so *it shall be forgiven him*; and consequently even your case, bad as it is, is not entirely hopeless: *but whosoever shall* maliciously *speak* any thing of this nature *against the Holy Spirit*, when the grand dispensation of it shall open, in those miraculous gifts and operations that will be attended with the 31 32

i *By whom do your* own *children expel them*, who practise exorcisms, &c.] For the proof of this fact, see Acts xix. 13; Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 49. Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib* viii. *cap.* 2. § 5. p. 420. Havercamp, and Dr. Whitby's note; but above all, that of Grotius on this passage. I do not see that there is any need of referring this to the apostles, who had not yet been sent out; and if they had, they to be sure would be involved in the *same censure* with *Christ*. It is more natural to suppose that the disciples of the Pharisees are here probably meant by *their children*.

k While he is actually present to guard them.] This the course of the argument plainly supposes; and the case in question proved *the presence of Satan*.

l *While a strong man*, &c.] The reader will observe, that (contrary to most others) I have introduced in this section Luke xi. 15—23. as parallel to Matt. xii. 22—30. and Mark iii. 22—27. The reason is, because, as there appeared to me no certain evidence that the *miracle* and *discourse* recorded by Matthew were afterwards repeated at another time, (see note a, on Luke xi. 37. § 110.) so I was not willing to insert so long a discourse twice: yet it is not impossible it might occur again; and if any, on the whole, judge it most probable it did, they may turn back from thence, and read these verses again.—I likewise thought the discourse, with the additions from Luke, appeared most complete and beautiful.

m *His goods are in* a profound *peace*.] Our Lord here (as also Luke x. 17—20. § 106.) evidently takes occasion, from having spoken of dispossessions, to turn his discourse to that grand and complete victory over Satan, of which these miracles were a specimen; and these words refer, not to demoniacs, who were far from being in peace or quiet, but to the case of sinners, who by the arts of Satan are lulled into a state of security and confidence, while in the hands of their greatest enemy, and in the way to final destruction.

n *He that is not with me is against me*.] How this is to be reconciled with Luke ix. 50 see the note there, § 96.

o Wastes his time and labour in what will at last turn to no solid account.] This is a more natural sense than to take it as if our Lord had said, *He that does not gather subjects into my kingdom, disperses them*. According to the interpretation I have given, it is a most noble maxim of Divine wisdom; and happy is the minister, happy the man, who attends to it.

p *The blasphemy against the Spirit* of God in this most glorious dispensation of it.] After all that Archbishop Tillotson has said (Vol. I. Serm. 17.) to prove that *the sin against the Holy Ghost* was *that* which *these Pharisees* committed, in ascribing *the miracles of Christ to Satan*, I have rather chosen to take the words in Dr. Whitby's sense, and must beg leave to refer to his paraphrase on the places above, and to his excellent dissertation on the subject, in his Fourth Appendix to Matthew, for the reasons which induced me to such a judgment.

SECT. 61. evident demonstrations of his mighty power, *it shall never be forgiven him* at all, *either in this world, or in that* which is *to come*;[q] *but he is obnoxious to eternal damnation,* and must irrecoverably sink into it; nor will all the grace of the gospel, in its fullest display, afford a remedy for so aggravated a crime, or furnish him with means for his conviction and recovery.

is in danger of eternal damnation.] [Mark iii. 29.]

MARK III. 30 This admonition he gave them with such repeated solemnity, *because they* had maliciously *said, He hath an unclean spirit,* and performs these miraculous works by the assistance of Beelzebub.

Mark iii. 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE VIII. 1—3 How condescending was the conduct of the blessed Jesus, while he dwelt among us! Though he was Lord of all, he not only waved the pompous manner of subsisting by continued miracles, but likewise declined to dwell with the rich and the great, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode.[r] He chose a laborious itinerant course, and subsisted chiefly on the bounty of a few pious women, whose company and friendship he did not despise. That subsistence was most pleasing to him which was the greatest testimony of the respect and affection of his hearers, and at the same time gave the greatest opportunity to testify his own humility and self-denial, and to pursue his schemes for public usefulness. So may his followers, and especially his ministers, always judge! And may all the great things they seek for themselves, be such as lie on the other side of the grave, and are to be enjoyed in the presence of our glorified Master!

MATT. XII. 22, 29 LUKE XI. 21, 22 We have seen another triumph of Christ over the evil spirit, another of those glorious and delightful instances in which the great Captain of our salvation, with superior strength, bound the strong man, and spoiled his goods. May the victory still be carried on to perfection! May his merciful alarms break that dangerous and fatal peace in which the slaves of Satan are for a while detained, that he may with greater advantage, and greater terror, plunge them into final and eternal ruin! And, in such a contest, may we abhor neutrality! With pleasure and zeal let us list ourselves under the Redeemer's banners, that we may share his trophies! And, while others are throwing away 23 their time, their labour, and their souls, may we, by gathering with him, secure to ourselves everlasting riches.

MATT. XII. 24, 25 We must surely be astonished to hear of that perverse and malignant interpretation which these wretches put on such convincing miracles: and it must move our indignation to see the Son of God maliciously charged as an associate with Satan. If they have thus *called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?* (Matt. x. 25.) Let us learn to imitate that meekness of wisdom with which the blessed Jesus pursues his vindica- 26 tion. Oh that his followers had ever traced it! Yea, I had almost said, Oh that they had learned, even from the union of confederate enemies, the danger of that house or kingdom which is unnaturally divided against itself!

It is matter of great thankfulness, thus expressly to hear that every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven; 31, 32 but awful to think, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is excepted. Let those who, while they cannot deny the facts of Christianity, despise and oppose its doctrines, tremble to think how near they approach to the boundaries of this sin, which is perhaps more obscurely described, that we may more cautiously avoid all such approaches. But let not the humble soul that trembles at God's word, meditate terror to itself from such a passage; which, when viewed in its due connexion, cannot, with any shadow of reason, be thought to belong to any who do not obstinately reject the gospel, and maliciously oppose it, when made known to them with its fullest evidence.

SECTION LXII.

Our Lord goes on to caution the Pharisees of the danger of such sinful words; and answers to the exclamation of the woman who extolled the happiness of his mother. Matt. xii. 33—37. Luke xi. 27, 28.

MATT. xii. 33.

SECT. 62. WHEN our Lord had thus faithfully warned the Pharisees of the danger they were in of incurring unpardonable guilt, by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, he proceeded to enforce the admonition in the following manner: Attentively consider what I have

MATT. XII. offered to you, and either lay aside your vain and hypocritical pretences to religion, or quit that malignity and wickedness which render these pretences insolent and odious: 33 *either make the tree good, and* shew it to be so by making *its fruit* also *good*;[a] *or else make*, and allow, *the tree* to be *corrupt, and its fruit* also *corrupt*, if it in fact appear to be so: *for the tree is* to be *known by the fruit* it produces, which is an infallible proof 34 of what quality it is. (Compare Matt. vii. 17, 18. sect. xlii.) O *ye* abominable *brood of vipers*, ye perverse, venomous, deceitful creatures, *how can you, who are* so *wicked* your-

MATT. xii. 33. EITHER make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil

q *It shall never be forgiven him* at all, *either in this world, or in that* which is *to come*.] It is observed both by Lightfoot and Grotius, that through a fond imagination of the final happiness of all the seed of Abraham, the Jews supposed there were some sins that had not been *forgiven here*, that would *be expiated by death*, and be *forgiven after it*; and that our Lord designed by this expression to assure them, that there was no forgiveness to be had for those that should be guilty of this sin, either before or after death: and that their expectations of forgiveness then, would prove no other than a deceitful dream. (See Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr.* and Grotius, *in loc.*) But it is clearly shewn by Dr. Whitby that this was used as a proverbial expression; and that it only signified, *a thing should never be*, when it was said, *It shall not be, either in this world or the world to come*.—However, as some think that it refers to the Messiah's kingdom, which was often called *the age to come*, I have also hinted at that sense, which is indeed included in the other, but does not seem to me to be so properly applied here; for, if our interpretation be right, the sin could not be committed till that age commenced.

r The rich and the great, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode.] Undoubtedly, to mention no more, the centurion (who had wealth and generosity enough to erect a synagogue at his own charge, Luke vii. 5. p. 111.) would have been very willing to have received into his house a single person of so extraordinary a character, so perfectly temperate, and so easy as to the common accommodations of life: but Christ came to bring the gospel to the poor; and the purposes of his mission required frequent removes.

a *Make the tree good*, &c.] The sense I have chosen is that which seems to agree best with what follows. I could not acquiesce in that of Mr. L'Enfant, who supposes it is as if he should have said, *Either allow me to be good, or prove the casting out devils to be evil*; for that would suppose every one who *casts out devils to be a good man*. Zegerus and Grotius understand it as if our Lord had said, "Since you cannot but allow that *my life*, and the tendency of *my* "*doctrine*, are *good*, be not so inconsistent with yourselves as to "suppose I am *a confederate with Beelzebub*." And it is indeed very possible that *this* may be the sense.

speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Luke xi. 27. And it came to pass as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!

28 But he said, Yea, rather blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

selves, *speak good things?* It is surely a force upon nature whenever you do it; and you will easily return to such uncharitable and impious language as we have now been hearing from you; *for the mouth* naturally *speaks out of the* overflowing *abundance of the heart.* And thus, on the one hand, *a good man, out of the good treasure of the heart,* freely and abundantly *produces good things,* and scatters the seeds of wisdom and piety in the minds of all with whom he converses: *and,* on the other hand, *a wicked man,* being full of corrupt affections, and a secret malignity against religion, *out of the evil treasure* of his heart, as naturally *brings forth evil things;* and, even when he labours most artfully to disguise himself and his character, breaks out, like you, in some unguarded moment, into such language as betrays the shame he would conceal. (Compare Luke vi. 43—45, sect. liv.) SECT. 62. MATT. XII. 35

But take heed how you suffer your tongues to run on in this profane and licentious manner; for *I* solemnly *declare unto you, That in the* awful *day of* the final and universal *judgment, men shall give* a strict and impartial *account for every unprofitable,* and much more for every pernicious *word*[b] *which they shall speak:* and woe be to them who have used that noble faculty of speech only to vain or to wicked purposes. *For* let every particular hearer apply it to himself: it is not by thine actions alone, but in some degree *by thy words, thou shalt* at last *be justified, or by thy words thou shalt be* then *condemned;*[c] as by the tenor of these the disposition of thy heart is shewn, and thy true character discovered. 36 37

And while he was speaking these things,[d] *a certain* pious *woman* was so transported with a mixture of pleasure at hearing his words, and indignation at the unworthy treatment he met with from his adversaries, that she could not forbear *lifting up her voice,* and, crying out *from amongst the crowd,*[e] she *said unto him,* O thou Divine Teacher, *Happy is the womb* of her *that bare thee, and* thrice happy *the breasts that thou didst suck!* with what unspeakable delight must thy blessed mother look on so illustrious a Son! LUKE XI. 27

But he modestly and seriously *replied, Nay, rather happy are they who hear the word of God* which I preach, *and keep it* in their hearts as a vital principle of holy obedience; for they will be entitled to eternal blessings, infinitely more valuable than any natural relation to me could give, or any opportunities of the most intimate converse with me, separate from such a practical regard to my instructions. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

WHOSE heart does not echo back the exclamation of this pious woman? Yet who does not too frequently forget that weighty and important answer which succeeded it? Let us not only hear, but keep the word of Christ; and we shall thus be happy in a nearer union with him than ever could arise from any natural relation to him, and shall ere long have opportunities of more noble and more delightful converse with him, than those with which the Virgin Mary herself was honoured, during the time of his abode on earth. Ver. 27, 28

Let us especially attend to those instructions we have here received, and judge of ourselves by our fruits; never flattering ourselves that our hearts are good, if our lives are *abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate;* (Tit. i. 16.) And in particular let us remember, that not our actions only, but the fruits of our lips, are to be brought into the solemn account which we must give to the great Judge of all the earth; and that the day is coming, when all our idle and unprofitable talk, which has proceeded *from the evil treasure* of a *depraved heart,* will undergo a strict examination, and we must answer not for our actions only, but shall be justified or condemned by our words. And, if foolish and wicked speeches are to be accounted for in the day of judgment, let us *set a watch on the door of our lips* to prevent them; and labour daily to use our tongue so, that it may indeed be, as it is in scripture called, *our glory.* (Psal. xvi. 9; xxx. 12.) MATT XII. 33, 36, 37

For that purpose, let it be our great care to lay up a good treasure of Christian knowledge and experience in our hearts; that while too many are poisoning those that are round about them with erroneous principles and vicious discourses, the opening of our lips may be of righteous things; and we may still be ready, upon all proper occasions, with freedom, variety, and spirit, to bring forth good and profitable things from the good treasure of our hearts; which may be edifying unto those that hear us, and may go from one heart to another. So will the Lord himself hearken with pleasure unto what we speak, and exactly record it in the book of remembrance that is written before him; and, producing it at last to our public honour, will own us for *his, in the day when he makes up his jewels.* (Mal. iii. 16, 17.) 35

b *For every unprofitable,* and much more for every pernicious *word.*] Though the terms *inconvenient* and *unprofitable* are sometimes applied to things capable of much worse epithets; (compare Rom. i. 28; Eph. v. 4, 11; Tit. iii. 9: and Heb. xiii. 17.) yet I cannot think, that our Lord here uses αργον, *idle,* merely to signify *mischievous.* We are certainly accountable for useless as well as wicked discourses, and they will be taken into that last survey which is to determine our character and state; which they, whose life is one continued scene of whim or sneering raillery, would do well seriously to consider. And it was to our Lord's purpose to observe it here, as it inferred, by the strongest consequence, the danger of such vile and criminal discourses as those of the Pharisees in this case. But discourse tending, by innocent mirth, to exhilarate the spirits, is not idle discourse; as the time spent in necessary recreation is not idle time; nor does a wise and gracious God expect from men the *life of angels.* The Jews about Kimchi's time, had a proverb among them, That *a scholar may be improved even by the idle words of his master;* but I think Heinsius had no reason to value himself so much as he seems to do, on his attempt to explain these words of Christ as an *allusion to that.*—If any, on the whole, are dissatisfied with the account of things here given, I would beg leave to ask them, whether *unprofitable talk* be not *a sinful wasting of time?* and whether that must not render a man in some degree criminal before God?

c *Or by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*] Since both the clauses in this verse cannot belong to the *same person,* it is plain that και here, as the Hebrew particle וְ in many places, is put for the alternative *Or:* and agreeably to this we find, that instead of και, the particle η is here inserted in many ancient copies.

d *While he was speaking these things.*] Luke brings in this story at the end of the parable of the *relapsing demoniac,* which was delivered just at the conclusion of the discourse before related. And though it is uncertain at what exact time this exclamation was made, yet what was now said might be a proper occasion for it; or if it be a little transposed, the reader will excuse it, as it serves for a fit appendix to this short section, and likewise prevents the more unequal length of the following.

e *From amidst the crowd.*] So εκ του οχλου plainly signifies; and it may thus, I think, be very properly connected with the words which follow it in the original.

SECTION LXIII.

Our Lord upbraids the Pharisees with their perverseness in asking a farther sign; and delivers the parable of the relapsing demoniac. Matt. xii. 38—45. Luke xi. 16, 24—26, 29—32.

MATT. xii. 38.

SECT. 63. MATT. XII. 38

THEN some of the scribes and Pharisees who were present, hearing how plainly Christ admonished, and how severely he rebuked them, *answered* him, by diverting the discourse to another topic; [*and*] with a view *to try him, demanded of him a sign from heaven, saying, Master,* thou professest thyself a teacher of extraordinary authority, and we may justly expect some proportionable proof of it: now these supposed dispossessions which we have lately seen or heard of, are so liable to fraud and collusion, that *we* cannot fully acquiesce in them; but *would* gladly *see a* more remarkable and convincing *sign from thee,* and particularly some such celestial appearance[a] as several of our ancient prophets gave.

MATT. xii. 38.
THEN certain of the scribes, and of the Pharisees, answered, [tempting *him, and* sought of him a sign from heaven,] saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. [Luke xi. 16.]

39 *But when the multitude was gathered in a crowd* about him, eager to hear what Jesus would reply to this demand, and ready to conclude that he would now perform some wondrous and peculiar kind of miracle, *he answered and said to them, This is an evil and adulterous generation,*[b] a very perverse and degenerate people, [*that,*] amidst such convincing miracles as I am daily performing in the most public manner, still *seeks after a* farther *sign: but no* such *sign* as their bold curiosity prescribes *shall be given them, unless* [*it be*] that one yet greater miracle, which I may not improperly call *the sign of the prophet Jonah,*[c] because it bears so great a resemblance to that miraculous occurrence that will be seen hereafter with respect to me. *For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites,*[d] and was miraculously sent among them by means of an unparalleled deliverance from the most imminent danger; *so also shall the Son of man,* by a yet more surprising Divine interposition in his favour, *be* made a very illustrious sign *to this generation. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish* that swallowed him,[e] and yet afterwards came out alive and unhurt; *so shall the Son of man,* after he has been slain by the infidelity and cruelty of those to whom he comes, *be* part of *three days and three nights*[f] *in the heart of the earth,* and on the third day shall, with the ministry of an angel in a visible form descending from heaven, burst the bands of death, and come forth from the tomb living and triumphant. And, by a natural consequence, *the men of Nineveh shall rise up in* the final *judgment with this generation,*[g] *and,* by the circumstances of their case when viewed together, *shall* plead against it, and *condemn it,* as far more inexcusable than they; *for they repented* in the very dust *at the preaching of Jonah,* though he made them but a transient visit, and wrought no miracle in their presence to confirm his mission; *and, behold, one* much *greater than Jonah is here,* and you reject him, though he has been so long among you, and has performed a great variety of most surprising miracles before you.

39 But [when the people were gathered thick together,] he answered and said to them, [This is] an evil and adulterous generation, [*which*] seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. [Luke xi. 29.]

LUKE XI. 30 MATT. XII. 40

Luke xi. 30. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

Matt. xii. 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. [Luke xi. 32.]

42 And much more may it be concluded, that *the queen of* Sheba, in *the south country, shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and,* by the signal instance that she gave of her great desire to improve in knowledge, *shall* plead against the obstinacy and perverseness of this wicked age, and *condemn it: since,* great as her rank and her affairs in life were, *she came from the extreme boundaries of the earth,* even from the remotest parts of the Arabian coast, *to hear the wisdom of Solomon,* that she might improve by his learned conversation, (see 1 Kings x. 1. *et seq.*) *and behold,* however contemptible he

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. [Luke xi. 31.]

a Some such celestial appearance.] The words of Luke expressly fix it to this sense, and Matthew, in another story of this kind, (Matt. xvi. 1. § 87.) expressly tells us, they demanded *a sign from heaven.* (Compare also Mark viii. 11.) It is not therefore to be understood of a *sign* only of *deliverance from the* Roman *yoke,* or of the *erection of the Messiah's temporal kingdom,* as some have supposed, but rather of some *miracle* performed in the visible heavens, where, they seem to have thought, impostors had less power than on earth. (Compare John vi. 30.)—And they might probably conclude, they had the better excuse for making such a proposal, as Moses, (Exod. ix. 22—24;) Joshua, (Josh. x. 12;) Samuel, (1 Sam. vii. 9, 10;) and Elijah, (1 Kings xvii. 36—38; and 2 Kings i. 10;) had given such signs. (Compare Isa. vii. 11; and xxxviii. 8.) See Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* 2. *cap.* 16.

b *Adulterous generation.*] This plainly signifies a *spurious race,* degenerated from the piety of their ancestors. Compare Isa. lvii. 3, 4; Psal. lxiv. 7, 8; and John viii. 39. *et seq.*

c *Unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah.*] As the *resurrection of Christ* was attended with the appearance of a descending angel, it was with greater exactness than is generally observed, the very thing that these Pharisees demanded, *a sign from heaven.*

d *For as Jonah was a sign,* &c.] The attentive reader may easily observe that some passages of the eleventh chapter of St. Luke are transposed in this section. But I will not insist on the necessity of doing it, since it is very possible the same words might be repeated again; but there is so very small a variation, and the discourse is so long, that I chose to unite all the three Evangelists, as far as might be, into one compound text. The reader who chuses to follow Luke's order exactly, will find a memorandum (beneath § 110. note a) of the place where this paragraph comes in according to that; and I must, on the whole, leave it among some other passages in the Evangelists, where it is neither possible, nor important, to determine the exact series.

e *In the belly of the great fish.*] It is no where said in the Old Testament that Jonah was swallowed by *a whale;* and it is the less probable, as *whales* are seldom found in the Mediterranean, and as the gullet of a whale is said to be so small, as not to be capable of receiving even the head of a man. It is therefore much more probable it was a shark, or some other great fish, which, it is said, *the Lord had prepared to swallow up Jonah:* (Jonah i. 17.) And the word κητος in Greek, (as well as נון in Hebrew,) may signify any *large fish,* as some of the Greek lexicographers have observed.

f Part of *three days and three nights.*] It is of great importance to observe, (as many good writers have done,) that the easterns reckoned any part of a day of twenty-four hours for a whole day; and say a thing was done after three or seven days, &c. if it was done on the third or seventh day from that last mentioned. (Compare 1 Kings xx. 29; 2 Chron. x. 5, 12; and Luke ii. 21.) And as the Hebrews had no word exactly answering to the Greek νυχθημερον, to signify a *natural day of twenty-four hours,* they use *night and day,* or *day and night,* for it. So that to say a thing happened *after three days and three nights,* was the same as to say it happened *after three days,* or *on the third day.* (Compare Esth. iv. 16. with v. 1; Gen. vii. 4, 12; Exod. xxiv. 18; and xxxiv. 28.) See *The Miracles of Jesus Vindicated,* p. 6—8.

g *Rise up in judgment with this generation.*] Some think there is a reference in this expression to the custom of witnesses rising up to give their testimony; but it was not properly on the testimony of the Ninevites that these sinners would be condemned. The plain meaning is, that the remembrance of their case would be considered as illustrating the guilt of those that rejected Christ;

may appear in your eyes, *one* much *greater than Solomon*, both in dignity and wisdom, *is here* before you, and is daily conversant among you.[h] SECT. 63.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none: [Luke xi. 24.]

Take heed therefore how you behave to me, lest all your inquiries after the kingdom of heaven, and all your converse with me, serve only to aggravate your guilt and ruin. For, if speedy repentance does not prevent it, I foresee that (to borrow a simile from the late subject of our discourse) your case will be like that of a demoniac, who, after a little respite, falls into a more violent relapse: for, as it sometimes happens that *an unclean spirit, when he has gone out of a man, goes about*, in a roaming discontented manner, *through dry* deserts and wild uncultivated *places*,[i] *seeking* some *rest* to his own malignant nature; *and*, through the invisible restraint of Divine providence, he *findeth none: Then he saith, I will return to my dwelling, from whence I came out:* and resolves to make another attack on the person he lately quitted: *and* it may be, *when he comes* to him, *he finds*, as *it* were, an habitation *empty* of any better guest, and even *swept and adorned* to receive him:[k] that is, he finds the miserable sinner unaffected with his late affliction and deliverance, and still a slave to those vices which render him an agreeable dwelling for Satan: And *then*, by the just judgment of God on such an incorrigible wretch, *he goes and associates with himself seven other spirits* which are yet *more wicked* and mischievous *than himself; and, entering in, they dwell* together *there; so that the last condition of that man is* much *worse than the former. Thus also will it be to this wicked generation*;[l] instead of growing better, they will grow seven times worse than before, as both the natural and the judicial consequence of their rejecting the methods of Divine grace for their recovery; till, as if they were possessed by a multitude of devils, they are madly hurried on to their irrecoverable ruin in this world and the next. MATT. XII. 43 44 45

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. [Luke xi. 24, 25.]

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. [Luke xi. 26.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us, to whom the revelation of the gospel is so clearly made, fear lest these dreadful things should come upon us, and the abuse of our advantages should render us an easy prey to Satan, and a fit habitation for the powers of darkness. Let those particularly fear it, who, having been brought to some serious impressions and some external reformation, are tempted to a relapse into former vices, which would render their *latter end* far *worse than their beginning*. (2 Pet. ii. 20.) God has permitted some such awful instances to occur; and unhappy wretches, perhaps some of them the children of religious parents too, who were once not far from the kingdom of God, have so abandoned every principle of religion, and every sentiment of wisdom and virtue, that it seems as if seven devils had possessed them, and were driving them headlong to destruction. Ver. 43 44, 45

May we, instead of demanding farther evidences of Christianity than the wisdom of God has seen fit to give us, make it our care to hear and obey, and diligently improve the light we have received! May we be brought to a sincere and lasting repentance by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, lest the Ninevites rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us! May we own the superior wisdom of this Divine Teacher, this better Solomon; and say, as the queen of Sheba to the Jewish prince, (1 Kings x. 8.) *Happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom!* for *thou speakest as never man spake*, (John vii. 46.) and *in thee all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.* (Col. ii. 3.) But oh, how many are curious to know what little concerns them, and are fond of improving their own wit, and trying that of others, by hard questions, while the far more obvious and important points of wisdom are neglected as beneath their regard; as if every thing were more necessary than being wise to salvation! We need not travel to distant climates to learn this heavenly philosophy; no, it is nigh us, even in our mouth; and we are, on that account, so much the more inexcusable, if it be not also in our heart. (Rom. x. 8.) 38 41 42

so that here those are said to condemn others who furnish out matter for their condemnation.

h *One greater than Solomon is here.*] Our Lord speaks of himself in such sublime language with the utmost reason, and with perfect modesty and decorum. The humble form of his appearance, and his necessary reserve in declaring himself the Messiah in so many words, made it yet more expedient that by such phrases as these he should sometimes intimate it: and indeed his saying he was greater than Solomon, that most illustrious of all the royal descendants of David, was as plain an intimation as could well be given.—Here is another undoubted instance in which Luke has plainly inverted the order of our Lord's words; for the connection cannot be secured without transposing the verses as they stand in him. The attentive reader will observe many more instances of the same kind, and see from hence how little ground there is for what some have supposed, that Luke's account is so exact, that all the gospels should be regulated by his order. See note g, on Luke i. 3. p. 1.

i *Through dry* deserts and wild uncultivated *places.*] Here is a plain reference to the common notion that evil demons had their haunts in deserts and desolate places. (Compare Isa. xiii. 21; and Rev. xviii. 2.) Some may think that a desire of doing mischief might rather have prompted the evil spirit, of whom our Lord speaks, to have continued in some city, or other place of public resort: but as he may be supposed in this parable to apprehend that, after being driven out, he should for a while be under some extraordinary restraint, it seems to me a very natural and beautiful circumstance thus to represent this malignant being as impatient of the sight of mankind, and rather chusing to seek his rest in the prospect of a sandy desert, than in the view of any more agreeable scene, which might renew his anguish, by presenting to him the memorials of divine goodness to the human race.——Another explication has been given to this passage, and Dr. Whitby and some others interpret it of the devils being cast out of Judea, yet finding no rest in the deserts of heathenism, because there also the apostles cast them out, which drove them to return again to the Jews, and to make them worse than before: but though it is possible that our Lord's comprehensive mind might have some view to this, his hearers could not understand it thus; and perhaps, after all, the circumstances might be merely parabolical and ornamental.

k *Empty, swept, and adorned* to receive him.] Mr. Jurieu draws a strange argument from hence in favour of purity, (one would think he meant of cleanliness,) that finding his former habitation swept and adorned, the demon could not enter in without a confederacy of seven yet more potent than he. But this is quite wide from the meaning of our Lord, who hereby strongly suggests, that indulging sinful habits is like sweeping and furnishing the house, to invite the abode of Satan there; in the same manner as purity, devotion, and love are elsewhere represented as consecrating the soul for a temple to the Holy Ghost. (See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19, 20; Eph. ii. 21, 22; and 1 Pet. ii. 1—5.) I know some judicious writers have glossed more minutely on these words, as if the meaning were, "empty of true grace, swept from gross sin, and garnished or adorned with seeming virtues and self-righteousness." But with all due submission, especially to one very great name by which this interpretation is patronized, I think that in this connection it enervates rather than illustrates the sense and spirit of this fine passage. Nor should I be forward to say that a reformation of life, without a thorough change of heart, though utterly unavailing as to his future state, brings a man more under the power of Satan than he was before, or makes him worthy of the punishment of being given over to seven demons instead of one.

l *Thus also will it be to this wicked generation.*] They who have read the sad account Josephus gives of the temper and conduct of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and just before their final destruction by the Romans, must acknowledge that no emblem could have been more proper to describe them. Their characters were the vilest that can be conceived, and they pressed on to their own ruin as if they had been possessed by legions of devils, and wrought up to the last degree of madness.

SECTION LXIV.

Our Lord declares his resolution of persisting in his work; urges the admission of the light he was dispersing; and declares his obedient disciples dearer to him than the nearest relations could otherwise be. Luke xi. 33—36; viii. 19—21. Matt. xii. 46, *to the end.* Mark iii. 31, *to the end.*

Luke xi. 33.

SECT. 64. LUKE XI.

OUR blessed Lord, in the conclusion of this excellent discourse,[a] which was occasioned by the perverseness of the Pharisees, who had been impiously reflecting on his miracles, and asking for a farther sign, assured them that he was not thus to be diverted from his work, but, notwithstanding all their opposition to it, yet would he still go on to bear his testimony to the truth; and to engage them to a free admission and improvement of the light which was then shining round them, he addressed the following exhortation to them: You have indeed endeavoured to oppose me with the greatest obstinacy and perverseness, nevertheless you shall not silence me; for *no man having lighted a lamp, puts it in a bye place, or under a bushel,* to conceal its rays, *but* rather sets it *on a stand, that they who come in* to the house *may see the lustre* that it gives: and thus, according to the charge that I gave formerly to my disciples, (Matt. v. 16. sect. xxxvii.) I too will take all opportunities of publishing the important message that I bring, and making my light to shine before men; and do you see that what I offer to you be received as it ought, and guard against those prejudices which would lead you to exclude it: For *the eye is,* as it were, *the lamp of the* whole *body*:[b] *if thine eye therefore be clear,*[c] and free from any vicious humour that would obstruct the sight, *thy whole body also will be enlightened; but if* [*thine eye*] *be distempered, thy* whole *body also will be* proportionably *darkened,* and no other part can supply the defect: and so it is with respect to the judgment, which is to the mind what the eye is to the body. *See to it, therefore, lest that which is as the light in thee, be* itself *darkness;* which it will be, if those perverse maxims be adhered to on which you now go, in rejecting my miracles, and the doctrine confirmed by them. (Compare Matt. vi. 22, 23. sect. xli.)

33 34 35

It may indeed cost you some pains to reform your judgment, but the pleasure and advantage will be an abundant equivalent for all the labour that you take in doing it. *For* though the case that I but just now mentioned is so sad, yet, on the other hand, *if thy whole body,*[d] in consequence of a clear eye, and thy whole mind, by means of a rectified judgment, *be enlightened, having no part* remaining *dark* through distemper or prejudice, *(being* [*thus*] *all enlightened,*[e]*)* the benefit of it will be such, that *it will be as when a lamp lights thee by its sprightly lustre,*[f] and thou goest on with security and pleasure in those paths which would otherwise be full of uncertainty and danger.

36

MATT. XII. MARK III. MATT. XII.

And as he was yet speaking these lively and important things *to the people,*[g] who in vast multitudes were gathered about him, *behold, there came unto him,* just *then, his mother and his brethren,* or near kinsmen: *who, standing without,* and apprehending the danger to which he exposed himself by such free remonstrances and admonitions as these, *sent to him to call him* away from so dangerous a situation; [*and*] for this end, *desired* earnestly *to speak with him,* as about some affairs of importance. *And,* as *the multitude sat* round *about him,* there was no room for his relations to get near him; and, notwithstanding all that they could urge of a peculiar interest in him, the people were so eager in attending to him, that none of them were willing to give place, *and they could not come at him on account of the crowd. Therefore one* of the people *said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without* at some distance, *inquiring for thee,* [*and*] earnestly *desiring to see* [*and*] *speak with thee:* what therefore must be done? Wilt thou go out to them, or give orders to the people to make way for them to come hither to thee? *But he,* to encourage those that were truly serious in their

32 47

Luke xi. 33.

NO man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel; but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light: but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Matt. xii. 46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, [there came then] [Luke, unto him] his mother and his brethren, [and standing without, *they* sent unto him, calling him; *and*] desiring to speak with him. [Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19.]

Mark iii. 32. And the multitude sat about him, [and they could not come at him for the press.] [Luke viii. 19.]

Matt. xii. 47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren [without seek for thee, *and*] stand desiring [Luke, to

a In the conclusion of this excellent discourse.] Luke has inserted here the following passages, which are delivered in words parallel to Matt. v. 15. and vi. 22, 23. (See the paraphrase and notes there, p. 75, 84.) Yet they appear in this connection to have a different sense, which I have expressed at large.

b *The eye is the lamp of the whole body.*] Nothing is more common with the finest ancient writers, than, by an obvious figure, to call the eyes *the lights* of the body, as our Lord here has done.—I render λυχνος *lamp,* because it had been so translated in the verse before, and it did not seem necessary to change it.

c *If thine eye therefore be clear.*] See note b, on Matt. vi. 22. p. 84.

d *For if thy whole body:* ει ουν το σωμα σου ολον.] This is an unusual rendering of the particle ουν, but it appeared to me necessary; for this verse is not introduced as an immediate consequence from the foregoing, but both of them are collateral inferences from ver. 34. as the intelligent reader will easily observe. And if it be admitted that γαρ, *for,* as well as ουν, *therefore,* is sometimes used with such a latitude, as that the former may be understood to introduce a *reason for,* and the latter to introduce a *consequence from,* something not immediately preceding, as also that they are sometimes used promiscuously, it will, I think, clear the connexion in some places, where it will otherwise give us a great deal of perplexity, and, I fear, after all our fine-spun reasonings, but very little satisfaction. (See Luke xx. 37, 38; Rom. i. 16. *et seq.* and Heb. ii. 9. *et seq.* Gr. and many other places.) Compare note i, on Matt. xii. 8. p. 102.

e *Being thus all enlightened.*] By allowing these words, φωτεινον ολον, to be thus included in the parenthesis, we prevent the absurdity of supposing, as our translation would lead one to imagine, that our Lord says, *If thy whole body be full of light,—the whole shall be full of light.* Else the clause should be so rendered as to shew, that the following words make a part of what our Lord asserts of the enlightened body: *it shall be all as full of light as when a lamp,* &c.

f *By its sprightly lustre.*] This seems to be the force of the word αστραπτη, which signifies a very strong and vivid flame, and is indeed most commonly applied to that of lightning, being here only used in the New Testament for any other flame. (See Matt. xxiv. 27, xxviii. 3; Luke x. 18; xvii. 24; and Rev. iv. 5; viii. 5; xi. 19; xvi. 18.)—It may, perhaps, be an oblique hint of the celestial original and vigorous active influence of that lustre which Christ diffused to illuminate and guide the mind.

g *And as he was yet speaking,* &c.] Matthew was so express in connecting this story with the preceding discourses, (not to insist on Mark's following the same order too,) that it is absolutely necessary to transpose Luke viii. 19. *et seq.* unless we suppose that it happened *twice,* and that perhaps on the same day; for Matthew assures us that *the parable of the sower* (to which Luke also joins it) was delivered *this day,* Matt. xiii. 1—3.

see, *and*] to speak with thee. [Mark. iii. 32. Luke viii. 20.]

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? [Mark iii. 33.]

49 And he [looked round about on them which sat about him, *and*] stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. [Mark iii. 34.]

50 For [Luke, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it; *and*] whosoever shall do the will of [God] my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and [my] sister, and mother. [Mark iii. 35. Luke viii. 21.]

attendance on his preaching, *answered and said to him that told him, Who* do you think *is my mother?*[h] *And who are* those whom you imagine I consider as *my brethren? And looking round on them that were sitting about him* to hear his word, *and stretching out his hand* with an affectionate regard, especially *towards* those that were *his* constant followers and professed *disciples, he said,* What kindred or relations have I that are nearer to me, or more esteemed than these? *Behold my mother and my brethren* here. *For these that hear the word of God, and practise it, are* considered and acknowledged by me as *my mother and my brethren:* nor do I thus regard these only that are now before me, but I declare the same too of all others of their character; [*for*] *whosoever shall do the will of God, my heavenly Father,* even *this very person,* of whatever place and family and station he be, *is* regarded by me as *my brother, or my sister, or mother:*[i] for this pious disposition will render such dearer to me, than any of the bands of natural relation, if separate from real holiness, could possibly do.

SECT. 64. MATT. XII. 48 49 50

IMPROVEMENT.

So may it be our care to do the will of God, that we may be thus dear to our Redeemer, who ought by so many tender bonds to be dear to us; and who, by such gracious and indulgent declarations as these which we have now been reading, is drawing us as with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love! Ver. 46 47—50

Still does the light of his Divine instructions shine with the brightest lustre, and diffuse itself around us! Let us open the eyes of our mind with singleness and simplicity to receive it; and make it our care to act according to it. *Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord,* (Hos. vi. 3.) and thus with cheerfulness shall we reap the fruit of a well informed mind and a well regulated life! LUKE XI. 33, 36

May we be delivered from all those false maxims which would darken our hearts amidst all this meridian lustre, and turn our boasted light into darkness! Would to God there were not renewed instances of this kind continually occurring among us; and that we did not daily meet with persons whose pretended wisdom teaches them to forget or despise the gospel, and so serves only to amuse their eyes, while it leads their feet to the chambers of death! 35

SECTION LXV.

Christ, teaching by the sea-side, delivers the parable of the sower, and assigns the reason of his speaking to the multitude in parables. Matt. xiii. 1—17. Mark iv. 1—12. Luke viii. 4—10.

MATT. xiii. 1.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side, [and began again to teach.] [Mark iv. 1.]

2 And great multitudes [Luke, much people] were gathered together, [Luke, and were come to him out of every city,] so that he went into a ship, and sat [in the sea,] and the whole multitude stood [by the sea] on the shore. [Mark iv. 1. Luke viii. 4.]

Mark iv. 2. And he [Luke, spake by a parable, *and*] taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, [Matt. xiii. 3. Luke viii. 4.]

MATT. xiii. 1.

ON that day[a] *Jesus, going out of the house* into which, at the importunity of his friends, he had retired for a while, *sat down by the side of the sea* of Galilee, *and began again to teach* there. *And such great multitudes* of people *were* again *gathered together* about him, *and came* in crowds *from* almost *every city* round about *to* hear *him,* that they began to press upon him, as they had done before in the former part of the day, (see Luke viii. 19. p. 128.) so *that, entering into a ship* for the convenience of being better heard, and less incommoded by them, *he sat down* on the vessel *in the sea,* at a little distance from the shore; *and the whole multitude stood by the sea upon the shore,* shewing the utmost eagerness to hear whatever he should say. SECT. 65. MATT. XIII. 2

And, to make his instructions the more agreeable to them, and the more deeply to impress them on the minds of honest and attentive hearers, *he spake* to them *by a parable*[b] concerning a sower, which shall be now related; [*and*] *taught them* also *many* other *things in parables; and* beginning with that of the sower, *in* the course of *his teaching* this day, he *said unto them:* MARK IV. 2

h *Who is my mother?* &c.] To suppose that our Lord here intends to put any slight on his mother would be very absurd: he only took the opportunity of expressing his affection to his obedient disciples in a peculiarly endearing manner; which could not but be a great comfort to them, and would be to Susannah, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and the other pious women who sat near him, Luke viii. 2, 3. p. 121.) a rich equivalent for all the fatigue and expense which their zeal for their heavenly Master occasioned. And as this seems to have been towards the beginning of their progress, it is observable, that our Lord appears to have been peculiarly concerned for their encouragement. See Luke xi. 27, 28. p. 125.

i *This very person is my brother, or my sister, or mother.*] This possibly might be intended as an awful intimation to some of his near relatives to take heed how they indulged that unbelief which so long after prevailed in their minds: (Compare John vii. 3—5. § 98.) For in this case the nearness of their relation unto Christ according to the flesh would be no manner of advantage to them; but those that should be found to do his will would be preferred in his esteem before them, and be considered as united to him in a relation that should never be dissolved. This is one of those many places in which και (*and,*) is put for η, (*or;*) for to be sure our Lord could not speak of the same person as his brother, and sister, and mother. See note c, on Matt. xii. 37. p. 125.

a *On that day.*] Matthew is the only Evangelist who expressly fixes these parables to the day on which the preceding occurrences happened; I say, fixes them to it; for though the phrases, εν μια των ημερων, *on a certain day;* and εν εκειναις ταις ημεραις, *in those days,* be very ambiguous in their signification, (see Matt. iii. 1, and note c, p. 96.) I cannot apprehend any thing more determinate than this of εν τη ημερα εκεινη, *on that day.* The way in which Luke introduces this discourse, as if it was delivered at the beginning of the progress Jesus made, before the passages we have mentioned in the preceding sections, (§ 61. *et seq.*) is not enough to fix the time when this discourse was made: and we have already shewn, in several instances, that it is no unusual thing with Luke to neglect the order of time, and sometimes only to relate a fact as happening on a certain day. (See Luke v. 17; and note a, p. 91; and compare Luke viii. 22; vi. 6, 12; xi. 14; and xx. 1.) Matthew might know the fact we have now before us more circumstantially than Luke, though the latter's account be exactly true so far as it goes; a reflection which we have frequent occasion to make with respect to all the Evangelists.

b *A parable.*] The word, according to its Greek etymology, properly signifies *a comparison* or *simile:* in which sense it is used here and in most other places; though sometimes it appears to be particularly used for an instructive apologue or fable. (Compare Ezek. xvii. 2. *et seq.*) And, as these often were expressed in poetical language, (see Judg. ix. 7—15.) the word *parable* sometimes signifies *a sublime discourse,* elevated beyond the common forms of speech, though no simile be used. (Numb. xxiii. 7; xxiv. 15; Job xxvii. 1; xxix. 1; and Psal. lxxviii. 2.) And, as short parables after grew into proverbs, or were alluded to in them, hence the word *parable* is sometimes used for a *proverb.* Mic. ii. 4; and Hab. ii. 6.

SECT. 65.

Hearken with peculiar attention to what I am now going to say, that you may thus be taught to hear my other discourses with improvement, and may not, through negligence, inconstancy, or carnality of mind, lose the benefit of my repeated instructions.[c] *Behold,*

MARK IV.

at the spring of the year,[d] *a sower went forth to sow* the ground with *his seed.*

And, as the ground lay near a beaten path, *it happened* that, *while he was sowing,*

4 *some* of the seed was scattered, and *fell by the way-side; and,* lying there uncovered, *it was* either *trodden under foot* by passengers, *or* picked up by *the birds of the air,* who presently *came and devoured it.*

5 *And some* of it *fell on stony soil, upon a rock* that lay but just beneath the surface of the ground, *where it had not much earth* to cover it, *and immediately it sprang up,* and

6 appeared green, *because it had no depth of earth* to make its way through: *But* its verdure was very short-lived; for *when the sun shone* hot upon it, *it was* presently *scorched* by the warmth of its beams, *and withered away* almost *as soon as it was sprung up, because it had no* room for taking *root* in such a shallow bed of earth, [*and*] *wanted* sufficient *moisture* to nourish it.

7 *And some* more of the seed being thrown near the hedge, *fell among* the briers and *thorns* there, *and* when it began to shoot out of the ground, *the thorns sprang up with it,* and grew so much faster, as not to leave it either room to grow, or nourishment to support it; *and* so they *choked it, and it yielded no fruit.*

8 *And the rest* of the seed *fell on good ground, and yielded fruit, which,* being well rooted and nourished, *grew up and increased* to its full proportion; *and* the ears filled, and *produced* a rich and plentiful increase, *some* of them *thirty, and some sixty, and* even *some an hundred fold,* for one grain that had been sown.[e]

LUKE VIII.

And when he had said these things, he cried out with a louder voice than before, *and said unto them, He that hath ears to hear* these important truths, *let him hear* and

8 regard them with the most diligent attention, and seriously reflect upon that instructive moral[f] which is contained in the parable I have now been delivering.

MARK IV.

And when the assembly was broke up (after Christ had delivered many other similitudes of this kind to them, which will be mentioned afterwards,) *when he* had parted with

10 the multitude, and *was alone* in a retired place, the rest of *his disciples,*[g] *with the twelve* who had been with him while he spake these things, *came and asked him* [*concerning*] *the parable* of the sower, *saying,* We desire thou wouldst more particularly explain to us *what may* the meaning of the several circumstances of *this parable be?* [*and*] give us leave to ask thee, *Why dost thou* preach in such a manner to the multitude, and *speak to them in parables,* which probably so few of them can understand?

MATT. XIII.

And he, replying, said unto them, I thus express myself in parables, *because,* though *it is granted,* through the Divine goodness, *to you,* whose hearts are open to receive the

11 truth in the love of it, *to know* and understand *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,* which have been long concealed; *yet it is not granted to others,* who are prejudiced against them, *but* they are justly suffered to continue unacquainted with them: and therefore *to them that are without,* and who are strangers, through their own neglect and folly, to what they might before have learned, *all* [*these*] *things are* now involved *in parables* and figures;[h] which, though they affect the mind of the attentive hearer, and promote his edification, are disregarded by the rest, and only looked upon as an empty

12 amusement. *For to every one who hath* any talent committed to him, and shews that he hath it by his diligent improvement of it, yet more *shall be given, and he shall have* a still greater *abundance* of means for his further improvement; *but even that which he* already *hath shall be taken away from* the slothful creature, and be withdrawn from *him* who acts like one *who hath not* any thing to improve. (Compare Luke viii. 18.) Thus wise men deal with their servants; and thus God will generally act in dispensing oppor-

13 tunities of a religious nature. And *therefore,* on this very principle do *I* now *speak to them in parables,* whereas I have formerly used the plainest manner of discourse: *because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not,*[i] *neither do they understand;* inasmuch as they do not honestly use the faculties that God has given them, but

MARK IV. 12.

are like persons that have their eyes and ears, and yet will neither see nor hear. So that it is in just displeasure that I preach to them in this obscure language, that what has been

3 Hearken; behold, there went out a sower to sow [Luke, his seed:] [Matt. xiii. 3. Luke viii. 5.]

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, [Luke, and it was trodden down,] and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. [Matt. xiii. 4. Luke viii. 5.]

5 And some fell on stony ground, [Luke, upon a rock,] where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth; [Matt. xiii. 5. Luke viii. 6.]

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched, and [Luke, as soon as it was sprung up,] because it had no root, [Luke, *and* lacked moisture,] it withered away. [Matt. xiii. 6. Luke viii. 6.]

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns [Luke, sprang up with it,] and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. [Matt. xiii. 7. Luke viii. 7.]

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred [fold.] [Matt. xiii. 8. Luke viii. 8.]

Luke viii. 8. And when he had said these things, he cried, [Mark, and said unto them,] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. [Matt. xiii. 9. Mark iv. 9.]

Mark iv. 10. And when he was alone, they [the disciples] that were about him, with the twelve [came and] asked of him the parable, [Luke, saying, What might this parable be?] [*and* why speakest thou unto them in parables?] Matt. xiii 10. Luke viii. 9.]

Matt. xiii. 11. He answered, and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given: [Luke, but to others,] [to them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables.] [Mark iv. 11. Luke viii. 10.]

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.

Mark iv. 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they

c The benefit of my repeated instructions.] As our Lord afterwards explains all the parts of *this parable,* I thought it sufficient to give this general account of its design in as few words as possible. Dr. Clarke, by taking the contrary method in his paraphrase, (though in this he be followed by others,) both renders the apostles' question as to the meaning of this parable very unnecessary, and occasions a needless and disagreeable repetition.

d At the spring of the year.] Many circumstances below make this probable, and indeed I do not find that in Judea they sowed even wheat sooner: but to conclude from hence, as Sir Isaac Newton does, (in his *Discourses on Prophecy,* p. 153.) that this parable was delivered in the spring, is very precarious. One might as well argue from that of the tares, delivered the same day, that it was harvest.

e *An hundred fold,* &c.] Such an increase, even in those fruitful countries, was not very common, but however sometimes happened. See Gen. xxvi. 12.

f Reflect upon that instructive moral.] This solemn proclamation was sufficient to declare that they also were to regard the following similes as intended to convey some useful instruction, and not as mere matter of amusement.

g *His disciples.*] This is a very just translation of the phrase οι περι αυτον, which frequently is used in the best authors for the disciples, or followers, of the person it refers to; and as it thus agrees with Matthew, so we may fitly understand it of those who attended Christ, in his progress with the twelve apostles. And in this way the style appears more natural and easy, than if we read it as it stands in our translation, where it sounds somewhat harsh, to speak of *those that were about him when he was alone.*

h *All these things are* now involved *in parables* and figures.] Here γινεται is plainly put for εστι: I therefore render it *all things are in parables.* See Matt. vi. 16; x. 16; Mark i. 4; Luke ii. 13; xxiv. 19; John i. 6; and elsewhere.

i *Seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not.*] This is justly and elegantly paraphrased in the version of 1727, in a few words; *they overlook what they see, and are inattentive to what they hear.* Yet I cannot think the Hebraism without some peculiar emphasis

may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them. [Luke viii. 10.]

Matt. xiii. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

their crime may be their punishment;[k] *that seeing* my miracles, *they may see* the outward act, *but not perceive* the evidence arising from them: *and hearing* my discourses, *they may* indeed *hear* the sound of them, *but not understand* their true intent and meaning; *lest at any time they should be converted, and* [*their*] *sins shall be forgiven them*, which to many of these people they never shall. SECT. 65. MATT. XIII.

And thus *in them is the prophecy of Isaiah* most exactly *fulfilled*, (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) 14
which indeed was originally intended to include them, and *saith*, "*By hearing, you* "*shall hear*, (or you may still go on to hear with eagerness,) *but you shall not under-* "*stand; and seeing, you shall see*, or you may still go on to see, *but you shall not* "*perceive*.[l] *For*, like a wretch who has besotted and stupified himself with riot, *the* 15
"*heart* or intellectual faculty *of this people is*, as it were, *grown stiff with fatness*,[m]
"*and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes* as if they were more than
"half asleep; so that one would imagine they were afraid *lest at any time they should*
"happen to be roused, so as to *see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and* "*understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal* and save
"*them*. I therefore justly leave them to their own obstinacy, and direct thee, O Isaiah,
"to methods which I know will increase it."

But happy indeed *are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they* 16
hear: you have not only greater opportunities of instruction than others, but greater integrity and seriousness in attending to them: and I congratulate you on so happy an occasion. *For verily I say unto you, That many* of the most holy *prophets, and* most 17
singularly *righteous men*, under the Jewish dispensation, *have* earnestly *desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them*: but only had imperfect intimations of those mysteries which are now revealed with much greater clearness to you, and will, through the divine blessing, render you singularly useful in this world, and proportionably happy in the next. (Compare Luke x. 23, 24. § cvi.)

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us hear, with fear and trembling, these awful declarations from the lips of the compassionate Jesus himself. Ver. 12
Here were crowds about Christ, who indulged such prejudices, and attended with such perverse dispositions, that in righteous judgment he took an obscurer method of preaching to them, and finally left many of them, under 13
darkness and impenitency, to die in their sins.

Let us take heed, lest the bounties of Divine Providence should be thus abused by us, as a means of casting us 15
into a stupid insensibility of the hand and voice of the blessed God: or we may otherwise have ground to fear, lest he should leave us to our own delusions, and give us up to the lusts of our own hearts. And then the privilege of ordinances, and of the most awakening providential dispensations, will be vain; seeing we shall see, and not perceive; and hearing we shall hear, and not understand.

It is our peculiar happiness under the gospel, that we see and hear what prophets and princes, and saints of old, 16, 17
desired to see and hear, but were not favoured with it. Let us be thankful for our privilege, and improve it well; lest a neglected gospel by the righteous judgment of God be taken away, and our abused seasons of grace, by one method of divine pleasure or other, be brought to a speedy period. But if by grace it is given to us to know *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, let us learn a thankfulness in some measure proportionable to the corrupt 11
prejudices which have been overborne, and the important blessings which are secured to us.

Our translators have well expressed the force of it, Gen. ii. 17; Jer. iv. 10; and Zech. vi. 15.

k It is in just displeasure, &c.] A late learned writer has endeavoured to prove that *Christ's use of parables* was not *in displeasure*, out in tender *condescension* to their aversion to truths delivered in a less pleasing manner: but this is in effect supposing both Mark, (chap. iv. 12.) and Luke (chap. viii. 10.) to have reported what our Lord says in a sense directly contrary to what he intended; for they say in so many words, it was *that* the multitude *might not perceive, nor understand*; and it also makes Matt. xiii. 12. both foreign and opposite to the purpose for which it was spoken. We must therefore submit to the difficulties which attend this natural interpretation; which are much lessened by considering that this happened after Christ had upbraided and threatened the neighbouring places, (from whence doubtless the greatest part of the multitude came,) which was some time *before this sermon*: (see Matt. xi. 20—24. § 58.) And it is not improbable, that the scribes and Pharisees, who had so vilely *blasphemed* him *this very morning*, (Matt. xii. 24. p. 122.) might with an ill purpose have gathered a company of their associates and creatures about Christ to *insnare him*; which if it were the case, will fully account for such a *reserve*.—It signifies little to plead on the other side, that *these parables* are *plain*. Their being so to us, is no proof they were so *to these hearers*: and since the apostles themselves *did not understand* even *that of the sower*, it is no wonder if the rest were *unintelligible* to the *careless* and *captious hearer*.—Consistent with all this is what was said of the advantages attending this method, to those who were honest and attentive; in the paraphrase on Mark iv. 2. p. 129.

l *Seeing you shall see, but you shall not perceive.*] This is a just translation of the original, both here and in Isaiah; and is another considerable argument for the interpretation here given of the whole context.—A pious and learned friend, by whose kind animadversions I have been led to insert some additional notes in this work, has urged several arguments to prove that this clause should be rendered, *seeing, &c. you WILL not perceive*. But on the maturest review of this passage both in Isaiah and the several places where it occurs in the New Testament, I cannot apprehend that it was spoken merely by way of complaint, but think it plain that it was intended also as a prediction; (compare Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 8.) Now in predictions, we generally render the future form, "Such or such a thing SHALL happen," though we only mean to express the certainty of the event, without denying the freedom of the moral agents concerned in it, or detracting from it in any degree.

m *Grown stiff with fatness.*] This is the proper English of επαχυνθη, and alludes to a notion the ancients had, that a great quantity of *fat* about the *heart stupified* both the intellectual and sensitive powers. Compare Deut. xxxi. 20; xxxii. 15; Psal. cxix. 70; and Isa. vi. 10.

SECTION LXVI.

Our Lord explains the parable of the sower, and exhorts his disciples to a diligent improvement of their knowledge and gifts. Mark iv. 13—25. Matt. xiii. 18—23. Luke viii. 11—18.

MARK iv. 13.

SECT. 66. MARK IV. MATT. XIII. 18. LUKE VIII. 11

AND when the twelve apostles, in a retired place (as we observed above, Mark iv. 10. p. 130.) asked Jesus the meaning of the parable of the sower, which he had delivered to the multitude as he sat in the ship; *he said unto them, Know ye not* the meaning of *this* easy and familiar *parable*, so nearly referring to the prophetic language? (see Jer. iv. 3. and Hos. x. 12.) *How then will you understand all* the other *parables* that I have spoken, some of which are much harder than this?

I shall however yield to your request, and shew myself on all occasions ready to instruct you: *hear ye therefore*, according to your desire, the explication of *the parable of the sower. Now* the meaning of *the parable is this.* It is intended to represent the different success of the gospel in the world; for *the seed* [*which*] *the sower* I spoke of *soweth, is the word of God*, which I am employed to preach, and which will ere long also be committed to you: but too much of our labour will be lost on three bad kinds of hearers, whom I described in the parable by different kinds of unfruitful ground.

MARK IV. *And*, in the first place, *these are they* whom I described as receiving the seed *by the way-side, where the word is* no sooner *sown, but* the effect of it is presently lost, and their true character may thus be represented to you: *when any one hears the word of the* heavenly *kingdom*, or of the gospel of the grace of God, *and* through a careless inattention *understands* [*it*] *not; then Satan, that wicked one*, who is the great enemy of God and souls, flying as eagerly as a bird to his prey, *comes immediately, and catches away the word that was sown in his heart, lest they* who have heard it *should believe and be saved;* and as nothing is like to be long remembered which is not well understood, all trace of it is quickly lost out of such a mind, as grain scattered on the road: *this*, I say, *is he that received the seed by the way-side* in the parable.

And in like manner, in the next place, *these are they who* were described as having *received the seed in stony soil*, or *on a rock* under a very shallow bed of earth; such, I mean, *who, having heard* the message of pardon, life, and glory, which *the word* of the gospel brings, *immediately receive it with* a transport of *joy*, and feel their natural passions elevated and enlarged at the report of such agreeable news; *But* as they *have no root* of deep conviction and real love to holiness *in themselves*, they have no true impression of the power of it on their hearts, *and so believe* it only in a notional, not a vital manner, [*and*] *endure* in the profession of it *but for a* little *while;* [*and*] *afterwards in a time of* sharp *trial*, especially *when* any domestic *oppression or* public *persecution arises on account of the word, they are presently offended*, [*and*] *apostatize* from that warm and eager profession which in times of less difficulty they were so forward to make.

And, in the third place, *these are they* whom I described by telling you, *that* they *received seed among thorns;* even *such as hear the word*, perhaps with great constancy, and the appearance of serious attention; [*but*] almost *as soon as they have heard* [*it*,] *go out* of the assembly, *and*, immerging themselves in secular affairs, permit *the cares of this world, and the* artful *delusion of riches*,[a] *or* perhaps *the pleasures of* [*this*] animal *life, or the desires of* some *other things* which equally tend to alienate the soul from God, to *enter* [*into their minds*,] *and* take up all their thoughts and time to such a degree, as to *choke the word, and so it becomes unfruitful:* [yea,] *they* themselves *are choked*, as it were, with these fatal incumbrances,[b] *and* whatever purposes or faint efforts they may make towards a partial reformation, they *bring no fruit to perfection*, but remain destitute of every degree of genuine and prevailing piety.

And once more, *these are they who* were said to have *received the seed into good ground:* even *such as* do not only *hear the word* with attention *and* simplicity of mind, but *understand* what is spoken, *and receive* it without prejudice and opposition; *and* when they depart, are solicitous to *retain* [*it*] *in an honest and good heart, bringing forth* the good *fruit* of substantial holiness, in various degrees, *with patience* and perseverance, *some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold*, both to their present joy, and to their future glory.

And he said farther *to them*, I appeal to yourselves, and urge it as a proper consideration to engage you to communicate the light you have to others, *Is a lamp brought* into a room, *to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?* [*and*] *not to be set on a stand?* You know it is not. For *no man* of common sense will even waste a few drops of oil so: nor is there any one that, *having lighted a lamp, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under*

MARK iv. 13.

AND he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

Matt. xiii. 18. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Luke viii. 11. Now the parable is this: The seed [*which* the sower soweth] is the word of God, [Mark iv. 14.]

Mark iv. 15. And these are they by the way-side; where the word is sown, but [when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then] Satan [the wicked one] cometh immediately, and taketh away the word [which was sown in his heart, [Luke, lest they should believe, and be saved:] this is he which received seed by the way-side.] [Matt. xiii. 19. Luke viii. 12.]

16 And these are they likewise which [received the seed] on stony ground, [Luke, on the rock;] who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [Matt. xiii. 20. Luke viii. 13.]

17 And have no root in themselves, and so [Luke, believe, *and*] endure but for a time; afterward [Luke, in time of temptation,] when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended, [Luke, *and* fall away.] Matt. xiii. 21. Luke viii. 13.]

18, 19 And these are they which received seed] among thorns; such as hear the word, [Luke, *and* when they have heard, go forth,] and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, [Luke, and pleasures of *this* life,] and the lusts of other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful; [Luke, *yea*, they are choked, and bring no fruit to perfection.] [Matt. xiii. 22. Luke viii. 14.]

20 And these are they which [received seed into] good ground; such as hear the word [and understand,] and receive, [Luke, *and* keep *it* in an honest and good heart,] and bring forth fruit [Luke, with patience,] some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. [Matt. xiii. 23. Luke viii. 15.]

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? *and* not to be set on a candlestick?

a *The* artful *delusion of riches.*] This phrase, απατη του πλουτου, is very elegant, and admirably expresses the *various artifices* by which people in the pursuit of *riches* excuse themselves from day to day, in putting off *religious cares*, and the confounding disappointment which often mingles itself with their labours, and even with their success. Compare Prov. xi. 28; Luke xviii. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17; 2 Tim. ii. 4; and iv. 10.

b *They* themselves *are choked*, &c.] So Luke expresses it, perhaps to intimate the uneasy situation of the mind, while clogged and straitened with such incumbrances as these, and rendered, as it were, unfit to breathe its own native air, and to delight itself with celestial and eternal objects.—Choking arises from any thing which straitens the gullet, or wind-pipe, and so obstructs the passage of food or air. And thus young plants, or corn, may properly be said to be choked by thorns, which do not leave them room to grow; and the word, which would exert its vital power and principle, is represented as choked, when thus pressed with secular cares prevailing in the mind.

Luke viii. 16. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. [Mark iv. 22.]

Mark iv. 23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, take heed [therefore] what [*and* how] you hear: With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear, shall more be given. [Luke viii. 18.]

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath, [*or* seemeth to have.] [Luke viii. 18.]

a couch;[c] *but sets it upon a stand* in a conspicuous place, *that* all *they who enter in* to the house, *may see the light* of it, and guide their motions by it: (compare Matt. v. 15. p. 75; and Luke xi. 33. p. 128.) And can you think it is fit that you should waste the precious oil of my instructions, which I am pouring into your minds, to render you the lamps of my sanctuary? Be not then backward, as occasion offers, to communicate to others what you receive from me; *for nothing is* now said in *secret* among us, *which shall not be revealed; nor* any thing *hid which shall not be made known and published*;[d] as we are carrying on no works or counsels of darkness among us, but concerting measures for the public instruction and reformation of mankind. SECT. 66. LUKE VIII. 17 36

If any man therefore *hath ears to hear, let him hear;* and if you have intelligent powers, let it be your peculiar care to exert them to this important purpose. MARK IV.

And he said also *to them*, Do you above all *take heed therefore*, and carefully attend to *what* you hear from me, [*and*] *how you hear* it: for in this sense I may say, as formerly on another occasion, (Matt. vii. 2. p. 86; and Luke vi. 38. p. 109.) *the measure with which you mete* to others, *shall be used to you; and to you that* attentively *hear, more shall be given*,[e] and those who are most diligent in teaching others shall be taught most themselves. *For*, as I said before in this discourse, (Matt. xiii. 12. p. 130.) *to him that* improves what he *hath*, more *shall be given; but from him that* acts as one who *hath not*, from him *shall be taken away even that which* for the present *he hath*, [*or*] *seemeth to have*;[f] but which he shall soon find was not, accurately speaking, his own, and must be strictly accounted for to the real proprietor. 24 25

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us apply to ourselves this charge of our blessed Redeemer, and take heed how we hear. Especially, let us be very careful that we despise not him that now speaks to us from heaven; and remember the authority which his exaltation there gives to the words which he spake in the days of his flesh. LUKE VIII. 18

Let us attentively hear the parable of the sower, and its interpretation. Still is Christ, by his word and ministers, sowing among us the good seed. Still is the great enemy of souls labouring to snatch it away. Let us endeavour to understand, that we may retain it; and to retain, that we may practise it. Still do the cares of this world press us; still do its pleasures solicit us; still do our lusts war in our members; and all unite their efforts to prevent our fruitfulness in good works; but let us remember, that, with having our fruit unto holiness, everlasting life is connected as the end; and that *in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* (Rom. xi. 22. and Gal. vi. 9.) MATT. XIII. 18. *et seq.* 19 MARK IV. 29

Let us therefore be concerned that the seed may take deep root in our minds, that we may not rest in any superficial impression on the passions; but, feeling the energy of that living principle, may flourish under the circumstances which wither others, and may in due time be gathered as God's wheat into his garner. Nor let us repine if we now go forth weeping, bearing this precious seed, while we have such a hope of *coming again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us.* (Psal. cxxvi. 6.) 17

SECTION LXVII.

Our Lord delivers the parable of the tares in the field; and afterwards explains it at large to his disciples.
Matt. xiii. 24—30, 36—43.

MATT. xiii. 24.

ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

MATT. xiii. 24.

NOW, to return to the story of our Lord's teaching the multitude from the ship: *he* likewise at the same time *proposed another parable to them*, to intimate that persons of various characters should come into the gospel profession; but that there should be a final separation between them in the other world, however they might be blended together in this. And he taught them, *saying, The kingdom of heaven*,[a] or the success of the gospel-dispensation, *may be compared to* that which happened to *a man*[b] *who had sown good seed in his ground: But* one night, *while* the *men* who were set to watch it *slept*, an ill-natured neighbour, who was *his enemy*, with a malicious view to spoil the crop, *came and sowed* a quantity of *tares among the wheat* which had just been thrown into SECT. 67. MATT. XIII. 24 25

c *Covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a couch.*] Mark expresses it as a *question*, and Luke as a direct *negation*. I have given it in both the forms, as what seemed most effectually to secure the credit of both the Evangelists: and I humbly submit it to better judgments, whether, in some of these instances, Christ might not immediately repeat the thought a second time in nearly the same words, in order to fix some very memorable passage on the minds of his hearers, who to be sure needed *line upon line, and precept upon precept*. In this view he will appear, if less like a polite orator, yet more like a father instructing his children; and perhaps if more of this familiar and condescending method was practised in our sermons, though the delicacy of a few might be less amused, the souls of the people might be more edified; and consequently the end of Christian ordinances (which is by no means the applause of those who administer them) might be more effectually answered.

d *Nor* any thing *hid which shall not be made known and published.*] Though a prospect of the final discovery of the great day would contain a strong argument, both in compassion to others, and from a prudent regard to their own happiness, to engage his disciples to make a faithful report of the gospel committed to their trust; yet I think the words will contain an important sense, without supposing them to refer to that. Compare Mat. x. 26, 27. § 75. and Luke xii. 2, 3. § 111. in which two places the same words seem, as often elsewhere, to have a different sense.

e *To you that hear, more shall be given.*] I know there may be some room to doubt, whether these three verses in Mark, at the close of this section, were spoken to the disciples apart, or to the multitude; but I think these words make the former much more probable.

f *Seemeth to have.*] I know δοκει εχειν, *seemeth to have*, is sometimes a pleonasm, which signifies *to have*: yet the paraphrase shews it is not necessarily so here, which is also favoured by Luke xvi. 12. § 124. (see also 1 Cor. iii. 18; Gal. vi. 3. and Jam. i. 26.) However, as I confess it may possibly be a pleonasm, if any clause to take it thus, then the last clause, which is included in a parenthesis, must be left out.

a *The kingdom of heaven.*] That this is frequently to be understood of the gospel-dispensation, has been observed before in note h, on Matt. iii. 2. p. 31.

b *May be compared to* that which happened to *a man.*] Or may be illustrated by the following similitude. See note i, on Luke vii. 32. p. 117.

SECT. 67. MATT. XIII.

the ground, *and went away* without being discovered. *But* afterwards, *when the blade was sprung up, and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared* among the ears of wheat, in a manner easily to be distinguished. *And the servants of the proprietor of the estate*[c] *came* in a surprise, *and said to him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed* of pure wheat *in thy field? whence then hath it* these *tares* which now appear mingled with the crop? *And he said unto them, Some* ill-natured and *malicious person* in the neighbourhood *has* undoubtedly *done this*, taking the advantage of your absence or negligence. *And the servants*, willing to make the best amends they could, *said to him, Wilt thou then have us go* directly to root them out, *and gather them up*, before they get any further head? *But he said, No*, I do not think that proper; *lest while you* endeavour to *gather up the tares, you should*, before you are aware, *root up* some of *the wheat* also *with them:* It will be better to *permit both to grow together till the harvest* come; *and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, that they may* afterwards *be burnt* for fuel;[d] *but gather ye the wheat into my barn*, that it may there be ready for my use.

Then Jesus, after he had spoke some other parables,[e] *having dismissed the multitude, went* from the vessel where he had been preaching *into an house*, to refresh himself a little before he crossed the lake;[f] *and his disciples*, who constantly attended him, *came to him, saying*, We desire thou wouldst *explain to us the parable of the tares in the field*, for we do not perfectly understand it. *And he answered and said unto them, He* in the parable *that sowed the good seed, is* intended to represent *the Son of man*, the great preacher of the gospel, which is ordained as the most illustrious instrument for the reformation and happiness of mankind. *The field is* indeed *the* whole *world*, in which the gospel is to be preached, and not to be confined to the Jewish nation alone: *the good seed are the children of the kingdom*, or those truly pious men who, being formed on the model of the gospel, and as it were assimilated to it, are the heirs of future glory, as well as entitled to the present privileges of my church: *But*, on the other hand, *the tares are* wicked men, who are indeed *the children of the wicked one*, though many of them may profess themselves my disciples, and, for their own unworthy ends, pretend a great zeal for my cause and church. *The enemy that sowed them is the devil*, who studies by all means to corrupt men's principles, and debauch their lives, and puts those on a hypocritical profession of religion, who are utter strangers to its power. *The harvest* I mentioned *is the end of the world*, the great day of judgment and retribution; *and the reapers are the angels*, who are to be employed in the services of that day. *As therefore the tares* in the parable *are* ordered by the owner of the field to be *gathered together, and burnt in the fire; so* likewise *shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall* then *send forth his* attendant *angels*,[g] *and they*, in obedience to his command, *shall gather out of his kingdom all things which have been an offence* to others, *even* all *those that practise iniquity*, and thereby bring a reproach on their profession, and lay stumbling-blocks in the way of others: *And* these blessed spirits, as the executioners of the Divine vengeance, *shall cast them into* hell, *the furnace of* unquenchable *fire:* and dreadful indeed will their condition be: for *there shall be lamentation, and gnashing of teeth* for ever,[h] in the height of anguish, rage, and despair; a despair aggravated by all the privileges they once enjoyed, and the vain hope which, as my professed disciples, they once entertained. But *then shall the righteous* be publicly owned and honoured, and with a joyful welcome be received into the heavenly world, where they shall *shine forth* with divine radiance and glory, *like the sun* itself, and be fixed for ever *in the kingdom of their Father*, to enjoy the transforming visions of his face.

This misery, or this felicity, is the end of all the living; nor can I ever declare a truth of greater importance to you. See to it therefore, that you regard it with becoming attention; and *every one who hath ears to hear, let him hear* it, and govern his life by its extensive influence.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked *one:*

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 38, 27, 29

Oh that these important instructions might, as it were, be ever sounding in our ears! It is matter of great thankfulness that this earth, which might have been abandoned by God as a barren wilderness, is cultivated as his field, and that any good seed is to be found in it; but grievous to think how many tares are intermingled, so as almost to overrun the ground, and hide the wheat from being seen. Let not a forward zeal prompt us, like these over officious servants, to think of rooting them out by violence; but let us wait our Master's time, and be patient till the day of the Lord!

c *The proprietor of the estate.*] So οικοδεσποτης seems to signify in this connexion. He is supposed to be *the master of the field*, and of some lodge, or farm-house, in which these servants dwelt.

d *May* afterwards *be burnt* for fuel.] This plainly proves, that the word ξιζανια, which we render tares, does not exactly answer to that vegetable among us, which is a kind of pulse too good to be used merely for fuel.

e After he had spoke some other parables.] Some of these are contained in the intermediate verses; (ver. 31—35;) but I apprehended the explication of the parable would appear with some peculiar advantage thus immediately after it.

f A little before he crossed the lake.] I am sensible that Mark iv. 36. may seem some objection to this; but the reader may see in my paraphrase there, § 69. that I apprehend it may be reconciled with this interpretation and order of the story; yet I acknowledge it possible, that the house here spoken of might be on the *other side of the lake*, and that they might go into it the *next day*.

g *Shall send forth his* attendant *angels.*] The reader will observe how high an idea our Lord here gives them of himself, when he speaks of *the angels* as his *attendants*, who were at the last day to *wait on him*, and at *his order* to assemble the whole world before him.

h *Gnashing of teeth.*] Since what is here spoken of is supposed to pass *in a furnace of fire*, it is strange that any should have imagined that ο βρυγμος των οδοντων signifies the *knocking*, or, as we commonly express it, the *chattering of the teeth*, through excess of cold.

The separation will at length be made; nor shall one precious grain perish. Awful, important time! when the angels shall perform their great office with a sagacity too sharp to be eluded, and a power too strong to be resisted! Gather not our souls, O Lord, with sinners! but may they be bound up in the bundle of life! that, when the day cometh which shall burn as an oven, and when the wicked, like chaff, shall be thrown in to be consumed, we may survey the execution of the divine judgment with awful triumph; being owned by God as his, while he is *making up his jewels, and spared by him as his obedient children.* (Mal. iii. 17; and iv. 1.) Then shall we not only be spared, but honoured and adorned, and shine forth like the sun in our Father's kingdom; for these *vile bodies shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of our Redeemer,* (Phil. iii. 21.) and our purified and perfected spirits shall be clothed with proportionable lustre, and reflect the complete image of his holiness. Amen.

SECT. 67. MATT. XIII. 42, 43

SECTION LXVIII.

Our Lord adds other parables relating to the speedy progress of the gospel, and the importance of the blessings it proposes. Mark iv. 26—34. Matt. xiii. 31—35, 44—53.

MARK iv. 26.

AND he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground,

27 And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Matt. xiii. 31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: [Mark iv. 31.]

Mark iv. 31. Which [indeed] when it is sown in the earth, is [the least of all seeds] that be in the earth: [Matt. xiii. 32.]

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs; [and becometh a tree,] and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may [come and lodge in the branches, and] under the shadow of it. [Matt. xiii. 32.]

Matt. xiii. 33. Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,

MARK iv. 26.

SECT. 68. MARK IV.

AND after Jesus had delivered the foregoing parables, *he* went on with his discourse to the multitude, and farther *said, So is the kingdom of God,* and such the nature of the dispensation of the gospel in its progress, that it is like the growth of vegetables, and may fitly be illustrated by the case of a husbandman: for it is *as if a man should throw* his *seed upon the earth; And,* after it is sown, *should* take no farther thought about it, but *sleep by night, and rise by day,* and apply himself to other business: *and* in the mean 27
time, without his thought and care, *the seed should spring up and increase, he knows not how. For the earth,* by a certain curious kind of mechanism, which the greatest 28
philosophers cannot fully comprehend,[a] does, as it were, *spontaneously,* without any assistance from man, carry it through the whole progress of vegetation; and *produces first the blade, then the ear,* and *afterward the full grain in the ear. But* at the proper 29
season for it, *as soon as the fruit is ripe, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come;* and all that remains is to receive the bountiful provision which the great Lord of all has produced by his own power. By such insensible degrees shall the gospel gain ground in the world, and ripen to a harvest of glory: and therefore let not my faithful servants be discouraged, if the effect of their labours be not immediately so conspicuous as they could desire;[b] a future crop may spring up, and the Son of man will in due time appear to gather it in.

And he made a pause in his discourse, and then *said,* I am thinking *whereunto shall* 30
we compare the kingdom of God? or with what parable shall we place it in such a point of light as farther to *illustrate it?*

MATT. XIII. 31 MARK IV.

After which reflection, *he proposed another parable to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven,* of which I am speaking, or the interest of the gospel in the world, *is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field* to raise and propagate the plant: It is, I say, like this grain, *which indeed when* at first *it is sown in the earth, is* very small and inconsiderable, and [*one of*] *the least of all the seeds that are* cast *in the ground:*[c] *But when it is sown* some time in the earth, *it grows up* to a surprising 31, 32
degree, *and becomes greater than all* other *herbs; yea,* I may even say, *it becomes a tree, and shoots out great branches, so* large and thick, *that the birds of the air may* build their nests in it, and *come and lodge in its branches,*[d] [*and*] harbour *under its shadow.* In such a remarkable manner did our Lord intimate, that his gospel should prevail amidst all opposition; and, inconsiderable as its beginnings were, should spread itself abroad through the whole world, so as to afford weary and fearful souls a grateful and secure retreat.

MATT. XIII. 33

He also *spake another parable to them,* to the same purpose with the former, which, like the rest, was taken from a very familiar circumstance daily occurring in life: *The kingdom of heaven,* said he, or the cause of the gospel, *is like* a little *leaven which a woman took and covered up in three measures of meal;* and though it seemed lost for

Yet some have been weak enough to argue from hence, that (according to the Mahometan notion) the alternate extremities of *heat* and *cold* should constitute the *torment of the damned.* See Archbishop Dawes's *Sermons on Hell,* Serm. iii. p. 14.

a By a curious kind of mechanism, &c.] The word *αυτοματη,* which is generally, in good authors, applied to *artificial machines,* so naturally suggested this thought, that I could not forbear hinting at it. The reader may see a very elegant illustration of it in Dr. Watts's *Philosophical Essays,* No. ix. § 2.

b Let not my faithful servants be discouraged, &c.] It cannot be the design of this parable to encourage private Christians to imagine that religion will flourish in their own souls without proper cultivation; or to lead ministers to expect that it will flourish in their people, while they neglect due application in private as well as public. I hope therefore the reader will acquiesce with me in the paraphrase given above; supposing that our Lord meant to intimate that his apostles and other ministers were not to estimate their usefulness merely by their immediate and visible success, but might hope that, by their preaching, a seed would be left in the hearts of many, which might afterwards produce happy fruit. On these principles, I doubt not but our Lord's preaching greatly promoted the signal success of the apostles, (to which he might in part refer, John iv. 38. p. 61.) and I hope the remark may sometimes be applicable to our labours, especially with respect to those who, having enjoyed a religious education, and being restrained from grosser irregularities, have not been so far as others from the kingdom of God. There can be no reason to interpret this (as Grotius and Dr. Clarke have done) of Christ only; he does not *go away and sleep;* and he perfectly *knows how the seed springs up:* on the other hand, every faithful minister may be said to put in his sickle, as having his part in the final harvest. (See John iv. 36. p. 61.)

c *The least of all the seeds,* &c.] Or *one of the least;* and so small, that it was proverbially used to signify *a very little thing.* (Compare Matt. xvii. 20. § 91. See Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xiii. 32.)

d *Come and lodge in its branches.*] The Talmud mentions a mustard-tree so large that a man might with ease sit in it; and another, one of whose branches covered a tent: (see Tremell. *Not. in loc.* and Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr.*) And it is certain we shall be much mistaken, if we judge of vegetables or animals in the eastern and southern countries, merely by what those of the same species are among us. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herodoto,* p. 163.

SECT. 68. a while in the mass of dough, it secretly wrought through it by a speedy, though insensible fermentation, *till* at length *the whole was leavened.* Thus shall the gospel spread in the world, and influence and assimilate the temper and conduct of men.

MATT. XIII. *All these things Jesus spake to the multitude in parables; and with many* other *such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear* and receive [*it;*]
34 well knowing that so many enemies were then hovering round him, that, had he declared the mysteries of his kingdom in plainer terms, he would have been in continual danger, and must, without a series of repeated miracles, have been cut off by their malice; *and* upon this account, *without a parable he spake not* any thing, in all that he delivered *to*
35 *them* on that day: *That* so *it might be* seen that passage was remarkably *fulfilled* in him,[e] *which was spoken by the prophet,* (Psal. lxxviii. 2.) and that he might with the utmost propriety adopt those words that Asaph had delivered, *saying,* "*I will open my* "*mouth in parables, I will give vent to* dark sayings of old, even to *things* which have "been *hid from the foundation of the world.*" For thus did Jesus teach important truths that were before unknown, in a manner something obscure, though to the attentive mind peculiarly impressing.

MARK IV. 34. *And* after he had sent away the multitude, and was retired from them, *he* freely *expounded all* these *things to his disciples when they were alone* with him.

MATT. XIII. And when he had given them the forementioned explication of the parable of the tares, he *again* added some other parables to the same purpose, to promote the diligence, zeal,
44 and resolution of his disciples, in searching into, and teaching these great and important truths, in which the glory of God and the salvation of souls were so much concerned. Particularly, he said to them, The happiness to which *the kingdom of heaven,* or the gospel-dispensation, is designed to conduct men, *is like* an immense *treasure hid in a field, which when a man has found, he hides* and covers up again with all possible care; *and,* in the transport he is in *for joy of it, goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field* at any rate, as being sure that it will abundantly answer the price.
45 Or *again,* to represent the matter in a like instance, that I may fix it yet more deeply on your minds,[f] *The kingdom of heaven is* in this respect *like,* or may be illustrated by the similitude of *a merchant* who goes about from one country to another, *seeking* the
46 largest and most *beautiful pearls,*[g] and other fine jewels; *Who finding one pearl of an exceeding great value* offered to him on very advantageous terms, would by no means slip the opportunity, but presently *went away, and sold all that he had, and bought it;* as well knowing he should be a considerable gainer, though he should part with all he was possessed of for it. Thus, though a resolute profession of my gospel may indeed cost you dear, yet it will, on the whole, be infinitely for your advantage, and richly repay all your losses.
47 But see to it, that you are in good earnest in your religion, and do not impose upon yourselves by an empty profession: for, to add one parable more, which I shall *again* borrow from an object with which some of you have been very conversant, The success of *the kingdom of heaven* in the world *is like* that of *a net thrown into the sea, which*
48 *gathered* in [*fishes*] *of all sorts; Which, when* the fishermen perceived that *it was full, they dragged to the shore, and sitting down* there, to survey the draught that they had made, *gathered the good into* proper *vessels, but threw away the bad,*[h] as not worth their regard. So mixed and undistinguished here are the characters of those who profess the gospel, which, as it is preached promiscuously to all, gathers in persons of all sorts,
49 and hypocrites as well as true believers are brought into the visible church. But an exact survey will finally be taken of the whole; and *so it will be* shewn at last, how great a difference there is between them, by the assignment of their state: for *at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth,* in the general resurrection, *and separate the wicked from among the just,* with whom they often have been joined before, even in the same
50 religious society, and in the participation of the same external privileges; *And* they *shall cast them into a furnace of fire,* the seat of the damned; where their torments shall never end, but *there shall be* incessant *wailing, and gnashing of teeth,* for rage and despair.
51 Then *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye,* with the key to them which I before gave you, *understood all these things? They say unto him, Yes, Lord,* we clearly understand
52 them. *And he said to them,* See *therefore,* that as you understand them, you make a good use of them, for your own advantage, and that of others: for *every scribe who is disciplined* in the mysteries, and has attained *to* the knowledge of *the kingdom of heaven,* or every faithful minister who is fit for his work, *is like a housekeeper, who* lays in a variety of goods for use, and keeps them in such order, that he readily *brings forth out*

which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; [and with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it;*] and without a parable spake he not unto them: [Mark iv 33, 34.]

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Mark iv. 34. And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Matt. xiii. 44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind;

48 Which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just;

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that

e *That it might be fulfilled.*] So many scriptures are thus quoted, by way of allusion, that I cannot think it necessary to suppose, as some late ingenious writers have done, that these words did not originally belong to the seventy-eighth Psalm, but are a fragment of some other, describing the manner in which the Messiah was to preach. (See Jeffery's *Review*, p. 117.) They have a plain connection with the following verses, and might perhaps be a kind of preface to all Asaph's Psalms, in which there are some dark sayings, though the greatest part of the seventy-eighth is very clear.

f *Fix it yet more deeply on your minds.*] Considering the many trials they were shortly to expect, it was proper the thought should thus be inculcated upon them by a variety of figures.

g *Beautiful pearls.*] The sacred writers elsewhere compare and prefer *wisdom* to *jewels.* See Job xxviii. 15—19; Prov. iii. 15; and viii. 11.

h *But threw away the bad.*] The word σαπρα, which we render *bad,* generally signifies *corrupt* or *putrid,* and seems an allusion to the drawing up some dead fish in a net with the living. Mr. Horberry justly observes, that this in the strongest terms represents the hopeless state of sinners at last. See his *Discourse of Eal. Punish.* p. 29.

52 an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.
53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

of his store things new and old, as the several occasions of life require, dispensing them in such a manner as may best suit the case of those who are under his care. SECT. 68.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, which he added to those he had spoken in public, *he departed thence* that evening, to shun the farther importunity of the people, and crossed the sea with some remarkable circumstances, which will be mentioned below. MATT. XIII.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us be concerned to gather up these fragments, that nothing may be lost; and to lay them up in our memories and our hearts, that, according to our respective stations in life, we may have them ready for use. Ver. 52

Let us remember, that sometimes the growth of piety in the heart is like that of vegetables in the earth. The seed of the word may for a while seem lost: or when the fruit appears, it may advance and ripen but slowly. Let not ministers therefore too confidently conclude they have laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought, because the fields are not immediately white to the harvest; but with believing hope, and humble patience, let them recommend the seed that they have sown to Him who, by the secret energy of his continued influences, can give at length a sure and plentiful increase. MARK IV. 26—29

When Jesus took to himself his great power, and reigned, the gospel, which had gained so little ground under his personal ministration, ran, and was greatly glorified, in the hands of the apostles. The grain of mustard-seed shot up and branched forth into a spreading tree, and birds of every wing took shelter there: (Oh that there had been none of the ravenous and the obscene kind!) Thus when the Lord shall please to *hasten it in his time, a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.* (Isa. lx. 22.) MATT. XIII. 31, 32

Let us pray that the triumphant progress of his kingdom may come. In the mean time, let it be our desire that the principles of the gospel may, like a sacred kind of leaven, diffuse themselves through our whole souls; that all our powers and faculties, that all our thoughts and passions, may be, as it were, impregnated and elevated by them. Let us remember the value of the blessings it proposes; and regarding Christ as the pearl of great price, and heaven as that immense treasure, in which alone we can be for ever rich and happy, let us be willing to part with all to secure it, if we are called to such a trial. 33 44—46

It is not enough that we are nominal Christians, or possessed of the common privileges of the church: the day of final separation will come, and the angels employed in the work will not overlook us, but conduct us to the abodes of the righteous or the wicked. Oh that we may not then be cast with abhorrence into the furnace of fire! but now seriously realizing to ourselves this awful day, of which our Lord has given such repeated prospects, may we so judge ourselves, that we may not then be condemned of him! 47—50

SECTION LXIX.

Our Lord having given some remarkable answer to some who seemed disposed to follow him, passes over the lake, and stills a mighty tempest as he was crossing it. Matt. viii. 18—27. Mark iv. 35, *to the end.* Luke viii. 22—25; ix. 57, *to the end.*

MARK iv. 35.

AND the same day, when the even was come, [when Jesus saw great multitudes about him,] [Luke, he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.] [Matt. viii. 18. Luke viii. 22.]
36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship.
Matt. viii. 19. And [it came to pass, that as they went in the way,] a certain

MARK iv. 35.

NOW, in the evening of the same day[a] on which the parables that we have been relating were delivered, *when Jesus saw great multitudes* still waiting *about him,*[b] purposing for a little while to retire from them, *he* came out of the house, and *went into a ship,* which stood by the neighbouring shore, *with* those of *his disciples* with whom he had just been discoursing; *and said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And when they had dismissed the multitude,* and had at length persuaded them to withdraw, *they took him* just *as he was in the ship,*[c] without any farther provision for their passage. SECT. 69. MARK IV. 36

But before we relate the particulars of their voyage, we shall here take occasion to add two or three little occurrences, one of which happened at this time.

And first *it came to pass, that as they went in the way*[d] from the house out of which he came, to the shore where he proposed to embark, *a certain scribe,* pleased with his MATT. VIII. 19.

a *In the evening of the same day.*] Or, *that very day, when it was evening; for* these are the express words of the Evangelist; εν εκεινη τη ημερᾳ, οψιας γενομενης: and indeed they are so express that I am amazed any critics, who do not suppose he was mistaken, can pretend it was not *the same day;* which yet Dr. Clarke does, as if the phrase meant nothing more than *one day towards evening.* I dare not take so great freedom with the sacred author, and have therefore been obliged to transpose, though not contradict Matthew.—This indeed appears one of the busiest days of Christ's life, as all the events and discourses recorded from his miraculous cure of the demoniac, who was blind and dumb, (§ 61. p. 122.) happened in it; nevertheless, I see no absurdity in supposing that all these things might pass in less than *twelve hours.* Compare note c, on Matt. xii. 22. p. 122.

b *Great multitudes* still waiting *about him.*] They sometimes staid with or near him several days together; (compare Matt. xv. 32. § 86.) And it seems, that now they staid a while after Christ had dismissed them, perhaps with a prayer or benediction; (Matt. xiii. 36. p. 134.) for on his coming down again to the shore, the disciples joined with him in persuading them to disperse; which, when they saw him determined to cross the sea, they would the more readily do; for so we may conclude from what Mark says above, ver. 36. that, just as he took shipping, they (that is, Jesus and his disciples,) sent them away. And this appears to me to be the easiest way to reconcile this difference, which is none of the least.

c *They took him as he was in the ship.*] This may seem an objection against the solution proposed in the last note; but I think the turn given in the paraphrase may remove it. If any are not satisfied with that answer, they must suppose that Christ's going into an house, mentioned by Matthew, was *some time after;* which seems not so natural a sense of Matthew's words. (See Matt. xiii. 36, with note f, p. 134.) But had that appeared to me the meaning of them, it would only have occasioned the alteration of a clause or two in the paraphrase: for it would have been improper to have divided the explication of the parable of the tares from the parable itself.

d *As they went in the way.*] As this and the next story are inserted by Matthew between his account of Christ's giving commandment to cross the lake, and his entering into the ship to do it, (see Matt. viii. 18—23.) I cannot but conclude they both happened at this time; and consequently, that when Luke introduces it by saying, it was *as they went in the way,* his meaning must be at large, one day as Christ and his disciples were walking, and not (as Sir Isaac Newton supposes) as they went on in that journey in which the Samaritans had refused him a lodging. The following words would indeed have been proper on that occasion; but they had also an universal propriety, as Christ had no house or stated lodging of his own, and was now going over to a place where we do not find he had any acquaintance. But if any think St. Luke's expression too strong to bear this interpretation, they must, if they would not impeach St. Matthew's account of it, conclude that this little occurrence happened twice, as it is very possible it might.

SECT. 69. MATT. VIII.

entertaining parables, and concluding from the tenor of some of them,[e] as well as from the zeal with which the people flocked about him, that he would soon become a mighty prince, on declaring himself the Messiah, *came* with all the appearance of profound respect, *and said unto him*, O thou great *Lord* [*and*] *Master*, who hast another kind of authority than we scribes can pretend to, (Matt. vii. 29. p. 89.) I beseech thee to give me leave to attend thee in thy passage; for I am determined that *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, and devote myself entirely to the service of thy kingdom. *And Jesus*, knowing the motives which engaged him to this resolution, *saith unto him*, Do not flatter yourself with the expectation of any temporal advantages from such an attendance; for I plainly tell you, that whereas (not to speak of domestic animals, which are under the care of man,) even *the* very *foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests*, for themselves and their young; *yet the Son of man*, successful as his kingdom must at length be, does now appear in such low circumstances, that he *has not* so much as a place *where he may lay his head;* he knows not one day where he shall find food and lodging the next; and his followers must expect no better a condition. A declaration sufficient to deter a person who sought nothing but his present interest and advantage.

scribe came, and said unto him, [Lord *and*] Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. [Luke ix. 57.]

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. [Luke ix. 58.]

21 *And to another of his disciples*, who had for some time attended his discourses, *he said*, *Follow me* statedly, as these my servants do, that thou mayst be trained up to take thy part with them in the ministry of the gospel. *But he said unto him*, *Lord*, I will most gladly do it; yet I beg thou wouldst *first permit me to go* home *and bury my* aged 22 *father*,[f] to whose remains I am going to pay my last duty. *But Jesus*, who thought it proper on this occasion to make an extraordinary trial of his faith and obedience, *said* again *unto him*, *Follow thou me* immediately, *and leave the dead to bury their dead:* let those who are themselves spiritually dead, perform the rites of funeral; yea, let the dead remain unburied, rather than disobey my word when I give thee so great a commission; or than neglect it *but* one day when I say, as I now do, *Go thou and preach* this gospel of *the kingdom of God*,[g] which thou hast heard, and shalt farther hear from me.

21 And [he said unto] another of his disciples, [Follow me: but he] said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. [Luke ix. 59.]

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead; [but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.] [Luke ix. 60.]

LUKE IX.

And at a certain time,[h] *another also said*, *Lord*, *I will* presently *follow thee; but* 61 *permit me first to* go and settle the affairs of my family, and *take my leave of them which* 62 *are at my house*,[i] as Elisha was permitted to do when called in so extraordinary a manner to the prophetic office. (1 Kings xix. 20.) *And Jesus said unto him*, Take heed that no fond affection for any who may stand related to thee, nor any solicitous concern about thy temporal affairs, prevent thee from executing the important purpose thou hast formed of devoting thyself to my service; for *no man having* once *laid his hand on the plough*, *and* afterwards *looking back*, *is fit for* the service of *the kingdom of God*;[k] as indeed, if the work of ploughing the ground require that a man should look before him, and resolutely mind what he is about, you may easily imagine that the duties of a gospel-minister will require a much more steady attention, and more firm resolution.

Luke ix. 61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

MATT. VIII.

And now, as it was said before, that Jesus was about to cross the lake, *when he was entered into the ship*, *his disciples followed him; and they* directly *launched forth*, 23 even as many as could conveniently get a passage in that vessel, or any others that were thereabouts; for they were all desirous to attend him; *and* several *other little ships were* 24 *also with him*. *And as they were sailing* over the lake, Jesus laid himself down in the ship; and being wearied with the various labours of the day, *he fell asleep: and*, *behold*, *there came down a violent storm of wind on the lake: and* on a sudden it was so tempestuous, that *there arose a great* and unusual *agitation in the sea*,[l] *insomuch that the vessel was* even *covered with the* swelling *waves*, *which beat into the ship*, *so that it was now full* of water, *and they were in extreme danger* of being cast away. *And* [*Jesus*] in the mean time, for the refreshment of his weary body, as well as for the trial of their faith, *was asleep on a pillow in the stern of the ship*, being greatly fatigued

Matt. viii. 23. And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him: [Luke, and they launched forth:] [and there were also with him other little ships.] [Mark iv. 36. Luke viii. 22.]

24 And behold, [Luke, as they sailed, he fell asleep; and there came down a [great] storm of wind on the lake; and] there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves;

e Concluding from the tenor of some of them.] The parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven, were both spoken before the multitude, (Matt. xiii. 31, 34. p. 135.) and they were both so plain, that the disciples did not ask Christ to expound them; as indeed one can hardly imagine how any explication could have made them more intelligible. The scribe's forsaking Christ, on the declaration he made of his destitute circumstances, makes it evident he was actuated by these views.

f *To go* home *and bury my* aged *father*.] Some think that this expression only intimates, his father was *so old* that he could not *live long*; but Christ's answer seems to take it for granted he was *already dead*.

g *Go thou and preach the kingdom of God*.] As our Lord called him now to follow him, we must conclude that this commission which he gives him to preach was not directly to be put in execution. The circumstance was plainly extraordinary, and might turn on reasons unknown to us. Christ might, for instance, foresee some particular obstruction that would have arisen from the interview with his friends at his father's funeral, which would have prevented his devoting himself to the ministry; to which he might refer in saying, *Let THE DEAD bury their dead*. I see no reason to suppose any regard to the priests being forbidden some usual ceremonies of mourning, which some have thought to be intended here.

h At a certain time.] This probably happened at another time; for it would have been very improper to have asked permission to go and bid his domestics farewell, when Christ had just made such an answer to the former: but the story is so short, and so much resembles the former, that I chose (as St. Luke also does) to join them together. Nor do I think it any reflection on the Evangelists, that they did not follow the order of time, provided they do not assert a regard to it where they vary from it.

i *Permit me first to* settle the affairs of my family, and *take my leave*, &c.] In this latitude I doubt not but the phrase αποτασσεσθαι τοις εις τον οικον μου is to be taken here, though it has something of a different signification, Luke xiv. 33. § 121. Intending to give up his possessions, he probably designed to *order how they should be distributed* among his friends; as Heinsius has very well explained the passage.

k *No man having laid his hand on the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*.] Hesiod has given it as the character of a good ploughman, that he keeps his mind intent on his work, that he may make a straight furrow, and does not allow himself to gaze about on his companions. (Hesiod Εργ. *lib.* ii. ver. 61—63.) Our Lord, on the like obvious principles, may use the phrase of *one that looks behind him while his hand is on the plough*, as a kind of proverbial expression for a careless, irresolute person, who must be peculiarly unfit for the Christian ministry. How happy had it been for his church, had this lively admonition been regarded, without which it is impossible ορθοτομειν τον λογον της αληθειας, *to divide*, or rather *direct*, *the word of truth aright*, 2 Tim. ii. 15. See *Bos. Observ. cap.* vi. p. 28—32.

l *A great agitation in the sea*.] Σεισμος μεγας properly signifies a *mighty agitation*: probably it was something of a hurricane.

[and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full;] [Luke, and they were in jeopardy.] [Mark iv. 37. Luke viii. 23.]

Mark iv. 38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: [and his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying,] Master, [Luke, Master,] carest thou not? [Lord, save us; we perish.] [Matt. viii. 25. Luke viii. 24.]

Matt. viii. 26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye [so] fearful, O ye of little faith? [Luke, Where is your faith?] [How is it that ye have no faith?] Then he arose and rebuked the winds, [Luke, and the raging of the water:] [and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased,] and there was a great calm.

with the labours of the day.[m] *And* when to all human appearance they were just sinking, *his disciples came to him, and awakened him, saying*, with great surprise and importunity, *Master, Master, is it no* manner of *concern to thee* that we are all of us in the utmost danger, and hast thou no regard to what we are exposed to in such a terrible extremity as this? *Lord, save us*, for *we are* just *perishing! And he says to them, Why are ye so* exceeding *timorous, O ye of little faith?* Can you imagine that God would suffer Me to be lost in a tempest? or that I would consult my own safety in the neglect of yours? *Where is your faith?* and *how is it that you have no faith* in exercise on such an occasion, when you have had so many signal evidences both of my power and my tender care? And *then rising up*, with an air of Divine majesty and authority, *he rebuked the winds and the raging of the water, and said to the sea*, as a master might do to a company of turbulent servants, *Peace, be still: and* he had no sooner spoken, but *the wind rested, and there was* presently *a great calm. And the men* that were with him *were* greatly *amazed, and* struck with such a reverential awe, that they *feared exceedingly, saying to each other, What a wonderful person is this, who* has not only power over diseases, but *commandeth even* the most tumultuous elements, *the winds and the sea; and* amidst all their rage and confusion, *they* humbly *obey him*, and are immediately composed at his command!

SECT. 69. MARK IV. 38 MATT. VIII. 26 27 24 25 20 21 LUKE IX. 62

[Mark iv. 39, 40. Luke viii. 24, 25.] 27 But the men marvelled, [and they feared exceedingly, and said one to another,] What manner of man is this, that [Luke, commandeth] even the winds and the sea, [Luke, and they] obey him! [Mark iv. 41. Luke viii. 25.]

IMPROVEMENT.

How great and glorious does our blessed Redeemer appear, as having all the elements at his command, and exercising his dominion over the winds and seas! He stills the very tempests when they roar, and *makes the storm a calm.* (Psal. cvii. 29.) He silences at once the noise and fury of the tumultuous waves: and, in the midst of its confusion, says to the raging sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* (Job xxxviii. 11.) Who would not reverence and fear him? Who would not cheerfully commit themselves to him? Under such a protection, how courageously may his church ride through every storm, and weather every danger! Christ is still with her, and she is safe even while he may seem to be sleeping. Blessed Jesus! that power of thine which here commanded the tempest into a calm, can easily silence all our tumultuous passions, and reduce our souls to that blessed tranquillity, in which alone we can be capable of enjoying thee and ourselves. Ver. 27

May we still be applying to Christ with such importunate addresses; and, sensible how much we need his help, may we cry out, *Lord, save us, or we perish!* And may it be the language, not of suspicion and terror, but of faith; of a faith determined at all adventures to adhere to him, whatever dangers are to be encountered, or whatever advantages are to be resigned.

Did his compassion for us, and his desire of our salvation, engage him to submit to such destitute and calamitous circumstances, that when *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests*, the Son of man himself had not a place where he might lay that sacred head, which with infinite mutual complacency and delight he had so often reposed in the bosom of the Father! May our zeal and love animate us cheerfully to take our part in his indigence and distress, if he calls us to it! May no considerations of ease or interest, or even of human friendship, lead us to turn a deaf ear to the calls of duty; or suffer us, when we once have engaged in his service, to think of deserting it, lest on the whole we should be judged unfit for the kingdom of God! May thy grace, O Lord, animate our souls, that nothing may prevent our faithfulness unto death, and so deprive us of that *crown of life* which thy grace has promised to such a character! (Rev. ii. 10.)

SECTION LXX.

Christ being arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, dispossesses two demoniacs; and permitting the evil spirits to enter into a herd of swine, is desired by the inhabitants to withdraw; and so returns to the western side of the sea. Matt. viii. 28, *to the end;* ix. 1. Mark v. 1—21. Luke viii. 26—40.

MARK v. 1.

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, [Luke, and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, [or Gergesenes,] which is over-against Galilee.] [Matt. viii. 28. Luke viii. 26.]

2 And when he was come out of the ship, [Luke, to land,] immediately there met him [two possessed with

MARK v. 1.

AND after they were thus delivered from the danger of the storm, *they came over to the other side of the sea* of Tiberias, *and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes;* a territory belonging, [*or*] at least adjacent, to that of the ancient *Gergesenes*, or Girgashites, (see Gen. x. 16; xv. 21; Deut. vii. 1; and Josh. iii. 10.) *which is* situated *over-against Galilee;* being that tract of land which fell to the lot of the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, and was afterwards called Trachonitis. SECT. 70. MARK V. 1

And when he was landed out of the ship, he was no sooner got ashore, but *there immediately met him two men*[a] *possessed with demons, coming out of the sepulchres*,[b] 2

m Fatigued with the labours of the day.] This we may reasonably conclude from a review of the preceding sections. See also the latter part of note a, in the beginning of this section.

a *There met him two men.*] Mark and Luke mention only *one*, who probably was the *fiercer* of the *two*; but this is no way inconsistent with the account that Matthew gives.—I cannot but observe here, that Mark tells this story in all other respects so much more circumstantially than Matthew, that it abundantly proves that his gospel was not (as Mr. Whiston maintains in his *Harmony*) an abridgment of Matthew. The same remark may arise, from comparing Mark v. 22—43. with Matt. ix. 18—26; and Mark ix. 17—27. with Matt. xvii. 14—18. and some other parallel passages, not to mention histories recorded by Mark, and not to be found in Matthew. See Mr. Jones's *Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel*, chap. vii. and ix.

b *Coming out of the sepulchres.*] Grotius supposes, that the *demons* chose to drive the men that they possessed among the tombs, to confirm some superstitious notions of the Jews relating to the power of evil spirits over the dead. The heathens had undoubtedly such notions: but I rather think, with Elsner, the demoniacs chose the caves of this burying-ground as a kind of shelter: and he has shewn, that wretches in extremity sometimes did the like. See Elsner. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 66—68.

SECT. 70.

which were in a burying-place near the city, whither they had fled as to a place affording them some shelter, and suiting their gloomy imaginations; and they were both of them *exceeding fierce* and mischievous, *so that no one could* safely *pass by that way:* and

MARK V.

[*one of these was*] *a certain man of the city with an unclean spirit, that had been* known to be *possessed with demons for a long time; Who* was so terribly outrageous

3 that he *wore no clothes, nor would abide in any house, but had his dwelling* sometimes in the burying-ground *among the tombs*, and sometimes in a desert, or a common, that lay near it;[c] *and* was under so strong an operation of the diabolical power, that *no one*

4 *could confine him even with chains: For he had often been bound with fetters and chains; yet* in a most surprising manner *the chains were broken asunder by him, and the fetters were beaten to pieces; and*, after all the methods that had been taken with him, *no one was able to tame him*, either by force or entreaties, or any kind of exorcism

5 that had been tried upon him. *And he was always night and day upon the mountains, and among the tombs, crying out* in a terrible manner; *and*, when there was nobody else to spend his rage upon, *cutting himself with* sharp pieces of the *stones* he found there.

6 *But when he saw Jesus afar off*, the demon that possessed him was so over-awed, that *he* immediately *ran and fell down* upon his face *before him*, with all the appear-

7 ance of the greatest reverence, *and worshipped him; And crying out with a loud voice, he said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?* I am not come here to enter into any contest with thee, and *I beseech* [*and*] *adjure thee by* that *God* whose Son thou art, *that thou do not* exert the power which thou hast to *torment me:* I know there will be a season when thou wilt have an ample triumph over me; but *art thou come hither to torment us before the time* allotted for our final punishment?[d] And this he spoke as he was acted by the demon that possessed

LUKE VIII.

him; who was afraid of being driven away: *For* Jesus was so moved with pity and compassion at the sight of such a miserable spectacle, that *he* already *had commanded*

29 *the unclean spirit,* [*and*] *said* with an air of authority *to him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. For* (as it was observed before) *it had often seized him* in a most violent manner; *and* notwithstanding *he was bound with chains, and kept* under the closest confinement *in fetters*, yet none of them were strong enough to hold him, but he would still break loose; *and having broke* and torn off all *the bonds* that they could fix upon him, *he was driven by the* impetuous impulse of the raging *demon into the desert places* where the burying-ground lay.

30 *And Jesus asked* the evil spirit that was in *him, saying, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.*[e] And this reply was not without some reason, *because* the evil spirit that possessed the man had many others with him, and *a multitude of demons had entered into him*, and had been suffered to unite their malice and power in harassing and tormenting the wretched creature.

31 *And* as they found that Jesus was determined to dislodge them, *they earnestly entreated him that he would not send them* quite away *out of the country;*[f] hoping, that if they had permission to hover still about it, they might do something to obstruct the progress of the gospel, against which their chief efforts were centred: [*and*] they particularly were importunate that he would not *command them to go out into the* bottomless *abyss*, the prison in which many of the fallen spirits are detained, and to which some who may, like these, have been permitted for a while to range at large, are sometimes by divine justice and power remanded. (Compare Rev. xx. 1—3; 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude, ver. 6; and see Grotius, *in loc.*)

MARK V.

Now there was there within their view, *at a considerable distance from them, on the mountains* near the sea-shore, *a great herd of many swine feeding on the mountain;*

11 for unclean as those animals were, the Jews in that country bred up great numbers of them out of regard to the gain of such merchandise, which they sold to the Roman soldiers, and

12 other Gentiles who were very numerous in these parts.[g] *And all the demons* which had possessed this miserable creature (set upon doing all the mischief that they could, though they were under such a sensible restraint, and desirous to bring an odium upon Jesus as the author of mischief,) *entreated him* again, *saying* to him, *If thou* art determined, after all we have said, that thou wilt *cast us out* of this man, *send us*, [*or*] *give us leave to go away* devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way;] [Luke, a certain man out of the city,] with an unclean spirit, [Luke, which had devils a long time: [Matt. viii. 28. Luke viii. 27.]

3 Who [wore no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but] had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no not with chains:—[Luke viii. 27.]

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him.

5 And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran, [and fell down before him,] and worshipped him; [Luke viii. 28.]

7 And cried [Luke, out] with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? [Luke, I beseech thee,] I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not: [art thou come hither to torment us before the time?] [Matt. viii. 29. Luke viii. 28.]

Luke viii. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit, [*and* said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.] For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) [Mark v. 8.]

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? [and he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many:] because many devils were entered into him. [Mark v. 9.]

31 And they besought him [much,] that he would not [send them away out of the country, *and*] command them to go out into the deep. [Mark v. 10.]

Mark v. 11. Now there was there [a good way off from them,] nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of [many] swine feeding [Luke, on the mountain:] [Matt. viii. 30. Luke viii. 32.]

c A desert, or a common, that lay near it.] So it is said by Luke, ver. 29, that he was *driven into the wilderness.*

d *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*] Here was such a reference to the final sentence which Christ is to pass upon these *rebel spirits* in the *judgment of the great day*, to which they are reserved, (Jude, ver. 6.) as could not be dictated by lunacy; and it is much to be questioned, whether either the person speaking, or any of the hearers but Christ himself, understood the sense and propriety of it.

e *My name is Legion, for we are many.*] There is no need of concluding from hence, that the number of these evil spirits was exactly the same with that of a Roman legion, which was now upwards of six thousand. (See Pitisc. *Lex. de Legione.*) It was a phrase that was often made use of to express a *great number*; (see Lightf. *Hor. Hebr.* on Mark v. 9.)—It is observable, that Luke here adds, that *many demons were entered into him:* so that it is evident he thought it not a mere *lunacy*, but a real *possession.* Probably a band of evil spirits united in the vexation of this wretched creature; but in what manner and order, it is impossible for us to say, who know so little of *invisible beings.*

f *That he would not send them out of the country.*] It seems from Dan. x. 13, 20, that *different evil genii* preside over *distinct regions*, by the direction of Satan their prince. These, who perhaps were spirits of distinguished abilities, might be appointed to reside hereabouts, to oppose as much as possible the beneficial designs of Christ: and having made their observations on the characters and circumstances of the inhabitants, they might be capable of doing more mischief *here* than elsewhere, and on that account might desire leave to continue on the spot.

g Which they sold to the Roman soldiers, and other Gentiles, &c.] The laws of Hyrcanus had indeed prohibited the Jews from keeping swine, (which shews it had been much practised among them,) but these Gadarenes, who had so many Gentiles in the neighbourhood, having long been under heathen government, (Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xv. *cap.* 7. [al. 11.] § 3; *et Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 20. [al. 15.] § 3.) and living in the extreme part of the country,

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, [If thou cast us out,] send us [*or* suffer us to go away] into the [herd of] swine, that we may enter into them. [Matt. viii. 31. Luke viii. 32.]

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, [and said unto them, Go.] And the unclean spirits went out [Luke, of the man,] and entered into the [herd of] swine: and [behold,] the [whole] herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, [and perished in the waters:] *and* they were about two thousand. [Matt. viii. 32. Luke viii. 33.]

14 And they that fed the swine, [Luke, when they saw what was done,] fled, and told [every thing] in the city, and in the country, [and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.] And they went out to see what it was that was done. [Matt. viii. 33. Luke viii. 34, 35.]

15 And they come to Jesus, and see [the man] that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, [out of whom the devils were departed,] sitting [at the feet of Jesus,] and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. [Luke viii. 35.]

16 And they [also] that saw *it*, told them [by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed,] and also concerning the swine [Luke viii. 36.]

Matt. viii. 34. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, [Luke, *and* the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about;] and when they saw him, they [began to pray him] that he would depart [Luke, from them,] out of their coasts; [Luke, for they were taken with great fear; and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.] [Mark v. 17. Luke viii. 37.]

Mark v. 18. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil, [out of

to the herd of swine which is feeding yonder, *that we may enter into them;* for we have no power of hurting even them without thy leave. *And immediately Jesus permitted them* to do it; partly to punish those who dealt in so infamous a commodity, *and* chiefly to prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases,[h] and to display the malice of those evil spirits: he therefore *said unto them*, You may *go*, since you desire it, and operate on those creatures as you please. *And* upon this *the unclean spirits went* directly *out of the man* whom they had possessed, *and entered into the herd of swine: and* such was the strange effect of their power, that, *behold, the whole herd* immediately grew mad, and *ran violently down a precipice into the sea,*[i] *and were all suffocated in the sea, and perished in the waters;*[k] *being* in number *about two thousand.* SECT. 70. MARK V. 13

And the swine-herds, seeing what was done, fled in great amazement, some one way and some another, *and told all* the story, both *in the city and country; and* circumstantially related *what had happened to the* two *demoniacs*, and how the demons had been ejected from them. 14

And when the people heard it, they were so much impressed with the report, that *they went out* in crowds *to see what was done*, and to satisfy themselves, on the testimony of their own senses, as to the truth of so unparalleled a fact. *And when they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac* (even him *that had* been tormented by *the legion*, and *out of whom the demons were departed,)* calmly *sitting at the feet of Jesus*, to receive his instructions, *and* now decently *clothed and* perfectly *composed*, as being restored to his right mind, they were struck with such a mixture of astonishment and reverence, that they *were afraid* of conversing with so great a prophet, and dreaded the farther effects of his power. (Compare Luke v. 8. sect. xxxiv.) *And they also who* were present, and *had seen* all that passed from the beginning, gave them a particular account of [*it*,] and *told them* more largely than the swine-herds had done, *by what means the demoniac had been recovered; and also* told them *concerning the swine*, how they had been so strangely destroyed by the apparent agency of these evil spirits by which the men had before been possessed. 15 16

And behold, all the inhabitants of *the whole city* of Gadara,[l] as the rumour increased, *came out to meet Jesus;* [*and*] indeed *the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about* flocked to see so wonderful a person: *and when they saw him, they* presently *began*, with all submission, *to entreat him that he would* please to *depart from them out of their coasts;* pretending that they, who had so great a number of Gentiles round them, were not fit to receive so great and holy a person: *for they* unreasonably looked on him as the author of the calamity which befel the swine, and *were seized with great fear*, lest he should send some farther judgments upon them, which they were sensible the great irregularities of their behaviour well deserved:[m] *and he*, by no means willing to obtrude his presence on those who were so insensible as not to desire it, *went into the ship* again, *and returned back* to the western shore of the sea. MATT. VIII. 34

And when he was come into the ship, the demoniac, out of whom the demons were now *departed*, fearing lest after this (as it had been supposed of some, Matt. vii. 43—45. sect. lxiii.) he might be in danger of a relapse, and, dreading the terrors of his former condition, *entreated him that he might* be allowed to *continue with him*, to enjoy the farther benefit of his instructions. *Yet Jesus did not permit him* to do it, *but sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, [and] go to thy friends* and relations *at home, and* fail not particularly to *tell them how great things the Lord God* of Israel, whose messenger I am, *has* by his almighty power *performed for thee, and* how graciously he *has had compassion on thee* in those deplorable circumstances which rendered thee a spectacle of horror to them, and all that saw thee. *And* upon this, *he went away* MARK V. 18 19 20

presumed to do it, scandalous and illegal as the employment was. See *Miracles of Jesus Vindicated*, p. 34, 35.

h To prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases. The cavils against this miracle are equally malicious and weak. *Our Lord's permitting the evil spirits to enter into the swine*, was not properly *sending them* into those beasts; or if he had done it, the punishment to the owners would have been just; or had it been less apparently so, his extraordinary character as a prophet, and the proofs he gave of a divine co-operation, would have set him above our censure in an action, the full reasons of which we might not perfectly have known.—But though this solution is to me very satisfactory, it is not necessary to have recourse to it; for this action evidently appears both wise and gracious; inasmuch as it unanswerably demonstrated at once the malice of Satan and the extent of Christ's power over him. No miracles are more suspicious than pretended *dispossessions*, as there is so much room for collusion in them; but it was self-evident that a herd of swine could not be confederates in any fraud: their death, therefore, in this instructive and convincing circumstance, was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind, than if they had been slain for food, as was intended.

i *The whole herd ran violently down a precipice into the sea.*] This story is an unanswerable demonstration of the error of the hypothesis advanced by the author of the late *Inquiry into the Case of the Demoniacs*, &c. (Mentioned before in note c, on Luke iv. 33. p. 69.) That ingenious writer is forced to suppose *these swine frightened by the two mad men*, and so *driven down the precipice:* but, not to mention the absurdity of supposing their lunacy thus to rage after Christ had spoken the healing word, one might venture to appeal to any body that has observed what awkward creatures swine are to drive, whether it would be possible, without a *miracle*, for *two men* to drive *twenty*, and much less *two thousand* of them into the water. It is a pitiable thing to see a writer of such a character reduced to so hard a shift. He seems indeed to think the common notion of possessions absurd and dangerous, and certainly opposes it with a very good design: but it is hard to say how Christ could have encouraged that notion more than by his conduct on this occasion; and I doubt not but this extraordinary occurrence was permitted chiefly to prove the reality of these possessions, and will always be effectual for the conviction of every impartial inquirer.

k *And were all suffocated, and perished in the waters.*] The display of the malignity of these demons, in this instance, served to illustrate the value of every miracle of this kind, and to display the grace, as well as power of Christ in every dispossession; in which view this circumstance appears to have been determined with great wisdom and goodness, though folly and perverseness have so strangely disguised it.

l *The whole city* of Gadara.] Josephus describes it as a very considerable place. It was, by the righteous judgment of God, the *first Jewish city* that fell into the hands of the Romans, in the fatal war under Vespasian, and suffered great extremities. Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* iv. *cap.* 7. [al. v. 3.] § 3, 4. See *Wits. de Decem. Trib. cap.* 8. § 2.

m Lest he should send some farther judgments upon them, &c.] Some have imagined that they thought Christ a magician, and feared the effects of his art; but the cause assigned in the paraphrase seems to me much more decent, and, all things considered, more likely. They were probably a licentious sort of people, and might naturally, from what they saw, fear some farther chastisement from so holy a Prophet.

SECT. 70. *and began to publish through the whole city* of Gadara, in which he dwelt, [*and*] *in* all the neighbouring region of *Decapolis*, *what great* and wonderful *things Jesus had done for him: and all men were amazed* at so stupendous a miracle.

MATT. IX. 1 *And* Jesus, *having entered into the ship*, departed thence as soon as the demoniac was dismissed: and, leaving those ungrateful people who had no greater value for his presence, *he passed over* the sea of Galilee, *and* shortly after *came to his own city* of Capernaum, where he had dwelt after his leaving Nazareth. (See Matt. iv. 13. p. 67.)

MARK V. 21 *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had passed over again in the ship to the other side* of the lake, he was no sooner landed but *a great multitude gathered to him*, [*and*] *the people* most *gladly received him*;[n] *for they* expected his speedy return, and *were all* impatiently *waiting for him: and he continued* some time *on the sea-coast*, teaching and working miracles.

whom the devils were departed, prayed him that he might be with him. [Luke viii. 38.]

19 Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but [sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, *and*] go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord [God] hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. [Luke viii. 38, 39.]

20 And he departed, and began to publish [throughout the whole city, *and*] in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel. [Luke viii. 39.]

Matt. ix. 1. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. Mark v. 21. And [it came to pass, that] when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; [*and* the people *gladly* received him; for they were all waiting for him:] and he was nigh unto the sea. [Luke viii. 40.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3 From the remarkable story which is here before us, we must surely see the most apparent reason to adore the
13 good providence of God, which restrains the malignant spirits of hell from spreading those desolations among beasts and men, which would otherwise quickly turn the earth into a wilderness, or rather into a chaos. But what mat-
12 ter of joy is it to reflect, that all their fury and rage is under a Divine control, and that they cannot hurt even the meanest animal without permission from above!

The unhappy creature whose state is here described in such lively colours, is an affecting emblem of those who
4, 5 are in a spiritual sense under the power of Satan. Thus do they break asunder the bonds of reason and gratitude, and sometimes of authority, and even of shame; and, thus driven on by the frenzy of their lusts and passions, they
15 are so outrageous as to injure others, and to wound themselves. Human attempts to moderate and reform them may be vain; but let us remember that the Almighty Saviour has a voice which can put this worst kind of demons to flight, and restore those that have been agitated by them to their right mind, so as to place them at his feet in holy composure, and in calm rational attention.

7 We see here a legion of devils trembling before the Son of God, confessing his superior power, howling as it were in their chains, and entreating the delay of their torments. And can human pride stand before him, and rebellious mortals triumph over him? Happy souls that are listed under his banners! They shall share the victories of the great Captain of their salvation, and *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly.* (Rom. xvi. 20.)

17 But oh, how stupid and how wretched were these Gadarenes, who preferred their swine to their souls, and besought him to depart out of their coasts whose presence was their defence and their glory! May divine grace preserve us from a temper like theirs! And may those of us who have ourselves experienced the restoring power
18, 20 of Christ and his gospel, be engaged to adhere to our great Benefactor, and gratefully to devote those powers to his service which he has rescued from dishonour, mischief, and ruin!

SECTION LXXI.

Christ being entertained at Matthew's house, justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners, and vindicates his disciples for not keeping so many fasts as the Pharisees and the disciples of John did. Matt. ix. 10—17. Mark ii. 15—22. Luke v. 29, *to the end.*

LUKE V. 29.

SECT. 71. NOW, after Jesus had continued for a while on the sea-shore, (as was observed, Mark v. 21.) he entered into Capernaum: *and* Matthew, or *Levi*, who dwelt there, and who had some time since been called from his former office of a publican, into the number of his

LUKE V. stated attendants, see sect xlv. p. 94.) desirous at once to shew his respects to Christ, and to give his former companions and acquaintance an opportunity of enjoying his instructive
29 conversation, *made a great entertainment for him in his own house*;[a] *and it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at table* there, *behold, a great number of publicans, and* such as had the general character of *sinners*, being invited by Matthew, *came, and sat also at the table with Jesus and his disciples; and* several *others* at that time were present; *for there were many* of the character above described in Christ's train, (compare Matt. xi. 12. and Luke xv. 1.) *and they followed him* with great eagerness, being charmed with the condescension with which he treated them, while many others shunned them with abhorrence.

LUKE V. 29. AND Levi made him a great feast in his own house: [Mark, and it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat,] [behold,] a great company of publicans [and sinners came, and] [Mark, sat also together with Jesus and his disciples,] and others; [Mark, for there were many] and they followed him.] [Matt. ix. 10. Mark ii. 15.]

30 *But when* the more reserved and stricter sort of people in that place, and in particular 39 But [when] their

n *Gladly received him.*] This Grotius has observed to be the meaning of the word (απεδεξαντο,) and in this sense it may likewise be understood, Acts xv. 4; and xviii. 27.

a *A great entertainment for him in his own house.*] Nothing has perplexed the generality of Harmonies more, and nothing has thrown the authors of them into greater inconsistency with the sacred writers, than their taking it for granted that Matthew made this entertainment on the very day that Christ called him to attend upon him. The early Harmonies of Tatian and Ammonius very justly separated them. (See Chemnit. *Harm. cap.* 43.) And to the many convincing arguments which Mr. Jones has brought to prove that they ought to be separated, (which see in his *Vindication of Matthew*, p. 129—137.) I will add, that it seems to me very evident they were not both on the same day, from this consideration, (so obvious, that I wonder none should have mentioned it,) so many things happened before the calling of Matthew, that the day must be far advanced, and there could not have been time to prepare a great feast, and invite a number of guests, at least till supper; (see § 45.) and so many things happened after the feast, (see § 72.) that we cannot suppose them to have been crowded into the little remainder of the evening after supper; on which account it is certain the feast was *after the day of his calling*, perhaps (as it seems by the intermediate stories) some months after, when he had made up his accounts, and regularly passed his business into other hands, which, to be sure, from a principle of justice as well as prudence, he would take care to do.

scribes and Pharisees[Mark, saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they] murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink, [Mark, *and* how is it that [your Master] eateth and drinketh] with publicans and sinners? [Matt. ix. 11. Mark ii. 16.]

their scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to be most exact and scrupulous in their conduct, *saw him* thus openly converse and *eat with publicans and sinners, they* were offended; and *murmured at his disciples* on that account, *saying, Why do you*, who should be examples to others, *eat and drink* in such scandalous company as this? [*and*] especially, *how is it that your Master*, who sets up for such an extraordinary Prophet, will allow himself to do it? for, while our traditions teach even the students, and much more the teachers of the law, to avoid all commerce with such polluted and infamous persons, you see that he publicly *eats and drinks with* a considerable number of *publicans and sinners*, as if there were no scandal in being accounted their friend and companion. SECT. 71. LUKE V. 30

Mark ii. 17. When Jesus heard it, he [Luke, answering,] saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. [Matt. ix. 12, 13. Luke v. 31, 32.]

Matt. ix. 13. But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

And Jesus, having heard that they were so offended at [*it*,] *answered them, saying, They that are in* perfect *health have no need* of the converse and advice *of the physician, but those that are sick;* and therefore, out of compassion to their need of him, he visits and converses with them, though it cannot otherwise be agreeable to him to do it: and I act on the same principles; for *I am not come to call the righteous*, as you arrogantly imagine yourselves to be, *but* such poor *sinners* as these, *to repentance* and salvation. *But*, if you are offended at it, you may *go your way, and* would do well to set yourselves to *learn the meaning of that* instructive [*scripture*,] (Hos. vi. 6.) which I cited on a former occasion, (see Matt. xii. 7. p. 101.) and which you Pharisees are so ready to forget, "*I require mercy and not sacrifice*." For, had you understood this saying, you would have seen that a ceremonial institution of divine authority, and much more a mere human tradition, is to give way to the great duties of humanity and charity, even where men's bodies, and much more where their souls, are concerned. MARK II. 17 MATT. IX. 13

Mark ii. 18. And the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees used to fast: and [the disciples of John] come and say unto him, Why do [we, the disciples of John, and] Luke, likewise *the disciples*] of the Pharisees fast, [Luke, often, and make prayers,] but thy disciples fast not [Luke, but eat and drink?] [Matt. ix. 14. Luke v. 33.]

Another occurrence which happened at the same time, *and* bore some resemblance to the former, was this. *The disciples of John* the Baptist, who had himself lived so austere a life, *and* was now in a calamitous state of confinement, as well as the disciples *of the Pharisees, used to fast* often, *and* the latter particularly twice a-week: (compare Luke xviii. 12. sect. cxxix.) Now, seeing Jesus at a publican's table on a festival occasion, surrounded with so many of his stated followers, some of *the disciples of John come and say unto him, Whence is it that we, the disciples of John, and also those of the Pharisees*, have *frequently* our days of solemn devotion, in which we *fast, and make* many *prayers* and supplications to God for ourselves and the people? *whereas thy disciples fast not* at all that we can perceive; *but*, on the contrary, *eat and drink* freely, though thou professest a righteousness superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees. (Matt. v. 20. sect. xxxviii.) MARK II. 18

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber [mourn *and*] fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. [Matt. ix. 15. Luke v. 34.]

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber, who are invited to attend the nuptial ceremony, with any decency *mourn* [*and*] *fast while the bridegroom is* yet ~~continuing~~ *with them? As long as they have* the pleasure of the presence and company of *the bridegroom among them, they cannot* reasonably be expected to *fast*, and every one would then account it to be out of season. Now my presence and converse renders this a kind of festival to my disciples: for, as John taught you but a little before his confinement, I am the great Bridegroom of my church:[b] you cannot therefore in reason expect I should command them to fast now, or that they should do it without such a command. *But*, I assure you, *the days will* quickly *come, when*, as your master is separated from you, so even I, *the bridegroom, shall be taken away from them; and then they* must expect to undergo a great deal of hardship, and particularly, *shall* be obliged frequently to *fast in those days;* as those whom I have mentioned might do if their festival was interrupted by the removal of their beloved friend whose joys they were sharing.[c] (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 27.) 19 20

29 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. [Matt. ix. 15. Luke v. 35.]

Nor do I now think fit to lay such rigorous commands upon them, because prudence will require me at present to accommodate their trials to their strength. *And*, farther to illustrate this, *he spake also a parable*, or proposed another similitude *to them*, saying, *No man*, when he is mending clothes, *will* of choice *sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment*,[d] but rather chooses what is a little worn: for *otherwise* it will be found that *both the new*, being stronger than the other, *makes a rent* in the edges of it when it comes to be stretched; *and the piece that was* [*taken*] *out of the new*, [*and*] *put in to* mend the former rent and *fill it up, agrees not* in colour and form *with the old;* and, being improperly put together, is of no service to the garment, [*but*] *takes away* more *from the old* than it adds to it; *and* thus *the rent is* increased and *made worse* than it was before. LUKE V. 36

Luke v. 36. And he spake also a parable unto them, No man putteth a piece [of new cloth into an old garment;] if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, [*and* put in to fill it up,] agreeth not with the old. [Mark, *but* taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.] [Matt. ix. 16. Mark ii. 21.]

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst

And again, on the same principles, *no* wise *man puts new wine into old bottles*, where the leather is weakened, and almost worn out; (compare Josh. ix. 4, 13; and Psal. cxix. 37

b I am the great Bridegroom of my church.] Some have supposed there is in this similitude which Christ has used, a reference to the book of Canticles; and it is possible there may. (See Carpzov. *Defence of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 220, 221.) There is no doubt a reference to what John had lately said to his disciples so expressly on that head. John iii. 29. p. 54.

c If their festival was interrupted, &c.] Our Lord seems here, with a beautiful propriety seldom observed, to suppose some hostile invasion to happen during the time of a nuptial feast, in which the bridegroom should either be slain or taken prisoner, which would damp all the joy of his friends, and change the scene into lamentation, fasting, and mourning.

d *New cloth on an old garment.*] The proper meaning of the words ῥάκους ἀγνάφου, by which *new cloth* is here expressed in the original, is cloth that has not passed through the fuller's hands, and which is consequently much harsher than what has been often washed and worn; and therefore, yielding less than that, will tear away the edges to which it is sewed. This sense Albert has vindicated from exceptions not worth mentioning here. See Albert. *Observ.* p. 71—76.

SECT. 71. LUKE V. 38 83.) for *else*, if he should, the fermentation of *the new wine will* soon *burst the bottles, and* so *the wine will be spilt, as well as the bottles destroyed: But new wine must be put into new bottles, and* by this means *both are preserved.* Now as, in the ordinary affairs of life, common sense dictates a regard to the mutual agreement and disagreement of things, it is necessary that I should attend to them in my conduct towards my disciples; and, as they have not been inured to such severities as you and the Pharisees have long practised,[e] I do not therefore choose immediately to impose them, lest otherwise, to the great detriment of the world, they should be discouraged from attending upon me.

39 And you cannot surely blame me for this, when you consider how difficult it is to alter the ways of living to which people have been accustomed even in less things than these now in question. As, for instance, though some may be fond of new wine, while it is yet fermenting in the vessel, yet those that have been used to drink another sort will have no liking to it; *and no man who has* generally *drank* good *old* [*wine*] that is well ripened and refined, *will immediately choose* to drink *new; for he says, The old is better,* as being both more pleasant and more wholesome. Judge then how fit it is that I should not oblige my disciples to a new course of severities at once, but gradually form their characters to what the honour of their future profession and the usefulness of their lives may require.

thou bottles, and [Mark, the wine] be spilled, and the bottles shall perish: [Matt. ix. 17. Mark ii. 22.]

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. [Matt. ix. 17. Mark ii. 22.]

39 No man also having drunk old *wine*, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 29 THERE is no reason to wonder that Matthew should gladly embrace so proper an opportunity of introducing other publicans and sinners into the presence of that condescending Saviour, from whom, though he once was numbered among them, he had received grace and the apostleship. Let us with pleasure observe how ready our 30 blessed Lord was to receive them. Surely, whatever offence the proud Pharisees might take on such an occasion, 31, 32 Jesus will appear peculiarly amiable in such a circle as this. Compassionate Redeemer! thou didst, as the great Physician of souls, willingly converse with objects that must have been most hateful to thy pure and holy nature! May we each of us have a due sense of the malignity of sin, that fatal disease of the soul, that we may with a MATT. IX. becoming temper apply to Christ for a cure! May we also, like him, be willing to condescend to the meanest and vilest, if it may be the means of winning them over to true religion and happiness! ever preferring mercy to sacri- 13 fice, and choosing rather to govern ourselves by the dictates of a benevolent heart, than by the maxims of proud and censorious men.

LUKE V. Christ would not discourage his disciples by over rigorous institutions; and it is unfit that his religion should be burthened with them. He suits the duties of his people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their 36—39 work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humbling services. From his example, and the whole genius of his gospel, let us learn to make all proper allowances to those about us, that we may teach them, and train them up as they are able to bear it; not crushing them under any unnecessary load, nor denying them any indulgence which true friendship will permit us to grant them; lest the good ways of God should be misrepresented, disgraced, and abandoned through our imprudent, though well-meaning severity: a caution to be peculiarly observed in our conduct towards young persons; and not to be forgotten with respect to those who, like the disciples here in question, are training up for the ministerial office.

SECTION LXXII.

Christ having in the way cured a woman by the touch of his garment, raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and afterwards performs some other miracles. Matt. ix. 18—34. Mark v. 22, *to the end*; Luke viii. 41, *to the end.*

MATT. ix. 18.

SECT. 72. MATT. IX. 18 LUKE VIII. 42. MARK V. 23 *WHILE he was speaking these things to them* in Matthew's house,[a] *behold,* a very remarkable circumstance happened, which opened the way to one of the most signal miracles which Christ ever performed: for, though it was an uncommon thing for persons in an elevated rank of life to pay any regard to him, (see John vii. 48.) *there came a certain ruler of the synagogue* in that city of Capernaum, *whose name was Jairus; and when he* was entered into the room where Jesus was, and *saw him, he fell* down *at his feet* with the profoundest humility, *and worshipped him* in the presence of all the company, *and entreated him to come* immediately *to his house: For he had one only daughter about twelve years old, and,* having in that bloom of life been seized with a very dangerous distemper, *she* then *lay,* to all human appearance, *at the* very *point of death. And he* applied himself to Jesus with the utmost importunity, and *earnestly*

MATT. ix. 18.

WHILE he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler [of the synagogue, Jairus by name: and when he saw him he fell at his feet] and worshipped him; [Luke, and besought him, that he would come into his house:] [Mark v. 22. Luke viii. 41.]

Luke viii. 42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying.

Mark v. 23. And he be-

e As you and the Pharisees have long practised.] That the Pharisees used to fast twice a week, is plain from Luke xviii. 12; and, no doubt, their young people were trained up to it. But it may be objected, that John's disciples were not so trained up, and consequently might have answered, that the disciples of Christ might as well, and as soon as they, have been brought under such severities and restraints. But the truth is, it was not divinely required of the one or the other. The character and circumstances of John laid them under some engagements not common to Christ's disciples, as he intimates; and, considering where and how the Baptist appeared, it is very probable many of his stated disciples were Essenes, who (as it is well known) were a kind of hermit Jews, educated in great abstinence, and more frequent fastings, than any of the rest of them. (See Prideaux's *Connection*, Part II. p. 378.) And if so, nothing could have been more convincing than this reasoning.

a *While he was speaking these things to them* in Matthew's house.] These words fix the order of this section so plainly, that it is surprising Mr. Le Clerc should suppose that many events happened between the discourses recorded just above, and this application of Jairus to Christ, which St. Matthew so strongly connects. That critic is driven to the hard expedient of paraphrasing this clause thus: "While he discoursed with them on the same subject which "he had been upon the beginning of the year;" which is extremely unnatural, and, so far as I can recollect, quite unexampled in any author, ancient or modern. (See Le Clerc's *Harmony*, p. 197.) Had he thought of what is suggested above, § 71. note a, p. 112, to prove Matthew's feast did not immediately follow his

sought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death, [*or* is even now dead;] *I pray thee* come and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live. [Matt. ix. 18.]

Matt. ix. 19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples. [Luke, But as he went,] [much people followed him, and thronged him.] [Mark v. 24. Luke viii. 42.]

Mark v. 25. And [behold] a certain woman [which was diseased with] an issue of blood twelve years, [Matt. ix. 20. Luke viii. 43.]

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all [her living] that she had [upon *them*, neither could be healed of any;] and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; [Luke viii 43.]

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched [Luke, the border of] his garment: [Matt. ix. 20. Luke viii. 44.]

28 For she said [within herself,] If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. [Matt. ix. 21.]

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. [Luke viii. 44.]

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing within himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? [Luke viii. 45.]

Luke viii. 45. When all denied, Peter, and [his disciples] that were with him, said [unto him,] Master, [thou seest] the multitude throng thee, and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me? [Mark v. 31.]

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. Mark v. 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. Luke viii. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she [knowing

entreated him, saying, My dear *little daughter is in the last extremity,* [*or*] *is* perhaps, as she was just expiring when I left her, *even now dead;*[b] [*I beseech thee*] therefore *that thou wouldst* be pleased to *come and lay thine hands on her, that she may recover; and* I doubt not but, extreme as the case is, if thou wilt interpose in her behalf, *she shall live.* SECT. 72. MATT. IX.

And Jesus arose and followed him, and [*so did*] *his disciples. Now, as he was going* 19 to the ruler's house, *much people followed him* to see the event; *and* they *pressed upon him* in such a manner that he could not walk without some difficulty.

And behold, among those that were crowding about him, there was *a certain* poor MARK V. 25. unhappy *woman who had* been long afflicted with a grievous disorder, having *laboured under a flux of blood for* no less than *twelve years: And* she *had suffered a great deal* 26 *from* the *many physicians* she had consulted, by disagreeable medicines and uneasy restraints, as well as by the great expense she had been at in applying to them: for indeed she had wasted all her substance, *and spent all that she had upon them:*[c] *but* her distemper was so inveterate, that she *could not be healed by any; and,* on the whole, she *was not at all the better* for their prescriptions, *but rather grew worse,* and weaker than before; And, *having heard of Jesus,* and the extraordinary cures he had wrought, being 27 ashamed publicly to mention her case, she *came in the crowd behind* him, *and touched* the fringe which, according to the divine commandment, (Numb. xv. 38; and Deut. xxii. 12.) he wore upon *the border of his garment. For,* as she knew that many had before 28 been healed by touching him, (see Luke vi. 19. p. 107.) she had such a firm persuasion of the virtue that was in him, and of his power to cure her, that *she said within herself, If I may but touch* any part of *his clothes, I shall be recovered.*[d] *And immediately* 29 on her having done it, *the fountain of her blood* that issued from her *was* at once staunched and *dried up, and she felt* such an unusual vigour and flow of spirits, that she plainly perceived *in her body that she was healed of that* wasting and dangerous *distemper* with which she had been chastised for so long a time.[e]

And upon this she would have retired unobserved; but *Jesus,* who had secretly per- 30 formed the cure by the concurring efficacy of his will, *immediately knowing in himself that* healing *virtue was gone out of him,* thought fit on this occasion to shew that it had not escaped his notice,[f] as well as to illustrate and commend the faith of the patient; and therefore he immediately *turned* himself *about in the crowd, and,* looking round him, *said, Who* is it that *has* just now *touched my clothes? And all* the rest that were near LUKE VIII. him *denying it,*[g] *Peter, and his disciples that were with him, said unto him, Sir,*[h] *Thou seest that the multitude are crowding around thee, and press thee* on every 45 side, *and dost thou say, Who has touched me?* One might rather ask, Who that has walked near thee has not done it? or which way is it possible, in such a crowd as this, to avoid it? *And Jesus said,* I am well aware that *somebody* here *has touched me,* not 46 merely by accident, but on some important design: *for I perceive that* a healing *virtue* and efficacy *is gone out of me,* and am not ignorant of the particulars of the cure it has produced.

And upon this *he looked round about* again, *to see her who had done this;* and di- MARK V. 32. rected his eye towards her with some particular regard. *And when the woman saw that* LUKE *she was not concealed* from his all-penetrating view, *knowing* (as we before observed) VIII. 47.

calling, he would have seen this criticism as unnecessary as it is forced.

b *Or is* perhaps—*even now dead.*] It is certain from Mark's expression, εσχατως εχει, which is literally rendered, *is in the last extremity,* as well as from the message relating to her death, which both he and Luke afterwards mention, that the young lady *was not dead* when her father came out: and consequently, that Matthew's phrase, αρτι ετελευτησεν, (if not Luke's, αυτη απεθνησκεν,) is to be taken in this extent. She had been *given over* when her father left her, and actually *was dead* before he could return; and he might therefore, when he applied to Christ for his miraculous assistance, be ready to fear she was *by this time dead,* and might accordingly express himself in such a manner as to intimate his apprehension of it. Nor is it necessary, after all, that we should understand the phrase in Matthew as implying she was *now* actually *dead;* for αρτι does not only signify what is *now come to pass,* but what is *just at hand,* (as may be seen in Phavorinus;) and so it may imply no more than that she was considered as just dead, and that there was no hope of her recovery but by a miracle.

c *Spent all that she had upon them.*] The ingenious Dr. Friend imagines that he discovers something remarkable in the difference of those seemingly synonimous terms which Mark and Luke make use of upon this occasion, and pleads that δαπανησασα, in the former, signifies to *squander away;* whereas προσαναλωσασα, in the latter, signifies a more *gradual consumption* of her stock, by taking a little at a time from it: (see Dr. Friend's *History of Physic,* p. 37.) But, with submission to so great a name, I am not satisfied of the justice of the remark, since, on the one hand, δαπαναω is used in a better sense, 2 Cor. xii. 15. (and δαπανη, in Luke xiv. 28. is the *necessary expense* of building, as a prudent man would compute it;) and, on the other hand, αναλισκω plainly signifies to *destroy* or *consume,* however that destruction or consumption be accomplished. (See Luke ix. 54; and 2 Thess. ii. 8.) Nor does it seem altogether certain, that a tenderness in speaking of others of the faculty, is any sure diagnostic of a physician's writings.

d *I shall be recovered.*] It is in the original σωθησομαι, *I shall be saved:* and there are many other places in which the word is used in the same sense; as to be sure it may with great propriety be applied to a rescue from any imminent danger or pressing calamity, especially in an extraordinary way. Compare Mark v. 23; vi. 56; Luke viii. 36; xvii. 19; xviii. 42; John xi. 12; and Acts iv. 9.

e *Of that distemper* with which she had been chastised, &c.] This being the plain meaning of μαστιγος here, I did not think it necessary to render it *plague* or *scourge,* as I have done in some other places.

f To shew that it had not escaped his notice.] And perhaps also to prevent a superstitious regard to any thing which might look like a relic of his, and from which weak people might, without any warrant, have expected benefit.

g *All denying it.*] The phrase not necessarily implying that the *woman* herself *denied it,* it would be unjust to suppose she was base or foolish enough immediately to deny what she had done; especially as the next moment we find her *owning it at large* with all possible candour.

h *Peter and his disciples—said unto him, Sir.*] Our English word Master, which we indifferently apply to almost any man to whom we speak, whether learned or unlearned, and which modern usage in common converse generally appropriates to inferiors, does by no means answer either to the Greek διδασκαλε, which signifies *teacher,* and would be most literally rendered doctor, (a word just of the same import in its original language,) or to επιστατα, the word here used, which denotes at least a presiding *authority.* I have therefore here chose to render it *Sir;* and should think διδασκαλε might as well be rendered *Rabbi,* as by any other word I can recollect. It is no wonder that titles of honour and respect cannot be perfectly translated from one language into another, considering the diversity of ranks and of ceremonies in different nations.

SECT. 72.

what a marvellous work *was wrought in her, she came fearing and trembling,* lest he should be displeased with this surreptitious method she had taken; *and falling down before him, she* candidly *told him all the truth;* [*and*] *declared to him before all*

LUKE VIII. 47

the people, without any reserve, *for what reason she had* thus *touched him, and how she had been immediately healed* by that touch, of the grievous distemper she had been so many years afflicted with, which no force of medicines could remove or abate.

MATT. IX. 22

But Jesus, having thus *turned about and seen her,* instead of reproving her with the severity she expected, *said to her,* in a most gentle and condescending manner, *Daughter, take courage,* and be comforted, for I am not offended with thee: I know the sincerity of *thy faith,* in the regard which thou hast shewn to me, though mingled with some infirmity; and it *has made thee well,* and fitted thee for a cure thou couldst not otherwise have received: and therefore *go* home *in peace* and cheerfulness; for I dismiss thee with my blessing, (see note l, on Luke vii. 50. p. 121.) *and* assure thee thou shalt continue to *be free from* any return of *thy distemper. And* accordingly *the woman was* perfectly *well from that hour,* and the malady never returned upon her as long as she lived.

MARK V. 35

In the mean time, *while he was yet speaking* to the woman, [*some*] messengers *came from* [*the house of*] Jairus, *the ruler of the synagogue,* whom we mentioned above: *and* they *said unto him, Thy daughter,* in whose behalf thou art applying to Jesus, *is* now actually *dead,* and consequently beyond the reach of prayer and of help: *why* therefore *dost thou trouble the* great *Master* in our Israel to come *any farther? Do not trouble him*[i] to come into the house of mourning, where he can only renew their sorrows

36 by the lateness of his arrival there. *But as soon as Jesus heard the word which was spoken* by these messengers, in which they related this melancholy news, *he says to the* afflicted *ruler of the synagogue,* Be not discouraged by these mournful tidings; and, notwithstanding they have brought thee such a sad account, *be not afraid,* as if there were no hope; *only believe* in the divine power and goodness operating by me, *and* I will answer for it, that, desperate as thy daughter's case may now appear to a human eye, *she shall* still *be recovered.*

LUKE VIII. 51

And when he came to enter *into the ruler's house, he permitted none* of the company *to follow him* in, *except* his three most intimate friends, *Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James,* whom he was pleased to distinguish on this, as he did afterwards on other occasions; *and* these, with *the father and the mother of the* deceased *maiden,* were the only persons whom he permitted to be eye-witnesses of the miracle he was about

52 to perform. *And,* as she was an only daughter, *all* their relations and friends who were present *wept* bitterly, *and lamented her: and,* as soon as Jesus was entered, *he saw the tumult, and the* crowd of *people who wept and cried out aloud;*[k] *and* there were also *the flute-players,* as usual on such occasions,[l] *making a* mournful *noise* with their musical

MARK V. 39

instruments, to soothe the grief of the afflicted family. *And when he was come in* to the house, *he says to them, Retire,* and make way that I may see her; [*and*] *do not weep* in this abandoned and inconsolable manner: for *why do you lament, and make* a noise? and where is the need of all *this* hurry and *disturbance? The damsel,* whose departure you so bitterly bewail as if her loss was irretrievable, *is not* finally *dead, but is* fallen

40 *asleep;* and if you have a little patience you shall see her awakened; (by which he intimated that this death should be like a transient sleep; see John xi. 11, 13. § cxxxix.) *And they,* not understanding his true meaning, were so rude that they *derided him,* as if the assertion had been altogether wild and ridiculous, well *knowing that she was* really and certainly *dead. But* he, too wise to enter into a clamorous debate with them, desired them to withdraw; and *when he had put them all out* of the way, *he takes the father and mother of the* deceased *maiden, and those* three disciples *that were with him, and enters in* to

41 the chamber *where the damsel lay* dead. *And,* approaching the bed on which the corpse was laid out, *he took hold of her hand: and,* to express his power over death itself, *called* with a loud voice, *saying to her,* (as if she had indeed been only asleep,) *Talitha cumi; which* Syriac expression, *being translated* into our language, *signifies Maiden, (I say*

42 *unto thee,) rise up. And* he had no sooner spoken these words, but *presently her spirit came back again* to animate the body which it had deserted, *and she* was so perfectly recovered that she *arose and walked;* which she was well able to do, *for she was twelve*

43 *years old. And,* as the life to which she was restored was not to be supported by a continued miracle, but must have food to nourish it in a natural way, *he ordered that some-*

what was done in her,] came [fearing and] trembling, and falling down before him, she [told him all the truth, *and*] declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. [Mark v. 33.]

Matt. ix. 22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, [unto her,] Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; [go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.] And the woman was made whole from that hour. [Mark v. 34. Luke viii. 48.]

Mark v. 35. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house, certain* which said [to him,] Thy daughter is dead. Why troublest thou the Master any further? [trouble him not.] [Luke viii. 49.]

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe, [and she shall be made whole.] [Luke viii. 50.]

Luke viii. 51. And when he came into the [ruler's] house, he suffered no man [Mark, to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James,] and the father and the mother of the maiden. [Matt. ix. 23. Mark v. 37, 38.]

52 And all wept and bewailed her: [Mark, and he seeth the tumult, [and the people] that wept and wailed greatly,] [and the minstrels making a noise.] [Matt. ix. 23. Mark v. 38.]

Mark v. 39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Give place, *and* [Luke, weep not;] Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. [Matt. ix. 24. Luke viii. 52.]

40 And they laughed him to scorn, [Luke, knowing that she was dead.] But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. [Matt. ix. 24, 25. Luke viii. 53, 54.]

41 And he took [her by the hand, and called, saying] unto her, Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee) arise. [Luke viii. 54.]

42 And straightway [Luke, her spirit came again, and she] arose, and

i *Why dost thou trouble the Master any farther? Do not trouble him.*] As several persons came, one might say, *Why dost thou trouble him?* as Mark has it; and another as Luke, *Do not trouble him.* I am sensible the mention of both together is no ornament to the story: and perhaps it might have been as agreeable to our taste and manner, had both been expressed by saying, *Messengers came, who would have persuaded him not to have given Jesus the trouble of coming.* But I endeavour, in this work, to give the reader as exact a view as possible of the (very consistent) varieties with which different Evangelists record the same facts; and it seems an end considerable enough, to excuse some little inelegances of style which the execution of such a design must occasion. This remark is to be applied to many preceding and following passages.

k *Cried out aloud.*] A late version renders αλαλαζοντας, *howling:* which is indeed a sense that the original will bear, yet it is not always to be so translated: (see 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Gr.) And as the word howling is seldom used among us but in the case of brutes, or where great contempt is designed, I rather chose to drop a little of the emphasis of the word, than to shock a compassionate reader by so harsh an expression. To lift up the voice in weeping was common in the eastern countries: see Gen. xxi. 16; Judg. ii. 4; and 1 Sam. xxx. 4.

l *The flute-players,* as usual on such occasions.] It is well known that musical instruments were used by the Jews as well as the heathens in their lamentations for the dead, to soothe the melancholy of surviving friends by soft and solemn notes. There were persons who made it their business to perform this office, and to sing to their music. (See Jer. ix. 17; xlviii. 36; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; and the notes of Drusius and Wolfius on this place.) Many have observed, that flutes were used especially on the death of children, and larger and louder instruments on the death of an adult.

walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. [Matt. ix. 25. Luke viii. 55.]

43 And [he] commanded that something should be given her to eat. [Luke viii. 55.]

Luke viii. 56. And her parents [and they *all* were astonished with a great astonishment:] but he charged them [straitly] that they should tell no man what was done. [Mark v. 42, 43.]

Matt. ix. 26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man, possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils.

thing should be given her to eat; which, on account of her late illness, she had not been able to do for some time. SECT. 72.

And her parents, and they [*all*] who were present, *were exceedingly astonished*, as well as filled with joy and gratitude: *but* [*Jesus*] behaved with his usual modesty,[m] and *strictly charged them, that they should tell no man* the particulars of *what was done*, nor make it their business to blaze abroad an event which would of itself become more public than he would have desired. *And* indeed it soon did so; for such numbers knew that she was really dead, and saw her alive again, that *the fame of it*, as of a most illustrious and extraordinary miracle, *went abroad into all that country;* and, being made the common subject of discourse, greatly increased the reputation he had before acquired by so long a series of wonders that he had wrought among them. LUKE VIII. 56 MATT. IX. 26

And as Jesus passed on from thence out of the ruler's house, *two blind men*, who had heard of his being there, and waited for his coming out, *followed him*, as he went through the street, *crying out*, with great importunity, *and saying, O thou Son of David, have compassion upon us* in the miserable darkness that distresses us, and restore to us that precious sight which we have lost. *And* he took no notice of them as he walked on; but *when he was come into the house* to which he was going, *the* two *blind men*, by his permission, *came unto him: and Jesus says to them, Do you* indeed seriously *believe that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yes, Lord*, we have not the least doubt of it. *Then he touched their eyes, and said*, Since you have that persuasion, *be it unto you according to* the sincerity of *your faith. And* immediately they both found that *their eyes were opened*, and they saw strongly and distinctly. *And Jesus gave them a strict charge that they* should not report it publicly abroad, and *should tell no man*[n] of the cure they had received. *But* they were so transported at what he had done for them, that *when they were gone out, they* were not able to refrain from publishing the miracle, but immediately began to *spread his fame over all that country.* 27 28 29 30 31

And when he had thus cured the two blind men, just *as they went out* of the house where Jesus was, *behold, they brought to him a dumb person*, who had been for some time deprived of his speech by being *possessed with a demon. And when* by the victorious word of Jesus *the demon was expelled, the* man who had so long been *dumb spake* readily and distinctly; *and the multitudes were astonished, saying, it was never seen so*, even *in Israel* itself,[o] though it be a people among whom God has wrought such unparalleled wonders. *But the Pharisees* continued their senseless and blasphemous charge against him as a magician; and, not being able to deny facts that were so notorious, in order to prevent the effect which they might have upon the people, they *said, He* certainly *casts out* these inferior *demons by* a wicked confederacy with Beelzebub himself, *the prince of the demons*,[p] whose interest gains far more than it loses by dispossessions wrought by such a hand. 32 33 34

IMPROVEMENT.

We have here a scene of complicated wonders worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. Any single story of this kind might justly move our admiration; but when we are reading the life of Christ, such a constellation of miracles rises, that the number renders us less sensible of the lustre and glory of each.

We may observe in the story of the distempered woman a mixture of weakness and of faith. She could not reasonably think to steal a cure, without the knowledge of him by whom it was wrought; or imagine a charm in the garment that Christ wore, which could produce so glorious an effect, independent on his agency and will. Yet she acted as if she had thought thus; and a compassionate Redeemer commended her faith, and excused her infirmity. Such candour should we exercise towards those in whom we find any thing truly valuable; not despising the day of small things, but ready to encourage and support the weak, and to commend whatever good we may discover in them. MARK V. 25, *et seq.* 28 34

We have already beheld Christ frequently giving sight to the blind, and casting out evil spirits: but we have here a second instance of his power over death, and behold one under its dominion hearing the voice of the Son of God! In how majestic, and yet in how gentle a manner, does he address himself to this admirable work! *Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.* And immediately she heard and obeyed. Thus shall he, with equal ease, call forth myriads of his saints, who now seem perished in the dust: and it may be said with regard to them also, in reference to that day, They are not dead, but sleep. The maiden, of whom we here read, arose only to a dying life; a life which needed the support of food, and was in no respect more noble, or more secure, than that of other mortals: but we look for a better resurrection, in which all the infirmities of the body shall be left behind in the grave: and *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor cryings.* (Rev. xxi. 4.) LUKE VIII. 51, *et seq.* 54 52 55

In expectation of this, let us restrain immoderate sorrow when our pious friends are taken away: let us not make too much ado on the occasion, nor allow ourselves to be thrown into a tumult of passion, even when our children MARK V. 39

m With his usual modesty.] It is well worth the reader's observation, with what perfect decorum our Lord conducted himself on this occasion; and how entirely he appears master of himself, and superior to any views of human applause. Dr. Lardner has illustrated this with a just and lively spirit of criticism. See his *Answer to Woolston*, p. 89.

n *Jesus gave them a strict charge, that they should tell no man.*] Our version is more literal, but the sense is perfectly the same. I intended the variation only as a specimen of several of the like kind, which I think might be made in a manner which would better suit the genius of our language, though (perhaps through an excess of tenderness) I have not often ventured to take even such little liberties as these. See Mr. Pope's *note* on *Homer's Iliad*, Vol. II. Book vi. ver. 665.

o *It was never seen so*, even *in Israel* itself.] This reflection was perfectly just; for no one of the prophets, that we read of in the Old Testament, appears to have wrought so many beneficial miracles in his whole life, as our Lord did in this one afternoon.

p *He casts out demons by the prince of the demons.*] Our Lord had in an unanswerable manner confuted this base calumny before: (see § 61. p. 122. *et seq.*) Yet they had the assurance to advance it again, without any regard to that confutation. Such were the infidels of those days, as well as of these.

SECT. 72. are stretched on the bed of death; but believing in Christ, and governing ourselves by his precepts and maxims, let us in humble resignation, and submissive, though mournful silence, wait the issues of his providence and grace; since he knows how, as in this instance, to over-rule the calamities of our families to the good of our souls, and even to strengthen our faith by those exercises which might seem most likely to overthrow it.

SECTION LXXIII.

Christ renews his visit to Nazareth, where he is again rejected by the inhabitants; and thence takes a circuit through the neighbouring country. Matt. xiii. 54, *to the end*; ix. 35, *to the end*; Mark vi. 1—6.

MARK vi. 1.

SECT. 73. *AND* Jesus, when *he went out from thence*,[a] and was departed from Capernaum, where he had raised the daughter of Jairus, *and* performed the other miracles which have just been mentioned, *came* again *into his own country* and town of Nazareth, and there
MARK VI. renewed the gracious proclamations which they had several months before so ungratefully rejected; *and his disciples*, as usual, *followed him* thither.

2 *And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue*, as he had formerly done, though they had then attempted in a tumultuous manner to destroy him on the same occasion: (sect. xxxii. p. 65.) *And many* of his townsmen, *hearing him, were struck with amazement, and said*, as several had done before,[b] *From whence hath this man*, whose birth and education we know, *this wisdom* which he manifests in these excellent discourses, *and* the power of performing *these mighty works? And what* supernatural *wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such* amazing *miracles* as these
3 *are done by his hands? Is not this* Jesus *the* man who but a while ago wrought among us as a *carpenter*,[c] and was *the son of* Joseph *the carpenter?* And *is not his mother*, who is *called Mary*, still living? *And* [*are not*] our neighbours, *James and Joses, and Simon and Judas*, whom we all know and daily converse with, *his brethren*, or near
MATT. XIII. kinsmen?[d] *And are not all his sisters*, or kinswomen, *here* at Nazareth *with us?* From *whence then hath this man all these* extraordinary *things*[e] which furnish him for this
56 illustrious character which he assumes, superior to that of the greatest teachers and princes
57 of our nation? *And they were offended in him*, and stumbled at the poverty of his education and family; so that they paid very little regard to what he preached.

MARK VI. *But Jesus said unto them*, This is indeed a most unreasonable treatment that I meet with from you: but it is obvious, even to a proverb, That *a prophet is no where less*
4 *esteemed than in his own country, and among his* nearest *relations, even in his own family*;[f] who form their judgment of him by the mean appearance which they remember he made formerly in private life, and are regardless therefore of the excellence of his doctrine, and of the plainest evidences of his divine authority and mission.

5 *And* this was verified in their conduct to him: for notwithstanding all that he had done in other places, they were so strongly prejudiced against him by the meanness of his outward circumstances, that they were openly regardless of the favour of his presence, and would not come to him for help; for which reason *he could not there* have any opportunity to exercise his power, or to *do any miracle* of note,[g] *excepting* only *that he laid his hands upon a few sick people, and cured them*; [*but*] *he did not perform many*
6 *mighty works* among them, *on account of their unbelief. And he wondered at* the continuance of *their infidelity*, especially considering the many additional evidences they had received of his Divine power in his late signal operations.

MATT. IX. *And* upon this *Jesus* left them,[h] and departing from Nazareth, *went round about* to *all the* neighbouring *cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching*
35 *the good news of the kingdom* which God was about to erect; *and* wherever he came, he gave abundant testimonials of the truth of his doctrine, by *healing every disease, and*

MARK vi. 1.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his disciples follow him. [Matt. xiii. 54.]

2 And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him*, were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man [this wisdom, and these mighty works!] and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? [Matt. xiii. 54.]

3 Is not this the carpenter? [the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon and Judas?] [Matt. xiii. 55.]

Matt. xiii. 56. And his sisters, are they not all [here] with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? [Mark vi. 3.]

57 And they were offended in him. [Mark vi. 3.]

Mark vi. 4. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. [Matt xiii. 57.]

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*; [*but* did not many mighty works, because of their unbelief.] [Matt. xiii. 58.]

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

Matt. ix. 35. And Jesus went [round] about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the

a *And he went out from thence.*] These words of Mark do plainly show that this visit to Nazareth is to be placed here: I say, to Nazareth, that being called *his own country*, by way of distinction from the rest of Galilee, and particularly from Capernaum, whence he now went out. See Luke iv. 23. p. 64.

b *And said*, as several had done before.] Luke plainly asserts that visit to Nazareth, which he mentions, to have been before many occurrences which Mark tells us happened before this. It is evident therefore, they are *different visits*; nor is there any difficulty in supposing, that some now present, who perhaps had not heard him before, might repeat so natural a reflection as this. Compare Luke iv. 22. p. 64.

c Wrought among us as a *carpenter.*] The Jews tell us, *he made rakes and yokes.* Their canons required, that all parents should teach their children some trade; and probably the poverty of the family engaged Christ, while he was at home with his parents, to work at his. See Grotius on Matt. xiii. 55.

d *His brethren* or near kinsmen.] Whether they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage, or the children of some brother or sister of Joseph or Mary, is not material. Every one knows that it was common with the Jews, to use the name of brethren in a larger sense, and to apply it to cousins and near kinsmen, as well as to those that were brethren in the proper sense of the word.

e *Whence hath this man all these* extraordinary *things?*] This, like many other things which have since been objected against the gospel of Christ, is as much the language of stupidity as of infidelity; for the meanness of Christ's education was a demonstration that his teaching in so excellent a manner must be the effect of some extraordinary divine influence on his mind.

f *A prophet is no where less esteemed*, &c.] This is plainly the sense of the words, (though our translation is more literal:) for a prophet may be, and often is, affronted at a distance from home; as Christ himself found by frequent experience. (Compare John iv. 44. p. 52. and Luke iv. 24. p. 65.)—I have rendered the last words καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, *even in his own family*; as καὶ often has such a signification, and here seems most forcible if it be so interpreted.

g *He could not there do any miracle.*] We are not to understand these words so strictly, as if the power of Christ was here disarmed, but only, that as they brought few sick people to him for a cure, he did not judge it convenient to obtrude his miracles upon them, and so could not honourably and properly perform them. On the same principle it is, that faith in some cases, though not in all, is made the condition of receiving a cure; (compare Mark ix. 23; Matt. ix. 28; and Acts xiv. 9.) and Christ saw it proper to make it so here; as he well might, considering what they must undoubtedly have heard of him from other places, and what they had confessed themselves but just before, of mighty works being wrought by his hands: which shews indeed that their unbelief did not so much consist in a doubt of his miraculous power, as of his divine mission, which, to any unprejudiced person's mind, that power so abundantly proved. In this view therefore, it is hard to say how he could, with honour and decency, have lavished away his favours on so unworthy a people.

h *Jesus* left them.] So far as we can learn from the gospel-history, he never after this returned any more to Nazareth.

kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people. [Mark vi. 6.]

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few.

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

every malady among the people. And beholding the multitudes which flocked around him, *he was moved with* tender *compassion for them, because they were faint* with the fatigue of frequent journeyings, *and exposed* to continual danger,[1] *as sheep that had no shepherd* to feed them with spiritual food, or to watch for the safety and edification of their souls. *Then*, as he intended immediately after this to send out his twelve apostles, *he says to* them and *his* other *disciples*, to quicken their devotion and zeal, *The harvest* of souls to be gathered in *is indeed great, but the* faithful *labourers* who assist in it *are few:* And *therefore* let me urge you to *make your* importunate *supplications to the* great *Lord* and Master *of the harvest, that he would*, by the secret but powerful energy of his Spirit on men's hearts, conquer their natural disinclination to this excellent work, and so *thrust forth* a sufficient number of active and indefatigable *labourers into his harvest*,[k] by whom it may successfully be carried on, to his own greater glory, and the edification and salvation of souls.

SECT. 73. MATT. IX. 36. 37 38

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE the blessed Jesus vouchsafed to renew his visit to Nazareth, where they had attempted to murder him on his first preaching among them, let us not be weary of well-doing, nor refuse to renew our attempts on the most obstinate sinners, where the interests of their immortal souls are concerned. 1

But though they were astonished at his wisdom, and could not but allow the mighty works that he had wrought, yet these ungrateful creatures went on to reject him, and in so doing were condemned out of their own mouth: nor can we be at any loss for instances of those who in later ages have fallen under the like condemnation. 2

He is spoken of as the carpenter; which intimates that he once wrought at that mean employment. What amazing condescension was this in the *Son of God*, and the *Heir of all things, by whom also the worlds were made!* (Heb. i. 2.) Yet surely while the hands of Christ were employed in these daily labours, his soul was rising in holy contemplations and devout affections. So may we intermingle pious meditations with our secular cares, and have our conversation in heaven, while our dwelling is on earth! 3

How much did these Nazarenes lose by their obstinate prejudices against Jesus! How many diseased bodies might have been cured, how many lost souls might have been recovered and saved, had they given him a better reception! May Divine Grace deliver us from that unbelief which does as it were disarm Christ himself, and render him a savour of death, rather than of life, to our souls! 5

Still he continued his gracious labours, and, when rejected in one city, went and preached in another; still surrounded with a crowd of admirers, whom he viewed with tender regard. Let his ministers learn of him tenderly to pity those who are faint and exposed to danger, and are as sheep having no shepherd. The extreme necessities of his churches in many places are but too apparent: let us earnestly pray, that God would behold them with compassion; that he would graciously provide for their instruction, and would thrust forth such labourers among them as may be diligent and faithful in their work, and prove the happy instruments of *gathering in fruit to everlasting life.* (John iv. 36.)

MARK VI. 1 2 3 5 MATT. IX. 35. 36, 37 38

SECTION LXXIV

Our Lord sends forth his apostles with a commission, and gives them instructions to preach the gospel.
Matt. x. 1—15. Mark vi. 7—11. Luke ix. 1—5.

MATT. x. 1.

AND when he had called [Luke, together] unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power [Luke, and authority over all devils, *or*] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. [Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 1.]

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholo-

MATT. x. 1.

AND Jesus *having called his twelve disciples together*,[a] whom (it has been observed before, Luke vi. 13. p. 106.) he had chosen some time since to be his constant followers and attendants, and who were named apostles from their mission; *he* endowed them with the gift of working miracles, and *gave them power and authority over all* kinds of *demons*, [*or*] *unclean spirits, to cast them out* of those unhappy persons whom they had possessed, *and to cure every distemper, and every malady*, how malignant and dangerous soever. 1

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first of them, who was one of the most early followers of Christ, and the first that was called to a stated attendance upon him, (p. 67.) and whose remarkable zeal and piety rendered him a kind of leader among them, was *Simon, who is* also *called Peter*,[b] as Christ had honoured him with that surname; (see John i. 42. p. 43.) *and Andrew his brother*, who was called the same day with him: *James the* [*son*] *of Zebedee* the fisherman, *and John his brother*, that beloved disciple; who were also called at the same time with the two former, as they were fishing at the sea of Galilee, (p. 67.) *Philip* of Bethsaida, *and Bartholomew:* 2 3

SECT. 74. MATT. X.

1 *Faint and exposed.*] Though the learned Elsner has taken a great deal of pains to prove, in his *note* on this text, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 49, 50.) that εκλελυμενοι signifies *scattered*, or *wandering*, yet I still chuse to render it, *they were faint*; which sense of the word is sufficiently vindicated by Wolfius, (*in loc.*) and Albert. (Observ. p. 76, 77.) and is established by the use of it in other places of the New Testament. Compare Matt. xv. 32; Mark viii. 3; Gal. vi. 9; and Heb. xii. 3, 5.—But I think Elsner has advanced enough to justify the rendering of εσκυλμενοι, exposed to every invading danger, as sheep are, when thrown up or abandoned by their shepherd.

k *Thrust forth labourers into his harvest.*] The word εκβαλη so plainly imports this, that I am sorry I retained our less emphatical translation in the first edition. Whoever considers the immense difficulties and oppositions with which every minister of Christ's kingdom was sure to encounter in those early days of it, will see the necessity of some unusual energy and impulse on the mind to lead any to undertake it.

a *Having called his twelve disciples together.*] There can be no room to doubt that this is the *proper place* of the *mission of the apostles*, considering its connexion with the preceding stories in all the Evangelists that mention it.

b *The first, Simon who is called Peter.*] The reasons assigned in the paraphrase are so apparently sufficient to account for Peter's being named *first*, that it is strange any should have attempted to prove from this text the *authority of Peter* over his brethren, when we never find it declared by Christ, or claimed by Peter, or owned by any of the rest of the apostles, but rather find so many scriptures which appear to look a contrary way. See Matt. xxiii. 8—12; Acts xv. 13. *et seq.* 2 Cor. xii. 11; and Gal. ii. 11.

SECT. 74. MATT. X.

Thomas called Didymus; *and Matthew*, who had been *the publican: James* [*the son*] of *Alpheus; and Lebbeus, whose sirname was Thaddeus*, and who was also called Judas or Jude, the brother of James: *Simon the Canaanite*, a native of Cana;[c] *and Judas Iscariot*, or a man of Carioth, that wicked and miserable creature, *who* afterwards *even betrayed him*, and then laid violent hands on himself.

5 *These twelve* disciples *Jesus sent forth by two and two* in pairs,[d] that they might be agreeable companions and assistants to each other in their work; *and* he *commanded them* to go into those places which he himself purposed shortly to visit;[e] and *to preach* there the gospel of *the kingdom of God*, or to proclaim the joyful tidings of the approaching kingdom of the Messiah; *and*, in confirmation of it, *to heal the sick*, and exert the other miraculous powers which he had given them. And upon this occasion he made an excellent discourse to them, *saying*, In this circuit which I now send you, *do not go into the way of the Gentiles*; for the glad tidings of the gospel are not yet sent to them; *nor enter into* [*any*] *city of the Samaritans*, if you should be obliged to pass through their country; though I once did it, and preached among them with considerable success.

6 (See John iv. 40, 41. sect. xxx.) *But* my message is chiefly to be delivered to the Jews; (compare Matt. xv. 24. and Rom. xv. 8.) and therefore *go ye rather to* them, *the* poor *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, who are generally wandering in the paths of error and sin; yet they shall receive this farther token of my regard, that the first notices of my

7 kingdom shall be sent to them. *And as ye go* from one place to another, wherever you come, *proclaim* this good news, *saying*, with that ardour and zeal which becomes my heralds,[f] *The* long-expected *kingdom of heaven is approaching*; prepare yourselves

8 therefore to receive the blessings of it. And that a declaration of so great importance may not want suitable testimonials, and the meanness of your personal appearance may not render the truth of it suspected, (as any proper occasion offers,) *heal the sick, cleanse the lepers*, yea, *raise the dead*,[g] and *cast out demons*: for such a power I have given to you, and see that you exert it in a manner most honourable to yourselves and me; [*and as*] *you have received* it *freely, freely give* unto others the assistance which it enables you to impart, and scorn the thought of making any gain of those for whom these works of mercy and power are performed.

MARK VI. MATT. X.

And he commanded them that they should take nothing for [*their*] *journey, except only a staff*, which they had in their hands:[h] and, to prevent any solicitude as to the

8 means of their support, *he said unto them*, Disburthen yourselves of all anxious cares on this occasion, and *provide neither bread*, or any other kind of food, for your subsistence, *nor money* to purchase provisions: *neither gold, nor silver, nor brass coin, in your purses*.[i] *Nor* even take so much as *a scrip* to carry any manner of provisions *for* [*your*] *journey; nor* think it needful you should have *two coats a piece*, or any change of

10 raiment; *nor* what might seem more necessary still, even another pair of *shoes*, or any stronger than ordinary, *but be shod* just as you are *with sandals*;[k] *nor yet* take any *staves*, but only those that you are used to walk with. *For the labourer is* surely *worthy of his food*: and as you may freely accept the necessary supplies of life when offered by those to whom you preach, so you may cheerfully trust the providence of God to take care of you while engaged in so good a cause; and he would rather support you by a miracle, than suffer you to want what shall be necessary for your sustenance.[l]

mew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whose sirname was Thaddeus:

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth [by two and two,] and commanded them [Luke, to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick,] saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: [Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 2.]

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.

Mark vi. 8. And *he* commanded them, that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; [Luke, and he said unto them,] Provide no bread, no money, [neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;] [Matt. x. 9. Luke ix. 3.]

Matt. x. 10. Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats [Luke, a-piece,] neither shoes, [but be shod with sandals,] nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. [Mark vi. 9. Luke ix. 3.]

c *Simon the Canaanite*, a native of Cana.] The reader may see an illustration of this title, and that of Lebbeus, § 52. p. 106. notes f, and g.

d *By two and two.*] It is obvious this would conduce to the *confirming* of their *testimony*, as in *the mouth of two witnesses every word is established*, (Matt. xviii. 16.) as well as make their mission much more comfortable than if each had been sent alone. Mr. Fleming has taken pains to shew, that there was great wisdom in joining them together in such pairs as are here intimated, on account of the resemblance or contrast of their characters. The discourse is very ingenious; but the memoirs of some of the apostles are so short, that much of it is uncertain conjecture, rather than convincing argument. See Fleming's *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 167. *et seq.*

e Which he himself purposed shortly to visit.] Our Lord was now entering at least on the third year of his ministry, and therefore purposed to take a larger tour than he had formerly done; concluding, that the fame of so many miracles would make way for his being heard with greater regard than before. (Compare § 31. p. 62. and § 36. p. 71, 72.) The time they had spent with him in an immediate attendance on his ministry, since their first call to the work, would no doubt conduce much to their *fitness* for it; and the *notice* taken of them by multitudes who had often seen them near Jesus would promote their *acceptance* in it. See Mark iii. 13, 14. p. 106.

f *Proclaim*—with that ardour and zeal which becomes my heralds.] This is the proper import of the word κηρυσσετε, which is derived from κηρυξ, *a herald*. Probably they were to make this proclamation with a loud voice as they passed through the streets of the towns they went to; as Jonah delivered his message to Nineveh. See Jonah iii. 4.

g *Raise the dead.*] Though many ancient copies have not this clause, and though we do not find that the apostles exerted any *such power* whilst Christ lived; yet since the oldest versions have it, and it is certainly much easier to *drop* than to *insert* a clause by accident, I chuse, with Dr. Whitby, to retain it, though there are great authorities on the other side. It is to me very evident, that some passages in this discourse refer to events which did not immediately take place. See Matt. x. 18, 21, 23. in the next section.

h *Except only a staff*, which they had in their hands.] There is no difficulty thus to reconcile this clause with what is said in Matthew, (ver. 10.) that they should *not provide a staff*, (as it is there expressed in the original, μηδε ραβδον;) for many *copies* read it in the *plural number*, μηδε ραβδους, *nor yet staves*; which reading is confirmed by Luke, (ver. 3.) where it is so expressed. Nor is there any need, we should suppose, with Heinsius, that ει is put for εαν here in Mark, as if they were commanded to *take nothing* with them, *not even so much as a staff*. For all that Christ intended was, that they should so entirely depend upon the providence of God, that they should set out with nothing but the staff in their hands; and that, however common it might be for those who were to travel a long way to be provided with two staves as well as with two coats, they need not be solicitous to have another ready in case one should fail.

i *In your purses.*] The original word, ζωνας, expresses the custom they had of carrying money in a kind of *fob-pocket* or purse, which was made in the duplicature of their girdles. See Dr. Shaw's *Travels*, p. 292.

k *Nor shoes, but be shod with sandals.*] I apprehend the word υποδηματα, *shoes*, must here signify a kind of *short boots*, which they used in long journeys, that covered the whole foot and *small* of the leg; whereas their *sandals* were pieces of strong *leather*, or *wood*, tied under the sole of the foot by strings, and something resembling modern clogs. See Calmet's *Dictionary*, Vol. II. p. 615. on the word SANDALS; and Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. x. 10.

l He would rather support you by a miracle, &c.] Our Lord intended this mission in part, as an initiation into their apostolic work; and it was, no doubt, an encouragement to them during all the remainder of life, to recollect the singular care which Providence now took of them, though they had abandoned their families, and with them the means of subsistence, and went out wholly unfurnished for such an expedition. In this view Christ leads them to recollect it, Luke xxii. 35. § 173.

11 And [he said unto them,] Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and [Luke, whatsoever house ye enter into,] there abide, [till ye depart from that place.] [Mark, vi. 10. Luke ix. 4.]

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it:

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the [Luke, very] dust of your feet, [for a testimony against them.] [Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5.]

15 Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city. [Mark vi. 11.]

And he farther *said unto them*, Go forth therefore with a holy alacrity; and *into whatever city or village you enter*, make it your first business to *inquire who in it is* of a *worthy* character for hospitality and piety; for I would not have you endanger your own reputation, by taking up your lodging in any disreputable family: *And whatever house you* thus *enter into, continue there till you leave the place;* that you may not seem to have too great a regard to the little circumstances of domestic accommodation, which it is beneath your character as my ministers to be very solicitous about. SECT. 74 — MATT. X. 11

And, as an early intimation of the friendly intention of your visit, *when you* first *enter into any family, salute it* in a courteous and religious manner, saying, according to the usual custom of friends when they enter the dwellings of each other, "Peace be upon this house."[m] *And if the family be worthy* the Divine regard, *your* good wishes for its *peace* and prosperity *shall come upon it*,[n] and I will make the blessing that you pronounce effectual: *but if it be not worthy*, even then *your* kind wishes for its *peace* and happiness shall not be lost, but *shall return unto you* in blessings on your own heads, as being the genuine workings of that pious and benevolent temper which God always approves and rewards. 12 13

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor in an obedient manner *hearken to your words:* as for such unhappy persons, *when you come out of that house or city* in which they dwell, *shake off the very dust of your feet as a testimony against them*,[o] or as a token that you look upon them as devoted by God to destruction, and therefore desire to separate yourselves entirely from them, that you may not be partakers of their plagues. (Compare Rev. xviii. 4. and Acts xviii. 6.) 14

And indeed you have reason to do it; for *verily I say unto you*, That whatever profession they may make of their regard to the true God, and however they may continue to boast of their national privileges, *it shall be more tolerable*, not only for the generality of Gentile sinners *in the day of* final *judgment*, but even *for* the natives of *the land of Sodom and Gomorrah*, those monsters of unnatural wickedness who were consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven, *than for* the inhabitants of *that* wretched *city;* for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah never sinned against such extraordinary light, and such singular favours as they. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT abundant reason is there for humble thankfulness, that the ambassadors of Christ were thus sent forth to preach the gospel, and that at length their number was increased, and their commission enlarged: so that instead of their being thus confined to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel, their* instructive *line is gone out through all the earth, and their words* have resounded even *to the end of the world:* (Psal. xix. 4.) May the purport of their message be seriously attended to! since it will so certainly be a savour of life or of death, of eternal salvation or aggravated condemnation and ruin. Ver. 1 5, 6

Let us tremble to think that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those by whom the gospel is rejected: and let us earnestly pray that divine grace may enable us to *receive it in the love of it*, and to obey *the truth that we may be saved.* (2 Thess. ii. 10.) 15

They who have the honour in this respect to succeed the apostles as ministers of this gospel, may learn most useful instructions from this discourse of our Divine Master. Let them speak and act as the messengers of peace, and the friends of mankind, who cordially wish well to all around them; and gratefully acknowledge the kindness which, as faithful labourers, they have justly deserved. Let them shew a true greatness of mind, in an apparent superiority to temporal interests and present gratifications; easy in whatever accommodations they find where Providence leads them; and forgetting themselves to remember their Master, and the souls he has committed to their care. 12, 13 10

Let them faithfully warn all around them of the importance of their eternal concerns, and of the unutterable danger of receiving the grace of God in vain, that, whether men will hear or forbear, they may be clean from their blood. And, while we preserve such a temper and conduct, we may cheerfully hope, that God will be with us in the way that we go, and, how precarious soever our circumstances may seem, will give us food to eat and raiment to put on. May we all have this token for good, that God will take care of our interests; even the consciousness of our being faithfully engaged to promote his glory, and our joyful *readiness to spend and be spent* for the service of souls! (2 Cor. xii. 15.) 9, &c.

m Peace be upon this house.] This custom of saluting friends after this manner is still retained among the Turks and other eastern nations; and I thought it not improper to express it for the illustration of what follows.

n *Your peace shall come upon it.*] This is one of those many passages in which (as the grammarians speak) the imperative is put for the future; that is, *Let it come*, for *It shall come:* (so 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) And perhaps many seeming imprecations in the Old Testament may most easily be accounted for, by such an explication as prophetic predictions of what should happen to the enemies of God and his people.

o *Shake off the very dust of your feet*, &c.] The Jews thought there was something of so peculiar an *holiness* in the *land of Israel*, that when they came home from any heathen country, they stopped at its borders, and wiped the dust of it from their shoes, that the sacred inheritance might not be polluted with it; nor would they permit herbs to be brought to them from their neighbours, lest they should bring any of the dust of their land upon them. So that the action enjoined to the apostles here was a lively intimation that, when the Jews had rejected the gospel, they were no longer to be regarded as the people of God, but were on a level with heathens and idolaters. See Mr. Fleming's *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 160.

SECTION LXXV.

Our Lord faithfully warns his apostles of the danger and opposition they might expect to encounter in his service. Matt. x. 16—28.

MATT. X. 16.

SECT. 75.

MATT. X.

WHEN our Lord had thus instructed his apostles as to their behaviour and office in general, he went on faithfully to lay before them the difficulties and trials they were to expect in the execution of it; and added, *Behold, I send you out as* so many innocent and defenceless *sheep, in the midst of* a whole multitude of fierce and ravenous *wolves*,[a] who will not fail to watch every opportunity to attack and even devour you: *be ye therefore* 16 continually on your guard against them, and labour to approve yourselves *prudent as serpents*, in avoiding unnecessary dangers;[b] but, far from imitating the malignity and revengeful nature of that animal, maintain at all times a holy simplicity of soul, *and* be *harmless* and inoffensive *as doves*, those gentle creatures, who are innocent and loving to 17 a proverb. *But be upon your guard against* the *men* of the world with whom you converse, that you do not by any inadvertency give them advantage against you; *for they will* seek occasions of mischief, and *betray you to the councils*, and deliver you up to the sanhedrim, and other inferior courts of judicature, *and will* also *scourge you in their* 18 *synagogues*.[c] *And* in some cases the prosecution shall be carried yet farther; for *you shall be brought before governors and kings on my account*,[d] *for a witness to them and to the heathen*, as this will give you an opportunity of testifying my gospel more solemnly both to Jews and Gentiles.

19 *But when they shall* accuse you with the utmost virulence, and *deliver you up* to appear before such high personages, *be not* anxiously *solicitous* about your defence there, *how* you shall answer for yourselves, *or what you shall speak:* but cheerfully throw yourselves upon the divine assistance, which shall be abundantly sufficient for you; *for it shall be given you in that very hour what you shall speak;* proper thoughts and words shall be suggested to you, and your minds shall be maintained in that composure and dig- 20 nity which is necessary for the honour of the cause you assert.[e] *For* indeed, when you appear on these occasions, and are called to answer for yourselves, *it is not* [*so much*] *you that speak, as the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*, in defence of that gospel which it is his peculiar office to promote in the world.

21 Nevertheless, all the wisdom and justice of your apologies, though divinely inspired, will not disarm the malice of your unreasonable enemies, which shall prevail to such a degree, as even to triumph over natural affection, *and* break asunder the strictest bonds of social life: for *one brother shall betray another*, not only to some slighter punishment, but even *to* a violent and tormenting *death; and the father* shall thus become the murderer instead of the guardian and protector of *the son; and children*, on the other hand, forgetting all the obligations of filial duty and affection, *shall rise up* as witnesses *against* 22 *their* own *parents, and cause them to be put to death. And you*, my apostles, notwithstanding all the humanity of your character, and the benevolent design of your office, *shall be* the objects of such general aversion, censure, and persecution, that you shall in a manner be *hated of all men for the sake of my name*;[f] when your calling yourselves by it shall appear to your enemies themselves the only crime chargeable upon you: *but* be not discouraged at these trials; for *he that* courageously *endures to the end, shall* on the whole *be saved;* and whatever extremities he may suffer in this world, God will not only deliver him from the destruction that shall come upon the wicked, but will amply repay his fidelity in the next. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 13. and Rev. ii. 10.)

23 *But* I say not this to encourage you to rush upon martyrdom before you have a plain and lawful call to it: for, on the other hand, it will rather be your duty to prolong such useful lives to the utmost limits you lawfully may, and *when they persecute you in one city*, to *flee to another:* and though this may contract the time of your abode in each, be not discouraged at that, which may, on the whole, be no inconvenience; *for verily I*

MATT. X. 16.

BEHOLD, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues:

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

a *As sheep in the midst of wolves.*] So frankly did our Lord warn his apostles of the hardships and dangers with which they should be surrounded. Nothing could be more fair, nothing more generous.

b *Prudent as serpents.*] Pliny has given us some very remarkable stories of the sagacity of serpents, some of which, I confess, have the air of fables: (see Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* viii. *cap.* 23, 27.) But it is certain there is a peculiar vivacity in their eyes; so that to be as sharp-sighted as a serpent, was a proverb both among the Greeks and Romans. See Erasm. *Adag.* p. 580.

c *Scourge you in their synagogues.*] Compare Matt. xxiii. 34. and Acts xxii. 19. This is a sort of discipline which has long since been used in their synagogues, where they kept their courts; and which the wretched Acosta tells us he himself underwent. See Acost. *De Vit. Hum. ad fin*; Limborch. *Coll.* p. 349; Wits. *Vit. Pauli*, § 1. § 19—21. and Vitring. *De Synagog. Vet. lib.* iii. *par.* 1. *cap.* 11.

d *Before* governors and kings, &c.] Accordingly the apostles were, several of them, obliged to appear before princes, and were severely prosecuted by their malicious enemies before Herod, Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Domitian, &c. as we learn from sacred or profane history.

e For the honour of the cause you assert.] Persons of so low an education as the apostles generally were, might have been much terrified at the thought of appearing before such great personages; and might have feared lest, in the hurry of their spirits, they should have been betrayed into an impropriety of language or behaviour, by which the cause of the gospel might have suffered; so that nothing could have been more suitable than the promise which our Lord here makes them, which was sufficient to prevent a thousand anxious apprehensions.

f *You shall be hated of all men for the sake of my name.*] They who believed the testimony of the apostles, as multitudes did, could not but ardently love them as their fathers in Christ: (see Gal. iv. 15.) This therefore is plainly one of those many scriptures in which the universal term *all* is to be taken with great restrictions. See John xii. 32. Phil. ii. 21. and Rom. v. 18.—As there seems in this text a peculiar emphasis in the phrase *for the sake of my name*, I chuse in this edition to render it more literally than in the first; though (as I had there observed) it is apparent that *the name* of a person is sometimes put for *the person* himself. See note l, on John ii. 23. p. 40.

say unto you, You shall not have had time to *finish* [*your progress through*] all *the cities of Israel,* and to preach the gospel in every place, *until the Son of man shall come*[g] in a yet more awful appearance, to fulfil your prediction concerning the manifestation of his kingdom, and to take vengeance on your cruel persecutors. SECT. 75. MATT. X.

24 The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord:

25 It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord: if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household;

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the house-tops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

And as for the unkind usage I have warned you to expect, you have no reason to be surprised at it; for, as I have formerly observed, (Luke vi. 40. sect. liv.) *The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord: It is* abundantly *sufficient if the disciple be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord;* and in such a circumstance the disciple and the servant have cause for thankfulness rather than complaint. *If* then, as you have already heard and found, *they have called me,* who am *the Master of the family, Beelzebub,* and reviled me as a magician, whom they should have received as the Messiah, (see p. 122.) *how much more* will they be likely thus to abuse *his domestics,* whose character and station are so much inferior to his! 24 25

Since *therefore* you have my example before you, and suffer in my cause, *fear them not,* but courageously sustain the utmost efforts of their rage; and assure yourselves that I will support you till you have finished your testimony: *for there is nothing* now *hid which shall not be revealed: nor* has any thing passed in *secret* between us *which shall not be* universally *made known.* See to it then, that you remember to what purpose I have admitted you to so great an intimacy with me, and discoursed so largely concerning my kingdom; and *what I say to you in darkness, speak* [*it*] *in the light* of open day; *and what you hear,* as it were, whispered *in the ear, proclaim* publicly with a loud voice as *from the house-tops.* 26 27

And though the boldness of your testimony may indeed at length cost you your lives, yet *be not afraid of them who* can only *kill the* mortal *body, and cannot kill* or hurt *the* immaterial *soul,* which will still survive in all its vigour, while its tabernacle lies in ruins;[h] *but* much *rather fear,* lest, by being unfaithful in so important a trust, you should incur the displeasure of *him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,* and has power to fill the separate spirit with anguish, or at the final judgment to re-unite it to the body, and condemn both to everlasting misery in that infernal prison. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

How apparently fit is it that this eternal and almighty God should be the object of our humble fear, and that in comparison with him we should fear nothing else! All the terrors of the world are disarmed by this; and by this are his flatteries also disarmed. In whatever stations of life we are fixed, let this engage us to be faithful to God in them: so shall we be most truly faithful to ourselves! Ver. 28

The apostles were exposed to peculiar dangers and trials; but *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus* must expect some degree of persecution; (2 Tim. iii. 12.) let us therefore arm ourselves with the same mind, that we may bear it with a truly Christian fortitude. May divine grace teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, and to shelter ourselves from the ill usage of a perverse and sinful generation, so far only as we can do it without offering any violation to our consciences! 16

It is indeed matter of great lamentation, that the sentiments of benevolence and goodness, which seem so natural to the human mind, and are always so ornamental and delightful, should prevail no more: and it is shameful, that the name of religion, so well calculated to cultivate these sentiments, should be made use of as an engine to destroy them; and instead of cementing kingdoms and families in closer and more affectionate bonds, should inspire them even with mortal animosity. Let us bless God for our public liberties; and earnestly pray, that where persecution reigns in its utmost terror, *the wrath of man* may *praise him,* and *the remainder of* that *wrath* be *restrained!* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) 21

The ill usage which the blessed Jesus endured from an ungrateful world may surely prevent our being surprised or offended, if we meet with some share of it too. May we be willing to suffer with him, that we may at length *reign with him!* (2 Tim. ii. 12.) And if, by unexpected revolutions in providence, we should be called out to the severest trials, may the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon us! and may we not account even our lives dear unto us, that, approving our fidelity to him, we may *finish our course with joy!* (1 Pet. iv. 14. and Acts xx. 24.) 24, 25

SECTION LXXVI.

Our Lord concludes his charge to his apostles with an assurance of God's providential care for their encouragement, and with a promise of abundant future rewards to all that should faithfully serve him, or assist others in his work; and, after this, they separate from one another, and go to different parts to preach the gospel. Matt. x. 29, *to the end;* xi. 1. Mark vi. 12, 13. Luke ix. 6. SECT. 76.

MATT. x. 29.

ARE not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on

MATT. x. 29.

AFTER these faithful warnings of the dangers to which the apostles would be exposed in his service, our Lord went on to lay before them such encouragements as might animate MATT. X. 29.

g *Until the Son of man shall come.*] I do not find that the apostles met with any persecution in this first progress, from which they soon returned to Christ, and told him all that they had done; (see Mark vi. 30. and Luke ix. 10.) 78.' and therefore, as well as for many other reasons, I cannot understand *the coming of the Son of man* to signify his overtaking them in this journey before they came to the end of it: nor does it appear natural, with Dr. Sykes, (in his *Essay on the Truth of Christianity,* p. 85. *et seq.*) to refer it to *Christ's coming to judgment.* It is rather, as Mr. Whiston observes, (in his *Discourse of Prophecy,* p. 63.) to be explained of their being driven out of Judea by persecutions, so that they had not time to visit all the parts of it before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which is often called *the coming of the Son of man.* See Matt. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 44. and Luke xviii. 8.

h *Cannot kill the soul,* &c.] I have paraphrased the words so as to illustrate the certain argument they contain to prove the existence of the soul in a separate state, and its perception of that existence; else the soul would be as properly killed as the body. Grotius has an excellent note here.

SECT. 76. MATT. X.

their courage and pious zeal; and began with reminding them of the universal extent of the divine providence; *are not two* young *sparrows*, said he, *sold for a* single *farthing? yet* there is *not one of them* that by any accident *shall fall to the ground* and die, *without* the observation and permission of *your* heavenly *Father.*[a] *And* not only are the more noble and vital parts of your animal frame regarded by God, but *even the* very 31 *hairs of your head are all numbered* by him. *Fear not, therefore*, that you should be overlooked; for, even as men, and especially as my servants and ambassadors, *you are of more value than many sparrows*, or than the whole species of them; and therefore may assure yourselves that Providence will watch over you.

the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 And let it be a farther encouragement to you to remember, that whatever you may now suffer for your fidelity to me, it will on the whole be most amply rewarded; for the regard that every one expresses to me here, shall be publicly remembered and acknowledged hereafter: *whosoever, therefore, shall* courageously *confess me before men*, be he ever so mean in the eyes of the world, *I also will* not fail to *confess him* in all the glories of my final appearance, not only *before* the assembled world, but even in the immediate presence of *my Father in heaven*, to whose everlasting favour all my faithful servants 33 shall be introduced: *But whosoever shall renounce me before men*, as ashamed or afraid to acknowledge his relation to me, *I also will renounce him before my Father in heaven* as a mean and unworthy creature, who has forfeited all claim to my patronage and favour in that awful day.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 But, to prevent the mistaken expectations which the apostles might form of the immediate temporal prosperity of his kingdom, our Lord farther added, *Do not suppose that I am come to send* and establish *peace on the land* in which we dwell:[b] for, though the general purport of my gospel has so powerful a tendency to promote it, yet the prejudices and lusts of men will so oppose and pervert it, that it will rather seem, from the event of 35 it, that *I came not to send peace, but a sword. For* a few will indeed embrace it; but they will be so cruelly persecuted even by their nearest relations, that I may say, *I am come to set a man at variance against his* own *father, and the daughter against her* own *mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*,[c] when the circum- 36 stances of the family were such, that they might otherwise have agreed. So that the ties of blood shall be forgotten, and the bonds of friendship violated; *and a man's enemies*, yea oftentimes the most severe and inveterate of them, [*shall be*] *those of his own family*, and it may be, the nearest of his relations, from whom he might justly have expected the greatest friendship.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 Prepare yourselves then for such severe trials as these, by remembering, that *he who loves* his *father or mother more than me*, and is induced by his regard to them to disobey my precepts, or to renounce my doctrine, *is not worthy of me*, nor shall have any interest in my saving benefits: *and he that loves* even his *son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of* an interest in *me* and my friendship, though it should be an only 38 child that he prefers to me, and for the sake of whom he abandons my gospel. *And*, in a word, *he that* is so concerned for his own ease and safety that he will not suffer for my sake, and *does not* resolutely *take* up *his cross* when providentially laid in his way, *and follow after me*,[d] even to die upon it, when the honour of my name and cause requires it, and I, as the Captain of his salvation, lead him on to it, cannot be owned as my faithful disciple, and *is not worthy of* an interest in *me*. (Compare Mark viii. 34. sect. lxxxix.)

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 Be assured, however, that you shall find it to be well worth your while to endure all these extremities for my sake; for *he that finds* and saves *his life*, by deserting my cause, *shall lose it* on the whole, as he will thus incur a sentence of final condemnation and destruction;[e] *but he that* out of faithfulness to me *loses his life*, and lays it down *for*

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

a *Not one of them shall fall to the ground*, &c.] Some have supposed there is a reference here to the two birds, which made a part of the leper's offering: (Lev. xiv. 4—7.) As if the sense of what our Lord expresses were, that Providence determines which of those two insignificant animals shall *live*, and which be *killed*. But as the words are capable of a more extensive sense, and our Lord elsewhere mentions five sparrows just to the same purpose, (Luke xii. 6. § 111.) I see no reason for paraphrasing them with any particular view to that rite. They are a full proof of the universality of the divine providence; but the singular interpositions of it in favour of good men, may in a much more convincing manner be argued, from the prayers and praises offered in scripture with regard to particular events, and the promises of temporal blessings made to those that fear and serve God. Nor can I think we are much concerned to determine how far any of these are miraculous, and how far the result of general laws settled in an exact congruity to the temper and conduct of every individual affected by them, which an omniscient God forgsaw, and which his perfect schemes might easily provide for, by methods to us unsearchable. It is plain, Homer thought Divine Providence interested itself in the lives of brute animals. See *Iliad. lib.* xv. ver. 274. See also Grotius, *in loc.*

b *To send peace on the land* in which we dwell.] That the word γη often signifies *some particular land*, and especially *Judea*, rather than the *whole earth*, is undeniably plain; (compare Matt. xxiii. 35. and Luke iv. 25.) And I have given it that turn here, because there was no part of the world where Christianity occasioned so much dissension, and none where peace was so much expected from the kingdom of the Messiah. Yet how very unjust it is, that any of those contentions which the gospel has accidentally occasioned should be urged as an argument against its divine authority, the reader may see in the excellent *Sermons* of the present Bishop of Winchester on this subject, in his *Miscellaneous Tracts*. In one word, the matter will issue in this; that if Christianity has occasioned more discord than any other religion, the only reason is, because it animates its professors to greater zeal for the truth, and better proves it to be worth their while to *suffer for conscience-sake*.

c *And the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.*] The thought seems to sink here, as it is much more usual for *mothers* and *daughters-in-law*, in whatever relation, to quarrel, than *natural parents* and *children*; but if we consider, that our Lord speaks of this as the first occasion of a quarrel between them, it may intimate a supposition, that they were persons of a friendly temper, who, even in such a relation, might otherwise have lived together on easy terms: a thought which seems to me to enliven the discourse, and which may lead us to reflect how often bigotry entirely transforms a natural disposition, that in itself was mild and amiable. Compare Luke xii. 53. note d, § 115.

d *He that does not take* up *his cross and follow after me.*] This alludes to the custom of persons *carrying the cross* to which they were to be fastened; and was a strong intimation, that he should himself be *crucified*; and that none could be a sincere Christian without a willingness to bear even that shameful and cruel death for his sake, if he was called to it. See Grotius, *in loc.*

e *He that finds his life, shall lose it*, &c.] The sense that I have given in the paraphrase, as it is much more general, and more important, appears to me much preferable to that of Dr. Hammond, who interprets the text of the Christians saving their lives by

my sake, shall find it in a far more noble state of being, which infinitely better deserves the name of life. SECT. 76.

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

And as for you, my servants, let none be afraid of shewing kindness to you, lest they should share with you in your sufferings for my sake; for *he that entertains you, does* in effect *entertain me*, whose ministers you are; *and he that entertains me, does* also *entertain him that sent me*, and my heavenly Father will regard it as done to himself; as, on the other hand, all the slights and injuries which are offered to you will be considered as reflecting not only on me, but on him. MATT. X. 40

41 He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

And did men truly understand their own interest, they would rejoice to assist you in that noble work in which you are engaging; for *he that* hospitably *entertains a prophet*,[f] *in the name of a prophet*, or with a pious regard to the office he bears, *shall receive the reward of a prophet* himself, or a reward proportionable to the worth of the person he shelters and accommodates in a time of danger and difficulty; *and he that entertains* [*any*] *righteous man in the name of a righteous man*, or with a cordial regard to the virtues of his character, *shall* himself *receive the reward of a righteous man*. 41

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Nor shall even the smallest *and* cheapest favour to the least of my servants be forgotten; for, *whosoever*, being able to do no more, *shall give to drink unto one of these little ones*, or to one of these my followers who makes the meanest appearance, even so much as *a cup of cold water only*, to refresh him in the fatigue to which he is exposed in my service, if he shall give it to him *in the name of a disciple*, or with a real affection to him on account of his relation to me, *verily I say unto you, he shall by no means lose his* proportionable *reward*, but shall find himself abundantly repaid both with present and future blessings. 42

Matt. xi. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

And it came to pass, after this solemn and instructive charge had been delivered, that *when Jesus had made an end of giving instructions to his twelve disciples*, and had prepared them for the service they were now to undertake, *he* did not lay aside the work himself, but still pursued it with an unwearied diligence and zeal, and *departed thence to teach* the Jews, in other parts, the doctrines of his gospel, *and to preach in their cities*. MATT. XI. 1

Mark vi. 12. And they [departed, and] went out [through the towns,] and preached [the gospel,] that men should repent. [Luke ix. 6.]

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them* [every where.] [Luke ix. 6.]

The twelve apostles also, in pursuance of the commission they had now received, set out at the same time; *and they departed* from the presence of their Master, *and went through the towns* of Galilee, and the neighbouring places, *and preached the gospel* wherever they came; insisting with great earnestness upon it, *that men should repent* of their sins, and prepare for that glorious manifestation of his presence which God was about to favour them with. *And*, in consequence of that miraculous power with which Jesus had invested them, *they expelled many demons, and anointed many sick persons with oil*, as a signal of healing which he had been pleased to direct, (compare Jam. v. 14.) *and* perfectly *cured them*, whatsoever their malady was; and this they did *every where* as they went on in their progress. MARK VI. 12, 13

IMPROVEMENT.

JUSTLY may the blessed Jesus set so high a value on himself, and on the blessings of his grace: justly may he insist upon our readiness to abandon all for him, who is so just an equivalent for all. May his grace teach us to love him more than the dearest of our relations, and even to be ready for his sake to sacrifice our lives! May it make us willing to take up and bear any cross for him, who bore his cross and expired upon it for us! MATT. X. 37, 38

The gospel has indeed been the occasion of much contention and persecution, not only in Judea, but elsewhere: yet let us not charge it upon any malignity, or any deficiency in that, but on the lusts and corruptions of men, who have either directly opposed, or grossly perverted it. Let us endeavour to arm ourselves with courage to encounter, and resolution to endure, whatever persecutions or injuries our adherence to it may cost us; ever confiding in that gracious Providence which extends itself even to the meanest creatures; reposing ourselves on the support of divine consolations, and esteeming ourselves happy, even in losing our lives in this world, if we may find them in that which is everlasting. 34, 35, 36, 29, 30, 39

In the mean time, may this excellent discourse of our blessed Redeemer animate us to every work of faith, and every labour of love! Let not the poorest be discouraged from some charitable attempt for the good of others; since the munificence of our heavenly Master will remember even a cup of cold water, given to the least of his servants under that character. Yet since there will be such a variety of rewards, proportionable to different degrees of liberality and zeal, let us indulge a generous ambition of abounding in the work of the Lord, that we may shine with distinguished glory in the day of retribution, and have an abundant entrance into his kingdom. 42

leaving Jerusalem in the last siege of that place by the Romans, and the Jews losing theirs by crowding into it. The beauty and energy of Christ's discourse in a parallel place, (Matt. xvi. 24—26. § 89.) would be quite lost by this interpretation; and indeed many Christians had actually lost their lives for the gospel, many years before that siege commenced.

f Hospitably *entertains a prophet.*] The word δεχομενος here plainly signifies to *entertain in an hospitable way*, as it does likewise Heb. xi. 31; Jam. ii. 25. and elsewhere: nor can the gradation in the words be understood without such an interpretation. The apostles were, no doubt, regarded as a kind of divinely-inspired prophets; though that title, by way of distinction, was afterwards appropriated to persons of an inferior rank. 1 Cor. xii. 28; and Eph. iv. 11.

SECTION LXXVII.

Herod hears of Jesus, and suspects him to be John the Baptist, whom he had lately murdered in a manner which is here recounted. Matt. xiv. 1, 2, 6—12. Mark vi. 14—29. Luke ix. 7—9.

MATT. xiv. 1.

SECT. 77.

NOW *at that time,*[a] while the apostles were making their circuit about the country, proclaiming every where the glories of their great Master, and working miracles in his name, *king Herod* (as *the tetrarch* we mentioned above[b] was generally called) *heard of*

MATT. XIV.

the fame of Jesus, [*and*] was informed by many *of all the* marvellous *things that were*

1 *done by him* and his apostles; *for*, by the account they gave concerning him in their mission, concurring with his own miracles and preaching, *his name was* every where *spread abroad*, and had reached many places far more distant than the court of Herod.[c]

2 And immediately his own guilty conscience suggested a fear which he could not forbear disclosing to those that were about him; *and* such was his surprise and terror, that *he said* even *to his* own *servants, This is John the Baptist*, whom I put to death; *he is* undoubtedly *risen from the dead, and for this reason* he appears with greater honour than ever, and these *extraordinary powers* now *operate in him*, though before he wrought no miracles.

LUKE IX.

And notwithstanding Herod had imbibed the principles of the Sadducees,[d] which were directly opposite to such a supposition, *he was exceedingly anxious*[e] on account of the

7 reports he heard; *for the* notion was not merely his own, but *it was said* too *by some* others, *that John was risen from the dead*, and would undoubtedly use his miraculous

8 power to punish those who had murdered him. *And* it was also conjectured *by some that Elijah had appeared*, according to the general expectation, as the forerunner of the Messiah; (compare Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14; and xvii. 10—12.) *and by others, that one of the ancient prophets was risen again* from the dead: *and others* also *said, It is* certainly *a prophet* of the former generations, *or* [*a person*] at least *like one of the prophets;*[f] for such miraculous works do as evidently speak a divine mission as any of theirs

MARK VI.

ever did. *But* in the midst of this variety of opinions, *when Herod heard* what was discoursed [*of Jesus,*] *he* was exceedingly distressed, and *said* with great anxiety, *John I*

16 *have* certainly *beheaded*, and received the strongest proofs that the execution was performed; [*but who is this, of whom I hear such things?*] I would not willingly believe it, yet I cannot but suspect that whatsoever be the name he now assumes, *it is John*, that venerable holy man *whom I beheaded*, and greatly fear *he is risen from the dead*. And he was so uneasy under the consciousness of the enormous crime he had committed in putting him to death, that, licentious as his principles and character were,[g] he was alarmed and terrified with the apprehension of his being actually returned to life; *and*, not knowing what to think of the reports he heard of Jesus, *he* earnestly *desired to see him*, that his doubts might be removed.

17 Thus was his guilty mind perplexed and tormented, and not without reason; *for, as* we have before observed,[h] *Herod had* formerly *seized John, and bound him* with chains

18 *in prison, on account of* the reproof he gave him for his marrying *Herodias; Because*, as Herod had seduced her from his brother Philip, who was still living, and had a daughter by her, *John had said* to him, with a freedom that he could not bear, *It is not lawful*

19 *for thee* thus *to have thy brother's wife*. *And* we had likewise added, that for this reason *Herodias* also was incensed against him, and *would have put him to death; but*

20 for a long time *she could not* compass her design: *For Herod had* so great *a reverence for John*, that he would not yield to her solicitations. But we must now inform the reader, that before this time she had found a way of accomplishing her cruel purpose.

21 For as her heart was filled with malice, *and* she was ever watching for an opportunity to be revenged on John, at length *a convenient day happened* of preferring her petition

MATT. xiv. 1.

AT that time [king] Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, [Luke, *and* of all that was done by him;] [for his name was spread abroad:] [Mark vi. 14. Luke ix. 7.]

2 And [he] said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. [Mark vi. 14.]

Luke ix. 7. And he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again: [and others said, that it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.] [Mark vi. 15.]

Mark vi. 16. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, [John have I beheaded; but who is this, of whom I hear such things?] It is John whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead. [And he desired to see him.] [Luke ix. 9.]

17 For Herod had—— laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison, for Herodias' sake:—

18 For John had said,— It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias— would have killed him, but she could not.

20 For Herod feared John.—

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a

a *At that time.*] Both Mark and Luke so expressly connect this with the preceding section, that there can be no room to doubt that this is its true place.

b *The tetrarch* we mentioned above.] Though he was called *tetrarch* for a particular reason, as heir to only a *fourth part* of his father's dominions, yet in this district, (which was that of Galilee,) he was properly a *king*. See note n, on Matt. ii. 22. § 13. and Luke iii. 1. § 15.

c More distant than the court of Herod.] The letters pretended to have passed between Christ, and Abgarus, king of Edessa, and preserved by Eusebius, (*Hist. Eccles. lib.* 1. *cap.* 13.) are probably spurious; though Dr. Cave, the learned Dr. Grabe, (*Spicileg.* Vol. I. p. 1—6.) and the celebrated Mr. Addison, (in his *Discourse on Christianity*, sect. 1.) seem inclined to receive them. They might however have their foundation in some message from that prince to Jesus. But the remark in the paraphrase is much more certainly confirmed by Matt. iv. 24, 25. § 36. p. 72.

d Herod had imbibed the principles of the Sadducees.] See note g, below.

e *He was exceedingly anxious.*] Διηπορει strongly expresses a mixture of *doubt* and *fear*, which must necessarily throw the mind into a very uneasy situation.

f *A prophet, or a person* at least *like one of the prophets.*] This plainly proves, that by the word *prophet* they generally meant one of the holy men whom God had raised up to his people in former ages; and if the particle *n* be omitted, as it is in some manuscripts, the argument is equally conclusive. See note c, § 20

g Licentious as his principles and character were.] Josephus tells us, that the Sadducean principles prevailed much among the rich and great: (*Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1. [al. 2.] § 4.) And it is very probable Herod was of this sect, as what is called in one text *the leaven of the Sadducees*, is in another called *the leaven of Herod;* (compare Matt. xvi. 6. with Mark viii. 15.) not to mention a kind of hereditary quarrel which there seems to have been between the Herodian family and the Pharisees. (See note f, on Mark iii. 6. § 50.) But it is no easy matter to arrive at a steady belief of so great an absurdity as the mortality of the soul. The existence of the soul after death, and a state of future retribution, and other evident principles of natural religion connected with both, will even force themselves upon the unbelieving heart, and wring it with anguish, which it cannot always, though it may frequently, conceal. This is admirably illustrated by Bishop Atterbury, in his sermon on this text and subject.

h As we have before observed.] I have ventured to repeat here a few clauses of Mark, because they seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce the following account of Herod's beheading John the Baptist. These verses are before inserted at large, in § 28. p. 56.

supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee: [Matt. xiv. 6.]

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced [before them,] and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. [Matt. xiv. 6.]

23 And he [promised her with an oath, *and*] sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. [Matt. xiv. 7.]

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she [being before instructed of her mother,] came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me [here] by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist. [Matt. xiv. 8.]

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; [nevertheless] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him [at meat,] he would not reject her, [*but* commanded *it* to be given *her*.] [Matt. xiv. 9.]

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded [John] in the prison, [Matt. xiv. 10.]

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel [brought *it*, *and*] gave it to her mother. [Matt. xiv. 11.]

29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came, and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb; [and went and told Jesus.] [Matt. xiv. 12.]

SECT. 77.

MARK VI.

with unexpected circumstances of advantage: A public festival was kept, *when Herod, on his birth-day,*[i] *made* a splendid *supper for* the entertainment of *his lords, and* of all the *chief officers* of his army,[k] *and other persons of distinguished rank in Galilee*, over which he presided: *And*, to grace the solemnity, Salome, *the daughter of the above-mentioned Herodias* by Philip her former husband, a young lady of celebrated beauty, *coming in* publicly among them, *and dancing in the midst* of the assembly; this instance of condescension, so unusual in those days and countries, especially in persons of such high dignity,[l] was so exceedingly agreeable *and pleasing* unto *Herod and his guests*, that *the king said* before them all *to the maiden* in a kind of transport, *Ask of me whatever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.* *And* when she seemed surprised at such a declaration, to encourage her to depend on what he said, *he promised her with* the solemnity of *an oath*, [*and*] profanely and foolishly *sware unto her* more than once,[m] *I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask of me, even* though it should be *to the* [*value of*] *half of my kingdom.* 22 23

And, young as she was, she perceived this was now grown a circumstance of high importance, and might be managed to considerable advantage; *she* therefore *went out, and said to her mother*, who was not in the assembly, *What shall I ask? And she*, struck with this unexpected opportunity of executing her revenge, eagerly *replied*, Ask *the head of John the Baptist*, who would have expelled and ruined us both: for nothing in the power of the king to grant could give me equal satisfaction. 24

And, though at first she hesitated at so shocking a proposal, yet *being* thus *before urged* to it *by her mother*, and at length confirmed in the resolution,[n] *she immediately*, after a very short absence, *came in to the king with* speed in her motion and *eagerness* in her countenance, *and made her demand, saying, I desire that*, in accomplishment of thy promise, *thou wouldst give me, presently, the head of John the Baptist*; and that I may be sure the execution is done, let the head be brought and delivered to me *here in a charger*, or large dish.[o] 25

And the king was exceedingly sorry, as well as greatly surprised, that she should prefer so strange a petition; *nevertheless*, as she persisted in it, *for the sake of his* repeated *oaths, and* out of regard to *his guests*, in whose presence they were made, *he would not deny her*, [*but*] granted what she asked, and *ordered that it should be given her.* 26

And immediately the king sent one of his guards[p] as an executioner, that very night, *and commanded his head to be brought* into the assembly: *and*, as soon as the soldier had received his orders, *he* presently *went, and* without any further warning, *beheaded John in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the maiden: and the maiden*, forgetting the tenderness of her sex,[q] and the dignity of her rank, with a steady cruelty, agreeable to her relation to so ill a woman, *brought* [*and*] *delivered it to her mother* with her own hands. And thus, till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all,[r] they gratified themselves in the indulgence of their lusts, and triumphed in the murder of this holy prophet. 27 28

And the next day, *his disciples hearing* [*of it*,] *came* to the prison, *and*, having permission to do it, *took up his corpse, and laid it* with great reverence, and due lamentation, *in a sepulchre* belonging to some of them who were willing to pay this last act of duty to their master's memory: *and* then they *went and told Jesus* what had happened, and, remembering the repeated testimony which John had borne to him, continued their attendance upon him. 29

i *When Herod on his birth-day.*] Some great critics, and particularly Grotius, Heinsius, and Reland, chuse to interpret this, of the *day of* Herod's *accession*, rather than *his birth*, which they think would have been more properly expressed by γενεθλιων than γενεσιων (See Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 100—102.) But it is evident, the Seventy use πμερᾳ γενεσεως for a birth-day; Gen. xl. 20.

k *Chief officers* of his army.] Though the word χιλιαρχος properly signifies one who had the *command of a thousand men*, and held a rank in their army nearly answering to that of the colonels in ours, there can be no reason to imagine that the entertainment was confined just to that rank of officers: I have therefore rendered it in a more general way.

l This instance of condescension so unusual in those days, &c.] Dr. Lardner very justly observes, that it was very unusual for ladies of a high rank to appear before the men, (Esth. i. 10—12.) and much less to dance at such banquets as these. See his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Vol. I. part i. p. 23.

m *Sware unto her*, more than once.] This may be very well concluded, because both the Evangelists use the plural ὡμοσεν, Matt. xiv. 9. and Mark vi. 26.

n *Being before urged* to it *by her mother*, and at length confirmed in the resolution.] So the word προβιβασθεισα seems to intimate, as Beza, with his usual accuracy, has observed; and there is indeed much more reason to wonder that she was induced to make such a request at all, than that she made some difficulty for a while of presenting it, considering how savage it seemed, and how many pleasing views must be sacrificed to it. But at last her mother's remonstrances seem to have wrought her up to great emotion, which the Evangelist well expresses by saying, *She came in* ευθεως μετα σπουδης *immediately*, and *with eagerness*. The whole narration of Mark, which is by far the most circumstantial, is very much animated; as Mr. Blackwall has justly observed in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 383.

o *The head of John the Baptist in a charger.*] It is well known, that it was, and is customary with princes in those eastern parts, to require the head of those they order to be executed to be brought to them, that they may be assured of their death. The Grand Signior does it to this day. See Dr. Lardner, in the place cited in note l, p. 24, 25. The word πινακ signifies *a large dish*, which the antiquated word *charger* well expresses; for which reason I chose to retain it.

p *One of his guards.*] So σπεκουλατωρα properly signifies, or *one who was then standing sentry*. There were no executioners in those times, whose peculiar business it was to put persons to death.

q Forgetting the tenderness of her sex.] This may perhaps be intimated in the repetition of the word *maiden*. Jerome tells us, that Herodias treated the Baptist's head in a very disdainful manner, pulling out the tongue which she imagined had injured her, and piercing it with a needle.

r Till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all.] Dr. Whitby, after many others, observes, that Providence interested itself very remarkably in the revenge of this murder on all concerned. Herod's army was defeated in a war occasioned by his marrying Herodias, which many Jews thought a judgment sent upon him for the death of John: (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. [al. 7.] § 1, 2.) Both he and Herodias, whose ambition occasioned his ruin, were afterwards driven from their kingdom with great regret, and died in banishment at Lyons in Gaul: (Joseph. *Ibid. cap.* 7. [al. 9.] § 2.) And if any credit may be given to Nicephorus, (*Hist. lib.* i. *cap.* 20.) Salome, the young lady who made this cruel request, fell into the ice as she was walking over it, which, closing suddenly, cut off her head.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 77. MARK VI. 14, 16 How dreadful a thing is it to have a guilty and accusing conscience! and how remarkable was the force of it, in the instance before us! Herod was a king, yet it addressed him in language of terror, and made itself heard and felt, amidst all the hurries and flatteries of a court. Vain was the power of a prince; vain the caresses of a favourite mistress basely gratified with the blood of a prophet; and vain the yet more besotting tenets of a Sadducee. In one instance at least, a resurrection shall be believed; and if a prophet arise in Israel, Herod shall be among the first to say, *It is John the Baptist, risen from the dead;* and shall be ready to forebode the sad effects of his recovered life, and to prognosticate evil to himself from the mighty works he performed. Let us make it our care to preserve a conscience void of offence, that, instead of a continual torment, it may be to us a continual feast!

22, 23 And if we really desire to preserve it, let us take heed that we be not excessively transported with the entertainments of life, or rashly enter ourselves into engagements which perhaps may plunge us into some degree of guilt, whether they be performed or violated.

24 We see, in this dreadful instance of Herodias, what an implacable degree of malice may arise in the hearts of sinners, on being reproved for the most scandalous and mischievous vices. Instead of owning the obligation to one that would have plucked her as a brand out of the burning, she thirsts insatiably for his blood; and chuses rather to indulge her cruelty and revenge in taking away his life, than to gratify her avarice and ambition in demanding a gift that might have been equal to the half of a kingdom.

25, 27 But how mysterious was that providence which left the life of so holy a man in such infamous hands, and permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot, to the petulancy of a vain girl, and to the rashness of a foolish and perhaps an intoxicated prince, who made the prophet's head the reward of a dance! *The ways of God are unsearchable!* but we are sure he can never be at a loss to repay his servants in another world for the great sufferings they endure in this, and even for life itself, when given up in his cause.

27 We may reasonably conclude that death could never be an unseasonable surprise to this excellent saint. When the executioner came into the prison by night, perhaps breaking in upon his slumbers, and executed his bloody commission almost as soon as he declared it, a soul like his might welcome the stroke as the means of liberty and glory; assured that the transient agony of a moment would transmit it to a kingdom where the least of its inhabitants would be, in holiness, honour, and felicity, superior to John in his most prosperous and successful state on earth.

29 His enemies might a while insult over him, while his disciples were mingling their tears with his dust, and lamenting the residue of his days cut off in the midst. His death was precious in the sight of the Lord, and the triumphing of the wicked was short. So will he ere long plead the cause of all his injured people, and give a cup of trembling and astonishment to those that have made themselves drunk with their blood. Let cruelty and tyranny do their worst, *verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.* (Psal. lviii. 11.)

SECTION LXXVIII.

When the apostles were returned from executing their commission, our Lord passes over the sea of Tiberias; and finding vast multitudes had followed him to the place of his intended retirement, he instructs and heals them; and, having miraculously fed above five thousand, retires afterwards to pray. Matt. xiv. 13—23. Mark vi. 30—46. Luke ix. 10—17. John vi. 1—15.

MARK vi. 30.

SECT. 78. MARK VI. 30. *AND* quickly after this awful event of the Baptist's death,[a] which has been just related, *the* twelve *apostles, when they were returned* from their circuit, *gathered together unto Jesus, and told him all* the occurrences of their late journey; recounting to him *both what* miracles *they had done* by his divine assistance, *and what* doctrine *they had taught* according to his direction.

31 *And when Jesus heard* [*of it,*] and was informed (as we have just now seen) of the death of John, as well as of the event of the journey which his apostles had been making, *he said to them, Come ye yourselves privately* with me *into a solitary place* in the neighbouring desert, *and repose* yourselves *a while* after the fatigue of your journey, that we may there indulge such meditations as are suitable to this awful dispensation. And it was necessary to give them this advice, *for there were many* continually *coming and going* to and from the public place in which they then were, *so that they had no opportunity even to eat* without interruption, and much less had they leisure for religious retirement and recollection.

LUKE IX. 10 *And* accordingly, *after these things,*[b] *he took them* with him, *and retired* from the multitude: *and they departed from thence,* (even from the place where they had been so much crowded and hurried,) and setting out *in a ship privately,* they withdrew *into a* lonely *desert belonging to the city called Bethsaida,* which we have several times

MARK vi. 30. AND the apostles [when they were returned,] gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. [Luke ix. 10.]

31 And [when Jesus heard *of it,*] he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. [Matt. xiv. 13.]

Luke ix. 10. And [John, after these things,] he took them and went aside, [Mark, and they departed thence] by ship privately, into a

a After this awful event of the Baptist's death.] Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all so express in the connexion of this story with the foregoing, that there can be no doubt as to the propriety and necessity of placing it here.

b *After these things.*] I have before observed, (in note a, on John v. 1. p. 94.) that Mr. Manne supposes this sixth chapter of John ought to be connected with the end of the fourth; (see his *Dissertations*, p. 157—163.) and the rather because he fancies one may find a connexion between John iv. 54. and vi. 1; the first of which texts tells us that *Jesus was in Galilee;* and the latter, *that he went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.* But I cannot see the least force in the argument, considering how often Christ changed his place, and came back again to that which he had formerly visited: nor can he urge it with any consistence, because, according to his own scheme of the Harmony, Christ had crossed the sea to Gergasa, and dispossessed the legion, after the cure of the nobleman's son, and long before the passing over the sea that is here referred to, (which was plainly not to Gergasa, but to the desert of Bethsaida:) so that there is no shadow of a reason for such an unexampled transposition, which has no copy or version to support it. Besides that this requires another change in ver. 4. which is equally arbitrary, and (as we shall show in note e, of this section,) most contrary not only to the faith of all copies, but to the reason of things.

desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida; [John, *and* Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.] [Matt. xiv. 13. Mark vi. 32. John vi. 1.]

Mark vi. 33. And [when] the people saw them departing, and many knew him, [and heard *thereof*,] [John, a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased:] and [they] ran a-foot thither out of all [the] cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. [Matt. xiv. 13. Luke ix. 11. John vi. 2.]

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; [Luke, and he received them,] and began to teach them many things, [Luke, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and [healed their sick, *even all*] them that had need of healing. [Matt. xiv. 14. Luke ix. 11.]

John vi. 3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

Luke ix. 12. And when the day began to wear away, [Mark, and was now far spent,] [and it was evening;] then [his disciples,] *even* the twelve, came [Mark, unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed,] send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, [Mark, and buy themselves bread,] and get victuals: [Mark, for they have nothing to eat.] [Matt. xiv. 15. Mark vi. 35, 36.]

John vi. 5. When Jesus then lift up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do.)

mentioned before. [*And*] as this desert was divided from the place they set out from by a creek or bay of the sea, *Jesus*, in passing to it, *went over* a part of *the sea of Galilee, which is* also sometimes called [*the sea*] *of Tiberias*,[c] because that is the most considerable place on its shore. SECT. 78. MARK VI.

And when the people who had been attending on his ministry *saw them departing*, *and*, though he was at some distance, *many* of them *knew him*,[d] *and* others thereabout *heard of* [*it*,] *a great multitude followed him; because they had seen his miracles, which he* had just before *performed on them that were diseased*, and, struck with the energy of them, were impatiently desirous still to hear so divine a Teacher. *And*, therefore, observing how he steered his course, and guessing right as to the place at which he intended to land, *they ran thither on foot*, and increased their numbers *out of all the cities* by which they passed: *and* they pursued their journey with such eagerness, that they *outwent them* who had taken ship, *and*, getting round to the shore where he was to land, they *came together to him*, and stood ready to salute him in a large body. 33

And Jesus, when he came out of the ship, *and saw* such *a great multitude* of people, who had taken so much pains to meet him there, *was moved with* tender *compassion for them; because* he perceived *they were* sadly neglected by those who ought to have been their spiritual guides, and were forced to wander from place to place, *as sheep having no shepherd* to feed and take care of them; *and* with this he was struck to such a degree, that though he had come thither for retirement, *he* did not either dismiss or forsake them; but, on the contrary, *received them* in a most condescending and indulgent manner, *and began* with renewed zeal and fervency *to teach them many* important *things; and*, in particular, *spake to them concerning the kingdom of God* which he was now erecting, *and healed* many of *their sick* people, [*even all*] *those that* were brought to him, and *had need of healing*. 34

And, in prosecution of this design, that he might be heard and seen with the greater advantage, *Jesus went up into a mountain, and there sat* down *with his disciples*, and the multitudes about him. *And* indeed it was a season of the year which admitted it; for the spring was now so far advanced that *the passover*, *a* grand *feast of the Jews, was near*.[e] JOHN VI. 3. 4

And when they had thus spent *the day* in a delightful attendance upon him, and it *now began to decline, and* indeed *was so far spent that the evening came on, then* some of *his disciples*, and particularly *the twelve* apostles, who were now round him, *came to him, and said, This is a* solitary *desert place*, where there is neither food nor lodging to be had, *and the time* of day *is now far advanced;* it will therefore be proper to put an end to thy discourse, and to *dismiss the multitude, that they may go into the towns and country-places round about* us, *and* find conveniences to *lodge* there, *and may* have opportunity to *buy themselves bread, and get* other *food; for they have* fasted all the day, and can have *nothing* here *to eat*. LUKE IX. 12

Then Jesus lifted up his eyes, and seeing a great company, who (as was said before) were *come* out of all the cities *to him, he says to Philip*, who, being a native of Bethsaida, was acquainted in that country, (John i. 44. p. 43.) How and *whence shall we buy bread* for the entertainment of all these people, *that they may eat* with me before we part? *(And this he said* only *to try him*, and to give him an opportunity of observing JOHN VI. 5 6

c Sometimes called *the sea of Tiberias.*] We have before observed, that it had various names. (See note b, on Luke v. 1. p. 68.) It is not necessary to suppose they crossed the lake; if they did, it was only over the extremity of it; or possibly they only made a coasting voyage round some creek or bay of it; otherwise it is hard to say how the people going on foot could have been there *before him*, as it is said they were, Mark vi. 33. See Lightf. *Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xiv. 13. and Calmet, *Dissert. Tom.* I. part i. p. 89.

d *Many knew him.*] It should seem that Christ ordered the vessel to be prepared at some distance from the place where the multitude was; yet not so far off but some of the company could make a shift to distinguish who he was.

e *The passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.*] Almost all who have compiled Harmonies of the gospel, have concluded that *this* was at least the *third passover* of our Lord's public ministry; and Sir Isaac Newton reckons it the *fourth*. (See note a, on John ii. 13. p. 47.) But Mr. Manne advances a most singular hypothesis, which is, that it was no passover at all, but was the feast of pentecost; (*Dissert.* p. 163.) But he has no authority for making such an alteration, all the old manuscripts and versions agreeing with the received reading, which therefore should not be changed without urgent necessity; whereas there is no necessity at all for it in this place: nor is it possible that *this* should be, as he supposes, the *feast of pentecost*, following the first passover of Christ's ministry; because such things are expressly said to have happened between *that passover* and *this feast*, as could not be crowded into the narrow compass assigned them on this scheme. For, according to Mr. Manne's scheme, the passover happened on April the 2d, the feast of pentecost on May the 23d, and this miracle of feeding the five thousand at the latter end of April. Now he himself allows that, after the first passover, [at which he staid long enough to work many miracles, and to have a conference with Nicodemus,] Jesus [having, as John tells us, chap. iii. 22. tarried some time with his disciples in Judea, and made so many disciples there, that he alarmed the Pharisees; see John iv. 1.] went through Samaria; and after having spent two days at Sichar, [and every hour in such a circumstance is important,] came into Galilee, and taught in all their synagogues; preached the sermon on the mount; and then [having, as Luke tells us, chap. iv. 31. dwelt a while at Capernaum, and taught them on the sabbath days,] cured Peter's mother-in-law: then, having cast out Legion, cured the paralytic, called Matthew, and [after having kept them with him some time, as Mark and Luke intimate, § 52. p. 106.] sent out the twelve apostles; and having on one sabbath vindicated his disciples for plucking the ears of corn, and on another cured the man with a withered hand, he then goes to Nazareth, [where he spent at least one sabbath;] and, after many other miracles, and the return of the twelve, goes into the desert; [John the Baptist in the mean time having been seized, (for it is directly said he was at liberty after the first passover, John iii. 24.) and after frequent audiences, while Herodias long waited an opportunity to destroy him, being at length beheaded.] All these events, except those included in crotchets, Mr. Manne expressly mentions; (p. 166—171.) and those that are so included, the Evangelists in express words connect with the rest. Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person, whether it is possible these things could happen in a month. It may rather be doubted whether two years be sufficient for them, and others connected with them in the preceding sections. On the whole, I cannot recollect any instance in which a person of such distinguished learning and abilities has been betrayed, by love to any hypothesis, into so palpable an error.—The reader will pardon my having been so large in confuting a scheme so inconsistent with that laid down above, and will, I hope, perceive that it is proved, not only to be precarious or unlikely, but even impossible.

SECT. 78. what followed more attentively; *for he himself* very well *knew what he was about to do,* and had determined how to proceed.) But *Philip*, forgetting what had been done of this kind by Elijah and Elisha, prophets so far inferior to Jesus, (1 Kings xvii. 14—16; JOHN VI. and 2 Kings iv. 4—6, 42—44.) and even by Jesus himself at Cana in Galilee, (John ii. 6—11. sect. xxiii.) was surprised that he should mention such a thing, and *answered him,*

7 *Two hundred pennyworth of bread*, or as much as could be purchased for two hundred denarii,[f] which is at present all our little stock, *is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little* refreshment, and much less would it furnish them with a full meal; it will be necessary therefore immediately to dismiss them, that they may have time to shift for themselves.

MATT. XIV. *But Jesus said to* him, and to *them* that stood near him, who had but just now made the same proposal, *They have no need to go away* fasting, nor am I willing to dismiss

16 them so without any supply: and therefore let them have food for their refreshment here; and, instead of sending them away to provide for themselves, do you make ready for them, and *give ye them* [*something*] *to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we* then *go* to any neighbouring place, *and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread* [*and*] *meat for all this* multitude of *people, and give* [*it*] *them to eat*, that it may go as far as it can? If such be thy pleasure, we shall not offer to dispute it, whatever be the consequence as to ourselves.

MARK VI. 38. JOHN VI. *But*, as *he* purposed in himself to entertain the multitude out of the little store of provisions they had, Jesus *says to them, How many loaves have you* here already? *go and see* that, and there will be no need of buying any more. Upon which *one of his disciples*, namely, *Andrew*, who was *Simon Peter's brother*, went to inquire; and, soon

8 returning back with an account of what they had, he *says unto him*, I find *there is a lad*

9 *here that has five* coarse *barley loaves, and two small fishes*, which he would let us have; *but we have no more* to offer them, either of bread or meat; [*and*] *what are they*

MATT. XIV. *among so many*, to satisfy the hunger of so great a company? *And he said* to them, Do you be under no concern about the scantiness of your provisions; but *bring them*

18 *hither to me*, for even these shall suffice.

19 *And*, when they were brought to him, *he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the green grass*, which at that season of the year was pretty high: *and*, that the distribution of the food might be more orderly, and the number of persons be the better observed, *he said to his disciples*, Let them be placed in order, and *cause them all to sit down by companies* in rows. *Now there was* then *much grass in the place*,[g] in which they might sit down with ease and pleasure.

LUKE IX. *And* his disciples would no more dispute the matter with him; but *they did so* as the Lord had commanded them, *and caused them all to sit down*, though they could not see

15 how they were to be fed. *The men therefore sat down* by themselves, *in rows* which there was room to pass between, *by hundreds and by fifties*, in a long square, containing an hundred in rank, and fifty in file:[h] and they were *about five thousand in number*, not to mention the women and children, who were placed apart.

MARK VI. *And Jesus, taking the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven* with great reverence and affection, *and having given thanks* to his heavenly Father for the bounties

41 of his kind Providence, and the extraordinary instance of Divine favour now to be manifested, *he*, in a solemn manner, *blessed them*, commanding upon the provisions before him that singular blessing by which they were to be multiplied in the distribution; *and* then he *brake the loaves* in pieces, *and distributed them to his disciples, that they might set* [*them*] *before the multitude, who were set down* upon the grass as he had ordered them: *and* accordingly *the disciples* [*gave them*] round *to* all *the multitude* with believing hearts and unsparing hands: *and he likewise divided the two fishes among them all*, and gave them by the hands of his disciples to the whole company, supplying them with *as much as they would* take. *And* so wonderfully were the provisions increased by passing under his creating hand, that *they did all eat* of them till they had every one enough, *and were all* fully *satisfied.*

JOHN VI. 12. *And, when they were* all sufficiently *filled, he says to his disciples*, Let there be no waste made of any part of the divine bounties, but *gather up the broken pieces that*

13 *remain, that* so *nothing may be lost*. The disciples *therefore*, in obedience to his word, went through the several ranks of the whole company, and picking up the pieces that were left, *they gathered them together, and filled* no less than *twelve baskets with the* very *fragments of the five barley loaves, and of the* two *fishes, which remained over and above to them that had eaten*: a quantity vastly larger than they had at first.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Matt. xiv. 16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat. [And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, [Luke, *and* meat for all this people,] and give them to eat?] [Mark vi. 37. Luke ix. 13.]

Mark vi. 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.

John vi. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but [Luke, we have no more, *and*] what are they among so many? [Matt. xiv. 17. Mark vi 38. Luke ix. 13.]

Matt. xiv. 18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down [upon the green grass;] [Luke, and he said to his disciples,] [Make them all sit down by companies.] [John, Now there was much grass in the place.] [Mark vi. 39. Luke ix. 14. John vi. 10.]

Luke ix. 15. And they did so, and made them all sit down. [John, So the men sat down] [in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties,] [John, in number about five thousand.] [Mark vi. 40. Luke ix. 14. John vi. 10.]

Mark vi. 41. And when [John, Jesus] had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and [John, when he had given thanks, he] blessed [Luke, them] and brake the loaves, and [John, distributed] *them* to his disciples [Luke, to set before the multitude] [John, that were set down,] [and the disciples *gave them* to the multitude;] and [John, likewise] the two fishes divided he among them all, [John, as much as they would.] [Matt. xiv. 19. Luke ix. 16. John vi. 11.]

42 And they did all eat, and were filled. [Matt. xiv. 20. Luke ix. 17.]

John vi. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, [Mark, and

f For two hundred denarii.] This amounts to about six pounds five shillings of our money. The mention of that sum seems to intimate (as in the paraphrase,) that their whole stock amounted to so much.

g *There was much grass in the place.*] It is also said (Mark vi. 39.) that the *grass* was *green:* as it was before the passover, but not near the feast of pentecost, when even the corn harvest was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold or dried fishes to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Matt. xiv. 19. "There "was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than "by Ahasuerus in that royal feast which was intended to *shew the "riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent ma- "jesty.*" See Esth. i. 4—7.

h An hundred in rank, and fifty in file.] That this is the proper import, is abundantly proved by Mr. Pierce in his *Fifth Dissertation* annexed to the Hebrews. This was the shortest and exactest way of ranging them, and reconciles Mark's account above, with Luke's, who only speaks of their sitting down by fifties. Thus disposed, they would wait more patiently till they were served in their turns; the number would appear at once, and they would see that Christ knew it.

of the fishes,] which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Matt. xiv. 20. Mark vi. 43. Luke ix. 17.]

Matt. xiv. 21. And they that had eaten [of the loaves] were about five thousand men, besides women and children. [Mark vi. 44.]

John vi. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, [Mark, straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go [before him] to the other side, unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.] [Matt. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 45.]

Mark vi. 46. And when he had sent them away, [and the evening was come,] he departed [John, again,] [*and* went up, [John, himself alone] into a mountain to pray.] [Matt. xiv. 23. John vi. 15.]

And yet *they who had eaten of the loaves* and fishes (as by the disposition of the multitude in rows, the number of them might be easily computed,) *were about five thousand men, besides women and children*, who sat by themselves, and might almost amount to an equal number. SECT. 78.

The men therefore who were present upon this occasion, and were thus miraculously entertained, *having seen the miracle which Jesus wrought*, after all the preceding wonders of the day, were so mightily struck with it, that they *said, Truly this is the* great *Prophet who was to come into the world*, and has so long been impatiently expected by us, even the Messiah himself, whom God has appointed to rule, as well as to teach his people. (Compare Deut. xviii. 18; and see also 1 Mac. xiv. 41.) And, concluding that the same miraculous power could make itself victorious over all opposition, and easily could subsist and maintain an army[i] in the greatest extremity, they began to enter into measures of proclaiming his title to the kingdom of Israel, and fixing him on the throne of David his father. MATT. XIV. 21. JOHN VI. 14

Jesus therefore, knowing that they would quickly urge this proposal, and that their hearts were so much set upon it, *that they were ready to come and seize him by force to make him king*, was determined immediately to part with them, lest he should give umbrage to the jealousy of the Romans, and lead the people that followed him into inconvenience and ruin: he therefore *immediately obliged his disciples to get into the ship* in which they had come thither,[k] *and to go before him to the other side* of the creek, *to* the city of *Bethsaida*,[l] *while he dismissed the multitude*, who upon seeing his disciples go aboard, would be more easily prevailed upon to go away. *And when he had* accordingly *dismissed* the multitude, and sent *them* off as well as his disciples, *and the evening was* now *come, he again withdrew*, according to his frequent custom, [*and*] *ascended up by himself alone to a mountain* in those parts, *to pray* to his heavenly Father; in which delightful exercise he spent the greatest part of the night. 15 MARK IV. 46

IMPROVEMENT.

So evidently true is it, that *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!* (Matt. iv. 4.) How wonderful did the power of Christ appear, in thus multiplying the food! and how amiable his compassion, in his affectionate concern for the relief of his necessitous followers! It is to be esteemed a great happiness, when the ministers of the gospel have it in their power to assist men in their temporal as well as their spiritual necessities; and it is peculiarly incumbent upon them, thus *to do good and communicate; for with such sacrifices* from their hands *God is* peculiarly *well pleased*, and the success of their ministry may be greatly promoted by them. (Heb. xiii. 16.) Ver. 41 MATT. XIV. 16

The disciples received from the hand of Christ the food they delivered to the people: and so should ministers be concerned, that they may receive from Christ what they dispense to others as the bread of life, and that they also at the same time may live upon it, as the support of their own souls. How great an honour is it to be employed as stewards of the mysteries of God! Let not immoderate secular cares, let not the desire of worldly riches or greatness, interrupt us in this blessed work! Christ withdrew from those who would have made him king: ill therefore does it become his disciples to pursue earthly grandeur; and most unworthy is it of his ministers, to act as if his kingdom were of this world. May we learn in every state to be content! (Phil. iv. 11.) In want, may we cheerfully trust Providence! In plenty, may we not wantonly abuse it! but learn, by his command of gathering up the fragments even of this miraculous feast, a wise frugality in the use of our enjoyments: that nothing may be lost, nor a reserve be wanting, by which the streams of future liberality may be fed! JOHN VI. 11 15 12

When the day had been thus employed, Christ retired to a mountain to pray. Thus must secret devotion attend our public labours for the instruction and salvation of men, if we would secure that divine blessing, without which, neither the most eloquent preaching, nor the most engaging and benevolent conduct, can command or promise success. MATT. XIV. 23

SECTION LXXIX.

As the disciples were upon the lake, they are overtaken by a storm: and Christ comes to them, walking on the sea, and stills the tempest. Matt. xiv. 24, *to the end.* Mark vi. 47, *to the end.* John vi. 16—21. SECT. 79.

JOHN vi. 16.

AND, when even was *now* come, his disciples went

IT was before observed, that, after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Christ ordered his disciples to depart, and go before him to Bethsaida; *and* accordingly, *when the* JOHN VI. 16.

i Concluding that the same miraculous power could subsist and maintain an army.] It is certain, that an army of less than five thousand men might, under such a Leader, have accomplished the greatest events, and have obtained even universal empire, had he been pleased to exert his power to such purposes. They probably remembered how vast an host had been defeated by Gideon with only *three hundred men* with their *trumpets* and *lamps*; (Judg. vii. 22.) not to mention Samson's slaying *a thousand* with a *jaw-bone*, (Judg. xv. 15.) and other extraordinary events of this kind recorded in the Old Testament. (See 2 Kings iii. 21—24; 2 Chron. xx. 22—25; and compare Lev. xxvi. 8.) They also knew that the whole body of the Jewish nation was then highly spirited with these sentiments, and might reasonably expect that legions of them would soon pour in to the standards of such a Leader.

k *Obliged his disciples*, &c.] This phrase may intimate that they, who plainly appear to have been too fond of secular views, were rather inclined to stay, and quitted the multitude with some reluctance, in what they thought so favourable a conjuncture. But it was certainly the highest prudence in Christ, considering what his purposes were, to order them away, and to dismiss them and the multitude, before any thing happened which could alarm or offend even the most jealous spies, who might perhaps herd among the crowd.

l *And to go before him to the other side* of the creek, *to Bethsaida.*] It was observed before, (Luke ix. 10. p. 159.) that they were now in a desert place belonging to Bethsaida; which probably was divided from it by some bay or creek that run into the land; and Christ now only ordered his disciples to pass over this creek to the city of Bethsaida, where he might afterwards have joined them, when he had sent away the people. But in their passage thither, a great storm arose, and they were driven by a contrary wind into the midst of the sea towards Capernaum. This reconciles the place before us with the beginning of the next section, where, notwithstanding the direction Christ had given them *to go before him to Bethsaida*, we find them *going to Capernaum*, which lay on the other side of the lake. Compare note a, page 162.

SECT. 79.
JOHN VI.
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MATT. XIV.
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MARK VI.
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MATT. XIV.
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MARK VI. 51

evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea[-side;] *And having entered into the ship* which waited for them, and put off from land, they quickly met with a cross wind that changed their course, and were soon driven farther from the shore than they designed; so that, instead of getting to Bethsaida, *they were going to the other side of the sea towards Capernaum;*[a] *and,* night coming on, *it was now dark, and the ship was in the midst of the sea,* they did not exactly know where. *Now Jesus was not* yet *come to them,*[b] [*but was*] still where they left him, ~~by himself~~ *alone on the land,* employed in secret devotion on the mountain to which he retired.

In the mean time they were in circumstances of great danger *and* distress; for *the sea arose* in a very tempestuous manner, *by reason of a violent* storm of *wind which blew* hard upon it: *and the vessel was tossed by the* swelling *waves; for the wind was contrary to them,* and had driven them far out of their intended course.

So when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, or something more than a league,[c] *in the* beginning of the *fourth watch of the night,* or about three o'clock in the morning,[d] *Jesus,* who knew the distress they were in, *perceiving* that *they were weary with rowing,* and in vain attempted to weather the storm, *came to them walking on the sea,*[e] by his miraculous power rendering his own body lighter than usual, or strengthening the waves to bear it: *and,* farther to exercise their faith and courage, he seemed, at first, as if he *would have passed by them. And when the disciples,* by that little light which the reflection of the moon on the water afforded them[f], *saw him walking on the sea, and passing near the ship,* not perfectly discerning who it was, *they were* much *terrified, saying, It is* certainly *an apparition,* for no human body could thus be supported by the water: *and they* had such a dread of what might be the consequence, that they *cried out* aloud *for fear. For they all saw him; and,* notwithstanding the miraculous power that he had lately given them over evil spirits, (Matt. x. 1. p. 149.) yet *were* they greatly *troubled. And* therefore, to deliver them from that anxiety, *he immediately spoke to them, and said, Take courage: for it is I,* your Lord and Master: *be not afraid* of me, who am your friend; nor of the violent tempest, which cannot hurt you while under my protection.

Then, as they knew his voice, they presently began to lay aside their fears: *and Peter,* whose natural temper was remarkably warm and forward, immediately *answering, said unto him, Lord, if it* indeed *be thou,* who art walking on the sea, as I now apprehend it is, I am so far from being afraid of the tempest in thy presence, while I continue in the ship, that I am willing thou shouldst, if thou pleasest, *command me to come to thee* even *upon the water,* and I will immediately venture to do it. *And* Jesus, that *he* thus might exercise his faith, and by convincing him of his weakness, might give a check at the same time to his excessive confidence, complied with his proposal, and *said* to him, If thou hast faith and courage to attempt it, *come* then, and make the trial: *and Peter,* being now assured it was indeed his Master, *came down from the ship, and* fully satisfied that he was able to uphold and bear him up, *walked on the water* for a while, *to come unto Jesus: But* soon *perceiving* that *the wind* was very *strong,* and the sea raging with great violence, *he was afraid* of being lost; *and* his faith failing him, *he* presently *began to sink,*[g] *and cried out* in a great consternation of spirit, *saying, Lord save me,* or I shall be swallowed up in a moment. *And immediately Jesus stretching out his hand, laid hold on him; and,* to remind him of his unbelief, *said to him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt* of my protection, when I was so near; when thou hadst my commission to make the trial, and hadst in part experienced my power in supporting thee thus far on the waves?

And, taking Peter with him, *he ascended to them into the bark;*[h] *and when they were*

down unto the sea; [Mark vi. 47.]

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, [Mark, and the ship was in the midst of the sea:] and Jesus was not come unto them, [Mark, *but was* alone on the land.] [Matt. xiv. 24, Mark vi. 47.]

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew, [and the ship was tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary] [Mark, unto them.] [Matt. xiv. 24. Mark vi. 48.]

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, [in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus] [Mark, saw them toiling in rowing, and cometh unto them walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.] [Matt. xiv. 25. Mark vi. 48.]

Matt. xiv. 26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, [John, and drawing nigh unto the ship,] they were [John, afraid,] saying, It *is* a spirit; and they cried out for fear. [Mark vi. 49. John vi. 19.]

Mark vi. 50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer, It is I, be not afraid. [Matt. xiv. 27. John vi. 20.]

Matt. xiv. 28. And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

22 And he said, Come. And, when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Mark vi. 51. And he

a *Were going to the other side of the sea towards Capernaum.*] This exactly expresses what is said in the original; ηρχοντο περαν της θαλασσης εις Καπερναουμ: and I cannot but look upon it as an argument that Bethsaida lay on the east side of the sea of Tiberias, (though most of our maps have placed it in a different situation;) since Capernaum is allowed by all to have been situated on the western shore, and is here represented as lying on the opposite side to Bethsaida, from which they were driven over the sea to Capernaum. (Compare note l, in the preceding page.) This situation of Bethsaida is likewise confirmed by Josephus, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] sect. 1.) who calls it by the name of Julias; which Pliny also speaks of, as on the eastern side of the lake of Gennesareth. See Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 15. and Lightfoot. *Cent. Chorog.* in Matt. *cap.* 93.

b *Now Jesus was not* yet *come to them.*] It is a great imperfection of our language, that we have no proper copulative particle but [*and;*] which is here so much the more unhappy, as, in laying together the whole narration of the Evangelists, the use of that particle is much more frequent than it would have been in any single one. I chuse therefore here, and in some other places, to change it for the word [*now,*] which in this connection signifies almost, if not entirely, the same thing.

c *When they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs.*]—Probably, when they found the wind so violent, they were afraid of being shipwrecked if they came near the shore: and therefore having perhaps sailed a while before the wind, they now rowed out to sea: for, as they must have been several hours at sea, one can hardly imagine, that with so brisk a gale they made no more way in all this time than a little above a league; unless we impute it to their having laboured all they could to avoid crossing the sea, and to get to Bethsaida.

d *In the fourth watch of the night.*] The Jewish night was divided into four watches, each containing about *three* of our *hours,* especially so near the equinox. The first began at six in the evening, the second at nine, the third at midnight, and the fourth at three in the morning. (See Godwin's *Moses and Aaron,* book iii. chap. 1.) F. Calmet (in the word HOURS,) thinks they learned this division from the Romans. See Veget. *de Re Militari, lib.* iii. *cap.* 8. and Pitisc. *Lexic. in Vigil.*

e *Walking on the sea.*] This was thought so impracticable, that the picture of two feet walking on the sea, was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an *impossible thing.* And in the scripture it is mentioned as the prerogative of God, that he *alone treadeth upon the waves of the sea,* Job ix. 8.

f By that little light, &c.] It is well known, that it is never *entirely dark on the water:* not to urge that the moon might perhaps now be in the last quarter, as it must have been, if the was about three weeks before the passover.

g *He began to sink.*] He probably could swim, as most fishermen can; (compare John xxi. 7.) and perhaps he might venture on the attempt he now made, with some secret dependence on his art, which God, for wise reasons, suffered to fail him. The word κατεποντιζεσθαι is very expressive, and may intimate that he felt himself *sinking with such a weight* that he had no hope of recovering himself, and expected nothing but that he should go directly to the bottom of the sea.

h *Into the bark.*] Though the Evangelists generally use the

went up unto them into the ship; [and when they were come into the ship,] [John, they willingly received him,] and the wind ceased: [John, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went:] and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. [Matt. xiv. 32. John vi. 21.]

52 For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

Matt. xiv. 33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, [and drew to the shore.] [Mark vi. 53.]

Mark vi. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

55 [And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out,] and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, [and brought unto him all that were diseased,] where they heard he was. [Matt. xiv. 35.]

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made [perfectly] whole. [Matt. xiv. 36.]

come aboard, they that were there *received him with* the utmost *pleasure*, as the great pledge of their common safety. *And* they quickly found the happy effects of his presence: for all the fury of *the wind* now *ceased* at once; *and*, what was yet more surprising, *the ship was immediately at the* point of *land to which they were going. And they were* all *exceedingly amazed in themselves, and astonished beyond measure*,[i] as if they had never before seen any exertion of his miraculous power. *For their heart was so hardened, and* their mind so insensible, that *they considered not the* yet more wonderful and glorious [*miracle of the*] *loaves*, which but the day before they had seen multiplied in so extraordinary a manner as to display even a creating power.[k] SECT. 79. MARK VI. 52

Then they that were about him, even all *that were in the ship, came and worshipped him*, as in a rapture of wonder, devotion, and joy, falling down at his feet with the utmost reverence, and *saying*, We are now convinced that *thou art indeed the Son of God*, and hast an unlimited power over the whole creation. MATT. XIV. 33

And when they had thus *passed over* the lake, *they came to* a part of *the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore* not far from Capernaum,[l] to which, it was observed before, (p. 161.) their course was tending. *And when they came out of the vessel*, as it was a place where Jesus had often been, *they* that were present when he landed, *immediately knew him;* and, though it was so early in the morning, the news of his arrival quickly spread through all the neighbouring parts. For they were ready to inform each other of his coming; *and the men of that place, who knew him*, no sooner were apprised of his arrival, but presently they *sent out, and ran to* every place in *all that country round about*, to give notice to their neighbours that Jesus was there, and that they now again should have the privilege of his preaching and working miracles among them: *and they began to carry about the sick in beds, and brought unto him all that were diseased, to the place where they heard he was. And* this was indeed the general custom *wherever he* came: as soon as he was *entered into* any *towns, or cities, or country* [*villages*,] *they laid the sick in the* most *public streets*, through which they expected he would pass, *and entreated him that they might at least touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched him*, believing in his power and his readiness to heal them, *were perfectly recovered*, how extreme soever their illness had been. 34 MARK VI. 54 55 56

IMPROVEMENT.

Thus it still pleases Christ to exercise the faith of his people, that he may strengthen their dependence on him, and demonstrate at once his compassion and his power. Thus are storms permitted oftentimes to rise around them, and for a while they are left in darkness, and are tossed with tempests: but he is near at hand, even when they think him at the remotest distance; and when he seems to be passing by them, as regardless of their danger and distress, he has designs of grace and mercy to them, and acts in such a way on purpose to quicken and excite them to a greater earnestness and fervour in their applications to him. Happy would the Christian be, could he always discern his Lord, and always conceive of him aright! but alas, how often does he appear to the disordered mind as the object of terror rather than of confidence! and, in a day of darkness, while he may seem to treat his suffering people with neglect, instead of seeking him with a more earnest importunity, how are they ready to be overwhelmed with fears, and to conclude he has forgotten them! JOHN VI. 17, 18 MARK VI. 48 49

At the command of Jesus, Peter ventured to go to him on the sea. And through what storms and dangers may we not safely venture, if we are sure that our Lord calls us! Yet the rebuke which he suffered may warn us not rashly to throw ourselves on unnecessary trials, lest our excess of confidence end in fear and disgrace. Modesty and caution will adorn our other virtues, and render us amiable in the eyes of the humble Jesus. MATT. XIV. 28—30

In how many circumstances of life does the Christian appear to his own imagination like Peter, beginning to sink in the waves! But in the time of our distress, like him, let us cry to Jesus for help; and, while we are lifting up the hands of faith and prayer, we may humbly hope that Christ will stretch forth his omnipotent arm for our rescue. Let every experience of this kind, and all the seasonable aid he is from time to time imparting to us, establish our dependence on him, and enforce our obedience to him as the Son of God. May divine grace deliver us from that hardness of heart, that stupidity and insensibility of mind, which sometimes remains unconvinced in the midst of evidence, and unaffected under the most moving illustrations of his abilities and willingness to help us! 30, 31 32, 33 MARK VI. 52

word πλοιον, which signifies *any vessel* in which men sail on the sea, I have sometimes varied it a little, in order to prevent that ill effect which the repetition of it so frequently as it occurs would have on the ear in reading; and have here called it *a bark*, that it may not be imagined like our *modern ships*. Accordingly, John calls it πλοιαριον, or *a little vessel*; chap. vi. 22. Compare John xxi. 3, 8.

i *Exceedingly amazed—and astonished beyond measure.*] The words λιαν εκ περισσου εξισταντο, και εθαυμαζον, are too emphatical to be exactly rendered; but this is plainly the sense of them: and the accurate reader will observe that I suppose the words λιαν εκ περισσου to be equally connected with εθαυμαζον and εξισταντο.

k As to display even a creating power.] Had not this been done, it is hard to imagine how twelve baskets full of fragments could have been taken up: it was therefore in itself (as the Evangelist plainly intimates) a more certain and glorious miracle than the ceasing of the wind immediately on his coming into the ship. Their speedy landing after this must also have increased their astonishment. Considering this instance, and that of Philip, Acts viii. 39, 40. we have room to admire the condescension of Christ, in submitting so often to the fatigues of journeying on foot from one place to another, when he could at pleasure have commanded angels to transport him. With equal ease he could have walked ashore from the waves of the sea, but with the most edifying modesty he avoided the ostentation of it.

l *To the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore* not far from Capernaum.] The *land of Gennesareth* was a large tract of ground on the western shore of the lake, in part of which Capernaum appears from hence to have been situated. For though Matthew and Mark only speak of their coming to the land of Gennesareth, and putting to shore there, it is plain, from John's account, that Jesus at his landing came to Capernaum: for it was there the people found him that followed him in the morning from the other side of the sea. Compare John vi. 22, 24, 25. in the next section, and ver. 59 § 82.

SECTION LXXX.

Our Lord, being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, cautions them against those worldly views with which they sought him, and declares himself to be the bread of life. John vi. 22—40.

JOHN vi. 22.

SECT. 80.

JOHN VI.

IN the mean time, while Jesus was thus charitably employed in healing those who were brought to him in the places near the shore, from whence he soon went forwards to Capernaum, *on the morrow* after he had fed the five thousand, great search was made for him by those whom he had sent away the night before: for they were so affected with
22 the miraculous entertainment he had given them, that there were many of *the multitude, who,* though they might withdraw to a little distance on his dismissing the assembly, (Mark vi. 46. p. 161.) yet still *continued on the other side of the sea* that night, hoping to have another interview with him in the morning; and, *as they saw there was no other vessel there* on the coast, *but that one into which his disciples entered* when they departed in the evening, *and* knew *that Jesus did not go with his disciples into the vessel, but that his disciples went away* by themselves, leaving him there to spend the
23 night *alone,* they made no question of his being still on that side of the sea. But in the morning they perceived that he was gone, and presently determined to go after him: and, *though* there were no vessels there the night before, yet were they quickly furnished with an opportunity of following him; for *there came other vessels* very early *from Tiberias,* and put to shore *nigh to the place where they had eat* the *bread* and fishes *after the*
24 *Lord had given thanks,* and commanded such a miraculous blessing upon them. *The multitude therefore, when they saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there* on that side, *went also themselves* immediately *aboard the vessels* that were now arrived, as many of them as could, *and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus* with all the
25 appearance of the most eager importunity. *And, when they had found him on the other side of the sea,* in the synagogue of Capernaum, (see ver. 59.) as soon as the worship was over, and before they quitted the place, *they* accosted him with the greatest respect, and *said unto him, Rabbi, when* and how *camest thou hither?* for, as thou didst not go last night with thy disciples, we expected to have found thee on the other side of the sea, and know not when thou couldst come, or what imaginable way thou couldst have of crossing the water.

26 But *Jesus,* modestly waving the recital of those extraordinary circumstances which attended his passage, diverted the discourse to a ~~yet~~ more important and edifying subject; and knowing, by an intimate penetration of their very hearts, that they were governed only by carnal motives in this attendance upon him, humble and zealous as it might appear, he *answered them* with great solemnity, *and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, You seek me, not because you have seen the miracles* that I perform, and are convinced by them that I am a divine Teacher, *but because you have eaten of the loaves, and were filled,* and have from thence concluded that you shall make yourselves
27 rich and great by following me. But these are mean, and may be fatal views; and I would form you to nobler and wiser sentiments: *labour not* therefore so much *to procure the meat which perishes,* and can only support the mortal part of your nature;[a] *but* rather be solicitous to obtain divine knowledge and instruction, *that meat which endures to eternal life,* and will nourish your souls to endless felicity: this is that *which the Son of man will* most readily *give you; for him has God the* great *Father* of all, in mercy to his creatures, sent into the world for this blessed purpose, and *sealed* with this miraculous power, which he daily displays,[b] as an authentic proof of his divine mission.

28 *They therefore,* that they might appear willing to receive his instructions as well as his bounties, *said unto him, What must we do that we may so work the works of God* as to secure his favour to eternal life?

29 *Jesus replying, said unto them,* Think not of meriting the divine favour by any thing you can do yourselves; for *this is the* great *work of God,* which he requires above all things, and which he will be ready to accept, *that you believe on him whom he has sent,* crediting his message, and venturing your souls upon his power and grace.

30 *Then,* though they just before had seen such an astonishing miracle, and several of them lived in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, where he had so long multiplied those wonders, yet some of them were so unreasonable, that *they said to him,* after all the miracles that he had wrought,[c] If thou wouldst have us to regard thee as invested with so

JOHN vi. 22.

THE day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone:

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

24 When the people therefore saw, that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?

a *Labour not to procure the meat which perishes.*] Hardly any one can imagine our Lord intended to prohibit men's labouring for the subsistence of their bodies. Most of those who attended him probably had no other support than their labour: but his intent was plainly to declare how much the interest of the soul was to be preferred to that of the body. (See note h, on Matt. xii. 7. p. 191, 192.) Εργαζεσθαι βρωσιν is to labour to procure meat.

b *Him has God the Father sealed.*] Some have ingeniously conjectured that this may allude to a custom which princes might have when making grand entertainments, to give a commission under their hand and seal, or perhaps to deliver a signet to those whom they appointed to preside in the management of them: (see Elsner, Vol. I. p. 311, 312.) Though it may possibly be sufficient to say, that to seal is a general phrase for authorizing by proper credentials, whatever the purpose be for which they are given; or for marking a person out as wholly devoted to the service of him whose seal he bears.

c *Some of them were so unreasonable, that they said to him.*] The sentiments of those that speak to Christ in this discourse are so various, (compare ver. 34, 41, 42.) and the Evangelist so expressly declares that there was a debate between some and others of them, ver. 52. that I think it would be wrong to imagine these to have been the perverse and ungrateful sentiments of the whole multitude, who had followed him with so much eagerness from place to place for several days.

high a character, that far exceeds whatever has been claimed by any one before, thou shouldst produce some signal evidence of a superior kind to all that has been done by others: *what sign therefore shewest thou* from heaven, *that we may see* [*it*,] *and believe thee? What dost thou perform* more than others, or even equal to what Moses did, that we should treat thee with so extraordinary a regard? Thou didst indeed yesterday feed some thousands of us in an extraordinary manner with barley bread: but *our fathers*, who were incomparably more numerous than that assembly, *did*, under the conduct of Moses, *eat manna*, a far more delicious food, *in the wilderness*, even forty years; *as it is written*, (Psal. lxxviii. 24.) "*He gave them bread from heaven to eat*;" and, when thou shalt give us as glorious a demonstration of thy mission, we will pay thee an equal regard.

SECT. 80. JOHN VI.

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said to them again, *Verily, verily, I say*, and affirm it *unto you*, how strange soever it may appear, *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven* which best deserves so honourable a name; *but* this you are supplied with by *my Father*, who, sending me among you as your Instructor and Redeemer, *giveth you* now *the true* and most excellent *bread from heaven. For that is* indeed *the bread of God*, and may most justly claim the title, *which descendeth from* the highest *heaven*,[d] whereas manna fell only from the clouds or the inferior regions of the air; *and* which *giveth life* and true happiness *to the* whole *world* of believers, whereas what Moses gave only relieved the temporal necessities of one particular nation.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

They therefore, when they heard him speaking of so excellent a gift, were presently desirous to obtain it; and, though as yet they did not fully understand what he intended by this bread, some of the wiser and better part of them[e] had such a notion of its excellence, that they *said to him, Lord, give us evermore this bread*, on which our life depends, and let us always live upon this heavenly manna.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Then, for a farther explication of this important truth, *Jesus said to them, I am* indeed *the bread of life*;[f] nor is bread so necessary to the support of your bodies, as a believing regard to me is to the life of your souls; *he* therefore *that comes to me*, and makes his application aright, *shall never hunger; and he that* truly *believes in me shall never thirst* any more; but may depend upon it, that he shall find the most restless desires of his soul satisfied, and, conscious of the noblest refreshment and nourishment already received, shall grow up to a state of everlasting complete satisfaction and enjoyment *But*, valuable as these blessings of my grace are, you are little disposed to pursue and accept them; for *I have* already *told you*, (ver. 26.) *that you have even seen me*, and beheld the miracles that I perform, *and* yet are so perverse and obstinate that you *believe not* [*in me*,] and will not be prevailed upon to come to me for life and happiness. Nevertheless, though you reject me, yet I shall not be universally rejected, nor shall the purposes of my mission be entirely frustrated; for *all that the Father* has graciously chosen to himself, and whom he *giveth* to *me* in consequence of a peculiar covenant, to be sanctified and saved by me, *will* certainly at length *come to me*;[g] *and*, on the other hand, if any of you find yourselves disposed to such a believing application to me, you have no reason to be terrified with any suspicion that you are excluded from hope by any secret transactions between the Father and me; for I declare it to you as an universal truth, and perfectly consistent with the former, That *him that cometh to me*, whoever he may be, *I will by no means cast out*,[h] nor shall he be rejected or refused on any consideration whatsoever. And you have sufficient reason to believe this, *because I came down from heaven* into this lower world, *not to do my own will*, or to seek any separate interest of my own, *but* to do *the will*, and to seek the glory *of him that sent me. And this is the will of the Father who sent me, That of all* the whole body of my people *whom he has given me*, and committed to my care, *I should lose none*, not even the

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, That of all which he hath

d *That is* indeed *the bread of God, which descendeth from heaven.*] It is necessary to translate ο καταβαινων, &c. in this ambiguous manner, that we may not supersede the explication which our Lord gives in ver. 35. Dr. Clarke has justly observed this, and it is of great importance to apply it to many other passages, where too clear and full a paraphrase of what is explained professedly in some subsequent verses would only serve to flatten the whole.—Compare note c, on Mark iv. 3. p. 130.

e Some of the wiser and better part of them.] See before, note c, on ver. 30.

f *I am the bread of life.*] Though indeed it is very usual with the sacred writers to represent divine instructions as the food of the soul, and to compare them to delicious and nourishing diet; (see Psal. xix. 10; cxix. 103; Prov. ix. 5; Job xxiii. 12; Jer. xv. 16; and Heb. v. 12, 14.) Yet I can recollect no instance in which the Instructor himself, as such, is called food, or any are said to eat him; much less in which, as below, they are exhorted to eat his flesh, and drink his blood: so that Dr. Clarke's laboured and ingenious criticism on this passage (in the xiith of his *Seventeen Sermons*,) is far from being satisfactory; and, however clear it may be of any such design, I fear it has misled many to a neglect of that great doctrine of Christ's atonement, to which there seems in this context so express a reference.

g *All that the Father giveth me will come to me.*] I have given that sense of this celebrated and important text, which, on serious, and, I hope, impartial consideration, appeared to me most agreeable to the words themselves, and to the general tenor of scripture. (See especially John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 24.) Mr. Le Clerc's gloss upon them appears to me unnatural, and Dr. Whitby's frivolous.—I do not mean in these notes to enter largely into any kind of controversy; but dare not suppress or disguise what I am in my conscience persuaded to be the sense of scripture merely because it is not agreeable to the general taste of the age to take it in that view.—I render ηξει, *will come*, because the word does not necessarily imply any thing more than the certainty of the event; and I would not lead any, merely in dependence on a translation, to build a weak argument on the word *SHALL*, which it is well known has sometimes been done.

h *And him that cometh to me*, whoever he may be, *I will by no means cast out.*] To limit this latter clause by the former is not only missing, but contradicting the design of Christ, and destroying the wise and beautiful turn of this text; than which I think few more important for stating some great doctrines of the gospel which have unhappily been the foundation of much eager and uncharitable dispute.—The expression ου μη εκβαλω εξω, is extremely beautiful and emphatical. It represents an humble supplicant as coming into the house of some prince, or other great person, to cast himself at his feet, and to commit himself to his protection and care. He might fear his petition might be rejected, and he thrust out of doors: but our Lord assures him to the contrary. His house and heart are large enough to receive, shelter, and supply all the indigent and distressed. God only knows how many thousand souls have been sensibly supported by these gracious words.

SECT. 80. JOHN VI.

meanest member, *but should* assuredly *raise it up at the last day* in complete glory and happiness. Or, to express it in more general terms, *even this is the will of him that sent me, That every one who views the Son with an attentive eye,*[i] *and,* in consequence of that view, cordially *believes on him,* receiving him by faith, and trusting in him as an all-sufficient Saviour, *should have eternal life: and I will* accordingly *raise him up at* 40 *the last day,* and make him completely happy, both in soul and body, in the enjoyment of a glorious immortality: nor are there any secret purposes and decrees of God inconsistent with the sincerity of such a declaration.

given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 32 How gratefully should we acknowledge the divine goodness, in giving this true bread from heaven for the life
33 of the world; and how solicitous should we be, that by a true faith we may feed upon it! In the midst of so
27 many ensnaring circumstances, let us be strictly watchful over ourselves, that the vigour of our pursuits and labours may not be laid out on the meat which perishes, to the forgetfulness of that which endures to eternal life: but
40 acknowledging those authentic seals by which Christ is marked out to that important trust, may we apply to him as sent of God the Father to be the Author of eternal salvation, and come to him to be partakers of his saving benefits!

It must surely grieve us to observe the neglect and contempt with which he is too frequently treated; but it may comfort us, that there yet remains *a remnant according to the election of grace.* (Rom. xi. 5.) All that
37 the Father giveth him, will come to him; and blessed be God that this appears to be no inconsiderable number! *Secret things belong to the Lord our God;* (Deut. xxix. 29.) let it therefore be our care *to make* first *our calling, and* then, by a happy consequence, *our election, sure.* (2 Pet. i. 10.) Whatever discouragements may arise in our way, may we fly to cast ourselves at the foot of Christ; and then we may be sure he will never, on any consideration, cast us out, but will receive us in the arms of his almighty compassion; and, having sheltered and maintained us in his house on earth, will at length conduct us safely to the presence of his glory, and to the blessed abodes of complete felicity!

SECTION LXXXI.

Christ having represented himself as the bread of life, enlarges on the necessity and benefit of feeding upon him as such. John vi. 41—58.

JOHN vi. 41.

SECT. 81. JOHN VI.

THUS did our Lord declare himself to be the bread of life which God had given them from heaven; but *then,* as this agreed not with their worldly views, *the Jews who were about him* were so far from receiving the declaration with a becoming regard, that, on the contrary, they took offence and *murmured* at it, *because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven,* to feed and support the divine life in the soul. *And,* being
42 strangers to the doctrine of his miraculous conception and divine nature, *they said* among themselves, *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have* long *known,*[a] having lived many years in the neighbourhood? *How* is it, *therefore,* that this man should claim so high a character? or how *does he* presume to *say, that I came down from heaven?*

JOHN vi. 41.

THE Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 *Jesus therefore,* who well knew all their secret suspicions, how artfully soever they might be whispered and concealed, *replied and said unto them, Do not murmur among yourselves* on this occasion, but rather set yourselves seriously to reflect on your present
44 state, and your true interest. I know indeed that your prejudices against me are strong, and, without the influences of divine grace, will prove invincible and fatal: for such is the moral blindness and degeneracy of human nature, that *no man can* by a saving faith *come* and make his application *to me, unless the Father who has sent me draw him* by the sweet but powerful influences of his Holy Spirit on the heart;[b] *and [then] I will raise him up at the last day,* and finally make him a partaker of the complete felicity and
45 blessedness of my kingdom. For *so it is written in the prophets,* (Isa. liv. 13. and Jer. xxxi. 34.) "*And they shall all be taught by God,*[c] by divine influences on their minds;" and there are many other passages much to the same purpose: (see Isa. ii. 2—5. Mic. iv. 1—4, &c.) *Therefore every one who has* not only been instructed in the true nature of God, but has both *heard and learned from the Father* himself by virtue of these internal and efficacious teachings of his grace, *comes unto me,* and cordially receives me under the

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

i *Every one who views the Son with an attentive eye.*] Thus the words πας ο θεωρων τον υιον, should undoubtedly be rendered. There are many other places where θεωρειν signifies to *view with attention.* Compare Matt. xxvii. 55. Luke x. 18. xxi. 6. John xvii. 24. Acts iii. 16. and Heb. vii. 4.

a *Whose father and mother we have* long *known.*] Dr. Wells argues from hence, that Joseph was yet alive; but it may signify only, *We know who his father and mother were.* It is at least certain, that Joseph died quickly after; for if he had been living, Jesus, when dying on the cross, would not have consigned his mother to the care of John, John xix. 26, 27. (Compare note b, on John ii. 1. p. 45. and Matt. xiii. 55. p. 148.)

b *Unless the Father who has sent me draw him.*] The sense I have given in the paraphrase seems so natural from a view of the words themselves, and of their connection, as well as so agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture, that I wonder so many learned and ingenious men should have laboured to disguise it by other interpretations. Dr. Clarke explains it as an intimation, that to be well grounded in natural religion is the best preparative for receiving the Christian religion. But this, though an apparent truth, falls far short of the sense of the passage; especially considering what is afterwards said of being taught by God, and not merely of him, ver. 45.—The Doctor observes here, that when in scripture one person is said to draw another, the word may signify either the *action* of the person said to draw, or of the *person drawn;* and unhappily produces John xii. 32; Jer. xxxi. 3; and Hos. xi. 4. all which lie strongly against such a sense. The truth is, God's drawing does not exclude our consent to follow, and our activity in doing it; but it always includes a divine agency. Compare Judg. iv. 7. (See Dr. Clarke's *Sermons,* Vol. III. No. 3.)

c *Taught by God;* διδακτοι τθ Θεθ.] The word properly signifies, they shall be the *disciples* or *scholars of God,* who shall humbly sit down, as it were, at his feet, and receive instructions from him. This, in the latter text referred to in the paraphrase, is expressly distinguished from human instructions relating to the nature of God. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 9.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God: he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead:

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eat-

character I profess. I speak this of an inward divine teaching, and *not* to insinuate *that any one* on earth *has seen the Father*, and been taught by him, as one man is by the converse of another: no one has enjoyed such an honour, *except* it be *he who is* come to men as the great Ambassador *from God: He* indeed being statedly resident with him, and inseparably united to him, *has seen the Father*, and conversed with him to a degree of intimacy and endearment which no creature can pretend to have known. In virtue then of those 47
ample instructions I have received from him, *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and testify it as a most sure and important truth, that this is the only method of salvation; and *that* it is *he*, and he alone, *who believes* in me, and reposes himself *on me*, that *hath everlasting life*. Remember, therefore, that it is in this respect I tell you, *I am the bread of life;* 48
not only as a Teacher of truth, and a Messenger from God to men, but as the Great Redeemer, whom you must receive into your hearts, and on whom you must, as it were, feed by faith, if you indeed would have your life to be supported and secured.

And those who thus regard me will receive far more important blessings than Moses, of 49
whom you have now been boasting, could possibly give. For though indeed *your fathers*, under the conduct of that illustrious prophet, *did eat manna in the wilderness*, yet it was not sufficient to maintain their life, *and* they *are* long since *dead:* [*But*] *this*, of 50
which I now speak, *is the* true *bread which cometh down from heaven*, and is of such a nature, *that any one may eat of it, and* have his life so nourished and supported by it, that he shall *not die*, but be assuredly delivered from the condemnation and ruin to which the breach of God's righteous law has subjected every offender.

Thus then I plainly tell you, how incredible soever you may think it, That *I, who came* 51
down from heaven for this gracious purpose, *am the living bread*, or a principle of divine life and eternal happiness to all who shall faithfully receive me: so that *if any one eat of this bread*, in spite of death and the grave, *he shall live for ever. And*, that you may more distinctly conceive this important truth, and see the propriety of this language, I add, That *the bread which I will give* to such a one *is my* own *flesh, which I will give* as an atoning sacrifice *for the* forfeited *life of the* whole *world* of Jews and Gentiles,[d] of which every true believer shall partake.

But *the Jews*, whose stupidity often occasioned them to mistake, and whose perverseness 52
led them to wrest his words, did not, or would not, understand him; and *therefore contended with each other*, the generality of them *saying*,[e] as if what he had said was to be taken in a literal sense, *How can this man* possibly *give us* [*his*] *flesh to eat?* What a monstrous and unintelligible doctrine is this?

Then Jesus replied in the same figurative language he had used before, and, without 53
condescending to any farther explication, *said to them*, However you may censure it as unintelligible and absurd, yet *verily, verily, I say unto you*, There is no truth more certain in itself, and more important to you: for *unless*, by a cordial dependence on the atonement I shall make, and by the powerful influences of divine grace upon your hearts, *you eat*, as it were, *the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood*,[f] *you have no* principle of spiritual *life in you*, and can have no claim to eternal happiness. For this is so 54
important a part of faith in me, that, to declare the necessity of it, I may say, (with such an alteration of my former words, ver. 40.) *He* alone *that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, hath eternal life; and I will* most assuredly *raise him up at the last day*, and shew by his complete deliverance, how just a confidence he has reposed in me, amidst all the contempt with which you treat me. *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is* 55
drink;[g] and nothing deserves the name so well, as nothing is worthy of being called life in comparison of that which is hereby supported. For this feeding upon me is such, that 56
he who thus *eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me* by an intimate and inseparable union, *and I* abide *in him*[h] by the unalienable tokens of my favour and love to nourish the divine life in his soul: I say by the unalienable tokens of it; for *as the* 57
living Father, the great source of life, *has sent me* into the world, *and I live by* the protection and care of *the Father*,[i] who is continually dwelling in me, and communicating of

d *Which I will give for the life of the* whole *world*, &c.] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in this verse, compared with ver. 31. They had insinuated, that *feeding a few thousands with the five loaves* was an inconsiderable thing when compared with what Moses did, when he fed the whole camp of Israel; but our Lord declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching the whole world, and giving life, immortal life, to all that should believe in him.

e The generality of them *saying*.] Had this been the language of all, there could have been no contention between them, which yet is expressly asserted.

f *Eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.*] This phrase naturally expresses a lively and habitual regard to Christ as the great support of the spiritual life. The mention of his blood naturally leads to the thought of his atonement, as we are elsewhere told, *We have redemption through his blood*, (Eph. i. 7.) and *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* (Heb. x. 19.) The sacrament of the eucharist is plainly intended to affect our minds with a sense of these important truths, and our Lord might probably think of that intended institution while he spoke: but as this was a future thing, and utterly unknown to his hearers, it seems to me unwarrantable to interpret this text as chiefly referring to that ordinance; and nothing can be more precarious, than many consequences which have been drawn from it in that view, though some of them be authorized by very great names.

g *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*] It might more literally be rendered, *Is truly meat, and is truly drink;* but the sense in which the word [*indeed*] is often used, gives a kind of paraphrase on the words. Just in this sense, *the true light*, is the *most excellent light;* (John i. 9.) *the true vine*, is the *most noble vine;* (John xv. 1.) and *the true bread*, is the *most excellent and nourishing bread.* See above, ver. 32.

h *Abides in me, and I in him.*] After these words, the Cambridge manuscript, and one of Stephens's, add, *As the Father is in me, and I in the Father, verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye receive the body of the Son of man as the bread of life, ye have no life in you.* Dr. Mill (in his notes here) seems to approve the addition; but I think Dr. Whitby has so fully proved it to be spurious, that I content myself with referring the reader to him, (see his *Examen Millii*, p. 49.) and to Wolfius on this text. (*Cur. Philol.* Vol. I. p. 865, 866.)

i *I live by* the protection and care of *the Father.*] The human and derived nature of Christ had, no doubt, the same dependence on the providence and influence of God, that other creatures have: and though Christ as Mediator has life in himself, (as it was said before, John v. 26. § 47.) yet was it *given him of the Father*, and it

SECT. 81. JOHN VI.

his Spirit in the richest abundance to me; *so he that* thus *eateth me, even he shall live by me*, through the Spirit which I will also communicate to him. And if you attend to these important hints that I have given, you may in general know what I meant, by saying as I have done, *This is the bread that came down from heaven;* and by adding, (ver. 49, 50.) that it is *not* in this case, *as* it was with *your fathers*, who *did eat manna* in
58 the wilderness, *and* yet ~~*are dead*~~,[k] without having found any efficacy in it to communicate a spiritual, or secure an eternal life; [*but*] *he that eats this bread shall live for ever.*

eth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 41 THE hearers of Christ murmured, and perversely objected against his doctrine. Let not ministers now wonder,
52 if the like capricious humour sometimes prompts their hearers to seek occasion of offence, where there is none: let them learn of their great Master, in meekness to *instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will*
44, 45 *give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*, (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Our Lord expressly asserts the necessity of being taught and drawn by the Father, in order to our knowing him, and coming to him. Let us therefore humbly seek these influences ourselves, and fix our dependence upon them in all our attempts upon others for their conversion and edification.

48, 51 Christ here gives us *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, to illustrate and enforce this important doctrine of
53, 54 the necessity of regarding him as the bread of life, and of feeding by faith on his flesh and blood, which he has given for the life of the world. Let us, as we desire any part in his saving blessings, most thankfully receive his
55 flesh as meat indeed, and his blood as drink indeed. May God be merciful to those that call themselves Christians,
56, 57 and yet are strangers to such a believing intercourse with Christ, and to the derivation of spiritual life from him! If this be enthusiasm, it is the enthusiasm of scripture; and the denial or forgetfulness of these important doctrines, is like a fatal palsy to the soul, which chills, as it were, all its nerves, and destroys at once its sensibility and vigour, its pleasure and usefulness.

To represent and inculcate these great truths, our Lord afterwards instituted the sacrament of his Supper, in which we not only commemorate his sufferings, but our own concern in them. It is the language of every intelligent approach to it, that we acknowledge the life of our souls to depend on the merit of his atonement, and the com-
58 munications of his grace. This is eating his flesh, and drinking his blood: may we be nourished by it to eternal life! Then, though this mortal part of our nature drop into the dust, our souls will live and triumph; nor shall our bodies finally perish, but be raised up by Christ in the great day, to take their part in the full joy of our Lord. There these intermediate ordinances shall cease, and copious uninterrupted streams of divine teachings, and divine influences, shall sweetly flow in upon our ever-improving, active, rejoicing minds!

SECTION LXXXII.

Christ having declared that the foregoing discourse was to be taken in a spiritual sense, is forsaken by many of his disciples; and while the apostles assure him of their continued fidelity, he intimates the treachery of Judas. John vi. 59, *to the end.*

JOHN vi. 59.

SECT. 82. JOHN VI.

THESE things, which had been now delivered by our Lord, *he spake* before all sorts of hearers *in the synagogue, as he was teaching at Capernaum*:[a] and, for wise reasons, he involved a part of his discourse in figurative and mysterious language; as in particular, that which related to eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

60 *Many therefore of* those who followed him as *his disciples, having heard* [*it,*] *said, This is a difficult* and strange *discourse;* and *who can hear* or understand *it?* In its literal sense it is plainly absurd, and we know not what other interpretation to give it.

61 *But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured about it*, though they did not speak out their objections and scruples, *said unto them, Does this* which you have just now heard so much *offend you?* and do you stumble at it as incredible?

62 [*What*] *then if ye shall see the Son of man ascending up* into heaven *where he was before?*[b] would you then understand what was meant by the bread of life coming down from thence, as the food of the world? Or would you then believe that I came from heaven, notwithstanding the objection you have made as to the meanness of my parent-

63 age?[c] Thus our Lord intimated his intended ascension; and in the mean time, as a key to his former discourse, he added, As in the human frame *it is the* indwelling *Spirit that quickens* every part of it; and *the flesh*, how exactly soever organized and adorned, if separate from that, *profits nothing*, but is an insensible and inactive corpse; so also *the*

JOHN vi. 59.

THESE things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

is he that qualifies Christ by his Spirit for the great work for which he sent him into the world; and he accordingly is elsewhere represented as *upholding him* in it. Isa. xlii. 1. Compare John viii. 29. and xvi. 32.

k *Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead.*] This version of the words is perfectly agreeable to the original: ουκ καθως εφαγον οι πατερες υμων το μαννα. But I should not perhaps have taken too great a liberty, had I avoided the ellipsis in the Greek, and ventured to reduce it to a plainer form, by rendering it, *Not like that manna which your fathers did eat, and are dead.* So Grotius has explained this passage; and though it does not so exactly answer to the Greek, and cannot pass for a literal translation, it plainly expresses the sense of the place, and the words run more natural and easy. See Grotius, *in loc.*

a *As he was teaching at Capernaum.*] Probably (as was hinted above, ver. 25. p. 164.) the foregoing discourses were introduced after the reading of the law and prayer. We are not to wonder at the dialogue which passed here; there are many other instances of disputes which either Christ or his apostles had with the Jews in their synagogues. See Matt. xii. 9. *et seq.* § 50; Luke xiii. 10. *et seq.* § 117; Acts xiii. 44. *et seq.*; and xvii. 17.

b *Ascending up* into heaven, *where he was before.*] A very celebrated writer thinks this refers to *the Son of man appearing to Daniel in the clouds of heaven:* but his appearing to him thus in vision, was no more an argument of his being there at the time of that appearance, than the appearance of the symbols of the Greek and Roman empires was an argument of their existence at that time.

c Would you then believe that I came from heaven? &c.] What Christ here says of his ascension, may be farther intended to intimate the necessity of taking his discourse in a figurative sense, as it would so soon be evidently impossible to eat his flesh, which was to be received into heaven.

words which I speak unto you are spirit, that is, they are to be taken in a spiritual sense, *and* then you will find they *are life* to your souls; whereas, to take them in a literal sense would be most unprofitable and monstrous. It is indeed strange that you should think of it; *but* I know *there are some of you who believe not*, and would shelter your infidelity under these mean and disingenuous cavils. This he plainly told them: *for Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed*, and who did *not; and* even knew the very person *who it was that* at last *should* so basely *betray him.*

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And he farther *said, For this reason I told you*, (ver. 44.) *that no man can come unto me except it be given him of my Father*;[d] because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strongly against such a doctrine as I publish, and that nothing but divine grace will subdue them.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

From this time many who had borne the name *of his disciples*, abusing and misrepresenting what he had now delivered, as if it had been either absurd or utterly unintelligible, *went back, and walked no more with him*; plainly perceiving that their true character was now discovered, as well as that their secular views were disappointed.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Jesus therefore said unto the twelve apostles, *Will you also go away?* The multitude are gone, and will you also follow them, and leave me entirely alone? Choose for yourselves; for I desire not to detain you against your will. *Then Simon Peter*, with his usual zeal, *answered him, Lord, to whom should we go*, if we were really disposed to quit thee? or what advantage could we expect by it? *Thou hast the words of eternal life*, and hast even now been directing us in the way to it; and God forbid that any other hopes and views should ever be preferred by us to these! However others may be governed by their carnal prejudices, *and* a deluded multitude may treat thee with contempt, *we* firmly *believe, and* assuredly *know*, on the most convincing evidence, *that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God*; in which persuasion we are determined to hazard all in thy service, and to sacrifice even our lives to thee.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus then *answered them*, Such a resolution might reasonably be expected from you all; for *have I not chosen you twelve* to the honour of a peculiar intimacy with me, and to a station of the most distinguished eminence and importance in the church?[e] And *yet* I know that *one of you is a devil*, and, under the influence of that malignant spirit of darkness, will turn my accuser and betrayer.[f]

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

This *he spake concerning Judas Iscariot*, [*the son*] *of Simon; for* it was *he* who at that time began to harbour in his breast this execrable purpose, and *had* then *thoughts of betraying him*;[g] *though he was one of the twelve* apostles, and therefore under peculiar obligations to fidelity and duty.

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon; for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

IMPROVEMENT.

We have, through the divine goodness, been made acquainted with those gospel-truths, in their full evidence, and mutual connexion, which were more obscurely hinted to those who attended on Christ's personal ministry: may we therefore hearken to the spiritual sense of this sublime and excellent discourse! And as the credible account of his ascension into glory is now added to the rest, let us receive the whole of his doctrine with the most humble submission: earnestly intreating the influences of divine grace, that we may not only be drawn to Christ, but be so firmly attached to his interest, that whoever else forsake him, we may never go away. On the contrary, may we rather collect an argument from their ingratitude and folly, more strenuously and more affectionately adhere to him! Indeed, to whom should we go but to him? *He has the words of eternal life.* From him, therefore, in all lowly subjection of soul, may we learn those lessons on which our everlasting happiness depends!

Ver. 60 63 62 66 67 68

May we never, like Judas, conceal a treacherous and disaffected heart under the specious appearance of piety and goodness! This would be only imposing on ourselves; for his penetrating eye can never be deceived. May we approve the integrity of our souls in his sight, and repose an unlimited confidence in him, as one whom we believe and know to be a Divine Saviour, Christ the Son of the living God!

70 64, 71 69

d *Except it be given him of my Father.*] To be *drawn by the Father*, (ver. 44.) and to *have faith given him by the Father*, are evidently synonimous terms; which plainly vindicates the interpretation given above, and shews how far the loose and general glosses of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Clagget are from expressing the true and determinate sense of our Lord's words.

e *Have I not chosen you twelve?* &c.] I see not the least reason, with Elsner, to expunge the note of interrogation, and render it, *I have not chosen you* all; which would entirely enervate the spirit of the following clause.

f My accuser and betrayer.] According to Mr. Locke, our Lord intimates that this was the reason why he had not more plainly declared himself to be the Messiah, because he knew Judas would have accused him of rebellion against the Romans: (for so the word διαβολος does sometimes signify *a false accuser*; see 1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; and Tit. ii. 3.) But I can see no proof that Judas, from the beginning, intended to betray Christ. It is more probable, he at first engaged with him in expectation of secular advantage; and finding those views disappointed, he might now begin to form that detestable scheme which he afterwards executed. If this was the occasion on which he first entertained the thought, (as I think it probably might,) one would imagine, that such an intimation of his secret wickedness must have struck him to the heart.

g *Had thoughts of betraying him.*] The words ἵνα αὐτὸν παραδῷ may properly, though not necessarily, import thus much; and, I think, had not this been actually the case, Christ would not have said he *is a devil*, but rather that he would become one.

SECTION LXXXIII.

Our Lord vindicates his disciples in neglecting the traditions of the Pharisees, and condemns those corrupt teachers for preferring such traditions to the precepts of the divine law. Matt. xv. 1—9. Mark vii. 1—13.

Mark vii. 1.

SECT. 83.

THE miracles which Jesus wrought, and which have been mentioned above,[a] being reported at the ensuing passover,[b] gave a farther alarm to the Jews, and especially to their established teachers; so that, to obviate the effect of them, and to prevent the success of his ministry, *there were then gathered unto Jesus the Pharisees, and some of the scribes, who were* stated inhabitants *of Jerusalem*, [*and*] *came* [*from thence*] on purpose to watch, and, if possible, to ensnare him. *And*, as they looked on all his actions with a most malignant eye, they soon found an opportunity to cavil; for *seeing some of his disciples eat bread with* what they counted *polluted (that is, with unwashed) hands, they found fault* with them among themselves.

MARK VII. 1 2

3 *For* this was a favourite tenet of *the Pharisees*, on which they laid a particular stress, *and* indeed almost *all the Jews* pay a considerable regard to it,[c] that they *do not* allow themselves to *eat without washing their hands often* with abundance of exactness,[d] and particularly just before their meals: and this they observe, not in consequence of any express divine command, but as *holding the tradition of the elders*, who thought this scrupulous care a decent expression and memorial of their concern to keep themselves free from whatsoever might pollute them. *And* especially [*when they come*] *from the market*, or any other place of public concourse, lest they should, without their knowledge, have touched any thing unclean, *they eat not till they have washed* their hands at least, if not their whole body. *And there are many other things* besides the washing of their hands, *which they* in like manner *receive and maintain* by the authority of the same tradition, [*as*] *the washing of cups and pots* in which their food is put, *and* of the *brasen vessels* made use of in preparing it, *and* even of the very *couches* on which they lie at their meals.

4

5 *Then the Pharisees and scribes*, after they had censured the disciples of Christ among themselves, (as was observed before,) came to Jesus, and *asked him, Why do not thy disciples walk* and behave themselves *according to the tradition of the elders*, as other pious and regular Jews do; *but transgress* [*it*] in a very obvious and material instance, *for they eat with unwashed hands?*[e] Can they be so ignorant as not to know the traditions that forbid it? Or are they so profane as not to regard them?

MATT. XV. 3

And he answering, said unto them, Nay, but I may with much greater reason ask you, *Why do you also transgress* what is infinitely more sacred, even *the command of God* himself, *out of regard to your* own vain and superstitious *tradition?* And this in several instances you run to such a length, as that *you fairly make void the command of God*, and render it insignificant, *that you may observe your tradition*; though you consider not perhaps from whence it comes, or may easily know that it was derived only from a fallible man. I will give you one notorious instance of it, which you cannot dispute: *for* you well know, that *God has commanded* [*by*] *Moses, saying*, "*Honour thy father and thy mother.*"—A precept written with his own finger on the tables of stone, *and* guarded by that awful sanction, "*Whoso curseth* his *father, or* his *mother, let him* "*surely die* without mercy." (See Exod. xxi. 17; Lev. xx. 9; and compare Prov. xx. 20; and Deut. xxvii. 16.) Now for any one to suffer his parents to languish in want of the necessary supplies of life, must certainly be a yet more aggravated wickedness than an impious word, which may possibly escape a man's lips in a sudden transport of passion.[f] *But* what you teach is contradictory to this divine command; and an ungrateful child may justify himself in the neglect of it, in consequence of your tradition: for *you assert*, [*that*] *any one may say to his father or mother*, [*Let that be*] *corban, that is to say*, let it be reckoned as a devoted thing, or be considered as *a gift* dedicated to the

MARK VII. 3 4 5

MATT. XV. 4

MARK VII. 9

MATT. XV. 4

MARK VII. 11

Mark vii. 1.

THEN came together unto [Jesus] the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which [were of, *and*] came from Jerusalem. [Matt. xv. 1.]

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but [transgress *it*, for they] eat bread with unwashen hands? [Matt. xv. 2.]

Matt. xv. 3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition! [Mark vii. 9.]

Mark vii. 9. Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Matt. xv. 4. For God [*by* Moses] commanded, saying, Honour thy father, and [thy] mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. [Mark vii. 10.]

Mark vii. 11. But ye say, [Whosoever] shall say to *his* father or mother, *It is* corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou might-

a Which have been mentioned above.] As both Matthew and Mark introduce the following discourse immediately after his crossing the sea to Capernaum, when he but just before had fed the five thousand, and John determines the debates in the preceding sections to that time, there can be no reasonable doubt about placing this section, and several more that are expressly connected with it, in this order.

b At the ensuing passover.] That a passover followed quickly after the events before related, is expressly determined. (see John vi. 4. and the note there, p. 159. and compare chap. vii. 2.) But the Evangelists do not exactly determine whether Christ did or did not attend it. If he did not, we may conclude he had proper reasons for not doing it: but to be sure such numerous and public miracles as he had lately performed, would be the subject of a great deal of discourse at Jerusalem. Compare John vii. 11, 12; and xi. 56.

c Almost *all the Jews* pay a considerable regard to it.] Their rabbies carried this to a most ridiculous height; one of them determining the *neglect of washing* to be a *greater sin* than *whoredom*: and another saying, it would be *much better to die* than to *omit it*. Many instances of this kind may be seen in Dr. Whitby and Dr. Hammond, *in loc.* and in Buxtorf. *Synag. Jud. cap.* xi. p. 236. It is plain that other nations commonly used to wash before their meals. See Athenæus, p. 408. Edit. Casaub. 1675. and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 73.

d *Washing their hands often.*] The word πυγμὴ is ambiguous, being very seldom used. Theophylact's gloss would incline one to render it, as L'Enfant does, *up to the elbows*; and Beza translates it, *with the fist.* (See Godwyn's *Moses and Aaron, lib.* i. *cap.* 10. p. 39.) Not being able certainly to determine the point, I thought it sufficient to add in the paraphrase, *with abundance of exactness.* Camero and Lud. Capellus (*in loc.*) explain it of *holding up their hands closed*, while the water was poured upon them; and I have nothing to object to the reasons they give for that interpretation.

e *For they eat with unwashed hands.*] It is in the original, *eat bread*; and I have sometimes retained the Hebraism, but did not think it necessary always to do it. Every attentive reader must have observed, that food in general is called bread, in a multitude of places; and bread is sometimes put even for the provisions of a royal table, 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10; and xii. 20.

f In a sudden transport of passion.] Dr. Lightfoot (in his *Hor. Heb. in loc.*) has well observed, that it is probable a child must be in a transport of very undutiful passion, when he made the rash vow afterwards mentioned, that he would *never* in any instance *relieve his parent*, so that it was a kind of *cursing him*; but had it been said ever so coolly and deliberately, the argument here

est be profited by me, [and honour not his father or his mother,] *he shall be free.* [Matt. xv. 5, 6.]

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother.

Matt. xv. 6. Thus have ye made the [word *and*] commandment of God of none effect, [through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.] [Mark vii. 13.]

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, [as it is written,] [Mark vii. 6.]

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. [Mark vii. 6.]

Mark. vii. 7. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. [Matt. xv. 9.]

8 For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do.

altar,[g] *by which thou mightest* otherwise *receive advantage from me,*[h] *and he shall* then be free from the command, and *not* be under any obligation to *honour* and relieve *his father or his mother.* *And* in this manner, out of regard to such a rash and impious vow, *you* not only suppose he may innocently omit this evident duty of natural as well as revealed religion, but will *no more permit him to do any thing for* the relief even of *his father or his mother.* *And* [*thus*] then it is evidently to be seen, according to the charge which I advanced against you, that, through a gross and impious superstition, *you have* even *invalidated the word,* [*and,*] as it were, annihilated *the command of God, by* means of *your tradition, which you have delivered* as a rule of life to be observed with the most scrupulous exactness: *and* it were easy to be shewn in other instances, that *many such like things you do.*

SECT. 83.

MARK VII. 12.

MATT. XV.

6

Yet these are the things in which you vainly pride yourselves, as proofs of your religion, but, *O you hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophecy of* such as *you,* and very fitly may those words which he delivers in the name of God be applied to you, where he is *saying* of the superstitious Jews of his own time, what may be evidently seen to agree to you, (*as it is written,* Isa. xxix. 13.) "*This people draweth near to me with their mouth, and* "*honoureth me with their lips;* they make a pompous profession, and pretend to a great "deal of devotion and piety; *but* it plainly appears, that *their heart is far estranged from* "*me.*" Notwithstanding all your talk, then, of strictness in religion, *yet* as this appears to be expressive of your real character, the doom of hypocrites belongs to you; and God may justly affirm of such, (as it is added there,) "*In vain do they worship me, while they* "*teach doctrines* or lessons [*that are*] merely *human* inventions and *injunctions,*[i] being "only the precepts of men, that have no stamp of the divine authority upon them," which yet they would insist upon as necessary parts of religion, and would impose them on the consciences of others. And this (as I have said) you may be charged with, not in one single instance only, but in many; *for, leaving the commandment of God, you maintain the tradition of men,* [*relating to*] *the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do,* with a zeal by no means required, and on which at best you lay a very disproportionable stress.

7

8

MARK VII

7

8

IMPROVEMENT.

How miserable is the case of those who, while they earnestly contend for the forms of divine worship, are losing both the improvement and reward which might be expected from a regular attendance upon it! This is the case of all who draw near to God with their lips, while their hearts are far from him. May we abhor the vanity of such hypocritical behaviour in the presence of Him who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men!

MATT XV.

9

Let us learn from this just and severe sentence which our Lord passes on these superstitious Pharisees, to avoid the temper he condemns in them. It much less becomes us as Christians, and especially as Protestants, to impose on our brethren with rigorous severity those doctrinal decisions, or those ritual observances, which have not their express foundation in the word of God, to which we so constantly appeal as to our common rule. Happy had it been for the church in all ages and nations, had men exerted that zeal for the truths and the institutions of God, in the beauty and glory of their native simplicity, which has carried them on to defend and propagate their own inventions, till religion itself has almost sunk under the weight of the ornaments in which they have dressed it, and the unwieldy armour which they have hung about it!

3, 7

Let children learn from the command which Christ has vindicated, to honour their parents by a tender care of them in their declining days; remembering, that as no filial duty and gratitude can ever fully repay our obligations to such friends, so an affectionate regard to them is a proper and necessary expression of our filial piety to the great Father of our spirits. Justly may he esteem his temples profaned, rather than adorned, by the most costly gifts, which are the spoils of nature, and the trophies of inhumanity.

4—6

suggested would have taken place, and would have justified the connection.

g *Any one may say,* [*Let that be*] *corban, that is to say, a gift.*] So I chuse with Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 74.) to render the words in Matthew, ος αν ειπη, though, I confess, not without some doubt. But I think it is best to leave as little as possible to be supplied, in order to make up the sense; and on that principle, I should prefer the addition in our own translation of this place, *he shall be free,* to that which Sir Norton Knatchbull proposes, who would render it, *You say,* [*a man honours his parents,*] *if he says it is corban, &c.* thus supposing the passage to imply a repetition from the verse before. But such a construction seems to me quite unparalleled, and very unnatural. Grotius makes και *redundant,* and would render it, *You teach, that whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, &c.—let him not honour his father and mother:* but in the way that I have rendered it, the sense is in effect the same, and the common sense of και is retained. Some considerable critics, particularly Drusius (*de Tribus Sectis, lib.* ii. *cap.* 17.) and Godwyn, (*Moses and Aaron, lib.* vi. *cap.* 6.) give a very elegant turn to the following words, δωρον ο εαν εξ εμου ωφεληθης, and would suppose them to be an oath expressed in the elliptical manner, which was very common among the Hebrews; if so, they should be rendered, *I swear by corban,* or the sacred treasury, *thou shalt receive no benefit from me.* But as both the Evangelists insert the particle ο, which in this construction has no force, I cannot wholly approve this version, and therefore did not insert it. Perhaps some of these pretended vows of theirs amounted to no more than an obligation to leave some proportion of the overplus of their estates to the temple treasury after their death, which might in a thousand instances be made the cloak of avarice and cruelty. The indeterminate manner of speaking, it must be owned, would lead to such a supposition.—Capellus, with immense labour, (and, I think, beyond all farther controversy,) has asserted the interpretation of this text as given in the paraphrase; and has produced a vast variety of passages from the *Talmud,* to shew the superstitious regard the Jews had to such rash and unnatural vows, as well as the ridiculous ways they sometimes took to evade them. See Lud. Capell. in Matt. xv. 5.

h *Advantage from me.*] Sir Norton Knatchbull would render εξ εμου, *of my substance,* or possession: but had this been the exact rendering, it would have been εκ του εμου, of which instances occur in Greek authors.

i *While they teach doctrines that are human injunctions.*] So I render διδασκοντες διδασκαλιας ενταλματα ανθρωπων. The words seem to allude to Isa. xxix. 13. where, though the present Hebrew copies read the text agreeable to our translation of the place, *Their fear to me is taught by the precept of men,* Grotius has shewn how a small variation in the original might justify the Seventy in that version of theirs which the Evangelist here follows, the sense of which is much the same with what we retain in that place.—I would only observe farther, that διδασκαλιαι in general signifies *any lesson,* and not merely (as Bishop Hopkins contends) *a doctrine of faith;* and that the purpose to which our Lord here applies it, plainly shews that it must refer to *ritual injunctions.* See Bishop Hopkins's *Works,* p. 150, 151.

SECTION LXXXIV.

Christ pursues his discourse against the Pharisees, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity.
Matt. xv. 10—20. Mark vii. 14—23.

Mark vii. 14.

SECT. 84. NOW when our Lord had thus condemned the Pharisees to their face, for the unwarrantable stress they laid on their vain and precarious traditions, he took this opportunity to undeceive the people, and to let them see how insignificant this outward strictness was, on
MARK VII. which the Pharisees insisted; *and having called all the multitude together to him,*
14 *he* pursued his discourse, and *said to them,* Let me charge *every one of you* attentively to *hearken to me* in what I now deliver, *and* give all diligence, that you may *understand it;* lest for want of doing it, out of regard to your admired teachers, you impose on your own
15 souls in a matter of the greatest importance. *There is nothing which enters into a man from without that can* really *pollute him* in the sight of God: it is *not,* I say, *that which* is originally from without, and *goes into the mouth,* that renders him polluted;[a] *but the things which come out of a man are those that* actually *defile him,* [*even*] *that which*
16 *comes out of* [*his*] *mouth.* And I would have you to observe, that much is comprehended in these few important words: remember them therefore, and think of them; and *if any one* of you *has ears to hear,* and a heart to consider, *let him hear* these things, and reflect seriously upon them.

17 *And when he was come into the house* apart *from the multitude, his disciples came* to him, according to their usual custom, [*and*] *asked him concerning the* meaning of this
MATT. XV. *parable,* or sententious and, to them, obscure saying. *And they* likewise *said to him* at the same time, *Knowest thou,* and art thou sufficiently aware of it, *that the Pharisees*
12 *who heard this saying, were* highly *offended* at it, as what appears to strike directly (as they represent the matter) both at the authority of the oral and of the written law?
13 *But he answered and said,* As for their displeasure, I am very little concerned about it, nor shall I ever labour to ingratiate myself with persons of their character: for I consider them as a set of men doomed to destruction: and indeed *every plantation which my heavenly Father has not planted,* and every thing in religion which, like the vain traditions they advance, is not founded in divine institution, but human invention, *shall* sooner
14 or later *be rooted up,* and cast out of the vineyard as an incumbrance to it. *Let them alone,* and do not trouble or concern yourselves about their censures; *they are blind guides of the blind* populace, that implicitly commit themselves to their conduct; *and* it is very easy to foresee the consequence; for, *if the blind* shall undertake to *lead the blind, they will both fall into a ditch* together, and encumber instead of helping each other, (compare Luke vi. 39. p. 109.) and so will these perverse Pharisees and their careless followers perish together.
15 *But Peter answering, said unto him,* We would desire thee, however, to *explain* more clearly *to us* what is the meaning of *this parable* which they are so much offended at; for even we ourselves are at a loss to reconcile it, not only with the Pharasaic traditions, but with the injunctions of the law of God, which hath so expressly enjoined a difference of meats.

MARK VII. *And Jesus said to them, Are you likewise still so void of understanding,* as not to apprehend the sense of what I said? by which you might have easily perceived that I did
18 not intend immediately to supersede any precept of the law relating to the distinction of clean and unclean food; but only to declare that it is the temper of the mind which God regards, and that no external accident separate from this can render a man offensive to him; and, after all the instructions I have given you, *do you not yet perceive* that it must needs
19 be so, *that whatsoever enters from without into a man cannot defile him?* And that, for this obvious reason, *because whatsoever enters in at the mouth enters not into his heart,* or mind, in which sin or holiness is seated, and which alone is capable of moral excellence or pollution; *but goes into the belly, and* passing through the bowels, by the course of natural digestion and evacuation, *is thrown off into the vault,* a place *which cleanses,* as it were, and carries off the grosser dregs of *all the food* that a man eats.
20 *But, said he,* It is indeed *that which comes out of a man that* really *defiles a man,* and makes him sinful in the sight of God, as it originally proceeds from within: [*for*] *the things proceeding out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and* these are *they* that actually *defile a man,* as they may thus be tainted with a great deal of moral guilt and
21 malignity. *For, from within, out of the heart of men, proceed* all such corrupt and *evil reasonings,*[b] as those of the Pharisees which you have now been hearing, and all those self-invented sophisms which exclude wisdom at the first entrance; and from hence also proceeds *adulteries* and *fornications,* and all sorts of sensuality and uncleanness; all acts

MARK VII. 14. AND when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand. [Matt. xv. 10.]

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him; [not that which goeth into the mouth,] but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man, [*even* that which cometh out of the mouth.] [Matt. xv. 11.]

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples [came, *and*] asked him concerning the parable; [Matt. xv. 12.]

Matt. xv. 12. And said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind: and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

Mark vii. 18. And [Jesus said] unto them, Are ye [also yet] so without understanding; Do ye not [yet] perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him! [Matt xv. 16, 17.]

19 Because [whatsoever entereth in at the mouth,] entereth not into his heart; but [goeth] into the belly, and [is cast out] into the draught, purging all meats. [Matt. xv. 17.]

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man: [*for* those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man.] [Matt. xv. 18.]

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [Matt. xv. 19.]

[a] *Not that which goes into the mouth,* &c.] Though it is very true, a man may bring guilt upon himself by eating what is pernicious to his health, or by excess in the quantity of food and liquor; and a Jew might have done it by presumptuously eating what was forbidden by the Mosaic law, which still continued in force; yet in all these instances, the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be just proportionable to it; which is all our Lord asserts.

[b] Corrupt and *evil reasonings:* πονηροι διαλογισμοι] I chuse to render it *evil reasonings,* rather than merely *evil thoughts,* as better suiting both the original and the occasion, and as containing a more universal and important truth: for those thoughts only, defile the heart which it willingly admits, and does, as it were, hold a parley and converse with. And, I fear, there are multitudes in the present age, like these Pharisees, who are contracting immense guilt by those corrupt and sophistical reasonings, on the subtilty of which they may highly value themselves and each other.

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, [false witness,] deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: [Matt. xv. 19.]

23 All these evil things come from within, and [these are the things which] defile the man: [but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.] [Matt. v. 20.]

of violence and *murders;* And *thefts,* and *insatiable desires,* and *malevolent affections* of inhumanity and cruelty to mankind; the injuries arising from *false witnessings and deceit;* the vile abominations of *lasciviousness* and intemperance; *an evil* envious grudging *eye,* and that odious temper which discovers itself by such a look; (compare Prov. xxiii. 6; xxviii. 22; and xxii. 9.) the horrid outrage of *blasphemy* and *pride;* and, in a word, all kind of *folly,*[c] wild imaginations, ungoverned passions, and many other moral irregularities. *All these evils,* and many more which I might mention, *come from within; and these are the things which* do indeed *pollute a man,* and render him an object odious to the infinite purity of the divine nature; *but* the bare undesigned violation of a ceremonial precept cannot do it; and much more evident it is, that *to eat with unwashed hands,* which has no moral impurity in it, and no authority but a vain tradition to forbid it, *does not,* and cannot *defile a man:* and it must have a very bad tendency to teach people to place religion in things so entirely foreign to it

SECT. 84. MARK VII. 22 23

IMPROVEMENT

MAY we be all taught of God to maintain a constant watch over our own hearts, as remembering that *from thence are the issues of life,* and from thence the sources of sin and death! (Prov. iv. 23.) All the secret motions and sentiments of them are open to the divine examination and inspection. There then may we begin our cares, to *purify ourselves from all filthiness* both *of the flesh and spirit,* as ever we would *perfect holiness in the fear of God.* (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

MATT. XV. 18

We see what secret abominations our Lord has here discovered and marked out. It is a matter of much lamentation, that our corrupted nature abounds with such poisonous productions: let us earnestly pray that they may be rooted out by divine grace, lest we ourselves be rooted out of God's vineyard, as at once encumbering and deforming it! 19

May the blessed Spirit of God create in us a clean heart, and implant in our souls a temper opposite to all these enormities! May candour and purity, integrity and tenderness, piety and generosity, humility and wisdom, prevail in our hearts, and shine in our conduct! And, in a word, *whatsoever things are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,* let us *think on these things,* and practise them! (Phil. iv. 8.) MARK VII. 21, 22

Let those who are employed to guide others, be especially solicitous to know and pursue the right way themselves; lest, instead of saving themselves, and those that hear them, they both of them at last perish together. We are in danger of it if, like these Pharisees, we inculcate on our hearers a zeal for the circumstantials and appendages of religion, while its essentials are neglected; and perhaps some of the greatest enormities of the mind are consecrated under an honourable name, and profanely listed under the banner of the God of holiness and love. MATT. XV. 14

SECTION LXXXV.

Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there expels a demon from the daughter of a Canaanitish woman; and afterwards, in his return to Galilee, cures a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Matt. xv. 21—29; Mark vii. 24, *to the end.*

MARK vii. 24.

AND from thence [Jesus] arose and [departed] into the borders [*or* coasts] of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it;* but he could not be hid. [Matt. xv. 21.]

MARK vii. 24.

AND Jesus arose from thence, and withdrew from the place where these invidious enemies were continually lying in wait for him, *to the borders* [*or*] *coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and* when he was come into those parts, *he entered into a house* as privately as he could, *and would have had no one know* [*it*] that he was there; *but* he had so many eyes upon him wherever he went, that *he could not* long *be concealed* in that retirement. SECT. 85. MARK VII. 24

25 For [behold, a woman of Canaan out of the same coasts,] whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came, [and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.] [Matt. xv. 22.]

Yea, an occurrence quickly happened that spread the fame of his arrival there through all the neighbourhood; *for behold, a Canaanitish woman* came *out of those coasts,* to whom, though an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, he displayed his power and goodness in a very remarkable manner. Now this was one *whose young daughter,* for whom she had a most tender affection, *was possessed by an unclean* and malignant *spirit,* which often threw her into violent agonies: and, as the fame of Jesus, and of the miracles that he had wrought, was known in all those parts, the afflicted mother was no sooner told of his arrival, but, *having* now an expectation of relief, from the great things she had *heard of him,* she *came* immediately to the place where he was, *and cried unto him* at some distance, with the most humble importunity, *saying, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David,*[a] consider my distressed case, and extend thy compassion to me, though a stranger; for *my* poor unhappy *daughter is grievously tormented by a* cruel *demon,* that delights in the misery of my child; and I well know that thou art able to cure her. 25

26 (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophœnician by

Now it is here to be observed as somewhat singular, that (as we just now hinted,) *the woman was* not a Jew, but *a Greek, a native of Syrophœnicia,*[b] or of that tract of 26

c All kind of *folly.*] I apprehend that ἀφροσυνη here stands directly opposed to σωφροσυνη, or *sobriety of thought and discourse;* and therefore does particularly signify the wild sallies of the imagination, and extravagant passions and appetites, and consequently must include a great many immoralities not touched on in the preceding enumeration.

a *O Lord, thou Son of David.*] Some have argued from this expression, that she was a *proselyte;* but perhaps she might have learned it from some of the Jews, (either immediately or by report,) and might use it as a title of respect without thoroughly understanding its meaning.

b *A native of Syrophœnicia.*] This part of Phœnicia was so called, as it had been formerly conquered by the Syrians,

SECT. 85. Canaan in which they now were: *and* therefore, though *she* thus earnestly *besought him to cast out the demon from her daughter*, and the case seemed so compassionable, our Lord thought it proper not to take such immediate notice of it as he had commonly done

MATT. XV. in the like instances; *But* turning from her, as if he were regardless of her case, *he answered her not a word.*

23 *And his disciples came* to him on the occasion, *and entreated him, saying, Dismiss her* with the grant of her request; *for* she is so overwhelmed with her affliction, that *she crieth after us* wherever she sees us;[c] and not only gives us trouble, but is like to make

24 thy abode here more public than thou wouldst have it. *But he replying, said, I am not sent, but to* seek and recover *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and am charged with no immediate message to the Gentile nations, to whom you all know this woman belongs.

25 *Then*, perceiving her case was the subject of their discourse, *she came* nearer, *and fell down at his feet* in a most importunate manner, *and worshipped him, saying, Lord*, I beseech thee to *help me*, though a stranger; for surely none ever needed thy help more.

MARK VII. *But Jesus said to her*, (yet farther to exercise and illustrate her faith,) *Let the Jews, the children* in God's family, *first be satisfied; for it is not proper to take the chil-*

27 *dren's bread, and throw it to the dogs;* and such you know that you Gentiles are commonly deemed by our nation, on account of those impurities and abominations that prevail among you.

28 *And she replied and said to him, True, Lord*, it would not be fit to put both on a level; *yet* even *the dogs under their master's table* are allowed to *eat the children's crumbs which fall from it*:[d] may I not then humbly hope, that, unworthy as I am, I may also receive some fragments of that mercy which is so liberally bestowed on the Jews, and may have been in some instances wantonly abused.

MATT. XV. *Then Jesus answering said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith;* and it was my design to illustrate, rather than to overbear it; now therefore, *for this* lively *saying*,

28 which argues so much humility and piety, *go thy way* with the kindest answer thou couldst wish, [*and*] *be it unto thee even* just *as thou wilt:* thy desire shall be accomplished in all its extent, for *the demon is* already *gone out of thy daughter*, and I assure thee that he shall torment her no more.] *And* accordingly *her daughter was cured from*

MARK VII. *that very hour. And, returning back to her house*, fully persuaded of the accomplishment of what Jesus had told her, *she found the demon was gone out, and her daughter*

30 was *lying on the bed*, composed and quiet, which of late she had very seldom been.

MATT. XV. *And Jesus* after this *departed again from thence*, even *from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and came near to the sea of Galilee*, passing *through* several places in his way

29 that lay in *the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*, from whence his fame had formerly brought multitudes to follow him: (see Matt. iv. 25, note l, sect. xxxvi.) *and* on a certain day, in his journey, *he went up to* the top of *a mountain, and sat down there*, to rest himself, and to teach the people, who in great multitudes resorted to him to attend upon his preaching, and brought their sick to be healed by him.

MARK VII. *And*, among many other diseased persons, *they brought him one who was* very *deaf, and had* so great *an impediment in his speech* that he was almost dumb too; *and*, mak-

32 ing known his case to Jesus, *they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him*, as he had done in many other cases, making no doubt that he would upon this be per-

33 fectly restored to his hearing and speech. *And, taking him aside from the multitude*, which was very numerous, *he put his fingers into his ears*, where there was a great obstruction, which hindered him from hearing distinctly; *and, spitting* on his finger, he

34 *touched his tongue*:[e] *And, looking up*, as *to* his Father in *heaven, he groaned*, in token of his earnest desire that these disorders might be removed; *and* then *said unto*

35 *him*, as with a voice of divine authority, *Ephphatha; that is, Be opened. And immediately* the word had its effect; and *his ears were* accordingly *opened, and the string of his tongue*, which had hindered it from moving freely, *was loosed, and he spoke distinctly*, and in an articulate manner, which from his birth he had never done before.

36 *And he charged* the man himself, and *them* that were near, *that they should tell no one* of it; *but the more he charged them* to conceal it, *the more* they were charmed with his modesty and humility, and consequently so much the more *abundantly did they*

37 *proclaim* [*the cure:*] *And* all *they* who heard of it *were struck with exceeding astonishment, and said, He has done all things well*, and performed the most extraordinary

nation;) and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

Matt. xv. 23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came, and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she, [and fell at his feet,] and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. [Mark vii. 25.]

Mark vii. 27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. [Matt. xv. 26.]

28 And she answered and said unto him, [Truth,] Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs [which fall from their master's table.] [Matt. xv. 27.]

Matt. xv. 28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: [for this saying, go thy way, *and*] be it unto thee even as thou wilt: [the devil is gone out of thy daughter.] And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. [Mark vii. 29.]

Mark vii. 30. And, when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

Matt. xv. 29. And [again] Jesus departed from thence, [from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,] and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee, [through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis,] and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. [Mark vii. 31.]

Mark vii. 32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech: and they beseech him to put *his* hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue:

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them, that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it;*

c *For she crieth after us*, wherever she sees us.] As Mark tells us, that Christ was entered into a house, and that the application of this woman to him prevented his being concealed as he desired to have been; it should seem that she, having learned that Jesus was there, watched for the disciples as they went in and out; and, having *cried after them* some time, she at length got admittance into the house; and, with the profoundest respect, accosted him *at first from some distance*, and *then drew near* and threw herself *at his feet*. Compare Matt. xv. 25; and Mark vii. 25.

d *True, Lord, yet the dogs, &c.*] Both Matthew and Mark use the word ναι, which we have rendered in the former, *Truth*, and in the latter, *Yes*. It is sometimes a form of assenting, and sometimes of entreating. Compare Philem. ver. 20. and see Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 143.

e *He put his fingers into his ears, and, spitting, touched his tongue.*] If any should ask, Why our Lord used these actions, when a word alone would have been sufficient; and such means (if they may be called means) could in themselves do nothing at all to answer the end,—I frankly confess, I cannot tell, nor am I at all concerned to know. Yet I am ready to imagine, it might be intended to intimate, in a very lively manner, that we are not to pretend to enter into the reasons of all his actions; and that, where we are sure that any observance whatever is appointed by him, we are humbly to submit to it, though we cannot see why it was preferred to others which our imagination might suggest. Had Christ's patients, like Naaman, (2 Kings v. 11, 12.) been too nice in their exceptions on these occasions, I fear they would have lost their cure; and the indulgence of a curious, or a petulant mind, would have been but a poor equivalent for such a loss.

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

cures in the most amiable and graceful manner; *making*, in this and many other instances, *both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* SECT. 85.

IMPROVEMENT. MATT. XV.

If there be any thing in the whole history of our Lord which might have a tendency to discourage and terrify the humble penitent, it would surely be his treatment of this poor Canaanitish woman, when she made so humble and so affectionate an application to him; first keeping silence; then intimating in words a coldness, not to say an aversion; and at last representing her but as a dog in comparison of the Jews. Surely such an answer had almost broke her heart, had it not been secretly supported by his grace, while his conduct seemed so unkind. Happy are they that, like her, (who, though a Gentile, did in this instance approve herself a true daughter of Abraham,) can *against hope believe in hope!* (Rom. iv. 18.) Happy they who can thus extract arguments even from discouragements![f] They will finally conquer and triumph, as this pious woman did; and the honours of their faith will be commemorated even by Christ himself, who soon indulges the overflowing tenderness of his heart in the applause he bestows upon her, and the ample grant he makes her of all that she asked in its utmost extent. Ver. 23 24 26 28

The story of the deaf man, whose ears were opened, and his tongue loosed, is one additional instance, among many more, of Christ's humility, as well as of his power. He retired from the admiring multitude; he used means when he could easily have wrought without them; he solemnly addressed his heavenly Father, virtually acknowledging, while he looked up to heaven, that as man he derived his miraculous power from above; and he was so far superior to the sentiments of vanity, that he commanded men to conceal the most glorious and benevolent actions. May all his followers, and especially his ministers, *learn of him* who was thus *meek and lowly!* (Matt. xi. 29.) neither acting as in their own strength when they attempt a spiritual cure, nor proclaiming their own praises when they have effected it. Then will they likewise do all things well; and there will be that beauty in the manner, which no wise man would entirely neglect, even in those actions which are in themselves most excellent and great. MARK VII. 32 *et seq.* 33, 34 36 37

SECTION LXXXVI.

Our Lord, after many amazing miracles, feeds above four thousand with seven loaves and a few small fishes: and then goes over to Dalmanutha. Matt. xv. 30, *to the end.* Mark viii. 1—10.

MATT. XV. 30.

MATT. XV. 30.

AND great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.

AND while Jesus was seated on the mountain to which he went up, (Matt. xv. 29.) *there came to him*, besides the deaf man of whom we have just been speaking, *great multitudes, having* brought along *with them persons who were lame*, or *blind*, or *dumb*, [*or*] *maimed* by the loss of a limb, *and many others* who had different complaints; *and they cast them at the feet of Jesus*, entreating his compassion, which failed not to operate on such occasions, *and he healed them* all. And *so* many and various were the displays of his miraculous power in the cures he wrought, *that the* whole *multitude was* perfectly *amazed when they beheld the dumb speaking* forth the praises of God and of their great Deliverer; *the maimed made whole* by the recovery of hands and arms which they had lost, or which were grown quite useless to them;[a] *the lame walking* with vigour and agility, *and the blind seeing* every object distinctly, and immediately bearing, without any inconvenience, the full force of unaccustomed light:[b] *and*, struck with such various and pleasing wonders, *they glorified the God of Israel*, who had raised up so illustrious a Prophet to his people, and sent help to so many afflicted creatures whom no human power could have restored. SECT. 86. MATT. XV. 30 31

Mark viii. 1. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, [Matt. xv. 32.]

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: [Matt. xv. 32.]

3 And [I will not] send them away fasting to their

This concourse of people continued with him much longer than could have been imagined; and, the season being favourable, they were so intent on hearing Christ and seeing his miracles, that they lodged two nights together in the fields:[c] and therefore, *in those days the multitude being very great, and having* spent the provision they had brought out with them, so that now on the third day they had *nothing to eat, Jesus having called his disciples to him, says unto them*, I cannot but *have compassion on the multitude* of my hearers, who flock thus eagerly about me, and express such zeal in their attendance, as to expose themselves thereby to many inconveniences; *for they have continued with me now three days, and* I well know that they *have nothing* left *to eat: And* therefore *I will not send them away fasting to their own houses, lest*, if I do, *they* MARK VIII. 1 2 3

f Happy are they, &c.] The pious, moderate, and eloquent Bishop Hall, has a fine contemplation on this subject, to which I refer the reader with pleasure; and take this opportunity of observing, that (allowing something for the peculiarities of the age in which he lived,) I have met with no devotional writings on the historical part of scripture, which have generally given me so much entertainment as his.

a *The maimed made whole.*] The word κυλλος, which we render *maimed*, does, in the strictest propriety, (as Festus observes,) signify *one whose hand or arm has been cut off*; (see Mark ix. 43.) but it is sometimes applied to those who only were disabled in those parts. (See Beza and Casaub. *in loc.*) And though in some rare instances it may be used to signify a lameness in the feet, (see Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 77. and Albert. *Observ.* p. 109.) yet, as it is here opposed to χωλους περιπατουντας, *the lame walking*, it must undoubtedly be limited as in the paraphrase.—It is reasonable to suppose that among the many *maimed* who were brought on such occasions, there were some whose *limbs had been cut off*: and, I think, hardly any of the miracles of our Lord were more illustrious and amazing than the recovery of such.

b Bearing—the full force of unaccustomed light.] So far as we can judge by all the stories of the blind restored to sight which occur in the gospels, this was universally the case; and I could not forbear pointing out so wonderful a circumstance.

c They lodged two nights together in the fields.] This we may infer from the next verse. The season of the year was pleasant, it being, as we have observed, quickly after the passover. (See § 83. note b, p. 170.) And, besides that the great number of cures which had been wrought but just before might animate them, perhaps they might conclude that the miraculous power of Christ, which was displayed in so many glorious instances around them, would either preserve their health from being endangered by the large dews which fell in the night, or restore them from any disorder they might contract by their eagerness to attend on his ministry.

SECT. 86. ——— abroad.

should some of them *faint by the way: for* our Lord knew that *several of them came from a considerable distance*, and were but ill furnished for procuring accommodations

own houses, [lest they faint] by the way: for divers of them came from far. [Matt. xv. 32.]

MARK VIII. 4 *any one* hope to *satisfy these men with bread* and other food *here* in this desert country, if he had ever so much money to spare for the purpose? [*And*] especially *whence should we*, whose stock is so small, *have so much bread in the wilderness as* might suffice *to fill so great a multitude*, whose appetites are many of them sharpened by so long a fast? We cannot but wonder to hear thee mention such a design.

And his disciples, not reflecting on the miracle he had lately wrought for the relief of the five thousand, or not imagining he would repeat it, *answered him, From whence can*

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here? [Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude?] [Matt. xv. 33.]

5 *And he asked them, How many loaves* are you provided with, or what *have you* at hand to eat? *And they said*, We have only *seven* loaves among us all, *and a few little*

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, [and a few little fishes.] [Matt. xv. 34.]

6 *fishes*, which is a very trifle to the present purpose. *And*, having ordered them to bring out what they had, *he commanded the multitude to sit down* in ranks *on the ground*, that they might be served, as before, in an orderly manner;[d] *and* then *having taken the seven loaves, and* solemnly *given thanks* to his heavenly Father, acknowledging his goodness as the great Author of all mercies, when he had blessed them before them all, *he brake* them into proper pieces, *and gave* [*them*] *to his disciples to set before them;*

6 And he commanded [the multitude] to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them:* and they did set *them* before the people. [Matt. xv. 35, 36.]

7 *and they* accordingly *set them before the people. And*, as *they* likewise *had a few small fishes*, he took them also in the same manner; *and, having blessed* [*them*] as he had done the bread, *he commanded* his disciples *to set them also before* [*the multitude.*]

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them.*

8 *So they did all eat, and were* abundantly *satisfied:* and the disciples afterwards collected what was left, *and they took up* no less than *seven baskets full of what remained of the fragments;* which Jesus ordered them to gather up, that he might thus convince them in the strongest manner of the greatness of the miracle, and teach them also, at the same time, to use a prudent frugality in the midst of plenty.

8 So they did [all] eat, and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets [full.] [Matt. xv. 37.]

9 *And they who had eaten* of these loaves and fishes *were about four thousand men, besides* a considerable number of *women and children*, who were there in company with them, and all partook of the same entertainment.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand men, beside women and children. [Matt. xv. 38.]

MATT. XV. 39 *Dalmanutha*, (which, with several neighbouring cities, stood *in the coasts of Magdala*, not far from Gadara, on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee,) and there he had an interview with some Pharisees, which will be related in the next section.

And, the repast being over, *he dismissed the multitude; and immediately* after this, *entering into a ship with his disciples*, he crossed the sea, and *came into the parts of*

Matt. xv. 39. And he sent away the multitude: [and straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples,] and came [into the parts of Dalmanutha,] into the coast of Magdala. [Mark viii. 9, 10.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 30 31 WITH what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded![e] Let us pause a little, and endeavour to paint him to our imagination, on this mountain, where the astonished multitudes so justly extolled all these mingled wonders of power and of grace. Let us reflect on the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, the deaf hearing, and the blind seeing, that with them we may glorify the God of Israel.

But who can describe the sentiments of these happy creatures, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves, in a moment, restored beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond all the prospects of hope! With what pleasure did the ear which had just been opened, listen to the pleasing accents of his instructive tongue! How did the lame leap around him for joy! and the maimed extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgments of his new creating power! While the voice of the dumb sang forth his praises in sounds before unknown; and the eye of the blind checked the curiosity which would have prompted it to range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature, to fix its rapturous regards on the gracious countenance of him that had given it the day!

Let us farther reflect, with what correspondent pleasure must our Lord survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his benevolent heart took its share in all the delight which he gave! These trophies of his greatness, how unlike to those of the field, the monuments of desolation and slaughter! Trophies, for which the hero must have struggled with the man, and might sit down and weep over his own success!

Whose heart is so insensible as not to feel an humane as well as devout pleasure in the history of these and the like miracles, though the subjects on which they were wrought are long since mouldering in the dust! But let us farther recollect, that our divine leader has other yet more noble and more permanent trophies,—those immortal spirits which he has redeemed, and sanctified, and saved! So may our transported souls, O blessed Jesus, in the consciousness of health, vigour, and salvation, behold thee as our Deliverer! So mayst thou view us with satisfaction, as the travail of thy soul, in that mountain of God where we hope to offer thee nobler praises, and for ever to consecrate to thy service those powers which thou hast recovered from weakness, dishonour, and ruin!

d That they might be served, as before, in an orderly manner.] See note h, on Mark vi. 40. p. 160. Probably here they might sit an hundred in rank and forty in file, by which means the four thousand men would be exactly disposed as the five thousand had been.

e With what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded!] As this story of *feeding the four thousand* is so very much the same with what we had in § 78. I refer the reader to the improvement of that section (p. 161.) for practical reflections on the greatest part of this; and chuse here to indulge a devout meditation on the number and variety of those cures which Christ performed, which constitutes the whole of this improvement, having been elsewhere but transiently touched upon.

SECTION LXXXVII.

The Pharisees again demand a sign, and Christ upbraids them with hypocrisy in doing it; and, having crossed the lake again, he cautions his disciples against their leaven and that of the Sadducees. Matt. xvi. 1—12. Mark viii. 11—21.

MATT. xvi. 1.

MATT. xvi. 1. THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, [and began to question with him,] and [tempting him] desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. [Mark viii. 11.]

AND when Jesus was landed on the opposite shore of the sea of Galilee, in the coasts of Magdala, *the Pharisees and Sadducees*, notwithstanding the difference of their principles, and the alienation of their affections from each other, agreed to join in an attempt upon him: and accordingly they *came, and began to examine him* in a very crafty and ensnaring manner; *and, to try him* yet farther, *desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven*:[a] pretending that they could not acquiesce merely in such miracles as he had wrought upon earth, where there was much more room for artifice and deceit, and evil spirits might have some greater influence than in the upper regions. (Compare Matt. xii. 38. sect. lxiii.) 1

SECT. 87. MATT. XVI.

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red:

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?

But he, answering, said unto them, It is most apparent you ask this out of a desire to cavil, rather than to learn the divine will; for in other cases you take up with degrees of evidence far short of those which you here reject: as for instance, *you* readily *say in an evening*, [*It will be*] *fair weather* to-morrow, *because the sky is* this evening *of a* bright and *fiery red: And in the morning*, [*It will be*] *tempestuous weather*[b] *to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, you know how to distinguish the face of the heavens*, and to form from thence probable conjectures concerning the weather; *and can you not* [*distinguish*] *the signs of the* present *times*, and see by the various miracles which are daily performed among you, and the other tokens which attend mine appearance, that this is indeed the period which you profess to desire with so much eagerness, and which you might discern with much less sagacity? 2 3

Mark viii. 12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, [A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.] [Matt. xvi. 4.]

And, sighing deeply, as being touched *in his* own *spirit* with a most compassionate sense of their guilt and misery, *he said, Why does this generation seek after a* farther *sign? Verily*, as I said once before on this occasion, (Matt. xii. 39. sect. lxiii.) *I* now *say* it again *to you*, This is *an evil and adulterous generation* which *demands a sign; and no* such *sign* as it requires *shall be given it, unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah*, who lay three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, and then came out alive; to which a most remarkable resemblance will be quickly manifested in the resurrection of the Messiah on the third day, that will moreover be attended with the appearance of an angel coming down from heaven. MARK VIII. 12

13 And he left them; and, entering into the ship again, departed to the other side. [Matt. xvi. 4.]

And, having said this, *he* staid no longer to debate the matter with persons of so perverse and disingenuous a temper, but *left them; and entering again into the ship* which brought him over the sea, he *departed to the other side* of the lake. 13

Matt. xvi. 5. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread, [neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.] [Mark viii. 14.]

And when his disciples were come to the other side of the sea, they were concerned to find that *they had forgotten to take any bread; and*, having used all the fragments which they carried over with them in the baskets, they *had* now *no more than one loaf with them in the ship*. MATT. XVI. 5

6 Then Jesus [charged them, saying,] Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, [and *of* the leaven of Herod.] [Mark viii. 15.]

And Jesus, willing to improve this circumstance, considering what had lately passed, *gave them a* solemn *charge, saying, Be very cautiously on your guard*[c] *against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and* particularly take heed of *the leaven of Herod*:[d] intending thereby to caution them against those corrupt mixtures which these sects had introduced to the depraving of religion; which tended, like leaven, to overspread, and sour, and puff up the mind, and so to prevent the efficacy of divine instruction upon it. 6

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread. [Mark viii. 16.]

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread! [Mark viii. 17.]

9 Do ye not yet perceive, [neither] understand? [have ye your hearts yet hardened?] [Mark viii. 17.]

But the slowness of their understanding shewed itself on this occasion, as it had done on many others; *and they debated* privately *among themselves, saying*, [*It is*] surely *because we have taken no bread* with us, that our Lord thus cautions us against the leaven of these men, as if they polluted whatever they touched. [*Which*] *when Jesus perceived*, as he knew all the secret workings of their minds, *he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why do ye reason* in this manner *with yourselves?* and why is it that you are under such concern *because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet consider*, after all that you have seen and heard, *nor understand* what has so lately passed before your eyes? [*and*] *have you still your hearts* so *hardened*, and your minds so stupified, as not to draw so easy a consequence from such repeated miracles, as to be free from any anxious concern on this account, because you have but one loaf? Are you like so many senseless images? 7 8 9 MARK VIII. 18.

Mark viii. 18. Having

a *Desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*] On the whole, I am ready to think, the two things mentioned in note a, on Matt. xii. 38. p. 126. are to be united; and that what they here demanded was the very thing which Josephus tells us. (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13. [al. 12.] § 4.) Impostors of those times promised they would shew them from God, under the character of σημεια ελευθεριας, *signs of liberty*, or some miraculous appearance from heaven, to assure them of deliverance from the Roman yoke. And on these principles they continued their demands in the apostles' times, (1 Cor. i. 22.) though so many signs from heaven had then been given in the voice from thence; in the preternatural darkness at our Lord's crucifixion: in the descent of angels in repeated instances; and in that of the Holy Spirit, in a visible form, as well as in the most sensible effects. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib. book* i. chap. 5. § 2. Vol. I. p. 291.

b *Tempestuous weather.*] So χειμων properly signifies. Dr. Lightfoot justly observes, that the Jews used to value themselves highly on their skill in prognosticating the weather. And Grotius has well observed, in his note on this place, what a variety of signs marked out that time for the arrival of the Messiah.

c *Be very cautiously on your guard.*] This sufficiently expresses the sense of the words οραπε και προσεχετε, which are repeated in the original, to urge the caution with the greater force and emphasis.

d *Leaven of Herod.*] Those Sadducees, who were also Herodians,

SECT. 87. MARK VIII. 20 *Having eyes do you not see* with them? *and, having ears, do you not hear? and,* with those natural powers of memory and reflection, *do ye not remember* what you were witnesses to but a few days ago? Let me refresh your memories, and ask you, *When I broke the five loaves,* and you with your own hands distributed them *among the five thousand* men till they were all satisfied, *how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him,* We well remember that we took up *twelve. And,* added he, *when* in like manner [*I divided*] *the seven* [*loaves*] *among the four thousand,* and fed them to the full, *how many baskets full of fragments did you* then *take up?*[e] *And they said,* Lord, we know we took up *seven.*

21 *And he* farther *said to them,* Since you remember these facts, *how is it that you do not understand* by them *that I did not speak to you concerning bread,* so as to blame you for having brought no more bread, but meant *that you should be on your guard against the leaven of* those erroneous notions and corrupt principles which are so common among *the Pharisees,* Herodians, *and Sadducees?*

MATT. XVI. 12 *Then they* were sensible of their mistake, and *understood that he did not charge them to beware of the leaven of bread, but* that he intended to warn them *of the* evil *doctrine* and example *of the Pharisees and Sadducees,* against which so many of his discourses were most justly levelled.

eyes, see ye not? and, having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? [Matt. xvi. 9.]

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. [Matt. xvi. 9.]

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. [Matt. xvi. 10.]

21 And he said unto them, How is it that you do not understand, [that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees? [Matt. xvi. 11.]

Matt. xvi. 12. Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees.

IMPROVEMENT.

MARK VIII. 18, 21 So evident is it, that the circumstances of a scripture story may be remembered, where the design of it is overlooked or forgot! It is much to be wished, that those which we have been surveying may not increase the number of such instances.

19, 20 In all those cases wherein the arm of the Lord has been made bare in our favour, let us seriously reflect on the divine power and goodness, and learn from past experience to trust it for the time to come. Never let us fall into

MATT. XVI. the perverse suspicions of the Israelites, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (Psal. lxxviii. 19.) But let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God, and cheerfully repose ourselves on his care, who can never want wisdom to

8 judge aright of the necessities of his people, or power to relieve them, even in the greatest extremities.

1 We see a new instance of the perverseness of these scribes and Pharisees. They tempted Christ by unreasonable

4 demands; and he justly suffered them to go away without the additional demonstration they sought. It is not for us to prescribe to God what degrees of evidence he shall give us. Let us impartially pursue and improve what

2, 3 we have; and be very careful that our sagacity and openness to conviction, in other matters of much less importance, may not condemn our stupidity, or obstinacy, where the truths of God and the salvation of our souls are concerned.

6, 12 It is our concern to beware of erroneous principles in religion, and of every corrupt leaven which might be ready to insinuate itself into our minds; especially of that, which, like the leaven of the Pharisees, would exalt our confidence in ourselves; or, like that of the Sadducees, would impair our persuasion of a future judgment, and our solicitous concern to live as in the views of it. May the oracles of divine truth ever appear to our minds as the rule by which all doctrines are to be tried! and let us, in the spirit of love, contend earnestly for that faith which we believe to have been once delivered to the saints; that both our sentiments and actions may finally be found blameless, unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ! *Amen.*

SECTION LXXXVIII.

Christ gradually heals the blind man at Bethsaida; and owns to his disciples that he is the Messiah, applauding Peter for expressly acknowledging him under that character. Mark viii. 22—30; Matt. xvi. 13—20. Luke ix. 18—21.

MARK viii. 22.

SECT. 88. MARK VIII. 22. *AND* when our Lord had thus crossed the sea, *he came to Bethsaida; and* his fame being well known there, as soon as he entered the place, *they brought him a blind man, and entreated him that he would* be pleased only to *touch him,* as being well assured that this would be sufficient for the recovery of his sight. *And,* as he chose to work this miracle in private, *he took hold of the blind man's hand, and led him out of the town*[a] in the

23 most tender and condescending manner; *and having spit upon his eyes, and laid his*

24 *hands upon him, he asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said, I* do indeed discern the forms of things, in an imperfect manner, and *see men walking* before me, but it is so obscurely, *as* that I am hardly able to distinguish them from *trees,* any

25 otherwise than by their motion.[b] *Then he laid his hands again upon his eyes, and*

MARK viii. 22.

AND he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put *his* hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking.

25 After that he put *his*

might, with peculiar propriety, be singled out by our Lord, to caution his disciples against them. See Grotius, *in loc.* and note f, on Mark iii. 6. p. 103.

e *How many baskets full of fragments did you take up?*] The learned Dr. Daniel Scott, on Matt. xvi. 10. with his usual accuracy, has observed that two different words are used in this and the preceding verse for *baskets,* κοφινους and σπυριδας. The former signifies *larger baskets;* and therefore is translated panniers by the French: we have borrowed the word from them; and it seems from its etymology first to have been given them from their being used by bakers to carry about large quantities of bread. The other seem to have been *smaller baskets* with handles, and such as consequently might easily be carried on the arm. It is observable, that our Lord did not affect to rise in the circumstances of the two miracles here mentioned. The latter, though in some particulars inferior to the former, was equally a demonstration of the divine power of Christ, and therefore equally to the purpose for which it is here mentioned; not to urge that it was of the two the more fresh in their memories.

a *And led him out of the* town.] Grotius thinks it was an intimation of his just displeasure against the inhabitants of Bethsaida, for their ingratitude and infidelity, that he would not permit them to be eye-witnesses of this miracle, or even suffer the person who received the cure to go back thither to proclaim it. Compare Matt. xi. 21. p. 117.

b *I see men walking, as trees.*] Probably they might not be far from the way-side, and these might be passengers who happened then to be going by; for it seems by the story, that our Lord, when he took him out of the town, permitted none of his company to attend him.

hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

caused him to look up a second time; *and* upon this *he* found his sight *was* perfectly *restored, so that he saw every man* and thing about him *clearly* and distinctly. *And he sent him away* directly *to his own house*, which lay in some neighbouring village; *and said* unto him, *Enter not into the* ungrateful *town* of Bethsaida, to proclaim what has now been done for thee; *neither tell* the circumstances of *it to any* man dwelling *in the town*, for they are unworthy the knowledge of such a miracle: but content thyself with returning thy acknowledgments to God for his favour to thee; for I assure thee, that in what I do I am animated only by a sincere regard to the glory of him that sent me, and to the relief of afflicted creatures. SECT. 88. MARK VIII. 26

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and [Luke, it came to pass] by the way, [when Jesus came into the coasts of *it*,] [Luke, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him, and] he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I [the Son of Man] am? [Matt. xvi. 13. Luke ix. 18.]

And Jesus, with his disciples, went out from the city of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which this miracle had been performed, and came *into the towns* belonging to a city in the northern part of Canaan (near mount Lebanon) which had formerly been called Laish, but now bore the name *of Cæsarea Philippi*, having lately been rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch.[c] *And it came to pass by the way*, as they were on their journey, *when Jesus was* just *come into* [*those*] *parts*, he retired a while for devotion; and *when he had been praying with his disciples apart, he enquired of them, saying, Whom do men say, that I*, who have so long conversed among them as *the Son of Man, am?* What notions do you find that men generally form of me? 27

Luke ix. 19. They answering, said, [Some *say that thou art*] John the Baptist; but some *say* Elias; [and others, Jeremias,] and others *say* that one of the old prophets is risen again. [Matt. xvi. 14. Mark viii. 38.]

And they, replying, said, Some [*say that thou art*] *John the Baptist* risen from the dead, with an additional power of working miracles; *but others* [*say*] that thou art *Elijah* the prophet, who art come to prepare the way of the Messiah; *and others* say that thou art *Jeremiah*;[d] *and others*, in a more general way, *that one of the ancient prophets is risen again.* LUKE IX. 19

Mark viii. 29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And [Simon] Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ, [the Son of the living God.] [Matt. xvi. 15, 16. Luke xi. 20.]

And, after they had told him what were the thoughts of others, *he* then *said to them*, for the trial of their faith, *But* tell me truly and plainly your own sentiments; *whom do you* yourselves think and *say that I am. And Simon Peter* immediately *answered*, with his usual zeal and forwardness, *and said to him*, in the name of the rest, Lord, we well know that *thou art the* great expected *Messiah;* and art not only the Son of Man, the worthy Heir of that glorious and extensive kingdom promised to him, but art, in a proper and incommunicable sense, *the Son of the* ever-*living God:* and we believe in thee as such, and adore thee under that divine character. MARK VIII. 29

Matt. xvi. 17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And Jesus, replying, said unto him, Thou hast confessed a truth, and a truth of the utmost importance; *blessed art thou*, therefore, *O Simon Bar-Jonas*, (or the son of Jonas,) in being brought thus firmly to believe it. *For flesh and blood hath not revealed* [*it*] *to thee*, thou hast not learnt it by human report, or the unassisted sagacity of thine own mind; *but my Father in heaven* has discovered it to thee, and wrought in thy soul this cordial assent in the midst of those various prejudices against it, which present circumstances might suggest. *And*, as thou hast been so ready to make this acknowledgment, *I also* in return *say to thee, Thou art* indeed *Peter*, (see John i. 42. p. 43.) thou art, as thy name signifies, a substantial rock; *and*, as thou hast shown it in this good confession, I assure thee, that *upon this rock I will build my church*;[e] faith in me as the Son of God shall be its great support, and I will use thee as a glorious instrument in raising it: yea, so immovable and firm shall its foundation be, and so secure the superstructure, that though earth and hell unite their assaults against it, *and* death in its most dreadful forms be armed for its destruction, *the gates of hell*, or the unseen world, *shall not* finally *prevail against it* to its ruin;[f] but one generation of Christians shall arise after another, even to the very end of time, to maintain this truth, and to venture their lives and their souls upon it, till at length the whole body of them be redeemed from the power of the MATT. XVI. 17

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 18

c *Cæsarea Philippi*, &c.] Philip the tetrarch called the chief city of this tract of land Cæsarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; and Philip's own name was added, to distinguish it from that other Cæsarea so often mentioned in the Acts, (chap. viii. 40; ix. 30; x. 1; xii. 19; xxi. 8; xxiii. 23, 33. and xxv. 4, 13;) which was a fine port on the Mediterranean Sea, and had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named in honour of Augustus Cæsar.—Josephus gives Philip so good a character, that some have thought our Lord retired into his territories for security from the insults of his enemies elsewhere. See L'Enfant's *Introduction*, p. 27.

d *Others* say that thou art *Jeremiah*.] Mr. Cradock has observed, that the Jews seem to have had a tradition among them, that Jeremiah the prophet would appear among them when the Messiah came to recover the *ark of the covenant*, which they had fancied he had hid: 2 Mac. ii. 5. (See Cradock's *Harmony*, Part. ii. p. 12.) And Dr. Whitby imagines, they might further encourage themselves in that notion, from Jer. i. 5, 10. (See his *note* on Matt. xvi. 14.)

e *Upon this rock I will build my church*.] I look upon this as one of those scriptures, the sense of which might be most certainly fixed by the particular tone of voice and gesture with which it was spoken; and therefore have paraphrased it with a latitude, which an intelligent reader will easily observe.—If our Lord altered his accent, and laid his hand on his breast, it would shew that he spoke, not of the *person*, but of the *confession*, of Peter, (as most Protestant divines have understood it,) and meant to point out himself as *the great Foundation*. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.—But if he turned to the other apostles, and pointed to Peter, that would shew he meant to intimate the honour he would do him, in making him an eminent support to his church. This is the sense which Grotius, Le Clerc, Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, and L'Enfant defend, and it seems to suit best with the connection; (see Whitby, *in loc.*) But to be a *foundation* in this sense, was not *his honour* alone; his *brethren* shared with him in it, (see Eph. ii. 20. and Rev. xxi. 14.) as they did also in the power of *binding* and *loosing*. (See Matt. xviii. 18. and John xx. 23.)—On the whole, how weak the arguments are which the Papists draw from hence, to support the supremacy of Peter in their wild sense of it, is sufficiently shewn by Bishop Burnet, *On the Articles*, p. 180. Calvin, *Institut. lib.* iv. *cap.* 6. Dr. Barrow, *On the Creed*, *Serm.* xxviii. Dr. Patrick, in his *Sermon* on this text, and a multitude more, whom I need not name.—There seems a reference in this expression to the common custom of building citadels upon a rock.

f *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it* to its ruin.] It is most certain that the phrase here used πυλαι ᾅδου, does generally in the Greek writers signify, *the entrance into the invisible world*; as Elsner (Vol. I. p. 77, 78.) and Albert (*Observ.* p. 111, 112.) have abundantly proved. So the Seventy use it, Isaiah xxxviii. 10; and Job xxxviii. 17. (Compare *Wisd. of Sol.* xvi. 13.) So that it is equivalent to *the gates of death*, Psal. cvii. 18. and elsewhere. The plainest and fullest sense seems to be what I have given in the paraphrase; for the vindication of which, see Dr. More's *Theological Works*, p. 110. and Dr. Whitby's note on this place. Grotius also supposes it refers to the final *triumph of the saints over the grave* at the general resurrection. This does indeed imply a victory over the power and policy of infernal spirits; but I cannot apprehend a reference to this to be chiefly intended; as it is certain that the Greek word ᾅδης [*hades*] does very seldom signify the *state of the damned*, but generally, (as שאול in Hebrew,) the *invisible world* in general. See Mr. Howe's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 61, 62.

SECT. 88. grave. In the mean time, I will raise thee, O Peter, and thy brethren, whose faith herein agrees with thine, (compare John xx. 23.) to distinguished honours in my church; *and I will give unto thee*, in particular, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and make thee the
MATT. XVI. instrument of opening it both to the Jews and Gentiles:[g] yea, so fully shalt thou be instructed in my will, *and* in the constitution of my kingdom, that *whatsoever thou shalt*
19 *bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*;[h] that is, thou shalt have authority to declare what precepts of the Mosaic religion are superseded, and what are continued, and what things are allowed or forbidden to my disciples; and I will myself confirm those decisions, whether general or personal, as made by the influences of my unerring Spirit communicated to thee and thy brethren, and will determine men's final state in a manner agreeable to them.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

LUKE IX. *And* upon this *he strictly charged and commanded his disciples that they should tell no man*, at present, *this thing concerning him*, which he had so expressly acknow-
21 ledged to them, *that he was Jesus the Messiah*, and that he actually professed and owned the title; because he knew it was like to be interpreted in a very unjust and unnatural manner, which might have rendered him and his followers obnoxious to the Romans, who would unreasonably look on such a profession as a claim to regal power, and utterly inconsistent with the rights of Cæsar.

Luke ix. 21. And he straitly charged [his disciples,] and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing [Mark, of him,] [that he was Jesus the Christ] [Matt. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 30.]

IMPROVEMENT.

MATT. XVI. We here behold the great Foundation of our faith and hope, even Jesus, the Rock of ages, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, (Heb. xiii. 8.) who is Christ the Son of the living God. Other foundation can no man lay.
16 (1 Cor. iii. 11.) On him may our souls rest, and the fiercest tempests shall rage in vain!

18 Our Lord foretold that the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against his church as thus founded: and behold, even to this day, the accomplishment of the prediction. As Christians of one age have sunk into their graves, a new harvest has sprung up in the next; and, in spite of all the artifices of Satan to pervert young minds, and all the advantages with which he attacks them, instead of the fathers have been the children, to be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (Psal. xlv. 16; and xxii. 30.)

19 Let us thankfully adore the divine goodness herein; and be very sensible how much we are indebted to that goodness in those powers communicated to the apostles, on whom, as subordinate foundations, we are built. (Eph. ii. 20.) As they received so ample a commission, and obtained grace from the Lord to be faithful to it, let us pay the humblest regard to their teachings; as well knowing, that what they have bound on earth, is bound in heaven, and what they have inculcated, was solemnly confirmed by a divine authority.

17 If we have listened with attention to those immortal writings of theirs, by which, being dead, they yet speak, and have found them the effectual means of revealing Christ in our hearts, in all his divine glories and saving powers; let us remember, that we owe it not to flesh and blood, or the most excellent human instruments alone, but to the influences of our Father in heaven.

MARK VIII. That efficacious grace is freely exercised, and operates in various methods; on some, in a more instantaneous way; on others, like the power of Christ on the blind man of whom we have been reading, by more gradual
23—25 advances. Let us be thankful for whatever light we receive, and press on to brighter discoveries; and join with them proportionable degrees of gratitude to Christ, and veneration for his gospel.

SECTION LXXXIX.

Christ prophesies of his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at them; and exhorts his disciples to self-denial, and a readiness for martyrdom in his cause. Matt. xvi. 21, *to the end.* Mark viii. 31, *to the end;* ix. 1. Luke ix. 22—27.

MATT. xvi. 21.

MATT. XVI. *NOW* when *Jesus* had applauded the confession of Peter, (as recorded above,) and thereby expressly declared to all the apostles that he was the Messiah, he *from that time began*
21 more plainly than ever *to teach* [*and*] *show to his disciples, that he, the Son of Man*, who was indeed the Christ of God, *must* in a few months more *go to Jerusalem; and* there, instead of being owned under the royal character he bore, and submitted to by princes and people, must *suffer many* most injurious *things, and be* disdainfully *rejected by the elders and chief priests, and scribes* of their nation, *and be killed* in a most cruel

MATT. xvi. 21. FROM that time forth began Jesus to [teach *and*] show unto his disciples, how that he, [the Son of Man,] must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things, [and be rejected] of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and [after

g *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, &c.] As stewards of great families, especially of the royal household, bore a key, probably a golden one, (as the lords of the bedchamber do,) in token of their office, the phrase of *giving a person the key* naturally grew into an expression of *raising him to great power:* (compare Isa. xxii. 22; and Rev. iii. 7.) And this seems more natural and certain than Bishop Burnet's supposition, that Christ refers to the custom of giving a key to the Jewish rabbies when they were admitted into their office, in token of the *power* given them to *expound the scripture.* See Grotius on Luke xi. 52. and Bishop Burnet's *Four Discourses*, (p. 241, 242.) *Peter's opening the kingdom of heaven*, as being the *first* that preached it, both to the Jews (Acts ii.) and to the Gentiles, (Acts x.) may be considered as an illustration of *this promise:* but I apprehend it more fully explained by the *power of binding and loosing* afterwards mentioned.

h *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven*, &c.] A power to *bind and loose* may signify, in general, *great authority* in a family or state: which sense it plainly has, both in Josephus and Plutarch. (See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 80.) When applied to *Judges* in criminal cases, it signifies to *absolve* or *condemn*, (See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod*, page 169.) and when used of teachers, especially in the Jewish language, it refers to their explications of the law; and thus *to bind* is to oblige a person to do or forbear any thing in question, or to declare a thing commanded or forbidden; and *to loose* is to declare the thing to be indifferent, or the person at liberty with respect to it. (See Lightf. *Hor. Heb. in loc.*)—The learned Selden has endeavoured to show that the clause before us must be interpreted in this sense, (see Seld. *de Synod. lib. ii. cap.* 7.) and many of the greatest characters for criticism in our own country and abroad have followed him; and among the rest the present celebrated Bishop of Winchester, in his glorious controversy on the subject of Church authority. I have included that sense, and taken the words in a yet greater extent, as the learned Puffendorf also does, (*De Habitu Relig. Christ*, &c. § 22—25.) and I shall, with great pleasure, submit to those ecclesiastical rulers who shall prove, as the apostles did, their *power* to *explain the laws of Christ* in a decisive way, and their authority efficaciously to *absolve* or *condemn* men, according to the sense they give of them.

three days] be raised again the third day. [Mark viii. 31. Luke ix. 22.]

Mark viii. 32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, [saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.] [Matt. xvi. 22.]

33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, [and said unto *him*,] Get thee behind me, Satan, [thou art an offence unto me;] for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. [Matt. xvi. 23.]

34 And [then] when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, [Luke, all,] Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, [Luke, daily,] and follow me. [Matt. xvi. 24. Luke ix. 23.]

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall [find *and*] save it. [Matt. xvi. 25. Luke ix. 24.]

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, [Luke, *that is*, lose himself, or be cast away?] [Matt. xvi. 26. Luke ix. 25.]

SECT. 89.

and outrageous manner: but he went on *and* added, to encourage them under this gloomy prospect, That *after* having lain part of *three days* under the power of death, he should *be raised again on the third day.*

MARK VIII

And, as *he* now *spake that saying plainly* and freely,[a] whereas he had before only given distant and obscure hints of it, they were exceedingly surprised and troubled: *and Peter*, elevated with what our Lord had been saying, and unable to reconcile it with what he now heard, *took him* [*by the hand*,[b]] *and began*, with a mixture of tenderness and surprise, *to chide him* for this melancholy discourse, *saying*, *God* in his infinite mercy *forbid*,[c] that thou, *O Lord*, shouldst ever be thus treated! *This* injury and violence, I persuade myself, *shall not* by any means *be* done *unto thee.* 32

But [*Jesus*,] *when he had turned about, and looked* round him *on his* other *disciples*, whose sentiments he knew to be much the same, *rebuked Peter* with an unusual severity; *and said to him, Get thee behind me, Satan*,[d] for *thou* actest the part of a devil, rather than a friend; and *art a scandal to me*, in thus endeavouring to obstruct the great end of mine appearance in the world; *for* by this it plainly appears, that *thou dost not regard* and relish *the things of God, but those of men*,[e] and losest thy zeal for the divine glory, and the salvation of souls, in a mean solicitude for the enjoyments of this temporal life, and the grandeurs of an earthly kingdom, of which thou art vainly dreaming. 33

Then having called the multitude, with his disciples, to him, he said unto them all, You must not only expect to see me suffer, but to share with me in my afflictions and sorrows, if ever you would hope to obtain a part in the glories of my kingdom: *if any one* therefore *is willing to come after me*, and to attend me as a faithful servant and disciple, *let him* learn to *deny himself* in the dearest pleasures and interests of this present life, *and* habituate himself *daily* to *take up his cross:* let him submit to whatsoever trial Providence may lay before him, *and* be ready to *follow me*, even to crucifixion itself; for till he is taught a readiness to meet death, even in that dreadful form, for my sake, he has attended my other instructions in vain. (Compare Matt. x. 38. p. 154.) 34

And it is well worth your while to submit even to this: *for whosoever will* attempt to *save his life* from persecution, by forsaking me and my gospel, *shall* find he has taken the surest way to *lose it;* as he will another day incur the sentence of the second death, and meet a far more dreadful punishment from God, as an apostate, than he could have borne from men as my servant: *but whosoever shall lose* or expose *his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall find* it with far greater advantage in the future state [*and*] so shall have reason to acknowledge that he took the truest method to *save it*. (Compare Matt. x. 39. p. 154.) 35

And therefore, on these principles, it will be certainly your highest wisdom to forego the greatest advantages, or to bear the utmost extremities, rather than to forsake me: *for* it is a kind of proverb among you, *What would it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and be punished with the loss of his life?*[f] and so may I say, what would all that gain, added to his present security, signify, if he thereby bring a sentence of death on his soul, [*and*] so *lose himself, or be* finally *cast away? Or what shall a man give as a ransom for his life?*[g] what gains would he not be willing to resign, to quit himself 36

a *Plainly* and freely.] So παῤῥησια evidently signifies, and is often rendered in our version, (compare John x. 24; and xi. 14.) and in this sense it is opposed to speaking in proverbs; John xvi. 25, 29. Christ had before given *obscure hints* of this, John ii. 19; iii. 14; vi. 51; Matt. x. 38; xii. 40; and elsewhere.

b *Took him by the hand.*] So I render the word προσλαβομενος. Compare Rom. xv. 7. Gr. which may help to illustrate the sense of it.

c *God* in his infinite mercy *forbid.*] Dr. Fuller supposes that Ιλεως σοι should be rendered, *May God have compassion upon thee!* (See Fuller's *Miscel. Sacr. lib.* ii. *cap.* 2.) Heinsius, Grotius, and Le Clerc give the same interpretation; which is also asserted at large by the learned Mr. Wasse, (*Biblioth. Liter.* Vol. I. p. 30.) And the accurate Dr. Scott renders it, *Mercy on thee!* which is more literal than any of the rest. I think the phrase, as used by the Seventy, generally signifies *God forbid;* or, as we render it, *Far be it from thee!* (See 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xx. 20; 1 Kings xxi. 3; 1 Chron. xi. 19; and compare 1 Mac. ii. 21.) But as the accurate critics I have mentioned above suppose there is a particular tenderness in their interpretation, I have endeavoured to preserve it in the paraphrase.—Some would render it, *Have compassion on thyself;* but I cannot recollect any place where it has that sense; though 2 Sam. xxiii. 17; and Gen. 43. 22. Septuag. have been especially alleged as instances of it. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 81.

d *Get thee behind me, Satan.*] Compare Luke iv. 8. p. 39.—The word *Satan*, which is originally Hebrew, and has from thence been taken into several languages, is often used in the Old Testament to signify *an adversary*, (See Numb. xxii. 32; 2 Sam. xix. 22; 1 Kings v. 4; and xi. 14.) and the expression has appeared so harsh to some, as coming from the mouth of Christ to one of his apostles, that they have rather chosen to translate it, *O mine adversary.* But as the Evangelists have *both* made use of the word Σατανα, which must be owned to have a sound as odious in the Greek as it has now with us, we may conclude that it was used by Christ, or his *rebuke to Peter* would have been otherwise expressed by some Greek word that signifies *an adversary.* Nor can the word appear at all too harsh, when we consider that the tendency of Peter's saying, though it was spoken out of a singular affection to his Master, was to obstruct the great design for which he came into the world, and none but Satan could desire to prevent what he was ready to submit to for the salvation of lost sinners.—Dr. Young, (in his *Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 137.) rendering Ιλεως σοι, *Favour thyself*, supposes that our Lord calls Peter, *Satan*, because he now fell on that advice which Satan uses the most successfully of all his artifices to undo men; that of *self-indulgence:* and so makes the scripture an introduction to his discourse on *self-denial.*

e *Thou dost not regard* and relish *the things of God, &c.*] To *relish* or *savour* is plainly included: but I did not think it proper to limit it by such a version; for the word φρονεις often signifies *to fix a governing regard* on any thing, so as to make it the chief object of our pursuit; which seems the plain sense of it here. Compare Rom. viii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; and Col. iii. 2.

f *If he should gain the whole world, and be punished with the loss of his life!* και ζημιωθη την ψυχην αυτου.] Though the force of this maxim, taken by itself, appears best by rendering ψυχην, *soul*, which it does undoubtedly on the whole signify here; yet as the same word had been rendered *life*, ver. 35. and its meaning is sufficiently plain from what follows, I thought it better to retain the same version here likewise; which, taken in its connection, has (as Dr. Tillotson observes, Vol. III. p. 528, 529.) an additional spirit, which consists in the application of a proverb relating to the *worth of life;* (compare Job ii. 4.) to the *soul*, which is in the highest sense *the life* of the man, or *the man himself.* Luke ix. 25.—Την ψυχην ζημιωθηναι does not merely signify *to lose the life*, which might be applied to a man who accidentally met death in the pursuit of gain; (as a merchant who should be lost in his voyage;) but it properly imports *undergoing a capital execution*, which is an idea of much greater terror, as well as of much stricter propriety in the present case: And would to God it might seriously be considered in this awful view! See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod*, p. 171.

g *As a ransom for his life.*] So the word ανταλλαγμα properly signifies; and in this connection leads us to reflect how willing a *condemned malefactor* would be to give all he had got by his crimes to *buy his pardon*, and how vain the attempt would in this case be.

SECT. 89. of that foolish bargain by which he had sold it? Yet in this case, what would be accepted as an equivalent for it? "Its redemption is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Psal. xlix. 8.)

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? [Matt. xvi. 26.]

MARK VIII. 38 Now assure yourselves, that this thought may with the utmost propriety be applied to the case before us: *for whosoever is ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation,* shall find, to his cost, that *of him also will the Son of Man be ashamed,* and him will he with scorn disown, and with inexorable justice condemn, *when he comes in his own glory,* (that is, in all the pomp and grandeur in which he was of old represented to the prophets,) *and* shall appear upon his throne, invested with *the glory of his Father,*[h] as commissioned by him, to be the great executor of his judgment, as well as the dispenser of his grace, attended *with* the bright retinue of *the holy angels,* who shall wait on him as his servants to grace the solemnity of that awful day.

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh [in his own glory, and] in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. [Luke ix. 26.]

MATT. XVI. 27 *For* you may certainly depend upon it, that howsoever he be now despised and rejected of men, there is a day appointed, when *the Son of Man shall* thus *come in his Father's glory,* and be encircled in the most pompous manner *with his* holy *angels; and*[i] *then shall he* convene the whole world before him, that he may determine the final happiness or misery of each, and *recompense every man according to his actions.*

Matt. xvi. 27. For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

MARK IX. 1 *And he said* farther *to them, Verily, I tell it you as a* most certain *truth, that there are some of them who stand here* among us *that* shall live to see a most awful emblem of this important day: for some that now hear me *shall not taste of death,* that is, they shall not die, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come* to be established far and near, *with* a divinely efficacious *power;* [*and*] have beheld so eminent an appearance of Providence to promote the triumphs of my gospel, and to avenge the cruel injuries I shall receive from this ungrateful nation, that they may be said even to see *the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,* and leading on his victorious armies against those who would not admit him to reign over them.

Mark ix. 1. And he said unto them, Verily, [Luke I tell you of a truth,] that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power, [*and* the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.] [Matt. xvi. 28. Luke ix. 27.]

IMPROVEMENT.

MARK VIII. 33 Alas! how prone are our foolish souls to relish and regard the things of men rather than those of God! How justly do we deserve the rebuke of our Lord, who, while he speaks to Peter with such abhorrence, after all the encomiums he had just been giving him, shows us with what indignation we should reject every motion that would lead us to prefer our own ease or temporal interest to the glory of God and the happiness of man.

36 We shall never act so mean a part, if we cordially digest the lessons which Christ hath here taught us, and consider of how much greater importance the salvation of the soul is, than the gain of the whole world when opposed to it. Let us steadily pursue this maxim of divine wisdom, and with cheerfulness sacrifice every other interest to the views of an eternal felicity.

34 Does Jesus call us to deny ourselves for him? What difficulties should we not be ready to submit to; what pleasures should we not renounce for him, who pleased not himself, that he might show his love to us; and took upon him the form of a servant, that he might make us kings and priests unto God! Does he require us to take up our cross and follow him? What sufferings should we not be willing to endure for him; and whither should we not consent to follow him, who has borne the cross for us, and willingly expired on it for our sakes!

A sense of gratitude for past favours might bear us triumphantly through all the opposition we might be called to encounter in his cause; how much more then may we be animated by the pleasing hope that we shall another day be confessed by Christ in the presence of his Father and of his holy angels. Let us represent to ourselves that

38 august presence, that awful day, whenever a regard to an adulterous and sinful generation would lead us to be

MARK IX. ashamed of Christ and of his words. So shall we certainly be brought to see the kingdom of God in its glory; and if it opens to us in the visions of the future state, we shall have no reason to be anxiously solicitous, though

1 death should remove us from these lower regions before the gospel hath that universal triumph which the word of God encourages his church to expect.

h *In his own glory, and the glory of his Father.*] How these are distinguished, it is not easy to say. Mr. Bragge explains it of the *lustre of his own glorified body,* surrounded with such a *circle of fire* as that in which (according to him) *God the Father* had appeared particularly on *Mount Sinai* (Bragge *On the Parables,* Vol. II. p. 181.) I think it sufficient to say, that besides the *glory* which the *human nature of Christ* habitually wears in heaven, some additional splendour shall now be given to him by the Father, when he sends him with *his commission* on so august an occasion as the *universal judgment.*

i *The Son of man coming in his kingdom.*] Raphelius (*Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*) and Albert (*Observ.* p. 113, 114.) have indeed proved that εχομαι is sometimes used for απεχομαι, and εν for εις (compare John v. 4.) and therefore they, with some other critics, would render this text, *Some here present shall not die till they see the Son of Man going into his kingdom,* that is, *ascending to heaven,* which the apostles did. (see Acts i. 9.) But it increases the difficulty to suppose both these uncommon senses of the words in question to occur together; nor will Luke xxiii. 42. be allowed as an exact parallel. I chuse therefore to adhere to our received version, which may include a reference to the *giving the Spirit,* and *propagating the gospel,* but chiefly refers to that providential *appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem,* so often called *the coming of the Son of Man,* (Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 30, 37.) and *the day in which he shall be revealed.* (Luke xvii. 24, 26, 30.) This sense is the more natural here, especially as our Lord's manner of speaking intimates that most of the company should be *dead* before the event referred to; yet his *ascension* happened in a few months after this.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE LATTER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST,

AS RECORDED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

SECTION XC.

CHRIST GOES UP TO A MOUNTAIN, WHERE HE IS TRANSFIGURED, AND DISCOURSES WITH HIS DISCIPLES CONCERNING THE EXPECTATION THE JEWS HAD OF ELIJAH.
MATT. xvii. 1—13. MARK ix. 2—13. LUKE ix. 28—36.

MARK ix. 2.

AND [Luke, it came to pass] after six days, [Luke, *or* about eight days after these sayings,] Jesus taketh with him Peter and James, and John [his brother,] and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves, [Luke, to pray.] [Matt. xvii. 1. Luke ix. 28.]

Luke ix. 29. And as he prayed, [Mark, he was transfigured before them, and] the fashion of his countenance was altered, [*so that* his face did shine as the sun;] and his raiment *was* white and glistering, [Mark, shining exceeding white as snow,] [*or* as the light,] [Mark, so as no fuller on earth can white them.] [Matt. xvii. 2.] [Mark ix. 2, 3.]

Mark ix. 4.] And [behold,] there appeared unto them [Luke, two men] talking with Jesus, [Luke, which were Moses and Elias:] [Matt. xvii. 3. Luke ix. 30.]

Luke ix. 31. Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

MARK ix. VER. 2.

AND it came to pass after six days, [*or,*] if you include the first and last, *about eight days after these discourses* which were related in the two last sections, *Jesus took with him* those three disciples whom he honoured with something of a peculiar intimacy, (compare Mark v. 37; and Matt. xxvi. 37.) namely, *Peter and James, and his brother John, and brought them up privately to an high mountain apart* from the people,[a] whither he retired *to pray;* intending, as he often did, to spend the night in that holy exercise.[b] SECT. 90. MARK IX. 2

And as he was praying, it came to pass that *he was* suddenly, in a most glorious manner, *transfigured in their presence; and the form of his countenance was changed,*[c] [*so that*] *his face shone* with a brightness *like* that of *the sun; and* his whole body was clothed with such a lustre as shone through *his raiment,* insomuch that the appearance of it *was* all *white and dazzling,*[d] *shining* so *exceedingly,* that it seemed as *white as snow,* [*yea*] as resplendent *as the light* itself, to *so* great a degree *as no fuller on earth could whiten it.* Such a glory did God confer on his Son, as an earnest of that in which he was finally to appear; and he permitted these his servants to see it, that they might not be offended at those scenes of deep abasement in which they were shortly to attend him. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 37. sect. clxxxii.) LUKE IX. 29

And behold, there appeared to them, at the same time that they saw their Lord in this splendid form, *two men,* that were *talking with Jesus* in a language and accent which the three apostles heard and understood, *who were* known to be *Moses* the great giver, *and Elijah* the zealous restorer, of the law. These were the persons whom they saw with Christ, in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated; *who, appearing* to their view *in* forms of *glory* somewhat resembling that which he now wore himself, *spake of his exit,* or departure out of the present life and state, *which he was shortly* after, even at the ensuing passover, *to accomplish at Jerusalem;*[e] suggesting and enlarging on such thoughts as were proper to animate him to so painful and glorious a conflict. MARK IX. 4 LUKE IX. 31

a *An high mountain apart* from the people.] Jerome tells us, (*Epist.* 17, 18.) that there was in his days an ancient tradition that this was Mount Tabor, which lay in the tribe of Zebulon. Its standing *apart* (as Mr. Maundrell observes that it does, *Travels,* p. 112.) is to be sure no argument to prove it; for that expression only signifies that it was a private retirement, which it might have been, had it made part of a ridge of mountains. However, as this happened at the distance of six days, there seems to be but little probability in Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that since Christ was just before near Cæsarea Philippi, this must be *the mountain* in that neighbourhood on which one of Jeroboam's calves had been worshipped; over which he thinks it a kind of triumph that the Shechinah was thus gloriously manifested, where it had been so long affronted by idolatry. See Fleming's *Christology,* Vol. I. p. 40.

b To spend the night in that holy exercise.] This appears from Luke ix. 37. where we read of their *coming down from the mountain the next day.* See p. 185.

c *The form of his countenance was changed.*] This was so striking a circumstance, that Eunapius (*Vit. Jambl.* p. 22.) relates a story of Jamblicus, which seems evidently to be borrowed from this; as many things which Philostratus tells us of Apollonius Tyanæus seem also to have been borrowed from other histories recorded of Christ by the Evangelists.

d *White and dazzling.*] The words λευκος εξαστραπτων may literally be rendered *white as lightning;* but as this clause stands here connected with parallel passages in the other Evangelists, I chuse to render it *dazzling,* that some proper gradation might be observed, which would otherwise have been destroyed.

e *Spake of his exit, which he was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem.*] Dr. Hammond and Le Clerc seem greatly mistaken in referring this to Christ's victory over the impenitent Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; for though the word εξοδος does sometimes signify a *military expedition,* (see Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 219.) yet it is plainly used for *death,* or *a departure out of the world,* 2 Pet. i. 15; and Wisd. iii. 2; which suits much better here with the construction, εν Ιερουσαλημ.

SECT. 90. LUKE IX. 32 33 MARK IX. 6 LUKE IX. 34 35 MATT. XVII. 6. 7 MARK IX. 8 9 10 MATT. XVII. 10

But Peter, and they that were with him, even the two other disciples, did not see the beginning of this glorious vision, nor hear the whole of this wonderful and edifying discourse; for, wearied with the labours of the preceding day, they *were* quite *overburdened* and sunk down *with sleep; but being awakened* with the splendour of those rays which pierced through the darkness of the night that had before favoured their slumbers, *they saw,* to their inexpressible astonishment, *his* unusual *glory, and the two men who were standing with him,* and heard the conclusion of their conference, from whence they collected who they were.[f] *And it came to pass that,* just *as they were departing from him, Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here* in such a circumstance as this: let this glorious appearance and converse be prolonged; for we could delight to spend all the remainder of our days thus; *and* therefore, *if thou pleasest, let us make three tents here,*[g] *for Thee one, and for Moses one, and one for Elijah,* that thou with them mayst lodge here in a more convenient manner. This was indeed a wild kind of proposal, ill suiting the state of these glorified persons, or the subject of their late discourse: but it is the less to be wondered at, considering the great surprise in which Peter was, *for he knew not what he said,* [*or*] *should say; for* such was the effect it had on him and the two other disciples who were then present, that *they were* vastly *terrified* at the majesty of this unparalleled sight, which broke out upon them at once in so unexpected a manner.

And as he was speaking thus, behold, there came a bright cloud, which, in a most surprising manner, spread itself over the top of the mountain, *and overshadowed them* all: *and* the disciples were seized with such a kind of religious horror, that *they feared when they entered into the cloud,*[h] and saw it diffused on every side of them. *And behold,* an ever-memorable circumstance then happened; for *there came a* most awful *voice out of the cloud,* as the sacred symbol of God's immediate presence, *which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased;*[i] *hear ye him,* therefore, with the humblest submission and obedience, as the object of my dearest complacency, and your surest guide to duty and happiness, in all respects superior to the greatest of your prophets.

And when the disciples heard [*this voice,*] *they fell* prostrate *on their faces* to the ground with the humblest reverence, *and were exceedingly terrified* by this tremendous manifestation of the present Deity. *And Jesus,* knowing their confusion, *came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and be not afraid;* infusing into them, at the same moment, a secret strength and fortitude of mind. (Compare Dan. x. 10, 19.)

And on a sudden, while the heavenly *voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone,* Moses and Elijah disappearing in a moment; [*and*] the disciples, *lifting up their eyes,* upon the kind encouragement that he had given them, [*and*] *looking round about* them for the persons *they* had seen but just before, *saw no man any more, but Jesus only with themselves,* who now again appearing in his usual form, graciously entered into conversation with them in the same condescending manner he was used to do.

And as they came down from the mountain on which this wonderful transaction had passed, *Jesus* strictly *charged them, that they should tell no one what they had seen, unless* it were *when the Son of man was risen from the dead;* lest, till that glorious evidence was given of his divine mission, this story should appear as an idle dream, or an incredible tale. *And* when he spake of rising from the dead, *they laid hold on that word,*[k] *disputing among themselves what this rising from the dead could mean;* for as often, *and* as plainly, as Christ had declared it to them, they could not persuade themselves to understand it in a literal sense. However, in obedience to the charge he gave them, *they were silent* as to what had passed, *and told no one in those days any of the things which they had* now *seen* and heard.

And his disciples, as they could not doubt but he was the Messiah, took that oppor-

32 But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter [answered and] said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and [if thou wilt] let us make [here] three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: [Matt. xvii. 4. Mark ix. 5.]

Mark ix. 6. For he wist not, [Luke, what he said, *or,*] what to say, for they were sore afraid. [Luke ix. 33.]

Luke ix. 34. While he thus spake, [behold,] there came a [bright] cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared, as they entered into the cloud. [Matt. xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7.]

35 And [behold,] there came a voice out of the cloud, [which said,] This is my beloved Son, [in whom I am well-pleased,] hear [ye] him. [Matt xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7.]

Matt. xvii. 6. And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

Mark ix. 8. And suddenly, [Luke, when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone; *and*] when they had [lift up their eyes, *and*] looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. [Matt. xvii. 8. Luke ix. 36.]

9 And as they came down from the mountain, [Jesus charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead.] [Matt. xvii. 9.]

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. [And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.] [Luke ix. 36.]

f Heard the conclusion of their conference, &c.] It might not perhaps have been proper they should have heard the *whole* of it: God might intend to reveal some of those things to them by the Spirit, and the knowledge of others might be reserved to the discoveries of the heavenly state.

g *Let us make three tents here.*] Mr. Fleming thinks it is as if he had said, "Lord, let this mountain be to Israel now, what Sinai "was to our fathers: hold, as it were, thy court here; and let the "people resort hither to learn thy will, and pay their homage to "thee, attended by these thy glorified servants." (See Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. I. p. 46.) But this seems too great a refinement, and too deep a scheme. I rather chuse to interpret them as words of *rapturous surprise*, intended merely to express the *pleasure* they had in what they saw and heard. The proposal was, as St. Mark observes, very improper; but perhaps few, in such an astonishing circumstance, could have been perfectly masters of themselves.—The tents they proposed to build must be only slight huts or bowers; and there is no reason at all to suppose they meant any sumptuous tabernacles like that of Moses in the wilderness; and, that no such idea might accidentally be raised, I chose to use the word *tents*.

h *There came a bright cloud, and overshadowed them*, &c.] I cannot think it probable (though a late eminent critic has so explained it) that this only means that *the cloud cast a shadow* which fell upon them, but rather that it *spread over the mountain:* and this not like a canopy or umbrella, but that it covered it in such a manner as a cloud does; yet with this difference, that it was more like a thick smoke than a shower; and that whereas the skirts of clouds are generally rarer than the central parts, this was darker towards the edges, a glory being *in the midst:* and probably it was the darker part with which the apostles were enveloped, while *the excellent glory* (as St. Peter calls it, 2 Pet. i. 17.) seemed much higher, and the rays of it were much attempered by that part of the cloudy veil which was between it and them. And thus we know that the Shechinah had appeared in former ages, particularly when it took possession of the tabernacle of Moses, Exod. xl. 34, 35. and the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.

i *In whom I am well-pleased.*] Though neither Mark nor Luke have given us these words, we may be sure that they were really spoken, as we have the concurring testimony both of Matthew and of Peter, who has thus quoted them, 2 Pet. i. 17. Some have thought their being omitted by Mark, an intimation that Peter did not review that gospel with any great accuracy, supposing it was (as Clemens Alexandrinus reports) put into his hands.—Perhaps the command that is added to *hear him*, may refer to that solemn charge to *hear* the great *prophet*, Deut. xviii. 15.

k *They laid hold on that word.*] So I think τον λογον εκρατησαν may most literally be rendered; the verb often signifying *to lay hold on*, and, in consequence of that, *resolutely to retain;* but never, that I can recollect, *to keep a secret*. Compare Matt. ix. 25; xiv. 3; Mark xii. 12; and Rev. xx. 2.—I think the words προς εαυτους should be joined with συζητουντες, as they are with the same word, Mark i. 27; ix. 16; Luke xxii. 23; and Acts ix. 29.

tunity of informing themselves as to a scruple which had long lain on their minds, and *asked him, saying, Why then do the scribes*, the teachers of our nation, and professed students of the law, *say, that Elijah must first come* before the Messiah appear? Is this vision that we have now seen, all the coming of that prophet which was to be expected? SECT. 90. MATT. XVII.

Matt. xvii. 10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come? [Mark ix. 11.]

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things: [and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.] [Mark ix. [12.]

And Jesus replying said unto them, It does *indeed* appear from the scripture, that *Elijah shall first come* to make way for the Messiah, *and regulate all things*,[l] by preaching repentance and reformation: *and yet*, how little is the influence that his coming will have upon a wicked and ungrateful generation? And *how is it* also *written of the Son of man* himself,[m] that illustrious Person whom Elijah is to introduce? It is plainly foretold, *that he must suffer many things, and be contemptuously rejected;* which evidently implies that his forerunner also shall be disregarded, and his preaching slighted. And the event, you know, has been answerable to it: do not therefore expect another to appear, *but* observe what *I* now *say to you*, while I assure you *that Elijah is indeed come already, as it is written of him*[n] in various passages of scripture; (see Isa. xl. 3; and Mal. iii. 1;) *and they* who pretended so eagerly to expect him *did not know* and acknowledge *him, but have treated him* in the most arbitrary and cruel manner, even *just as they pleased*, without any regard to piety, justice, or humanity: and *thus likewise shall the Son of man* quickly *suffer by them*, and with the utmost enmity and malice shall be persecuted by a hardened people, who will shew no more regard to him than to Elijah his herald. 11 12

12 But I say unto you, that Elias is [indeed] come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed, [as it is written of him:] likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. [Mark ix. 13.]

Then the disciples understood that he spake to them concerning John the Baptist, who was foretold under the name of Elijah, as the Messiah was under that of David. (Compare Mal. iv. 5; and Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.) 13

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

IMPROVEMENT.

How glorious and delightful was this view of our blessed Redeemer, which the apostles had when he was transfigured before them, clothed, as it were, with the divine Shechinah, and shining with a lustre like that of the sun! How pleasing and how edifying must it be to them, to see with him Moses and Elijah, those two eminent saints who had so many ages ago quitted our world, but whose names they had often read in the sacred records with wonder and reverence. Ver. 2 3

Well might Peter say, *It is good for us to be here.* Well might he be contented to resign his entertainments and his hopes elsewhere, that they might prolong these delightful moments, feasting their eyes with these divine visions, and their minds with these more than human discourses. Nor can we wonder that the scene, transitory as it was, left so abiding a savour on his spirits, that in an epistle which he wrote many years after, and but a little before his death, he should single this story from a thousand others to attest it as he does, and to argue from it. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 16—18.) But oh how much more desirable is it to stand upon Mount Zion, and to behold those brighter glories which our Jesus wears in the heavenly regions! To behold, not merely Moses and Elijah, but all the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs; and, in a word, all the saints of God in every age, whether to us personally known or unknown, surrounding him in a radiant circle; and not only to behold them, but to converse with them. Lord, it is good for us to be there, in our desires at least, and in our meditations, till thou pleasest to call us to that happy world, and to take us thither, where no drowsiness will cloud our eyes, where no hurry will discompose our thoughts, but where the perfection of holiness and of love shall cast out every degree of terror, as well as of sorrow. 4 LUKE IX. 32. MARK IX. 6.

In the mean time, let us reverently attend to that Saviour who appeared in this majestic form, and who comes recommended to us with so many testimonials of his divine authority. He was again declared, by a voice from heaven, to be the beloved Son of God; as such let us hear him, receiving all his revelations with the assurance of faith, and all his commands with the obedience of love. If these sentiments govern our hearts and our lives, the thoughts of that departure from this world which we are shortly to accomplish, will be no grief or terror to our souls. Like our blessed Master, we may connect the views of it, and intermix discourse upon it, with the most delightful enjoyments and converse; nay, it will serve to render them yet more pleasing. For who would not long to be made conformable to Christ, even in his sufferings and death, if it may be a means of transforming us into the resemblance of his glories! MATT. XVII. 5 LUKE IX. 31

SECTION XCI.

Christ, descending from the mountain on which he was transfigured, drives out an evil spirit which had obstinately withstood the attempts of his apostles. Matt. xvii. 14—21. Mark ix. 14—29. Luke ix. 37—43. SECT. 91.

LUKE ix. 37.

AND it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the

LUKE ix. 37.

THUS did our Lord discourse with his three disciples after he had been transfigured in so glorious a manner in their presence: *and it came to pass, that on the next day, when* LUKE IX. 37.

l *Shall first come and regulate all things.*] It is plain that ἀποκαταστήσει here, (as ἀποκατάστασις, Acts iii. 21.) cannot, as it generally does, signify, *restoring* things to their former state, but only, in the general, *reducing them to order*. It is strange Tertullian (*De Resur. cap.* 35.) should infer from hence, that Elijah the prophet is to come before Christ's second appearance. Grotius has well confuted that wild notion in his *Annotations, in loc.*

m *And yet how is it written of the Son of man* himself!] The construction of this verse, in the original, is as perplexed as almost any in the New Testament. The Prussian Testament, which is followed by the late English version, renders it roundly and elegantly enough, "It is true," said he, "that Elias must first come "to restore all things, and that it is foretold of him, as well as of the "Son of man, that he should have much to suffer, and be rejected "with contempt." But this is not strictly agreeable to the original, nor can I find the martyrdom of John the Baptist any where foretold in the Old Testament: I chuse therefore to render this clause as a question.—That καὶ sometimes signifies [*and yet,*] evidently appears from John v. 40; Luke ix. 45; Matt. xxiii. 37; and other places.

n *Elijah is indeed come already, as it is written of him.*] For the reason assigned in the preceding note, I chuse to connect these two clauses, and conclude that the words which lie between, both in the original and in our translation, are to be included in a parenthesis.

SECT. 91.

they came down from the mountain on which the night had been so delightfully spent, *a great crowd of people met him. And, being come to the disciples,* and particularly to the rest of the apostles, who, knowing their Master was on the hill, waited for him in the
MARK IX. adjacent valley, *he saw a great multitude around them, and,* among the rest, some of *the scribes* and Pharisees, who were *disputing with them,* and endeavoured to take the op-
14 portunity of their Master's absence to expose and distress them.

15 *And immediately,* as soon as he came near them, *all the multitude seeing him, was struck into astonishment* at those unusual rays of majesty and glory which yet remained on his countenance;[a] *and, running to him,* they *saluted him* with the greatest marks of respect and affection: yet the scribes and Pharisees, without regarding his return, continued their ill-natured attack on his disciples.

16 *And,* taking notice of the warm dispute they were engaged in, *he asked the scribes,* What is the point you are debating, and *what do you contend with them about?*

17 *And,* presently, upon his making this enquiry, *behold, a* [*certain*] *man of the multitude* came, and *kneeling down to him, answered* the question in effect; *and, crying out* with a loud and eager voice, *said,* O thou great Teacher and *Master* in our Israel, *I have brought thee my* poor afflicted *son, who has* for a long time been possessed with *a dumb spirit;* and the malicious demon has deprived him of the use of his hearing and speech:
MATT. XVII. And, in this moving case, *O Lord, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child;* [*and*] yet, instead of being a comfort to me, is a most melancholy spectacle of
15 horror; let me entreat thee, therefore, to *have compassion on* [*him,*] *for he is lunatic,*[b] *and grievously tormented* with terrible fits, which frequently seize him, and sometimes en-
LUKE IX. danger his life: *for he often falleth into the fire, and often into the water. And, behold, wherever* [*this*] *spirit seizes him, he* has no strength or thought to take care of
39 himself, but *suddenly cries out* in a violent manner, *and it convulses him* so *that he foams again* at the mouth, *and gnashes with his teeth* in extremity of anguish; *and* thus he miserably *pines* and withers *away* in the bloom of his age: *and* [*it*] is *with* great *difficulty* that the malignant demon *departs from him* for a little while, *having bruised him* to such a degree by violent distortions, that he is hardly able to use his limbs in the interval
MATT. XVII. of these dreadful agitations. *And* I am persuaded there is some more than ordinary difficulty in the case; for *I brought him to thy disciples, and spake to* [*them*] concern-
16 ing him, *and entreated* [*them*] in the most affectionate manner to use their utmost efforts *to cast him out; and they could not* accomplish it, nor *heal him.*

17 *Then Jesus said in reply to him, O ye incredulous and perverse generation* of men, *how long shall I be with you* before you will learn a becoming regard to me? *How long shall I endure* that infidelity which *you* are shewing on so many occasions? And thus did he mean at once to reprove the weakness of faith in the father, and in his disciples, as well as the obstinacy and perverseness of the Jewish teachers, who were triumphing in their present disappointment: and then, turning to the father of the child and his attendants, he said, *Bring thy son hither to me,* and you shall see what my power can effect.

MARK IX. *And* upon this *they brought him* that was possessed to Jesus, and presented the poor creature *to him. And immediately, as soon as he saw him, while he was yet coming,*
20 *the* evil *spirit,* in a rage, wrought in him with such violence, that he *threw him down and convulsed him; and he fell on the ground* with great force, and there lay *and rolled* from one side to the other, a spectacle of horror, *foaming* at the mouth, and sweating profusely, till nature was almost exhausted, and he seemed ready to die.

21 *And,* that the greatness of the cure might more plainly appear, while the unhappy youth lay thus before him, *he asked his father, How long time is it that he hath been*
22 *thus* afflicted? *And he said,* Even *from his childhood:*[c] *And* the evil spirit is so outrageous, and so malicious, that *it frequently,* as I said, *has thrown him into the fire, and into the waters,* when he has happened to be near them, as if he watched for opportunities *to destroy him;* so that I am sensible it is a most difficult, as well as dreadful case: *but if thou canst do any thing* in it,[d] *have compassion on us, and help us;* for surely none ever needed thy pity more.

23 *And Jesus said unto him,* The question is not at all concerning my power, but concerning the strength of thy faith; for *if thou canst* firmly and cheerfully *believe,* the

hill, much people met him.

Mark ix. 14. And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed; and, running to him, saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And [Luke, behold,] [*a certain* man] of the multitude, [kneeling down to him,] answered and [Luke, cried out, saying,] Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: [Matt. xvii. 14. Luke ix. 38.]

Matt. xvii. 15. Lord, [I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child; *and*] have mercy on *him,* for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. [Luke ix. 38.]

Luke ix. 39. And lo, [wheresoever] *this* spirit taketh him, he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth again, [and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away;] and bruising him, *it* hardly departeth from him. [Mark ix. 18.]

Matt. xvii. 16. And I brought him to thy disciples, [and spake to *them,*] [Luke, and besought *them* to cast him out,] and they could not cure him. [Mark ix. 18. Luke ix. 40.]

17 Then Jesus answered [him,] and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring [Luke, thy son] hither to me. [Mark ix. 19. Luke ix. 41.]

Mark ix. 20. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, [as he was yet a-coming,] straightway the spirit [threw him down, and] tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. [Luke ix. 42.]

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all

a *Was struck into astonishment,* &c.] It is strange that so few critics should have said any thing concerning the reason of the multitude's being thus astonished. It could not be, as Doctor Clarke supposes, his coming down from the mountain the day after he went up; for they were gathered round it in expectation of his descent; and I do not remember that he ever continued more than *one night* in such a retirement. Nor is it easy to imagine the multitude were under any apprehension, after he had been no longer absent, that they never should be able to find him again. I therefore follow Dr. Whitby's natural conjecture in his paraphrase, which is agreeable to what we read of Moses, that *the skin of his face shone when he came down from the mount.* (Compare Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. and 2 Cor. iii. 7.) One would indeed have expected that Luke, who has mentioned the lustre on Stephen's countenance, when pleading his cause before the sanhedrim, (Acts vi. 15.) should have taken some notice of the fact here supposed: but it is observable, Mark tells the story before us far more circumstantially than either of the other Evangelists; which, by the way, is another most convincing proof that his gospel was not (as Mr. Whiston supposes) an abridgment of Matthew.

b *He is lunatic.*] Grotius well observes, that this word (which exactly answers the etymology of the original) might with great propriety be used, though there was something preternatural in the case; as the evil spirit would undoubtedly take advantage of those disorders into which the brain and nerves of this unhappy child were thrown by the changes of the moon.

c *From his childhood.*] So the word παιδιοθεν properly signifies; and I think, with Grotius, it is much more convenient to render it thus than *from his infancy.*

d *If thou canst do any thing* in it.] Perhaps, observing the fit grow more violent on his approaching Christ, his faith might begin to fail. This was a very natural manner of speaking, and yet strongly pathetic, and obliquely interesting the honour of Christ in the issue of the affair. See Raphel. *ex Xen.* p. 73.

things *are* possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the [unclean] spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. [Luke ix. 42. Matt. xvii. 18.]

26 And *the spirit* cried and rent him sore, and came out [of him;] and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead. [Matt. xvii. 18.]

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose: [Luke, and *he* healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.] [And the child was cured from that very hour.] [Matt. xvii. 18. Luke ix. 42.]

Luke ix. 43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

Mark ix. 28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples [came to Jesus apart, and] asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? [Matt. xvii. 19.]

Matt. xvii. 20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence unto yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit, [he said unto them,] This kind [can come forth by nothing] but by prayer and fasting. [Mark ix. 29.]

deliverance will surely be effected, as *all things* of this kind [*are*] *possible to him that believeth.*[e] SECT. 91.

And immediately the father of the child, touched to the very heart to think that his dear son might possibly lose the cure through the weakness of his own faith, *cried out* aloud, *and said with tears* in his eyes, and ardour in his countenance, *Lord, I* do from my heart *believe* that thy power is unlimited; yet such is my frailty, that when I look on this spectacle of misery, my faith is ready to fail me again: *help* me therefore against *my unbelief*, by mitigating the circumstances of the trial, or communicating suitable strength to my soul.[f] MARK IX. 24

Then Jesus seeing that the crowd ran together, and was continually increasing round them, *rebuked the unclean spirit* which had possessed the child, *and said unto him*, with an air of superior power and divine authority, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit*, who hast so maliciously deprived this youth of his speech and hearing, *I* strictly *charge* and command *thee* immediately to *come out of him, and* presume to *enter into him no more*, nor farther to disquiet him as long as he lives. 25

And immediately, as soon as he had spoken these words, [*the* evil *spirit*,] *having cried out* with great earnestness, *and thrown him into violent distortions, came out of him; and* the poor youth had been so miserably handled, that *he* fell into a swoon, and *seemed as one dead, so that many* who were present *said, He is* undoubtedly quite *dead*, and will revive no more. *But Jesus, taking* hold of *him by the hand, lifted him up, and* strengthened him, so that *he arose* and stood on his feet. *And* when [*he*] thus had perfectly restored and *healed the child*, he took *and delivered him to his father*, who received him with an inexpressible mixture of joy and amazement. *And the child was well from that very hour*, and these terrible symptoms returned upon him no more. 26 27

And they who beheld it *were all astonished at the mighty power of God*, by which this illustrious miracle had been wrought. LUKE IX. 43.

And when he had left the multitude, and *was come into the house* where he then resided, *his disciples*, something mortified at the repulse they had met with in their late attempt, *came to Jesus when* he was *alone, and asked him privately, Why could not we* prevail so far as to cast out this demon, and *expel him*, since we have performed many cures which seemed equally difficult? MARK IX. 28

And Jesus said unto them, It was *because of* the remainder of *your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if you had* but the least degree of *faith* in a lively exercise, though it, comparatively, was but *as a grain of mustard-seed*,[g] *you might* perform the greatest wonders, so as even to *say to this mountain* here in the neighbourhood, *Remove from this place to that, and it should* accordingly *remove; and*, in a word, *nothing will be impossible to you. But* as to the case that was lately before us, *he* farther *said unto them, This* demon which possessed the child was one of a very obstinate *kind*, which *cannot* be expelled so readily as others; nor must you expect to have power over such spirits as these, to oblige them to *go forth by any means: unless* you do *by* frequent *prayer and fasting* intercede with God for his more abundant co-operation, and by such extraordinary devotions endeavour to prepare your souls for his farther influences.[h] MATT. XVII. 20 21

IMPROVEMENT.

THE invidious opposition which these scribes and Pharisees made to our Lord, and the ill-natured joy they expressed in what they imagined would disgrace his disciples, appears exceeding odious; and it shews us the fatal effects of ambition, pride, and avarice, when they possess the hearts of those who should be (as these by their office MARK IX. 14

e *If thou canst believe*, &c.] As the construction in the original is something uncommon, το ει δυνασαι πιστευσαι, I cannot forbear mentioning a singular conjecture which I lately had from the mouth of a very accurate critic, especially in biblical learning. He thinks, instead of το, it might be τι, as some copies read it; and then taking πιστευσαι to be the imperative mood, would render and paraphrase it with an interrogation after τι; "*What dost thou* "*mean* by saying *if thou canst?*" referring to ει δυνασαι, in the verse before: "*believe: all things are possible to him that believeth;* see "thou to the firmness of thy faith, and leave the rest to me."

f *Help my unbelief*, &c.] It seems an inconvenience inseparable from this method of paraphrasing, that sometimes (as in the present instance) some lively and strongly pointed sentences should lose something of their spirit by it; yet keeping the original thus distinct, may in part remedy it; and, on the whole, many of these expressions are so full of meaning, that the general laws of interpretation require they should be unfolded. To observe the exact medium here, is a felicity which I dare not say I have obtained, though I laboured after it.

g *Faith as a grain of mustard-seed.*] It is very trifling to suppose, that here is a reference to the *poignancy* of *mustard-seed*, as an emblem of a vigorous and lively faith. It is apparently a proverb to express any thing inconsiderably small, that being, as our Lord expresses it, one of *the smallest among seeds.* Thus the rabbies say, the globe of the earth is but as a grain of mustard-seed, when compared with the expanse of the heavens. See Drusius, *in loc.*

h *This kind cannot go forth by any means, unless by prayer and fasting.*] An ingenious physician, mentioned by the learned author of the *Inquiry into Demoniacs*, &c. p. 47. instead of εν προσευχη και νηστειαις, would read εν προτεχει νηστειαις, *by constant fasting*; and supposes it refers to the necessity of frequent and long-continued abstinence, in order to the cure of such an epileptic distemper as the child in question had been subject to. But as the criticism is founded on mere conjecture, contrary to all the copies known in the world, so I cannot think it at all natural in itself, or pertinent to the occasion; for it seems not at all to our Lord's purpose to speak of the natural methods of cure, in answer to the apostles' demand, why they could not miraculously perform it?—Nor can any instance be produced to prove that the expression is proverbial for any thing very difficult.—I could therefore see no reason to recede from the usual interpretation which I have given in the paraphrase.—As for the interpretation of Chrysostom and Theophylact, who suppose that γενος signifies at large this kind of beings, that is, demons, it seems very wrong; since the apostles evidently did cast out many demons, whatever peculiar maliguity there might be in this and others of his rank, which might make more intense devotion necessary to eject them.—Sir Norton Knatchbull's sense is extremely forced, who understands it as if it had been said, This sort [of miraculous faith] *advances not but by prayer and fasting.* Raphelius has abundantly shewn how inconclusive those authorities from Xenophon are, by which he would justify so odd a version of εξελθειν. (See Raphel. *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 44—46.) And were the words considered as they stand in Mark, where there is nothing said of faith, it would be easy to perceive our Lord as speaking of demons which they *were not able to cast out:* and that some demons are more maligunant than others, is most manifest from Matt. xii. 45. But oftentimes an explication has been built upon the words of one Evangelist, and many learned remarks have been made to establish it, which could not be applied without great violence to suit the parallel place in another, and presently has fallen to the ground upon comparing them together.

were) teachers of others. Such qualities render those in the number of the most dangerous enemies of mankind, who ought to be its most affectionate friends, and most useful benefactors. May the light of the gospel break in on their souls, and form them to a better temper!

The solicitous concern of this parent when he saw his child under such sad symptoms of disorder, may surely remind persons in that relation of the sentiments with which they should view those of their children who are, in a spiritual sense, under the power of Satan; and of the importunity with which they should entreat that the hand of Christ may be stretched out for their rescue.

A lively exercise of faith is greatly to be desired in this and all other applications of this nature. But alas, how often do we find the remainders of a contrary principle! In how many instances does that passionate exclamation of the father in this story suit us,—Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief! How difficult is it, in the midst of so much guilt and weakness, of so much perplexity and unworthiness, to believe the promises of forgiveness and preservation, of grace and glory! Yet we may humbly hope, that He who by his grace has wrought the divine principle in our souls, will maintain it there. Only let it be our concern to oppose those corruptions which would enervate and suppress it. Perhaps there are some of them which will not be driven out but by prayer and fasting, by deep humiliation, and more than ordinary solemnity and intenseness of devotion. But surely they have little regard to the peace and security of their souls, who can allot only a few hasty moments to them, when they have whole hours and days to bestow, not only on the labours, but even on the amusements of life.

SECTION XCII.

The disciples are offended at the warning Christ gives them of his approaching sufferings. He makes a miraculous provision for paying the tribute money. Matt. xvii. 22, *to the end.* Mark ix. 30—33. Luke ix. 43—45.

Mark ix. 30.

AND while every one of the spectators *was amazed* at this stupendous miracle wrought on the child who had been so terribly possessed, and *at all the* other extraordinary *things which Jesus did*, our Lord and his apostles left that place, and, setting out on a further progress, *they departed from thence, and passed* from the mountain on which he had been transfigured, *through* the rest of *Galilee: and* Jesus chose to do it as privately as he could; for *he was desirous that no one might know* [*it*,] lest the important conversation into which he then entered with his disciples should be interrupted. *For while they continued* travelling and conversing *in Galilee*, and especially when they came to the places where they lodged, *Jesus taught his disciples*[a] more largely than he had done before, what was to befal him. (Compare Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22. sect. lxxxix.)

And he *said unto them*, with great solemnity, *Apply your ears* attentively *to these sayings*,[b] how disagreeable soever they may be, and let them sink into your hearts; *for the Son of man*, instead of reigning in that grandeur which you expect, *shall* very *shortly be betrayed into the hands of* sinful *men*,[c] *and* shall seem for a while to be a helpless prey to their rage; for *they shall put him to death* in a most cruel and infamous manner; *but* they shall not finally triumph over him; for *after he is* thus *slain, he shall rise* from the dead *on the third day*, according to the intimations I have often given you. (See p. 48, 126, 177.)

But they were so strongly prepossessed with the expectation of a temporal kingdom, that they *understood not this saying*, plain as it was, *and* the sense of *it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not;* foolishly imagining it inconsistent with what the sacred oracles had declared of the glorious success of the Son of man, and the universal empire he was to establish. (Dan. vii. 14.) *And yet they were afraid to ask him* what was the meaning *of that saying*, lest he should upbraid them as unteachable: considering how lately he had given them the like warning before, and how severely he had rebuked Peter for endeavouring to dissuade him from it; (sect. lxxxix.) nevertheless, they perceived that their Master foretold his own death; *and were exceeding sorry* that a person of so excellent and amiable a character, from whom they had entertained such glorious expectations, should meet with so unworthy a return.

And soon after this, *he came* with his disciples *to Capernaum; and when they were come to Capernaum, the* receivers and *collectors of the* sacred *tribute*,[d] which was gathered every year through all their cities, *came to Peter, and said, Does not your*

Mark ix. 30. AND [while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did,] they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*. [Luke ix. 43.]

31 For [while they abode in Galilee, Jesus] taught his disciples, and said unto them, [Matt. xvii. 22. Luke ix. 43.]

Luke ix. 44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men, [and they shall kill him: and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.] [Mark ix. 31. Matt. xvii. 22, 23.]

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying, [and were exceeding sorry.] [Matt. xvii. 23 Mark ix. 32.]

Matt. xvii. 24. And [he came to Capernaum: and] when they were come to Capernaum, they that re-

a *For Jesus taught his disciples.*] Mark assigns this as the reason why he desired his journey should be private, *viz.* that he might have an opportunity to talk over this subject at large: which shows that the continuance or abode in Galilee, mentioned by Matthew, refers to the short stay they made in the places where they lodged; and indeed he could not so conveniently speak to all the twelve while they were actually travelling.

b *Apply your ears to these sayings.*] This seems to me a just translation of θεσθε υμεις εις τα ωτα υμων τους λογους τουτους, which is literally, *Put these sayings into your ears:* a phrase which our language will hardly admit. It intimates the propensity they had to withdraw and turn away their ears from such declarations as he was now about to make.

c *Shall shortly be betrayed, &c.*] Mark has expressed it in the present tense, and says, *The Son of man is delivered;* but nothing is more common in the sacred language than to speak of what should certainly and quickly be, as if it was already done. Compare John xii. 31; xvii. 4, 11, 24; Eph. ii. 5, 6; Heb. xii. 22; and Rev. xviii. 2, 4.—The explication of many other scriptures depends on this obvious remark.

d *The collectors of the* sacred *tribute.*] Josephus has expressly asserted, that each of the Jews used yearly to pay a didrachma, or half-shekel, the piece of money here mentioned, to the service of the temple: (See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 9. [al. 12.] § 1.) A custom which probably took its rise from the demand of that sum from each of the Israelites, whenever they were numbered; Exod. xxx. 13. And therefore, with Beza, Casaubon, Hammond, Grotius, and many other great critics, I chuse to understand this passage as referring to that, rather than to any civil tax; chiefly because I think, notwithstanding what Salmasius says to the contrary, (against Milton, p. 259.) our Lord's argument, ver. 25, 26. can otherwise have no force.—The reader will find an excellent note in Grotius here, which renders it unnecessary to enlarge any farther.

ceived tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? [Mark ix. 33.]

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Master, who has the character of so religious a Teacher, *pay the* usual *tribute* of the didrachma,[e] or half-shekel, to the service of the temple? And *he says, Yes*, I know that he uses to pay it, and make no doubt but he will do it now. *And when he came into the house, Jesus*, who was there before, *prevented him*, before he could speak of the affair in question, *and said* to him, *What dost thou think, Simon*, and what seems fit to thee on this occasion? *Of whom do the kings of the earth receive custom or tribute? of their own sons or of strangers? Peter says to him*, Lord, it is evident they receive it only *of strangers*. *Jesus said to him, Then the sons*, by virtue of their father's dispensation, *are free* from the obligation: and, on the like principle, I, as the Son of God, might plead an exemption here, especially as I have not now the sum which is required towards the maintenance of the temple worship. *Nevertheless, lest we should offend them*, by giving an occasion to imagine that I put any slight on the temple, or lest others from my example should in far different circumstances omit this contribution, I will not debate the matter, but rather work a miracle than fail in the payment. *Go* therefore *to the sea, and* when thou comest to the neighbouring shore, *throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt* there *find* a piece of silver coin called *a stater*,[f] which it has just swallowed; *take that, and give* it to *them* that collect the tribute, both *for me and thee*; for thou knowest it will answer their demands for both. Accordingly Peter went, and having caught a fish, he found the money in its mouth, and presently returned and paid it, according to his Lord's command.

SECT. 92. MATT. XVII. 25 26 27

IMPROVEMENT.

How slow and untractable were the minds of the apostles, who understood not these plain things, when thus inculcated again and again! But, on the other hand, how much integrity does it shew in the historian, to record what seemed so little to the honour of himself and his brethren! In this respect, and many others, surely credit rises to the gospel, even by occasion of the infirmities of those to whom it was committed, and out of weakness they are made strong.—The lenity of our blessed Lord was truly admirable, that he should bear such stupidity in his disciples with so much gentleness and patience, and should, with so much earnestness, go on to renew his instructions to them. Let us, however, learn to be upon our guard against the prejudices of worldly interest, since, as we see, they may take such strong hold of minds in the main upright and pious. And therefore let us earnestly pray that God would give us a greater relish for spiritual and eternal blessings.

MARK IX. 32 LUKE IX. 44

It cannot surely become us to seek the grandeur and riches of this world, when our blessed Master was so poor that he could not pay this little tribute without having recourse to a miracle. Yet this he chuses, rather than to give offence by a refusal, how justly soever he might have pleaded an exemption from it. Let us learn from hence that meekness of wisdom, which will teach us to seek the interest of others rather than our own; and to consider how we may edify others by the abundance of our good works, rather than how we may excuse ourselves in the omission of any. That extent of knowledge and power which our Lord displayed on this occasion, can never be at a loss for means to repay whatever we may thus sacrifice for his sake.

MATT. XVII. 27 26

Nov. 17. 1855

SECTION XCIII.

Christ reproves his apostles for their contention who should be greatest; and recommends to them humility and mortification. Mark ix. 33—37, 42, *to the end.* Matt. xviii. 1—9. Luke ix. 46—48.

MARK ix. 33.

AND being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way [there arose a reasoning among them, *and*] they had disputed among themselves, [which of them should be greatest.] [Luke ix. 46.]

35 And [Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart,] sat down, and called the

MARK ix. 33.

NOW when Peter was returned from the sea-side, and had paid the tribute money with which the fish had supplied him,[a] our Lord, from a late occurrence which he had observed among his disciples, took occasion to recommend humility to them: *and being in the house* with his apostles, that he might naturally introduce the discourse he intended, *he asked them, About what were you disputing with each other on the way* in so eager a manner, that I could not forbear taking particular notice of it?

SECT. 93. MARK IX. 33

But, instead of answering him directly, *they were* confounded with the question, and continued *silent*, being ashamed to confess the truth; *for* as they were travelling *on the way, a controversy arose among them*, [*and*] *they had* warmly *debated* the matter *one with another, which of them should be* the *greatest* man in that temporal monarchy, which they assured themselves that Jesus, as the expected Messiah, would erect, whatever sufferings might lie in the passage to it.

34

And Jesus perceiving, notwithstanding their silence, *the* secret *thought of their* ambitious *heart*, and observing the same carnality and emulation to be still working there,

35

e *Does not your master pay the* usual *tribute*, &c.] It seems then to have been a voluntary thing, which *custom* rather than *law* had established. In Nehemiah's days it was accounted so, and the sum was then something lower. See Neh. x. 32.

f *A stater*, which it has just swallowed.] The *stater* was (as appears in part from this text) a piece of coin, in value about *two half-shekels*, or, according to Dr. Prideaux, near *three shillings* of our money, though most critics reckon the *shekel* but about *half-a-crown*. (See Drusius on this verse and the 24th.)—I see no reason, with Schmidius, to suppose this piece of money was created on this occasion: but supposing, as in the paraphrase, that the fish had accidentally swallowed it, (perhaps as it was falling into the water, near some other prey,) I cannot forbear remarking how illustrious a degree of knowledge and power our Lord discovered in the case before us; knowledge, in penetrating into the bowels of this animal, though in the sea; and power, in directing this particular fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance. Hardly any circumstance can be imagined more fit to encourage him and his brethren in a firm dependence on divine providence. And it is very natural to reflect how easily Christ could, if he had seen fit, have drawn up immense treasures, by this very method, from the heart of the sea: but he intended that his servants should be enriched and adorned in a much nobler manner than with pearls and costly array.

a When Peter was returned, &c.] In order to remind those who may hear these sections read in a family, of the connection of them, I have generally introduced each with a brief hint at the subject of the former; which, though it makes the paraphrase on the first verse of a section sometimes much longer than I should otherwise have chosen, yet I hope it may be attended with advantage sufficient to balance that inconvenience.

SECT. 93. MATT. XVIII.

when he was sat down, called all *the twelve* about him,[b] *and says unto them* with great seriousness and earnestness, It is humility that is the way to honour in my kingdom; and therefore, *if any one would be chief* there, *let him*, in all the offices of condescending friendship to his brethren, *be* as *the last of all, and the servant of all.*

twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. [Luke ix. 47.]

Now *at the same time*,[c] when *the disciples* were thus called, they *came to Jesus*, and finding that he knew the subject of their late debate, some of them at length took the liberty of *saying*, Lord, decide this question, and tell us plainly *who is* intended to be *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, and to whom wilt thou commit the chief management of affairs in it?

Matt. xviii. 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And, when he had answered the enquiry in the manner related above, *Jesus*, in order to impress the important maxim yet deeper on their minds, *having called to him a little child* that happened then to be in the house where they lodged, *took and set him by him in the midst of them; and taking him* up, and embracing him *in his* gracious *arms*, in token of his tender regard, *he said unto them, I assuredly* declare it *to you* as a most solemn and important truth, That *except ye be converted* and turned from these ambitious and carnal views, *and become like little children* in lowliness and meekness, in a candid teachable temper, and an indifference to the great things of the present life, (Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2.) you will be so far from having any distinguished rank among my subjects, that *ye shall by no means* so much as *enter* at all *into the kingdom of heaven*, or be entitled to any of its final blessings. *Whoever therefore shall humble himself* even *as this little child*, and act with such candour, simplicity, and modesty as you see in him, *he is* the person that hereafter will be regarded as *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, and will stand high in its final glories. *And whosoever* cordially *shall entertain this child*, [*or*] shall discover an affectionate regard to any *one of such little children in my name*, and for my sake, as one whom I love, and recommend to his care, *entertaineth me;* for I shall take the kindness as done to myself: *and* I would have you to remember, that it shall not terminate even there, but (as I have formerly told you, Matt. x. 40. p. 155.) *whoever* thus *shall entertain* and shew a regard to *me*, *entertains not me* alone, *but him that sent me*,[d] even my heavenly Father, who is honoured or affronted as I am respected or slighted. And this regard to the meanest of my servants, I must urge upon you as of the utmost importance; *for* (as I just now told you) *he that* by such a condescension *is* as the *least among you all, he shall be* eminently *great* in my esteem, and be distinguished by peculiar marks of the divine favour. *But whoever shall* deliberately do any thing to *offend*, and to occasion the fall of *one of these little ones who believe in me*,[e] or of any disciple of mine, though he may seem as weak as this infant, will expose himself thereby to such guilt and punishment, that *it were better for him* he should undergo the most certain and terrible destruction one can imagine, even *that a* huge *mill-stone*[f] *should be hanged about his neck, and he should* thus *be thrown* headlong *into the sea*,[g] [*and*] there be *drowned in the depth of* [*it.*]

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and [took and] set him [Luke, by him] in the midst of them, [and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,] [Mark ix. 36. Luke ix. 47.]

3 Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And [Luke, whosoever shall receive this child,] [*or* one of such] little [children] in my name, receiveth me; [and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me:] [Luke, for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.] [Mark ix. 37. Luke ix. 48.]

6 But [whosoever] shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were [cast into the sea, *and*] drowned in the depth of the sea. [Mark ix. 42.]

Woe unto the world, because of such *offences* or scandals as these; *for* they will bring upon it the most dreadful judgments: indeed, considering the corruption and weakness of mankind, and the various temptations with which they are surrounded, *it is*, humanly speaking, *necessary*, or unavoidable, *that offences come; but* I may well say, *Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh*, whoever he be, that by avarice, ambition, or any other vicious affection, lays a stumbling-block in men's way, and makes himself accessary to the ruin of immortal souls, tempting them either to renounce or to despise the gospel; for the time will come when he shall bitterly repent it.

7 Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be, that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.

Wherefore, let me renew the exhortation which I formerly gave you, Rather to submit to the severest mortifications, than to indulge your sinful inclinations to the scandal of others, and to your own ruin: and, as I then told you in my sermon on the mount,[h] (see on Matt. v. 30. p. 78.) *If thy* right *hand offend thee*, that is, if any thing dear unto thee as a right hand should be the means of leading thee into sin, rather than indulge it, *cut it*

8 Wherefore if thy hand offend thee, [cut it off,] and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life—maimed, rather than having two hands, [to go into hell, into the fire that

b *Called* all *the twelve* about him.] It is natural to suppose that *twelve* persons travelling together on foot would form themselves into two or three little companies, while some of them, no doubt, would be attending Christ, and discoursing with him: but our Lord judged it proper, as he was now in the house, that all the twelve should hear this admonition, though they might not all have been engaged in the dispute which occasioned it.

c *At the same time.*] By these words Matthew expressly fixes the connection between this story and that which concluded his xviith chapter. But Clarius seems to refine too much, when he supposes that Christ's having thus miraculously provided for paying Peter's tribute with his own, gave umbrage to the rest: yet this precarious turn serves the church of Rome as an argument for the supremacy of the Pope; nor is it wonderful, that in so weak a cause they should catch at such a shadow.

d *Entertains not me* alone, *but him that sent me.*] Here Christ was interrupted by a speech of John, related Mark ix. 38—41. which is paraphrased and explained below, in § 96. where I have accounted in note a, for placing it apart.

e *Shall offend one of these little ones, &c.*] To *offend* a person generally signifies, (as was observed before, p. 78. note c,) *laying a stumbling-block in his way;* so that any who should by a scandalous life lead others to think ill of the Christian profession in general, or should by persecution discourage the weak, or by sophistry, bad example, or otherwise, pervert them from the way of truth and goodness, would fall under the weight of this terrible sentence.

f *A* huge *mill-stone.*] So I render μυλος ονικος, which (as Erasmus, Grotius, Raphelius, and many others observe,) properly signifies *a mill-stone* too large to be turned, as some were, by the hand, and requiring the force of asses to move it; as it seems those animals were generally used by the Jews on this occasion. See Raphel. *Annot. Xen.* p. 46.

g *Thrown* headlong *into the sea.*] Casaubon and Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 85.) not to mention others, have shewn at large, that *drowning in the sea* was a punishment frequently used among the ancients, and that the persons condemned had sometimes heavy stones tied about their necks, or were rolled up in sheets of lead. It seems to have grown into a proverb for dreadful and inevitable ruin.

h As I told you in my sermon on the mount.] It will, I hope, be observed, that Matthew, who had before so largely recorded that sermon, gives us again this passage of it on the present occasion; which is one proof among many others, that our Lord did not think it improper or unnecessary, sometimes to repeat what he had then said? (see p. 89, note c.)—And, considering the importance of these maxims, and how little many of his hearers were disposed to receive and retain them, it was a valuable instance of his compassion and wisdom.

never shall be quenched:] [Mark ix. 43.]

Mark ix. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; [Matt. xviii. 8.]

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out, [and cast *it* from thee:] it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God, [*or* into life,] with one eye, [rather] than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: [Matt. xviii. 9.]

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

SECT. 93.

MARK IX.

off, and cast [*it*] *from thee*, whatever pain or deformity, or other detriment might follow from such a loss; for *it is* much *better for thee to enter maimed into* eternal *life*, *than having two hands to go* down *into* the prison of *hell*, even *into that fire which shall never be extinguished: Where their* corroding and upbraiding conscience is as a *worm*, which *dieth not*,[i] but, with unutterable anguish, still gnaws upon the heart; *and* where *the fire* of divine wrath, which shall penetrate into the very soul of the sinner, *is not* and shall not be *quenched* throughout all the endless ages of eternity. 44

And again, *if thy foot offend thee, cut it off* with as much resolution as thou wouldst part with a gangrened member for the preservation of thy life; for something yet more important is here concerned, and *it is better for thee to enter lame into* the regions of eternal *life* and blessedness, though thou wast ever to continue so,[k] *than having two feet to be cast into the inextinguishable fire of hell; Where their tormenting worm dieth not, and* where *the fire is not quenched*, nor the violence of its heat abated through all the ages of eternity. 45, 46

And, to repeat so wholesome and necessary an admonition a third time, *If thine eye offend thee*, or would necessarily be the means of leading thee into sin, chuse rather with thine own hands to *tear it out* of its socket, *and* to *cast it away from thee* as an abhorred thing, than, by complying with the temptation, to hazard thy far more precious soul; for *it is* far *better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God*, [*or*] *into* everlasting *life* and blessedness, *with* but *one eye*, even though the other were not to be restored at the resurrection, but the blemish were to continue for ever, *than having two eyes*, and all the other members of the body in the greatest perfection, *to be cast into hell*, where they will all be full of unutterable anguish, being tormented with everlasting *fire*; In that dreadful prison of divine vengeance, *where* (as I have told you again and again) *their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched* nor abated, but preys perpetually on the miserable sinner that is condemned to it. *For* as the flesh burnt on the altar has salt rubbed upon it, in consequence of which it burns so much the more fiercely, so *every one* of those unhappy creatures, the victims of divine justice, *shall be* (as it were) *salted with fire*;[l] *and*, instead of being consumed by it, shall, in those wretched abodes, continue immortal in the midst of their flames; whereas *every* acceptable *sacrifice shall be seasoned with* another kind of *salt*,[m] even that of divine grace, which purifies the soul, and preserves it from corruption. 47, 48, 49

In allusion to this, you, my disciples, may remember, I have formerly called you the salt of the earth; (Matt. v. 13. p. 74.) and, as *salt is* a very *good* thing, so will you, if you answer that character, be inestimable blessings to the world, by purifying and preserving it from corruption, and diffusing the savour of that knowledge and grace with which you are seasoned: *but*, as I added then, *if the salt* itself *be grown insipid, with what will you season it?* or what can restore you, if you are corrupted, who should be the means of curing or restoring others? See to it, therefore, that you *have* this excellent *salt in yourselves; and*, as one instance of it, be careful to *maintain peace with each other*, and do not give way to those very unbecoming disputes and emulations which have been the occasion of my present discourse. 50

i *Where their* conscience is as a *worm* which *dieth not.*] There may indeed be an allusion here to Isa. lxvi. 24. (compare Ecclus. vii. 17. and Judith xvi. 17.) but the expression had been just and proper without it: and it is observable, that some of the ancients expressed the same thought by saying, that *the marrow of the backbone* did, in a wicked man, *turn into a* huge and fierce *serpent*; thereby intimating, (by a much finer figure than Ælian, who reports it, understood,) that their own *thought* should be their *torment*, and they should be unable to disarm it by those artifices which had prevailed in the present life; see Ælian, *Hist. Anim. lib.* i. *cap.* 51. and Gataker, *Antonin. lib.* viii. § 58.—Since the first edition of this work, I have met with an explication of these words in Dr. Rymer's *Representation of Revealed Religion*, p. 155, so new to me, and at the same time so considerable, that I could not forbear mentioning it. He supposes, that both *the worm* and *the fire* are meant of *the body*, and refer to the two different ways of funeral among the ancients, interment and burning. So that our Lord may seem here to prevent an objection against the permanent misery of the wicked in hell, arising from the frail constitution of the body; as if he should have said, "The body will not then be as it is at present, "but will be incapable of consumption or dissolution. In its "natural state, *the worms* may devour the whole, and die for want "of nourishment; *the fire* may consume it, and be extinguished "for want of fuel: But *there* shall be *perpetual food* for *the worm* "that corrodes it, *perpetual fuel* for *the fire* that torments it." The words of the Apocryphal writer above mentioned, Judith xvi. 17. greatly illustrate this interpretation; where it is said, *The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on* the wicked *in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms into their flesh; and they shall feel them, and weep for ever.*

k Though thou wast ever to continue so.] It is certain no man will *enter into life halt, maimed*, or *blind*, as the bodies of the saints will be restored in the greatest perfection. I know indeed, that, with some latitude in the expression, he may be said to *enter halt* or *maimed into life*, whose spirit passes from a *dismembered body* into the regions of the blessed; but it seems to me, that the propriety of the phrase is most exactly preserved, by taking it as in the paraphrase, and the spirit of the thought is greatly increased by that interpretation.

l *Shall be salted with fire.*] Grotius, Spanheim, Gataker, Le Clerc, and Dr. Mill, have abundantly answered the favourite criticism of Scaliger, by which he would here read πυρι instead of πυρι, that it might be rendered, *Every offering made by fire shall be salted.*—The learned and laborious Wolfius has proposed a multitude of interpretations on this text. He and Mons. L'Enfant think it refers to the *fiery trial* through which Christians must expect to pass: but this neither seems a natural sense of the phrase itself, nor does it so well suit the context, by which it should seem to be a reason why the *infernal fire is never quenched.* I know it may be answered, that it is, however, a reason why the disciples should practise the mortification required above; but it seems desirable, where it can be done, to interpret the particles in their most usual sense, though sometimes it is necessary (as we have elsewhere observed, page 102, note i.) to recede from it. To suppose, as Dr. Clarke and some others do, that here is a reference to the ambiguity of the Hebrew word מלח, which signifies either *to be salted* or *consumed*, seems very unwarrantable: since αλισθησεται has no such ambiguity; not to say how much it would impair the force of the sentence, leading to an idea the very contrary to what Christ had suggested above no less than *three times.*

m *Every sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt.*] It is well known that the Mosaic law required this. See Lev. ii. 13.—Heinsius thinks, that as *salt* contracts and binds, it was therefore used as an *emblem of friendship*, which he supposes our Lord afterwards to refer to; and that it was the foundation of the *figure* by which *a perpetual engagement* is called *a covenant of salt*; Numb. xviii. 19. I should rather think it intended as a circumstance of decency, that the meat of God's table should be salted; and conclude that, if it had any emblematical meaning, it was to recommend to the worshipper an incorrupt heart, seasoned with savoury sentiments of wisdom and piety. Sinners are elsewhere represented as the victims of divine justice: (Isa. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xii. 3; xlvi. 10; Ezek. xxi. 9, 10; and xxxix. 17.) And good men (as in the end of this verse) are represented in another view, with regard to their conse-

SECT. 93. How deeply is pride rooted in the heart of fallen man, when neither the daily instructions nor edifying example of the humble Jesus could prevent it from appearing, even among the apostles themselves, in so mean and unworthy a manner! Still did worldly interest and grandeur so intoxicate their minds, that they seemed even against hope to MATT. XVIII. 1. have hoped for it, and to have found out a strange kind of method of grafting these expectations even on the very cross of Christ, which was intended to destroy them.

MARK IX. 36 How edifying and affecting are these lessons which the meek and lowly Redeemer gave us, with this little child in his arms, whose example we are required to copy! Lord, give us of thy regenerating grace, that we may do it; that we may *be converted, and become as little children,* free from avarice and ambition, malice and prejuMATT. XVIII. 3. dice! How melancholy is it to think, that many, who have by their office been employed to read and explain this lesson to others, and who have not been children in understanding, seem to have learnt so little of it themselves, as if it had never been at all intended for that order of men, to whom indeed it was immediately addressed! If there be any such yet remaining in the Christian ministry, let them seriously weigh the woe denounced on *that* 7 *man by whom the offence cometh.* May the infinite mercies of God be extended to all professing Christians who give themselves up to worldly pursuits and projects; and especially to those who make the church of Christ only a kind of porch to the temple of Mammon, and the sacred office itself merely a convenient vehicle for swallowing down riches and honours! May divine grace deliver us from such fatal snares, and form us to that self-denial and mortification, without which we cannot be the true disciples of Christ; but, after having pierced ourselves through with many unnecessary sorrows here, shall plunge ourselves deep into eternal perdition!

MARK IX. 43—48 May these repeated and dreadful representations of future misery, which we have now been reading, impress our souls in a becoming manner! Blessed Jesus! thou bringest good tidings; yet which of the prophets under the legal dispensation ever represented the terrors of the Lord in so awful a light as that in which thou hast placed them! Let none of thy ministers be afraid to imitate thee herein! nor let any of thy followers presume to censure them for it! May we all be effectually warned to flee from the wrath to come; and, as we would not another day 49 be salted with fire, may our hearts now be seasoned with thy grace! and may we, by a modest and peaceful, a benevolent and useful life, be daily bearing a testimony to it, and, as the salt of the earth, may we be labouring to cure the growing corruption of the world about us! Nov. 18. 1855. a.m.

SECTION XCIV.

Our Lord farther enforces condescension and humility, and gives rules for the accommodation of disputes and offences among Christians. Matt. xviii. 10—20

MATT. xviii. 10.

SECT. 94. FARTHER to promote the humility and moderation of his disciples, our Lord proceeded in the discourse which he began (as in the former section) with the little child in his arms, and said, *Take* special *heed that you despise not one of these little ones,* or that you do MATT. XVIII. not cast contempt on the weakest and meanest of my servants, nor slight even the soul of 10 a child; *for I say unto you, that their* attendant *angels,* while *in heaven, do incessantly behold the face of my heavenly Father;*[a] and if the highest courtiers in the world above do not disdain, on proper occasions, to minister unto them, much less should you disdain 11 it. Especially when you consider how much greater an instance of condescension you have continually before you, than it is possible even the angels should give; *for the Son of man* himself,[b] that great and illustrious Personage, *came* not, as many have imagined, to reign and triumph upon earth, but by all the offices of humility and endearment *to save that which was lost* and undone; and he takes a gracious and constant oversight of the least, as well as the greatest, of his redeemed ones. (Compare Luke xix. 10; sect. cxliii.) 12 *What do you think* would be the conduct of a faithful shepherd? *If a man had* a flock of *an hundred sheep, and* but *one of them should wander* from the rest, *would he not leave the ninety-nine* in their pasture or fold *on the mountains,*[c] *and go out* with the 13 most solicitous care and labour *to seek that which is gone astray? And if he happen to find it, I assuredly say unto you, that* he will bring it back with greater pleasure, and the recovery of *it will give him* a *more* sensible *joy, than* the safety of *the ninety-nine* 14 *which had not wandered* at all. (Compare Luke xv. 4, 5; sect. cxxii.) *Even so* the love and tenderness of God for those who are regarded by him as his children is such, that you may be assured *it is not the will of your heavenly Father that* any *one of these little ones should be lost,* for want of your care in attending it, or through your negligence in seeking its recovery.

15 *And* as, in order to the recovery of your weaker brethren, admonition will frequently be necessary, let me lay down a rule which, when larger societies are formed among you,

MATT. xviii. 10.

TAKE heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep,* than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against

cration to God, as acceptable sacrifices. Rom. xii. 1; xv. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 5.

a *Their* attendant *angels,* while *in heaven, &c.*] The fathers looked on this as an argument that each good man has his particular *guardian angel:* (see Suicer. *Thesaur.* Vol. I. p. 43.) And Grotius also seems to allow the force of it. I apprehend this passage rather intimates, that the angels, who sometimes attend the little *ones* spoken of, at other times stand in God's immediate presence; and consequently that different angels are at different times employed in this kind office, if it be incessantly performed. The general sense is plain, that the highest angels do not disdain, on proper occasions, to perform services of protection and friendship for the meanest christian; but, as St. Paul says, they are *all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation:* (Heb. i. 14.) I say, *the highest;* because *to behold the face of God* may signify *waiting near his throne,* and be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes. See Grotius; and compare 2 Sam. xvi. 19; 1 Kings xii. 6; Esth. i. 14; and Luke i. 19.

b *For the Son of man* himself.] The particle *for* here introduces another reason to enforce the caution not to despise these little *ones,* and not a *proof* of *their angels beholding God's face.* See note d, on Luke xi. 36. p. 128.

c *Leave the ninety-nine on the mountains.*] The original will bear either this construction, or that which is given in our common translation; but I have rather chosen to express it thus, as most agreeable to what we find in Luke, chap. xv. 4. § 122.

thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

it will be of great importance to attend to with the utmost care: *If* thou shalt know *thy brother* to be guilty of a fault, and he shall *sin against thee, go and reprove him* in the most convincing, yet the most gentle manner that thou canst;[d] and that he may take it the better, let it be done *between thee and him alone: if he will hear thee* with due regard, it is well, for by this means *thou hast gained thy brother;* he will return to the way of his duty, and the friendship between you will thus be established on firmer foundations than ever, in consequence of this substantial token of thy impartial sincerity and frankness of temper. (Compare Prov. xxviii. 23.) *But if he will not hearken* [*to thee,*] *take with thee one or two more,* who are persons of character and reputation in the society, *that* their presence may add greater weight to the admonition given, and may be of service, either to silence his objections, and bring him to a sense of his fault, or to prevent disputes, and justify thy conduct, if the matter should be carried farther; as *in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established* more effectually than it could otherwise have been. (See Deut. xix. 15.) *But if he* shall be still incorrigible in his fault, and *disregard them* in the advice they offer him for peace, then *tell it to the whole church,*[e] or society of worshipping Christians to which he belongs, and among whom he has immediate communion in gospel ordinances; *and if* they concur in any admonition to the offender, and *he* be so far hardened as to *disregard the* whole *church,* or society of Christians, you have then done your utmost to reclaim him; and while he continues in this obstinate temper, you will do well to enter your protest against it, by forbearing any intimate friendship with such a person; and *let him* therefore in this case *be to thee* even *as a heathen and a publican,* or other most notorious sinner,[f] to whom you would perform only the common offices of humanity, but would avoid his intimate society as scandalous, and to whom you are not under those peculiar obligations whereby Christian brethren are bound to each other.

SECT. 94. MATT. XVIII. 16 17

These are the maxims which you, my apostles, are to inculcate on my other followers, and let them see to it, that they duly regard you; for *verily I say unto you,* You shall be furnished with such divine illumination and assistance, as shall abundantly confirm the authority of your decisions on every case and question which may occur; and fully prove (as I formerly told you) that *whatsoever you shall bind,* even in this course of your humble ministry, *on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* (See note h, on Matt. xvi. 19. p. 180.) 18

And *further,* as a convincing token and demonstration of this, *I say unto you, That* this authority and power not only shall attend the actions of your whole united body, but even *if* any *two of you shall agree together* here *on earth,*[g] *concerning any thing which they shall* think it proper to *ask* in prayer, for the miraculous confirmation of any of their determinations, *it shall be* immediately *done for them by my Father in heaven.*[h] *For where* but *two or three are assembled in my name,* with a regard to my authority, and to the purposes of my glory, whatever the peculiar occasion be, *I am there,* by my special, though invisible presence, *in the midst of them,* and will shew, by all proper interposition of my divine power, the regard I have to their interest and their prayers. 19 20

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS happy are the meanest servants of Christ in the care and favour of their heavenly Master, and in the angelic guard which, by his high command, are continually attending even the lambs of his flock. So condescend- Ver. 10

d *Reprove him* in the most convincing manner that thou canst.] The word ελεγξον signifies to *convince* as well as to *admonish.* Compare John viii. 9, 46; xvi. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Tit. i. 9; and James ii. 9.—The reader will observe, I often chuse to give the full force of a word in the paraphrase, rather than greatly to increase the number of words in the version, though so increased they might express no more than is expressed in a single word or two in the Greek.

e *Tell it to the* whole *church.*] This is one of those many scriptures which would have been very intelligible, if they had not been earnedly obscured by ingenious men, whose interest it has been to spread a cloud over them. I am more and more convinced, that the vulgar sense of the New Testament, that is, the sense in which an honest man of plain sense would take it on his first reading the original, or any good translation, is almost every where the true general sense of any passage; though an acquaintance with language and antiquity, with an attentive meditation on the text and context, may illustrate the spirit and energy of a multitude of places, in a manner which could not otherwise be learned. The old English editions of 1539 and 1541 render it, *Tell it to the congregation;* and, I think, properly enough.—The word *church* is unhappily grown into a term of art, and has by different persons a variety of secondary ideas annexed to it; as Dr. Watts has beautifully shewn in his *Essay on Uncharitableness,* p. 7—10. But it signifies in general an assembly, or number of people, called together on whatever occasion, as is well known. (Compare Acts xix. 32, 39.) It is in the New Testament generally used, as here, for *a particular assembly;* (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 23; xvi. 19.) but sometimes it is used for the whole body of Christians, because they are now called out from the world, and are at last to be gathered together in the presence of Christ their head, (2 Thess. ii. 1.) and to dwell for ever with each other and with him. (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Compare Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; v. 24; and Col. i. 18, 24.—According to Bishop Stillingfleet's interpretation of this text (in his *Irenicum,* book ii. chap. 5. § 8.) it should be rendered, *Tell it to an assembly,* or a select company. But it is certain, the force of the article is better preserved by our version; and as undoubtedly it must be an assembly of Christians, (compare 1 Cor. vi. 1.) so no interpretation seems so natural, as that it should be *that assembly* which was under a peculiar obligation to watch over the person in question, (compare 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. and 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.) and *that* whose advices and remonstrances he was peculiarly obliged to hear. And this was likewise conformable to the usage of the Jews, who admonished offenders in their synagogues, and to many of their maxims, which commentators mention on this text. See Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* and Selden, *de Syned. lib.* 1. *cap.* 9.

f *As a heathen and a publican,* or other most notorious sinner.] If I am not much mistaken, that celebrated text in Titus relating to heretics, (chap. iii. 10.) which requires that a man who disturbs the peace or subverts the faith of his Christian brethren, should be *twice admonished,* and then discarded by the society, may be much illustrated by this passage. When such a case occurs, (as well as when an offended brother has just cause of complaint,) each particular person concerned must judge as well as he can; remembering he is answerable to Christ for the impartiality of such judgment.

g *If* any *two of you shall agree together* here *on earth.*] The text so expressly refers to *agreeing in a petition,* that I wonder the learned and judicious editors of the Prussian Testament should render it, *If any two of you shall live on earth in a good understanding with each other.* Perhaps there may be a reference to the notion the Jews had, that it was necessary at least *ten* should concur in *social prayer,* if any extraordinary success was expected. See Trigland. *De Secta Karæorum. cap.* x. p. 172.

h *It shall be done for them, &c.*] That this refers to a *miraculous answer of prayer,* may appear from comparing Matt. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 23, 24; John xiv. 13, 14; 1 John iii. 22; v. 14, 15; and James v. 16. See Tillotson's *Works,* Vol. III. p. 307.

SECT. 94. ing are the blessed spirits above, that even the greatest of them do not disdain *to minister unto the heirs of salvation:* (Heb. i. 14.) Let not the wisest and greatest men despise those whom angels honour with their guardianship and care; especially since the Son of man, that merciful Shepherd, has come forth into this wilderness *to save that* MATT. XVIII. *which was lost*, and even to seek and recover us when we were gone astray, and should otherwise have wandered on to our eternal ruin.

15, 16 What could have been more happy for the church of Christ, than the observation of this plain and easy rule, which he has given for ending disputes among his followers? And yet who, that sees the conduct of the generality of Christians, would imagine they had ever heard of such a rule? Instead of this private expostulation, which might often bring a debate to a speedy and amicable conclusion,—what public charges! what passionate complaints! what frequent and laboured attempts to take, if the least scandalous, yet not the least pernicious kind of revenge, by wounding the characters of those whom we imagine to have injured us!

17 As for church-censures, how lamentable is it that they have been so little conformable to this rule, and in many instances so contrary to it, in almost every Christian nation under heaven! Is this the form in which ecclesiastical judgments do appear in the popish, or even in the protestant world? Are these the maxims by which they have been, or by which they are, determined, even by those who claim the largest share in the promises made to the apostles, and boast with the greatest confidence of the presence and authority of Christ with them, to confirm their sentences, and to sanctify, perhaps, rapine and murder? Vain, wretched confidence! Let us earnestly pray that this dishonour to the Christian name may every where be wiped away; and that true religion, and even common humanity, may not with such solemn mockery be destroyed in the name of the Lord.

18 Let humble submission be always paid to apostolical decisions in every difficulty; and let the promises made to these leaders in the Christian church be some encouragement even to us, on whom the ends of the world are come. None but an Omnipresent, and consequently a Divine Person, could say, *Wherever two or three are* 20 *gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* His power and his goodness can never be impaired: let it therefore be an encouragement to social prayer: and let the remembrance of our Redeemer's continued presence and inspection, engage us to behave ourselves agreeably to the relation that we claim to him, and to those expectations from him which we profess.

SECTION XCV.

Our Lord cautions his disciples against a revengeful spirit, and inculcates mutual forgiveness, by the affecting parable of the unmerciful servant. **Matt. xviii. 21, to the end.**

MATT. xviii. 21.

SECT. 95. *THEN* when Jesus had given this advice for the accommodation of differences among his disciples, *Peter*, imagining it might be abused by ill-disposed persons as an encouragement to offer injuries to others, *came to him, and said, Lord, how often must I forgive* MATT. XVIII. *my brother, if he offend against me?* must I go on to do it *until* he has repeated the 21 injury *seven times?*

22 And *Jesus*, in reply, *says to him, I do not* merely *say to thee, Till seven times, but* even *till seventy times seven:* in short, the precept is unbounded, and you must never be weary of forgiving your brethren, since you are so much more indebted to the divine mercy than they can be to your's.

23 *For this reason*, or with respect to this matter, I may properly say, that *the kingdom of heaven*, in its constitution and final process, *may be likened to*, or be illustrated by, the instance of *a certain king* that ruled over a large country,[a] *who*, as he had a great number of officers under him, was *determined* at length *to settle an account with his* 24 *servants. And when he began to reckon* with them, *there was brought to him one who* had so abused the eminent station in which he had been placed, and the high confidence which his prince had reposed in him, that he *owed him* a most immense sum, and stood 25 accountable for *ten thousand talents:*[b] *And as he had nothing to pay* which could be any equivalent for the debt, or any considerable composition for it, *his lord*, according to frequent custom in such cases, (Exod. xxii. 3; Lev. xxv. 47; and 2 Kings iv. 1.) *commanded him to be sold* for a slave, *and* also *his wife and children, and all* the goods *that* 26 *he had, and payment to be made* with the price of them, as far as it would go. *The servant therefore, falling down* in helpless consternation, *prostrated himself at his* master's *feet, and said, Lord*, I beseech thee to *have patience with me* for a while longer, 27 *and I will* endeavour to *pay thee all. Then the lord of that* unhappy *servant* whose affairs were so utterly desperate, *being melted with compassion*, graciously *discharged him; and*, knowing how vain it was to expect he should ever pay him, declared that, on condition of his future good behaviour,[c] he frankly *forgave him all the debt.*

28 *But* just *as that servant went out* from the presence of his generous and indulgent sovereign, *he met* with *one of his fellow-servants, who owed him* but a very inconsiderable sum of money, no more than *an hundred pence;*[d] *and laying hold of him by the*

MATT. XVIII. 21

THEN came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants.

34 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents:

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred

a *May be likened to*, or be illustrated, &c.] See § 58. note i, p. 116, 117.

b *Owed him ten thousand talents.*] According to Dr. Prideaux's computation, if these were *talents of gold*, this would amount to *seventy-two millions sterling*; which is so immense a sum, that it seems strange Antiochus the Great should be able to pay it, as Eutropius tells us he did, to purchase a peace with the Romans: (*Eutrop. lib.* iv. *cap.* 2.) But by Livy's account of the conditions of peace, they were *talents of silver*, of which Antiochus was to pay fifteen thousand talents, that is, five hundred talents down, two thousand five hundred when the senate should ratify the peace, and the remaining twelve thousand in twelve years, at a thousand talents a year: (Liv. *Histor. lib.* xxxvii. *cap.* 45. *et lib.* xxxviii. *cap.* 38.) And even thus the sum must have amounted to £6,750,000. See Prid. *Connect.* Vol. I. *Pref.* p. 20. and Vol. II. p. 138.—Our Lord seems to have mentioned so large a sum, on purpose to intimate the number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction.

c On condition of his future good behaviour.] This is a circumstance exceedingly natural, and, by the revocation of the pardon afterwards, it seems strongly implied.

d *An hundred pence.*] Reckoning the Roman denarius at seven

pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

throat, and almost strangling him,[e] *he said*, in a furious and outrageous manner, *Pay me* SECT. 95.
that which thou owest me immediately, or I will detain thee as my prisoner. *And his*
poor *fellow-servant fell down at his feet*, as he had done at his lord's, *and entreated him*, MATT. XVIII.
saying, in the very words which he himself had used but just before on the like occasion, *Have patience with me* for a while longer, *and I will* endeavour to *pay thee all. And*
he would not be prevailed upon to forbear him any longer; *but went* away with him 30
before a magistrate, *and cast him into prison*, protesting he should lie there *till he should pay* even the last farthing of *the debt*.

And when his other *fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly* 31
grieved at such an instance of unexampled cruelty from a man in his circumstances, *and came and gave their lord* the king *an exact* and faithful *account of the whole matter*,[f]
who was highly incensed at so inhuman an action. *Then his lord, having called him* 32
again, *said unto him*, with just indignation, *Thou wicked* and barbarous *slave*,[g] thou knowest that *I* frankly *forgave thee all that* vast *debt* which thou owedst to me, *because*
thou didst entreat my pity: And *shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy* 33
fellow-servant when in thy power, *even as I* but just before *had compassion on thee?* Thou art most inexcusable in what thou hast done, and I am determined to treat thee accordingly.

And his lord, being justly *incensed*, revoked the grant of remission he had just before 34
made, as forfeited by so vile a behaviour; and not only put him in prison, but *delivered him to the tormentors* there, to fetter and scourge him,[h] *till he should pay all that was due to him;* which was equivalent to condemning him to perpetual confinement and painful imprisonment during life.

And Jesus concluded the discourse with saying, *Thus also will my heavenly Father* 35
deal with you, if you do not every one of you *from your* very *hearts forgive his brother his trespasses;* and I leave it to your own consciences to judge whether it be safe for you to tempt the strictness of his inexorable justice, by the severity of your conduct towards your offending brethren.

IMPROVEMENT.

How unreasonable, and how odious, does a severe and uncharitable temper appear, when we view it in the light of this parable! Yet what light can be more just than this? We are indebted to God more than ten thou- Ver. 24
sand talents; from our infancy we begin to contract the debt, and are daily increasing it in our ripening years: justly, therefore, might he cast us into the prison of hell, till we paid the uttermost farthing. And were we to fall at his feet, with a promise of paying him all, on his patient forbearance, it must be the language of gross ignorance, 26
or of presumptuous folly, when addressed to a Being who knows our poverty, and knows that, in consequence of it, we are utterly incapable of making him any amends. But he magnifies his grace in the kind offers of a free 27
forgiveness; and shall we who receive it, and hold our lives and all our hope by it, take our brethren by the throat, because they owe us a few pence? or shall we carry along with us deep-continued resentment, glowing 28
like a hidden fire in our bosoms? God forbid! For surely if we do so, out of our own mouth shall we be con- 34
demned, while we acknowledge the justice of the sentence here passed against this cruel servant.

Christ himself has made the application, *so shall my heavenly Father deal with you, if you do not forgive* 35
your brethren; and he has instructed us elsewhere to ask forgiveness only as we grant it: (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) Let us then from this moment discharge our hearts of every sentiment of rancour and revenge, nor ever allow a word, or even a wish, that savours of it. And as ever we hope our addresses to the throne of divine mercy should meet with a favourable audience, let us *lift up holy hands, without wrath*, as well as *without doubting*. (1 Tim. ii. 8.)

Nov. 20. 1855.

SECTION XCVI.

Christ reproves John for prohibiting one who casts out demons in his name, because he was not of their company. Mark ix. 38—41. Luke ix. 49, 50.

MARK ix. 38.

AND John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, [because he followeth not with us.] [Luke ix. 49.]

MARK ix. 38.

IN the midst of the preceding discourse relating to humility *and* self-denial, the apostle SECT. 96.
John (whether desirous of diverting him from a subject which he could not hear pursued
without some consciousness of having deserved blame, or thinking it might receive some MARK IX.
farther illustration by his remarks upon the case that he should mention,) interrupted our Lord,[a] and *answered him*, when he had just been urging a readiness to receive one of the
least of his servants in his name, (Mark ix. 37. p. 190.) by *saying, Master,* while we 38

pence half penny of our money, it amounted to three pounds and half-a-crown.

e *By the throat*, and almost strangling him.] This is the proper import of the word πνιγε, which yet more strongly expresses his cruelty.

f *Gave their Lord an exact* and faithful *account.*] This is the meaning of the word διεσαφησεν, as Albert has shewn, *Observ.* p. 116.

g *Thou wicked slave.*] The word δουλε is not always a term of reproach, nor does it necessarily imply more than *servant.* (Compare Matt. xxv. 21, 23.) Yet in this connection, I thought it would well bear the version I have given it, which may best express the indignation with which his lord is supposed to speak.

h *Delivered him to the tormentors*, &c.] Imprisonment is a much greater punishment in the eastern parts of the world than here; state criminals especially, when condemned to it, are not only forced to submit to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with clogs or yokes of heavy wood, in which they cannot either lie or sit at ease; and, by frequent scourgings, and, sometimes by racking, are quickly brought to an untimely end. (See Samedo's *China*, p. 225.) To this there is probably a reference here. Compare § 32. note h, p. 64.

a Interrupted our Lord.] I have inserted this story apart here, that the thread of the preceding discourse might not be broken; that the ninety-third section might not be lengthened beyond due bounds; and that I might have room to illustrate and improve this passage, which, though short, has both its difficulty and its use.

SECT. 96. were in our late progress, *we saw one casting out demons in thy name,*[b] *who does not follow us,* nor converse with us as brethren: *and we forbade him* to do it any more, *because he does not follow* thee *among us,* and never had, as we apprehend, any regular commission from thee, and so might possibly have proved an occasion of neglect or reproach to the rest of thy disciples.

MARK IX.

39 *But Jesus said unto him, Do not forbid,* or go about to hinder *him* at present; *for,* by thus making use of my name, he appears to have some reverence and regard for me, and will not therefore set himself against me; since *there is no man who shall* be seen to *work* such *a miracle in my name, that can quickly,* or on any slight occasion, *speak evil of me,* or say any thing dishonourable of that name for which he professes such a 40 regard: And be that regard ever so imperfect, I would not discourage one who acts thus now: *for,* with respect to such, and in a case like this, I may use a proverb (the reverse of that which I mentioned on a different occasion) and say, *Whosoever is not against us, is for us;*[c] and therefore I would by no means condemn a man for doing that by which the kingdom of Satan is in fact weakened, and my name glorified, though he have 41 not my immediate and express commission. I rather take it in good part, as I am willing to do any thing that looks like a token of esteem and affection to me, be it ever so inconsiderable; *for,* as I formerly told you, (Matt. x. 42. p. 155.) *whoever shall present you with a cup of* cold *water* only *in my name,* that is, *because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his* proportionable *reward.* And so he went on to warn them of the danger of offending any of the weakest of his disciples, in the manner recounted and explained above. (See Mark ix. 42. p. 190.) And when he had concluded that discourse, he not long after quitted Galilee. Compare Matt. xix. 1. sect. cxxxv.

39 But Jesus said [unto him,] forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. [Luke ix. 50.]

40 For he that is not against us, is on our part. [Luke ix. 50.]

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 38 It is sad that the spirit which remains in so many Christians, and in this instance appeared even in the beloved Saint John, should (as the apostle James expresses it) *lust unto envy:* (Jam. iv. 5.) How ill does that spirit become a disciple, and much more a minister of the benevolent Jesus! The apostle Paul had learnt and taught a better temper, when he *rejoiced that Christ was preached,* even by those who were his personal enemies, (Phil. i. 18.) *To seek our own glory, is not glory;* (Prov. xxv. 27.) and to confine religion to them that follow us, is a narrowness of spirit which we should avoid and abhor.

39, 40 Christ here gives us a lovely example of candour and moderation; he was willing to put the best construction on dubious cases, and to treat those as friends who were not avowed and declared enemies. Perhaps in this instance it might be a means of overcoming a remainder of prejudice, and perfecting what was wanting in the faith and obedience of the persons in question; at least it suited the present state of things, in which men are to be judged of by their professions and actions, as their hearts cannot immediately and certainly be known.

But let us judge ourselves with greater severity, remembering there is an approaching day, *in which the secrets of all hearts will be made manifest;* in which those who have indeed been neuters in the war between Christ and Satan will be treated as enemies,—and those other words will be fulfilled, *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* (Matt. xii. 30. and Luke xi. 23.)

41 In that day, may the sincerity of our hearts be discovered, and then we may rejoice in this repeated assurance, that the least of our services shall be kindly remembered, and abundantly rewarded according to the riches of divine bounty and grace.

SECTION XCVII.

Our Lord sends out the seventy disciples with large instructions, like those he had before given to the twelve apostles. Luke x. 1—16.

SECT. 97.

LUKE X. 1.

AFTER these things, before he departed from Galilee, *the Lord* Jesus intending, when the approaching feast of tabernacles was over,[a] to make one journey more over the country in the last half year he was to spend on earth, *fixed upon seventy others* of his disciples

LUKE X. 1.

AFTER these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face,

b *Casting out demons in thy name.*] Probably this was a case something resembling that of the sons of Sceva; (Acts xix. 13—16.) and God might see reason now to grant that efficacy to their adjurations, which he afterwards denied when the evidences of the gospel were proposed so much more distinctly and fully, after the *descent of the Spirit.*—Dr. Clarke supposes that he was one of John the Baptist's disciples.

c *Whosoever is not against us, is for us.*] Our Lord had formerly said, (Matt. xii. 30.) *He that is not with me, is against me;* thereby giving his hearers a just and necessary admonition, that, on the whole, the war between him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent to him would finally be treated as his enemies. [See § 61. p. 123.) But here, in another view, he very consistently uses a different and seemingly opposite proverb, the counterpart of the former, directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope, that they who did not oppose his cause wished well to it,—a conduct peculiarly reasonable, when his cause lay under so many discouragements. Probably many who now concealed their regard to him, were afterwards animated courageously to profess it, though at the greatest hazard.—I cannot, with Mr. Baxter, think an express declaration of regard to Christ to have been more necessary in the former case than now; but it is most obvious, that Christ requires us to be more rigorous in judging ourselves, than he allows us to be in judging each other.

a When the approaching feast of tabernacles was over.] It seems to be much more reasonable to suppose that Christ sent out the seventy before the feast of tabernacles than after it, considering how little time he had between that and the feast of dedication, in which interval he despatched his last circuit in Galilee. To take from those three months all the period to be allowed for their journey and return, seems inconvenient. But it is astonishing that Mr. Le Clerc, and some others, should suppose that these instructions were given to them in Christ's journey to the above-mentioned feast: for, not to mention the impossibility of holding a discourse with such a number of people on the road, about an affair of such importance, it is expressly said, John vii. 10. that he went up to the feast of tabernacles privately; which is utterly inconsistent with his being attended with such a train as seventy, or (according to that author,) eighty-two persons; for Le Clerc supposes the twelve were also with him.—I shall elsewhere give my reasons why I suppose the story of the Samaritans refusing him entertainment, (though recorded Luke ix. 51—56.) to have happened later than this. (See § 127. note a.) At present I would only observe, that the expression, *after these things,* in the beginning of this chapter, may either refer to the stories immediately preceding, in the close of the former, from ver. 57. to the end, or to the general series of events recorded above, though (as I think the Evangelist himself strongly intimates) one little history be transposed.

into every city and place whither he himself would come.

also, besides the twelve apostles so frequently mentioned before, (see Luke ix. 1. *et seq.* sect. lxxiv.) *and sent them* out *before him, two and two* together, *into every city, and* more private *place into which he himself intended* shortly *to come;* and thus, as it were, he divided the whole country into thirty-five lesser circuits. SECT. 97. LUKE X.

2 Therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

And at their setting out he gave them many important instructions, nearly resembling those which he had before addressed to the apostles; and as it was a large and copious field for service on which they were to enter, *he said therefore to them,*[b] as he had formerly done to their brethren, (Matt. ix. 37, 38. p. 149.) *The harvest is indeed great,* and many souls are to be gathered in, *but the* faithful *labourers are* as yet very *few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would,* by his immediate access to the spirits of men, *thrust forth* more *labourers into his harvest,* though the work may prove so fatiguing and hazardous, that they are naturally averse to it.[c] 2

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

And as for you, *go your ways* with all the resolution and zeal you can employ in your ministry, as indeed you will need it all; for *behold, I send you forth as* so many defenceless *lambs in the midst of* ravenous and cruel *wolves.* Yet as you go under the singular care of Divine Providence, *carry not* with you any *purse* of money, *nor* even a *scrip* for your provisions, *nor* any more *shoes* than you have now on your feet; *nor* stay so much as to *salute any man* as you pass *by* him on *the way;*[d] but let it evidently appear to all who see you, that your thoughts are full of the great errand on which you go. 3 4

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.

And, in all the stages of your journey, carry along with you those benevolent affections which are so well suited to the design of your mission: *into whatever house* therefore *you* shall happen to *come,* at your *first* entrance *say, Peace be upon this house,* and pray that prosperity and happiness may attend the whole family. *And if any son* and heir *of peace,* or any truly good man who is worthy of such blessings, *be there* in the house, *your* prayer for *peace* and prosperity shall be answered, and *shall rest upon it; but if not, it* shall not be entirely lost, but *shall return upon you,* and you shall be the better for those kind and friendly sentiments, even though the wishes they dictate be not exactly answered. 5 6

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house:

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

And when you are entered into any lodgings, *continue in the same house* as long as you stay in the town, cheerfully and contentedly *eating and drinking what you find with them; for* as, on the one hand, *the* common *labourer is worthy of his reward,* and therefore you, who take so much pains to bring them to the greatest blessings, have much more right to your entertainment; so, on the other, it is beneath you to be very solicitous and nice about the manner of it: and therefore *do not* create an unnecessary trouble in the family where you are, or *go from one house to another,* in hope of better accommodations during the short stay you make in a place. 7

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And I repeat it again, *Into whatever* town or *city you come, and they* receive and *entertain you* freely and cheerfully, be ready to accept their kindness to you, and without any difficulty *eat* and drink *such things as are set before you: And* I am sure I put it into your power to make them an abundant recompense, when I commission you, as I do now, to *heal the sick that are in it, and to say unto them, The* long-expected *kingdom of God is come near unto you,* and therefore prepare yourselves thankfully to receive the blessings of it, which are thus freely offered to you by the Messiah. 8 9

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

But into whatsoever city you come and they perversely set themselves against you, and *do not entertain you,* nor regard your message, *go out into the streets of it, and say,* in a most public and solemn manner, Since you reject so gracious and important a message, we cannot but consider you as rejected by God, and devoted to certain and inevitable destruction; *we* therefore separate ourselves from all that belongs to you, and *wipe off* from our feet, as a testimony *against you, even the very dust of your city which cleaves to us;*[e] *nevertheless know this assuredly, that the kingdom of God is come near unto you,* and in the midst of all the calamities which are to befal you, let your consciences witness that mercy hath been offered and refused. *And I say unto you,* as I formerly did to your brethren, *That in that day* of the final judgment *it shall be more tolerable* even *for* the accursed inhabitants of *Sodom* itself, *than for that city,* wheresoever it be found. 10 11 12

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Now while our Lord was thus mentioning to his seventy disciples the wretched case of those that rejected the gospel, he could not forbear reflecting that this was the condition 13

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin, Woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty

b *He said therefore to them.*] Luke is the only Evangelist who has given us this account of Christ's sending out the seventy; and it is the less to be wondered at that he should do it so particularly, if the ancient tradition be true which Origen and Epiphanius have mentioned, that he was himself *one* of the number. See Dr. Whitby's *Preface to Luke,* where he has shewn this to be highly probable, and no way inconsistent with what Luke has said at the beginning of his gospel.

c *That he would thrust forth* more *labourers, &c.*] As both Luke here, and Matthew in a parallel passage, (Matt. ix. 38.) use the word ἐκβαλῃ, which literally signifies to *thrust out,* I was willing to express the force of it in the version as well as the paraphrase. (See note k, on Matt. ix. 38. § 73. p. 149.)—So many of the expressions used in this discourse are to be found in that to the twelve, § 74, 75. that it is generally sufficient to refer to the paraphrase and notes there, for the explication of them here.

d *Nor* stay to *salute any man,* as you pass *by* him on *the way.*] Our Lord did not intend by this to forbid his disciples in general, nor even any of his ministers, a decent use of the customary tokens of civil respect to others, any more than he forbids the use of shoes and purses; only while they were employed on this particular message, he required the forbearance of them, that every one who saw them pass by might perceive that their minds were full of the most important business, and that they were earnestly intent on the immediate despatch of it. (Compare 2 Kings iv. 29.) This was the more necessary, as they were so much straitened for time. See above, note a.

e *Wipe off the very dust of your city, &c.*] For the import of this solemn action, see § 74. note o, p. 151. from whence it will appear, that Dr. Edwards's singular interpretation (Edw. *On Script.* Vol. II. p. 189—193.) is not only foreign, but contrary to our Lord's purpose. He strangely supposes it an allusion to those courts, where, as in what we call pie-powder (or *pieds poudres*) courts, controversies were immediately decided, as it were, *before people could wipe the dust off their shoes.*

SECT. 97. LUKE X.

of some of those cities where he himself had made the most frequent visits, and the longest abode; he therefore repeated the pathetic lamentation he had before taken up for them,[f] and said, On this account, *Woe unto thee, O* thou obstinate *Chorazin; Woe unto thee,* O thou incorrigible *Bethsaida! for if the wonders which have been wrought in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon,* degenerate as they were, *they would have repented long since, sitting in sackcloth and* lying down in *ashes,* to express the depth of their humiliation and sorrow. *But* though vengeance has long since been executed upon them, God will make manifest the impartiality of his justice, and *it shall be more tolerable, in the* day of his tremendous *judgment, for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And thou,* O most ungrateful and rebellious *Capernaum, who hast been* distinguished from all the rest by my longest residence in thee, so that thou hast (as it were) been *lifted up to heaven* in that respect as well as in magnificence and wealth, *shalt be brought down* even *to hell,* and sunk into the deepest and most irrecoverable ruin, since thou hast heard my gospel only to despise it.

And then turning to the seventy disciples, who still stood around him, he concluded his instructions to them in these important words, (to the same purpose as he before had said to the apostles, (Matt. x. 40. sect. lxxvi.) *He that heareth you,* in the discharge of this your embassy, *heareth me; and,* on the other hand, *he that rejecteth you,* in like manner *rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me,* even the Father himself, whose credentials I bear, and who will punish the despisers of the gospel as impious rebels, who presume to contemn his Infinite Majesty, and provoke his almighty power.

works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 13, 15 So unwilling was the blessed Jesus to give over his kind attempts for men's salvation, he projected another circuit through the country, and sends forth other messengers, more numerous than the former company—he renews his invitations to perishing sinners, and his lamentations over those who had hitherto *rejected the counsel of God against themselves:* (Luke vii. 30.) Thus let us love the souls of men: thus let us use repeated endeavours to deliver them; endeavours which would probably be much more successful than they are, if these wise and gracious directions of Christ to his ministers were more attentively observed by those who are honoured with that important office.

3, 4, 5, 7, 8 Let all such cast their care upon God; let them go forth cheerfully in a dependence on his protection and favour; let them carry about with them hearts full of affection for the whole human race, seeking and praying for the peace of all around them; cheerfully *contenting themselves with such things as they have;* (Heb. xiii. 5.) and neither pursuing the grandeurs nor the delicacies of life with an eager attachment.

2, 16, 11, 15 Send forth, O Lord, such labourers into thine harvest, and animate them to a becoming zeal in their work, by a deep sense of that dreadful condemnation which those will incur who, despising them, pour contempt on their divine Master, and his heavenly Father, in whose name he was sent! May God preserve our country from that guilt and ruin! The kingdom of God is come nigh unto us, and we are lifted up to heaven by our privileges: may we not, after all, be cast down to hell for the abuse of them! but may divine grace make such a way for the gospel into our hearts, that we may cordially receive all who faithfully proclaim it, and bid them welcome in the name of the Lord!

SECTION XCVIII.

Christ discourses with his brethren about his going up to the feast of tabernacles, and stays some time after them. John vii. 1—13.

JOHN vii. 1.

SECT. 98. JOHN VII.

AFTER these things, that is, after he had miraculously fed the five thousand, walked on the sea to his disciples, and discoursed with the multitude concerning the bread of life,[a] *Jesus* for some time *walked,* or travelled, as we before observed, *in Galilee,* and there instructed his disciples: (see p. 188.) *for he would not* then *walk* or converse familiarly *in Judea,*[b] *because the Jews,* and more especially their rulers, incensed by the growing fame of his miracles, and the freedom of his discourses, *sought* an opportunity *to slay him,* either by private assassination, tumultuous assault, or legal process.

1

JOHN vii. 1.

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

And a very noted *feast of the Jews was* then *near,* which is [*called*] *the feast of tabernacles;* instituted in commemoration of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and celebrated in booths erected for that purpose, with great solemnity and joy. (See Lev. xxiii. 34, *et seq.*)

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

Therefore his brethren, or near kinsmen in Galilee, *said unto him,* We would advise thee to *remove from hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also* who are there *may,* for the confirmation of their faith in thee, behold thy miracles, and *see the* mighty

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may

f He repeated the pathetic lamentation, &c.] Considering the affectionate temper of our Lord, it is no wonder that he should renew his lamentation over those unhappy places where he had so intimately conversed; and that he should do it in such words as these, so well calculated to alarm and impress all that should hear or read them. Oh that they might now have their due weight with those who might pass them over too slightly, when they occurred before in Matt. xi. 20—24! (See § 59. p. 117—119.) Oh that every impenitent creature who reads them, might know *that the sentence of his own condemnation is now before his eyes!*

a *After these things,* &c.] Those that I have mentioned here are the last which had been recorded by John. See a more particular account of them, § 78—82.

b *He would not walk in Judea.*] This may be an intimation, either that he was not at Jerusalem the preceding passover, or at least made no public appearance or long abode there. I am inclined to think the former was the case.—Undoubtedly, his omission of a journey thither at some of the great feasts might be vindicated by his extraordinary character, and those intimations he might have from his heavenly Father, of being dispensed with, for reasons not particularly known to us, who have no concern with them. See note b, § 73. p. 170.

see the works that thou doest:

4 For *there* is no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly; if thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.

7 The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

works which thou performest here: *For* this retirement seems not at all to suit the great pretensions thou art making to a public and extraordinary character; as it is well known that *no man will* chuse to *act any* remarkable *thing in secret, that is himself desirous,* like thee, *to be publicly known* and talked of:[c] *if,* therefore, *thou* art really the promised Messiah, and *performest these things,* which we so often see at home, by a divine commission, go up to Jerusalem, and there *manifest thyself to the* great men of the *world,* and appear in places of the most public concourse; and thou canst not have a better opportunity of doing it than at this celebrated feast, which brings together so many, not only from the land of Israel, but from neighbouring countries. This they said, not out of any real friendship and respect, but to make farther trial of him, and in some measure to upbraid him with those precautions which he thought proper to observe; *for,* notwithstanding all the evidences he had given of his divine mission, yet *neither did his brethren* and kindred themselves *believe in him,* when they saw that he took no such method to raise himself and his family, as they thought inseparable from the character of the Messiah, whenever he should appear.[d]

Then Jesus said unto them, My time, either to manifest myself, or to go up to Jerusalem, *is not yet come; but your time is always ready,* and such a circumstance in your case is comparatively of very little importance. You have no reason to fear any injury or assault, as *the world cannot hate you,*[e] because it is on principles of carnal wisdom that you act, and so have nothing in your conduct that may draw upon you any particular opposition; *but me it hates;* not on account of any ill action which I have committed, but *because,* from a zeal for truth, and a desire of its reformation, *I bear my testimony concerning it, that its deeds are evil. Do you,* therefore, *go up to this feast* whenever you please, without waiting for me; and acquiesce in what I now tell you, that *I do not* as [*yet*] *go up to this feast*;[f] *for* that which I judge *my* most convenient *time* of doing it *is not yet fully come,* nor do I need to be directed by you in my conduct on such occasions as these.

Now when he had said these things unto them, he left them to go up alone, while *he continued* [*still*] *in Galilee* for a few days longer: *But when his brethren* or kindred *were gone up, then he also* himself *went up to the feast,*[g] *not publicly,* with a train of attendants, as he had often done,[h] *but as it were in secret,* with as much privacy as he could.

The Jews therefore, not seeing him appear as usual, *sought for him at the* beginning of the *feast, and said,* What is become of Jesus, and *where is he?* or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast?[i]

And there was, in the mean time, *a great murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said,* (as they had, from the whole tenor of his life, the utmost reason to conclude,) *Surely*[k] *he is* an eminently pious and *a good man: but others,* under the force of strong prejudices, suspected the worst, and *said, Nay,* that cannot be, *but he* certainly *seduces the* ignorant *populace,* however he comes by this power of doing it; and the wisest part of mankind must see that he will undoubtedly at last draw his followers into ruin, as some other impostors have lately done. (See Acts v. 36, 37.) Thus they privately debated the matter; *howbeit, no one* that thought favourably of him, *spoke* his mind *with freedom concerning him,*[l] *for fear of the* rulers among the *Jews,* who were jealous of his growing fame, and looked with a very malignant eye on all who took any peculiar notice of Jesus.

c *That is himself desirous to be publicly known* and talked of.] This seems to be a very invidious and groundless insinuation, as if he was actuated by ostentatious views: the contrary to which appeared so evidently in the whole of his conduct, that nothing but base envy could suggest such a charge.

d *Neither did his brethren believe in him,* &c.] It is astonishing that these near relations of Christ, who must have had so many opportunities of seeing the glories both of his character and miracles, (which last they here expressly acknowledge,) should continue in unbelief. But they unhappily laid it down as a first principle, that the Messiah must be a *temporal Prince;* and finding this mark of his mission wanting, and seeing (more strongly than others not so intimately conversant with him could do) his aversion to any such scheme, they would yield to no other proofs; and are, I fear, on the fatal list of those who perished, as thousands now do, by opposing hypothesis to fact. See Dr. Sykes, *On the Truth of Christianity,* p. 128.

e *The world cannot hate you.*] These words, gentle as they may appear, contain a most awful insinuation, that these his kinsmen were persons governed entirely by carnal views, and therefore destitute of the love of God, and all well-grounded hope from him.

f *I do not* [*yet*] *go up to this feast.*] The reader may observe that I inclose the word [*yet,*] which answers to οὔπω in the original, in crotchets; and the reason is, because I do indeed doubt whether it was in the oldest copies. And this doubt arises, not merely from Porphyry's objecting against this as a falsehood, (for frequent experience has taught us how little the enemies of Christianity are to be trusted in their representations of scripture,) but from observing that Jerome, and the other most ancient fathers who reply to that objection, do not found their answer on his citing the passage wrong, but, as they justly might, on the intimation our Lord gave of his intending shortly to go to the feast, in that expression, *My time is not yet fully come.*—It is a glorious testimony to the unblemished integrity of our Lord's character, that so cunning and inveterate an enemy was forced to have recourse to such mean and ridiculous methods of aspersing it. See Dr. Mill on this text, and Cleric. *De Arte Critica,* part iii. p. 232.

g *He also went up to the feast.*] Our Lord might know of some circumstance of particular danger which might have rendered *his going up* at the usual time, and in company with his brethren, unsafe, and therefore improper.

h *Not publicly,* with a train of attendants, &c.] I look on this as a most certain argument, that the story in Luke ix. 51—56. cannot (as most commentators suppose) relate to this journey; since it is so evident, he was then attended with a numerous train of followers. Compare note a, § 97. p. 196.

i *Where is he?* or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast?] If our Lord had absented himself from the two preceding feasts, (which perhaps the expostulations of his brethren, ver. 3, 4. may imply,) there was yet an obvious reason for the surprise which this question expresses; for undoubtedly our Lord used generally to attend on these occasions. See p. 170. § 83. note b.

k *Surely.*] It is possible, as our translators have supposed, that the word οτι here may be only an expletive; but to me it seems probable that it may not improperly be rendered *surely* or *truly,* which is accordingly the sense that I have sometimes given it.—We should not, I think, unnecessarily conclude a word to be quite insignificant in any writer of credit and character, especially in the sacred penmen.

l *No one* that thought favourably of him, &c.] The reason afterwards given renders such a restriction absolutely necessary. Those that thought contemptibly of Christ might have spoken their minds as freely as they pleased.

IMPROVEMENT

SECT. 98. JOHN VII. Ver. 5

We see how little the greatest external advantages can do without the divine blessing, when some of the nearest relations of Christ himself, by whom he had been most intimately known, were not prevailed upon to believe in him. Who then can wonder if some remain incorrigible in the most regular and pious families? How much more valuable is the union to him, which is founded on a cordial and obedient faith, than that which arose from the bands of nature? and how cautiously should we watch against those carnal prejudices by which even the brethren of Christ were alienated from him?

1, 8 Our Lord, we see, used a prudent care to avoid persecution and danger till his time was fully come; and it is our duty to endeavour, by all wise and upright precautions, to secure and preserve ourselves, that we may have opportunities for farther service.

12 In the course of such service we must expect, especially if we appear under a public character, to meet with a variety of censures; but let us remember, that Jesus himself went *through evil report and good report;* by some applauded as a good man, but by others, and those the greater part of his countrymen, condemned as deceiving the people. Let us learn of Christ patiently to endure such injurious treatment; and endeavour to behave ourselves so, that we may have a testimony in the consciences of men, and in the presence of God, that, after the example of our great Master, *in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world;* (2 Cor. i. 12.) Then will our names be had in remembrance, and the honour and reward of our faithful obedience continue, when the memories of those that reviled us are perished with them.

SECTION XCIX.

Christ, going up privately to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, vindicates his conduct, and farther urges the proofs of his divine mission. John vii. 14—24.

JOHN vii. 14.

SECT. 99. JOHN VII.

THUS were the Jews divided in their sentiments about our blessed Lord, and though they eagerly inquired after him, they knew not where to find him: but *now in the midst of the feast* of tabernacles, about the third or fourth day, *Jesus went up* to Jerusalem, and entered publicly *into the temple, and taught* the people, who were in vast multitudes assembled there. *And the Jews* who heard him *were amazed, saying, How does this*

15 *man understand letters?*[a] or how comes he to be so well acquainted with sacred literature, as to be able thus to expound the scriptures, and to apply himself to us with such gracefulness and propriety, *having never learned* these arts of address at any place of public education?

16 *Jesus answered them, and said,* There is no such reason why you should wonder at this; for *my doctrine,* or that which I now teach you, *is not mine* own invention, or what I have learnt by any common method of inquiry; *but* it is entirely *his that sent*

17 *me,* and I learned it by immediate inspiration from him. And if you desire rightly to enter into the evidences of it, you must make it your great care to maintain an honest and religious temper; for *if any one be* resolutely *determined* to observe the dictates of my heavenly Father, and *to do his will,*[b] though ever so contrary to the impulse of a corrupt nature, *he shall* then quickly *understand whether my doctrine be of God, or whether I speak* it *of myself;* for the evidence is plain to an honest mind, and the correspondence which such a truly good man will find between the whole system of my doctrine and his own inward experience, will be unto him instead of a thousand speculative arguments.

18 In the mean time you might observe something, even in the very manner of my teaching, sufficient to convince you that I am no impostor: for *he that,* in such a circumstance, and with such pretensions, *speaks of himself,* without any divine commission, will govern himself by secular views; and a sagacious observer will soon see that he *is seeking his own glory* and interest, even under the most self-denying forms: *but he that* in the whole of his conduct shews that he *seeks the glory* of God, as *of him that* he declares to have *sent him,* gives great reason to believe that *he is true* and sincere in that declaration, *and* that *there is no unrighteousness* or imposture *in him.*[c]

19 But your character is the very reverse of this, and you cannot but know it in your own conscience: for let me upon this occasion call you to reflect on your own conduct, and appeal to that: *hath not Moses given you the law,* and do you not eagerly contend for its divine original? *and yet none of you observes the law* which he has given you. If you deny the charge, let me remind you of that grand precept, "Thou shalt not kill," and then ask you, *Wherefore do you go about to kill me,* though an innocent and upright person, who am come to bring you a most important message from God?

JOHN vii. 14.

NOW about the midst of the feast, Jesus went into the temple and taught:

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

a *How does this man understand letters?*] I see no reason to believe that our Lord adorned his discourses with quotations from, or references to, the writers that were then most celebrated for their learning, or shewed any extraordinary acquisitions in history, antiquities, &c. The Evangelists have given us no specimen of this kind; and it is certain that foreign literature was then in great contempt among the Jews.—The words undoubtedly refer to our Lord's great acquaintance with the scriptures, and the judicious and masterly manner in which he taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty and nobler eloquence than the scribes could attain to by a learned education.—Compare Mark i. 22. and Matt. vii. 29. p. 89. note g.

b *Be determined to do his will.*] This seems to be the import of those words, θελη το θελημα αυτου ποιειν. (See § 22. note a, p. 43.) This important passage seems an express declaration, that every upright man to whom the gospel is proposed, will see and own the evidence of its divine authority; which indeed might reasonably have been concluded from the awful judgment pronounced on those who presume to reject it.

c *No unrighteousness* or imposture *in him.*] The word αδικια, in this opposition to αληθης, must signify *imposture.* Yet I think it the fairest way to translate the original words in all their extent, and content myself with suggesting in the paraphrase those limitations which the particular connection requires.

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

This Jesus said, with reference to what he knew to be the secret design of some of his hearers, who were even then plotting his destruction; but *the multitude*, who were not aware of it, ignorantly and rudely *answered and said*, Surely *thou art possessed* and distracted,[d] to talk thus; dost thou not safely travel from place to place, and appear in our most public assemblies, even here at Jerusalem, and *who goes about* or desires *to kill thee?*

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

Jesus, referring to the design which he knew some of them had of renewing their persecution against him as a sabbath-breaker, because he had commanded the disabled man at the pool of Bethesda to carry his bed on that day, (compare John v. 16. p. 95.) *answered* in the gentlest manner, *and said unto them, I have*, some time ago, *performed one* remarkable *work*,[e] *and you all*, to this very day, *wonder on account of it*,[f] that I should order the man that I cured to carry his couch on the sabbath-day: Yet a little reflection might convince you that your cavil is very unreasonable, even on your own principles: for *Moses gave you* a precept, which required *circumcision, (not that it is* originally *of Moses'* institution, *but* had been formerly established by the observation of Abraham, and *of the* other *fathers* of our nation, many ages before Moses was born, which therefore could not properly be altered by him;[g]) *and you* scruple not to *circumcise a man*-child *on the sabbath-day*, if it happen to be the eighth from his birth. *If* [*then,*] *to prevent the violation of Moses' law* by deferring this sacred rite, you acknowledge it fit that *a man* should *receive circumcision on the sabbath* itself, [*why*] *are you incensed against me, that*, by speaking a word, *I have cured a man* who was *entirely* disabled,[h] *on the sabbath;* as if it was a more servile work to heal than to wound? or how do you imagine that I have not power, when I have thus healed him, to manifest the perfection of the cure, by commanding him to carry his couch?[i] *Judge not according to* these prejudices which the meanness of my *appearance* tends to produce; *but judge righteous* and equitable *judgment;* which if you do, you must necessarily acknowledge my divine mission to be as evident and certain as that of Moses himself, to whose precepts you profess so great a regard.

22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers,) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn of our meek and humble Master, to refer the honour of all we know and do to divine instructions communicated to us, and divine grace working in and by us; that, seeking the glory of God, we may have the surest evidence that we are truly his. Let us on all occasions remember, that integrity and uprightness will be a certain security to us against dangerous mistakes in matters of religion. If the light we already have be faithfully improved, we may humbly hope that more will be given in; nor shall we then fail of convincing evidence that the gospel-doctrine is of God; for the experience of its power on our hearts will check our passions, and destroy the prejudices that would prevent the truth from taking place in our minds. Ver. 16 18 17

Let us receive his doctrine as divine, and hearken unto Christ as sent of God; and whatsoever be the vile reproaches we may meet with from a wicked world, and the malicious designs it may form against us, let us be resolute and stedfast in the practice of the duties he has taught us, that *with well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* (1 Pet. ii. 15.) 19

Our Lord was reviled as a demoniac and a lunatic; but instead of rendering railing for railing, he replied in the words of gentleness and sobriety. So let us endeavour to conquer the rudeness of those attacks we may meet with in his cause; that we may, if possible, remove the prejudices so fatal to those that entertain them, and form men to that equitable and impartial judgment which would soon turn all their cavils against Christ into admiration, praise, and obedience. 20 21—23 24

d *Thou art possessed* and distracted.] So some of them express it, John x. 20. *He hath a devil, and is mad:* which plainly shews, as many have observed, that they thought some of the worst kind and degrees of lunacies proceeded from the agency of some demon: as many considerable Greek writers plainly did. (See Bos. *Exercit.* p. 41—43.) But it can never be argued from hence that possession and lunacy are universally synonymous terms. When joined together they seem to signify different things; the former being put for the *cause*, and the latter for the *effect*.

e *I have* some time ago *performed one* remarkable *work*.] It is plain the miracle here referred to was wrought a year and a half before this feast. Compare § 46. note a, p. 94.

f *And you all wonder on account of it.*] I here follow Theophylact and Beza in joining the words δια τουτο to the end of this verse, because it is certain that in their usual signification they cannot properly introduce the next: and John xix. 11. (§ 188.) may be an instance of the like kind.—The Prussian translators render it, *Because Moses gave you circumcision*, &c. and the learned Elsner inclines to this version: (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 314, 315.) But though I am sensible ο ενεκεν sometimes signifies *because*, (see Gen. xxxviii. 26; Numb. x. 31; and xiv. 43. *Septuag.* and *Hebr.*) I cannot find δια τουτο ever so used; and I think, if it be retained at the beginning of the next verse, it should be rendered, *As to this matter;* which sense it may perhaps have in Matt. xiii. 52; xviii. 23; and in a few other places; and so Grotius takes it here. See Dr. Whitby on this place.

g *Not that it is* originally *of Moses*, &c.] An excellent person, justly celebrated in the learned world, has lately suggested to me a thought on these words, (which I have not met with elsewhere, but have briefly hinted in the paraphrase,) as to the reason why our Lord makes this obvious remark, that circumcision was older than the time of Moses. Had Moses instituted it, he would probably have ordered it so as to make it quadrate with his law relating to the strict rest of the sabbath; but finding it instituted by a previous covenant, which his law could not disannul, (see Gal. iii. 17.) he left it still on the same footing.—This argument will indeed infer that the strict sabbatical rest was not observed in the patriarchal age; but yet it might be a day of extraordinary devotion, which I apprehend to be proved from Gen. ii. 3.

h *I have cured a man entirely.*] Our translation loses much of the emphasis: the words ολον ανθρωπον υγιη εποιησα literally signify, *I have healed*, or made sound, *a whole man*. But the ambiguity in our English word *whole* rendered such a version very improper. I therefore thought it necessary a little to vary the expression, but the sense is altogether the same.—But, since I published this, a very accurate critic, both in the Greek and English language, has suggested another version, yet more literal than this, or any of the rest: *I have made a man sound throughout.*

i That I have not power, when I have thus healed him, &c.] So our Lord himself states the argument, in a case nearly resembling this, (Matt. ix. 5, 6. p. 92.) and might probably here intend to insinuate it, though in an oblique manner.

SECTION C.

The Jews pass a variety of censures on Christ; and the sanhedrim, alarmed by the regard which some expressed towards him, send officers to seize him; but Christ openly declares that their purposes should not immediately take effect. John vii. 25—36.

JOHN vii. 25.

SECT. 100. JOHN VII. 25.

THEN, while our Lord was thus discoursing at the feast of tabernacles, *some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, who knew more of the designs of the sanhedrim than others who had spoken before, (ver. 20.) *said, Is not this he whom they seek* an opportunity *to put to death? But behold, he* is not only come up hither to the feast, but *speaks openly* and freely in the very temple itself; *and they* are so far from seizing him, that 26 they *do not* so much as *say any thing to* prohibit *him: do the rulers* then *indeed know* they were mistaken in their former censures, and are they now persuaded in their con- 27 sciences *that this is really the Messiah? But we* have sufficient reason to conclude this cannot be the case; for many of us *know this man*, from *whence he is*, and are sure that he was born of Joseph's wife; *whereas, when the Messiah comes, no man will* thus *know* from *whence he is;* for he is to be born in a miraculous way of a virgin.[a]

28 *Then Jesus*, though they said this in a private manner to each other, and imagined that he could not have heard them, *as he was teaching them in the temple*, and at some distance from them, *cried out* with a louder voice than before, *and said, Do ye* indeed *both know me, and know* from *whence I am?*[b] Alas, it is great rashness and folly for you to assert it; and whatever you may object, *yet* it is most certain that *I am not come of myself*, with vain and false pretences to a divine mission, nor do I want any proper evidences of it: *but he who sent me is true* to all his promises and predictions,[c] *whom*, 29 nevertheless, with all your boasts, *ye know not. But I know him* in a most intimate manner; *for I am* sprung *from him*[d] by a mysterious and divine generation, in consequence of which I am infinitely better acquainted with him than you, or any mere creatures, can be; *and he hath sent me* among you as his Ambassador, on an errand of the highest importance.

30 *Then* they were so provoked by this claim of a divine original, and by the charge advanced against them, as ignorant of that God in whom they gloried as so peculiarly their own, that *they sought* an opportunity *to seize him; yet* God impressed their minds in such a manner, that *no one* of them would be the first that *laid hands on him:* and they were kept under this visible restraint, *because his* appointed *hour* of suffering *was not yet come*, but he had farther services in life to despatch before he was delivered to them.

31 *And many of the people* were so much affected with these discourses, that they secretly *believed on him, and said* to each other, *When the Messiah comes, will* it be possible *he* should *do greater miracles than these which this* [*Jesus*] *has done* here at Jerusalem, and over the whole country?

32 This, however, could not be so privately said, but some information of it was sent to *the Pharisees*, who, when they *heard that the people whispered such things concerning him*, were greatly displeased and alarmed at it: *and the Pharisees and* the other members of the grand sanhedrim, particularly *the chief priests*, among whom there were many Sadducees, (see Acts iv. 1.) *sent officers* from the chamber in which they held their council,[e] into the adjacent court of the temple, *to seize him*, as he preached there to the multitude.

33 *Then Jesus said to them*, as soon as they appeared, I know the design on which some of you are come, but God will not permit you immediately to execute it; for *yet a little while* longer *I am* to continue *with you, and* [*then*] *I* am to *go* again *to him that sent* 34 *me*. And when I am returned to him, I shall be entirely out of your reach; so that *you shall seek me, and* wish that you had me in your power again, but you *shall not find me; and where I am*, or where I shall then and always be, *you cannot* possibly *come:* which he said, referring to his speedy exaltation to the heavenly world, and to the impotent malice with which they should then oppose his triumphant cause.

35 But he was not understood in that sense: *the Jews therefore* who were present *said among themselves, Whither is he about to go, that we shall not find him? Will he* leave Judea, and *go to the* remainders of the holy seed who are *dispersed among the*

JOHN vii. 25.

THEN said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him: Do the rulers know indeed, that this is the very Christ?

27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am, and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him: and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me;* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto

a He is to be born in a miraculous way of a virgin.] It is evident from Matt. ii. 4, 5. that the Jews apprehended the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem; and from a multitude of other places, that they knew he was to be a descendant of David: (compare ver. 42.) I know not how therefore to account for their saying that, *when Christ came, no man would know whence he is*, but by supposing, with Archbishop Tillotson, (Vol. II. p. 454.) that the words refer to an expectation they had that he would be *born of a virgin*.—As for the notion which Justin Martyr mentions, that the Messiah should for a while *be hid*, it seems more modern; and they must put a strange interpretation on Isa. liii. 8; Mic. v. 2; and Psal. cx. 4. to draw any such consequence from them as Dr. Whitby and M. L'Enfant suppose they did.

b *Do you both know me, and know whence I am?*] So Bishop Chandler would render these words; (see his *Defence*, p. 334.) and it seems necessary, in order to vindicate the propriety, and indeed the veracity of the reply; unless, with Beza and Camerarius, we suppose it to be spoken ironically.

c *Is true* to all his promises and predictions.] There seems a reference here to the accomplishment of some of the *prophecies* already fulfilled in him, together with a cheerful *faith* in what was yet to come.

d *I am from him.*] I should have chosen to render παρ' αυτε, *with him*, as I did in the first edition, to avoid a tautology; but I am sensible, on farther reflection, that I want a sufficient authority for such a version. I therefore acquiesce in our own: but I see no occasion to vary any thing in the paraphrase, since in either sense it suggests so strong a reason for believing that Christ hath the most intimate knowledge of the Father.

e From the chamber in which they held their council.] See § 24. note f, p. 48.

the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*; and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

Greeks and other nations? *and* will he *teach* them, or *the Greeks* themselves,[f] even the idolatrous Gentiles, after his being thus rejected by his own nation at home and abroad? *What* [*sort of*] *saying is this which he has* now *spoken, You shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, you cannot* possibly *come?* Thus they continued cavilling at his words; yet were so overawed by his presence, that they did not dare to offer him any violence, notwithstanding the commission with which some of them came. 36

SECT. 100. JOHN VII.

IMPROVEMENT.

So confident is error in its own decisions, and so vain in its self-applauses! These unhappy people, every way mistaken, censure their rulers for a supposed credulity, in seeming, as it were, to acquiesce in Christ's claim to be the Messiah; and imagined themselves, no doubt, exceeding wise in rejecting him, while they blindly took it for granted he was the son of Joseph, and had not patience to wait for the authentic story of his miraculous conception. Surely men had need to look well to the force of those arguments, on which they venture their souls by rejecting the gospel. Ver. 26 27

Our Lord answered their secret reasoning in a manner which might justly have alarmed them, charging them with ignorance of that God whom they pretended to know, and whom, with a presumptuous confidence, they claimed as theirs. And oh, that it may not be found at last, that many who have appeared most confident of their interest in God, neither know him, nor are known by him! 28

The blessed Jesus, who is *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person*, has the completest knowledge of the Father. May we be so wise and happy as to seek instructions from him, *that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened*, and the temper of our hearts proportionably regulated, by all the discoveries of the Divine Being which he makes! 29

How obstinate and desperately hardened were the hearts of those who, notwithstanding all the proofs that Jesus gave of his divine mission, were yet so far from hearkening to him, as to seek opportunities to destroy him! So dangerous and fatal is the prevalence of error in such as like not to retain God in their knowledge, that they will even venture on the greatest wickedness, when once they are *given over to a reprobate mind.* (Rom. i. 28.)—May God preserve us from a spirit of delusion, and fill us with that wisdom, that we may know the things belonging to our peace; and being ready to receive the truth in the love of it, may we acknowledge and attend to Christ as sent of God! 30, 32

May we learn this heavenly wisdom in time, since the hour is approaching when Christ will be sought in vain, and all correspondence between him and sinners will be finally cut off! Where he is, they cannot then come; and to be excluded from him, will at length appear insupportable misery, even to those who, with proud folly and fatal self-sufficiency, are now most ready to say unto him, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of* thee or *thy ways.* (Job xxi. 14.) 34

SECTION CI.

Christ invites his hearers to come and imbibe the Spirit from him; and by these and other gracious discourses, disarms the resolution of the officers, who return to the sanhedrim without him; where a short debate arises between Nicodemus and his brethren. John vii. 37, *to the end.*

JOHN vii. 37.

IN the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

JOHN vii. 37.

SUCH were the discourses which our Lord made to the people, in the presence of those who were sent by the sanhedrim to seize him; and this happened *in the* eighth and *last day, that great* [*day*] *of the feast* of tabernacles, when, according to the institution of Moses, (Lev. xxiii. 34, 36; Numb. xxix. 35.) there was to be an holy convocation, attended with some extraordinary sacrifices. Now, on this day, when it was customary for the priests to surround the altar with their palm-branches, and to pour out water in the temple, as an expression of the general desire of the Messiah's appearance, and the pouring forth of the Spirit by him,[a] *Jesus stood* on an eminence, that he might be the better heard and seen, *and proclaimed* with a loud voice, *saying, If any man thirst*, that is, if he ardently desire true happiness, and long for the blessings promised under the administration of the Messiah, *let him come unto me* by faith, *and drink* his fill; for I am most ready freely to communicate every needful blessing, and particularly those supplies of the Spirit which you profess so earnestly to desire. (Compare Isa. lv. 1.) For *he that* truly *believeth on me, as the scripture hath* in many places *said* and promised,[b] shall receive those supplies in so great an abundance, that he shall not only be refreshed himself, but *out* 37 38

SECT. 101. JOHN VII.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

f *Will he go to the dispersed among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?*] By Greeks we are here to understand idolatrous Gentiles, and not Hellenists, or Jews that used the Greek language; for these were the dispersed among them. There is therefore, I think, a sting in these words beyond what commentators have observed. They insinuate, that if he was to go into foreign countries to address himself to the Jews there, who might be supposed not so well instructed as those that lived in Judea and at Jerusalem, he would not be able to make any proselytes, even among these; but would be constrained to apply himself to the ignorant and stupid Gentiles, to seek disciples among them; which, to be sure, appeared to these haughty scorners one of the most infamous circumstances that could be imagined, and most incompatible with the character of the true Messiah.

a When it was customary for the priests to pour out water, &c.] That there was a custom on this day of drawing water out of the fountain of Siloam, and pouring it out before the Lord in the temple, at the time of evening sacrifice, and that the priest who did it stood on some eminence, the Jewish Rabbies unanimously assure us. (See Reland's *Antiq. Hebr.* part iv. *cap.* 6. § 6.) Some think it was intended to supplicate the former rain; but the context inclines me much rather to believe those Jewish writers, produced by Dr. Lightfoot, (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on this place,) who say it was meant as a way of invoking the divine influences of the blessed Spirit, and as a mark of their desire of having it poured out upon them. See Tremellius's excellent note on this text.

b *As the scripture hath* in many places *said* and promised.] Chrysostom, and after him many other eminent critics, refer this to the former clause, and understand it as if he had said, *He that hath that faith in me which the scripture requires:* (see Castalio, Zegerus, and Jac. Cappellus, *in loc.*) And thus they avoid the difficulty which arises from our not finding the following words in scripture.—But it seems much more natural, with Grotius, to suppose that here is a general reference to the several prophecies which refer to the effusion of the Spirit by the Messiah under the similitude of pouring out water; and accordingly I have paraphrased the words in that view of the connexion. See Isa. lii. 15; xliv. 3; lviii. 11; and Joel ii. 28.

SECT. 101. JOHN VII.

of his belly, or from within him,[c] *shall flow* vital streams, and, as it were, *rivers of living water*, for the refreshment and comfort of others.

Now this, which was true in a more extensive sense, *he* peculiarly *spake of the Spirit*[d] *which they who believed on him should receive*, and which some of them should also be enabled to communicate to others. But it was not then generally understood; *for the*

39 *holy Spirit was not yet* [*given*] in that extraordinary manner, *because Jesus was not yet glorified;* and it was the wise and gracious purpose of God to send him down on the church, after the ascension of Jesus, as a triumphant Conqueror, into his father's presence. (See Eph. iv. 7—12; John xvi. 7; and Acts ii. 33.)

40 *Then many of the people, when they heard this* gracious *saying*, which was indeed a more free declaration and profession than he commonly made, *said, Surely this* [*man*] *is*

41 at least *a prophet*,[e] and probably comes to introduce the Messiah. And *others said*, Nay, *this is* certainly *the Messiah* himself; *but* in opposition to this, *some* objected, and *said, Shall the Messiah*, when he appears, *come out of Galilee*, as we know this Jesus of

42 Nazareth does? *Hath not the scripture said* expressly, *That the Messiah is to come from the seed of David? and* hath it not also added, that he is to arise *from the town of Bethlehem*-Judah, *where David was* [*born*,] and which was the ancient seat of

43 his family? (Compare Isa. xi. 1. and Mic. v. 2.) And *thus* they were divided in their sentiments, and *there was* a warm *dissension*[f] *among the people on his account.*

44 And the officers also, who had been sent to apprehend him, were at a loss what they should do, *and some of them would have seized him; but*, struck with the regard which several of the people expressed towards him, and, above all, impressed by the dignity and sweetness of his discourses, and the secret hand of heaven which wrought for his deliverance, they were so far restrained, that *no man laid hands on him.*

45 *Then the officers came* back *to the chief priests and the Pharisees*, without accomplishing the purpose for which they were sent: *and* when the sanhedrim perceived they had not executed their commission, *they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him* with you as your prisoner, according to the orders you received from us?

46 *The officers replied*, We could not find in our hearts to attempt it; for surely *no man* living *ever spake* in so engaging and irresistible a manner *as this man doth*;[g] and had you heard him yourselves, it must have disarmed your resentment against him.

47 *Then the Pharisees*, far from being softened by the account they gave them, *answered them* in a scornful and upbraiding way, What, *are you also deceived* by his artful and

48 popular address? Surely you cannot be so weak as to be thus infatuated? Pray consider the conduct of those who are most capable of judging of this point: *have any of the rulers believed on him, or* [*any*] *of the Pharisees* of a more private station?[h] Yet you know these are most eminent for their acquaintance with religion, and are the most au-

49 thentic interpreters of the sacred writings in which it is contained: *But this* wretched herd of *people, who* are so enchanted with him, *know* and regard *not* any thing of the true meaning of *the law*, and, it is easy to be seen, *are cursed* with a judicial blindness, and given up to the most absurd and fatal mistake.[i]

50 Upon this, *Nicodemus*, whom we before have mentioned as the person *who came to* [*Jesus*] *by night*, (see John iii. 1. *et seq.* p. 49, 50.) *being* both a ruler and a Pharisee, and sitting in the sanhedrim as *one of them*, took so much courage, that he *said to them,*

51 *Doth our law*, which you boast so much acquaintance with,[k] *judge* and condemn *any man before* the magistrate, appointed to execute *it*, summon him into his presence, that he may *hear* from *him* what he hath to say in his own defence, *and know*, from credible witnesses, *what he hath done* to deserve punishment? (See Deut. xvii. 8—11, and xix. 15. *et seq.*)

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

40 Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?

49 But this people who knoweth not the law, are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?

c *Out of his belly*, or from within him.] The belly is frequently put for the mind or heart. Compare Job xv. 35; xx. 20; and Prov. xx. 27, 30.—It sometimes signifies, in a more general way, the inward part of a thing, (1 Kings vii. 20; Matt. xii. 40.) and may perhaps have some allusion here to the prominency of that capacious golden vase from which the water was now poured out in a large stream.

d *This he spake of the Spirit.*] It is strange that, when the Evangelist has thus plainly commented on these words of Christ, a late eminent writer should venture to advance a different interpretation, and explain them as spoken of *the doctrine of the gospel.*

e *Surely this man is a prophet.*] As the article is prefixed, it might seem natural to render it *the prophet*, were it not afterwards distinguished from *the Christ*. On this account I conclude that here, as also John i. 21. ὁ προφήτης signifies only *a prophet*, that is, one of the ancient prophets revived. See § 20. note c, p. 40.

f *A warm dissension.*] So I apprehend the word Σχισμα always signifies. And thus the word *schism*, which is just the same, (with an English termination,) expresses not merely nor necessarily a separation from each other, but an angry debate, whether it be, or be not, attended with separation.

g *No man ever spake as this man doth.*] Plutarch mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Antony, when Marius sent soldiers to kill him, that when he began πεζεσθαι τεττθαι τον ῥητορα, *to plead for his life*, he disarmed their resolution, and melted them into tears, (Plutarch, *Vit.* p. 431.) But these officers are thus vanquished, merely by hearing Christ's gracious discourses to the people, which is a circumstance much more remarkable. They return in a kind of amaze, and, instead of seizing him as their prisoner, or making a laboured apology for their failure, only break out into a pathetic exclamation, that *no man in the world ever spake like him.* It is a reflection which, I hope, we often make, as we read his discourses.

h *Have any of the rulers believed on him, or any of the Pharisees?*] I cannot think, with Grotius, that this is any intimation, that, if there were any of the Great Council who had favourable thoughts of Jesus, they were the Sadducees. The interpretation of the paraphrase is much easier. There is no reason to believe any of the Sadducees were inclined to receive the gospel; and, if the Pharisees had secretly suspected them of such an inclination, they would hardly have affronted them by such an insinuation in this grand assembly, considering the high rank in which many of that sect were.

i *This people, who know not the law, are cursed.*] I see no ground to think, with Grotius, that this refers to Deut. xxvii. 26. and is built on a supposition that the ignorance of the populace must always expose them to a curse. It rather intimates an apprehension, that God had given them up to a spirit of fatal infatuation.—Instances of their contempt of the common people may be seen in Lightfoot, (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) and Vitringa, (*Observ. Sacra. lib. iii. cap.* 2. p. 498.)

k *Doth our law*, which you boast so much acquaintance with.] Soft as these words seem, there is a severe sting in them; and they in effect amount to a charge, that while they professed such a knowledge of the law, and zeal for it, they either knew not, or regarded not, some of its plainest precepts, and were even unmindful of those which, as they were a court of judicature, were their peculiar concern.

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

But *they*, without entering farther into the argument, *answered him* only by *saying*, in a slight and superficial manner, What, *art thou* thyself *also of Galilee*, that thou favourest the pretences of this contemptible Galilean? *Search* a little farther into the matter, *and* thou wilt soon *see* the unreasonableness of doing it; *for* it is notorious, even to a proverb, that *no prophet is raised up from Galilee*,[1] nor will God ever honour that contemptible country with such a production. 52

SECT. 101. JOHN VII.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

And, having said this, they would not wait for a reply, but immediately broke up the court; and so *every one went* away *to his own house*. 53

IMPROVEMENT.

With what delight and thankfulness should we hear this gracious proclamation of Christ, which he now made Ver. 37
in the temple, and a while after repeated from the throne of his glory,—*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*; yea, *whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely!* (Rev. xxii. 17.) Blessed Jesus, had we been allowed to have prescribed to thee a form of words, in which thy kind purposes towards us should have been expressed, what could we have invented more pathetic, more condescending, or more reviving!—May we thirst for the blessings of thy grace, and in the confidence of faith apply unto thee for them; and particularly for 39
these communications of thy Spirit, which are so highly excellent and desirable, and indeed so necessary for us! Supply us with them, we entreat thee, in so rich an abundance, that we, in our different spheres, may supply others, and from us there may flow rivers of living water! 38

Well might such gracious words as these disarm the rage of enemies and persecutors. Let us add our testimony to theirs, and say, Never man spake as Jesus speaks. Let us hear him with calm and thankful attention, while his 46
voice still sounds in his word. Happy are those *that know the joyful sound!* (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) The Pharisees, like deaf adders, stopped their ears against the voice of the Charmer; and, while they proudly censured the popu- 48, 49
lace as a brutal herd, and gloried in their own superior wisdom, rejected the counsel of God: rashly judging without serious inquiry, and weakly borne down by vulgar senseless prejudices against names and places, which is all the senate of Israel opposes to the solid argument of Nicodemus! That good man, already considerably improved 51, 52
by his interview with Jesus, was undoubtedly confirmed in his adherence to him, by observing the methods of their opposition: and where magistrates arm their authority to overbear argument, they will probably, in the judgment of impartial men, produce a suspicion at least, that they know their cause to be incapable of a rational 53
defence.

Nov. 26. 1755

SECTION CII.

Christ, having spent the night in retirement, returns to the temple, where an adulteress is brought before him; but he avoids giving judgment in her case, and turns the consciences of his enemies on themselves.
John viii. 1—11.

JOHN viii. 1.

JOHN viii. 1.

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives.

THUS the Pharisees debated the case, *and* in such dissension their assembly broke up; but *Jesus*, chusing to retire in the evening, that he might by secret converse with his heavenly Father be animated to all the labours and dangers before him, *went* up *to* a mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which lay to the east of the city, on the other side of the brook Cedron, and is well known by the name of *the Mount of Olives*, where he spent the night in meditation and prayer.

SECT. 102. JOHN VIII.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple; and all the people came unto him, and he sat down and taught them.

But, that his retirement might not break in upon the opportunity of public service which the present concourse of people gave him, *he returned to the temple early in the morning; and all the people* who *came to* worship there, before they returned to their respective habitations in the country, (the feast being now ended,) flocked around *him* to receive his instructions; *and* such was his courage and zeal, notwithstanding the late conspiracy which had been formed against him, that, *sitting down* in one of the cloisters, *he instructed them* as freely as he had ever done. 2

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

And, while he was engaged in this exercise, *the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman* who had just been *taken in* the commission of *adultery*,[a] having been unhappily betrayed into it among those intemperances which too often attend public feasts; *and*, as the court of judicature before whom she should have been tried was not yet assembled, they took that opportunity of laying a snare for Jesus, by *setting her* before him, *in the midst* of the people who were attending his discourse. And, as if they were desirous of 3

4 They say unto him,

4

1 *No prophet is raised up from Galilee.*] As it is plain that Jonah, and probable that Nahum also, was a Galilean, Sir Norton Knatchbull and others, who imagine that these rulers could not be ignorant of that, suppose that προφητης here signifies the Great Prophet, or Messiah. But probably, had this been their meaning, they would rather have quoted the text which mentions Bethlehem as the birth-place of the Messiah. The answer must therefore be acknowledged to be very mean and trifling, and the abrupt manner in which the assembly was broke up, seems to intimate their consciousness that it would not bear examination.

a *Brought to him a woman taken in adultery.*] It is well known that this story is wanting in the Syriac version, as well as in the Alexandrian and Bodleian copies, and indeed in most of the oldest manuscripts; which engaged Beza to question, and Le Clerc, with many others, to reject its authority. But I acquiesce in the reasoning of the learned Dr. Mill, to whom I refer the reader for the arguments to prove it *authentic*; the critical examination of these matters lying quite out of the sphere of my present design. A mistaken apprehension that some circumstances in the story were indecent, and an excessive rigour with respect to those who had fallen into this truly detestable crime, might perhaps be the occasion of this omission, if it was not accidental in some early copies. Erasmus conjectures it might be added by St. John, after some copies of his gospel had been taken; and Grotius, that some who heard the story from the apostle's mouth, recorded it with the approbation of Papias, and other eminent persons in the church.—The notice that Eusebius, (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap. ult.*) Jerome, (*Adv. Pelag. lib.* ii. *cap.* 6.) and other ancient writers, have taken of the dubiousness of this passage, with a few other instances of the like nature, shews that critical exactness with which they examined into the genuineness of the several parts of the New Testament; and so, on the whole, strengthens the evidence of Christianity, which (as I have shewn at large in the ninth of my *Ten Sermons*) is so inseparably connected with the genuineness and purity of the New Testament.

SECT. 102. — JOHN VIII.

information from him, *they* craftily *said unto him, Master*, as thou professest thyself an extraordinary Teacher, we desire thou wouldst pronounce thy judgment on *this* case: here is a *woman* who *was taken in the very act of adultery: Now Moses in the law has commanded us, that such* infamous *women should be stoned*,[b] (Lev. xx. 10; and Deut. xx. 22.) but, as thou takest upon thee either to supersede many of his precepts, or to interpret them in a very singular manner, we would be glad to hear thy determination in an affair of so great importance; *what therefore dost thou say? This they said tempting him, that*, which way soever he should determine, *they might have* an opportunity *to accuse him*, either to the Jewish rulers, if he acquitted such a criminal, or to the Romans, if he ventured, though on the authority of the law, to pronounce a capital sentence against her, which he had no authority from the Romans to do,[c] and which the Jewish rulers themselves had at present no power to execute. (Compare John xviii. 31.)

Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act:

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?

6 This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.—

But Jesus stooping down, wrote something *on the ground with his finger*,[d] chusing (as it were) to speak to them by that action, rather than by words. *But as they*, thinking that they had him at a great advantage, *continued asking him* with greater importunity, *he raised himself up, and*, without replying directly to their demand, only *said to them, Let him of you that is without sin* in this or any other respect, pursue the prosecution, and *throw the first* fatal *stone at her*, when she is condemned:[e] (compare Deut. xvii. 7.) thus prudently avoiding a decision of the case, and leading them to reflect on their own guilt. *And stooping down again, he wrote on the ground*, as he had done before, and left them to their own reflections.

—But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

But having heard [*his answer*,] *and being*, by a secret energy which went along with the word of Jesus, in a very awful and powerful manner *convicted in their consciences* of their own personal and aggravated guilt, *they* were ashamed even to look each other in the face; and so *went out one by one, beginning from the eldest*,[f] whose age and office tended to increase their shame and remorse; and the impression passed *even to the last*, or the youngest and meanest of them. *And Jesus was left alone* by all the accusers, *and the woman standing in the midst* of the crowd, with which he had been surrounded before she was brought in.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

And Jesus raising himself up, and seeing none of those who had been soliciting his judgment, *but* only *the woman* they had brought before him, *said to her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Has no man condemned thee*, or is there none remaining to bear witness against thee? *And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I* take upon me, at this time, and under this circumstance, judicially to *condemn thee*, though thy crime has been undoubtedly great; *go thy way*, therefore, without any impediment from me; but, as the Messenger of God, *and* Friend of souls, I warn thee that thou *sin no more*;[g] for such enormous practices as these must subject thee to a severer judgment from God than man can pronounce or inflict.

10 When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 2 THE devout retirements of Christ, and his early renewed labours, so often come in view, that, after having made some progress in his history, we are ready to pass them over as things of course. But let us remember, that

b *Such women should be stoned.*] If they spoke accurately, this must have been a woman who had been betrothed to a husband, and had been guilty of this infamous crime before the marriage was completed; for such only are expressly condemned to be *stoned.* (Deut. xxii. 22, 24.) The Jewish writers tells us, that when (as in the case of other adulteries) only death in general was denounced, without specifying the particular kind of it, *strangling* was to be used. Custom indeed (as Grotius observes) might have introduced *stoning* in all these cases; (compare Ezek. xvi. 38, 40;) yet that would not justify what they here say. But our Lord's spirit was too noble to take the advantage of such a slip, if it was a mistake: he had a much greater view, and silenced them in a far more effectual manner.

c *To accuse him*—to the Romans, if he ventured, &c.] It is very evident that the Jewish Sanhedrim sat by licence from the Roman governor; and though they had a right to try capital causes, it was necessary (as it seems from passages elsewhere examined) that the sentence they passed should be recognized and allowed by the Romans before it could be carried into execution. (See § 186. note c, on Matt. xxvii. 2. and § 188. note h, on John xix. 10.) For Christ therefore to have undertaken the decision of this case would, *ipso facto*, have rendered him obnoxious to the Romans, as well as to the Sanhedrim: and had he condemned her, a new occasion of offence must have arisen in consequence of that—to Pilate, if execution had been ordered without an application to him,—and to the Jews, if Christ had directed such an application to be made. So that the snare here was much the same with that afterwards laid for him (Matt. xxii. 17—22. § 154.) in the question about the lawfulness of paying tribute.

d *Wrote on the ground with his finger.*] The following words μη προσποιουμενος, *as though he heard them not*, or, (as I would render them,) *as not regarding them*, are wanting in the most valuable manuscripts. Dr. Mill therefore, I think justly, omits them, as several other printed editions of the Greek Testament do. Were they admitted, they would cut off most of the *conjectures* which learned men have advanced as to *what Christ wrote*; a question, which it is impossible for us to determine, and which we have no need at all to be solicitous about. I am inclined to think there was a language in the *action* itself, either to intimate that these hypocritical Pharisees should be themselves (as the prophet expresses it, Jer. xvii. 13.) written in the earth, or that they were to attend to what was written: but I can determine nothing, and must say, with a great critic on these words, *Nescire velle, quæ Magister optimus nescire nos vult, erudita inscitia est:* "To be willing to con-" tinue ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to con-" ceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning."

e *Let him of you that is without sin, throw the first stone at her.*] Le Clerc makes the supposed impropriety of this reply a farther argument against the genuineness of this text, since the law did not require the *witnesses* or *executioners* to be *free from sin*, in order to the efficacy of such a prosecution. But it may be answered, that our Lord's certain knowledge of what the effect would be, vindicated the wisdom of putting the matter upon this issue, by which it is plain, in fact, he escaped their snare.

f *Went out one by one, beginning from the eldest.*] It is strange any should have interpreted this clause so rigorously, as to imagine that every particular person went out just according to *his age*. It seems only to intimate that those *elders* of the people, who had been most eager in the prosecution, appeared under the most sensible confusion, and were some of *the first* that left the assembly. And in this view it is very remarkable; especially considering that they were now in the presence of the multitude, before whom they would no doubt be desirous to keep up the strictest appearance of virtue, in order to maintain their influence over them.—Though (as Dr. Whitby shews, on ver. 7.) adultery prevailed much among the Jews about this time, yet I see no reason to conclude that their conscience convicted every one of them of this particular crime.—Their partiality (as Dr. Lardner well observes) seems to appear in bringing only the woman, not the man, when the law condemned both. (Lard. *Credibil.* part i. Vol. I. p. 79.)

g *Sin no more.*] Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 318.) and Suicer (*Thesaur.* Vol. I. p. 205.) have shewn that the word αμαρτανειν, *to sin*, is used by the most elegant Greek classics (as the correspondent word *peccare* is by the Latin) to signify *the commission of adultery*; which strongly intimates, that even the light of nature taught many of the Heathens the exceeding sinfulness of it: which is the more worthy of notice, as not only the greatest of their men, but (according to their scandalous theology) the greatest of their gods too, gave it all the sanction it could have from example.

in some degree they call upon us to go and do likewise; and will another day condemn those who, while they call themselves his disciples, are given up to ease and luxury, and suffer every little amusement or sensual gratification to lead them into an omission of their duty to God and their fellow-creatures; an omission especially aggravated in those whom he has appointed to be teachers of others, and who have therefore so many peculiar errands to the throne of grace, and so many engagements *in the morning to sow*, or to prepare *the seed* of religious instruction, *and in the evening not to withhold their hand* from dispensing it. (Eccles. xi. 6.) SECT. 102. JOHN VIII.

While Jesus is teaching, his enemies address him, not only as an instructor, but as a judge; and yet, by this specious form of honour and respect, they sought only to ensnare and destroy him. So unsafe would it be always to judge of men's intentions by the first appearances of their actions! But our Lord, in his answer, united, as usual, the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence and gentleness of the dove; and in his conduct to this criminal, shewed at once that tenderness and faithfulness which might have the most effectual tendency to impress and reclaim her; if a heart capable of such infidelity and wickedness could be impressed and reclaimed at all. *Go thy way*, said he to this adulteress, *and sin no more*. Perhaps the charge may have little weight with such abandoned transgressors as she; but let all learn to improve their escapes from danger, and the continued exercise of divine patience towards them, as an engagement to speedy and thorough reformation. 3, 5 6 7 10, 11

Let the force of conscience, and the power of Christ over it, (both which so evidently appeared in this instance,) teach us to reverence the dictates of our own minds, and to do nothing to bring them under a sense of guilt; which, through the secret energy of our Redeemer, wrought so powerfully on these Pharisees, that, hypocritical and vain-glorious as they were, they could not command themselves so far as even to save appearances; but the eldest and gravest among them were the first to confess their guilt, by withdrawing from the presence of so holy a Prophet, from the temple of God, and from the criminal whom they came to prosecute. A like consciousness of being ourselves to blame, will abate the boldness and freedom of our proceedings with others for their faults, if, while we judge them, we are self-condemned; nor will the authority of a superior age or station of life bear us out against these inward reproaches. 9

November 27 · 1855

SECTION CIII.

Our Lord speaks of himself as the light of the world, urges the concurrent testimony of his Father, and gives the Jews repeated warning of the danger they would incur by persisting in their infidelity. John viii. 12—29.

JOHN viii. 12.

THEN spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

JOHN viii. 12.

THEN Jesus, after the interruption that he met with while he was speaking to the people in the temple, by the Pharisees bringing in the adulteress, resumed the work he was before engaged in, and *again* proceeded to instruct the people; and observing the sun lately risen, and shining with great lustre and beauty, he *spake unto them, saying, I am the* true *light of the world*, in whose appearance you ought chiefly to rejoice:[a] this sun arises, in a few hours to descend again, and may fail many of you before your intended journey is despatched;[b] whereas *he that follows me*, and governs himself by the dictates of my word and Spirit, *shall not* be left to *walk in* the *darkness* of ignorance, error, and sin, *but shall have the light of life* continually shining upon him, to diffuse over his soul knowledge, holiness, and joy, till he is guided by it to eternal happiness. SECT. 103. JOHN VIII. 12

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

Some of *the Pharisees therefore*, who were then present, but different persons from those who had brought in the woman, enraged at the late disappointment of their brethren, *said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself*, and therefore, by thine own confession, (chap. v. 31.) *thy testimony is not* to be admitted as *true*, but may rather be suspected of vain-glory; nor can we believe such great things of thee, unless we have some farther proof than thine own affirmation. 13

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I indeed *bear witness of myself*, [*yet*] as I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shewn that I am come with a divine commission, *my testimony is* entirely and perfectly *true*, and as such you ought to admit it, *for I* well *know from whence I came, and whither I am going*, and the most evident demonstrations of it have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine, and in the miracles which I have wrought among you: *but you* are so perverse, that, as often as I have hinted or declared it, you *know not* to this day *from whence I come, and whither I am going*: Which is not to be ascribed to the want of sufficient evidence, but merely to the force of your own prejudices; for *you judge according to the* maxims of *flesh* and sense, and will believe nothing in opposition to these principles which you have so rashly imbibed,[c] and by this means are justly liable to condemnation: but I wave that for the present, as *I* now *judge no man*, but rather appear under the character of a Saviour. (Compare chap. iii. 17.) *Yet if I* should *judge*, *my* determination and *sentence is* apparently *true* and right, and you would justly be condemned for not receiving my testimony; *for I am not alone* in what I say, *but I and the Father that sent me*, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur together in the testimony that I give. *And it is written in your* own *law*, for which you profess so sacred a regard, *that* 14 15 Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in

a *I am the* true *light of the world.*] The Messiah was often represented under this view. Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 6; and Mal. iv. 2. Compare Luke ii. 32; John i. 4—9; iii. 19; ix. 5; and xii. 46.

b The sun arises to descend again, and may fail many of you, &c.] The reader will remember this was the morning after the conclusion of the feast of tabernacles, and probably might be before the morning sacrifice: after which, no doubt, many would be setting out for their habitations in the country.

c *You judge according to the flesh*, &c.] The same carnal prejudices still prevail in the minds of the Jews, and prevent their reception of Christ; they laying it down as a first principle, that *he is to be a great temporal Prince and Deliverer*. And the admission of false principles, which are constantly taken for granted, and never examined, will, I fear, be attended with fatal consequences to thousands more.

SECT. 103. JOHN VIII.

the testimony of two men is to be admitted as *true*, and matters of the greatest consequence are without scruple to be determined by it. (Deut. xvii. 6; and xix. 15.) Now *I am* [*one*] *who bear* this *witness of myself*, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know; *and the Father who sent me* is another, and surely a most credible Person, who also *bears* his *testimony to me;* thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach, and the justice of every sentence I might pass.

your law, that the testimony of two men is true.
18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.

19 *Then said they to him, Where is* this *thy Father*, to whom thou so frequently appealest? mention him plainly, that we may know how far he is to be regarded, and produce him as a witness. *Jesus answered*, you may well ask; for it plainly appears by your conduct that *you neither know me nor my Father*, however you may boast an acquaintance with him: and indeed, *if you had known me* aright, and regarded me as you ought to have done, *you would also* long ere this *have known* who and what *my Father* is, in another manner than you now do; for I bear his complete resemblance, and it is my great business to reveal him to those who submit to my instructions.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 *These words Jesus spake* with the greatest freedom, *as he was teaching in the temple, in* a certain part of it called *the treasury*, where the chests stood in which the people put their gifts for the service of that sacred house, (see Mark xii. 41. sect. clix.) the stores of which were laid up in chambers over that cloister: and though he so plainly intimated that God was his Father, and charged the Jews with being ignorant of him, in whom they boasted as so peculiarly their God, *yet* their spirits were kept under such a powerful, though secret restraint, that *no one seized him;* which was the more wonderful, as it was a place from whence it would not have been easy to have escaped without a miracle, and which was much frequented by his greatest enemies: but the true reason was, *because his hour was not yet come* in which he was, by divine permission, to be delivered into their hands.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

21 Confiding therefore in the protection of Divine Providence, *Jesus then said unto them again*, as he had done before, (chap. vii. 33, 34. p. 202.) *I am* speedily *going away* from among you, *and you shall seek me, and* inquire after the Messiah in vain; but, as a just punishment for your having rejected me, you *shall die in* this *your sin*, and perish for your unbelief by a single stroke of divine vengeance, which shall sink you into final condemnation. Remember then, that I have warned you with the greatest faithfulness, and now again I solemnly repeat the warning, that though you should be ever so desirous of admittance to me, it will be in vain; for *you cannot come* to the place *whither I am* now going, either to molest me, or to secure yourselves.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 *The Jews then said*, with a very perverse and foolish contempt, What, *will he kill himself, that he says, You cannot come whither I am going?* We shall not desire to follow him upon those terms.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself; because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?

23 *And he said unto them* yet more plainly, So vile and malicious an insinuation as this evidently shews that *you are from beneath*, the slaves of earth, and the heirs of hell; while, on the other hand, *I am from above*, and shall quickly return thither: *you are* originally *of this world*, and your treasure and hearts are here; but as *I am not of this world*, my thoughts therefore naturally turn to that celestial abode from whence I came, and I incessantly labour to conduct men thither. But as to you, I labour in vain: and *therefore I* just now *said unto you, that you shall die in your sins*, and it is really a great and awful truth, and deserves another kind of regard than you give it; so that I yet again would call you to consider it; *for if you believe not that I am* [*he*] whom I have represented myself to be,[d] *you shall* unavoidably *die in your sins*, and are in effect the murderers of your own souls.[e]

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 *Then said they to him*, in proud derision, *Who art thou*, that such great regard should be paid to thee, and that it should be so fatal a thing to neglect thee? *And Jesus said unto them, Truly, because I am* still *speaking to you* to this very day in so plain and affectionate a manner, *I have many things to say and judge concerning you*,[f] and justly might upbraid you with the utmost severity, and pass an immediate sentence of condemnation upon you: *but*, for the present, I content myself with reminding you, that *he who sent me is true: and*, as *I speak to the world* only *those things which I have heard from him*, he will finally verify my words, and it will be at the peril of your souls if you continue to treat me with such perverseness and contempt.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.
26 I have many things to say, and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

d *That I am he*, &c. οτι εγω ειμι.] There is evidently an ellipsis here, to be supplied by comparing it with ver. 12. Compare John xiii. 19; Mark xiii. 6; and Acts xiii. 25.

e Are in effect the murderers of your own souls.] The repetition of the threatening here, from ver. 21. is a very awful rebuke to the folly of their answer, ver. 22: as if our Lord had said, "It "very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such "silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, "is at stake, and to talk of my killing myself, when, by your un"belief and impenitency, you are plunging yourselves into eternal "death." Thus do those passages in our Lord's discourses, which to a careless reader might seem flat tautologies, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with a most penetrating spirit, and to be full of divine dignity. A remark which will frequently occur, especially in reading those important discourses of Christ, which John has, through the infinite goodness of God to his church, recorded after they had been omitted by the other Evangelists.

f *Truly, because I am* still *speaking to you, I have many things to say and judge concerning you.*] I entirely agree with the learned Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Herod.* p. 292—303.) that the difficulty of these words arises from a mistake in the *pointing*, as they stand in most copies; and I think his method of restoring the true reading and sense the easiest and justest I have ever met with. He would point them thus, Την αρχην, οτι και λαλω υμιν· πολλα εχω περι υμων λαλειν και κρινειν. All that know any thing of the Greek language, know that την αρχην often signifies *indeed*, or *truly;* and so the translation I have given is very literal, and makes a very good sense.—Mr. Fleming would render it, *I am, as I said to you, The Beginning*, that is, the Person spoken of, Gen. i. 1. and elsewhere, under that title: but this, as well as our own version, is not any thing like a just and grammatical translation; though to be sure there is a sense in which Christ may most properly be called *the Beginning*. Compare Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13. (see Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. I. p. 281.)—I shall only add, that some would render it, *The same I am speaking to you of:* but the version here given is more agreeable to the original, and by a proper *pointing* would ap-

These things were very intelligible, when compared with what he had said before; [*yet*] so exceeding stupid were they, and so blinded by the prejudices of their minds, that *they did not understand that he spake to them of* God *the Father* as the Person who sent him. SECT. 103. JOHN VIII.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Jesus therefore said to them, I know that, notwithstanding all I have said, you will be still so obstinate as to persist in your infidelity, till you proceed even to take away my life; but *when*, after all your professed desire of his appearance and kingdom, *you shall have lifted up* that glorious Person, *the Son of man*, from the earth, and have even proceeded so far as to put him to a violent death, instead of seeing his cause and interest overborne by that outrageous attempt, *you shall then know*, by some new and convincing tokens, *that I am* [*he*,[g]] *and* [*that*] *I do nothing* separately *of myself, but*, in exact agreement with him, *speak* all *these things according as my Father has instructed me: And* even now, *he that sent me is* graciously present *with me*, to bear his testimony to the truth of what I say, and to support and vindicate me: and, whatsoever you may foolishly surmise, *the Father has not left me alone*, nor will he ever leave me; *for I always do the things which are* most *pleasing to him*, and faithfully and constantly pursue the important work which he has committed to my trust. 28

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him. 29

IMPROVEMENT.

Such may our character ever be, as we desire the supports of the Divine presence! Whoever be displeased, may we *always do the things which please him:* and with all diligence let us *labour, whether present* in the body *or absent* from it, to be still approved and *accepted of him!* (2 Cor. v. 9.) Ver. 29

Our blessed Redeemer is the light of the world. With how much pleasure should we behold his rays! With how much cheerfulness should we follow, whithersoever he leads us; as well knowing that we shall not then walk in darkness: and God forbid we should ever chuse to continue in it, as the shelter and screen of wicked works! 12

May we, with all candour and humility, regard and submit to the testimony which the Father has borne to him in so express and incontestable a manner! Dreadful would be the consequence of our refusing to do it. The doom of these wretched Jews would be ours, to die in our sins. And oh! how insupportable will that guilty burthen prove in a dying hour, and before the tribunal of God! How will it sink us into condemnation and despair! In vain shall those who now despise him, then seek admittance to the world where he is: thither they cannot come: and if excluded from him, must be excluded from happiness. 17, 18, 21, 24

Justly might it long since have been our case; for surely he has many things to say of us, and to judge concerning us, should he lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, after his having been so long with us, yea, after we have, as it were, seen him lifted up and *set forth* as *crucified among us!* (Gal. iii. 1.) 25, 26

May this faithful admonition prevail to our conviction and reformation; that our everlasting condemnation may not farther illustrate the reasonableness, yea, the necessity of it, and the madness of hardening our hearts against it! 28

SECTION CIV.

Our Lord continues his discourse with the Jews in the treasury, the day after the feast of tabernacles; and labours to convince them how vain their pretences to liberty and to the privileges of the children of Abraham were, while they continued to reject and persecute him. John viii. 30—47.

John viii. 30.

As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Thus did Jesus warn the Jews of the danger of rejecting him, and appeal to his heavenly Father as authorizing the whole of his administration; and, *as he was speaking these words, many* of his hearers were so struck with them, that they *believed in him*,[a] and were strongly inclined to follow him as the Messiah. SECT. 104. JOHN VIII.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed:

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Then Jesus, knowing the weakness and treachery of the human heart, and the difficulties which would lie in the way, if they attempted to put that inclination into practice, *said to those* of the *Jews who* were now ready to profess that they *believed in him, If you continue* stedfast *in* your adherence to *my word*, and yield a constant and universal obedience to it, [*then*] *you are my disciples indeed*, and I will find you as such. *And you shall* then *know the truth* of my gospel in its full compass and extent, so far as it is necessary to your salvation, or conducive to your comfort; *and the truth shall make you free*,[b] and fix you in that state of glorious liberty which is the privilege of my disciples alone. 31, 32

pear natural and easy, if what should be considered as one sentence had not been separated into two parts by a wrong *division* of the verses.

g *You shall then know that I am he.*] This undoubtedly refers to the prodigies attending his death, his resurrection and ascension, the descent of the Spirit, the amazing miracles wrought by the apostles in his name, &c.—But I am careful not to put such words into our Lord's mouth in the paraphrase, as would have been unsuitable to the reserve which, on some of these heads, prudence obliged him to keep: or such as in other instances would have superseded farther enquiry into the meaning of what he said. I think it most natural to refer these to the notes, or to the paraphrase on some following passage.

a *Many believed in him.*] One can hardly think that the ambiguity of the expression of *the Son of man's being lifted up*, (ver. 28.) engaged them to this, in hope that it might intimate some exaltation to a temporal kingdom. It is more reasonable to believe, that they felt their hearts impressed with what they heard from him in the whole preceding discourse. Yet it is observable, that in the series of it he advances no new proof of his mission; so that probably these people were wrought upon by what they observed in the temper and conduct of Christ; bearing the perverseness of his enemies with so much patience, speaking of an ignominious and painful death with such holy composure, and expressing so genuine and lively a sense of his heavenly Father's approbation, and so sweet a complacency in it.—And perhaps, would ministers generally allow themselves to open with freedom the native workings of a heart deeply impressed with the gospel, the secret charm might subdue those whose subtilty and prejudice might be proof against the most conclusive abstract reasoning.

b *The truth shall make you free.*] According to Sir Isaac Newton, (*On Proph.* p. 140.) these words were spoken in a sabbatical year,

SECT. 104. JOHN VIII.

But some that heard him were not a little displeased at this, as an insinuation that they were not already free; and, strangely forgetting the servitude of Egypt and Babylon, and how often their nation had been conquered by others, and even how low it was at present reduced by the Roman power, *they* confidently *answered him, We are the seed of Abraham*, a person always free, and the peculiar favourite of heaven; *and* we *have never been*
33 *in slavery to any man* whatever, nor do we fear that God will permit us to be so: *how* then *dost thou say* to us, *You shall be made free* upon becoming my disciples?

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 *Jesus*, waving what he might easily have replied as to their former history, and the present state of their civil affairs, that he might give no unnecessary offence, *answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you*, and recommend it to your consideration as a most important truth, *That every one who* habitually *practises sin*,[c] and goes on in a course of it, *is the slave of sin;* and that is a servitude by far meaner and more dreadful than the
35 yoke of an earthly tyrant. *Now*, as *the servant does not always abide in the family* of his master, but is, at his Lord's pleasure, liable to be dismissed or transferred to another; much less can you, who are the servants, not of God, but of sin, promise yourselves that you shall still, on account of your descent from Abraham, continue in those privileges which, by undeserved mercy, you hitherto enjoy; [*but*] *the* eldest *son* and heir of the family continually *abides* in his father's house, and his power and influence [*there*]
36 are *always* increasing.[d] Thus do I ever continue, and have power of receiving whom I will into the family: *if therefore* I, who am *the* Only-begotten *Son* of God, and the heir of all things, *make you free, you*, claiming in virtue of my right and authority, *will be free indeed*,[e] and will not only be delivered from the bondage of corruption and the tyranny of Satan, but be entitled to those immunities and blessings here, and to that future inheritance of eternal glory to which at present you have no claim.

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 And as to what you say, that you are Abraham's seed, *I know that you indeed are*, in a natural way, *the posterity of Abraham*,[f] as Ishmael also was; *but* what can that avail you, while you are so unlike Abraham in your temper, and are so far from being of a disposition suitable to your descent from him, that *you* not only deride, but *seek to kill me, because my word has no place in* your hearts, and has not any weight or influence
38 upon *you*, but is of a tenor directly contrary to your prejudices and lusts. And, on the whole, there is so great a difference between us, that it is really impossible to reconcile your practice with my doctrine; for *I speak that which I have seen with my Father*, and which I know to be agreeable to his mind and will; *and you do that which you have seen with your father*, and shew a visible conformity in your works to him: by which he intimated that their works as much resembled the nature of the devil, as his doctrine answered to that of God.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 But *they replied* with some warmth, *and said to him*, Take heed on whom this reflection may fall; for *Abraham is our father*, and surely thou wouldst not insinuate any thing to the injury of that holy patriarch's memory, who was expressly called the friend of God.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.—

Jesus says to them, If you were indeed, and in the most important sense, *the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham*, and would make it the great business
40 of your life to imitate so wise and so holy an example. *But now you seek* and contrive *to slay me, a* blameless and innocent *Man*, for no other reason but because I am one *who has* faithfully *told you the truth, which I have heard* and received in commission *from God: Abraham*, your boasted ancestor *did not* any thing like *this;* but gave the readiest
41 credit, and the most joyful welcome, to all the messages which God sent him. Nevertheless, though you are so far from doing the works of Abraham, I may well say, as I have just now intimated, (ver. 38.) that *you do the works of* him who is indeed *your father.*

—Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father.—

Then said they to him, We would have thee to know that *we are not born of fornication;* we are not bastard Jews, whose blood has been contaminated with idolatrous alliances; but, by virtue of our descent from his people, and our profession of his religion, *we have* all *one* great and common *Father*, [*which is*] *God.*

—Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

42 *Jesus said to them, If God were* indeed *your Father*, as you pretend, instead of attempting to take away my life, *you would* honour and *love me: for*, to speak without any reserve on this important head, I renew the declaration, That *I proceeded* originally,

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came

when at the feast of tabernacles, which was just about the beginning of the civil year, great numbers of servants were set at liberty: and he supposes that the answer of the Jews (ver. 33.) is to be explained with a peculiar reference to this, and contains two distinct thoughts: "*We are Abraham's seed*, and consequently, had we "ever been in bondage, we should have been set at liberty at this "season, though *Gentile slaves* are still detained; and, besides that, "*we never were in bondage to any man* at all." But the arguments by which this is fixed to a sabbatical year are dubious; and the words will make a good sense, independent on this peculiar interpretation; which yet seemed remarkable enough to deserve a mention here.

paraphrase and note on these words contain an excellent illustration of them. The main sense of what he says on this passage, is much the same with what I have given above, (much as I had written it several years ago:) the casting out Ishmael, though a son of Abraham by the bondwoman, beautifully illustrates the remark and the connection. It is strange that Dr. Claget should think that Moses was *the servant* here meant: and stranger yet, that Dr. Clarke should adopt so unnatural an interpretation. See his *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 4, 5.

c *Who* habitually *practises sin.*] Πας ὁ ποιων αμαρτιαν seems a phrase of the very same import with *working iniquity:* I have therefore rendered it *practises sin*, as that word generally signifies an habitual course of action.

e *If the Son make you free, &c.*] Archbishop Tillotson (Vol. III. p. 578.) thinks that this alludes to a custom in some of the cities of Greece, and elsewhere, whereby the son and heir had a liberty to adopt brethren, and give them the privileges of the family.

d *The servant does not always abide in the family; but the son abides [there] always.*] I think Dr. Guyse's ingenious and pious

f *I know that you are the posterity of Abraham.*] It seems probable that our Lord speaks this, not to those who believed in him, but to some others in the company; and that the phrase, *They answered him*, ver. 33. only signifies, that some of those who were present made such a reply.

from God; neither came I of myself; but he sent me.
43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

and do come from God,[g] and appear among you as his Messenger; *for I came not of myself, but He has sent me*, and I constantly keep his commission in view. And *why do you not understand* this *my language*, and acknowledge it, simple as it is, to be indeed divine? [*Is it*] *because you cannot hear my word?*[h] Can you pretend to say that I decline giving you the most public and frequent instructions, or that those instructions are unintelligible and obscure? Your consciences in general know the contrary as to the main series of them. 43

SECT. 104. JOHN VIII.

41 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The case indeed is sufficiently plain, nor do I fear to represent it in the most express terms: I tell you therefore, *You are* the genuine children *of your father the devil*;[i] *and the* malicious and abominable *lusts of* that accursed spirit, whom I justly call *your father, you will* resolutely and obstinately persist to *do*;[k] and even now there is the plainest evidence of your resemblance to him, in your design to murder me, and in your opposition to the truth that I deliver to you; for *he* has always acted as the enemy of mankind, and *was a murderer from the beginning*, in his attempt to bring destruction on the world by sin: (compare 1 John iii. 8.) And to accomplish his destructive purpose, as his original integrity was lost by his apostacy from God, he threw off all regard to what was right, *and continued not in the truth*, but, by an audacious and most pernicious lie, ruined the first parents of the human race, *because there* was and *is no truth in him*: and, indeed, *when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own*, and indulges the bias of his own fraudulent and perfidious nature; *for he is* himself *a liar, and* was *the father of it*, or the first forger of that detestable and pernicious crime. 44

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

And, as you are of such a disposition, if I would flatter your prejudices and vices, you would hear me with pleasure; *but because I* plainly and faithfully *speak the truth*, without desire of favour, or fear of offence, *you*, being under the influence of this false spirit, *do not believe me*. 45

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

If you take upon you to deny this, and accuse me of falsehood and prevarication in any degree, how will you prove your charge? *Which of you convinces me of* that, or any other *sin? But*, on the other hand, *if* it be evident that *I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God*, or that is really a child of God, and a partaker of his Spirit, *hears* with an affectionate and obedient regard, *the words of God*, his heavenly Father, and receives them with reverence, by whomsoever they are brought: the reason *therefore*, why *you do not hear* mine, is *because*, as I have often said, *you are not* the children *of God*. 46

47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY we approve ourselves the sincere disciples of Jesus, by continuing in his word, and being *faithful* even *unto death*, as ever we expect *a crown of life!* (Rev. ii. 10.) Without this, external privileges will turn to but little account. The children of Abraham may be the children of Satan; and they are so, if they imitate the temper and works of the accursed fiend, rather than of the holy patriarch. The devil was from the beginning a liar and a murderer; and all falsehood and malice are from him. Let us earnestly pray that we may be freed from them, and from the tyranny of every other sin to which we have been enslaved; that Christ, the Son, may make us free of his Father's family, and of his heavenly kingdom! Then we shall be free indeed, and no more be reduced to bondage. Ver. 31, 37, 38, 44, 36

May we prove that we are the children of God, by our readiness to hear and receive the words of our blessed Redeemer, the words of incarnate truth, and wisdom, and love; whom none of his enemies could ever convict of sin, nor ever accused him of it, but to their own confusion! May we resemble him in the innocence and holiness of his life; that we may the more easily and gracefully imitate that courage and zeal with which he reproved the haughtiest sinners, and bore his testimony against the errors and vices of that degenerate age and nation in which he lived! 47, 46

SECTION CV.

Jesus promising immortality to his followers, and speaking of his own existence as prior to that of Abraham, the Jews in the temple attempt to stone him; but he miraculously escapes from their hands. John viii. 48, *to the end.*

JOHN viii. 48.

THEN answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

JOHN viii. 48.

NOW when *the Jews* heard Jesus so expressly declaring that they were ignorant of God, and were the children not of Abraham, but of the devil, they *answered* him *therefore*, with great rage and contempt, *and said unto him, Do we not well say, that thou*, who speakest of Israelites in such language as this, *art a Samaritan*, rather than one of the holy seed, *and art possessed by a demon*, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness?[a] 48

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g *I proceeded* originally, *and do come from God.*] This seems to be the proper distinction between εξηλθον and ηκω. The Seventy (as several commentators have observed) use *the first* of these words to express the descent of children from their parents; (compare Gen. xv. 4; xxxv. 11; and Isa. xi. 1.) The form in which the *other* stands, favours the rendering I have given, (*do come from God,*) and may intimate not only his first mission, but his exact attendance to every particular message.

h *Is it because you cannot hear my word?*] I chuse to place a mark of interrogation against this clause, Οτι ο λογος τον εμον; and, δυνασθε ακουειν may refer either to their opportunity of *hearing*, which is the most common sense of the word, or to their capacity of *understanding*: I have therefore included both.—The word γινωσκειν, in the preceding clause, evidently signifies *to understand*, Acts viii. 30. and *to distinguish*, John x. 14.

i *You are of your father the devil.*] The account Josephus gives of the wickedness of the Jews about this time, abundantly vindicates this assertion of our Lord from any appearance of undue severity. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 10. (*al.* vi. 11.) § 5; *cap.* 13. (*al.* 16.) § 6. *Edit. Havercamp*, and Dr. Lardner's *Credibility*, part i. book i. chap. 6. Vol. 1. p. 304—310.

k *You will* resolutely and obstinately persist to *do.*] This is plainly the sense of the words, θελετε ποιειν. See note a, on John i 43. p. 43.

a *Possessed by a demon*, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness.] See note d, on John vii. 20. § 99. p. 201.

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But to this insolent charge *Jesus* meekly *answered*, It is plain from the whole series of my discourses and actions, that *I am not a demoniac*, nor can any of you produce any thing in all that I have said or done which looks like lunacy or impiety; *but* the truth is, *I honour my Father*, by bearing a steady and consistent testimony to the doctrine he sent me to reveal to the world; *and*, because this is contrary to your corrupt prejudices
49 and passions, therefore *you dishonour me* by such opprobrious reflections, in hope of
50 discrediting my message. *But* as for what personally relates to me, I am little affected with it, for *I seek not my own glory*; nevertheless, I know *there is one that seeketh*, and will secure it, *and* who now *judgeth* of all that passes, and will at length evidently
51 shew the exact notice he has taken of it, to my honour and to your confusion. For God will not only finally glorify me, but will confer the highest honours and rewards on all my faithful servants; and therefore, *verily, verily, I say unto you, If any one keep my word, he shall never see death*,[b] but shall assuredly be entitled to eternal life, and shall immediately be advanced to so glorious and happy a state, that the dissolution of this mortal nature shall, with respect to him, hardly deserve to be called death.

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 *Then the Jews*, thinking he had asserted that his disciples should be exempted from the common lot of mortality, *said* again *to him* in a reproachful way, *Now we* assuredly *know that thou hast a demon* dwelling in thee, which hurries thee on to this madness and pride, otherwise thou couldst never talk at this extravagant rate: for *Abraham*, the friend of God, and the great founder of our nation, *is dead: and* all *the* holy *prophets*, whom God raised up in succeeding ages, were so far from being able to bestow immortality on their followers, that even they themselves are long since dead; and *yet thou* presumptuously
53 *sayest, If any one keep my word, he shall never taste of death*.[c] What, *art thou greater than* that venerable patriarch, *our father Abraham, who is dead*, and than all *the* most illustrious *prophets*, who *are* also *dead? Whom dost thou* then *pretend thyself to be*, that thou shouldst thus assume such a distinguishing glory to thyself?

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 *Jesus replied, If I* only *glorify myself*, by high encomiums on my own dignity and excellence, while I neglect the honour and service of my Father, *my glory is nothing* but a mere empty sound; [*but*] it evidently appears by all the series of my converse and miracles, compared with each other, that *it is my Father* himself *that* effectually *glorifies me*, even he *of whom you* confidently *say, thât he is your God*, though in this respect you
55 pay so little regard to his testimony. And notwithstanding all your boasts, *yet* nevertheless *you have not* truly *known him; but I* well *know him; and if I should* deny it, and *say that I know him not*, or retract my pretensions to that peculiar and intimate knowledge of him which I have so often professed, *I should be a liar like you: but I* repeat it again, notwithstanding all your enmity and your scorn, that I perfectly *know*
56 *him, and* continually *keep his word* in its fullest extent and exactest purity. And I will tell you farther, that though you despise me as unworthy of your notice, *your father Abraham* himself *was* even *transported with a* joyful *desire that he might see my day*,[d] or the time of my appearance and glory, *and* in some degree, *he saw* [*it*] by faith, *and rejoiced* in the distant and imperfect view,[e] thankfully receiving every intimation of the purposes of my coming which God was pleased to give him.

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55 Yet ye have not known him, but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

57 *Then the Jews said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old*,[f] *and hast thou*, who but half a century ago wast not in being, any room to pretend that thou hast *seen* and conversed with *Abraham*, who has been dead more than two thousand years?
58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you*, and solemnly affirm it as a most certain truth, how incredible soever it may seem, that *before Abraham was born*,[g] I had

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto

b *He shall never see death.*] The turn given to this expression in the paraphrase accounts not only for this passage and that in John xi. 26. (§ 140.) but for what is said of *Christ's having abolished death*, (2 Tim. i. 10;) having *destroyed the devil*, (Heb. ii. 14.) and *raised up Christians with himself, and made them sit with him in heavenly places*. (Eph. ii. 6.)—Death is as nothing, compared to what it would otherwise have been to the sinner; and the felicity of heaven is so sure and so near, that, by an easy and common figure, true Christians are spoken of as already there. See the following note.

c *Yet thou sayest, If any one keep my word, he shall never taste of death.*] This is not the phrase which our Lord used, ver. 51. though perhaps its signification is nearly equivalent. But I think it shows how improper it would be to interpret the preceding words, Θανατον ου μη θεωρηση εις τον αιωνα, *He shall not see death for ever*; as if they signified, He shall not die eternally: for on this interpretation of the words, there could have been no shadow of force in the argument they use, unless they had meant to assert that *Abraham and the prophets were dead*, εις τον αιωνα, *for ever*; than which nothing could be farther from the thoughts of any of the Jews, except the Sadducees, who do not seem to have been the persons speaking here. See note l, on John iv. 14. p. 58.

d *Was* even *transported with a* joyful *desire that he might see my day*: ηγαλλιασατο ινα ιδη την ημεραν την εμην.] It is necessary to translate the word ηγαλλιασατο thus, not only to avoid the tautology which our translation occasions, but also to preserve the force of the words ινα ιδη. And indeed the expression may with the strictest propriety signify *leaping forward with joy* to meet the object of our wishes, as well as *exulting* in the possession of it. See Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 46—48.

e *He saw it* by faith, *and rejoiced* in the view.] I cannot think with Mr. Fleming, (*Christology*, Vol. I. p. 221.) that the appearance of Christ to Abraham, (Gen. xviii. 1.) could with any propriety be here referred to as Christ's day. It seems much more reasonable to conclude, with Dr. Scott and Mr. Henry, that it intimates some peculiar discoveries which the Spirit of God might make to Abraham for his own private consolation, though not expressly recorded in scripture. And thus, with regard to him, as well as many other saints under that dispensation, the secret of the Lord might in an extraordinary manner be with them, and he might show them much more of his covenant than they could have discovered without such extraordinary assistance.—Compare Psalm xxv. 14. and see Dr. Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. V. p. 194. Since I drew up this note, the reverend and learned Dr. Warburton has shown, that there is great reason to believe our Lord here particularly refers to a special revelation made to Abraham, when he received that command from God to offer up Isaac; by which he was informed, that the sacrifice then enjoined him was a symbol of the method which God would really take for the redemption of sinful men, by the death and resurrection of his own Son. See *Divine Legation*, Vol. II. p. 589—627. and the *Vindication* of it, in the second volume of *Occasional Remarks*.

f *Thou art not yet fifty years old.*] Christ was not now *five and thirty*: but Erasmus thinks that, worn with labours, he might appear older than he was. Lightfoot imagines, that as the Levites were discharged from the temple service at fifty, (compare Numb. iv. 3. 23.) that age was proverbially used, as I think it might have been, without any such institution relating to them. It is little to the credit of Irenæus's judgment to have inferred from hence, or admitted on an uncertain tradition, fathered on St. Luke, that Christ was now turned of forty. See Iren. *lib.* ii. *cap.* 39, 40.

g *Before Abraham was born.*] Erasmus observes that this is the

you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

a glorious existence with the Father, and *I am* still invariably the same, and one with him.[h] SECT. 105.

This appeared to them so direct a claim to the name and properties of the eternal JEHOVAH, that, being ignorant of the divine nature of Christ, they thought it intolerable blasphemy; and though he was *then* discoursing in so sacred a place as the temple, *they* immediately *took up* some loose *stones*, with which they were repairing either the pavement or the building,[i] *that they might cast them at him*, to destroy him: *but Jesus* in a miraculous manner *concealed himself* from their sight, *and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them* unknown,[k] *and so passed on* to another place till their fury was a little appeased. JOHN VIII. 59

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what patience did our blessed Redeemer bear, and with what meekness of wisdom did he answer, the most virulent and opprobrious language! When he was rudely charged with being a Samaritan, and having a demon, he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;* (Heb. xii. 3.) and *being* thus *reviled, he reviled not again.* (1 Pet. ii. 23.) And shall we too keenly resent the reflections which are thrown upon us! May but our conscience witness for us, and we need not fear all that are against us! Ver. 48, 49

Christ honoured his Father, and sought not his own glory. So may we be careful for the honour of God, and cheerfully commit to him the guardianship and care of our reputation! and we shall find there is one that seeketh, and judgeth in our favour. 49, 50

It is a great and important promise which our Lord here makes, *If any one keep my word, he shall never see death.* Sense seems to plead against it; but he is *the resurrection and the life*, and hath assured us he will make it good. Let us therefore be *strong in faith, giving glory to God;* (Rom. iv. 20.) Though not only Abraham and the prophets, but Peter and Paul and the other apostles, are dead, yet this word shall be gloriously accomplished. Still they live to him, and shortly shall they be for ever recovered from the power of the grave; so that death is to them comparatively as nothing. With them may our final portion be, and we may set light by the reproaches, clamours, and accusations of prejudiced, ignorant, and sinful men! 51, 52

Adored be that gracious providence that determined our existence to begin in that happy day which prophets and patriarchs desired to see, and in the distant view of which Abraham rejoiced! Let it be also our joy; for Jesus Christ is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;* nor could *the heart* of those holy men fully *conceive those things which God had prepared for them that love him*, and which *he has* now *revealed unto us by his Spirit.* (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) 56, 58

SECTION CVI.

The seventy disciples return with joy: Christ foretels the greater success of his gospel, and praises his heavenly Father for the wise though mysterious dispensation of it. Luke x. 17—24.

LUKE X. 17.

AND the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

LUKE X. 17.

AFTER these things, Jesus determined to take his last, and, as it seems, his most successful circuit through Galilee;[a] *and*, before he set out upon it, *the seventy* disciples, who had been sent before him as his harbingers, (sect. xcvii. p. 196, 197.) *returned* to him *again*[b] *with* great *joy*, attended with some mixture of surprise, *saying, Lord*, we have not only cured diseases, according to the power thou wast pleased to give us, (ver. 9. p. 197.) but, though thy commission did not directly express so much, yet it appears that *even the demons* themselves *are subject to us*, when *in thy name* we command them to go out of such as they had possessed. SECT. 106. LUKE X. 17

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

And he said to them, I know that it is and must be so: for *I* myself *saw Satan*, the great prince of the demons, *falling like lightning from heaven* on his first transgression, and well remember how immediate and dreadful his ruin was;[c] and I foresee in spirit that renewed, swift, and irresistible victory, of which this present success of yours is an earnest, which the preaching of the gospel shall shortly gain over all these rebel powers which, even in their highest strength and glory, were so incapable of opposing the arm of God. 18

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and

And, that you may more successfully pursue this conquest, *behold, I* now *give you* a miraculous *power* securely *to tread upon serpents and scorpions*, those venomous and 19

meaning of γινεσθαι; and Raphelius abundantly justifies the interpretation, *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 133.

h *I am* invariably the same, &c.] Compare Heb. xiii. 8. I have long (with Chrysostom and many others) looked on this text as at least a strong intimation of the Deity of Christ, nearly parallel to Heb. i. 12. συ δε ο αυτος ει, *thou art the same.*—I cannot apprehend that εγω ειμι is ever used for *I was;* nor imagine, that if our Lord had been a mere creature, he would have ventured to express himself in a manner so nearly bordering on blasphemy, or have permitted his beloved disciple so dangerously to disguise his meaning.

i *Took up* some loose *stones*, with which they were repairing, &c.] See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* on this place; and note h, on John ii. 20. p. 48.

k *Going through the midst of them.*] The omission of these words in this passage, as quoted by Chrysostom and Augustin, as well as in some manuscripts, has led some to suspect they were added from Luke iv. 30. See § 32. note p, p. 65.

a His last circuit through Galilee.] St. Luke has given us a large account of several occurrences in it, omitted by all the other Evangelists; and I think there can be no doubt but it must come in here. It was despatched between the feast of tabernacles and the dedication, (mentioned John x. 22. § 134.) or between the months of September and December.—I call it his last circuit through Galilee, because it is strongly intimated, that after the conclusion of it he returned thither no more before his crucifixion. (See Luke xiii. 31—33. and John x. 40—42.) Quickly after his resurrection, which was the next spring, we find five hundred brethren in Galilee. (1 Cor. xv. 6.) It is probable most of them might be converted in this journey; for we never find him attended by greater multitudes, nor his enemies more alarmed, than about this time.

b *The seventy* disciples *returned* to him *again.*] I presume not to determine where or when they met him; but considering they were by the law obliged to attend this feast at Jerusalem, it seems most probable that was the time and place.

c *I saw Satan*, &c.] I think this answer to the seventy loses much of its beauty and propriety, unless we suppose Satan to have been the prince of the demons they spoke of, and also allow the reference, hinted at in the paraphrase, to the first fall of that rebellious spirit. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 4. and Jude ver. 6.—For the remainder of this section, and some of the following, the reader may consult the notes in the parallel passages referred to, which have been considered in their proper places above.

SECT. 106. LUKE X.

hurtful creatures, (compare Mark xvi. 18; and Acts xxviii. 5.) in token of your triumph over the infernal spirits, *and over all the might of* Satan *the* great *enemy*, which he may set in array against you; *and* I will so effectually support you in all the trials you shall meet with, that *nothing shall by any means* be able to *injure you*, while you continue faithful in your adherence to my service. (Compare Psal. xci. 13. and Gen. iii. 15.)

over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 *Nevertheless, rejoice not* so much *in this, that the* evil *spirits are* thus *subject to you*, and that you are enabled miraculously to control them; *but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*, and that you stand enrolled among the heirs of that glorious world, as the peculiar objects of the divine favour and love.

20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

21 *In that* remarkable *hour, Jesus*, in a pleasing contemplation of the success that should attend his gospel, though it was to be propagated by such weak instruments, exceedingly *rejoiced in* his *spirit, and said*, in the words he had used on a former occasion,[d] (Matt. xi. 25, 26. p. 118.) *I ascribe glory to thee, O* Almighty *Father*, the Creator and *Lord* both *of heaven and earth, that* while *thou hast hid these things from the wise* philosophers *and prudent* politicians of the age, thou hast discovered them in the mean time to others of an inferior character, *and hast* graciously *revealed them to* the weak, the ignorant, and the poor, who are but as *infants* in the eyes of the world, and in their own apprehension: *be it so, O Father!* I cheerfully acquiesce in it, *since such is thy* sovereign, wise, and holy *pleasure*, to humble human pride, and to display the glory of thy name.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 Then likewise did Jesus repeat the declaration of his own extensive authority, and said, (as before, p. 118.) *All things* in the kingdom of providence and grace *are delivered to me by my Father; and no one* perfectly *knows who the Son is, except the Father; nor who the Father is, except the Son, and he to whom the Son will* be pleased to *reveal* [*him*:] so that from me you must learn the saving knowledge of God and the way to secure his favour.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 *And* then *turning to his disciples, he said* [*to them*] *apart, Blessed are the eyes which* do, or hereafter shall *see the things that you see:* and (I may add) the ears which do, or 24 hereafter shall hear the things that you daily and familiarly hear. In the midst of all your poverty, fatigue, and danger, you have reason to think yourselves exceeding happy; *for I say unto you*, and very solemnly assure you of it, *That many* of the most eminent *prophets* of the Old-Testament dispensation, *and* even of the most pious and illustrious *kings* whom God raised up to reign over his people, *desired* earnestly *to have seen the things which you see, and did not see them; and to have heard the things which you hear, and did not hear them:* remember then how much you are indebted to the divine goodness, and let it be your care to make a suitable improvement of them. (Compare Matt. xiii. 16, 17. p. 131.)

23 And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said, privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 23 AND are not our obligations in some measure proportionable to theirs, while these glorious sights are reflected 24 to our eyes from the mirror of his word, and these glad tidings are echoed back to our ears! Have not we also 21 reason to adore the peculiar favour of God to us, and to admire the sovereignty of his love, that he has been pleased to reveal his Son in us, and has given to such babes as we must own ourselves to be, that spiritual knowledge of him which he has suffered to remain hidden from the great, the learned, and the wise; *Even so, Father*, must we also say, *for so it seemed good in thy sight:* thou *hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy*, and often exaltest the riches of thy grace, by the meanness and unworthiness of those on whom it is bestowed.

20 Have we reason to hope that our worthless names are written in heaven? let us often think of that glorious society amongst whom we are enrolled as members, and rejoice in the thought of those privileges which result from such a relation to it: privileges, in comparison of which, a power to heal diseases and eject demons with a word, would hardly deserve our joy. In a grateful sense of them, let us adore the grace which gave us a place in the Lamb's book of life, and be ever solicitous to behave in a manner worthy of so illustrious a hope.

18, 19 We have great encouragement to expect that he before whom Satan fell like lightning from heaven, will enable us finally to trample on his power. Let us not servilely fear that condemned criminal, already marked with the scars of the divine vengeance; but let us cheerfully hope that the triumph over him will be renewed by the preaching of the gospel. Quickened by that hope, let us more earnestly pray that the ruin of his gloomy kingdom may be daily more and more apparent, especially among us; that our gracious Redeemer, who reckons the 21 interest of souls his own, may have renewed reason of joy and praise on that account. Exert, O blessed Jesus, 22 thine own almighty arm for that great purpose; and, as thou alone canst do it, reveal thine heavenly Father to those who, by neglecting thee, shew that they know not him! Dec. 6. 1755.

SECTION CVII.

Christ answers the scribe who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life; and illustrates his answer by the parable of the good Samaritan. Luke x. 25—37.

SECT. 107. LUKE X. 25.

LUKE X. 25.

WHILE our Lord was discoursing in this manner with his seventy disciples, an assembly of people gathered round them; *and behold*, among the rest, *a certain* man who was a *lawyer*, or one of those scribes who made it their profession to study and teach the law

LUKE X. 25.

AND behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what

[d] *And said*, in the words he had used on a former occasion.]—They are here repeated with evident propriety, in the view of that glorious success which should attend these his despised servants, as destined conquerors of the infernal legions, by whom thousands of the poor should be brought to receive the gospel.

shall I do to inherit eternal life?

of Moses, and to resolve many curious questions relating to it, *rose up* with a design *to try him*;[a] *and*, to judge of the skill of Jesus in divine matters, *said*, O thou great *Master* and Teacher in Israel, *what must I do that I may inherit* that *eternal life*, which thou so frequently proposest as the main object of our pursuits, and which is indeed most worthy of them.

SECT. 107.

LUKE X.

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And Jesus, as *he* knew with what design he had proposed the question, wisely returned it on himself, and *said to him, What is written in the law*, which thy profession must engage thee to have made thy study? *how dost thou* find the case to be determined there? and what is it thou dost so frequently *read* there?[b] 26

27 And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he replying, said, It is there written as the sum of all the commandments, (Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.) "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with* "*all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thine understanding;* thou "shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render him the most intelligent and sincere, "the most affectionate and resolute service;[c] *and* thou shalt also love *thy neighbour* as "sincerely and impartially *as* thou lovest *thyself*." 27

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Jesus readily approved his answer; but was desirous to convince him at the same time how far he was from coming up to what the law required: *and*, in this view, *he said to him, Thou hast answered right: do this, and thou shalt live;* do it perfectly, and thou wilt have a legal claim to life; or cultivate this temper sincerely, and God will not leave thee finally to perish, but will give thee all necessary discoveries of his will in order to thine eternal salvation. 28

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

But he, willing to justify himself as to the integrity of his inquiry, and to display the virtue of his character, not at all doubting but he sufficiently understood his duty to God, *said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour*, whom by this latter precept I am obliged to love? for I would fain know the whole of my duty, that I may practise it in all its extent. 29

30 And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

And Jesus replying, spake the following parable, which was intended to shew, in the most lively manner, that every human creature, who needs our assistance, is to be considered by us as our neighbour, of whatever nation, or faith, or profession he may be: and he *said, A certain man* of our own country *went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and*, passing through those wild deserts and dangerous roads,[d] he *fell among* some of those cruel *robbers who* so often assault such as travel that way: and these ruffians, *having both* plundered, *stripped*, and bound him, *and* having also *wounded him* in a cruel and dangerous manner,[e] *went off, leaving him half dead. And it happened, that* while he was in these deplorable circumstances, *a certain priest went down that way*, who was going to Jericho, where so many of that profession were settled;[f] *and* though, by virtue of his sacred office, he ought to have been a peculiar example of humanity to the afflicted, yet *seeing him* lie at some little distance, and being willing to avoid the trouble or expense which a more particular inquiry might have occasioned, *he crossed* [*the road,*] *and went on*, proceeding in his journey without any further notice. *And in like manner* too, *a Levite*, going that way, *when he was at the place*, just *came and looked on* this miserable object,[g] *and* immediately *crossed and passed by*, without doing any thing at all for his relief. And thus the distressed creature might have lain and perished, *but* for *a certain Samaritan*,[h] who, *as he was travelling* the same way, *came* to the place *where he was, and seeing him* in this sad condition, though he might easily know, or at least guess him to be a Jew; yet, notwithstanding the general hatred of these two nations to each other,[i] he *was moved with* very tender *compassion* towards 30

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 31

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on *him*, and passed by on the other side. 32

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, 33

a With a design *to try him.*] Dr. Barrow concludes it was with an intent to ensnare him; the question being so determined by the Jewish doctors, that for a different answer he might have been accused of heresy; (see Barrow's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 221;) but I see no certain proof of so bad an intention.

b *How dost thou* so frequently *read* there?] Vitringa with great pertinency observes, that what the scribe replies, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.* was daily read in their synagogues, which made the answer more apparently proper. (Vitring. *Synag.* p. 1060.) And that this passage of scripture is still read by the whole assembly, both in their morning and evening prayers, and is called, from the first word of it, the Shemah, may be seen in Pedahzur's *Ceremonies of the Modern Jews*, p. 49. and 115; only it is observable, they leave out that clause, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* See Wotton's *Miscell.* Vol. I. p. 171—194.

c Thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul, &c.] I apprehend, with Archbishop Tillotson, we may acquiesce in this general sense of the passage, without being solicitous to seek a particular distinct idea to each of the words used here. Otherwise I should think καρδίᾳ, *the heart*, a general expression, illustrated by the three following words; *even with all thy soul*, (ψυχῆς,) that is, with the warmest affection; *and with all thy strength*, (ἰσχύος,) that is, with the most vigorous resolution of the will; *and with all thine understanding*, (διανοίας,) that is, taking care to form rational ideas of him as a guide to the affections and resolutions. Accordingly we may observe, that in a parallel place (Mark xii. 33.) the word συνέσεως is used instead of διανοίας. And this very word is justly translated *Understanding*, Eph. i. 17; iv. 18; and 1 John v. 20.

d Passing through those wild deserts and dangerous roads.]—This circumstance is well chosen; for so many robberies and murders were committed on this road, which lay through a kind of wilderness, that Jerome tells us it was called מעלה, the *bloody way.* Jericho is said to have been seated in a valley, and thence is the phrase of going down to it.

e *Wounded him* in a cruel and dangerous manner.] This is strongly implied in the expression πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες, *having laid on wounds.*

f Where so many of that profession were settled.] See Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* where he produces a passage from a considerable Jewish writer, to prove that twelve thousand priests and Levites dwelt at Jericho; which, if it had any shadow and degree of truth, vindicates the paraphrase, and shews how naturally the priest and Levite were here introduced, without any reflection on their office.

g *Came and looked on* this miserable object.] This is the import of ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν, as Raphelius has shewn in his *Not. ex Xen.* p. 91.

h *A certain Samaritan.*] It is admirably well judged, to represent the distress on the side of the Jew, and the mercy on that of the Samaritan; for self-interest would make them see how amiable such a conduct was, and lay them open to our Lord's inference, ver. 37. Had it been put the other way, prejudices might more easily have interposed before the heart could have been struck with these tender circumstances.

i Notwithstanding the hatred of these two nations to each other.] See note g, on John iv. 9. § 29. p. 59. Some writers tell us, this hatred arose so high, that if a Jew and a Samaritan met in a narrow way, they were exceedingly solicitous that they might pass without touching each other, for fear of pollution on each side. If this was fact, it is a beautiful illustration of the humanity of this good Samaritan, who would not only touch this Jew, but took so much pains to dress his wounds, and to set him on his own beast, supporting him in his arms as he rode, as well as making such generous provision for him at the inn.

SECT. 107. LUKE X.

him: *And going to him, he bound up his wounds* in the best manner he could,[k] *when,* as the only means he had to cure them, *he had poured in* some of the *oil and wine* which he had taken with him as part of the provisions for his journey; (compare Gen. xxviii. 18;) *and setting him on his own beast,* because he was incapable of walking, *he* held him up as he rode, and with the tenderest care *brought him* safely *to an inn,* where he had some acquaintance; *and* there *took* farther *care of him,* that he should be lodged and accommodated in a proper manner that night. *And the next morning as he departed* from the inn, *he took out* of his purse *two* denarii, or Roman *pence,*[l] *and gave them to the landlord* of the house; *and* at the same time *said to him, Take* all possible *care of* this poor wounded stranger, and let *him* want for nothing; *and whatsoever more thou shalt spend* on his account, *I will repay thee as I come back.*

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Now, said our Lord to the lawyer he was discoursing with, *which of these three* persons, the priest, the Levite, or the compassionate Samaritan, *dost thou think was the neighbour of this* poor *man that fell among the robbers? And he said,* Undoubtedly it was *he that had mercy upon him,* notwithstanding he was a person of another nation and religion. *Then said Jesus to him,* If this seem so amiable an example to thee, *Go and do thou likewise;* and if thou findest even a Samaritan in the like distress, consider him as thy neighbour, and as cheerfully perform all these beneficent and friendly offices to him: for those pretensions to religion are but vain which do not inspire men with such universal humanity and benevolence.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

IMPROVEMENT.

Of how great importance is it that we should every one of us be in good earnest making this enquiry which the scribes addressed to our Lord, *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* What ought we not willingly to do, and to bear, that we may secure so great a felicity? Still will our Lord answer us from his word, that we must *keep the commandments of God,* while we are looking to him as *the end of the law for righteousness;* (Rom. x. 4.) Happy are they that faithfully do it, that through the grace manifested in the gospel, *they may have a right to eat of the tree of life!* (Rev. xxii. 14.)

May this abstract and summary of the commandments be written, as it were, in golden characters, on the table of each of our hearts! May we love the Lord our God with all the united powers and faculties of our souls, and our neighbour as sincerely and fervently as ourselves! And may we learn, from this beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, to exercise our charity to our fellow-creatures in the most amiable manner!

The Jewish priest and Levite had, no doubt, the ingenuity to find out some excuse or other for passing over to the other side; and might, perhaps, formally thank God for their own deliverance, while they left their brother to bleed to death for want of their assistance. Is it not an emblem of many living characters, perhaps of some whose sacred office lays them under the strongest obligations to distinguished benevolence and generosity? But the good Samaritan acted the part of a brother to this expiring Jew. O seed of Israel, O house of Levi, and of Aaron! will not the day come when the humane virtues of heathens shall rise up in judgment against thee!

Let us reflect with shame, what are the differences between one Christian and another when compared with those between a Samaritan and a Jew! Yet here the benevolence of a good heart overcame even these; and, on the view of a wounded, dying man, forgot that he was by nation an enemy. Whose heart does not burn within him, whose eyes do not overflow with tears of delight, while he reads such a story? Let us *go and do likewise,* regarding every man as our neighbour who needs our assistance. Let us exclude every malignant sentiment of bigotry and party-zeal, which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race but a little select number, whose sentiments and practices are so much our own, that our love to them is but self-love reflected. With an honest openness of mind, let us always remember the relation between man and man, and feel and cultivate that happy instinct by which God, who has formed our hearts in many instances alike, has, in the original constitution of our nature, strongly and graciously bound them to each other.

SECTION CVIII.

Christ visits his friends at Bethany, and commends the diligence with which Mary attends his preaching, while her sister Martha was too anxious about the entertainment of her guests. Luke x. 38, *to the end.*

LUKE X. 38.

SECT. 108. LUKE X.

ABOUT this time[a] our Lord quitted Jerusalem, and set out with his disciples on his last journey from thence to Galilee, the feast of tabernacles (as was observed above) being fully concluded. *Now it came to pass, as they were on their journey, he entered,* with many of his attendants, *into a certain* neighbouring *village* called Bethany; (compare John xi. 1. sect. cxxxix.) *and a certain* pious *woman, whose name was Martha,* with the most cheerful hospitality *received him into her house,* thinking herself greatly honoured by such a visit.

LUKE X. 38.

NOW it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.

k *Bound up his wounds,* &c.] As the Jew was stripped by the robbers, ver. 30. we may probably suppose the Samaritan used some of his own garments for this purpose; which was a farther instance of wonderful goodness, perhaps tearing them to make a more convenient bandage. Of the use the ancients made of wine and oil in dressing fresh wounds, see Bos. *Exerc.* p. 24. and Wolfius on this text.

l *Two* denarii, or Roman *pence.*] These were in value about fifteen pence of our money. It is a very probable circumstance, that a man travelling without any attendants, and now going out to a considerable distance from home, should not have more to spare, especially as he was to travel through so dangerous a road; and so it would have been very imprudent to charge himself with much more money than he was like to want in his journey; which would be the less, as it was usual for travellers in those parts to carry their provision with them. Compare Gen. xxviii. 18; and Josh. ix. 12, 13.

a About this time.] I express myself in this indeterminate manner as to the date of this little but very instructive story, because I apprehend the Evangelist has not exactly determined when it happened, which it was of no importance for us exactly to know. It might very possibly be just at this time; at least the want of any sufficient reason for transposing it, obliges me, on the rules I have laid down to myself, to introduce it here.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

And she had a sister called Mary, who, being earnestly desirous to improve this happy opportunity of advancing in divine knowledge and a religious temper, *sat down at the feet of Jesus,* as an humble disciple;[b] *and heard* with most diligent and pleasing attention *his* wise and gracious *discourse,* which, as his usual practice was, he began, as soon as he came in, to address to those that were about him.

But Martha, too solicitous about the variety and elegance of the entertainment she intended for her sacred Guest and the company with him, *was* exceedingly *hurried*[c] and perplexed *about much serving; and coming in* to the room where Jesus was, *she,* not without some warmth and discontent, expressed how much she was offended at her sister's sitting still, and *said, Lord, dost thou not mind that my sister has left me* to provide and *serve* up the entertainment *alone,* which is more than I can well manage; while she sits here as calmly as if she had no concern in it? I would not take upon me to call her away from thy presence myself, but I beg that thou wouldst interpose in the matter; *speak to her therefore, that she may lend her helping hand with mine,*[d] and let her then sit down to hear thee discourse when the entertainment is over.

And Jesus in reply said to her, O *Martha, Martha, thou art* over *anxious and disturbed* with restless agitation of spirit[e] *about many things* which are not worth so much solicitude, and might well have been spared on such an occasion as this: *But* let me tell thee, my dear friend, that *there is one thing* absolutely *necessary,*[f] and of infinitely greater importance than any of these domestic and secular cares; even the care to have the soul instructed in the saving knowledge of the way that leads to eternal life, and to secure a title to it: *and Mary* is wisely attending to that; therefore, instead of reproving her, I must rather declare that she *has chosen* what may eminently be called *the good part,*[g] *which* as it *shall not be* finally *taken away from her,* I would not now hinder her from pursuing; but rather invite thee to join with her in her attention to it, though the circumstances of our intended meal should not be so exactly adjusted as thy fond friendship could desire.

IMPROVEMENT.

So steadily and zealously did our blessed Lord pursue his work, with such unwearied diligence and constant affection! No sooner is he entered into the house of this pious friend, but he sets himself to preach the word of salvation, and is the same in the parlour which he had been in the temple. O Mary, how delightful was thy situation! Who would not rather have sat with thee at the feet of Jesus, to hear his wisdom, than have filled the throne of the greatest prince upon earth! Blessed were thine eyes in what they saw, thine ears in what they heard, and thine heart in what it received and embraced, and treasured up as food which would endure to everlasting life! Ver. 38, 39

How unhappily was her good sister deprived of the entertainment of these golden moments, while hurried about meats and drinks, and tables with their furniture, till she lost not only her opportunity, but her temper too; as it is indeed hard to preserve it without a resolute guard, amidst the crowd and clamour of domestic cares! Happy that mistress of a numerous family who can manage its concerns with the meekness and composure of wisdom, and adjust its affairs in such a manner, as that it may not exclude the pleasures of devotion, and cut her off from the means of religious improvement! Happy the man who, in a pressing variety of secular business, is not so cumbered and careful as to forget that *one thing* which is absolutely needful; but resolutely chuses this better part, and retains it as the only secure and everlasting treasure! Oh that this comprehensive important sentence were ever before our eyes! Oh that it were inscribed deep upon our hearts! *One thing is needful.* And what is this one thing but the care of the soul? what, but an humble attention to the voice and the gospel of Christ? Yet, as if this were of all things the most unnecessary, for what poor trifling care is it not commonly forgot? yea, to what worthless vanity is it not daily sacrificed? 40, 41, 42

Let the ministers of Christ, let the friends of souls in every station, exert themselves, that all about them may be awakened duly to regard this great interest; accounting it their meat and their drink to promote it. Let them be always solicitous that neither they nor others may neglect it for the hurries of too busy a life, or even for the services of an over-officious friendship.

b *Sat down at the feet of Jesus,* as an humble disciple.] It is well known that this was the posture in which learners attended on their teachers, (compare Luke viii. 35; and Acts xxiii. 3.) and likewise grew into a proverb for humble and diligent attention. See the authors cited by Wolfius, *in loc.* and especially Vitringa, *Synag. lib.* i. part 2. *cap.* 6.

c *Was* exceedingly *hurried.*] The word περιεσπατο properly signifies *to be drawn* (as it were) *different ways* at the same time, and admirably expresses the situation of a mind surrounded with so many objects of care, that it hardly knows which to attend to first. She had probably servants to whom she might have committed these affairs; and the humility and moderation of our blessed Redeemer would have taken up with what had been less exactly prepared; especially as she had so valuable and so signal an opportunity of improving her mind in divine knowledge.

d *Lend her helping hand with mine.*] This is the exact import of συναντιλαβεται, which is also with the utmost propriety used for the *assistance* which the *Spirit of God* gives to the infirmities of our frail nature. Rom. viii. 26.

e *Disturbed* with restless agitation of spirit.] The word τυρβαζη is no where else used in the New Testament. It seems to express the restless situation of a person in a tumultuous crowd, where so many are pressing upon him that he can hardly stand his ground; or of water in great agitation.

f *There is one thing* absolutely *necessary:* ενος δε εστι χρειαι.] This is one of the gravest and most important apophthegms that ever was uttered: and one can scarce pardon the frigid impertinence of Theophylact and Basil, who explain it as if he only meant, *One dish of meat is enough.*

g *The good part.*] That μερις signifies *a portion,* there can be no reasonable doubt; but that here is any allusion to the custom of sending *the best portion* of an entertainment to a guest to whom peculiar honour was intended, seems too great a refinement, and not exactly suitable to the occasion, though some considerable critics have defended it. (See Wolfius, *in loc.* and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 225, 226.) I think rendering την αγαθην μεριδα, *the good part,* is more forcible, as well as more literal, than our translation; as it intimates nothing else to deserve the name of *a good part* when compared with this. Compare Matt. xix. 17. § 137.

SECTION CIX.

Christ being entreated by his disciples to teach them to pray, repeats with some additions the instructions and encouragements relating to that duty which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount. Luke xi. 1—13.

Luke xi. 1.

SECT. 109. LUKE XI.

OUR Lord then leaving Bethany, went on his way; dividing his time, as usual, between the care of teaching his numerous followers and the exercises of secret devotion. *And as he was* one day *praying in a certain* retired *place, when he had ended, one of his disciples said to him, Lord,* we desire thou wouldst *teach us to pray,* and give us some short form which may be proper for our frequent use, *as John also taught his disciples,*[a] and other leading men of the several religious sects among us have taught theirs.

2 *And he said to them, When ye pray,* you may use that form which I before have given as a comprehensive model and directory for prayer, (See Matt. vi. 9—13. p. 82.) and *say* in your addresses to God, "O God of the spirits of all flesh,[b] who dwellest in the "high and holy place, with humble reverence we bow before thee, and with a filial confi- "dence in thy mercy, and mutual love unto each other, we would look up to thee as to "*our* God and *Father, who* with the most amazing grace and condescension *art* ready to "attend unto the supplications of thy children from thy throne *in heaven:* we adore thee "as possessed of infinite perfections; and as our first concern is for thy glory, we offer it "as our first request, *May thy name be* every where *sanctified;* may thy perfections be "displayed through the world, and be regarded with the highest veneration! And, "that the honour of thy Majesty may be thus exalted, *May thy kingdom come* which "thou hast promised to establish under the Messiah; may thy victorious grace be univer- "sally triumphant over all thine enemies, and thy people be willing in the day of thy "power! And, as an evidence of its efficacy on the hearts of men, *May thy* holy *will* "*be done, as* it is constantly *in heaven, so likewise upon earth;* and be as cheerfully "submitted to, as fully acquiesced in, and readily obeyed in all things, as it is possible for "us in this imperfect state to imitate those heavenly spirits who delight in doing thy 3 "commandments, and hearkening to the voice of thy word! During our continuance "here on earth we would not be solicitous to seek great things for ourselves, but humbly "beg that thou wouldst *give us day by day our daily bread,* and wouldst supply us, as "our wants return upon us, with such a competent provision of the necessaries of life as "may enable us to serve thee acceptably, and to attend without distraction and uneasi- 4 "ness to the performance of our duty. *And,* though the guilt of our iniquities might "justly separate between thee and us, and withhold good things from us, we earnestly "entreat thee to extend thy mercy to us, and to *forgive us* all *our sins; for even we,* "the bowels of whose mercy cannot be compared with thine, are willing to *forgive* "*every one that is indebted to us,* and desire to pardon all that have injured us: "*and,* to prevent us for the time to come from falling into sin, *bring us not into* "circumstances that will expose us to the danger of *temptation,* nor suffer us to be "tempted above what we are able to bear; *but* keep us by thy grace from all iniquity, "and *rescue us from* the power of *the evil one,* that he may never triumph in our fall, "and we may finally be saved from all the ruinous effects of sin."

5 *And* when he thus had taught them what they were to pray for, in order to excite and encourage them to a believing importunity in prayer, *he said to them, Who* is there *of you* that has not observed the efficacy of importunate requests?[c] If, for instance, he *shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight,* and knock at his door, *and say to him,* 6 *Friend,* I desire thou wouldst *lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine,* who was benighted *on his journey, is* just *come to my house, and* being altogether unprovided, *I* 7 *have nothing to set before him* for his refreshment: *And he from within,* instead of granting his request immediately, *shall* at first be unwilling to do it, and *answer* him, *and say, Do not disturb me* at so late an hour; for *the door is now shut* and fastened, *and my children are with me in bed* and asleep; so that *I cannot rise to give thee* what thou 8 askest. Yet if he still go on to press him that he would consider his necessity and comply with his request, *I tell you, though he would not rise and give him* the loaves that he desired, *because he was his* neighbour and *friend, yet on account of his importunity,* as he continues knocking, and will take no denial, *he will* at length *get up and give him as* 9 *many as he wants.* Now then, if one who was at first unwilling to regard his friend, was overcome at last by his continued earnestness, and yielded to his importunity, much more will God, who is infinitely good and rich in mercy, though he may not see fit to answer

Luke xi. 1.

AND it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come: thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth:

3 Give us day by day our daily bread:

4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him:

7 And he from within shall answer, and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given

a *As John also taught his disciples.*] Many learned men suppose that the Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This John the Baptist had probably done, though we know not now what it was. And in this view only can we suppose the disciples could now ask Jesus to *teach them to pray;* for it is not to be thought, that in the three preceding years of his ministry, he had not often given them instructions both as to the *matter* and *manner* of *prayer.* In this sense Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Lightfoot understand the request and answer before us; and I have never met with any thing upon it which has given me more satisfaction. See Mede's Works, p. 1, 2. and Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

b O God, &c.] I think it but justice to the reverend Mr. Godwin to let the reader know that this paraphrase on the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses was written by him. I had here only given a translation, having paraphrased this excellent prayer before in § 40, the notes on which may be consulted here.

c *Who* is there *of you* that has not observed the efficacy of importunate requests?] The words in the original do not make a complete grammatical sentence: but such accidental inaccuracies

you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

you immediately, be certainly prevailed upon at length to give you what you stand in need of, if you continue to be earnest and importunate in your prayers to him: *and I say* therefore *to you*, Whatever mercy you desire to obtain, *ask* it of God with a continued fervency, *and it shall* assuredly *be given you; seek* it with diligence, *and you shall find* it; and if it be a while delayed, *knock* with an earnest importunity at the door of divine mercy, *and it shall* at length *be opened to you*. And the success of others may encourage you to this, as what indeed has been confirmed by happy and constant experience: *for every one that asks* with an unwearied fervency, *receives; and he that* diligently *seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocks* again and again, though for a while there may be some delay, *it shall* at length *be opened*. (Compare Matt. vii. 7, 8. sect. xlii.) SECT. 109. LUKE XI.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

And, further to assist your faith on these occasions, reflect upon the workings of your own hearts towards your offspring, and consider, *What father is there among you who if a son* of his *shall ask* him *for bread, will give him a stone? or if* [*he ask*] him *for a fish, instead of a fish will give him a serpent? Or if he ask* him *for an egg, will* be so unnatural as to *give him a scorpion?* and in the room of what is necessary for the support of life, will offer him a thing that would be useless or injurious to him. *If you then, who are* at least comparatively *evil*, and perhaps some of you inclined to a penurious and morose temper, yet *know how to give good gifts to your children*, and find your hearts disposed to relieve their returning necessities by a variety of daily provisions; *how much more shall* [*your*] *heavenly Father*, who is infinitely powerful and gracious, and who himself has wrought these dispositions in you, be ready to bestow every necessary good, and even to *give the* best and the most excellent gift of all, his *Holy Spirit, to them that* sincerely and earnestly *ask him* for it, to produce and cherish in their hearts those graces which may fit them for the services of life, and for the joys of an happy immortality? (Compare Matt. vii. 9, 10, 11. p. 86, 87.) 11 12 13

IMPROVEMENT.

Well does this petition become every disciple of Christ, *Lord, teach us to pray!* Thou hast taught us by thine example, and by the precepts of thy word; teach us also by thine Holy Spirit! Excellent is this form of sound and divine words which our great Master here recommends. God forbid that any of his followers should censure their brethren, who think it still proper to use it, not only as a directory but as a form too, though perhaps with some little variation from the original sense of some clauses of it.[d] Let us attentively study it, that, concise and expressive as it is, our thoughts may go along with its several petitions. Ver. 1

Let us learn to reverence and love God, and to consider ourselves as brethren in his family. Let the glory of his name, and the prosperity of his kingdom, be much dearer to us than any separate interest of our own. Let it be our cordial desire that his will may be universally obeyed, and with the most entire consent of soul acquiesced in by all his creatures, both in heaven and on earth. Let our appetites and passions be so moderated, that having even the plainest food and raiment, we may be therewith content: and, on the other hand, how plentiful soever our circumstances may be, let us remember, that day by day we depend on God for our daily bread. Nor do we need even the most necessary supplies of life more than we need daily pardon; to which, therefore, we should be putting in our constant claim, heartily forgiving all our brethren, as we desire to be forgiven by God. Conscious of our own weakness, let us, as far as we can, endeavour to avoid circumstances of temptation; and when necessarily led into them, let us be looking up to heaven for support; labouring above all things to preserve our integrity, and to maintain a conscience void of offence. 2, 3, 4

Depending on the certainty of these gracious promises, and encouraged by the experience of so many thousands who have on asking received, and on seeking found, let us renew our importunate addresses to the throne of divine grace; and, remembering the compassion of our heavenly Father, let us be emboldened, in the full assurance of faith, to ask every necessary blessing, especially the communication of that enlightening and sanctifying Spirit, without which our corrupt hearts will find out a ready way to abuse the choicest of his providential favours, to the dishonour of his holy name, and the deeper wounding of our own miserable souls. 9, 10

SECTION CX.

Our Lord dining at the house of a Pharisee, seriously admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger; by which they are exasperated rather than reformed. Luke xi. 37, *to the end.*

Luke xi. 37.

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he

Luke xi. 37.

Now, after our Lord had delivered these things, it happened one day, that *while he was speaking* to the people about the great concerns of their eternal salvation,[a] *a certain Pharisee* then present *invited him to dine with him; and*, with whatever view he might SECT. 110. LUKE XI. 37.

are sometimes to be found in the most approved authors. The sense is not the less plain.

d With some little variation from the original sense, &c.] Dr. Guyse has excellently shewn, in his note on Matt. vi. 13. that this prayer in its original sense was peculiarly suited to the dispensation then present, as introductory to the Messiah's kingdom, and has given a just and expressive paraphrase of it in that particular view. But there is not a clause in it which will not bear a more extensive sense, and express what ought to be our daily temper, and the breathings of our heart before God. No doubt, thousands of Christians have daily refreshment and edification in the use of it; and it is astonishing that any should venture to condemn their brethren for it. But I would hope there are few of any profession now remaining, who have so much the spirit of opposition and censoriousness.

a It happened one day, that *while he was speaking*, &c.] The attentive reader will easily observe that I have here omitted what occurs from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 37th verse. That passage is inserted, § 61—64. as being exactly parallel to Matt. xii. 22. *et seq.* and Mark iii. 22. *et seq.* Nor could I see any proof that the same discourse, with just the very same circumstances, happened again here; and as this seemed improbable, in proportion to the variety and resemblance of those circumstances, I thought it was better thus to transpose Luke's story, than to take the repetition for granted.—The phrase εν δε τω λαλησαι, *while he was speaking*, will, I think, fairly admit the turn I have given it in the paraphrase; but if any judge otherwise, it will be easy to turn back to the passage as inserted before, p. 122. *et seq.* and all I have said above to introduce the section before us will be true on that supposition.

SECT. 110. LUKE XI.

do it, Jesus, that *he* might not seem morose, or insensible of a civility, accepting the offer, *went in* to his house, *and sat down to table.*

went in, and sat down to meat.

And when the Pharisee who had invited him *saw that he* was regardless of the tradition of the elders, and *did not first wash before dinner*, according to the constant custom of their sect, *he wondered* [*at it,*] considering the character he had for an extraordinary degree of sanctity.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 *But the Lord*, perceiving his thoughts, and knowing that in some circumstances a faithful reproof is the most valuable token of friendship and gratitude, *said to him*, As I see you are *now* offended at my neglecting the ceremony of washing before dinner, I cannot but plainly tell you, that *you Pharisees* are too much like those vain people that *cleanse* only *the outside of the cup and the dish, while* the inside, which is of much greater importance, is left dirty and foul; for with regard to many of you, *your inward part*, even your very heart and conscience, *is* defiled, being *full of rapine, and* of all

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 the foulest kinds of pollution and *wickedness*. But let me seriously ask you, *O* ye *thoughtless creatures*,[b] and let me charge you that ye ask yourselves, *Did not he that made the outside, make also that which is within?* Did not the same God that created the body, create the soul too? and must he not intimately know his own work, and discern and abhor all those secret abominations, which, in contempt of his omniscience, you study so artfully to conceal from your fellow-creatures? (Compare Psal. xciv. 8, 9.)

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

41 I would therefore, from the sincerest concern for your true honour and happiness, exhort you, not only to purge yourselves from secret wickedness, *but* to abound in the exercise of universal goodness, and particularly to *give alms* with liberality *in proportion to your substance*:[c] *and* then, if it be done from a right principle, *behold*, God, the great Proprietor of all, will accept and bless you; and though you should not be so exact in this outward washing, *all things are pure to you*, so that you may use them with comfort; whereas now you do, as it were, pollute and profane every thing you touch, and all the water in the world cannot wash away the stain. (See Tit. i. 15.)

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have: and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 *But* alas, you seem little disposed to attend to this kind and faithful advice; and therefore my character obliges me solemnly to warn you of those approaching judgments which, if speedy repentance does not prevent, will shortly overtake your whole sect, numerous and honoured as it is. *Woe* therefore *unto you, Pharisees! for*, to gain the admiration of the priests and the people, *you* most scrupulously *pay the tithe of mint and rue, and every* [*other*] trifling *herb* that grows in your gardens, and expect to recommend yourselves to the divine acceptance by such kind of observances; *but*, at the same time, you shamefully *pass by* and carelessly neglect the practice of righteous *judgment* to your fellow-creatures, *and* of *the love of God* your Creator, as if they were matters of but little importance; whereas indeed *these* are the duties that *you* more especially *ought to have done; and* yet, I own, you ought *not to neglect the other*, as even the least of God's commands are to be revered and obeyed. (See Matt. v. 19.)

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 *Woe unto you, Pharisees*, on account of your pride, which appears on every occasion, and in every affair of life! *for you love the uppermost seats* in all assemblies, even *in the* very *synagogues* where you meet to humble yourselves before God; *and* mightily affect *salutations in the markets* and other public places, by titles of distinguished respect, as the guides and fathers of the people, the oracles of truth, and the standards of holiness. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 6—10. sect. clvii.)

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 *Woe unto you* also, *O* ye *scribes and Pharisees*, on account of your deceit, as under all those appearances of the strictest sanctity you are the most egregious *hypocrites* of the age![d] *for* I may truly say that *you are like concealed graves*,[e] *which*, being overgrown with grass, *men walk over, and are not aware of* [*them,*] till they stumble at them, and are hurt, or at least defiled by the touch of them.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them.*

45 *And one of the doctors of the law*,[f] who happened to be present, observing that in this last woe Jesus mentioned the scribes, who were a body of men to whom he and his

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto

b *O ye thoughtless creatures.*] As αφρονες is a milder word than μωροι, I chose to render it thus, rather than as in our translation; (see note m, on Matt. v. 22. p. 76.) The learned Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 227.) explains the latter part of the verse as if it had been said, "*There is a great deal of difference between cleaning the out-*" *side, and cleaning that which is within*, and no such necessary con-" nection between them as you seem to suppose." To justify this, he urges 2 Sam. xix. 24. and one passage in Aristophanes, where σωειν signifies to *cleanse*; but the sense is so unusual, and that commonly received so much more lively and important, that I could not persuade myself to deviate from our translation here.

c *In proportion to your substance.*] Thus Grotius understands it. The learned Bos (*Exercit.* p. 26.) has I think abundantly proved the words τα ενοντα (for κατα τα ενοντα) will very justly admit this sense, and are thus used by some of the best Greek classics. No other seems to agree so well with the connection; not even that ingenious turn of Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 93—96.) who explains τα ενοντα, by το εντος του ποτηριου και της παροψιδος, Matt. xxiii. 26. or *that which is within the cup and dish*, as if it had been said, "Give meat to the hungry, and drink to " the thirsty, and make a liberal distribution of *those things that* " *are within the cup and the dish.*" But the last view in which το σωθεν had been mentioned, was, as expressing *the temper of the heart*, (ver. 40.) which is a strong objection against this great man's interpretation.

d *O ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*] Though some copies want these words, and Grotius and Dr. Mill give them up, I think Dr. Whitby is right in retaining them; especially because they so much illustrate verse 45. See Whitb. *Exam. Mill*, p. 46.

e *Are like concealed graves.*] The discourse against the Pharisees, which is recorded Matt. xxiii. (§ 157, 158.) was plainly delivered at another time, and in very different circumstances. Our Lord there compares them to *whited sepulchres*, ver. 27. adorned on the outside, but defiled within: but here to *graves overgrown with grass*, which might often happen to be by the way-side; (compare Gen. xxxv. 19.) and so might occasion such accidents as are here referred to.

f *One of the doctors of the law.*] I apprehend that νομικος may well be rendered *a doctor or interpreter of the law*: which I generally chuse, rather than the word lawyer, because that naturally suggests to us a modern idea of an office which did not exist among the Jews at this time, and has strangely misled some interpreters. These Jewish lawyers (as our translation calls them) were the most considerable species of scribes, who applied themselves peculiarly to study and explain the law. Probably many of them were Pharisees; but it was no ways essential to their office that they should be so. What touched the person here speaking was, that our Lord in his last *woe*, ver. 44. had joined the scribes with the Pharisees.

him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets; and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation:

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zecharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke

brethren belonged, *answered and said unto him, Master,* in *saying these things, thou* SECT. *reproachest* not only the sect of the Pharisees, but *us too,* in a manner unbecoming the 110. dignity of our holy profession, as the depositaries of the sacred oracles.

But Jesus was so far from palliating the matter to ingratiate himself with them, that *he* LUKE plainly and courageously *said,* Nay, it is a righteous rebuke, and I intend it for you, and XI. therefore particularly repeat it for your admonition: *Woe unto you also, ye* professed 46 *interpreters of the law! for,* by your rigorous decisions on the ceremonial parts of it, and the human traditions which you have added to it, *you load* other *men with insupportable burdens, and* unmercifully lay them on, while *you yourselves will not touch the burdens with one of your fingers,*[g] but suffer your lives to contradict your precepts, even in some of the most important instances.

I also solemnly denounce a *woe unto you* all, for the malignity and cruelty of your 47 tempers under this mask of piety and devotion! *for* at a great expense *you build* and adorn *the sepulchres of the prophets,* as if you had a mighty veneration *and* affection for them, though *your fathers slew them.* But as you are regardless of the instructions 48 that the prophets gave, and appear in your conduct to imitate your fathers, *truly you bear witness to* them, rather than against them, *and* in effect *approve* and vindicate *the works of your fathers;*[h] *for* as *they indeed slew them, and you build their sepulchres,* one would imagine that you erected these monuments not so much in honour of the slaughtered prophets, as of the persecutors by whom they were so wickedly destroyed. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 29—32. sect. clviii.)

Therefore, also, the wisdom of God hath said,[i] and I am in his name commissioned 49 to declare it as his determinate purpose, *I will* yet *send them* other *prophets and* extraordinary messengers, particularly the *apostles,* who shall declare my gospel to them, as the last expedient for their recovery and salvation: but such I know to be the hardness of their hearts, that they will generally despise *and* reject them; nay, [*some*] *of them they will kill, and* will *persecute* the rest: So that by filling up the measure of their sins, they 50 will bring such a terrible destruction upon themselves, *that the blood of all the prophets* and martyrs *which has been* cruelly *shed from the foundation of the world, may* seem to *be required of this generation:* Even *from the blood of* righteous *Abel,* who in those 51 early ages for his distinguished piety was murdered by his inhuman brother, *to the blood of Zechariah,*[k] one of the last of the prophets, *who was slain between the altar and the temple.* (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22.) *Yea,* in the strongest terms *I tell you,* and repeat it again, The ruin God will bring upon you in his righteous judgment shall be so dreadful, that *it shall* seem as if the guilt of all their blood had been laid up in store, that it might *be required* at the hands *of this generation,* and heap aggravated ruin on their heads. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 34—36, sect. clviii.)

And I will add, that the disguises thrown on scripture, and the methods used to conceal 52 it from the people, have done a great deal to bring on this terrible sentence: *woe* therefore *unto you, interpreters of the law,* on this account! *for* by these unrighteous practices *you have* as it were *taken away the key of* divine *knowledge;*[l] and instead of tracing out a spiritual Messiah in scripture, and illustrating the testimony which the sacred oracles bear to him, you have rather abetted the popular prejudices against him; and have been so perverse and obstinate in your opposition to the gospel, as that *you have not entered in* to the kingdom of heaven *yourselves, and* even *those that* otherwise were disposed to do it, and *would have entered in, you* by your wicked management *have hindered.*

But while he spake these severe and awful *things* with so much freedom *to them, the* 53 *scribes and Pharisees* were so exceedingly provoked, that they *began fiercely to fasten upon him,*[m] *and rudely* endeavoured *to urge him to speak of many things* that were the most exceptionable topics: Thereby *laying snares for him, and attempting,* if possible,

g *Will not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.*] Perhaps their consciences might charge them with some private contempt of the injunctions they most rigorously imposed upon others, in ceremonial precepts, as well as moral; or it may refer to the want of a due tenderness for the comfort of men's lives, which they imbittered with such rigour. This seems to prove against Trigland, (*de Karæis,* p. 58. *et seq.*) that these lawyers were not Karaites; for these added not traditionary burdens to the law.

h *And* in effect *approve* and vindicate *the works of your fathers.*] Archbishop Tillotson (Vol. II. p. 195, 196.) has set this text in a most strong and beautiful light, and hinted the turn which I have given it in the paraphrase.

i *Therefore also the wisdom of God hath said.*] Dr. Guyse (with Markius, *Exerc.* p. 669.) paraphrases this clause as the words of the historian, and supposes him here to apply this character to Christ, and to declare that *Christ, the wisdom of God, farther said, I will send them prophets, &c.*—I doubt not but Christ might with great propriety be spoken of by that phrase: but, with all due respect to that learned and pious interpreter, I cannot apprehend it to be the sense of this passage; not only because the phraseology is unexampled in the Evangelists, but chiefly because our Lord does not say, I send to *you,* but to *them.* Yet I see no reason to conclude (with Mr. Whiston, in his *Essay* for restoring the Old Testament, p. 228.) that this is a quotation from any ancient writer. Christ was empowered, without any such voucher, to declare what the counsels of Divine wisdom had determined, and this manner of speaking strongly intimates that he was so; in which view it has on this interpretation, a peculiar beauty and propriety.

k *The blood of Zechariah.*] What reason there is to conclude the Zechariah here spoken of is that prophet of whose death we have an account in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, *et seq.* will be shewn in note g, on Matt. xxiii. 35. § 158.

l *The key of knowledge.*] Vitringa understands this of one fundamental truth, which would have led them into the knowledge of the rest: (*Observ. Sacr. lib.* i. p. 125.) but all their endeavours to embarrass and bias the minds of men in their inquiries after truth, might be intended here; as well as more especially their disguising the prophecies which related to the Messiah.—If a key was delivered to them as the badge of their office, (p. 180. note g, and Camero on this place,) there may be a beautiful allusion to that circumstance; as if he should have said, *You take that key, not to use, but to secrete it.* (See Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 208.)—Elsner has well shewn on this text, that the heathen priests were called κληδουχοι, *key-bearers.* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 228, 229.)

m *Fiercely to fasten upon him.*] So δεινως ενεχειν properly signifies. (See note g, on Mark vi. 19. p. 56.)—Several more of the words here used are metaphors taken from hunting. Αποστοματιζειν might be rendered to mouth or bear down with the violence of their words, as Theophylact excellently explains it; but the addition of περι πλειονων engaged me rather to translate it as I have done. Grotius and Ca-

SECT. 110. LUKE XI.

to start some unguarded *word*[n] which they hoped might fall *from his mouth* in the warmth of natural resentment; *that they might* take occasion to *accuse him* for it before the Roman governor, or the Jewish sanhedrim; but the prudence of Christ frustrated their malice, in the midst of all the plainness of his faithful rebukes.

him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3 *et seq.* FAITHFUL are the wounds of a friend; and such were the reproofs of Christ on this occasion. How well had all the entertainments of the Pharisee's table been repaid, had he and his brethren heard them with candour, 51 humility, and obedience! These men despised them to their ruin: let us often review them for our instruction, that none of these dreadful woes may come upon us.

39, 42 This discourse of our Lord is a most just and severe rebuke to every hypocritical professor who is scrupulous and exact in matters of ceremony, while he neglects morality; and is studious to shine in the sight of men, while 43 he forgets the all-penetrating eye of God. It exposes the ostentation of those who pride themselves in empty titles 46 of honour, and eagerly affect precedence and superiority. And it evidently chastises those who press on others the duties they neglect themselves, and so are most righteously judged out of their own mouth.

44 How melancholy is it to observe, in instances like these, the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the human heart, and 47, 49 its desperate and unfathomable wickedness! and to see how men impose upon themselves with empty appearances, like these Pharisees, who built the sepulchres of the former prophets, while they were persecuting those of their own 50, 51 day; and, in contempt of all that was said by the messengers of God, were *filling up the measure of their iniquities*, till the cloud which had been so long gathering burst on their heads, and poured forth a storm of aggravated wrath and ruin!

May that God who has an immediate access to the hearts of men, deliver all Christian countries, and especially 52 all Protestant churches, from such teachers as are here described: who take away and secrete the key of knowledge instead of using it, and obstruct rather than promote men's entrance into the kingdom of heaven! How loud will the blood of the souls they have betrayed cry against them in the awful day of accounts! and how little will the wages of unrighteousness, and the rewards of worldly policy, be able to warn them against destruction, or to support them under it!

SECTION CXI.

Christ cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and animates them against the fear of men by the promise of extraordinary assistance from his Spirit in their greatest trials. Luke xii. 1—12.

LUKE xii. 1.

SECT. 111. LUKE XII.

IN the mean time, while Christ was thus discoursing at the Pharisee's house, *many thousands of people were gathered together*,[a] and pressed with *so* much eagerness to hear him, *that they* even *trampled on each other: and* [*Jesus*] going forth among them, *began to say to his disciples* in the presence of them all, See that you more especially be-
1 ware, and *above all things take heed to yourselves of* being corrupted by *the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy:* a vice which secretly puffs up their minds, and strangely spreads itself through their hearts and lives, so as to taint and spoil the very best
2 of their duties. But seriously reflect upon the folly of it; *for* you may assure yourselves, as I have told you formerly, (Matt. x. 26; Mark iv. 22; and Luke viii. 17.) that *there is nothing* now so secretly *concealed which shall not be* discovered, and be openly *unveiled* another day; *nor* any thing so artfully disguised or *hid, which shall not* then at least *be made known*, if God does not more immediately expose those shallow artifices which he
3 now discerns and abhors. *So that whatever you have spoken* with the utmost caution, *in* the thickest *darkness, shall* then *be* published and *heard in the* clearest effulgence of *light: and what you have whispered in* the most retired chambers and *closets, shall* then *be proclaimed* aloud as *from the house-tops*, in the audience of all.

4 *And* therefore let it be your care, not merely to save appearances, but to maintain a good conscience, though at the greatest expense: for *I say unto you, my* dear *friends*, with all possible seriousness, and most tender concern for your everlasting welfare, *Fear not those who* at the worst can only *kill the body, and after that have nothing more which they can do*, the immortal soul being entirely out of their reach as soon as it has
5 quitted the body. *But I will point out to you* the great Object *whom you shall fear*, while I exhort you most reverentially to *fear* the great Almighty God, even *him who, after he has killed* the body, *has power to cast* both that and the soul *into hell; yea*, knowing that I cannot too often inculcate it, *I say unto you* again, *Fear him*, and rather chuse to venture on the greatest dangers, and to sacrifice your lives, than to do any thing which may offend his Divine Majesty. (Compare Matt. x. 28. p. 153.)

LUKE xii. 1.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light: and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

4 And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

saubon have shewn that it sometimes signifies *to examine in a magisterial way;* but Erasmus's note is, on the whole, the best I have seen upon this word.

n *To start some* unguarded *word.*] Θηρευσαι in this connexion has a most beautiful propriety, and signifies the eagerness with which sportsmen beat about for their game, to start it from its covert.—It is very probable, as Mr. Cradock conjectures, that the Pharisee who was master of the house, had invited a great many of his brethren and learned friends, on purpose to make a more formidable attack upon Christ, and by their concurrent testimony to charge upon him any thing which might render him obnoxious: and the presence of so many of them made the discourse delivered at this time more proper, and the courage and zeal it expressed more remarkable. See Cradock's *Harmony*, part ii. p. 6.

a *Many thousands of people were gathered together.*] It would be more exactly rendered *many myriads;* but, lest every English reader should not know that *a myriad* is ten thousand, I render it *many thousands:* nor is it necessary to take the word in its strictest sense. Perhaps this vast assemblage of people might be owing to an apprehension, either that Christ might meet with some ill usage among so many of his enemies, or that he would say or do something peculiarly remarkable on the occasion. Compare Luke v. 17. 19. § 45.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered; fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

9 But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye ought to say.

In the mean time, remember that your enemies cannot hurt even your bodies without his knowledge and permission; for his providence extends itself even to the meanest works of his hands: for instance, *Are not five sparrows sold for* so inconsiderable a sum as *two farthings?*[b] and *yet not one of them*, minute and worthless as they are, *is forgotten before God;* but he attends to all the circumstances of their lives and deaths. Surely then you will not be overlooked by him; *but* may justly conclude, that he has such a 7 special and particular concern for you, as that *even the very hairs of your head are all numbered*, so that not one of them can perish without his notice *Fear not, therefore;* for as men, and much more as my servants and friends, *you are more valuable than many sparrows*, and will be more remarkably his care than they. *But* howsoever he may now 8 permit you to be persecuted by your enemies for your fidelity to me—though he should even suffer you to sacrifice your lives in so honourable a cause, you will be far from being losers by it in the end: for *I say unto you*, That *if any one shall* freely *acknowledge* his faith in *me before men*,[c] *the Son of man* himself *shall also acknowledge* his complacency in such a person, and his relation to *him*, even *before the angels of God*, when they come to attend on his final triumph. *But as for him that* basely and perfidiously *renounces* 9 *me before men*, and is ashamed or afraid of maintaining so good a cause, *him will I* also *renounce before the* holy *angels of God*,[d] when they appear in a radiant circle around me, and wait, with solemn and observant silence, the important event of that awful day (Compare Matt. x. 29—33. p. 153, 154.)

Nothing can therefore be more dangerous and fatal than to oppose my cause, *and* that 10 especially when the Spirit is sent down on my followers after my resurrection and ascension: for *whosoever shall speak a* reflecting *word against the Son of man* in this present state of his humiliation and suffering, he may possibly hereafter repent, and on that repentance *it may be forgiven him*:[e] *but as for him that blasphemeth the Holy Spirit*, who shall then display his most glorious agency as my great Advocate and Witness; as for the wretch that maliciously imputes to diabolical operation the most convincing evidences of divine power and goodness that shall be given by the Spirit after his effusion, his crime is of such a nature, that *it shall not be forgiven him;* for he has thus opposed the last method of God's recovering grace, and shall, as utterly incorrigible, be abandoned to final destruction. (See Matt. xii. 31. and note p, p. 123.)

But let me add, that however others may be affected by this testimony of the Spirit, 11 one happy effect of its operation shall be to furnish you, my apostles, for an honourable discharge of your office in its most difficult parts: and therefore, in the opposition you shall meet with from your enemies and persecutors, *when they shall bring you before* the judicial courts which assemble in *the synagogues, and* even before greater *magistrates, and* the supreme *powers*, whether Jewish or heathen; though they may have not only your liberty, but your life in their hands, yet *be not anxious how* to behave, *or what apology you shall make* for yourselves,[f] *or what you shall say* in defence of the gospel you preach: *For the Holy Spirit* himself *shall teach you in that very hour*, or in the 12 season of the greatest difficulty and extremity, *what you ought to say*, and what answer you should make to the most captious inquiries, or most invidious charges: (Compare Matt. x. 19, 20. sect. lxxv.) Proper thoughts and expressions shall freely flow in upon you as fast as you can utter them; so that with undaunted courage you shall be able to vindicate the honour of my gospel, and to confound the most artful or most potent of your enemies.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us, from this discourse which we have been reading, learn the folly of hypocrisy, as well as the wickedness Ver. 1 of it. *A lying tongue is but for a moment;* (Prov. xii. 19.) and the great approaching judgment-day will show all in their true colours. May we live as those who are then to be made manifest! May the leaven of deceit, by 2, 3 divine grace, be entirely purged out of our hearts; and all our conduct be so fair and equal, that it may appear more honourable and lovely in proportion to the accuracy with which it is examined; as the whitest garments are recommended, by being seen in the strongest light!

If we would preserve such an integrity of soul, let us endeavour to get above the servile fear of man: *of man* 4 *that shall die, and of the Son of man, that shall be as grass;* as if the oppressor had us in his power, and were *ready to destroy: and where is the fury of the oppressor?* (Isa. li. 12, 13.) With what infinite ease can God

b *For two farthings, ασσαριων δυο.*] This was a Roman coin that was then current in Judea, called *as*, or anciently *assarius*, which was the tenth part of the denarius or Roman penny, in value about *three farthings* of our money. Two sparrows might be bought for one, and five for two of these. Compare Matt. x. 29. § 76.

c *If any one shall acknowledge me, &c.*] The idioms of languages differ so much, that what is very elegant and proper in one, may, if verbally translated, be contrary to grammar in another. This verse and the following are instances of it. It seems to me a kind of superstition, to scruple such little changes as I have here made.

d *Him will I* also *renounce, &c.*] Nothing can be more majestic than this view which Christ gives of himself. To be *renounced by him* is spoken of as a circumstance which would expose a man to the contempt of the whole angelic world, and leave him no remaining shelter or hope. Compare Matt. vii. 23. § 43. note d, p. 89. and John v. 22. *et seq.* § 47. note h, p. 97.

e *It may be forgiven him.*] The common rendering of αφεθησεται is more literal; but the connexion shows it must be taken as here; for it would be madness to imagine that, in such a case as this, *forgiveness* must come of course, whether the blasphemer did or did not repent. What grammarians call an enallage of moods and tenses is very frequent; and I shall not always think it necessary to trouble the reader with an apology, when the reason of the change is so evident.

f *Be not anxious how* to behave, *or what apology you shall make* for yourselves.] It is not without reason that Christ so often touches on this topic. The apostles, being poor and illiterate men, would naturally have been thrown into confusion when they appeared as criminals in the presence of persons in the highest stations of life, and their solicitude would be in some measure proportionable to their piety, if they apprehended the gospel, which was dearer to them than their own lives, might suffer by the hurry and disorder of their thoughts, when they were thus called publicly to defend it. Compare note e, on Matt. x. 19. p. 152.

SECT. 111. LUKE XII.

restrain it; and, when it is let loose in all its violence, how little can it do to hurt his faithful servants! Let this mean passion be overawed by the fear of that God who has our eternal all in his hands; whose vengeance or favour will reach far beyond the grave, and determine our final misery or felicity, as we are the objects of the one or the other.

While we are in the world, let us labour after a firm faith in the universality of Divine Providence; from which
6, 7 the least of his creatures are not exempted, nor are they forgotten by it. Let us endeavour to enjoy the pleasure and comfort of such a thought; assuring ourselves, that He who regards the life of birds, and of insects, will not neglect the care and preservation of his children.

8, 9 In a steady persuasion of this, let us determine courageously to confess and maintain his gospel in the extremest danger; knowing that thus only we shall secure the honour of being owned by Christ, amidst all the glories of his final appearance.

11, 12 And, in a word, to animate us to this holy courage, and to assist us in every other duty, let us earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit, by whose influence the apostles were instructed and supported in the discharge of their difficult and various office; whose grace therefore must be abundantly *sufficient for us*, to cause us to *abound in every good word and work*. (2 Cor. ix. 8.)

SECTION CXII.

Christ being desired to interpose in a dispute between two brethren about property, declines the decision of the case; and takes occasion to advance a caution against covetousness, which he enforces by the parable of the rich fool. Luke xii. 13—21.

LUKE xii. 13.

SECT. 112. LUKE XII.

AND while he was discoursing thus to his disciples, *one of the crowd* that was then about Jesus, *said to him, Master*, I desire thou wouldst *speak to my brother, that he would* agree to *divide the inheritance with me*, which since the death of our father he injuriously detains to himself; for thou art well known to be a person of such an extraordinary character, that I would hope his reverence to thine authority may induce him to do me justice.

LUKE xii. 13.

AND one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 *But* Jesus, as *he* did not come to meddle in such matters, prudently *replied*,[a] *Man*, what dost thou mean by such a rash appeal to me? *Who constituted me a judge* in temporal concerns, *or* set me up as *a divider over you?* My kingdom is of a spiritual nature; and as to the civil rights and properties of men, I intermeddle not with them, but leave them just as I found them. (Compare Exod. ii. 14.)

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 *And* upon this occasion, though *he* would not interpose in the affair, yet, to prevent their being fond of the enjoyments of the world, and to preserve them from a covetous disposition, Jesus *said* to his disciples, and *to them* that were present, *See to it, that* with the utmost care and resolution *you be upon your guard against* all kinds and degrees of *covetousness*;[b] *for* though it be a common, it is a very unreasonable vice; since it is evident that the comfort and happiness of *a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions;* nor can the continuance of his life, even for the shortest period of time, be secured by that abundance.

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 *And*, to enforce and illustrate this remark, *he spake a* very instructive *parable to them, and said, There was a certain rich man whose ground bore fruit* so *plentifully*, that
17 he had not room to receive and lay up in store the vast produce of his harvest. *And he* found all his plenty an incumbrance to him, so that he *reasoned with himself*, not without some considerable anxiety of mind, *saying, What shall I do? for I have not room* at
18 present *to store up my crop*, should I stow it ever so close. *And*, after some pause, *he* came to a resolution, and *said, I will do this*, as what appears to me the wisest scheme: *I will pull down my* old *barns, and build* new, which shall be *larger*, and much more commodious than they; *and there I will gather in all my* rich *increase* this year, *and*
19 all *my goods* that I already have in store: *And* then *I will* retire from business, and sit down and enjoy the fruits of my former labours, and will *say to my soul* with complacency and confidence, O my *soul, thou hast* now an *abundance of goods laid up*, on which thou mayst comfortably subsist *for many* future *years; repose thyself* therefore after all thy fatigues; *eat* and *drink* freely, without any fear of exhausting thy stores; *and be* as *merry* as corn and wine and oil, shared with thy most jovial companions, can
20 make thee. *But God* beheld him with just displeasure, and by the awful dispensation of his providence, in effect *said to him*, amidst all this gaiety of heart, in the variety of his schemes and hopes, *Thou fool*, who dost thus stupidly forget both the dignity and the mortality of thy nature, and thy continual dependence upon me thy supreme Lord! know to thy terror, that while thou art talking of a long succession of pleasurable years, *this* very *night thy soul shall be demanded of thee*,[c] and be hurried away to its place; *and*

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This I will do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided!

a *He* prudently *replied.*] This appellant probably thought, that as the Messiah, he would act in the character of a prince who would decide controversies relating to property.—My rendering the phrase *he said unto him*, by the equivalent word *replied*, will not, I hope, be thought to need any apology.

b *See to it, that* with the utmost care *you be upon your guard against* all kinds and degrees of *covetousness.*] Ορατε και φυλασσεσθε is a lively phrase, the full force of which I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase, not being able exactly to do it in the version. (Compare note c, on Matt. xvi. 6. p. 177.) Some old versions and very good copies read it, *from all covetousness;* to which I have shewn so much regard, as to insert the word *all* in the paraphrase; as it is certain, at least, that our Lord intended the caution in this extent, whether he did or did not so particularly express it.

c *Thy soul shall be demanded of thee.*] It is in the original απαιτουσιν, *They shall demand thy soul.* Elsner thinks it alludes to the *messengers sent to fetch away the soul;* and produces a remarkable and well known passage from Plato, to prove that Socrates thought this the office of a spirit superior to men. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 231.

then, where will all its boasted entertainments be, or *who shall possess what thou hast* thus laboriously *provided*, but shalt thyself never enjoy? And accordingly the unhappy creature died that night, and all his wealth could do no more for him than furnish out the expences of his funeral. And *so*, or such a fool in the divine account, [*is*] *he that heaps up treasures to himself* here on earth, *and is not rich with respect to God*[d] in acts of charity and piety, which would secure a fund of celestial treasure lodged in his almighty hand, and therefore inviolably safe from such calamitous accidents as these. SECT. 112. LUKE XII. 21

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

IMPROVEMENT

MOST prudently did our Lord decline the invidious office of an arbitrator in civil affairs; and wisdom will require his ministers generally to avoid it likewise. It is more suitable to our office, like our blessed Master, to endeavour to draw off and disengage the minds of men from covetousness, and to pluck up the root of those eager contentions which so often divide even the nearest relations, and inspire them with mutual aversions more invincible *than the bars of a castle.* (Prov. xviii. 19.) Ver. 13 14

And, that a covetous desire of the enjoyments of the world may not create contentions, and engage us in pursuits that will be fatal to our souls, let us seriously consider the true value of things, and reflect how little riches can do to make us happy, if we obtain them; and how very uncertain that life is, on the continuance of which our possession of them does so evidently depend. But, alas! how many are there who are now as deeply engaged in their worldly schemes as this rich fool in the parable, to whom God will, in a few weeks or days, if not this very night, say, by the awful voice of his irresistible providence, *Thy soul is required of thee!* And then what will all these treasures do to purchase life, or to allay the agonies of death? So far will they be found from being capable of this, that they will rather serve to increase and imbitter the surprise and anguish of those agonies. 15 16, *et seq.* 20

Let it then be our labour and care that we may be rich towards God, rich in works of piety and charity: So shall we safely consign over our treasure to the bank of heaven, and shall be enriched by it when we leave the world as naked as we entered into it, and lose all but what has been so wisely and happily spent. 21

SECTION CXIII.

Christ repeats the cautions and arguments against an anxious and covetous temper which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount. Luke xii. 22—34.

LUKE xii. 22.

AND he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

LUKE xii. 22.

THUS Jesus cautioned his followers against setting their hearts on worldly treasures; but as most of them were in such low circumstances as to be in greater danger of immoderate solicitude about the necessary supplies of life, he proceeded to caution them against this, by repeating some of those admonitions which he had formerly delivered in his sermon on the mount.[a] *And* accordingly *he said to his disciples, For this cause*, that is, considering the great uncertainty of riches, *I say to you*, and strictly charge it upon you, That you *be not anxious about your life, what you shall eat*, or how you shall procure food to support it; *nor for the body, what you shall put on* to cover, defend, and adorn it. For you must needs be sensible, *the life* itself, which you have received from God without any care or thoughtfulness of yours, *is* much *more* important *than meat, and the body than raiment:* and well then may you hope that the great Author of your life, and the Former of your body, will maintain his own work in a proper manner, without your anxiety and solicitude about it. Especially may you expect it, when you see the care which he takes of the inferior creatures; as, for instance, *consider the ravens* how they are subsisted; *for they neither sow nor reap, and have neither storehouse nor barn* to lay up any thing against a time of want, nay, their young ones are already deserted by their dams; and *yet*, voracious as they are, *God* one way or other *feedeth them*, so that you see the species is still continued: now, *how much more are you better than* they? and how much rather may you hope to be supplied with *the* necessaries of life, than any kind of *birds?* (Compare Matt. vi. 25, 26. p. 84.) SECT. 113. LUKE XII. 22 23 24

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

And moreover, as this care is unnecessary, it will also be unprofitable: for, *which of you, by taking* the most solicitous *thought, can add a single cubit*, or the least measure or moment, either *to his age* or stature? (Compare Matt. vi. 27; and note h, on that text, sect. xli.) *If then you cannot do the least matter*,[b] as in this proverbial expression you grant, *why are you anxious about the rest*, as if you were to hold your life by a kind of perpetual lease, and were secure against all danger of a sudden ejectment? 25 26

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye, then, be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

But, to pursue the argument I began before, Do but *consider* God's providential care even of the vegetable creation: survey, for instance, *the* fair and beautiful *lilies*, and reflect *how they grow; they neither labour* to prepare the materials of their dress, *nor spin* it into that curious form; and *yet* Providence clothes them in so elegant and splendid a manner, that *I say unto you, Even Solomon*, when on some grand festival he appeared, *in all his* utmost *magnificence, was not arrayed* in so beautiful a white *as one of these. And if God so clothe* and adorn *the grass of the field* among *which* the lilies grow, though it *is* [*flourishing*] *to-day* in all its verdure, *and* by *to-morrow is* cut down and 27 28

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day

d *Rich with respect to God.*] There is a force and propriety in the phrase εις Θεον, which our language will not exactly express. It represents God as a depositary in whose hands the good man has lodged his treasure; and who has, as it were, made himself accountable for it in another and better world. Compare Prov. xix. 17.

a Repeating some of those admonitions, &c.] Most of the thoughts and expressions used here occurred before § 41. and are, I hope, sufficiently explained there; I content myself therefore with referring the reader to it. p. 84.

b *If then you cannot do the least matter.*] This proves that *to add one cubit to a thing* was a proverbial expression for making the least addition to it.

SECT. 113. LUKE XII.

thrown into the furnace or still, (see note l, on Matt. vi. 30; sect. xli. p. 85.) *how much more* [*will he clothe*] *you, O ye of little faith,* who thus suspect his care?

And do not you then, who are acquainted with the care of Providence, and are particularly interested in it, be solicitous to *seek what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor be* like meteors in the air, that are tossed about by every blast of wind, hurried with anxious cares, and *agitated with* a variety of *restless* and uneasy *thoughts.*[c] *For the* Gentile *nations of the world,* who know little of Providence or of a future state, *seek after all these* lower *things* with great solicitude; and they are more excusable in doing it: *but* you are directed to much nobler objects of pursuit, and furnished with a more substantial support against such anxieties, in that paternal relation which God avows to you; and as *your* heavenly *Father* well *knows that you have need of these things,* he will certainly provide them for you in a proper degree. Leave them therefore to his care, and, low as your condition is, be not uneasy and disquieted about them: *but seek ye rather the kingdom of God,* and labour to promote its interest among men; *and* then you may depend upon it, not only that you shall obtain that most important prize, but likewise that *all these* other necessary *things shall be added to you,* without your anxiety. (Compare Matt. vi. 31—33. p. 85.)

I repeat the encouraging thought, *Fear not, ye little flock,* my dear property and charge, however feeble you may seem; fear not, I say, that you shall be left destitute of these common blessings of Divine Providence; *for it is your* heavenly *Father's* gracious *pleasure to give you* what is infinitely more valuable, even *the kingdom* of eternal glory: and can you possibly imagine that, while he intends to bestow that upon you, and even takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there,[d] he will refuse you those earthly supplies which he liberally imparts even to strangers and enemies?

Animated therefore by such a hope and confidence, instead of being solicitous to increase your possessions to the utmost, rather be prepared, when Providence shall call you, to *sell what you* already *have, and distribute* [*it*] *in charity;*[e] and so you may *provide for yourselves purses which do not grow old* and wear out,[f] even *a never-failing treasure in heaven,* that region of security and immortality, *where no thief approaches* to plunder the riches of its inhabitants, *nor doth the moth* corrode and *spoil* the robes of glory in which they appear. And the more careful should you be about this heavenly treasure, *because* it is certain, that *where* that which you account *your* chief *treasure is* laid up, *there will your heart be also* fixed, and the whole tenor of your thoughts and affections will naturally flow in that channel. (Compare Matt. vi. 20, 21. p. 84.)

in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 22 ARE we not all conscious to ourselves that on such topics as these we need *line upon line and precept upon*
29 *precept,* as being too deficient in our regard, though *God speak once, yea twice?* (Job xxxiii. 14.) We see our
27, 28 heavenly Father *crowning the earth with his goodness:* to this day does he *clothe the grass and the flowers*
24 with the same profusion of ornament; to this day does he *feed the young ravens when they cry,* (Psal. cxlvii. 9.)
30 nor has the meanest species of insects perished. Still does he know our necessities; and still he addresses us in the same gracious language, and avows the same endearing paternal relation. The experience of his power, goodness,
23 and fidelity, is increasing with every succeeding generation, with every revolving day. The life that he has given is supported by his care; and the same hand that formed the body, nourishes and clothes it. Let us then *cast all*
32 *our care on him,* as being persuaded that *he careth for us:* (1 Pet. v. 7.) Feeble as his little flock is, *it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom;* and we are unworthy our share in so glorious a hope, if we cannot trust him for inferior blessings, and refer it to him to judge in what manner our present wants are to be supplied.

30 Let the heathens abandon themselves to these low anxieties; but as for us, let us thank God and take courage,
33 opening our hearts wide to every sentiment of faith in God and charity to men; and while we have this inexhaustible bank to draw upon, let us be *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,* so *laying up*
34 *in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life;* (1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.) the very hope and expectation of which, if our heart be set upon it, will give us incomparably sweeter delight than the securest possession of this empty world, and the most ample magazines of its richest stores.

c *Nor be agitated with restless thoughts.*] After all the various and perplexed things which critics have said on this word μετεωρίζεσθε, (of which a very large account may be seen in the learned Wolfius,) the sense I have taken is the most simple, and especially here the most natural. The authorities produced by Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 233, 234.) and several of those mentioned by Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 97, 98.) seem to me to favour this sense, though some of them are produced to establish another. It appears from them, that any speculations and musings, in which the mind fluctuates, or is suspended in an uneasy hesitation, might well be expressed by such a word.

d Takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there.] This is the beautiful and wonderful import of the word εὐδόκησεν in this connexion, which generally signifies *a pleasurable acquiescence.* And agreeably to this, it is most edifying and delightful to observe how God is represented in scripture as enjoying his own prescience, as it were, with a peculiar relish, in the view of those glories which he has prepared for his people.—Hence those emphatical phrases of *wisdom rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth,* or in the prospect and idea of them, before they were actually made; (Prov. viii. 31.) of *God's knowing the thoughts he thinks towards his people;* (Jer. xxix. 11;) and of *his rejoicing over them with joy,* and *silently resting in his love to them.* (Zeph. iii. 17.) The tenderness and energy of innumerable scriptures depend on this remark; and many of those relating to election, predestination, &c. which have been as dry rods of controversy, when considered in this view, bud out into a thousand fair leaves and fragrant blossoms of hope and joy.

e *Sell what you have, and distribute it in charity.*] These words were probably as a fruitful seed in the minds of some who heard them: and the liberal sale of estates a few months after, by which so many poor Christians were subsisted, might be in a great measure the harvest which sprung up from it under the cultivation of the blessed Spirit. Nothing is more probable than that some of the many myriads now attending our Lord (ver. 1.) might be in the number of the thousands then converted. See Acts ii. 41—45.

f *Purses which do not grow old* and wear out.] This may be fitly taken as an allusion to the danger of losing money out of a hole worn in an old purse. Such is frequently the gain of this world, and so are its treasures hoarded up, and *put into a bag with holes:* (compare Hag. i. 6.) The rich men of Judea, so soon ravaged and destroyed by the Romans, particularly found it so.

SECTION CXIV.

Christ exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and fidelity, in expectation of his coming, and of the final account to be given for all their advantages. Luke xii. 35—48.

LUKE xii. 35.

LET your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

OUR Lord having thus exhorted his disciples to a due moderation as to their worldly possessions, proceeded to press upon them a serious preparation for their final remove from earth, and for the awful solemnities of death, judgment, and eternity.[a] He therefore went on to say, Consider yourselves always as servants who have a Master in heaven; and, that you may approve your diligence and fidelity to him, *let your loins be* still *girded up* in a posture for active service, *and your lamps* be continually *burning* in readiness to receive him:[b] *And be you,* on the whole, *like men* in a waiting posture, *who,* as good servants left with a proper charge, attending to the work appointed them, *wait for their Lord's return from a marriage-feast,*[c] or any other late entertainment; *that when* ever *he comes and knocks* at the door *they may immediately open it to him,* and not be surprised in any disorder. *Happy are those servants whom, when* [*their*] *Lord comes, he shall find* thus *watching* for him: and happy also will you be, if this shall be your case: for *verily, I say unto you,* So condescending is your Lord and Master, *that,* if you answer this character, *he will* reward you as graciously as if some great man, absent on such an occasion as I have supposed, finding his servants diligently waiting for him at his return, should gather up his clothes and *gird himself, and cause them to sit down to supper, and* should *come forth* himself *and wait upon them.*[d] *And* at whatever hour the time of his arrival be, *whether he shall come* early *in the second watch, or come* late *in the third watch* of the night,[e] *and find* [*them*] *thus* employed, blessed and *happy are those* faithful *servants.*

But do not think it is enough, if you would then be happy, to make some sudden preparation upon notice of his coming; for the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night; and *you know this, that* there is none so negligent and stupid, where a house is plundered, but *if the house-keeper,* who is entrusted with the care of it, *had been aware at what hour the thief would have come, he would* undoubtedly *have watched* at that time, *and would not have permitted his house to be broken open:* he then that acts with prudence will be always on his watch, that, as he knows not when the thief will come, he may not find him unprepared. *Be you therefore also ready; for at such a season as you think not* of, and may least of all expect it, *the Son of man cometh;*[f] and as the day of final judgment will be a surprise to the world in general, so the day when particular persons are called out of this life, is often a sudden thing, and too frequently a fatal surprise to the persons most intimately concerned in it. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 43, 44, sect. clxiii.)

Peter then said unto him, Lord, dost thou speak this awakening *parable*[g] *to us* thine apostles in particular? *or* is it *also unto all* in general, that what thou hast been saying is directed?

And the Lord said in reply, Though none are entirely unconcerned, yet you my ministers are more peculiarly to apply it to yourselves, and to consider me as asking each of you, *Who is that faithful and prudent steward*[h] *whom* [*his*] *Lord shall set over* all *the servants of his family,*[i] *to deal out* to each of his domestics *the stated allowance of food in its* proper *season?* As the guilt of such an officer will be greater than that of a

SECT. 114.

LUKE XII.

35 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

36 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

37 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

38 And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

39 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

40 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

41 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

a A serious preparation for—death, judgment, and eternity.] I shall give the reason of my interpreting this passage thus, a little below, in note f, though I am sensible the generality of readers would rather have expected an apology if I had gone about to interpret it otherwise.

b *Let your loins be girded up, and your lamps burning.*] As the Easterns wore long garments, it was necessary that, when they had any thing to do which required them to exert their strength or agility, they should tuck them up and *gird them* close; a practice to which there are frequent references both in the Old Testament and the New. (See 1 Kings xviii. 46; 2 Kings iv. 29; Job. xxxviii. 3; Jer. i. 17; Eph. vi. 14; and 1 Pet. i. 13.)—That the lamps should be found extinguished might be an inconvenient circumstance to the master, and would be a demonstration of the servants' idleness. The expressions taken together may intimate the care we should take to inform ourselves in our duty, and the resolution with which we should apply to the performance of it.

c *From a marriage-feast.*] There is no particular mystery in this circumstance. Our Lord might probably instance in this, because *marriage-feasts* were generally the most splendid, and so prolonged to the latest hours.

d *And* should *come forth* himself *and wait upon them.*] It is true (as Grotius and many others observe) that the Roman masters did sometimes, during the Saturnalia, practise some condescensions like these to their slaves: but that was, perhaps, chiefly for their own diversion; and it is difficult to judge how far Christ's hearers might be acquainted with it; at least the words would be very intelligible without supposing any such reference.

e *In the second or third watch* of the night.] This included all the time from nine in the evening to three in the morning; and was as if he had said, whether he come early or late.

f *At such a season as you think not, the Son of man cometh.*] The *coming of the Son of man* often signifies his providential interposition for the destruction of Jerusalem; (see Matt. x. 23. note g, p. 153.) But here I think it cannot be taken in such a sense, because our Lord speaks of an immediate reward to be bestowed on all faithful servants, and an immediate punishment to be executed on all that were unfaithful: and expressly declares this to be a matter of universal concern: all which particulars have very little sense or propriety when applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. It must therefore be understood of his coming to remove them from the capacities of service here, to give up their account. And, if we suppose it to relate to death as well as judgment, (which by a consequence at least, it undoubtedly does,) it strongly intimates his having such a dominion over the invisible world, that every soul removed into it might be said to be fetched away by him. Compare Rev. i. 18.

g *This* awakening *parable.*] It may signify particularly the similitude of *the Lord and his servants,* or may extend to the whole of the discourse.

h *Who is that faithful and prudent steward?*] This interrogation had a lively force to turn their thoughts inward, that each might ask himself *Whether he was the man?* The Prussian version therefore (and that English one which follows it so close) loses much of the spirit of the passage in rendering it, *If there be any faithful steward, &c.*

i *The servants of his family.*] So I render θεραπειαν, which (as Elsner shews at large, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 235.) exactly answers to the Latin *famulitium, all the servants of a family;* for which we have no one English word, any more than for σιτομετριον, which strictly signifies a *determinate measure of wheat;* but here is put for *all the daily food* (see Erasmus here.) By such a version the distinction between this and the 44th verse is set in a clearer light than critics have generally given it. To be raised from the care of giving out food to the servants, to have the charge of the whole estate, was a noble preferment.

SECT. 114. LUKE XII.

common servant, if he prove negligent; so the reward of his fidelity will be proportionably great. Peculiarly *happy is that servant* in so eminent a station, *whom his Lord at his arrival shall find thus employed* in a faithful discharge of the trust committed to him.

44 *Truly I say to you, that he will* prefer him to a much higher station of honour and importance; as if a person finding his domestic steward thus faithful, should upon that *appoint him to take the care of all that he hath*, abroad as well as at home. (Compare Gen. xxxix. 4, 5, 6.)

45 *But*, on the contrary, *if that servant* I spoke of before as set over the family,[k] should *say in his heart, My Lord delays his coming*, so that I have nothing to apprehend from it; *and* on that foolish presumption *shall* grow so insolent and wanton as to *begin to beat* and abuse *the men and maid-servants, and to eat and drink* in a riotous *and* ex-

46 travagant manner, so as to *debauch* [*himself*] with it: I assure you, that *the Lord of that servant will come* upon him *in a day when he does not expect him, and in an hour which he is not aware of, and will* scourge him with such severity, that he will even *cut him asunder*;[l] *and*, notwithstanding the profession he has made, God *will appoint him his portion with infidels*;[m] nay, in some respects his case shall be worse than theirs, as his opportunities and engagements have been so much greater.

47 *And that servant who*, like him I have been speaking of, *knew his lord's will* by a particular declaration of it,[n] *and*, disregarding the instructions given him, *did not keep himself ready*,[o] *nor* set himself to *do according to his will, shall* have the sorest punishment inflicted on him, and *be beaten with many* [*stripes*.][p] (Compare Deut. xxv. 2, 3.)

48 *But he who*, like the heathen, *did not know* the particulars of his duty by a clear revelation, *and* yet, sinning against that degree of light he had, *committed things which deserved stripes, shall be beaten* indeed, but *with fewer* and lighter [*strokes*[q]] than the other. *For* it is a received maxim among men, and God will make it the rule of his final judgment, that *much* improvement *shall be required from every one to whom much is given: and where much is deposited, the more will be demanded* in proportion to it. (Compare Numb. xv. 29, 30.)

43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken:

46 The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 35 36 MAY our souls be awakened by these awful truths! and may we be engaged *to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and* watch *to the end!* (1 Pet. i. 13.)

Great are our encouragements to diligence on the one hand, and on the other, dreadful will be the punishment of our neglect. The time of our Lord's appearance is uncertain; let us therefore always be ready,—solicit-

40, 43 ous that when he comes, he may find us so doing as he has required; *living not to ourselves, but to him*, and employing ourselves about that particular thing, whatsoever it may be, which, all circumstances considered, we are verily persuaded may most promote the great ends of life, and the important purposes of his glory.

42, 44 How glorious are the rewards promised to such! How justly may they awaken our emulation! He will prefer them to stations of more honourable and important service. He will set them down at his table, and minister (as it were) himself to their delight, bringing forth the choicest dainties of heaven, and spreading before them an eternal banquet. Lord, may we through thy grace be found worthy to taste of that supper! May

k *If that servant* I spoke of before, &c.] It is necessary thus to go back to ver. 42. for the explication of this; for it is most evident, from the whole tenor of scripture, that the servant who at his Lord's coming has passed his account in an honourable manner, will never afterwards be in danger of incurring his displeasure.

l Scourge him with such severity, that he will even *cut him asunder*.] Dr. Whitby has so clearly proved *this* to be the sense of διχοτομησει, that I am surprised that any should since have coldly rendered it, *shall separate him from the rest*. But this is one instance of many, in which the version of 1727 has followed the Prussian Testament in some of those parts of it which are the least judicious. I know not on what authority it has been asserted that the word may only signify *confiscating his estate*. Wherever it, or any of its derivatives, occur in the *Septuagint*, it has always the signification which is here given it by our version, and generally answers to the Hebrew נפר. See Exod. xxix. 17; Lev. i. 8; Ezek. xxiv. 4. *Septuag.*

m *And appoint him his portion with infidels*.] It has been suggested to me by a person of great worth and eminence, that απιστων signifies *unfaithful*: and that had infidelity, or the disbelief of the gospel, been referred to here, the word would have been απιθεστων. But I must beg leave to observe, that απιστοις does in several places evidently signify unbelieving: compare John xx. 27; I Cor. vii. 12—15; x. 17; xiv. 22—24. (where there is an express opposition in ver. 22. between απιστοις and πιστευουσι;) 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15; 1 Tim. v. 8. And I cannot but think that the spirit of this text is much better expressed by such a rendering; especially when the next verse is compared with it, which shews that though this wicked servant shall have his portion and abode with such, (who, by the way, had they not been unfaithful, would not have been unbelievers,) yet his punishment shall be more grievous; as there may be a great difference in the condition of criminals confined in the same prison.

n *Knew his Lord's will* by a particular declaration of it.] There is a force and propriety in these words beyond what is usually observed. A servant, without express instruction, might know, that to beat his fellow-servants, and plunge himself into debauchery, would be offensive to his master; and he would therefore deserve some correction: but such a conduct in a servant to whom his master had committed some particular charge, with suitable instructions for performing it, was most monstrous, and consequently deserved severer punishment.

o *Did not keep himself ready*.] So Mons. L'Enfant renders the word ετοιμασας, I suppose to distinguish it from the following clause; and I follow him, though not without some hesitation. Perhaps both may be joined thus: *Did not prepare or set himself to do according to his will*.—But since I wrote this, I perceive a great emphasis in these words which I did not before observe. The sense rises on that of the foregoing verse; as if our Lord had said, "Think not that I merely intend to forbid such gross immoralities "as drunkenness, riot, oppression, &c. but be assured that sins of "omission, where there have been fair opportunities of learning "your duty, will expose you to the divine correction." The opposition here and in the next verse is between a servant who receives an express message from his master, which he contradicts; and another who, though he receive no such express message, yet falls into such instances of misbehaviour as he cannot but know to be inconsistent with his duty and office in general; by which he exposes himself justly to some punishment, though, other things being equal, he is less criminal than the former.

p *Shall be beaten with many stripes*.] *Scourging* was a usual *punishment* for negligent servants; but I cannot find that what is properly called giving the bastinado was in use among the Jews, though some suppose it to be referred to here. Brennius thinks that these words have a peculiar reference to the case of ministers, who have such singular advantages for knowing Christ's will; so that they will certainly be in the number of the most happy or the most miserable of mankind. May they seriously consider it, and rejoice with trembling in those distinctions of their office which will draw after them such solemn and weighty consequences!

q *Shall be beaten* indeed, but with *fewer strokes*.] This strongly intimates that ignorance will not entirely excuse any who have neglected God's service, since they might in general have known at least the main branches of their duty; as every servant may know in the main what kind of conduct his master will approve, though some may be much more fully instructed than others as to his particular pleasure.

the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feed us, and guide us to fountains of living water! (Rev. vii. 17.) SECT. 114.

On the other hand, let us seriously consider the punishments to be inflicted on the unfaithful servant. Let ministers, if such there are, who abandon themselves to a life of idleness and luxury; who stain their sacred character by intemperance; who proudly censure their brethren, and either call or wish for the secular arm to smite their fellow-servants, perhaps more faithful than themselves—let such hear and tremble. Their Lord may come in a very unexpected hour; (as indeed, when do such expect him?) and what are the stripes they have given others, when compared with those which they shall themselves receive? stripes which shall cut them asunder, and pierce deep into their very souls! How much more tolerable will it be, even for the worst of Gentile sinners, than for such! LUKE XII. 46

Let all who are in any measure distinguished by the gifts of the divine bounty to them, or by their stations, whether in civil or sacred offices, attentively dwell on this great truth, so solemnly repeated again and again: let them consider it with a view to their own account: *To whomsoever much is given, of him will much be required.* May divine grace so impress it on their hearts, that they may be distinguished by present fidelity and future rewards, in proportion to the difference which Providence has already made in their favour! And may they never have reason to reflect with confusion and anguish on what is now their honour and their joy! 48

SECTION CXV.

Christ observes the evils which would be occasioned by his coming, yet declares his desire to complete his work, and warns the Jews of the great danger of neglecting the short remainder of their time of trial. Luke xii. 49, *to the end.*

LUKE xii. 49.

I AM come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law, against her mother-in-law.

54 And he said also to

LUKE xii. 49.

OUR Lord farther added in his discourse to his disciples and the multitude: After all that I have said to promote humanity and charity, yet it will in fact appear that *I am come to send fire on the earth;* so opposite is my doctrine to the prejudices and the lusts of men, and such are the violent contentions that my gospel will occasion, through the wickedness of those among whom it is preached: *and* yet *what do I wish?* that the gospel might be suppressed? nay, but I rather say, *O that* this fire, fierce as *it* shall be, *were already kindled*[a] by the propagation of a religion whose blessings so abundantly counterbalance all the accidental evils which can attend it! *But I have* indeed, in the mean time, *a* most dreadful *baptism to be baptized with*, and know that I shall shortly be bathed, as it were, in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress: *yet*, far from drawing back on that account, *how* inexpressibly *am I straitened* and uneasy through the earnestness of my desire, *till*, terrible as it is, *it be* fully *completed*,[b] and the glorious birth produced, whatever agonies may lie in the way to it! SECT. 115. LUKE XII. 49 50

But these benefits are to be secured in a very different manner from what some of you, my disciples, imagine: for *do you* now *suppose that I am come to give peace on the earth*, or immediately to establish that temporal tranquillity and prosperity which you expect should attend the Messiah's kingdom?[c] *Nay, but* considering how my gospel, notwithstanding all its tendency to peace, will be opposed, and how it will be perverted, *I* may *say to you*, that I am *rather* come to occasion the most unnatural *division*. *For* such are the contentious heats and animosities that will attend the publication of the gospel, that *ere long, five in one family shall be* so *divided*, that there shall be *three against two* on the one side, *and two against three* on the other: And this shall be the case when those families consist of persons in the nearest relations to each other: *the father*, for instance, *shall differ with the son, and the son with the father; the* fondest *mother with the daughter, and the daughter with the mother; the mother-in-law with her son's wife, and the daughter-in-law with her husband's mother*;[d] and so inveterate shall be their hatred against all that embrace my gospel, that they shall break the bands of nature as well as of friendship, to express it. (Compare Matt. x. 34, 35; p. 154.) 51 52 53

And he said also to the people, This perverseness already shews itself in your overlook- 54

a *And what do I wish? O that it were already kindled!*] I think Sir Norton Knatchbull has abundantly established this version. Dr. Whithy (who here, as in many other places, transcribes from Grotius, seems fully to have proved that η sometimes has this force. Compare Luke xix. 42; and Numb. xxii. 29; Josh. vii. 7; Psal. lxxxi. 13. *Septuag.* (Perhaps we may add Luke xxii. 42.) See Grotius, *in loc.*

b *How am I straitened* and uneasy *till it be completed!*] The word συνεχομαι seems to import *an ardour of mind*, with which a person is so borne on towards the object of his affection and pursuit, that the necessary impediments which lie in his way are uneasy to him; compare 2 Cor. v. 14. Mr. Locke understands it of a kind of embarrassment which Christ was under, to know how faithfully to fulfil his ministry, without giving such umbrage to the Roman power as would have drawn persecution and death upon him before the appointed time; (see Mr. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 134.) but this seems to me a very foreign and unnatural sense.—That which I take it in is also favoured by Luke xxii. 15. § 168: but if Grotius, whose sense I have hinted in the paraphrase, judge rightly of the particular force and beauty of the word συνεχομαι, it may be illustrated by John xvi. 21. § 178.

c Or immediately to establish that temporal tranquillity, &c.] There are so many prophecies of the peaceful state of the Messiah's kingdom, (compare Psal. lxxii. 7; Isa. ii. 4; xi. 6—9; lxv. 25.) that it is hard to say how Christ could completely answer the character of the Messiah if he should never *give peace on earth;* but the error of the Jews lay in supposing he was *immediately* to accomplish it; whereas the prophecies of the New Testament, especially in the book of Revelation, shew, and those of the Old Testament most plainly intimate, that this prosperous state of his kingdom was not only to be preceded by his own sufferings, but by a variety of persecutions, trials, and sufferings which should in different degrees attend his followers, before the kingdoms of the earth became, by a general conversion, the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. (Rev. xi. 15.) See Dr. Leland's *Answer to the Moral Philosopher*, p. 353—366.

d *The mother-in-law with her son's wife, and the daughter-in-law with her husband's mother.*] The original words, πενθερα and νυμφη, are exactly expressed in this translation. The English words mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are more extensive, and rather, though not necessarily, lead us to think of [*noverca*, μητρυια] a step-dame, or father's second wife, and her husband's daughter. Our Lord might mention this relation, because, in consequence of the obligation which the Jewish children were under to maintain their aged parents, a young man might, when he settled in the world, often take his mother, if a widow, into his family, and her abode in it might occasion less uneasiness than that of a mother-in-law in any other sense.

SECT. 115. LUKE XII.

ing so many proofs of the Messiah's appearance among you, while you discover such a sagacity in your observations with respect to other things: for *when you see a cloud arising out of the west*, or coming from the Mediterranean sea, *you presently say, A heavy shower is coming*;[e] *and it is so. And when* [*you find*] *the south wind blowing* from the desert of Arabia and other hot climates, *you say, There will be sultry heat; and* so accordingly *it comes to pass. Ye hypocrites*, that pretend to ask for farther signs, as if you were really desirous to know whether I be or be not a Divine Teacher; *you know how* by such remarks as these *to distinguish the face of the earth and of the heavens*, so as to foretell the changes in the weather before they come; *but how is it that you do not discern* and judge of the much more evident signs of *this time*, which are attended with such manifest and unparalleled tokens of the Messiah's coming? (Compare Matt. xvi. 2, 3; p. 177.) *Yea, why is it you do not even of yourselves judge what is* fit and *right*,[f] and gather from such obvious premises, how you ought in reason and conscience to treat so extraordinary a Person as I appear to be from the whole series of my doctrine and conduct, instead of disregarding all the proofs that shew me to be sent from God?

the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when *ye see* the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 This, however you may thoughtlessly neglect it, is a matter of the utmost importance: I must therefore enforce the exhortation I formerly gave you, (Matt. v. 25, 26; p. 77.) and press you to endeavour, with the greatest diligence, that the controversy may immediately be made up between God and your souls. For you count it a rule of human prudence, *when you go to the magistrate with your adversary* who has a suit against you, to *use your* utmost *endeavour to make up the affair with him*[g] while you are yet *on the way; lest he force thee before the judge, and the judge*, having found thee to be indeed accountable, *deliver thee to the* custody of the *serjeant, and the serjeant* 59 *throw thee into prison.* It will not then be in thy power to compound the matter upon gentler terms, or to get free from thy confinement; but *I tell thee* that, when he has thee at such an advantage, *thou shalt not* be able to *come out from thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite* of the debt thou owest.[h] And thus, if you are regardless of the proposals of God's mercy while the day of life and grace is continued, nothing is to be expected from the tribunal of his justice but a severe sentence, which will end in everlasting confinement and punishment.

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 49 To what a lamentable degree is human nature corrupted, that so noble a remedy as the gospel, so well adapted to the cure of a malevolent and contentious disposition, should in so many instances only irritate the disease! and that a scheme so full of love and goodness, and so well suited to promote peace and harmony in those who cordially embrace it, should be opposed with all the violence of persecution, and be the means of introducing strife and division!

52, 53 How monstrous is it, that any should hate their neighbours, yea, and their nearest relatives, for that disinterested piety and regard to conscience which might recommend strangers to their esteem and affection! Yet let not those who meet with such injurious treatment be discouraged, knowing they have a Father and a Saviour in heaven, whose love is ten thousand times more than all: nor let others be offended, as if Christianity had been the occasion of more evil than good; for such is the nature of eternity, that the salvation of one immortal soul will be more than an equivalent for the greatest and most lasting temporal evils which the greatest number of persons can suffer for conscience sake.

50 Let this awaken our zeal to save souls, however great and terrible the sufferings are to which it may expose us, in proportion to the rage with which the enemy is endeavouring their destruction. May we be animated in it by the example of the blessed Jesus, who, with a view to this, even longed for those sufferings which innocent nature could not but regard as the object of strong aversion!

54, 56 May we at all times be so wise as to discern the evidences and to comply with the purposes of the gospel, else our knowledge in natural things, should it extend not only to the most common but the most curious appearances on the face of the earth or the heavens, will turn to no other account but to shame and condemn us!

58 If we have any reason to fear that, through obstinate impenitence, the blessed God is still an adversary to us, let us make it our first and greatest care that, by an humble submission of soul to him in the methods of his gospel-grace, that strict scrutiny of his justice may be prevented, and that sentence of his wrath averted, which would otherwise plunge us into endless ruin and misery; for when could we pretend to have paid the last farthing of the debt of ten thousand talents, which we have been daily contracting, and which is charged to our account in the book of his remembrance!

e *A heavy shower is coming.*] Ομβρος properly signifies *a heavy shower*; and καυσων, in the next verse, *sultry* or *scorching heat.*

f *Why is it you do not even of yourselves, &c.*] The phrase αφ' εαυτων does not seem here to signify, "From the like principles of "good sense which you use in common affairs, or in matters relating to yourselves;" but it seems an advance on that thought, as if our Lord had said, "Even though I had not so expressly drawn "the consequence, yet, from the tenor of my doctrine and character, as well as from my miracles, you might have discerned "yourselves, that it must be a very wrong and very dangerous "thing to reject and slight me."—Castalio and Grotius connect this verse with the two following, I think without any reason.

g *Use your* utmost *endeavour to make up the affair with him.*]—Theophylact intimates, and Salmasius, and after him La Cene, largely insist upon it, that δος εργασιαν signifies, "*Pay the interest* as "well as the principal of thy debt, in order to procure *deliverance.*" But Luke makes use of another word [τοκος] for *usury*, (Luke xix. 23.) which I think a considerable argument for the common rendering, which is also more extensive.—Απηλλαχθαι signifies not merely any kind of deliverance, but such an agreement as secures the defendant from any farther danger of prosecution; as Elsner accurately shews, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 237.—It is well known that αντιδικος properly signifies *a prosecutor*, or one who has a suit at law against another, whether in a civil or criminal case.

h *The very last mite* of the debt thou owest.] The *mite* [λεπτον] was the least valuable of their coins, (see Mark xii. 42.) containing no more than half of their least kind of farthing, or of their κοδραντες, or quadrans; which was itself but the fourth part of the *as*, or ασσαριον, or of the larger farthing, mentioned Matt. x. 29; and Luke xii. 6; so that the mite was but little more than the third part of an English farthing, and a sparrow was reckoned worth four of them.

SECT. CXVI.

Christ, on the mention of some calamities which had befallen others, warns his hearers of the danger they were in if they did not repent, and illustrates it by the parable of the barren fig-tree. Luke xiii. 1—9.

LUKE xiii. 1.

THERE were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

LUKE xiii. 1.

SECT. 116.

LUKE XIII.

NOW, while our Lord was thus discoursing of the necessity of being at peace with God, *some who were present at that time, told him of those* unhappy *Galileans*, the followers of Judas Gaulonites,[a] who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the Roman power by some acts or principles of resistance to it; and *whose blood Pilate* the governor *had* in effect *mingled with their sacrifices*, having circumvented and slain them when they were come to worship in the temple at a public feast.

2 And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

And Jesus, without making any remarks on the cause in which they were engaged, endeavoured, with his usual wisdom and piety, to lead the minds of his hearers into some profitable reflections upon the event; and, *in reply, said to them, Do you think that these Galileans were* notorious *sinners above all* the rest of *the Galileans, that they suffered such* sad *things* as these, and were cut off in so miserable a manner? If you do, you are very unfit to judge of the conduct of providence; for, howsoever you may censure them, as shewn hereby to be the most enormous sinners, *I tell you, No:* you are not to conclude from hence this was the case; *but, except you repent, you shall all perish thus*;[b] vengeance will overtake you in your evil ways, and, in the desolating judgments that will shortly come on your whole nation, the blood of many of you shall be mingled with your sacrifices.

2

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

3

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

Or, to instance in another unhappy case that has lately occurred, I mean that of *those eighteen men on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them*,[c] *do you think they were greater offenders than all the* other *inhabitants of Jerusalem*, that they were thus providentially singled out for destruction? *I tell you, No;* you would judge very rashly, if you were in general to draw such conclusions; for the best of men may be involved with others in temporal calamities; *but* remember what I told you before, that *except you repent, you shall all perish thus;* you shall be pressed under the insupportable load of the divine vengeance, and be destroyed under the ruins of that holy city in which you trust.

4

5 I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

5

6 He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it*:

9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that, thou shalt cut it down.

And, in order to awaken them more effectually to such deep and serious repentance, *he spake this parable* to them: There was *a certain man* who *had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came*, for several successive seasons, *searching for fruit upon it, but he found none. And* at length, despairing of any better success, *he said to the keeper of the vineyard, Behold, these three years* together[d] *I* have *come to look for fruit upon this fig-tree, and* still *I find none: cut it down* therefore immediately as a barren tree: for *why does it* thus *cumber the ground*, filling up the place of more profitable plants with its useless bulk, and drawing away nourishment from those that grow round it? *But* such was the concern of the vine-dresser for its preservation, that *he said to him in reply, Sir*, I desire thou wouldst *let it alone this year also, till I shall dig* up the ground *about it, and lay dung to* the root of *it:* And then *perhaps it may bear fruit*;[e] and if so, it is well, and thou preservest thy tree; *but if not, after this thou shalt*, if thou pleasest, *cut it down*, and I will say nothing to prevent it. By which parable our Lord did plainly represent to the Jews the divine displeasure against them for

6 7 8 9

a *Told him of those Galileans*, the followers of Judas Gaulonites.] Josephus has given us the story of this Judas Gaulonites at large, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1. § 1. (See also *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8. [al. 7.] § 1; *cap.* 17. § 8; and *lib.* vii. *cap.* 8. [al. 28.] Havercamp.) It appears he was the head of a sect who asserted God to be their only Sovereign, and were so utterly averse to a submission to the Roman power, that they accounted it unlawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar, and rather would endure the greatest torments than give any man the title of lord. This Judas is probably the person whom Gamaliel refers to by the name of Judas of Galilee, Acts v. 37.—Josephus does not mention the slaughter of these Galileans, (which, by the way, makes Zegerus's interpretation very improbable, that they were actually slain at the altar in contempt of the temple;, but he records an action of Pilate that much resembles it, of the manner of his treating the Samaritans; *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 4. [al. 5.] § 1.—Perhaps this story of the Galileans might now be mentioned to Christ with a design of leading him into a snare, whether he should justify or condemn the persons that were slain.

b *You shall all perish thus:* ωσαυτως απολειθε.] Some content themselves with rendering it, *You shall all perish as well as they*; and possibly no more may be intended: yet the rendering I prefer appears to be more literal; and I the rather chuse it, because (as Grotius, Tillotson, Whitby, and many others have observed,) there was a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans and that of the whole Jewish nation; the flower of which was slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword while they were assembled at one of their great festivals; (see Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. [al. vii. 17.] § 3, 4.) and many thousands of them perished in the temple itself, and were (as their own historian represents it at large) literally buried under its ruins. Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 4. [al. vii. 10.] § 6. *et cap.* 5. [al. vii. 11.] § 1, 2.

c *On whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them.*] From the fountain of Siloam, which was without the walls of Jerusalem, a little stream flowed into the city, (Isa. viii. 6.) which was received into a kind of bason, which some have thought to be the same with the pool of Bethesda; (see 2 Kings xx. 20; Neh. iii. 16; Isa. viii. 6; and John v. 2; ix. 7.) Being near the temple, it is no wonder that many frequented it for purification; but the calamity occasioned by the fall of the neighbouring tower is not, that I can find, mentioned any where but here; probably it had happened at some late feast; and some of Christ's hearers might then have been at Jerusalem.—Erasmus indeed takes this Siloam to have been Shiloh, the place where the tabernacle was first settled, (Josh. xviii. 1; Psal. lxxviii. 60.) but without sufficient reason; see Drusius, *in loc.* This last instance might seem in some respects more to the purpose than the former, as there was no human interposition attending the death of these men; so that it seemed more immediately providential than that of the Galileans whom Pilate had massacred.

d *These three years.*] Many have supposed that these words allude to the time of Christ's personal ministry, which, as most have computed the chronology of the New Testament, had now lasted three years: but it is certain the patience of God bore with them much longer than another year. Grotius therefore thinks it more probable it may refer to the nature of a fig-tree, which, if it bear at all, generally begins to do it within three years after it is planted; but might, to be sure, be looked upon as barren, if it had disappointed the expectation of the planter three years together after the time in which it should have yielded fruit, which was yet worse.

e *Perhaps it may bear fruit:* κ'αν μεν ποιηση καρπον.] It is in the original something of an abrupt way of speaking, of which Raphelius has produced many examples; (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 102, 103;) but I think the way of rendering the idiom I have here used, would suit it in most of those instances.

SECT. 116. LUKE XIII.

having neglected the many opportunities they had enjoyed as planted in the vineyard of God's church; (compare Isa. v. 1, 2; xxvii. 2, 3;) and in an awful manner intimated, that though they had hitherto at his intercession been spared, yet, if they continued unfruitful under the additional cultivation they were shortly to receive on the descent of the Spirit, and the proposal of the gospel in its full extent and evidence,[f] they must expect nothing but speedy, irresistible, and irrecoverable ruin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 WHICH of us may not learn a lesson for himself from this instructive parable of the fig-tree? Have we not long been planted in God's vineyard, and favoured with the cultivation of his ordinances, yea, with the dews of 7 his grace too; and yet how little fruit have we borne in proportion to those advantages! How long has he come seeking it in vain, while we have frustrated the most reasonable expectations, perhaps not only for three, but several of us for more than thirty years! Wonderful is it that the dreadful sentence has not long since gone forth 8 against us, *Cut them down; why cumber they the ground?* We owe it to the intercession of our blessed Redeemer, the Great Keeper of the garden of God, that this has not long since been our case. *Let us not be high-minded, but fear!* (Rom. xi. 20.) Let barren sinners reflect that this may be the last year, perhaps indeed the 9 last month or last day of their trial; for even now also is *the axe laid at the root of the tree!* (Matt. iii. 10.) And let them remember, that though *there be hope of a tree, when it is cut down, that it may sprout again,* (Job xiv. 7.) yet, when the doom is executed on them, *their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will go up like dust;* (Isaiah v 24.) and *every tree which brings not forth good fruit* will be *hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

2 Let such therefore meditate terror when *the judgments of God are abroad in the earth;* and, when others are overwhelmed in ruin, let them not harshly censure the sufferers, as if they were greater sinners than any others; 3, 5 but let them apply that salutary though awful admonition to their own souls, repeating it again and again, till they are pricked to the heart by it, *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.*

Terrible indeed was the case of those *whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices,* and of those who were 4 dashed to pieces in a moment by the fall of Siloam's tower: but infinitely more dreadful will be the condition of them that *fall into the hands of the living God,* (Heb. x. 31.) especially of those deceivers who having surrounded his altars with hypocritical forms of devotion, shall themselves be made the victims of his justice, and be crushed by the resistless weight of his almighty vengeance.

SECTION CXVII.

Christ cures a crooked woman in the synagogue, and vindicates his doing it on the sabbath-day; and afterwards repeats the parables of the grain of mustard-seed, and of the leaven. Luke xiii. 10—22.

LUKE xiii. 10.

SECT. 117. LUKE XIII.

THUS our Lord went on in his journey through Galilee for a considerable time; *and as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath-day, Behold there was* present *a* poor disabled *woman, who* (as the Jews used commonly to express it, and was now actually the case) *had* been afflicted by *a spirit of weakness*[a] no less than *eighteen years, and was bowed together* in *so* sad a manner, *that* from the time it first seized her, 11 *she was utterly unable to raise herself upright,*[b] or to stand straight.

12 *And Jesus seeing her,* and intimately knowing all the sad circumstances of her affliction, and the difficulty with which she was then come to attend the solemnities of divine worship there, *called her to him, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from* that affliction which thou hast long been under by reason of *thy weakness* and malady.

13 *And* as he was speaking these words, *he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was* strengthened, and *made straight;* so that she stood before them all in an erect posture, and moved with as much ease and freedom as if she had never been disabled: *and,* as was most reasonable, *she* in a very affectionate manner *glorified God* before the whole assembly; praising him for so signal and unexpected a favour, and declaring how long her illness had continued, and how desperate and incurable it was thought.

14 *But a ruler of the synagogue,*[c] instead of joining in acknowledgments of the divine power and goodness displayed in that gracious action of our Lord, was *moved with indignation,* which he endeavoured to disguise under the form of piety and zeal; and, as

LUKE xiii. 10.

AND he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath:

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself.*

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her* to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the

f Under the additional cultivation, &c.] The extraordinary means used to bring them to repentance after the resurrection of Christ, by the effusion of his Spirit and the preaching of the apostles, might, with great propriety, be expressed by digging round the barren tree, and applying warm compost or dung to its roots.

a *Had* been afflicted by *a spirit of weakness.*] It is very evident the Jews apprehended that all remarkable disorders of body proceeded from the operation of some malignant demon. Perhaps they might draw an argument from what is said of Satan's agency in the affliction of Job, (chap. i. and ii.) and from Psal. xci. 6. (compare Septuag.) and 1 Sam. xvi. 14. They also considered Satan as having *the power of death,* Heb. ii. 14.—And that, in some maladies, this was indeed the case, is intimated by our Lord's reply here, ver. 16. and by St. Paul's words, 1 Cor. v. 5. where he speaks of delivering an offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.—The topic is very judiciously handled by that illustrious writer Mr. Howe; (see his *Works,* Vol. II. p. 360, 361;) and there are some curious and entertaining remarks in Wolfius on this text.

b *Utterly unable to raise herself upright.*] This version of ουκ δυναμενη ανακυψαι εις το παντελες, seems preferable to that other which the words εις το παντελες might bear, "*She could not lift herself up,* so "as to stand *perfectly straight.*" (Compare Heb. vii. 25. Gr.) For on the rendering I have given, which is equally literal, the miracle appears much more important than on the other.

c *A ruler of the synagogue.*] It is plain that there were several rulers of the same synagogue. (Compare Mark v. 22; Acts xiii. 15; xviii. 8, 17.) And Dr. Lightfoot and Vitringa have observed that, in every town where there was a synagogue, there were at least ten men who were obliged constantly to attend on the public worship in it. Of these, *three* were called *rulers,* who presided in directing the worship, and judged of such little disputes and litigations as might be determined in the synagogue; but not without a reserve of appeal to the several superior courts. If of these three there was any one who had a distinguished authority, and might, by way of eminence, be called *the ruler of the synagogue,* it is strange the Jewish writers omit to mention it, which, so far as I can recollect, they never do. See Wolfius on this text, and Vitringa, *Synag. Vet.* p. 585.

sabbath-day; and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.

if he only had been angry *because Jesus had healed* her *on the sabbath-day*, he *answered and said unto the people, There are six days on which* the common *work* of human life *must be done; on* some of *these therefore* you may surely find time to *come and be healed, and* should *not* make these applications *on the sabbath-day*, which, you know, is appropriated to the sacred purposes of religious rest and worship. SECT. 117. LUKE XIII.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

Then the Lord answered him with a just severity, *and said, Thou hypocrite*, who thus makest thy pretended zeal for the honour of divine institutions a specious cloak for thy malice against me, art thou not self-condemned? *Does not every one of you*, even the Pharisees and rulers of synagogues among the rest,[d] without any scruple or blame, *loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead him away to drink on the sabbath-day*, as well as on any other: though the work be more servile than what I have done, 15

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

and the occasion far less important? *Now*, if you have such a regard to the thirst of one of your cattle, *was it not* much more apparently *fit that this* good *woman, who is a* believing *daughter of Abraham, whom Satan* by the divine permission *has bound* in this cruel manner, *lo* for *these eighteen years* together, *should be loosed from this bond* even *on the sabbath-day*, especially when it might be effected without any labour, by no more than a word and a touch? 16

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

And when he had said these things, all his opposers were ashamed, and perfectly confounded by the strength of such obvious and conclusive reasoning: *and all the multitude* who were present *rejoiced* in his triumph; *for* they were greatly delighted with *all the* wonderful and *glorious things that were done by him*, in which there was so amiable a display of his goodness as well as his power. 17

18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

Now on this occasion, for the farther encouragement of his friends, and confusion of his enemies, our Lord thought proper to intimate the great increase of his kingdom, notwithstanding the malignant opposition it should meet with, which he illustrated by two parables formerly delivered elsewhere: *and he said, To what is the kingdom of God like, and what shall I compare it to?* or how is it that I shall represent the propagation of the gospel in the world? 18

19 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

It is like a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and from so minute a seed *it grew* to a prodigious bulk, *and became such a great tree, that the birds of the air* came and *lodged in its branches.* So shall my kingdom, which in its first beginning seems to be contemptible, diffuse itself in time over the whole world, and the inhabitants of distant nations shall seek their shelter in it. (Compare Matt. xiii. 31, 32, and Mark iv. 30—32, p. 135.) 19

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

And again he said, To what else *shall I liken the kingdom of God*, of which I have now been speaking? or how shall I describe the efficacy of its doctrine? *It is like* a little quantity of *leaven which a woman took and covered up in* a mass of dough, consisting of no less than *three measures of meal;* and yet it insinuated and diffused itself throughout *till the whole* lump *was leavened.* So shall the gospel make its way, and, by a secret influence, shall spread its efficacy through the hearts of men, till it has changed them into a likeness to itself. (Compare Matt. xiii. 33, p. 135.) 20, 21

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem.

And thus *he went through* all *the* principal *cities and villages* of Galilee, *teaching* them wheresoever he came, *and travelling on toward Jerusalem;* to which he had now begun to steer his course, as he intended to be there at the approaching feast of the dedication, (John x. 22, sect. cxxxiv.) and to spend the little remainder of his time during his continuance upon earth in that city, or the neighbouring parts; no more returning to these northern regions till he appeared here after his resurrection. 22

IMPROVEMENT.

AGAIN do we see, in a very instructive instance, the power and goodness of Christ. It wrought on a poor despised creature; but our Lord considered her as a daughter of Abraham, and honoured, even in her, whatever traces of her father Abraham's faith and piety his penetrating eye might discern. Her zeal and willingness to attend on public worship brought her out, though she could not stand upright, and had probably in that respect a much better excuse for staying at home than many could make who now often absent themselves from the much nobler services of the Christian sanctuary. Ver. 12, 16, 11

She met with Christ in the synagogue, and returned with a cure. And oh, how many, as the effect of such a pious zeal, though they have not been loosed from their infirmities, have at least been greatly strengthened to bear them. 10, 13

Our Lord says, that *Satan had bound her.* That malignant enemy to our bodies and souls rejoices in any opportunity of hurting either. But it is pleasing to think, that his power is always under the control of Christ; and therefore shall never be exercised on his people any farther than their gracious Redeemer sees it consistent with their good, and will take care to render it subservient to it. 16

How gravely does this ruler of the synagogue instruct the people in a point of ceremony, while his heart was full of enmity to Christ, and hardened against every sentiment of human compassion! Justly was his hypocrisy confounded and exposed. 14, 15

d Even the Pharisees and rulers of the synagogues among the rest.] Had not this been generally the case, the answer would not have been sufficient for conviction in the present circumstance. Perhaps this ruler might that very day have been performing such an office for one of his cattle with his own hands: I say, *with his own hands;* for it was by no means essential to his being a ruler of the synagogue that he should be a person of wealth or dignity in common life; though probably in large and splendid cities, (such, for instance, as Capernaum was,) such persons might generally be chosen.—Critics have collected passages from rabbinical writers, in which they allow it to be lawful to feed or water a beast on the sabbath-day. See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* on this text; where he shews they were expressly allowed even to draw water for their beasts; a much more laborious work than leading them to it. See also Wotton's *Miscell.* Vol. II. p. 41—46.

SECT. 117. We should with pleasure see the Sun of Righteousness thus victoriously breaking through those clouds which envy and malice had raised to obscure him, and diffusing his sacred light from one end of the heavens to the other. With pleasure should we view the accomplishment of these parables which represent the success of his gospel as so great; and we should daily pray, with increasing earnestness, that all the remaining nations and kingdoms of this world may at length *become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ:* and sincere converts flock to him from every side, even *as doves to their windows!* (Rev. xi. 15; and Isa. lx. 8.)

LUKE XIII. 18, 21

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SECTION CXVIII.

Christ warns his hearers of the difficulty and importance of entering into the kingdom of heaven; and is not intimidated by the fear of Herod from pursuing his work. Luke xiii. 23, *to the end.*

LUKE xiii. 23.

SECT. 118. *AND,* as Jesus was proceeding in his journey towards Jerusalem, where he designed to be present at the feast of the dedication,[a] being attended by several of his disciples, in a pretty large compass which he took by the way, *one* of them *said to him, Lord, are there [but] few that shall be saved?* Surely, if thy kingdom be so extensive as these parables intimate, (see ver. 19, 21.) the number must be very considerable.

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LUKE xiii. 23.

THEN said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

But he said to them, Instead of amusing yourselves with such curious inquiries with relation to others, attend to what more nearly concerns you, and be solicitous to secure

24 your own safety: And let me urge it upon you, that you *exert your utmost strength to enter in at the strait gate,*[b] which I formerly mentioned as leading to eternal life, (Matt. vii. 14, p. 87.) and strain, as it were, every nerve to break your way through those enemies who are always ready to oppose your passage: *for I seriously tell you,* the time is coming when *many will* importunately *seek to enter in,*[c] *and shall not be able* to do it.

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 And, howsoever they may now despise and trifle with the means of grace, this will hereafter be the case, even with the most stupid and negligent of mankind, *as soon as ever the* great Lord and *Master of the family shall,* as it were, *have risen up* from his seat, *and* with his own authoritative hand *shall have shut* and barred *the door;*[d] *and you,* among the rest, *shall begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying,* with great earnestness, *Lord, Lord,* we beseech thee *open to us:* but you will cry in vain, *and he* who now so graciously invites and waits upon you, *shall* then *reply to you, I know you not,* who you are, or from *whence you are* come; but determine to treat you as strangers, for whom I have no friendship or regard, and who have never been approved by me.

25 When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are:

26 Some of you may perhaps *then* plead an intimate acquaintance and professed friendship, and urge the privileges that you once enjoyed, and the conspicuous figure you made in his church: but if any of you can carry it so far as that *you shall begin to say,* Lord, *we have eaten and drank in thy presence* in a familiar manner,[e] *and thou hast* thyself lived among us, and often *taught in our streets* and houses, so that thou canst not sure

27 have forgot us: *Nevertheless, he will* persist in disowning you, and *say, I tell you* again, *I know you not,* and whatsoever you pretend to, I regard not *whence you are;* all the former relation to which you refer is (as it were) blotted from my remembrance, since your hearts were still insincere, and your lives unsuitable to your fair professions; and therefore *depart from me, all ye that* habitually *practise iniquity;* for none of your character shall ever be admitted here. (Compare Matt. vii. 22, 23. p. 89.)

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 This awful word, how little soever you may now regard it, shall wound you to the heart, and throw you into agonies of everlasting despair: and *there shall be* the bitterest *weeping and gnashing of* the *teeth* for madness and rage, *when you shall see* your holy ancestors, *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets* of the succeeding ages, *in* actual possession of *the kingdom of God; and* shall find *yourselves cast out* with

29 contempt, and thrust back with just indignation. *Yea they shall come* from the most distant heathen lands, even *from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down* in joyful multitudes, to partake of the heavenly banquet with your pious ancestors *in the kingdom of God,* while you are utterly excluded from it. (Compare Matt. viii. 11, 12. and note f, p. 111, 112.)

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

a Where he designed to be present at the feast of the dedication.] Mr. Whiston and some others place the following passages in a different order, and introduce them after this feast; but it does not appear that Christ was ever in Galilee before his resurrection, after this journey. He was indeed at Ephraim, or Eprem; (John xi. 54. § 141.) but, as that city lay on the confines of the tribe of Benjamin, at no great distance from Jerusalem, (Lightfoot's *Disquisit. Chorogr. in Johan. cap.* vii. § 1.) the argument which Mr. Whiston draws from thence in favour of his order must be very inconclusive. See Whiston's *Harmony,* p. 385 and 403.

b *Exert your utmost strength to enter in at the strait gate.*] The original word αγωνιζεσθε fully expresses this. It imports the act of *contending* in the most ardent and resolute manner *with antagonists* in games, or in war; and may well intimate, that the *strait gate* is beset with a variety of *enemies,* through which, if we aspire to a crown of eternal glory, we must *break* and *force our way;* a representation equally just and awakening! Compare 1 Cor. ix. 25; Col. i. 29; 1 Tim. vi. 12, and 2 Tim. iv. 7.

c *Many will seek to enter in.*] The Prussian Version renders it, *shall try,* or *attempt:* but I apprehend from the context, that it refers to importunate entreaties when they were actually excluded, rather than to feeble attempts now; though it is an awful truth, that these likewise will be unsuccessful.

d *The master of the family, &c.*] There is a majesty and pathos in this passage, as in many others, which no paraphrase can retain, in which the very words of our Lord do not make a part.

e *We have eaten and drank in thy presence.*] Perhaps some of the nine thousand whom he had fed by miracle may at last be in this miserable number. (Compare John vi. 26.)—Brennius refers it to their having eaten the sacrifices presented to God according to the Mosaic constitution.—But different persons may use this plea in different senses; and they who, while their hearts were hardened in impenitence and unbelief, have profaned the Lord's Supper by an unworthy participation of it, will find a sad sense peculiar to themselves, though it might not be chiefly intended.

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30 And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

And, behold this shall be the case not only of a few, but of great numbers: for *there are* many who are now *last* in point of religious advantages, *that shall* then *be first* in honour and happiness; *and there are* many who now appear *first, that shall* then *be found last*,—and, on account of their abused privileges, shall appear as the most infamous and miserable of mankind. (Compare Matt. xix. 30; and Mark x. 31. sect. cxxxvii.)

31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

These things our Lord said in his journey through Galilee towards Jerusalem; making many pauses in his way, that, in consequence of the shortness of his stages, he might have an opportunity of greater usefulness. And it came to pass *on that day* when he uttered these discourses, *some* of the *Pharisees came, and* that they might, if possible, intimidate and drive him to a distance, they *said to him, Go forth, and depart from hence* with all possible speed, into the territories of some other prince, *for Herod* the tetrarch, in whose dominions thou art, *is* at this very time *determined to kill thee*,[f] as he did John the Baptist, thy friend and associate, and seeks but an opportunity to effect it. 31

32 And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

But Jesus was so far from being at all alarmed at this intimation, that *he said to them* with great steadiness, *Go and tell that fox*, that crafty, wicked, and voracious prince, *Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures* in thy dominions *to-day and to-morrow*, and carry on my work a little while longer, *and the third day I shall be perfected*;[g] for the appointed time will quickly come when I shall finish my course, and have done all that I intend here. 32

33 Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

In the mean while he may well allow me a license to stay in his territories so long, at least on such kind and gracious designs; or howsoever he may be unwilling to allow it, yet *nevertheless I must go on* in this leisurely progress (as I just now said) *to-day and to-morrow, and the third day*, till the determined season comes in which my ministry shall be fulfilled: nor do I fear the effects of Herod's malice; *for it cannot be supposed that a prophet should perish*, or be put to death, any where *out of Jerusalem*,[h]—that unhappy city, the seat of the supreme court, challenging as it were to itself the sad prerogative of being the slaughterhouse of the messengers of God. 33

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

And upon this, turning in thought at least towards Jerusalem, though it lay at the distance of so many miles, he took up a most affectionate lamentation over it, and said, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, thou guilty and miserable city! *who*, though thou hast been distinguished by divine favours beyond any place on earth, yet with the utmost ingratitude and cruelty *slayest the prophets, and stonest* as the vilest malefactors *those who are sent unto thee* as the ambassadors of God! *How often would I have gathered thy children together* unto myself with all the tenderness of parental love, and have sheltered, comforted, and cherished them, even *as a hen* [*gathers*] *her little brood* of chickens *under her wings! yet you* were still regardless of the offers of my grace, and *would not* be persuaded to hearken to my call, and to accept my favour. 34

35 Behold your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And now, alas, *behold* with awful dread, and remark the prediction and event, *your house is left unto you desolate;* and the hour is just at hand when your children whom I would have gathered to myself shall perish, and your temple shall be utterly destroyed; *and* in the mean time *I assuredly say unto you*, That I will quickly cease my labours among you, and retire in such righteous displeasure, *that you shall see me no more, till the time come when*, taught by your calamities, *you shall* be ready and disposed to *say, Blessed* [*be*] *he that cometh in the name of the Lord*,[i] and shall in vain wish for the succour of him whom you now despise. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 37—39. sect. clviii.) 35

IMPROVEMENT.

And who would not welcome such a Saviour, when he appears on so kind a design! who would not *bless him that cometh in the name of the Lord*, to gather our souls with the tenderest care, and to shelter us from wrath and ruin! that Saviour whose bowels yearned over us, and whose heart poured forth its blood for us! Too many reject him, and will not hearken to the kindest calls of his compassionate voice. Unhappy creatures! the time will come when they too late will be convinced of their fatal error. 34

Let each of us be solicitous for himself. Away with those vain curiosities which serve only to amuse and dis- 23

f *Herod is determined to kill thee;* θελει σε αποκτειναι.] For the force of this phrase compare note b, on John vii. 17. § 99. p. 200. and note a, on John i. 43. p. 43.—It is very probable, considering both the wicked character and suspicious temper of Herod, that though he had a curiosity to see Christ, (compare Luke ix. 9; xxiii. 8.) he was uneasy at his spending so much time in Galilee, lest he should occasion him some embarrassment either with regard to the Jews or the Romans; yet fearing, after all the anxiety which the murder of John the Baptist had given him, to make any attempt on his life, he might think fit thus to endeavour to terrify him with an empty threatening. In this view there would be a peculiar propriety in calling him fox, rather than lion, wolf, or bear; to which savage beasts the prophets had sometimes, with a plainness becoming their character, compared wicked persons. Compare Zephaniah iii. 3; Ezek. xxii. 27; and Prov. xvii. 12.

g *And the third day I shall be perfected.*] Many suppose, and I think very reasonably, that our Lord is not to be understood as speaking exactly of *three days*, but of a *little period* of time; see Hos. vi. 2. and compare the original of Gen. xxxi. 2; Exod. iv. 10; Deut. xix. 4; Josh. iii. 4; 1 Sam. xix. 7; and 1 Chron. xi. 2; in all which places, *yesterday and the third day* signifies *lately*, or *a little while ago*.—On this interpretation the word τελειωμαι, *I shall be perfected*, may refer to Christ's finishing the work of redemption, and, being by death consecrated to his office as the great High Priest and Captain of our salvation; as the word is used, Heb. ii. 10; v. 8, 9, 10; vii. 27, 28.

h *It cannot be supposed that a prophet, &c.*] John the Baptist had lately perished in Galilee; so that the expression ουκ ενδεχεται can import no more than this version expresses, which Elsner has shewn to be its proper sense: (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 242.)—Drusius, Grotius, Knatchbull, and many other eminent critics, refer this to the right which the sanhedrim alone had to punish a person as a false prophet.

i *You shall see me no more, till you shall say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*] Some, supposing these words refer to the congratulations which Christ received on his entrance into Jerusalem, (Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10; Luke xix. 38; and John xii. 13. § 146.) urge them as a reason for placing this section after the ixth and xth chapters of John, or between the feast of the dedication and his last passover. But as our Lord repeats these words again after his triumphant entry, (Matt. xxiii. 39. § 158.) they must be capable of another interpretation, and therefore can afford no such argument; nor is there any intimation of his return into Galilee between these two feasts.—It does not imply, they should ever see Jesus at all; but only that they should earnestly wish for the Messiah, and, in the extremity of their distress, be ready to entertain any one who might offer himself under that character. Compare Luke xvii. 22, 23. § 128.

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tract our thoughts. Let us call and fix them down to the great concerns of our own salvation: and, if we would secure it, let us prepare to encounter difficulties, and strive, as for our lives, to break through all the opposition of our enemies, and resolutely to enter in at the strait gate. How many have sought it when the door has been barred! and how soon may the great Master of the house arise and shut it for ever against those who are yet trifling!

26, 27 28, 29

Let not hypocrites trust in vain words. The workers of iniquity shall be disowned by Christ at last, though they may have eaten and drank in his presence. But oh, who can express the disappointment, the rage and despair of those who fall from such towering hopes, and plunge as from the very gates of heaven, into the lowest abyss of darkness and horror! Their hearts will endeavour to harden themselves in vain; their doleful cries shall be distinguished in that region of universal horror! but they shall not penetrate the regions of the blessed, nor interrupt the delight with which even the dearest of their pious relatives shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

31, 33

If we through grace have more substantial hopes, let us imitate the zeal and courage of our divine Leader; and, whatever threatenings or dangers may oppose us, let us go on day after day till our work be done, and our souls at length perfected in glory. But let us carefully distinguish between those things in which our Lord meant himself as our Pattern, and those which were peculiar to his office as a Prophet sent from God. That extraordinary office justified him in using that severity of language when speaking of wicked princes and corrupt teachers, to which we have no call; and by which we should only bring scandal on religion and ruin on ourselves, while we irritated rather than convinced or reformed those whom we undertook so indecently to rebuke.

SECTION CXIX.

Our Lord being invited to dine with a Pharisee, cures a man who had a dropsy, cautions them against an affectation of precedence, and urges them to works of charity. Luke xiv. 1—14.

LUKE xiv. 1.

SECT. 119. LUKE XIV.

AND it came to pass, that just *as* our Lord was finishing his journey through Herod's dominions, *he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees,*[a] who was a magistrate of great distinction,[b] by whom he was invited *to eat bread*, that is, to dine with him, *on the sabbath-day;* and many of the Pharisees were present there: and, as their usual custom was, *they were* narrowly *watching him*, to make the most invidious observations on his conduct.

LUKE xiv. 1.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 *And behold there was a certain man before him that had a dropsy*, who having heard that Jesus was to dine there, had conveyed himself thither, in hope of a cure.[c]

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him, which had the dropsy.

3 *And Jesus, answering* to the secret reasonings which he discerned in their minds on this occasion, *said to the doctors of the law and* other *Pharisees* who were then present, What do you think now of this case? *Is it lawful to heal* a distempered person *on the sabbath-day?* or can there be any thing in so benevolent an action inconsistent with the sacred rest which is required on that day?

3 And Jesus, answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 *But they were silent;* as not being able with any face to deny the legality of the action, and yet unwilling to say any thing which might seem to authorize or countenance those cures which Christ performed on the sabbath-day as well as at other times; and which, in the general, they had been known to censure.

4 And they held their peace.—

When Jesus therefore found that they would make him no reply, he extended his compassion to the poor man; *and, taking him* [*by the hand,*[d]] *he miraculously healed him* before them all, *and dismissed him* perfectly well, restored at once to his full strength, and reduced in a moment to his proper shape and bulk.[e]

—And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go:

5 *And*, more fully to convince them how justifiable such an action was, even upon their own principles, as he saw they were cavilling at it, *he said in answer to them, Which of you, if he have* but *an ass or an ox that shall* happen to *fall into a pit, will not immediately draw him out* without any scruple, even *on the sabbath-day,*[f] though that is a much more laborious action, and the life of one of those animals is so much less important than the health of a man? and can you then, without the greatest injustice, condemn me for what I have now done?

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

a *As he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees.*] As all that follows from the beginning of this xivth chapter to chap. xvii. 10. is placed by Luke before the account of his journey through Samaria to Jerusalem; and as I find no other event in any of the Evangelists before the feast of dedication to which I conclude that journey refers, I am obliged (by the rule I laid down to myself, of never changing the order without apparent reason,) to take all these discourses and stories just as I find them; though I cannot pretend positively to say that Luke, who, no doubt, has sometimes changed the order in his narration, has exactly observed it here. It is however possible, that all recorded in these chapters might pass within the compass of a few days, and so would be consistent with interpreting chap. xiii. 32, 33. in a more literal manner than is absolutely necessary.

b A magistrate of great distinction.] If (as Dr. Whitby supposes) the person who gave the invitation was indeed one of the grand sanhedrim, he might nevertheless have a country seat in Galilee; as the higher courts never fail of allowing some recess to their members. So that Grotius's argument for transposing this story till Christ's arrival at Jerusalem seems inconclusive.

c Had conveyed himself thither, &c.] I cannot think (as some suppose) that he was one of the family: because it is said that Christ dismissed, or let him go, when he was cured; ver. 4.

d *Taking him by the hand.*] I know some have imagined that *Christ led him aside* to avoid ostentation: but the words do not express this; and, as our Lord speaks of the cure both immediately before and after it, there can be no room to imagine he intended to conceal it. Probably the circumstance of *taking him by the hand* is mentioned as an instance of his condescension; and shews that there was nothing in the manner of the cure which could be objected to as a servile work.

e Reduced to his proper shape and bulk.] If any ask how this could be, I answer, He that at once could cure the dropsy with a touch, could, if he please, annihilate the excess of water that caused it; and it is reasonable to believe the cure was wrought in such a manner as would make the reality and perfection of it immediately apparent.

f *If he have* but *an ass or an ox, &c.*] Our Lord had used the same reasoning before, almost in the same words, when vindicating the cure of the man whose hand was withered, (Matt. xii. 11. p. 103.) and at another time had urged an argument in effect the same with regard to the cure of the crooked woman: (Luke xiii. 15. § 117.) Which may serve, among a variety of other instances, to vindicate several repetitions which must be supposed, if we desire to assert the exact and circumstantial truth of the sacred historians.—See Wotton's *Miscel.* Vol. II. p. 27.

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room: lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

And they were all so confounded at the force and evidence of what he said, that *they were not able to answer him again to these things*, though they had not the candour to acknowledge themselves convinced by them. SECT. 119.

And he spake what may in one sense of the word be called *a parable*, that is, a grave, concise, and memorable sentence, (see note b, p. 129.) *to those who were invited* to dinner, *when he observed how they chose* and contended for *the chief seats* at the table; *and*, to reprove them for their pride, and recommend humility, he *said unto them*, There is one thing I would on this occasion address to every one in the company, namely, *When thou art invited by any* friend *to a wedding-feast*, or any other great entertainment, remember the hint which Solomon has given, (Prov. xxv. 6, 7.) and *do not sit down in the uppermost place, lest another of more honourable* rank in life *than thee should* happen to *be invited by him; And he that invited you both should come and say to thee*, Thou must *give place to this person; and thou shouldst then*, to avoid a second disgrace of this nature, *begin with shame to take the* very *lowest place*, as conscious how much thou hast exposed thyself by so haughty and foolish a behaviour. *But* rather, on the contrary, *when thou art* thus *invited, go and sit down* at first *in the lowest place* thou canst find:[g] *that when he that invited thee comes* into the room, *he may say to thee*, My *friend, go up higher: then* shall thy modesty be followed with a distinguishing regard, and *thou shalt* thus *have honour in the sight* both of the master of the feast and *of* all *them that sit at table with thee*, as having assumed nothing to thyself, but rather been contented to stoop to thine inferiors. *For* this may be laid down as a certain maxim in life, and happy is the man that attends to it, *Every one who exalts himself* beyond his proper rank and circumstances *shall be* proportionably *humbled* and mortified; *but he that* willingly *humbles himself shall be exalted* and honoured, as well as beloved both by God and man. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 12. and Luke xviii. 14.) LUKE XIV. 7 8 9 10 11

Then said he also to him that invited him, If you desire to improve what you have to the best advantage, spend it in charity, rather than in magnificence and luxury: and *when thou makest a dinner or a supper, invite not* so much *thy rich friends, or thy brethren, or thy kindred, or neighbours*;[h] *lest they* should *also invite thee again, and* thus *a recompense be made thee*, and all thou hast in return be to receive one banquet for another; which would introduce an habit of high living, at a great expense both of money and time, and would occasion the disorder of your respective families. *But* rather, *when thou wouldst make an entertainment* which should turn to the surest account, let it be plain and frugal, and *invite* to it *the poor, the disabled, the lame,* [*and*] *the blind*,[i] who are incapable of providing for themselves: let these come frequently to thy house, to receive thine alms, or "send portions to them" when they cannot come: (Neh. viii. 10.) *And* this will afford thee a much nobler satisfaction than banquets can give; and, I may truly say, *thou shalt be happy in that they are not capable of making thee* such *a requital; for* their prayers shall descend in blessings on thy head; and, besides all the pleasure a generous heart will find in the very exercise of such bounties, *thou shalt be* abundantly *recompensed at the resurrection of the just*,[k] if they proceed from a real principle of piety and faith. (Compare note a, p. 109.) 12 13 14

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy were they who had frequent opportunities of conversing with Christ, whose discourses were always so wise and so useful; how well did he repay all the entertainments he received, in the advantages which he gave for religious improvement! In vain might his enemies watch for occasions against him. *In his tongue was the law of wisdom* as well as of *kindness:* (Prov. xxxi. 26.) And surely the lips of his ministers and disciples would feed many to their everlasting benefit, were this blessed model to be more carefully traced! (Prov. x. 21.) Ver. 1

Let us particularly observe what he here says concerning a modest and humble deportment, which is indeed the surest way to be honoured and respected. And let us take great heed that *that* good-breeding, which consists so much in the expressions of humility, and a readiness to prefer others to ourselves, do not degenerate into a mere form, and prove, as it too often does, the cloak of arrogance and pride; but that it have its foundation in a lowly opinion of ourselves, and an habitual disposition to submit even to our inferiors, when we may do it without breaking in upon the duties and decencies of life, and injuring those to whom it may be exercised, by an indulgence which they know not how to understand or improve. 8—11

Let us hearken to these exhortations to charity from the mouth of our charitable Saviour, who gave himself for us. And as *Christ pleased not himself*, (Rom. xv. 3.) let us not allow ourselves to squander away great quan- 12, 13

g *Sit down* at first *in the lowest place.*] It is most probable that Christ himself, as illustrious a person as he was, had accordingly done thus, and *sat down* among them *in the lowest place* at the table.

h *Invite not* so much *thy rich friends,—or neighbours.*] Probably (as Mr. Reading well conjectures) he observed in the Pharisees a humour of making magnificent feasts, (on the sabbath-days, and on other occasions,) and of treating great persons, chiefly out of pride, ambition, and ostentation; which might render this advice peculiarly proper, especially if he who now gave this entertainment was, as many of his brethren certainly were, very deficient in works of *charity*. See Reading's *Life of Christ*, p. 256.—It is plain the word *rich* (as Grotius well observes) refers not merely to neighbours, but to the kindred and the other persons that are mentioned with them; for if these were in low circumstances, their being related to them was an argument why they should be regarded rather than neglected.

i *The disabled, &c.*] We render αναπηρους *the maimed:* but the signification of the word is much more extensive, and indeed takes in both *the lame* and *the blind* afterwards mentioned; and may also include those whom the infirmities of age have rendered *helpless.*—Grotius thinks this scripture was the foundation of the *agapæ*, or love-feasts, among the primitive Christians; but it is not evident. Pliny has a fine parallel passage: See Plin. *Epist. lib.* ix. *epist.* 30.

k *At the resurrection of the just.*] It is not so evident as Dr. Clarke supposes, that δικαιων must here signify *charitable men;* it rather seems to me a strong and awakening intimation that none who neglect works of charity shall have their final lot among the righteous; which is evident from the many hundred scriptures which indispensably require *mercy* as well as *justice.* (Compare Matt. i. 19. note a, p. 13.)

SECT. 119. LUKE XIV.

tities of money in what may gratify our own senses, or make a gaudy show in the eyes of the vainer part of mankind; but let us be willing to spare from the luxuries and superfluities of life, that we may bestow it on the poor and the distressed. And indeed, whatever our circumstances and possessions be, we must expect that the stream of our bounty will soon be dried up, if it be not supplied from the fountain of a prudent frugality. This self-denial may now in some instances be painful; but it will be amply *recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* May we then meet with many whom our liberality has fed and clothed, whom our knowledge and zeal have instructed, and whom our holy examples have edified and quickened! Here will be a foundation laid for the endearments of an eternal friendship; when that which has been formed upon a partnership in vice or animal pleasure shall be for ever forgotten, or be remembered with mutual horror.

SECTION CXX.

Our Lord foretells, in the parable of the great supper, the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. Luke xiv. 15—24.

LUKE xiv. 15.

SECT. 120. LUKE XIV.

AND while Jesus was thus discoursing, *one of the guests* at the Pharisee's table *hearing these* useful *things*, and willing to keep up so good a spirit of conversation, *said to him, Happy* indeed *is he who shall* be honoured so far as to *eat bread*[a] *in the kingdom of God:* blessed man, who shall live in the time of the Messiah, and share the entertainments he will prepare for his people, when these virtues of humility, condescension, and charity shall flourish in all their glory!

LUKE xiv. 15.

AND when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 On this natural occasion, our Lord thought it proper to remind him and the company, that many who, on mistaken notions of this kingdom, professed to desire it, were under the force of such carnal prejudices on this head, that they would in fact slight and reject it. *And* to this purpose *he* uttered the following parable, and *said to him* that had expressed so 17 high a notion of the entertainments of his kingdom, *A certain man made a great supper, and invited many* guests; *And he sent* out *his servant at the hour of supper to say to those that were invited,* as they delayed their coming, My master desires you would *come* away as soon as possible, *for all things* prepared for the entertainment *are now* 18 *ready. And they all began with one* [*consent,*][b] as if by mutual agreement they had all contrived to put a slight on the entertainment, *to excuse themselves* on one pretence or another. *The first said to him* that was sent, *I have* just now *purchased a field, and I am under a necessity of going to see it; I entreat thee* therefore *to make my excuse.* 19 *And another said, I have* just *bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them,* that I may see how they will draw; *I beseech thee* therefore to *make my excuse,* and assure 20 thy master that it is important business that prevents me.[c] *And another said, I have* very lately *married a wife,* and shall have company to entertain, *and therefore* you will easily perceive *I cannot come* to attend your master's feast and neglect my own.[d] *And that* 21 *servant returning, told his lord* all *these things. Then the master of the house* who had made the entertainment *was* very *angry,* as he reasonably might be, to see such an affront put upon his splendid preparations, and such an ungrateful return made for the peculiar kindness and respect he had shewn in sending for these guests; *and* therefore he *said to his servant, Go out directly into the streets and lanes of the city,*[e] *and bring in hither the poor, and the disabled, and the lame, and the blind,* that they may come and partake of the entertainment; for I had rather see my house filled with such guests than 22 empty as it now is. *And the servant* quickly came back, and *said, Sir, what thou didst* please to *command is done;* these poor distressed people are come in, and sat down at the table, *and still there is room* for more guests, and entertainment enough provided 23 to feast many others. *And the lord said to the servant, Go out* then *into the roads* without the city, and, rather than fail, look for the poorest and most helpless travellers, who are sheltering themselves under trees *and hedges;*[f] *and,* if importunity be necessary to such, *press them* that you find there by the most earnest invitation *to come in,*[g] *that my house*

16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

a *Shall eat bread.*] It is well known that the phrase, *to eat bread,* signifies making a meal; and this not merely at a common table, but sometimes at a feast where the provision is very sumptuous. So perhaps it might be at the table of this noble Pharisee, ver. 1. (See 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10; xii. 17, 20; and Prov. ix. 5.) Compare note e, p. 170.

b *With one* [*consent;*] απο μιας.] Of all the various methods which learned men have taken to supply the ellipsis here, (which may be seen at large in Wolfius, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 682, 683.) it seems to me most natural to understand the word γνωμης, that is, *with one consent;* which supposition is maintained by Beza. The variety of their excuses render φωνης, *with one voice,* less proper.

c *I beseech thee make my excuse,* &c.] It is a beautiful circumstance that our Lord here represents both these bargains as already made; so that going to see the farm and to prove the oxen that evening rather than the next morning, was merely the effect of rudeness on the one hand, and of a foolish impatient humour on the other: and could never have been urged, had they esteemed the inviter or his entertainment. Accordingly it is commonly found in fact, that men neglect the blessings and demands of the gospel, not for the most important affairs in life, with which they seldom interfere, but to indulge the caprice and folly of their own tempers, and to gratify the impulse of present passions, sometimes excited on very low occasions.

d *I cannot come,* &c.] As the process of the *parable* represents a wise and good man offended with this excuse among the rest, we must suppose something in the circumstance of his receiving the message, or of appointing the time for entertaining company on his own marriage, which implied a rude contempt of the inviter, and made the reply indecent. It was not necessary to descend to such particulars.

e *Into the streets and lanes of the city.*] This seems the true distinction between πλατειας and ρυμας; the former of which signifies *a broad,* and the latter *a narrow way,* in which last the alleys may be included.

f *Into the roads and hedges.*] Any gross and abandoned sinners might be represented as in this wretched condition. (See Eph. ii. 12—17.) But it seems an excessive refinement of Brennius, to suppose the hedges here mentioned refer to the ceremonial law as a partition; as it likewise is to explain the first clause as relating to the proselytes of the gate, and the second to the idolatrous Gentiles. One might as well infer from ver. 24, that no Jews should be saved: and it argues a wrong taste in criticism to torture every circumstance into a fancied resemblance.

g *Press them* by the most earnest invitation *to come in.*] Nothing can be more apparently weak than to imagine, with St. Augustin and many others, that these words can justify the use of compulsion and force in religious matters; the absurdity and iniquity of

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

may be well *filled*. *For I say unto you that none of those men who were invited*, if they should now be ever so desirous of it, *shall* be admitted so much as to *taste of my supper*, since they have so rudely and ungratefully slighted it. SECT 120.

And in like manner, such will the divine conduct be with regard to the gospel. God sends messengers in the most importunate manner to invite you Jews to come and partake of its rich entertainment: yet you neglect it on the meanest pretences, and one is too busy and another too idle to attend to it. But he will severely resent the affront, and (though it may seem to you as unaccountable a conduct as that which I have represented in this parable) will call in the poor, ignorant, and wretched Gentiles, who were wandering in the most helpless circumstances in the ways of idolatry and wickedness, and his church shall be filled with them; while you, who reject his gospel, shall in righteous judgment be yourselves rejected, and perish for want of those mercies which you now despise. LUKE XIV.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the infinite mercy of God forbid that this should ever be our condition! The gospel-feast, like the sumptuous banquet of Ahasuerus, (Est. i. 3, 4.) is of a very long standing: not only from week to week, but from age to age, God is sending to invite new guests; and, after all the millions that have been regaled by it, and nourished up to everlasting life, there is yet room for more. Still are his servants sent from one time to another, with all the fervour of the most affectionate persuasion, to urge sinners to accept of these desirable blessings: (for such only is the compulsion that becomes a feast, and suits the nature of reasonable creatures.) May we not receive the grace of God in vain! May we not perish, as thousands before us have done, by making light of the gospel! Ver. 24 21, 22 23

It has often been observed from this parable, that they were lawful occasions which these unhappy people pleaded as their excuse for neglecting the invitation. And how many perish by what is indeed lawful! But the care of our estates or cattle, our domestic affairs, and our dearest relatives, will be destructive to us, if they be minded as our main care, and our hearts be so attentive to them as to forget the *one thing needful*. 18—20

Are we of the number of those who, though once blinded, impoverished, and enfeebled by sin, are now brought as welcome guests to the table which divine love has spread? Let us adore the grace which opened the door to us, and opened our hearts to comply with the call; by its strong and powerful, though rational and gentle influence, compelling us to come in. Let the servants employed in the message urge it with a becoming earnestness; as well knowing how much the heart of their great Master is in it, and how much the happiness of souls depends on their accepting it. Lord! may we see thy table furnished with guests, and ourselves be so happy as finally to partake of those blessings to which we are now commanded to invite others! For blessed indeed are they who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God! 21 15

SECTION CXXI.

Our Lord urges upon his disciples the necessity of considering the difficulties of religion before they take up a profession of it. Luke xiv. 25, *to the end.*

LUKE xiv. 25.

LUKE xiv. 25.

AND there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

AND as great multitudes attended Christ,[a] and *went with him* in this his journey toward Jerusalem, *he turned* about *and said to them*, You now attend me from place to place with some tokens of regard; but seriously consider how much it will cost you to approve yourselves my faithful followers. SECT 121. LUKE XIV.

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

If any one comes to me to be instructed in my religion, and to obtain the blessings of my kingdom, *and does not* prepare himself, on a proper occasion, to act as if he did even *hate his father and mother, and* his very *wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life too*,[b] that is, if he be not willing to abandon all these rather than to forsake me, *he cannot* really *be my disciple*, whatever he may pretend. 26

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever does not stedfastly resolve even to *bear his cross and* to *come after me*, whenever he is called to tread the painful steps that I am taking in the way to crucifixion and death, *he cannot be my disciple:* and therefore, as I gave these things in charge to my apostles, (Matt. x. 38. p. 154.) I repeat them to you as matters of universal concern, which require your most attentive consideration. 27

28 For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and

And it is necessary to dwell on the thought; *for which of you, if he* be a person of common prudence, and *intend to build a tower*,[c] or any other edifice, *does not first* 28

which I have represented at large in my Sermon on that subject. It is certain the word ἀναγκάζω is often used to express an *importunity* where there could be no secular terrors; Matt. xiv. 22; Mark vi. 45; Gal. ii. 3, 14; vi. 12. (as is likewise the word παρεβιάζοντο, Luke xxiv. 29; and Acts xvi. 15.) and several instances are produced by Elsner, in which the word signifies *pressing persuasion*. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 244, 245.) And here, as it would be most indecent to imagine persons forced to an entertainment, so it would have been quite impracticable for a single servant to have compelled a multitude in this sense. There is an ambiguity in the English word [*press*,] which much more exactly answers to that in the original than the word our translators use: and it seems to me the part of a faithful translator, especially of the sacred writings, to preserve the ambiguities of the original, though a paraphrase, which speaks only a man's own sentiments, may sometimes venture to determine them.

a *Great multitudes* attended Christ.] Perhaps the cure of the man who had the dropsy, and some expectations as to the event of Christ's visit to this Pharisee, might cause a crowd near his house; and what follows might be spoken the same sabbath, on our Lord's coming out from thence: but as the Evangelist does not so expressly connect the passages, I was not willing to assert it in the paraphrase.

b To act as if he did even *hate his father and mother, &c.*] Strictly speaking, to hate our nearest relatives, and our own lives, would be unnatural wickedness, and equally contrary to the dictates of humanity and the genius of the gospel. But it is well known, that one thing is said to be loved and another hated in scripture, when the former is much preferred; and especially when, out of regard to it, the latter is neglected and forsaken. Compare Gen. xxix. 31; Deut. xxi. 15—17; Mal. i. 3; Rom. ix. 13; and Matt. vi. 24.

c *If he intend to build a tower.*] This phrase naturally suggests to us the idea of a more magnificent edifice than our Lord's hearers might probably think of on this occasion. It is plain that towers were frequently run up, probably of some slight materials, to lodge those who had the care of keeping vineyards or flocks; and they were built pretty high in proportion to their basis, that they might command the larger prospect. Compare 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; Mic. iv. 8; Isa. v. 2; Matt. xxi. 33; and Mark xii. 1.

SECT. 121. LUKE XIV.

deliberately *sit down and compute the expense* it will require, and compare it with his own circumstances, that he may judge *whether he has* a stock of wealth [*sufficient*] *to finish it? Lest when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to complete* [*the work*] he had begun, for want of money to go through with it, *all who see it*, as they pass by, 30 should *begin to deride him, Saying*, in contempt, *This* must be surely a wise *man* who thus *began to build, and was not able to finish* his plan; and here his imperfect work stands a lasting monument of his great discretion!

31 *Or what* wise *king*, if he was *marching out to another king in war*,[d] *does not first sit down and consider whether he* has any such advantage as to arms, strength, or situation, as may induce him to conclude that he *is able with* no greater force than *ten thousand men to meet* and oppose *him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?* 32 *And if* he find he has *not, while he* that comes with this superior force against him *is yet at a distance, he sends an embassy, and desires terms of peace*,[e] acknowledging his readiness to submit to some things which may be disagreeable, for the preservation of his dominions, and perhaps of his life.

33 *So then* do you consider whether you think it worth your while to adhere to me on these terms, for I assure you, I will admit you on no other; and *whosoever he be of you that does not* stedfastly resolve to *give up all his possessions* whenever he is called to it on my account, *he cannot be* owned by me as *my disciple* indeed.

34 And if you are not my disciples indeed, your outward profession will be very insignificant; for though *salt* in general *is a* very *good thing*, and my servants, as I formerly intimated, (Matt. v. 13. p. 74.) are the salt of the earth; *yet* I must again add, *if the salt be grown insipid, with what can it be seasoned?* or what can recover those whom my 35 gospel will not influence and reclaim? And as insipid salt is such a vile and worthless thing that *it is neither fit* to be used of itself as manure *for the land, nor* even so much as fit *for* a place on *the dunghill*, to be there mixed with other dung; [*but*] *it is thrown out of doors*, and trampled under foot like mire in the streets: you also will be no less useless and contemptible, if, under the advantages and obligations of a Christian profession, you are destitute of a sincere principle of integrity and piety, and will be utterly abandoned and rejected as unprofitable servants. *He* therefore *that hath ears to hear, let him hear* it attentively; for it is a point in which not only the honour of my kingdom but the salvation of your own souls is concerned.

counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it?*

29 Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king going to make war with another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 Salt *is* good; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 33, 34, 35 MAY our most serious attention be fixed on so important a truth; and may this plain and candid declaration of our Lord be duly regarded by us, as ever we desire to find the advantage of that relation to him in which we are so ready to glory! If we would not be cast out with disdain, and trampled under foot as worthless and vile, let us be solicitous that there may be the salt of divine grace in our hearts; and let us undertake a religious profession 28, 32 with that deliberate consideration which becomes a matter of such great importance. A hasty purpose will never bear us through the difficulties we must expect to encounter; and rash vows and thoughtless adventures in this case will only expose us to the derision of others, and the keener remorse of our own minds.

26 Nor is the nature and evidence of religion such as to have any reason to fear the severest examination. The demands of Christ are indeed high,—that the nearest relatives should be abandoned, and even life itself sacrificed for his sake; that we be at least martyrs in resolution, and have so much of a reciprocal affection for him, as shall, 33 like his love to us, be stronger than death. Yet how reasonable is the demand! Did he leave his Father's bosom for us, and shall we scruple to abandon our houses and our kindred for him? Did he expire on the cross for us, 27 and shall not we be ready to take up our crosses and follow him? Shall it not be delightful to us to trace his most painful steps, and by the most costly sacrifices to approve our gratitude and our duty?

Blessed Jesus, lead us! and by thy grace we will follow thee, whatever be the path, whatever be the burden, whatever the terror of the way; knowing that if we partake with thee in *thy sufferings*, we shall at length share with thee in thy consolation and *thy glory*! (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

SECTION CXXII.

Publicans and sinners flock round our Lord, and he vindicates his readiness to receive them by the parables of the lost sheep and piece of money. Luke xv. 1—10.

SECT. 122. LUKE XV. 1.

LUKE XV. 1.

THUS our Lord addressed himself to the multitude, and especially to his disciples, on the sabbath-day, as he came out from the house of the noble Pharisee with whom he had dined: Now as it was *then* a season of leisure, and he appeared in public teaching

LUKE XV. 1.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him.

d *Or what king marching out to encounter another king, &c.*] According to Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronology*, these words were spoken at our Lord's last passover, and might refer to Herod's leading his army through Judea against Aretas, king of Arabia. But as Herod did not then appear to be the weaker, I cannot see that (even supposing the premises to be true) there would be any certainty of such an intended allusion.

e *Desires terms of peace:* ερωτα τα προς ειρηνην.] This represents the feebler person as *begging a peace*; a proper emblem of the humility and resignation with which peace is to be sought from an offended God, who is possessed of a strength, not (as in the case supposed here) merely double, but infinitely superior to ours.—The pious and amiable author of a late valuable piece called *Orthodoxy and Charity*, (whoever he be,) has given a quite different interpretation of this passage, which, so far as I can recollect, I have not yet seen, and which I am sure deserves consideration. He explains it (p. 43.) as referring to those who have not courage to fight with their spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and therefore make the best terms they can with them, and sit still neglecting Christ and religion. But if the passage be taken in this sense, our Lord, by declaring in the next verse that he will make no abatement in his own demands, plainly intimates how necessary it is to break through all opposition, and to determine to face all the difficulties in our way, which it will be our wisdom to view and consider, that we may be prepared with proportionable resolution.

the people, *all the publicans* in that place, *and* some other notorious *sinners*, who might not easily have been admitted into the Pharisee's house, *drew near to hear him* preach,[a] being charmed with the condescension which allowed of their access. SECT. 122.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And Jesus, moved with compassion for them, uttered some remarkable discourses, admirably calculated for their encouragement, and that of others who had lain under the most aggravated guilt. But *the* proud *Pharisees and scribes* who were present, *murmured* when they saw such a crowd around him, *and said, This man*, while he sets up for a religious Teacher, unaccountably *gives access to* the most profligate *sinners, and* sometimes *eats with them*, and makes no scruple to accept of invitations to their houses. (Compare Mark ii. 16. p. 143.) LUKE XV. 2

3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,
4 What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?
5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing:
6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.
7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

But [*Jesus,*] for the encouragement of these poor penitents, as well as to rebuke the censorious and uncharitable Pharisees, *spake to them this parable, and said, What man is* there *of you that has* a flock of *an hundred sheep*, who *will not, upon losing one of them*, immediately *leave the ninety-nine* that were feeding together *in* the pastures of *the desert*,[b] *and go* from place to place in search *after that which was lost, till he find it? And having* at length *found it, he lays it on his shoulders*, greatly *rejoicing*, as a man in such a circumstance naturally would: (compare Matt. xviii. 12, 13. sect. lxiv. p. 192.) *And when he cometh home, he calls together* [*his*] *friends and neighbours, and says unto them*, with the greatest pleasure, My friends, you may now *rejoice with me: for* my labour and search have not been in vain, but *I have found my sheep which was lost.*— And as he thus is more delighted with the recovery of the sheep which he had lost, than with the safety of the rest which had not wandered; *so, I say unto you, that greater* and more sensible *joy will be in heaven*, among the blessed and benevolent spirits that dwell there,[c] *over one penitent sinner, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need* such deep *repentance*,[d] or such an universal change of mind and character. 3 4 5 6 7

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.
10 Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Or, to illustrate the matter by another obvious similitude, that it may yet more powerfully strike your minds, *What* poor *woman having ten pieces of silver* money, though they were each of them but of the value of a drachma, *if she lose one of them* out of her little stock, *will not* presently *light a lamp, and* take the pains to *sweep* out *the house, and search carefully* in all the corners *till she find it? And when she has found it*, 9 *she* joyfully *calls her* female *friends and neighbours together*,[e] to acquaint them with her good success; *and*, concluding it will be agreeable news to them, she *says, Rejoice with me*, my friends, *for I have found the piece* of money *which I had lost.* And *so I* 10 *say unto you*, that *there is* in like manner a peculiar *joy* in heaven *among the angels of God over one repenting sinner.* Do not therefore wonder if I labour to promote their joy on this account, and condescend to familiar converse with those whom you proudly despise as unworthy your regard. 8

IMPROVEMENT.

How graceful and lovely does our Lord appear, while thus opening his compassionate arms and heart to these wretched outcasts, for whose souls no man cared! Who can chuse but rejoice at this jubilee which he proclaimed among them, and at the cheerful attention which they gave to these glad tidings of great joy; May we, who are his followers, never despise the meanest or the worst of men when they seem disposed to receive religious instruction; but rather exert ourselves with a distinguished zeal, as knowing that the joy of the heavenly world in their recovery will be in some measure proportionable to the extremity of their former danger. Ver. 1 10

Let us often recollect the charity and goodness of those perfected spirits who look down from their own glory 7

a *All the publicans and sinners drew near to hear him.*] Some suppose they came by a particular appointment from all the neighbouring parts. But as Luke goes on in the story, without any intimation of a change, either in the time or the scene of it, I am inclined to think these discourses might be delivered the same day that Christ dined with the Pharisee, (§ 119.) which being the sabbath-day, would give the publicans, who on other days were employed in their office, a more convenient opportunity of attending.—Some have concluded (I could never conjecture for what reason) that this happened in Galilee of the Gentiles beyond Jordan, from whence, they say, Christ went up to Jerusalem: (Luke xvii. 11.) But that the chief part of this assembly were Gentile idolaters can never be proved; and if it could, it would be no sufficient proof of Christ's being now on the other side of Jordan. Yet I acknowledge it highly probable that some idolatrous Gentiles might join with the multitude, who, if they understood these parables, might justly draw great encouragement from them.

b *In* the pastures of *the desert.*] Uncultivated ground, used merely as common or pasture, was called wilderness, or desert, by the Jews, in distinction from arable or inclosed land. Compare Josh. xv. 61; 1 Kings ii. 34; 2 Kings iii. 8; Matt. iii. 1; and Mark vi. 31. (Compare also note c, on Matt. xviii. 12. § 94. p. 192.)

c *Greater joy will be in heaven, &c.*] Alluding, says Mons. L'Enfant, (a little too coldly,) to the style of the Jews, with whom it was usual to represent the angels weeping for the corruption of men, and rejoicing at their conversion. But it seems very unwarrantable to suppose Christ thus asserting a thing, merely because the Jews used thus to represent and conceive of it.—We may conclude from ver. 10. that, at least in some extraordinary cases, the angels are, either by immediate revelation or otherwise, informed of the conversion of sinners, which must to those benevolent spirits be an occasion of joy, nor could any thing have been suggested more proper, to encourage the humble penitent, to expose the repining Pharisee, or to animate all to zeal in so good a work as endeavouring to promote the repentance of others.

d *Than over ninety-nine righteous persons, &c.*] It cannot be our Lord's meaning here, that God esteems one penitent sinner more than *ninety-nine* confirmed and established saints; (who are, undoubtedly, the persons spoken of as needing no repentance, or no universal change of heart and life, in which sense the word μετανοια is commonly used;) for it would be inconsistent with the divine wisdom, goodness, and holiness, to suppose this. But it is plainly as if he had said, "As a father peculiarly rejoices when an extravagant child is reduced to a sense of his duty, and one whom he had considered as utterly ruined by his follies, and perhaps as dead, returns with remorse and submission; or as any other person who has recovered what he had given up for gone, has a more sensible satisfaction in it, than in several other things equally valuable, but not in such danger: so do the holy inhabitants of heaven rejoice in the conversion of the most abandoned sinners, and the great Father of all so readily forgives and receives them, that he may be represented as having part in the joy."—Though, by the way, when human passions are ascribed to God, it is certain they are to be taken in a figurative sense, entirely exclusive of those sensations which result from the commotions of animal nature in ourselves.

e *She calls her* female *friends* [τας φιλας,] *and neighbours together.*] It might seem hardly worth while to ask the congratulation of her friends on so small an occasion as finding a drachma, (for that is the piece of coin here mentioned, in value not above nine-pence;) but it is represented as the tenth part of her little stock, and the impressible and social temper of the sex may be perhaps thought of, as adding some propriety to the representation.

SECT. 122. LUKE XV. 4, 6, 8, 9 with compassion on mortals wandering in the paths of the destroyer, and who sing anthems of thankfulness and joy, when by divine grace they are reclaimed from them. Let every sinner be touched with a generous desire, that he who has been in so many instances the offence and burden of the earth, may become the joy of heaven by his sincere conversion. And let the solicitude with which the little possessions of this world are sought, when they are lost by any accident, engage us more earnestly to seek what is infinitely more valuable, our own salvation, and that of the immortal souls of others. May we in our different stations labour successfully for their recovery: that we may another day share in that higher joy which angels and glorified saints shall express, when they see them not only reduced to the paths of virtue and happiness, but fixed in abodes of eternal glory!

SECTION CXXIII.

Our Lord farther pursues the design of the preceding parables, by delivering that of the prodigal son. Luke xv. 11, *to the end.*

LUKE XV. 11.

SECT. 123. LUKE XV. WITH the same design of vindicating himself in conversing with publicans and sinners, of reproving the envy of the Pharisees, and of encouraging every sincere penitent by moving representations of the divine mercy, our Lord went on to utter another most beautiful and affecting parable. *And he said*, while this various multitude was standing round him, There was *a certain man* in plentiful circumstances, and of a very condescending temper,

12 who *had two sons*, that were now grown up to manhood. *And the younger of them*, fondly conceited of his own capacity to manage his affairs, and weary of the restraints of his father's house, *said* one day *to his* indulgent *parent, Father*, as I am now come to years of discretion, I desire thou wouldst *give me* into mine own hands *that portion of goods which*, according to an equitable distribution, *falls to my share. And he*, unwilling to make any invidious distinction in distributing his effects, *divided his living between them* both,[a] and gave them his chief stock of money, reserving the house and estate in his own hands.

13 *And not many days after* this division was made, *the younger son gathering all* his treasure *together*, and pretending a design of trafficking with it, *took a journey into a very distant country; and there* forgetting his relations at home, and *living* with a knot of companions like himself, *in a* very *riotous*, debauched, and extravagant *manner*, he quickly *squandered away* the whole of *his substance.*

14 *And when he had consumed all* in this wretched course, it so happened, through the righteous judgment of God upon him, that *there was an extreme famine in that country* where he sojourned; *and he* soon *began to be in want* of the very necessaries of life.

15 *And*, finding no shelter or relief among those who had been the companions of his luxury, and shared in the spoils of his substance, yet unable to brook the mortification of returning home in such circumstances, *he went and joined himself* as a servant *to a citizen of that place; who*, thinking such a worthless creature unfit for any better post, *sent him* away *into his grounds*[b] belonging to an estate in the country, where he employed him *to feed swine;* to which, however mean and disagreeable the employment was,[c] this unhappy youth, who had once lived in so much plenty and splendour, was forced to submit:

16 *And* even then, through the unkindness of his master and the extremity of the season, *he* was kept so poorly, that he had not bread, but *would gladly have filled his* hungry *belly with the* sorriest *husks*[d] *which the swine did eat; and* yet there was *no man* that *would* take so much pity upon him as to *give unto him* one morsel of food; so sparing did the famine make them, and so much did every one despise this foolish and scandalous prodigal.

17 And now the infamy and distress of his present situation began to lead him into serious consideration; *and coming to himself*, he so far recovered his reason, which had before been dethroned and extinguished by the mad intoxication of sensual pleasure, that *he said* in his own mind, Alas, *how many hired servants* in the family *of my* good *father have bread enough and to spare, while I* his child, who have known so many better days, *am* even *perishing with famine*, and am not thought worth my food by this unkind master

18 to whom I have hired myself! Whatever be the consequence of it, I am resolved that I will sit no longer in this miserable condition: but *I will* immediately *arise and go to my father*, if all my little remaining strength can carry me such a journey; *and*, without vainly attempting an apology, I *will say to him*, O my dear injured *father*, I

LUKE XV. 11.

AND he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me.* And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

a *Divided his living between them* both.] It is plain no significant sense can be put on this circumstance of the parable, as referring to the dispensations of God to his creatures. It is one of those many ornamental circumstances which it would be weakness over-rigorously to accommodate to the general design.

b *Who—sent him into his grounds.*] That κωμη, in such a construction, should be rendered in this manner, the accurate Elsner has shown by a variety of convincing instances. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 248.

c However mean and disagreeable the employment was.] It is true that among the ancient Greeks, the chief swineherd was looked upon as an officer of no inconsiderable rank; as evidently appears from the figure which Eumæus makes in the *Odyssey:* but this was an age of greater refinement; the unhappy youth was obliged to tend the swine himself; and if he be considered as a Jew, the aversion of that nation for this unclean animal must render the employment peculiarly odious to him; and probably this circumstance was chosen by our Lord, to represent him as reduced to the most vile and servile state that could be imagined.

d *With the* sorriest *husks.*] A late translation (after Brown, Saubert, Grotius, and many others) renders κερατια, *carraways*, or the fruit of the *carub-tree*, which bore a mean, though sweetish kind of fruit, in long crooked pods, which by some is called St. John's bread; but if the account which Saubert himself gives of it be true, swine would hardly have been fed with any thing but the *husky* part of this, in a time of extreme famine. I therefore chuse to retain our version; but take it, on the whole, to have been the fruit of a tree something of a wild chesnut kind. See Drusius, *in loc.*

humbly confess that *I have sinned against* the great God of *heaven*[e] by a long course of vice and wickedness, *and* have been guilty also of the vilest behaviour *before thee*, in abusing thy goodness, and grieving thee by my unnatural rebellion; *And*, in consequence of this, I *am no more worthy to be called thy son*, nor can I expect the favour of being admitted into thy family on such terms again; nevertheless, do not suffer me to perish, but rather *make me as one of thine hired servants*,[f] and I will be contented for the future to labour and to fare as they do, so I may but live in thy sight.

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And accordingly *he arose* at that very instant, and set forward on his long journey, passing through all the stages of it with a firm resolution, Providence taking care for his subsistence, though he was obliged to beg his way; *and* at length he *came to* the neighbourhood of the house in which *his father* dwelt.

20 And he arose, and came to his father.—

But while he was yet at a considerable distance, his father, who happened to be then looking that way, *saw him*, and presently knew him, disguised as he was; *and his bowels yearned over him* to see him in so wretched a condition: *and* immediately, as if he had forgot the dignity of his own character, and all the injuries he had received, *he ran* to his child, *and fell on his neck* with an eager embrace, *and* tenderly *kissed him* with tears of joy. *And the son* began to make his humble acknowledgments, as he before had purposed, and *said unto him*, O my abused and injured *father*, I am ashamed to appear in thy presence; for such has been my vileness, that *I have sinned against* the God of *heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called* and owned as *thy son*, or to receive any token of thy favourable regards. *But*, before he could make an end of the speech he intended, *the* compassionate *father* turned, and *said to his servants*, who were now gathered round them, Go immediately into the house, and *bring out the best robe* that is there,[g] *and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet*, that my dear child may appear like himself; *And* let others of you run to the stall, and *bring hither the fatted calf* that is there, *and kill it*[h] for a festival entertainment; *and let us eat and be cheerful: For* I esteem this as one of the happiest days of my life, and more joyful than the birth-day of one of my children; since *this my son, that was* so long considered by me as *dead, is restored to life*;[i] *and he who was* concluded to be irrecoverably *lost, is found*, so that I have renewed hope of comfort in him. *And* the whole house was filled with joy, and, having made the entertainment ready, *they began to be cheerful.*

—But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet.

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

But while the younger son was thus received into his father's house, *his elder son was* abroad *in the field; and as on his return he approached the house, he heard* the sound of *music and dancing*, and was surprised at the discovery of such unusual joy. *And calling one of the servants* to come to him, *he inquired* of him *what was the meaning of these things*, and what could have occasioned this extraordinary rejoicing? *And he said to him*, It is because *thy* younger *brother is come* home; *and thy father* is so transported with joy at his unexpected return, that he *has killed the fatted calf*, and made a very splendid entertainment, *because he has received him in good health* again, and found him happily recovered to a sense of his duty. *And he was* very *angry* at the kind reception of his brother, *and* resolved that he *would not go in.*

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musicand dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant?

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safeandsound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in:—

His father therefore hearing he was there, and being told he had discovered some uneasiness, *came out* with great condescension, *and* calmly *entreated him* to be pacified, and to join with them in the festivities of the day.

—Therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

But, instead of rejoicing on so happy an occasion, and running to embrace his penitent brother, *he* was still full of envy and resentment, and *replied to his father, Behold, I have served thee these many years*, and even to this day am as careful of thy affairs as if thou wast my master rather than my father; *nor* canst thou say, *I have at any time* departed from my duty, or *transgressed thy command; and yet thou hast never given me* so much as *a kid, that I might make an entertainment with* a few of *my* select *friends: But as soon as* ever *this thy* favourite *son was come, who has*, as much as in him lay, *devoured thy substance with harlots* abroad, in a long course of scandalous debaucheries, to his own ruin and the infamy of the family, *thou hast killed for him the fattest calf*, and made him as welcome as if he had been the most dutiful child upon earth.

29 And he answering, said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And, though his father justly might have taken offence at his unbecoming reply, yet,

31 And he said unto him,

e *Sinned against* the great God of *heaven.*] This was, as Dr. Goodman observes, (*Parable of the Prodigal*, p. 207.) an acknowledgment that his *father's yoke* had been so *easy*, that his throwing it off had been an act of rebellion against God: and it showed also that his heart was touched with a sense, not only of the folly but the guilt of his conduct, and that the fear of God began to take hold of him.

f *Make me as one of thine hired servants.*] He mentions this, not because such servants fared worse than slaves, but because he was himself an hired servant, and therefore naturally compared his own condition with those of that rank in his father's family.

g *The best robe.*] It is observed by Ferrarius (*de Re Vestiar. lib.* iii. *cap.* 24.) that the στολη, *or long robe*, was a garment which servants never wore; so that his father's ordering any such garment, and especially the best, to be brought, was declaring in the most moving manner that can be imagined, how far he was from intending to treat him like a servant.—His mentioning the ring and shoes spake the same language; as many learned writers have observed. See Wolfius, *in loc.*

h *The fatted calf, and kill it.*] Elsner would render the word θυσατε, *sacrifice it*; truly urging that it was customary to offer a sacrifice at the birth, and sometimes at the unexpected recovery, of a child. (See Elsner, *Observ.* p. 249, 250.) But no such sacrifice was appointed among the Jews, nor could any have been lawfully offered but at Jerusalem, which does not appear to have been the scene of the parable; so that I can see no just reason for such a rendering.

i *That was dead, is restored to life.*] It is by a very common and beautiful emblem that vicious persons are represented as dead, both by sacred and profane authors; (compare 1 Tim. v. 6; Eph. ii. 1; v. 14; and Wolfius, *in loc.*) and the natural death of their children would be less grievous to pious parents, than to see them abandoned to such a course as this young sinner took.—But to suppose an allusion here to that statute (Deut. xxi. 18—21.) which condemned a disobedient and rebellious son to death on the prosecution of his parents, would in this case be most unnatural, and utterly spoil the tenderness and grace of this speech.

SECT. 123. LUKE XV.

with great gentleness, *he said to him, Son, thou art always with me, and* art every day receiving some token of my kindness; yea, *all that I have is* in a manner *thine*, as thou art heir to the bulk of my estate:[k] *But* surely, on farther consideration, thou must acknowledge that *it was fit we should feast and rejoice* to-day: *for this thy* poor *brother*,[l] *who was* but lately looked upon as *dead, is*, as it were, miraculously made *alive again*: 32 *and he who was lost* to us all, *is* now happily *found*: and it will much better become thee to join with us in joy for his return, than thus peevishly to quarrel with my indulgence to him.

Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.

Now you who have heard this parable will easily see how indecent this conduct was, and how ungracious a figure this elder brother makes in my story. And I will assure you, that when you Pharisees murmur at the kindness shewn to the publicans, or even the Gentiles themselves,[m] on their sincere repentance, you act with as ill a grace, and are the objects of still greater blame, in proportion to the degree in which men's eternal interests are more important than those that relate merely to the present state.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us here behold, with all due attention, the moving representation which our gracious Redeemer makes of the folly of sinners and the compassions of God; compassions, which he describes as one who himself felt them, and who, in this respect, as well as others, was the express image of his Father.

We have before us in this parable, a lively emblem of the character and condition of sinners in their fallen state.

Ver. 12 They are thus impatient of the most necessary restraints; thus fondly conceited of their own wisdom; and thus, when enriched by the bounties of the great common Father, do they ungratefully run from him, and say unto 13 God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:* (Job xxi. 14.) Sensual pleasures are eagerly sought; and perhaps all their earthly possessions and hopes are quickly paid as the price of them. While the 14 means of obtaining these pleasures continue, not a serious thought of God can find a place in their minds: and then, perhaps, afflictions, heavy and complicated afflictions, come upon them; yet even under that pressure they 15, 16 will often make very hard shifts before they will be persuaded to think of a return; till at length divine grace, working in concurrence with Providence, brings them to a better temper.

17 When they see themselves naked and indigent, enslaved and undone; when they come to themselves, and recover the exercise of their reason, improving it to the only purposes for which it would have been worth while to have received it,—then they feel the pangs of penitential remorse: then they remember the blessings they have lost, 18, 19 and attend to the misery they have incurred. And hereupon they are disposed humbly to confess their folly, and to prostrate themselves in the presence of their heavenly Father: they put the resolution immediately into practice; they arise and go unto him.

20 But oh, let us behold with wonder and pleasure the gracious reception they find from divine, injured goodness! He sees them afar off; he pities, he meets, and embraces them; he interrupts their complaints and acknowledg- 21 ments with tokens of his returning favour. *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* (Jer. xxxi. 20.) Thus does God welcome the humble penitent; thus does he open the arms of his love to embrace him, and the treasures of his bounty to enrich him. He arrays him 22, 23 with the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness, dresses him in the ornaments of sanctifying grace, honours him with the tokens of adopting love, and invests him with the glorious privileges and immunities of his children. And all this he does with unutterable delight: *he rejoices over him with joy; he rests in his love*, and, as it were, *re- 24 joices over him with singing*, (Zeph. iii. 17.) and this is the joyful language of the song, My children that were dead are alive again; and though they were lost, they are found.

25—32 Let heaven and earth unite in the joy, and echo back the song. Let no elder brother murmur at the indulgence with which these prodigals are treated; but rather welcome them back into the family, and even encourage every thing that looks like a disposition to return to it. And let those who have been thus received, wander no more: but rather let them emulate the strictest piety of those who for many years have served their heavenly Father, without having in any notorious instances transgressed his commandments.

k *All that I have is thine.*] This is a material intimation, and suggests a strong reason against murmuring at the indulgence shewn to great sinners; for as the joyful welcome that the father gave this younger son did not incline him to disinherit the elder brother, so neither will God, out of a partial fondness for remarkable penitents, raise them to a state of glory superior to that of those who have on the whole made a greater progress in holiness, and done him more constant and faithful services.

l *This thy brother.*] There is a lovely opposition between this and the 30th verse: the elder son had there indecently said, *This thy son*; the father in his reply tenderly says, *This thy brother.* And it is a moving intimation, that the best of men ought to look on the most abandoned sinners as in some respect their brethren still; and should especially remember the relation, when there appears any inclination to return.

m To the publicans, or even the Gentiles themselves. Many commentators have considered this parable in a view of peculiar application to the Jews and Gentiles; and have observed that the murmurs of the Jews against the apostles for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, (see Acts xiii. 42—50; xxii. 21, 22; and 1 Thess. ii. 16.) are represented by the conduct of the elder brother.—This was certainly a case comprehended in our Lord's design; but he undoubtedly had something more in his intention. He meant to shew, that had the Pharisees been as eminently good as they themselves pretended to be, yet it had been very unworthy their character to take offence at the kind treatment which any sincere penitent might receive. Thus does he here, and in many parallel texts, condemn their conduct on their own principles; though elsewhere, on proper occasions, he shews the falsehood of those principles, and plainly exposes their hypocrisy and guilt. Thus the judicious Calvin states the matter; and it is strange so many learned writers should have puzzled themselves and their readers in so clear a case.

SECTION CXXIV.

Christ delivers the parable of the unjust steward, and reproves the Pharisees for their covetousness and hypocrisy. Luke xvi. 1—18.

LUKE xvi. 1.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for thou mayst be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unright-

LUKE xvi. 1.

SECT. 124.

LUKE XVI.

OUR Lord then spake another parable, by which he intended to convince his hearers of the necessity of making a right use of their worldly enjoyments; *and*, having before rebuked the Pharisees for their envious and uncharitable temper, *he said also to his disciples* that were about him, *There was a certain rich man who had a steward* in whom he had long put great confidence: *and he was* at last *accused to him, as having wasted his goods* which had been entrusted to his care. *And calling him, he said unto him, What* 2 *is this* strange account *that I hear of thee?* Can it be true that thou hast acted so unjust and base a part? *Give an* immediate and exact *account of thine administration* and management in this office; *for thou canst no longer be steward* with any honour to thyself or satisfaction to me, while thou continuest under such imputations and suspicions as these.

And upon this, as might be well imagined, *the steward* was much alarmed, and *said* 3 *within himself*, in the reasonings of his own mind, *What shall I do* in this unhappy situation of my affairs? *for my lord is taking away my stewardship*, and with it I shall lose my subsistence. *I am not able to dig*, or to apply myself to any other laborious work of husbandry;[a] nor can I expect, under this load of infamy, to be trusted by another in the business I have been accustomed to; [*and*] *I am* utterly *ashamed to beg* my bread, after having lived so handsomely in the world thus long. And, after a pause, he added, 4 *I* have at length bethought myself, and now *know what I will do:* an expedient offers itself to my mind by which I may secure myself friends, so *that when I am removed from my office, they may receive me into their houses.*

And, in pursuance of this scheme, *having called every one of his lord's debtors to* 5 *him* whom he could hope to oblige by so fraudulent a proposal, *he* determined to lower the several articles in his book which stood chargeable to the account of each, and *said*, for instance, *to the first, How much owest thou to my lord? And he said, An hundred* 6 *baths of oil.*[b] *And he said to him, Take thy bill* in which thou hast acknowledged the receipt of it,[c] *and sit down directly and write* another, in which thou shalt acknowledge the receipt of but *fifty*, and I will alter my book agreeable to that. *Then he said* 7 *to another, And how much dost thou owe? And he said, An hundred homers of wheat. And he says to him, Take thy bill* back *and write* down an acknowledgment of but *fourscore;* and remember how easy I have made thine account.

And when *the master* heard of it, though he could not but be sensible that it was an 8 act of great injustice, yet he *praised the unjust steward, as having done prudently* however, and found out an artful expedient for his subsistence, by making friends who might shelter him for the present, and perhaps recommend him to some new trust, in hopes of sharing again in the spoils of his dishonesty. And *thus*, said the blessed Jesus, when he had concluded the parable, *the children of this world are wiser in their* way and *generation*,[d] that is, they generally act a more prudent part with respect to their secular interests, *than* even those who may be called *the children of light*, or than good men themselves, who are enlightened by God to see where their true happiness lies, do with respect to theirs, which are so much more important; (compare John xii. 36; 1 Thess. v. 5; and Eph. v. 8.) for they seldom appear so thoughtful and active in the great concerns of religion, as worldly men are in pursuit of the momentary and precarious possessions of this present life.

And I also *say to you*, Endeavour to *make yourselves* sure *friends with* these riches, 9 which may not improperly be called *the unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon*,[e] (as so little

a *I am not able to dig*, or to apply myself to—husbandry.] Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 104, 105) and Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 251.) have shewn that the word σκαπτειν signifies in general *to cultivate the land*, and especially *to prepare it for seed*, which was one of the most laborious parts of the husbandman's work in which day-labourers were employed, and consequently most fit to be mentioned by this steward, who, having been used to a delicate and luxurious way of living, would naturally think of such a change of life in the most discouraging view. The expression ουκ ισχυω, *I am not able*, or strong enough to do it, has also a peculiar beauty in this view, which is lost in our translation, and in most others.

b *An hundred baths of oil.*] The Greek word βατος is evidently derived from the Hebrew בת, which we render *baths* in the Old Testament. (1 Kings vii. 26; 2 Chron. ii. 10; Ezra vii. 22.) According to Bishop Cumberland, it contained about seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint. Compare Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 2. § 9.—*The measure of wheat*, κορους, mentioned in the next verse, is the כור, *cor* or *homer* of the Hebrews, containing about eight bushels and an half, Winchester measure. The word *homer* being familiar to an English ear, I have retained it in the version. This homer contains ten ephahs or baths, (Ezek. xlv. 11, 14.) and each of these latter ten omers. (Exod. xvi. 36.) Twenty homers, which he allowed the debtor to deduct, would on this computation contain 170 bushels of wheat, and might be as valuable as fifty baths, or about 378 gallons, of oil; so that the obligation conferred on both these debtors might be equal.

c *Take thy bill* in which thou hast acknowledged the receipt of it.] This bill, probably, was somewhat equivalent to a note under his hand, acknowledging the receipt of so much oil, and promising payment for it. The alteration of this plainly shews how much Dr. Clarke is mistaken in supposing the steward did no wrong to his master in this affair, but only gave the debtors the value of what he set off out of his own stock, he undertaking to pay his lord. (See Dr. Clarke's *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 285.) For, not to say how improbable it is that this bankrupt should be able or willing to make such a considerable present, it is plain that, if he had intended it, he would have let the account remain unaltered. But by the exchange of bills, he cunningly made each of the debtors an accomplice with him in defrauding his lord, and thereby provided against a discovery.

d *In their generation.*] It here signifies *affairs*, or *actions;* as Gen. vi. 9; xxxvii. 2.

e *The unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon.*] Nothing can be more contrary to the whole genius of the Christian religion than to imagine that our Lord would exhort men to lay out their *ill-gotten goods* in works of *charity*, when *justice* so evidently required they should make restitution to the utmost of their abilities.—*Mammon*, or *wealth*, is here called *unrighteous*, or *deceitful*, on account of its

SECT. 124. LUKE XVI.

confidence can be reposed in them;) *that when you fail*, and die out of this world,[f] *they may receive you into everlasting habitations*, and you may for ever enjoy the reward of your pious charity and love, in an everlasting friendship with all those truly worthy persons who have been relieved by it.

eousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 Let this exhortation be regarded, not only by those that abound in wealth, but by all others: for *he who*, acting on strict principles of integrity and piety, *is faithful in the smallest* [*trust*,] *is*, and would in fact appear to be *faithful also in* one of *much* greater importance if it were committed to him; *and he who is unjust in the least* matter, *is*, if he can attempt it with views of impunity, *unjust also in much*.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 *If therefore* it appears that *you have not been faithful in* the management of *the unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon*, as I before called those precarious treasures, *who will* 12 *entrust you with the true* [*riches?*] *And* I repeat it again, *if you have not been faithful in what was* really *another's*, and only was committed to your care and management for a little while, *who* do you think *will give you* [*that which shall be*] *your own* by an unalienable right and eternal possession?[g] You cannot sure expect so high a reward without a behaviour correspondent to it.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?*

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 But, as I formerly have said, I tell you now again, *No domestic* whatever *can serve two* different *masters; for he* assuredly *will either hate* and despise *the one, and love the other; or* at least *he will adhere to* the commands of *the one and neglect* those of *the other:* so, in like manner, *you cannot* faithfully *serve God, and* yet at the same time be the servants of *mammon*, having your hearts engrossed by worldly interests and pursuits. (Compare Matt vi. 24. p. 84.)

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 *And the Pharisees also, who were* extremely *covetous*, stood by and *heard all these things; and they* contemptuously *derided him*[h] as a poor visionary, who did not understand human life, or only appeared to despise the world, because (as they supposed) it was out of his reach.

14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 *And he said to them, You* Pharisees *are they that justify yourselves before men*, and find out a great many plausible excuses for possessing and pursuing the world as you do; *but God knows your hearts*, and knows that it is not by love to him but to yourselves, that you are animated, even in the most specious and pompous of your actions: *for that which is highly esteemed among men is*, in many instances, *an abomination before God*, who observes the vile purposes from which it often proceeds, and cannot be imposed upon by any glittering misrepresentation or disguise. (Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 7.)

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

16 But a dispensation is now opening upon the world which will put you to deserved shame; for *the law and the prophets* [*were*] the only divine revelation among you *until John* the Baptist appeared; but *from that time the kingdom of God is* publicly and plainly *preached, and every one forces his way into it*;[i] for considerable numbers, notwithstanding all your sophistry, stand well disposed to receive it, and are willing to secure its 17 blessings at any rate. (Compare Matt. xi. 12, 13. p. 116.) *Yet* I would not be understood as if I intended by what I say to put any slight on former revelations; for I rather establish and vindicate them, and again declare it to you as a most solemn truth, That *it is* much *easier for heaven and earth to pass away*, and the whole system of created nature to be destroyed, *than for one tittle of the law* of God *to fail*, or the least precept of it to be 18 set aside as faulty. (See Matt. v. 18. p. 75.) And, far from doing any thing to lessen or abate the force of it, I rather assert it in its utmost extent and spirituality; insomuch that you know I have before declared, notwithstanding all your boasted but dangerous traditions, that *whosoever puts away his wife, and marries another*, unless it be on account of a breach of the most fundamental article of the marriage-covenant, *commits adultery; and whosoever marries her that is put away from her* former *husband* for any less important cause, *commits adultery* with her, as the first contract still continues in force, by which she is the wife of another. (Compare Matt. v. 32. p. 78.)

16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

IMPROVEMENT.

VER. 8 MAY the wisdom of the children of this world in their comparatively trifling concerns, excite a holy emulation in the children of light! Is it not much better worth our while to employ all the attention of our thoughts in observing opportunities for the good of our souls, and to exert all the force of our resolutions in improving them, 9 than to labour merely for the meat which perishes,—for that deceitful mammon, that treacherous friend, which will at best only amuse us for a few years, and will for ever forsake us in our greatest extremity?

being so apt to fail the expectation of the owners; and in that view, is opposed to *true riches*, ver. 11.—*The mammon of unrighteousness* is plainly such a Hebraism as the *steward of unrighteousness*, ver. 8. and the *judge of unrighteousness*, chap. xviii. 6. Gr. which our translators have with perfect fidelity changed into the *unjust steward* and the *unjust judge*; and had they taken the same liberty in many other places, they had made many scriptures plainer than they now appear to an English reader.—See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 252. where he has shewn that αδικια signifies *unfaithfulness*, on which account it is often opposed to *truth*. Compare Rom. i. 18; ii. 8; and Deut. xix. 19; Mic. vi. 12. Hebr.

f *That when you fail*, and die out of this world.] It is with apparent propriety that our Lord suggests the thoughts of *death* as an antidote against *covetousness*. Strange it is, that so many on the very borders of the grave should be so wretchedly enslaved to that unreasonable passion!

g *If you have not been faithful in what was another's*, &c.] This is well expressed, though not exactly rendered, in the version of 1727. *If you have embezzled what another gave you in trust, how can he give you an estate in perpetuity?* It probably alludes to a custom of rewarding faithful stewards, by giving them some part of the estate they have managed.

h *They derided him.*] The word εξεμυκτηριζον might more exactly be rendered, *they sneered*. There was a gravity and dignity in our Lord's discourse, which, insolent as they were, would not permit them to laugh out; but by some scornful air they hinted to each other their mutual contempt: and they have, no doubt, seriously answered for it, as others of their temper and character will.

i *Forces his way into it:* εις αυτην βιαζεται.] Some think this intimates that those who should have been readiest to *open the door*, rather attempted to *keep them out:* it certainly implies that there were strong obstacles in the way.

Let us take occasion, from this parable, to think how soon we must part with our present possessions: how soon we must give an account of our respective stewardships as those who must be no longer stewards. Let us therefore manage them in such a manner as may most effectually promote the great purposes of our everlasting happiness. To this end, let us remember how absolutely necessary it is that we abound in works of charity and benevolence, and that we endeavour to abstract our hearts from an over-eager attachment to these lying vanities; for surely the trifles of earth are no better. Let us not imagine that our particular address can find out the secret of *serving God and mammon*, since Christ represents it as an impossibility and contradiction. SECT. 124. LUKE XVI.

May we be found faithful in what God has committed to us, whether it be little or much; and govern ourselves, not by the maxims of this vain world, but by those of the gospel! And if the same temper that led the covetous Pharisees to deride our Lord, engage the children of this world to pour contempt upon us as visionaries and enthusiasts, we have much greater reason to be grieved for them than for ourselves. Their censures can be matter of but little account to us, when we consider that the things which are highly esteemed by men are often an abomination in the sight of God. His law is sacred, and the constitutions of his kingdom are unalterable: may the temper of our minds be so altered and disposed as may suit it! For another day, and another world, will shew that real Christianity is the only wisdom; and that all the refinements of human policy without it, are but specious madness and laborious ruin! 10, 12 14 15, 16 17

SECTION CXXV.

Our Lord, to enforce the preceding admonitions, delivers the parable of the rich glutton and Lazarus. Luke xvi. 19, to the end.

LUKE xvi. 19.

THERE was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

20 And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried.

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

LUKE xvi. 19.

THAT his hearers might be more effectually dissuaded from addicting themselves to worldly pursuits and carnal pleasures, Jesus added another parable, which might have been sufficient to convince the covetous Pharisees of their madness in deriding what he had before said. And he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: *There was a certain rich man who* lived in the greatest elegance and pomp; for he *wore* robes of *purple and* vests of *fine linen, and daily feasted in a* very *splendid* and luxurious *manner*. *And there was* in the same place *a certain poor man named Lazarus*,[a] a person indeed of eminent piety, but in the utmost indigence and distress; *who* being unable to labour, or so much as to walk, *was laid* down *at his gate*, to beg the rich man's charity; and all his body being *full of* sores and *ulcers*, he was a most miserable spectacle: *And*, being almost famished with hunger, *he* earnestly *desired to be fed*, if it were but *with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; yea*, he was in so exposed and abandoned a condition, that *the* very *dogs came and licked his sores*,[b] which lay uncovered in the open air. SECT. 125. LUKE XVI. 20 21

But so it was, that in a little time *the* poor *beggar*, worn out with the load of so great a calamity, *died; and*, being a favourite of heaven, notwithstanding all his distress on earth, he *was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom*, the abode of happy spirits in a separate state;[c] *the rich man also died* quickly after him, for all his riches were not sufficient to procure the least continuance of his life; *and* he *was buried* with great funeral solemnity and pomp. But observe the difference of their circumstances beyond the grave. This poor sensual creature was by God's righteous vengeance condemned to everlasting misery; *and in the unseen world*,[d] *being* in the midst of *torments*, aggravated by all the indulgence and delicacy of his former life, *he lifted up his* weeping and despairing *eyes, and saw Abraham from afar, and* the poor despised *Lazarus* lying *in his bosom*, as a newly received guest at the heavenly banquet, placed next the father of the faithful himself. 22 23

a *A certain poor man named Lazarus.* An exceeding proper name, which seems (as Lud. Capellus observes) to be derived from עזר, *Lo azer*, and signifies *a helpless person*; an etymology on all accounts much more natural than that so generally followed, which derives it from *Eliezer, God is my helper*.—Some have imagined, from the name of Lazarus, and the particular detail of circumstances, that this was an history rather than a parable; but this must be a groundless supposition, as it is plain the incidents are parabolical. But the criticism of Lomeirus, who explains it as a mystical representation of the Jewish and Gentile churches, is far more extravagant.—Dr. Lightfoot and others have shewn that the Jews in their Gemara have a parable much to the same purpose.

b *Yea, the dogs came, and licked his sores.*] Had the connection in the original been attended to, I think there could have been no debate among commentators whether this were mentioned as an alleviation or an addition to his calamity. For however lenient and healing the tongue of a dog may be in such cases, the words αλλα και should be rendered *yea*; as Erasmus, Beza, Schmidius, and Calvin contend, and above all, Raphelius abundantly proves. (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 106, 107.) The circumstance is surely recorded to shew that his ulcers lay bare, and were not (as Isaiah in another case expresses it, chap. i. 6.) *either closed, or bound up, or mollified with ointment.* Some versions add, that *no man gave unto him*; which Grotius thinks is intimated in his *wishing to be fed with the crumbs* which the dogs used to gather. (Matt. xv. 27.) If so, it was with singular propriety that he who denied a *crumb* is represented as unable to obtain a *drop*; but as it is not expressed in the Greek, either here or in Abraham's reply, I did not chuse to insert it.—Giving alms will be no security to those that live a sensual life.

c *Carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.*] The Jews assign this office to angels, (see Drusius, *in loc.*) and, no doubt, with the utmost propriety, considering how suitable it is to their benevolent nature, and to the circumstances of a departed spirit. The Greeks (as Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 255. and many others have observed) assign guides to the souls of the dead, to conduct them to their respective seats. It is strange any should render τον κολπον τη Αβρααμ, *Abraham's bower*, or (with Jac. Capellus) *Abraham's haven*. Our translation is in all respects much more just. It alludes to the way of representing the entertainments of heaven, by sharing a magnificent banquet with Abraham and the other patriarchs: (compare Matt. viii. 11; and Luke xxii. 30.) And nothing can better describe the honour and happiness of Lazarus, who had lain in so wretched a condition before the glutton's gate, than telling us that he was placed next to Abraham, and so lay in his bosom. (Compare John xiii. 23. § 170.) Thus Casaubon and Grotius well explain it.—As for *the rich man's seeing him there*, M. L'Enfant thinks the Jews borrowed this manner of speaking from the Greeks, who described the seats of the blessed as separated from those of the damned by a great impassable river, from the opposite banks of which they might converse. Many of them also expressly speak of a great chasm interposed. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 256, 257. and Grotius, *in loc.*

d *In the unseen world.*] This seems generally the sense of the Greek word αδης, as was observed before in note f, on Matt. xvi. 18. p. 179.—Both the rich man and Lazarus were in Hades, though in different regions of it. See Grotius's learned and judicious note here.

SECT. 125. LUKE XVI.

And calling out with the greatest earnestness and importunity, *he said, O Father Abraham, have compassion upon me,* a poor unhappy descendant of thine, *and send Lazarus,* not to reach out to me any of the dainties of heaven, for I presume not to ask so great a favour, but only to bring me a little water; and if I may not have a draught of it, I should be thankful if he might be permitted *to dip the tip of his finger in water to refresh my tongue,*[e] though it were but for a moment; *for I am* so *tormented in this flame,* that it excites an intolerable thirst, which is continually raging and preying on my very soul.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 *But Abraham said,* with awful and inflexible severity, *Son, remember* the former days when thou and Lazarus were upon earth, *that thou didst* then *in thy lifetime receive thy good things* which thou wast so foolish as to chuse for thy portion, in the neglect of God and of thy soul; *and likewise Lazarus* then received [*his*] evil *things,* of which thou wast witness; *but now* the scene is changed, so that *he* in his turn *is comforted, and thou art* justly *tormented;* and neither his joy nor thine anguish can admit of any end

26 or interruption. *And besides all this,* as to the favour thou desirest from the hand of Lazarus, it is a thing impossible to be granted: for *between us and you there is a great chasm fixed,* a vast unmeasurable void is interposed; *so that they who would go from hence to you,* if any should be so compassionate as to desire to help you, *cannot; neither can they who are there come unto us;* but we are still to continue at an unapproachable distance from each other.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that *would come* from thence.

27 *Then* the rich man, as *he* perceived that his own case was irretrievable, *said* unto Abraham, There may however be a passage from you to the other world, as it is plain there is from thence to you: *I beseech thee therefore, O father, that thou wouldst* please

28 to *send him to my father's house,* on an errand of the utmost importance: *For I have* there *five brethren,* thoughtless young creatures like myself, who are now revelling on those possessions which were once mine,[f] and are likely ere long to fall into the same misery with me: I earnestly entreat thee therefore *that he may* be sent to *testify to them* the reality and importance of this invisible world, *that they may* be awakened to avoid those evil courses that have been my ruin, and *may not also come into this place of torment.*

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 But *Abraham said* in reply *to him,* Thou knowest *they have* an excellent divine revelation in the writings of *Moses and the prophets; let them* but *hearken to* the warnings and instructions that are given by *them,* and they have means sufficient to secure them from that danger.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 *And* when the poor tormented creature found this also was objected to, *he* pleaded still in their behalf, and *said, Nay, father Abraham,* they will slight these as I foolishly did; *but* surely *if one go to them from the dead, they* cannot withstand so awful a messenger, but *will* undoubtedly *repent,* and reform their lives.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 *But* Abraham put an end to the discourse with an assurance of the fruitlessness of any such extraordinary means for their conviction; and *he said to him,* The evidences of the divine revelation are such, that *if they hearken not to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded* to a thorough repentance and reformation, *though one should arise from the dead* to visit them.[g] For though it might indeed alarm them for a time, the same prejudices and lusts which led them to despise those methods of instruction that God has given them, would also lead them ere long to slight and forget such an awful apparition as you desire they might see.

31 And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19, 20, 21

Most evidently may we learn from this parable, that it is impossible to *know either love or hatred by any thing that is before us under the sun;* (Eccles. ix. 1.) Who that had seen the pomp and plenty of this rich sinner, and compared it with the indigence and misery of Lazarus, would have imagined that the latter had been the child, and the former the enemy, of God? But let us *judge nothing before the time;* (1 Cor. iv. 5.) Our Lord Jesus Christ shews us the period of all the prosperity of the wicked, and of all the calamities with which good men may be exercised.—And what availed the luxuries of life, or the magnificence of burial, to a wretch tormented in

23, 24 flames? Surely the fierceness of those flames would be proportionable to the luxury in which he had formerly lived, and the sense of his torment be heightened by the delicacy he had once indulged. May God awaken those unhappy persons, whatever their rank in the present life may be, who place their happiness and glory in being *clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day!* May they lift up their enchanted, deluded

e *Dip the tip of his finger in water, &c.*] The Hebrews drank their wine mingled with water; and large quantities of water, on one occasion or other, were used at their feasts: (see John ii. 6.) There seems therefore in this petition a proper allusion to that.—Archbishop Tillotson observes, with his usual vivacity, that this is the only instance we meet with in scripture, of any thing that looks like a prayer put up to a glorified saint, (Tillotson's *Works,* Vol. II. p. 142.) and even here the application was in vain, and no relief was the saint capable of giving.—It is observable, the *rich man speaks as knowing Lazarus,* and as supposing (ver. 28.) that his brethren also might know him on his appearing to them.

f *I have five brethren,* &c.] As no mention is made of any surviving wife and children, but his five brethren are described as living still together in his father's house, one would imagine that our Lord intended to represent this wretched creature as a young man, who (unhappily for himself, like many modern rakes) coming early to the possession of his estate, soon broke his constitution by debauchery, and so left his riches to the younger children of the family, having no other heirs.

g *If they hearken not to Moses, &c.*] It is true Moses no where expressly asserts *a future state of rewards and punishments;* yet the facts recorded by him strongly enforce the natural arguments in proof of it; and the prophets speak plainly of it in many places. See Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11; xvii. 15; xxiii. 6; xlix. 14, 15; lxxiii. 17. *et seq;* Prov. xiv. 32; Eccles. iii. 17, 21; xi. 9; xii. 7, 13, 14; and Ezek. xviii. 19, 20, 21.—Bishop Atterbury has excellently shewn the justice of Abraham's assertion here, in his incomparable discourse on this text. (See his *Sermons,* Vol. II. Serm. 2.) The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised from the dead, (John xi. 46.) and the wickedness of the soldiers who were eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and yet that very day suffered themselves to be hired to bear a false testimony against it, (Matt. xxviii. 4, 15.) are most affecting and astonishing illustrations of this truth: for each of those miracles was far more con-

eyes, and see that pointed sword of the divine vengeance which is suspended over them by so weak a thread; and may they take this warning from one greater than Moses and the prophets, from one that came from the dead to enforce it, that they pass not into that place of torment! SECT. 125.

Let poor afflicted saints take comfort in what has now been read, though they may be despised and slighted by men. The time will shortly come, when those angels who now descend in an invisible form to minister to them, will appear as their guard to convoy them to the regions of glory. Abraham's bosom will be opened to them, and the dainties of heaven be set before multitudes who, perhaps, while on this side the grave, hardly knew how to procure even the necessaries of life. LUKE XVI. Ver. 23

May we never view those seats of glory, as this wretched sensualist did, at an unapproachable distance! Let us think seriously of his deplorable circumstances, when he asked a drop of water from the tip of Lazarus's finger, and yet was denied. Dreadful representation! yet made by Christ himself, who surely knew how to describe the case with the utmost propriety. Behold, O our souls, this son of Abraham in that flaming prison, in all the restless agonies of torment and despair; and we may judge what dependence to place on a descent from pious ancestors, or a participation of external privileges. 25

We inquire not curiously into the motives which engaged him to request that so extraordinary a warning might be sent to his brethren; whether it might proceed from a remainder of natural affection, from a fear of meeting them in the same misery, or from a mixture of both. It is enough to observe how and upon what principle it was denied, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* Let none vainly excuse themselves from believing the evidence of the revelation God has given, on a pretence that if they saw signs and wonders they would believe. The heart of man may be hardened against the most sensible and immediate miracle; but if that evidence were irresistible, it would ill become us to dictate to God when and to whom it should be given. Let us examine and acquiesce in such as he has seen fit to afford; and pass through our various scenes of life as those that have eternity in view, and are persuaded we must each of us, in a few years at farthest, be with Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, or with the rich man in that tormenting flame. 27, 28 31 30 29

SECTION CXXVI.

Christ repeats his exhortations to an inoffensive conduct and a forgiving temper; and warns his disciples not to arrogate any merit to themselves. Luke xvii. 1—11.

LUKE xvii. 1.

THEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him* through whom they come.

LUKE xvii. 1.

OUR Lord also about this time repeated to the numerous attendants who were *then* around him, several things which *he* had formerly *said* in a more private way *to the disciples;* and particularly addressed them in terms like these: Considering the general corruption of human nature, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan, *it is impossible but* one way or other *offences should come;* many professing my religion will, no doubt, act unworthy of themselves, and disgrace the holy name they bear: *nevertheless, woe* [*be to him*] *by whom they come;* and let me warn you therefore, as you love your own souls, to guard against the guilt and danger of being a stumbling-block to others. For I assure you, *it were better* for such a one, even *for him* that by an immoral life proves a reproach and scandal to my cause, *that* he should die by the hand of violence, and suffer the most shocking execution, yea, that *a huge millstone should be hanged about his neck, and he* should *be thrown into the sea, than that he should offend* and ensnare *one of these little ones* that believe in me, so as to draw the meanest of them into sin and ruin. (See Matt. xviii. 6, 7. and the notes there, sect. xciii. p. 190.) SECT. 126. LUKE XVII. 1 2

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Take heed to yourselves, therefore,[a] that you may govern all your passions aright, and particularly your resentments, by which otherwise much sin may be occasioned both to yourselves and others. And *if thy brother trespass against thee,* do not lay up a secret grudge against him for it, but plainly and faithfully *rebuke him,* endeavouring to convince him of the evil he has committed: *and if he* appear to *repent* of his fault, *forgive him* immediately, without insisting on any rigorous satisfaction. *And if he trespass against thee* again and again, even though he should repeat his fault *seven times in a day,* (compare Psal. cxix. 164.) *and seven times in a day return to thee,* seriously *saying, I repent* of my folly, and am heartily sorry for the injury I have done thee,—*thou shalt forgive him* even these repeated offences. (Compare Matt. xviii. 21, 22. p. 194.) 3 4

Then the apostles said unto the Lord, Lord, we are sensible that in this instance, as well as in several others, we have need to pray thou wouldst *increase our faith:*[b] Oh quicken our apprehension of the reality and importance of the motives by which all thy commands are enforced, and of the authority by which they are dictated; that we may not scruple to submit even to such precepts as these, how hard soever they may bear upon flesh and blood! 5

And the Lord said, If you had ever so little *faith,* though it were but *as a grain of mustard-seed,* yet (as I formerly told you) it would conquer the greatest difficulties: so that *you might,* as it were, be able to *say to this sycamore-tree, Be thou rooted up, and planted in the sea, and it should* presently *obey you.*[c] 6

vincing than such an apparition as is here referred to would have been.

a *Take heed to yourselves.*] This contains a strong and important intimation how much sin and scandal is occasioned by a severe quarrelsome temper in the disciples of Christ; as it not only stirs up the corruptions of those with whom they contend, but leads others to think meanly of a profession which has so little efficacy to soften and sweeten the tempers of those who maintain it

b *Increase our faith.*] Woltzogenius himself acknowledges that their applying to Christ to strengthen their faith, shews that they believed he had a divine influence over the spirits of men. See Whitby, *in loc.*

c *You might say to this sycamore-tree, &c.*] I do not apprehend this text to be entirely parallel to Matt. xvii. 20. p. 187. In this connection the expression seems proverbial, and to be as if he had said, As the least degree of miraculous faith will (as I said before)

SECT. 126. LUKE XVII.

Endeavour therefore to live in the exercise of this noble grace, and in a series of such services as are the proper fruits of it: *but* in the midst of all, be careful to maintain the deepest humility, as in the presence of God your heavenly Master, on whom, as you are his servants, you can have no claim of merit: for *who* is there *of you, that* if he *has a servant ploughing* his ground *or feeding his flock, will say unto him, as soon as he comes* 8 *in from the field, Come in*[a] *and sit down at the table* with me? *Or will he not rather say to him,* if it was a part of that servant's business to do it, *Make ready* somewhat for *my supper, and,* when it is prepared, *gird up thy garments* close about thee,[e] *and wait upon me while I am eating and drinking; and afterwards thou shalt* sit down to *eat* 9 *and drink* thyself? And suppose he should observe his orders with the greatest diligence, *does he* think himself obliged to *thank that servant because he hath done what was commanded him? I apprehend* he does *not*, because he has an authority over the servant, 10 and may justly claim his obedience as matter of debt. Now, to apply this to your own services; *so likewise ye, when you have* faithfully *done all that was commanded you* in the exactest manner, yet should still *say, Surely we are* worthless and *unprofitable servants,*[f] who cannot pretend to have merited any thing from the hand of our Master; *for we have done* no more than *what we were,* by virtue of our relation to God, and dependence upon him, indispensably *obliged to do,* as much as any purchased slave is obliged to serve his master. And assure yourselves, that no services will be so pleasing to God as those performed with such an humble spirit.

7 But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 These discourses, and those above mentioned, happened in our Lord's journey to the feast of the dedication;[g] *and as he went to Jerusalem,* to attend it,[h] *he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee,* taking those parts of Samaria in his way which lay next to Galilee.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us renew our guard against every thing in our conduct which might give offence to the meanest and 2 weakest; and against every thing which might by a bad example mislead others, or furnish the enemies of religion 3, 4 with matter of reproach and accusation against it. Let us imbibe the forgiving spirit of the gospel, and, bearing in mind the numberless instances in which God has forgiven us, though we have sinned against him *not only seven times, but seventy times seven,*—let us *arm ourselves,* in some degree, *with the same mind,* and endeavour to *forbear and forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has* freely *forgiven us.* (Eph. iv. 32. and Col. iii. 13.)

5 In a sense of the weakness of our faith, let us pray to Christ to increase it; and then those duties will be discharged with ease and delight which appeared most difficult in a distant prospect. Yet when faith and patience 7—10 have had their most perfect work, when our Master's will has been borne with the most entire submission, and done with the most zealous despatch, let us not pretend to place any merit in our own actions or sufferings; but let us think of ourselves as the servants of God, yea, as unprofitable servants, whose goodness extendeth not to our great Master: and to the riches of his grace let us ascribe it, that our feeble powers are strengthened to the performance of our duty; and that our worthless services are accepted, and the numberless deficiencies of them mercifully excused.

SECTION CXXVII.

Christ travelling through Samaria, rebukes the intemperate zeal of James and John against those who refused to grant him entertainment; and heals ten lepers. Luke ix. 51—56; xvii. 12—19.

SECT. 127. LUKE IX. 51.

LUKE ix. 51.

IT was observed in the close of the former section, that our Lord was now on his journey from Galilee, near the feast of the dedication:[a] *and it came to pass, that as the days*

AND it came to pass, when the time was come that he

produce the greatest effects, so the least degree of true, sincere piety will finally bear a man above all opposition, and enable him to conquer the world.

d *Come in.*] Raphelius proves that the word παρελθων has often this sense. Compare Luke xii. 37; and Acts xxiv. 7. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 263. and especially *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 108.

e *Gird up thy garments* close about thee.] Compare Luke xii. 37. p. 227.—That servants used to be girded while waiting on their masters, is well shewn by Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 258, 259. See note b, on Luke xii. 35. p. 227.

f *Unprofitable servants.*] The word αχρειοι sometimes signifies *wicked,* (Rom. iii. 12; Matt. xxv. 30.) but in this connection it cannot have that sense. I entirely agree with Heinsius, that here, and 2 Sam. vi. 22. *Septuag.* it signifies *mean* or *inconsiderable,* as the best of men certainly are.

g In our Lord's journey to the feast of the dedication.] See note a, on Luke xiii. 23. § 118. and note a, on Luke xiv. 1. § 119.

h *As he went to Jerusalem.*] As Luke has related the two little histories contained in the next section at some distance from each other, it is very difficult (as the attentive reader will observe) to place them together without some tautology. I have therefore inserted the introduction to one of them at the end of this section; leaving out the word εγενετο, *it came to pass,* which is a mere expletive, or at most does only imply that what is mentioned in the context happened in this journey, or may refer to the discourses Christ had before delivered, as we have observed in the paraphrase.

a Near the feast of the dedication.] Taking it for granted that the following αναλημψεως, refers to *Christ's ascension,* (the reasons for which I shall give below,) I think this the only place where this little story can properly come in. Most harmonizers place it just before the feast of tabernacles; (of which we had an account in the seventh and eighth chapters of John, from sect. xcviii. to cv.) and chiefly on their authority, without a critical examination, I had mentioned it in that connexion in my *Sermon against Persecution,* p. 3. But I am now convinced that could not be the time; not only as it would increase the difficulty, by supposing Luke then to say, that *the time of his being received up was fulfilled,* though it must have been above *half a year* before his death, but chiefly because that was not the last journey he made from Galilee to Jerusalem, and because (as we observed on John vii. 10. note h, p. 199.) he made that journey with all possible secrecy; whereas here he had a train of attendants.—No commentators (on our interpretation of αναλημψεως) have, for the obvious reason hinted above, thought of placing it higher; and lower I think it cannot be brought: for though I was once strongly inclined to take the words in their most literal sense, and to conclude this happened when Christ was going from Galilee to Jerusalem just before his ascension, after having manifested his resurrection by his appearance to the five hundred brethren, 1 Cor. xv. 6. (compare Matt. xxviii. 7, 16—18.) I have been obliged to give up that hypothesis, considering that he never after his resurrection appeared so publicly as in this story, (compare Acts i. 3; x. 40, 41.) and that he had then no difficulties to expect at Jerusalem against which he should stedfastly set his face.—And as for his journey to Jerusalem just before the passover at which he suffered, he went from Ephraim near the wilderness, (John xi. 54.) and passed through Jericho, (Luke xix. 1.) so that Samaria did not lie in his way. Nor is there, that I can find, any proof that he ever went back to Galilee, between the feast of dedication and his

should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem;

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

Luke xvii. 12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God;

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

were now almost *fulfilled in which* he knew *he should be received up* to heaven again,[b] having despatched the ministry which he was to discharge on earth; notwithstanding all the painful scenes through which he was yet to pass, his heart was so animated with a regard to his Father's honour and the salvation of men, and so cheered with the views of his own approaching exaltation and glory, that, in defiance of all his most inveterate enemies, *he resolutely set his face to go* up *to Jerusalem*, though he knew it was the last journey he should take from Galilee thither, and that tortures and death awaited him there. *And*, as his way lay through Samaria, being a stranger there, *he sent messengers before his face, who in their progress entered into a village of the Samaritans to prepare entertainment for him;* only desiring to take a lodging there, and to pay for their accommodation. *But* the Samaritans had such a national grudge against the Jews, that *they would not receive him*, nor grant him the common rites of hospitality due to any stranger, *because his face was directed towards Jerusalem;* and they concluded from the season of the year, that this visit was intended as a peculiar honour to the temple there.[c]

SECT. 127. LUKE IX. 52 53

And when his disciples, James and John, who attended him,[d] *saw it, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we speak for fire to come down from heaven to destroy them, as Elijah did* with regard to his enemies, (2 Kings i. 10, 12.) for surely one word in such a case will do it, and the artillery of heaven will be much more ready to avenge such an affront offered to thee, who art so much superior to any of the prophets? 54

But [*Jesus*] *turning* short upon them, *rebuked them* with a becoming severity, *and said, Ye know not what kind of spirit ye are of;* you neither consider the genius of the gospel, so much more gentle than that of the law, nor do you sufficiently know your own hearts; and if you were more diligently to examine them, you would soon find that there is a great deal of personal resentment and ostentation mingled with all that zeal for me which you so warmly express on this occasion. But I reject your motion as absolutely unfit to be complied with; *for the son of man came not* into the world to erect his kingdom by military force, or by any other method *to destroy men's lives, but to save* [*them;*] and therefore will exert his miraculous power in works of mercy and benevolence, and not of terror and vengeance. *And they* departed from that place, and *went on* till they came *to another village.* 55 56

LUKE XVII.

And as he entered into a certain neighbouring *village, there met him ten men who were lepers*, and who on that account were shut out from the towns to which they belonged; and as in this miserable state they could have no society with any but themselves, both Jews and Samaritans conversed promiscuously together. *And standing afar off*, lest they should pollute passengers who might come too near them, *they lifted up their voice, and said* with great earnestness, having heard of the fame of Christ, *Jesus, Master*, we beseech thee to *have mercy upon us*, as thou hast already extended it to others in these deplorable circumstances. *And, seeing them* as they stood crying to him, *he said unto them, Go, show yourselves to the priests;* intimating that the cure they desired should be performed by the way. *And it came to pass, that as they were going* in obedience to his word, *they were* all miraculously *cleansed* by the power of Christ, the efficacy of which was such as to operate at a distance as well as near. 12 13 14

And one of them, perceiving he was healed, was so affected with it, that he immediately *returned* with an heart full of gratitude and joy, *glorifying God with a loud voice*, and made a free and open acknowledgment of so signal a mercy. *And*, presenting himself before Jesus, *he fell down on his face at his feet, giving* the most affectionate *thanks unto him* as the immediate Author of his cure; *and* it is remarkable that *he was a* 15 16

death; which I think sufficiently accounts for the use of the phrase of *the days* or time *being fulfilled*, &c.

b *As the days were fulfilled in which he should be received up:* εν τω συμπληρουσθαι τας ημερας της αναλημψεως αυτου.] In all the reasonings of the former note, I have taken it for granted that αναλημψεως here signifies Christ's being *taken up to heaven:* and this is so generally the signification of the word, that I wonder any learned men should have interpreted it in a different manner.—Sir Isaac Newton, merely to suit with his hypothesis of preserving the order of Matthew unvaried, strangely supposes that this occurrence happened in the first year of Christ's preaching, (Newton *On the Prophecies*, p. 152.) and interprets the passage before us as if αναλημψις were the same with αναδοχη, *a renewed entertainment*, which would make it no exact date at all, but might indifferently be applied to any other feast.—— Heinsius confounds it with υψωσις, and interprets it of his being *lifted up* on the cross: though, it is certain, the ideas of being *lifted up* to a state of suspension, and *taken* or *received up*, are extremely different.—A learned friend, for whose judgment I have justly a great regard, observing that λημψις sometimes signifies a *seizure*, ingeniously conjectures that αναλημψις may signify Christ's *being seized again;* imagining it may refer to a former seizure at Nazareth, Luke iv. 29; urging farther, that αναλαμβανω signifies *to take again*, and referring (I think without sufficient evidence) to Acts xx. 13, 14; xxiii. 31. compared with ver. 10. and Eph. vi. 13. compared with ver. 11. in proof of it. But I beg leave, with all due deference, to observe, that συλλαμβανω is the word which Luke uses for *taking*, in the sense this worthy person supposes, as denoting *to seize*, (compare Acts i. 16; and Luke xxii. 54.) in which he is supported by the authority of Aristotle, Euripides, and the best Greek classics. And therefore, since the word is plainly used with reference to Christ's ascension, Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2, 11, 22; 1 Tim. iii. 16; as also to that of Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 10, 11. *Septuag.* and since in all the places referred to above, it may be rendered by *taking up*, (see Grotius on Mark xvi. 19.) I scruple not at all, with the most ancient versions, and the generality of critics, to follow the usual interpretation, which refers αναλημψις to *Christ's ascension;* especially since no considerable difficulty would be removed by admitting any of the preceding different interpretations.—That the word *days* signifies no more than time, and is sometimes used to express what passes in an instant, is very evident from 1 Kings ii. 1; and Gen. xxv. 24. *Septuag.*

c As a peculiar honour to the temple there.] None of the feasts observed at Jerusalem could be more remarkable in this view, as this was kept in commemoration of the temple's being purified, after it had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose idolatrous impositions the Samaritans had willingly offered to submit; as was observed before in note g, on John iv. 9. p. 58. Josephus observes, (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 6. [al. 5.] § 1. and *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 12. [al. 11.] § 3.) that the Jews, going from Galilee to Jerusalem, at their public feasts, took Samaria in their way; and it might be resented as something of an affront, considering the antipathy of the two nations.

d *James and John*, who attended him.] That these disciples, so remarkably distinguished by their Lord's favour, should have some distinguished zeal and faith, may seem less wonderful, than that a person of so sweet a disposition as John should make so severe a proposal. (Compare § 96. Imp. p. 196.)—The affinity which this story has to the other with which Luke has connected it, is (as Grotius justly observes) a sufficient reason for his having thus transposed it.

SECT. 127. LUKE XVII.

Samaritan. And Jesus observing it, *answered and said, Were there not ten* lepers *cleansed? but where* [*are*] *the* other *nine*, of whom it might have been expected, as they were Jews, that they should have expressed a greater sense of piety, and have been more ready to thank God for their deliverance? How is it, that of all who were cleansed, *none are found who have returned to give glory to God, but this* poor *stranger* to the commonwealth of Israel? *And he said to him, Arise, go thy way:* this *thy faith* in my power *has saved thee*, and been happily made the means of thy cure; and from these grateful sentiments with which thy heart is filled, thou mayst conclude the cure thou hast received is given thee in mercy.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE IX. 53

WHO would not have imagined that the blessed Jesus should have been most cordially welcome wherever he came, when there was grace in all his words, and benevolence in all his actions? Yet these Samaritans would not receive him because he was a Jew. And thus do unhappy prejudices, taken up on imaginary grounds, against men and things in the general, sometimes injure the best of men, and prove much more hurtful to the persons themselves by whom they are entertained.

54

The rash disciples would have called for fire from heaven; and let us observe how Christ treated the proposal. He treated it like himself; like the kind compassionate Friend of human nature; and also like one who well *knew what was in man*, (John ii. 25.) and how little human terrors and severities can do towards producing a real conversion. Yet fire from heaven might have carried along with it some rational ground of conviction, which penal laws and sanguinary executions can never produce. What then would Christ have said to these disciples if they had themselves proposed to smite with the sword, or to cast fire-brands into the houses of these inhospitable men?

55

Little do they know their own spirit; little do they understand either the true genius or the true interest of the gospel, who have recourse to such violent methods as these to extirpate heresy, and to propagate truth. Let us bless God that neither the guilt nor the misery of such a conduct is ours.

Let us learn to search our own hearts, that we may form a thorough acquaintance with ourselves; which will greatly promote both the comfort and usefulness of life. Especially let us attend to our aims and intentions, and be greatly jealous over our own hearts, lest we indulge our irregular passions under religious pretences, and set up the standards of malice and pride in the name of the Lord.

LUKE XVII. 12—16, 17, 18

From the story of the ten lepers let us learn importunately to seek the influences of Christ, to purge us from that far more odious and fatal disease which sin has spread over our whole nature; and, after the example of the Samaritan, let us own the mercy we have received. Have we not reason to fear that, of the multitudes who are indebted to the divine goodness, there is not one in ten who has a becoming sense of it? Let us labour to impress our hearts deeply with such a sense. Let us remember what it is that God expects of us; and let us farther consider, that as the exercise of gratitude towards such a Benefactor is most reasonable, so also in proportion it is most delightful to the soul: it is indeed (as one well expresses it) like the incense of the Jewish priest, which, while it did an honour to God, did likewise regale with its own fragrancy the person by whom it was offered.

SECTION CXXVIII.

Our Lord cautions the Jews against expecting a pompous kingdom of the Messiah, and warns them of the approaching national destruction which would be the consequence of rejecting him. Luke xvii. 20, *to the end.*

LUKE xvii. 20.

SECT. 128. LUKE XVII. 21

THUS our Lord went on his journey, and at length came to Jerusalem. *And* it was about this time that, *being asked by* some of *the Pharisees*[a] *when the kingdom of God*, which he had so often mentioned as approaching, *should* actually *come; he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with* that external pomp and *observation* of men which you expect. *Neither shall they* point to this or that remarkable place, and *say, Behold,* [*it is*] *here, or, behold* [*it is*] *there. For behold, and* observe it attentively, *the kingdom of God is* already *among you:*[b] though, because it is an inward and spiritual kingdom, erected in the hearts of men, and not attended with outward grandeur, you overlook it as unworthy your regards.

LUKE XVII. 20. AND when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here, or, lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

22

And he afterwards *said to the disciples* apart, Though you do indeed undergo some present difficulties in consequence of your adherence to me, yet you have so much greater extremities before you, that *the time will come when you shall wish to see one of these days of the Son of man, and shall not see it;* and the whole Jewish nation having rejected Me, the true Messiah, shall yet long for the appearance of him whom they expect under that character, and eagerly listen to every one that pretends to it.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see *it*.

23

And accordingly *they shall say to you, Behold,* [*he is*] *here, or, behold* [*he is*] *there; but* [*do*] *not you go out*, on hearing such reports, to seek him, *nor* join to *follow* [*them*] in any

23 And they shall say to you, See here, or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24

of their vain delusive schemes. For he will indeed come, but in a very different manner from what they expect; even to execute upon them a sudden and unavoidable destruction: *for as the lightning which lightens from one* [*part*] *under heaven, shines* in a moment with the greatest swiftness *to the other* [*part*] *under heaven*; *so also* in as swift and terrible a manner *shall* the coming of *the Son of man be in his day*, when he appears to

24 For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

a *Being asked by* some of *the Pharisees.*] I pretend not to say whether this was at Jerusalem or some neighbouring place; nor is it any way material to determine it.

b *The kingdom of God is amongst you.*] So I render the words ἐντὸς ὑμῶν, referring the reader to those exact critics in the Greek language, Beza and Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 109, 110.) for a more particular vindication of it. It is certain our Lord could not properly say the kingdom of God was *in* the Pharisees to whom he spoke, whose temper was entirely alienated from the nature and design of it.

plead the cause of that gospel which has been so generally despised. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 23, 27. sect. clxi.) *Nevertheless, he must first suffer many things, and be* yet more opprobriously and solemnly *rejected by this generation* of men, who shall by this public and national act of impiety and rebellion fill up the measure of their iniquities. (Compare Luke xxiii. 18—21; John xix. 15; Acts iii. 13—15.)

25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Then shall impending vengeance fall upon them at once: *and as it was in the days of* 26
Noah which preceded the flood, *so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man,* or in those days when he shall come in the manner I have now described, for the destruction of his enemies. For, notwithstanding the express predictions of divine judgments approaching, 27
they went on with their usual course as if there were no danger; *they did eat, they drank, they married wives,* [*and*] their daughters *were given in marriage;* and with a confident security they persisted in the business, entertainments, and luxuries of life, *till the* very *day in which Noah entered into the ark; and* then *the deluge came* with irresistible fury, so that it overbore *and destroyed them all* at once. (Gen. vi. 13; vii. 21.) *Likewise* 28
also as it was at Sodom *in the days of Lot; they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted* vineyards *and built* magnificent houses, and never thought themselves more secure, or their pleasant country more like to flourish: Thus did they carelessly go on, despising every admonition of their guilt and danger: *But on the* very *day when Lot went* 29
out of Sodom, an horrible tempest of *fire and brimstone was rained down* by the Lord *from heaven, and* with a sudden overthrow *destroyed them all.* (Gen. xix. 14, 24.) *Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed,* when he will sensibly 30
display his power in the destruction of this sinful people: the Jewish nation shall be as careless and confident as if there was not the least danger, indulging themselves in all kinds of luxury and extravagance,[c] till they shall see ruin surrounding them on every side, from which it will be as impossible for them to escape as it was for the sinners of the old world, or the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 37—39. sect. clxiii.)

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark: and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded:

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all:

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In that day, if any one shall be taking the air *on the house-top,* or be retired thither 31
for any other purpose, *and his* best dress and *furniture be in the house, let him not come down* into the house *to take it away;*[d] but let him flee the readiest way by those steps which go down on the outside of the building: *and he that is* at work *in the field,* stripped of his upper-garment, *let him likewise not return back,* though it be but a few steps, to take it. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 17, 18. sect. clxi.) But *remember* the awful ex- 32
ample of *Lot's wife,* with the dreadful issue of her delay and looking back; (Gen. xix. 26.) and take heed, lest, like her, you perish in that sudden vengeance which shall overtake your former abode, if you allow yourselves to linger in it, or turn back for the sake of any thing you have left there. For in that day, *he that shall seek to preserve his life* 33
by retiring into some fortified city, and especially into that where it might seem he should be safest, *shall lose it; but he that shall* be thought to take the ready way to *lose his life, shall preserve it;* for they who regard my admonitions, and retire, however their conduct may be censured as imprudent, shall survive the general ruin.

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.

I tell you, in that night, that gloomy calamitous time, the providence of God shall be 34
strangely seen, in delivering some of my disciples, when others in the very same places and circumstances shall perish in the common calamity: *there shall,* for instance, *be two persons* lying *in the same bed; and the one shall be taken* by the enemy,[e] *and the other dismissed. Two women shall be grinding together,* at the same mill; *the one* 35
shall be taken, and the other dismissed. And *two men shall be* working or walking 36
together *in the field; the one shall be taken and the other dismissed.* (Compare Matt. xxiv. 40, 41. sect. clxiii.)

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And they answered and said to him, Where, Lord, and to whom shall this destruction 37
happen?[f] *And he said to them,* That common proverb is applicable to the present occasion,—*Wheresoever the carcase* [*is,*] *there will the eagles be gathered together;*[g] wherever the impenitent and unbelieving Jews are, the vengeance of God will pursue them, and the Roman eagles shall (as it were) fly upon them as a helpless prey; and so, where their numbers are the largest, there the destruction will be greatest and most terrible. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 28. sect. clxi.)

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is,* thither will the eagles be gathered together.

c Indulging themselves in all kinds of luxury and extravagance.] It is not unseasonable for Great Britain to recollect, that when a pompous and luxurious way of living has come to its height in many of the most considerable ancient and modern nations, there has been a very sudden transition to the lowest state of servitude and ruin. All histories abound with instances of this kind; and God grant that our own age may not add one to the number!

d *Let him not come down* into the house *to take it away.*] This shews, beyond all controversy, that this discourse refers not to the *final judgment,* from which there can be *no escape;* but to the *destruction of Jerusalem,* from which it is well known that many Christians were preserved by this caution. See Grotius, *in loc.*—The Jewish houses were built with a flat roof, and had stairs on the outside to go down from the top. Compare note e, on Luke v. 19, p. 92.

e *The one shall be taken* by the enemy.] That this is the sense of the word παραλημφθησεται, and that αφεθησεται in the latter clause should be rendered *dismissed,* or *let go,* I think Elsner has abundantly proved; *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 262, 263.—He has likewise shewn there, how customary it was for *women* to *grind at the mill.* See also Bos, *Exerc.* p. 30.

f *Where, Lord,* &c.] I have seen few paraphrases which do not supersede this question: I have forbore mentioning Jerusalem above, that I might leave room for it.

g *Wheresoever the carcase is,* &c.] Dr. Clarke has explained the general sense of this proverb with great judgment. (See his *Seventeen Sermons,* p. 381, *et seq.*) It is as if it had been said, *The like causes will produce the like effects.* But it seems to suggest so proper an allusion to the Roman standards, and to the carnage they made of the Jews, that I could not forbear introducing the mention of it.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 128. LUKE XVII. 21. Ver. 22 26—30 32 31 34—36 37 17

MAY our minds be formed to a true taste and relish for the kingdom of God! and may we learn wherein it consists; not, like the kingdoms of this world, in external pomp and splendour, but in righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, and that inward subjection of soul to the divine government which is the essence of religion, and the grand security and felicity of our natures! Many are, like the Pharisees, talking of it, and expecting it, while it is among them, and they know it not; and, perhaps, despise the humble Christians in whom it resides, and most eminently triumphs. May they who think most slightly of it never have cause to wish at last for the return of those days of the Son of man, which are now their burden, rather than their pleasure, while they hear vital and inward religion in vain recommended and enforced!

What our Lord says of his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, may be applied, as it is elsewhere, to his appearance at the final judgment, of which the former was a figure. Thus shall the men of that generation be immersed in business and pleasure; and that tremendous day shall come upon them, even as a thief in the night; so that they shall find themselves overwhelmed with irrecoverable ruin, while they cry, *Peace and safety*, (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) And thus doth the awful hour of death, which consigns men over to judgment, surprise the generality of mankind, while they are thoughtless of it, and unprepared for its approach, amidst all the solemn warnings of it which they daily receive. May we be always in a prepared posture, and daily live as on the verge of eternity!

And if once we are engaged in a course of serious preparation, let us *remember Lot's wife*, and take heed that we turn not back again. We flee as for our lives; let us not *look behind us*. Whatever is to be left, whatever is to be lost, it is enough if our *life be given us as for a prey*.

If we have any just hope that it will be so given us, we have a great deal of reason to own and adore the riches of divine grace to us, of that distinguishing grace which has taken us when others are left; some, perhaps, employed in the same business, and dwelling in the same place, and, may not I add, some lying in the same bed too!

In a word, let all seriously bethink themselves, and *flee from the wrath to come*. God spared not Judea, that favourite country, when they rejected his gospel and his Son: *let us fear, lest he also spare not us:* (Rom. xi. 20, 21.) In this respect also, *wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together*. The same causes will produce the same effects; and when we, in particular, of these happy but sinful nations, consider our numerous and aggravated provocations, we shall see much greater reason to wonder that the judgments of God have been so long delayed, than that they should at last fall upon us with an insupportable weight.

SECTION CXXIX.

Christ presses his disciples to perseverance in prayer, by the parable of the importunate widow; and recommends humility by that of the Pharisee and publican. Luke xviii. 1—14.

LUKE xviii. 1.

SECT. 129. LUKE XVIII.

THUS our Lord discoursed with his disciples of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; *and*, for their encouragement under those hardships which they might in the mean time expect, from their unbelieving countrymen or others, *he spake a parable to them;* which was intended to inculcate upon them this great truth, *that*, how distressed soever their circumstances might be, *they ought always to pray* with faith and perseverance, *and not to faint* under their trials.

2 For this purpose he discoursed to them in the following manner, *saying, There was a judge in a certain city, who neither feared God, nor reverenced man;* but was wicked enough to set light by all regards to both, and to make his own humour and secular interest 3 the only rule of his actions. *And there was a widow in that city* who had sustained some injury from an enemy more powerful than herself; *and*, having no other way to obtain redress, *she came to him*, at a place and time when she could not be denied access, *and said*, I come to put myself under the protection of the law, and to demand thine assistance as a magistrate, to *do me justice against mine adversary*,[a] that I may not sink 4 under his oppressive attempts. This was her case *and* plea; yet as she brought no present in her hand, *he would not, for a* considerable *time*, take any notice of it: *but*, as she still persevered in her petition, *he afterwards said within himself, Though* indeed *I neither fear God nor reverence man*, and therefore care not what becomes of this 5 cause, or who has the right or the wrong of it; *Yet, because this* importunate *widow gives me trouble* by her continual application, *I will do her justice, lest* by her *coming perpetually* to me with this petition, *she* even stun and *weary me out* with her cries.[b] 6 *And the Lord said, Hear* and observe *what the unjust judge saith* upon this remarkable occasion, and how he owns himself to be prevailed on by the continual cries of one 7 whom otherwise he would not have regarded. *And* if the earnest importunity of a poor widow thus prevailed on an unrighteous person, *shall not* a righteous *God* much more be moved to *vindicate his own elect*, his chosen and dearly beloved people, *that cry to him day and night* under the cruel oppression of their insulting enemies, even *though* 8 *he* may seem to *bear long with them*, to give them space for repentance?[c] Yes, *I say*

LUKE xviii. 1.
AND he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always *to* pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you, that he will

a *Do me justice against mine adversary.*] This is the undoubted import of the phrase εκδικησον με; and care should have been taken in the version, to express it so as not to suggest the idea of *revenge*.

b *She* even stun and *weary me out.*] The word υπωπιαζη is very emphatical, and signifies *to stun* or *beat down* by violent and repeated blows on the head. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 27.

c *Though he* may seem to *bear long with them*, &c.] The learned Elsner supposes μακροθυμων, with a small alteration in the accent, to

avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

unto you, he will certainly *vindicate them;* and when he once undertakes it, he will do it *speedily* too; and this generation of men shall see and feel it to their terror. *Never tideless, when the Son of man,* having been put in possession of his glorious kingdom, *comes* to appear for this important purpose, *will he find faith in the land?*[d] The persecution will be so severe as almost to bear it down; but let the remembrance of what I have now spoken be a comfort to my people, and a warning to those that injure them.

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

He also spake this other *parable to certain* persons *who,* like the proud, self-justifying Pharisees, with an arrogant conceit of their own merit, *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others* as reprobates. There were, said he, *two men* who *went up to the temple to pray* there, choosing to offer up their particular devotions at that sacred place; and *the one* of them was *a Pharisee,* one of that sect so greatly honoured among you, *and the other a publican,* whom you are used to number with the most contemptible of mankind. And *the Pharisee, standing by himself* at as great a distance as he could from the miserable sinner who had entered the temple with him, as if he feared being polluted by touching him, or any other person less holy than himself,[e] *prayed in this manner: O God, I thank thee that I am not as* the generality of *other men* are, but have always had the grace to withstand those vile temptations which conquer and enslave them; so that I am not like the *rapacious, unjust, adulterous* generation among whom I live, *or even like this* wretched *publican* that stands there at a distance, who probably is all this, and more: Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am zealous in all the traditions of the elders; that in conformity to them *I fast twice a-week;*[f] and with the greatest strictness *I pay tithes of all that I possess,* not excepting even the very herbs of my garden. (Compare Matt. xxiii. 23; and Luke xi. 42.) Thus the Pharisee offered his devotions, standing as near as he could to the court of the priests; confident in his own distinguished sanctity, and desirous to be observed by others. *But the* poor humble *publican, standing afar off* in the court of the Gentiles, as unworthy to be numbered among God's people, and much more unworthy to appear in the presence of so holy a Deity, *would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven,* the habitation of the divine holiness and glory; *but smote on his breast,* in token of the bitterest remorse and deepest humiliation, *saying, O God,* I entreat thee *be merciful to me, a* miserable *sinner,*[g] who acknowledge that I have nothing to hope but from the riches of thine unmerited and forfeited goodness.

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are,* extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

Now, added our Lord, *I say unto you,* and I would have you diligently observe it, that *this* poor, humble, self-abasing *man went down to his house justified rather than the other;* and would have been more acceptable in the sight of God than the Pharisee, if he had indeed been that moral upright man he pretended: even in that case his pride and confidence in his own righteousness would have blasted all; *for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;*[h] as nothing is more hateful to God than pride, and nothing more amiable than lowliness of mind.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

IMPROVEMENT.

How hateful is the character of this unjust judge, who neither feared God nor reverenced man, but centred all his regards in himself! How hateful, and how contemptible in any circumstance of life; especially in a magistrate, the guardian of the public interest, in comparison of which he ought to forget his own! Yet even he was prevailed upon by importunity; and our Lord mentions it to encourage the fervour of our addresses to the throne of grace. What then, is the blessed God, like this unjust judge, to be wearied out with a peal of words, and thereby weakly induced to do what would otherwise have been contrary to his designs? Far from us be so absurd and so impious a thought! Our condescending Lord only intended to intimate, that if the repeated importunate cries of the afflicted may at length prevail even on an inhuman heart, they will be much more regarded by a righteous and merciful God, who is always ready to bestow his favours when he sees we are prepared to receive them. We may be sure that God will vindicate his elect: let this encourage them, though the rod of the wicked may for a while rest on their back; and let it intimidate the proud oppressors of the earth, who, in the midst of all their pomp and power, are so wretched as to have the prayers of God's people against them. Ver. 2 5, 1, 6 7

correspond to βραγιον, and would render it, *Shall he not avenge his elect, who cry to him, and wait patiently for it,* that is, for his appearance in their favour? (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 265, 266.) But, as I cannot think the words will naturally bear such a construction, or that the authorities he produces are satisfactory, I chuse to retain our version. Nor can I, on this interpretation, perceive any inconsistency between ver. 7 and 8. since it is plain God might *wait long,* and yet at length execute a *speedy* and *sudden* vengeance on the persecuting enemies of his people. Compare Psal. lxxiii. 19; Hab. ii. 3; and especially Ecclus. xxxv. 18; to which words Grotius supposes there is an allusion here.

d *Will he find faith in the land?*] It is evident the word γη often signifies, not *the earth* in general, but some particular *land* or *country;* as in Acts vii. 3, 4, 11; and in numberless other places. And the context here limits it to the less extensive signification.—The believing Hebrews were evidently in great danger of being wearied out with their persecutions and distresses. (Compare Heb. iii. 12—14; x. 23—39; xii. 1—4; Jam. i. 1—4; ii. 6; v. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 20—25; iii. 14—17; iv. 1, 2, 12—19; v. 9, 10.)—Mr. Fleming argues from hence, that deism shall prevail very much towards the conclusion of the Millennium: (*Christol.* Vol. II. p. 358.) but it is evident from the connection, as stated above, that this cannot justly be inferred from this text; nor does the fact itself seem at all probable.

e As if he feared being polluted by touching him, &c.] Thus Camero well explains this clause. Compare Isa. lxv. 5.

f *I fast twice a-week.*] It has been observed by most commentators, that the Jews, especially the Pharisees, used generally to keep private fasts on Mondays and Thursdays, as the primitive Christians did on Wednesdays and Fridays: and our Lord had formerly reproved their ostentatious manner of doing it; Matt. vi. 16—18. See Drusius, *in loc.*

g *A* miserable *sinner.*] It is very apparent that the word *sinner* often signifies *an abandoned profligate,* or, as we commonly express it, *a wicked wretch;* and not merely one who has in some instances violated the divine law, which, alas, has been, and is the case with the best of men. See Psal. xxvi. 9; Amos ix. 10; Matt. ix. 10, 11; xxvii. 45; Luke vi. 32, 33; vii. 37, 39; xix. 7; John ix. 24, 31; and 1 Tim. i. 9.

h *Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, &c.*] This appears to have been a favourite maxim with our Lord, since we find it repeated almost in these very words no less than *three* different times; not to mention a multitude of expressions in sense nearly equivalent. See Matt. xxiii. 12; and Luke xiv. 11. Compare note k, § 157.

SECT. 129. LUKE XVIII. 11–13

How instructive is this parable of the publican and Pharisee; and how well connected with the former, to teach us that humility without which repeated prayers will be repeated insults and affronts to heaven! Let us not trust in ourselves that we are righteous, and despise others; but rather be severe to our own faults, and candid to theirs.

Behold this arrogant Pharisee, standing apart from the publican, but as near as he could to the seat of the divine majesty! And hear him boldly celebrating his own praises rather than those of his Maker! *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.* We see a man may acknowledge it is the grace of God which makes the difference between him and others; and yet while he professes that humbling doctrine of the gospel, may be blown up with pride: yea, he may nourish and express that pride by the words in which he declares his faith. Mistaken creature! that imagined this encomium on himself was a prayer, and trusted in this defective morality, and these ceremonies of human device, while an utter stranger to real vital religion. Happier, a thousand times happier, the poor publican, when abasing himself in the dust; when smiting on his breast; when owning himself a sinner, and imploring the divine mercy as his only hope! Lord, we equally need it: may we with equal humility seek it! May we habitually maintain those views of ourselves which may promote that humility so necessary in order to the acceptance of our addresses, and therefore to the happiness of our souls. And indeed, if in our approaches to God we can place our confidence in any righteousness of our own, whatever we may imagine of our own knowledge or holiness, we have need to be taught again the first principles of both, and are strangers to the essentials of religion.

SECTION CXXX.

Christ opens the eyes of a man who was born blind; and the sanhedrim examine strictly into the evidence of the miracle. John ix. 1—23.

JOHN ix. 1.

SECT. 130. JOHN IX. 2–6

OUR Lord was now come to Jerusalem, at the feast of dedication, about the middle of December;[a] *and as he was passing along* through the streets of that city, *he saw* a poor *man who had been blind from his birth*, that sat and asked relief from those that went by.

And his disciples, taking notice of the poor man's case, applied themselves to Jesus, and *asked him* concerning it, *saying, Rabbi*, we desire thou wouldst tell us *who* it was that *sinned* in so extraordinary and aggravated a manner as to occasion such a judgment? Had *this man* himself been guilty of some heinous crime, as some of our doctors suppose he might be in a pre-existent state?[b] *or* had *his parents*, before his birth, committed some notorious sin? for we apprehend *that he was born blind* as a punishment to himself, or them, or both.

But *Jesus*, waving the curiosity of the question, *answered, It is not because either this man or his parents have sinned* in such an extraordinary manner as you suppose; nor was the punishment of either the chief design of this dispensation of Providence; *but* the intent of it was, *that the* miraculous *works of God might be* remarkably manifested *in* restoring *him* to sight, as you will quickly see. For however the malice of the Jews may be irritated by it, *I must perform the works of him that sent me, while it is day*, and the opportunity of despatching it continues; for I well know that *the night is coming, in which no man can work:* I see death approaching, which, as it puts a period in general to human labours, so will close the scene of such miracles as these, and remove me from the converse and society of men. But *so long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;* and, as a proof of the divine illumination I am capable of giving, I have often restored sight to the blind, and I will do it in this instance.

Now *when he had spoken thus*, that he might exercise the faith and obedience of the patient, and might shew that he could command efficacy on whatever means he should please to use, *he spat on the ground, and made clay with the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay: And* then, for a farther trial of his resignation and submission, *he said to him, Go wash at the pool of Siloam;*[c] *(which* word Siloam, *being interpreted* from the Hebrew, *signifies, Sent*, and so bore some analogy to the character of Jesus, as

JOHN ix. 1.

AND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay;

7 And said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

a About the middle of December.] See John x. 22. and the note there, § 134. Notwithstanding all the pains which Mr. Whiston has taken to prove that the cure of the blind man, of which we have an account here, happened several months before Christ discovered himself to him in the temple, and indeed at the preceding feast of tabernacles, I chuse, with the generality of critics, to introduce it here; not merely that the thread of the story might not be interrupted, but because Mr. Whiston's reasons (in his *Harmony*, p. 385.) appear inconclusive. For I see not but all here recorded might happen within the compass of two or three days at most, nay, perhaps of one single day. And it seems much more probable that παραγων [*as he passed*] might be used here without any immediate reference to παρηγεν in the preceding verse, (John vii. *ult.* § 105.) than that when Christ was fleeing out of the temple in the hasty manner described there, his disciples, as he passed away from his enemies, should put so nice a question to him, (as in ver. 2.) or that he should stand still to discourse with them, and to perform such a cure in so leisurely a manner as it is plain this was done.

b In a pre-existent state.] Dr. Lightfoot (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) shews that some rabbies have wildly fancied a child might sin in its mother's womb: but most commentators, with juster reason, agree that this refers to the notion the Jews had of the transmigration of souls. They thought that if a man behaved himself amiss, he was afterwards sent into another body, where he met with great calamities, and lived on much worse terms than before; whereas a more advantageous situation than the former was supposed the reward of distinguished virtue: a notion which they borrowed from the Pythagoreans; which seems to be hinted at by Josephus, and is plainly referred to, Wisd. viii. 19, 20. (Compare Matt. xiv. 2, xvi. 14.)—Perhaps the disciples might put this question on purpose to learn our Lord's sentiments on this subject of curious speculation; but he wisely declined an express decision of the matter, to fix on something more useful.

c *Wash at the pool of Siloam.*] Perhaps by this command, our Lord intended to make the miracle so much the more taken notice of; for a crowd of people would naturally gather round him, to observe the event of so strange a prescription. And as it is exceeding probable that the blind man had a guide to lead him, especially through the streets of so populous a city, he might naturally mention the errand they were going upon, and call those that saw him to a greater attention. Accordingly this miracle was afterwards talked of with particular regard: John xi. 37. § 140.—As for the pool of Siloam, it was supplied from the fountain of that name which arose in the south-west part of Jerusalem. See note c, on Luke xiii. 4. p 231. and Reland. *Palestine*, p. 857.

sent of God.) *He therefore* presently complied with the direction, and *went away and washed* as he was ordered, *and* had no sooner done it, but he *came* from the pool *seeing;* and not only found his sight given him, but his eyes were at once so remarkably strengthened, that he immediately could bear the light.[d]

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

The neighbours therefore, and they who had seen him before, and known *that he was* always *blind, said* one to another, *Is not this he that sat* in the street, *and asked* [*charity*] of those who passed by? Whence is there such an astonishing alteration in him? And *some said, It is* assuredly *he; and others, It is* indeed very much *like him,* yet it cannot be the person himself:[e] [*but*] *he said* ~~and confidently averred,~~ Truly *I am the* very *man.* 8 9

9 Some said, This is he: others *said,* He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he.*

They therefore said to him, How then *were thine eyes opened,* which we know to have been blind? Could any medicine have so strange an effect? And *he replied, A* certain *man,* who is *called Jesus,* and who is famous for many other extraordinary works, *made clay* by spitting on the ground, *and having anointed mine eyes* with it, *said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash* there: *and* accordingly *I went and washed, and* immediately *received my sight;* and this is, in a few words, a true and exact account of this wonderful fact. 10 11

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Then said they to him, Where is he that performed this, and gave thee such directions? *And he said, I do not know;* for I have never yet seen him, nor ever conversed with him, otherwise than as I just now told you. 12

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

And *they brought him who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees,* in the grand sanhedrim, that he might be examined by them; that so, if there was any fraud in the matter, they might discover and expose it. *Now it was* on *the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay*[f] in the manner before related, *and opened his eyes;* which was a circumstance that some of these hypocritical rulers pretended to take great offence at. *The Pharisees therefore,* disposed to find all the fault they could, *asked him again, how* or by what means *he received his sight. And he said to them,* exactly as he had before declared to the people, *He* only *put clay upon mine eyes, and I* then, according to his command, went and *washed* at the neighbouring pool of Siloam, *and* behold, I *do* now see perfectly well. 13 14 15

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Then said some of the Pharisees, This man, though apparently possessed of some extraordinary power, *is not,* to be sure, a messenger *of God,* nor can he perform these works by a divine agency, *because he observeth not* the sacred rest of *the sabbath,* which the law of God so expressly enjoins. But *others* more wisely *said, How can a man that is a* notorious *sinner* and sabbath-breaker, as you suppose this man to be, *do such* great and beneficial *miracles,*[g] which wear all the marks of a divine original that can be imagined? *And there was a* warm debate and *division among them* on this important question; the few friends of Christ among them not failing to urge so great an advantage against the rest.[h] 16

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

But, to prevent the offence that might be taken at their dispute, *they* turned and *said again to the blind man,* (that is, to him who had been blind, and still was spoken of by that title,) *What sayest thou concerning him, since he hath,* as thou declarest, *opened thine eyes? And he* freely *said,* It is clear to me that *he is a* most illustrious *Prophet;* for surely otherwise he would have been unable to perform so great a miracle. 17

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.

The Jews therefore of this great council, being generally displeased with his reply, and yet unable to invalidate it if the miracle was allowed, *would not believe concerning him,* on his own credit, *that he had* formerly *been blind, and had* now *received his sight:* but represented it as a confederacy between him and Jesus, by an easy fraud to get the reputation of so extraordinary a cure: and in this view they went on roundly to censure it, *till they had called* in *the parents of the man who* maintained that he *had* thus *received his sight,* that they might strictly examine them on this question, *And they asked them, saying, Is this* indeed *your son, of whom* it is reported that *you say he was born blind?* Give us an account of the whole matter; and particularly tell us, if you are sure that he was blind from his birth, *how then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said, We* assuredly *know that this is our son; and* affirm it to be true *that he was born blind,* and hath continued so from his infancy: *But* as for this strange fact, *how he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not* any more than he has told us, not being present when the cure was wrought: *he is* himself *of* a sufficient *age* to answer such a question; if you please therefore to *ask him, he will* undoubtedly *speak concerning himself,* and is best able to tell you his own story. 18 19 20 21

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes we know not: he is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.

d Could bear the light.] This is strongly intimated in the phrase, *he came seeing.* Compare note b, § 86. p. 175.—Perhaps he had been taught by the example of Naaman not to despise the most improbable means when prescribed in the view of a miracle. Yet it is plain he did not know this was Jesus of Nazareth yet, and so had no particular faith in him, (compare ver. 12.) which shews, by the way, that such a faith was not universally required as a condition of receiving a cure.

e *It is like him,* &c.] The circumstance of having received his sight would give him an air of spirit and cheerfulness, which would render him something unlike what he was before, and might occasion a little doubt to those who were not well acquainted with him: as Bishop Hall justly observes.

f *It was on the sabbath-day,* &c.] Dr. Lightfoot (in his *Hor. Heb.* on ver. 6.) has shewn, that anointing the eyes on the sabbath-day with any kind of medicine, was forbidden to the Jews by the tradition of the elders.

g *Such* great and beneficial *miracles.*] This seems to intimate that they thought there were at least some miracles so glorious and so benevolent, that no evil agent would have either inclination or power to perform them; and that they reckoned this in that number. The thought seems both rational and important, and is set in a very strong light by the learned Mr. Chapman, in his *Euseb.* ch. ii.

h The few friends of Christ among them, &c.] If Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the sanhedrim, were now present, they would naturally distinguish themselves on this occasion; and Gamaliel too, on the principles he afterwards avowed, (Acts v. 38, 39.) must have been on their side.

SECT. 130. JOHN IX.

These things his parents said in this cautious manner, not that they had any doubt of the cure as wrought by Jesus, but *because they were afraid of the Jews: for the Jews,* in this their highest court, *had already agreed, that if any one should* show such regard to Jesus of Nazareth as to *confess him to be Christ, he should* immediately *be* excommunicated and *cast out of the synagogue*;[i] a censure which was reckoned very infamous, 23 and attended with many civil incapacities and penalties. Not knowing *therefore* but such an interpretation might be put on their owning the truth of this miracle, *his parents* declined giving any particular testimony concerning it; and rather chose to refer them to their son, and *said, He is of age* sufficient to be heard as an evidence, and it will therefore be most proper that you should *ask* the particulars from *him*.

22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5 Oh that the zeal of our great Master might quicken us his too negligent servants! Still is he *the light of the world*, by his doctrines, precepts, and example. May our eyes by divine grace be opened to see, and our hearts 4 be disposed to love and to follow this light! It was a governing maxim with him, and he meant it also for our admonition, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, wherein no man can work.* We are sent into the world on an important errand, to work out our own salvation, and that of others: may we improve the present day; and so much the rather, as we see the night approaching! On some the shadows of the evening are already drawing on; and as to others, their sun may go down at noon. Let us 2, 3 therefore, waving the curiosity of unprofitable speculations, apply ourselves seriously to the business of life, and zealously seize every opportunity of usefulness.

6, 7— Our Lord, as it should seem, unasked, and, by the person on whom it was wrought, unknown, performed this important and extraordinary cure. And the manner in which he did it is worthy of notice: He anointed his eyes with clay, and then commanded him to wash. Clay laid on the eye-lids might almost blind a man that had sight; but what could it do towards curing blindness? It reminds us, that God is no farther from the accomplishment of any purpose or event, when he works with, than without, means; and that all the creatures are only that which his almighty operation makes them.

—7 The blind man believed, and received the immediate benefit of it. Had he reasoned, like Naaman, on the impropriety of the means, he had justly been left in darkness. Lord, may our proud hearts be subdued to the methods of thy recovering grace! And may we leave it to thee to chuse how thou wilt bestow favours which it is our highest interest on any terms to receive!

15, 17 18, 19 20, 23 It must be a satisfaction to every true Christian to observe the curiosity and exactness with which these Pharisees inquired into the miracles of Christ, and how thoroughly they canvassed every circumstance of them. A truth like this need not fear any examination. Every new witness which they heard confirmed the case, and confounded the obstinacy of their unbelief.—But surely the weakness of the parents was very pitiable, who, in the midst of the evidence and obligation of such a miracle, were more afraid of incurring a human sentence than of offending God, by failing to own so great a favour, and to confess the blessed Person by whom it was wrought. *The fear of man bringeth a snare;* (Prov. xxix. 25.) but they whose eyes Christ has opened in a spiritual sense, will see a glory and excellence in him, which will animate them boldly to bear their testimony to him in defiance of all the censures which men can pass, or of all the penalties by which they can enforce them.

SECTION CXXXI.

The man who was born blind that had received his sight, is a second time examined before the Sanhedrim, who, provoked by the freedom of his replies, excommunicate him; but Jesus meets him, and declares himself to be the Son of God. John ix. 24—38.

JOHN ix. 24.

SECT. 131. JOHN IX.

NOW, as the sanhedrim were not able to discover any fraud in the miracle mentioned in the preceding section by examining the parents, *they therefore called a second time for the man who had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God,* by a free confession of the fraud, if there be any collusion or artifice in this affair;[a] or, if the cure was really 24 wrought in the manner thou affirmest, acknowledge the power, sovereignty, and goodness of the Divine Being in working by so unworthy an instrument; for *we* certainly *know that this* Jesus of Nazareth, the *man* of whom thou speakest, *is a* profligate *sinner*,[b] and deserves public punishment rather than esteem.

JOHN ix. 24.

THEN again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 *Then answered he and said, If he be a sinner, I know not* any thing of it, having no personal acquaintance with him; but *one thing I* certainly *know*, and will stand to the

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner, *or no*, I know not: one thing

i *If any one should confess him to be Christ, &c.*] Hence it appears, that though our Lord was cautious of professing himself to be the Christ in express terms, yet many understood the intimations he gave; and that most of his disciples by this time declared their faith in him under that character. It also farther appears from hence, that the parents, and indeed the sanhedrim, knew who it was that opened this man's eyes, though he himself was hitherto a stranger to him, and was not yet acquainted with the dignity of his person. Compare ver. 25, 36.

a *Give glory to God*, by a free confession of the fraud, &c.] As it is greatly for the honour of the divine omniscience and providence, that persons who are guilty of crimes not fully proved against them should freely confess them, and not presume, against the dictates of conscience, to maintain their own innocence; there is a great propriety in the phrase taken in this sense: (compare Josh. vii. 19. and Rev. xi. 13.) Yet some have taken it as a general adjuration by the glorious name of God; (as 1 Kings xxii. 16; 2 Chron. xviii. 15; and Matt. xxvi. 63.)—The words also admit another sense, which I have comprehended in the paraphrase; but I prefer the former.

b *This man is a sinner.*] I cannot, with Mr. Locke, (*Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 28) imagine this any proof of a tradition among the Jews that the Messiah should be perfectly *free from sin*; but rather conclude, that *sinner* here, as in ver. 16, signifies a notoriously wicked man. It was certain, from the principles of their sacred writings, that a person not entirely sinless might perform very illustrious miracles. But how severe an insult was here on the character of our Redeemer, to be pronounced a known scandalous sinner by this high court of judicature! An infamy which has seldom, in any civilized country, fallen on any person not legally convicted.

I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

truth of it, *that whereas I was blind*, even from my birth, *I now see* perfectly well, and owe my sight to the very person whom you condemn.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

But they again said to him, hoping that, in some minute circumstance at least, he might contradict his former account, and give them some advantage against him, Tell us once more as particularly as thou canst, *what did he unto thee? and how did he open thine eyes?*

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

And as the man perceived that they intended only to ensnare him, *he answered them* eagerly, *I have told you already, and you have not regarded* what I said, nor would at all believe me: *why would you* desire to *hear it again? Would you also become his disciples*, as many have lately done, and some, perhaps, on occasion of this miracle which he has performed on me?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

The Pharisees *then* were filled with indignation, and were so greatly exasperated at what appeared to them so insolent a speech, that *they reviled him* in very opprobrious language, *and said, Thou art* indeed *this fellow's disciple*, as many of the herd of ignorant people are; *but* we would have thee to know that we scorn the imputation, for *we are the disciples of Moses*,[c] and are too firmly attached to that great and holy prophet, to regard such a deceiver as this.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

We well *know that God spake to Moses*,[d] and gave the most ample evidence of sending him with a divine commission; *but as for this man, we know not from whence he is*, nor can we perceive any satisfactory credentials of his bringing any message from God to us.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

But, not discouraged by their unjust reflections, *the man replied* with a becoming freedom of spirit, *and said unto them, Why, in this respect it is strange that you know not from whence he is, and yet* it is plain that *he has opened mine eyes.*

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.

Now we all *know* in general *that God heareth not sinners*, and that persons of infamous characters and immoral lives cannot expect the divine acceptance in any common petition which they offer, much less for the performance of a miracle; *but if any man be* truly *devout, and* faithfully *do his will, him* indeed *he heareth* with a favourable regard: when therefore God is found to hear a man in such an extraordinary instance as this, there seems the greatest reason to believe he is a person whose temper and character are approved by him.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

And this is plainly an extraordinary instance; for, *from the beginning of the world it was never heard that any man opened the eyes of one who*, like me, *was born blind.*

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

It is surprising, therefore, that you, who allow that Moses was a prophet on the authority of his miracles, should in this case judge so hardly of my deliverer, whoever he be. But every unprejudiced person may easily see that *if this man were not* sent *of God, he could do nothing* of this kind.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

And, not being able to endure so plain and forcible a reproof, which even stung them to the heart, *they answered and said to him*, with great hatred and scorn, Thou vile presumptuous wretch, *thou wast entirely born in sins*, and didst bring into the world with thee most evident tokens of the divine wrath and vengeance; *and dost thou* insolently take upon thee to *teach us*, the guides of the national faith, and members of the supreme court of ecclesiastical judicature? We shall find out a way to correct this arrogance. *And* immediately *they cast him out* of the synagogue, passing a solemn sentence of excommunication upon him, though there was no shadow of proof that he had deserved it.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

Now *Jesus* quickly *heard* of their arbitrary proceedings, *that they had* thus passed sentence on the poor man, and had *cast him out* for his sake; *and, finding him* soon after, *he said to him* privately, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God*, the great expected Messiah?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

He answered and said, Sir, who is he, that I may believe on him? I know that such a glorious Person is expected; and if he be already come, tell me but who he is, and where I may meet with him, and I am ready to express a due regard to him who shall be pointed out to me under that honourable and important character.

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

Then Jesus, to encourage him under what he was now suffering on his account, *said to him*, with a degree of freedom which was very unusual,[e] Thou hast no need of going far to seek him; for *thou hast both* already *seen him*, and had experience of his power and goodness; it was he that miraculously opened thine eyes, *and* indeed it is even *he that is* now *talking with thee*, who *is that very Person.*

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

And, immediately yielding to that convincing argument which arose from what he had himself experienced of his almighty power, *he said, Lord, I* most readily *believe* that thou art he, and humbly prostrate myself before thee, to render thee due homage as such. *And*, falling down at his feet, *he worshipped him.*

c *We are the disciples of Moses.*] Hereby they craftily, but most maliciously and falsely, insinuated that there was such an opposition between Moses and Jesus, that it was impossible for the same persons to be the disciples of both.

d *We know that God spake to Moses.*] Their partiality here was inexcusable; for, if they believed the mission of Moses on the evidence of miracles, credibly attested indeed, but performed two thousand years before they were born,—it was much more reasonable, on their own principles, to believe the mission of Jesus on at least equal miracles, wrought daily among them, when they might in many instances have been eye-witnesses to the facts; and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice, they were here compelled to own, or at least found themselves utterly unable to disprove.

e With a degree of freedom very unusual.] We have formerly observed the wise caution of Jesus on this head. See § 29. note r, p. 59.—The freedom here used may be accounted for by considering the extraordinary circumstances of the case; this being the first instance in which any one had incurred the great inconveniences attending a sentence of excommunication, out of zeal for the honour of Christ. No doubt this passed privately between our Lord and this good man, though, presently after, others joined the conversation, as we observe in the beginning of the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 131. So little does truth fear repeated examinations; and thus does it, after every trial, come forth like pure gold out of the furnace. So did this miracle of Christ appear to these subtle adversaries; so will the Christian cause appear to all who will diligently search into its evidence.

JOHN IX. Who can forbear wondering at the obstinacy of these Pharisees; and, on the same principles, at that of the present Jews, who, while they acknowledge that God spake by Moses because he wrought miracles, will not, on the evidence of yet more various and glorious miracles,[f] and those attested beyond all contradiction, acknowledge the 28, 29 authority of the Son of God himself?

30 But we see this poor illiterate creature, (for such he undoubtedly was,) with the advantage of truth on his side, baffles all the sophistry of his most learned antagonists. Great is the truth, and it will prevail. Great is this truth, so fundamental to the gospel, that *Jesus is the Son of God:* and this also, which is so important to natural religion 31 and revealed, that *God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he hears,* and most favourably regards. May we be truly devout, and add to our devotion an obedient regard to the divine 34 will, and *the eyes of the Lord will be upon us, and his ears be open to our cry!* (Psal. xxxiv. 15.) Then, 35 being favourably owned of God, we shall have no reason to fear the censures of men. If they cast us out, Christ 37 will receive us, and perhaps reveal himself to us with more freedom, in proportion to the injuries we sustain from them.

SECTION CXXXII.

Christ admonishes the Pharisees of their danger; and represents himself as the door of the sheepfold, through which men must necessarily enter if they desire their own salvation, or that of others committed to their care. John ix. 39, *to the end;* x. 1—10.

JOHN IX. 39.

SECT. 132. WHILE Jesus stood talking with the blind man who had received his sight, several people, who were then entering into the temple, knowing them both, and desirous to hear what passed, gathered together about them: *and Jesus said*, so that they all might hear him,

JOHN IX. 39 You may see in this man, and in what has happened in relation to him, an illustration of the effects which my appearance is to produce: for *I am come into this world for judgment* as well as mercy; *that*, on the one hand, *they who see not, might see*, or that the ignorant souls who are willing to be instructed, might learn divine knowledge; *and*, on the other hand, *that they who see, may be made blind:* that such as are proudly conceited of their own science and wisdom, may either be humbled or exposed; and they who wilfully stand out, and harden their hearts against my instructions, may bring upon themselves yet greater darkness.

JOHN IX. 39.
AND Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world: that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind

40 *And* [*some*] *of the Pharisees, who were* then present *with him, heard these things, and* apprehending that he glanced at them, *said to him, Are we also blind?* and dost thou mean to insinuate any thing of that kind? If thou dost, speak plainly. Now this they said, hoping thereby to draw him into some dangerous reflection on the sanhedrim, who had lately passed their censure on the man whose eyes he had opened.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 *Jesus said to them, If you were* indeed *blind*, and laboured under unavoidable ignorance, *you would not* then *have* any *sin* in comparison of what you now have:[a] *but now you say, Surely we see* much more clearly than the rest of mankind; *therefore your sin abides* upon you with greater aggravation: and this conceit which you have of your own knowledge hinders conviction, and prevents the first entrance of instruction into your minds.

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

JOHN X. Nevertheless, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, I will for a while longer 1 continue my admonitions; and therefore, *verily, verily, I say unto you* who call yourselves the shepherds of the people, That *he who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other* ~~private~~ *way*, whatever be the character he may assume, 2 *the same is* to be looked upon as no better than *a thief and a robber. But he that comes in at the door* of the sheepfold *is the* true *shepherd of the sheep;* and such a one will 3 always chuse to enter in by that which is the regular appointed way. *To him*, as soon as he approaches, *the door-keeper opens* the fold,[b] *and the sheep* themselves *hear his voice* with regard; *and he* is well acquainted with each of them, insomuch that he *calls* each of 4 *his own sheep by name*,[c] *and leads them out* to pasture. *And when he* thus *puts forth his*

JOHN X. 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth

f More various and glorious miracles.] A beautiful parallel between the miracles of Moses and Christ is drawn by Orobio on the one hand, and Limborch on the other. Limb. *Collat. cum Judæo*, Script. iii. Quest. 4. No. 3. p. 131. *et seq.* and *Resp. ad* Script. iii. p. 151. *et seq.*

a *If you were* indeed *blind, you would not have* any *sin*, &c.] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 326.) understands this of *corporeal blindness;* as if our Lord had said, "It is a great aggravation of your "perverseness, that you know by experience the difference between "blindness and sight, which might convince you of the import-"ance of such a miracle, and of the divine power by which it is "wrought."—But the following words, *But now you say, We see*, suit much better with the sense given in the paraphrase.

b *The door-keeper opens* the fold.] Grotius does not attempt the accommodation of this circumstance: Mr. Cradock interprets it of the *Holy Ghost*, and Dr. Whitby of *God the Father*, as giving free admission to those teachers who maintain a due regard to Christ: an interpretation which seems much more reasonable than to refer it (as some do) to ministers.—It is suggested by Sir Isaac Newton, that, as these words were spoken near the temple, where sheep were kept in folds to be sold for sacrifices, Christ here alludes to what was peculiar in those folds; that, as they were kept locked, they not only excluded the thief, but the shepherd, till the door-keeper opened them. (See Newton on *Proph.* p. 148.) But I cannot think, whatever occasion Christ might take, from the sight of sheep, to represent his people under that image, and himself as a Shepherd, he would describe them like sheep shut up in a pen to be sold for sacrifice: nor does the shepherd's leading them out, &c. agree with this circumstance. In countries where there were so many savage beasts, it might be ordinarily necessary to have the folds better secured than among us; and the chief shepherd might often leave a servant to watch them while thus shut up, and come himself to lead them out to pasture in a morning.

c *Calls his own sheep by name.*] Dr. Hammond justly infers

forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

own sheep from the fold, *he* himself *goes before them* to guide them to good pastures, and to defend them from any danger which may occur, *and the sheep* cheerfully *follow him; for they* well *know his voice*, being daily accustomed to it. *But* if *a stranger* come to lead them out, *they will not follow* him; *but*, on the contrary, they *will flee* away *from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.* SECT. 132. JOHN X.

This ~~short~~ *parable Jesus spake unto them; but they did not understand what it was that he said to them*, but were quite at a loss to conjecture his meaning; though his intent in describing the character of the good Shepherd was plainly to shew how far the Pharisees, who assume the name, were from answering it; and to warn the true sheep, or persons of real integrity and simplicity, of the danger of being blindly governed and guided by them. 6

Then Jesus, to clear up what was most obscure in his former discourse, *said to them again, Verily, verily I say unto you*, and solemnly assure you, that, however you neglect me, *I am the door of the sheep*,[d] and it is only by authority derived from me that the people of God are to be taught and fed. *All that ever came before me*, assuming the Messiah's character, or setting up for a despotic authority in the church, and teaching other methods of salvation than by me,[e] *are thieves and robbers*, persons of very bad designs, who had no warrant from above for what they did; and, whatsoever their pretences were, their administration has a fatal tendency to make havoc of the souls they should watch and feed; *but the* true *sheep*, or those who are sincere and well-disposed persons, *have not heard them*, so as to relish and regard their doctrine. I therefore repeat it again as a most important truth, That I myself *am the door;* and *if any one enter in by me*, and acknowledge my authority, *he shall be*, like a sheep in his fold, *safe* from the invasion of what might injure and destroy him; *and shall go in and out* under my care and guidance, *and* shall still *find* good *pasture;* that is, in consequence of his regard to me, and the enjoyment of communion with me, his soul shall be fed and nourished with true doctrine, and shall obtain substantial happiness. For whereas *the thief only comes that he may steal, and kill, and destroy,—I am come* for the benefit of all my sheep, *that they may have* true *life, and that* at length *they may have it more abundantly*;[f] a most plentiful provision being made for their everlasting comfort and happiness, even far beyond what has ever been known before. 7 8 9 10

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us hear with an holy awe on our spirits, that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world for purposes of judgment as well as of mercy; and make it our humble prayer that we may be enlightened by him, and not sealed up under aggravated darkness as a punishment for our obstinacy and impenitence; for then all the means of knowledge which we have so basely perverted, will rise up to condemn us. JOHN IX. 39

Let Christ be regarded by us as the door from whom all true teachers derive their authority, and to whom they direct their administrations; and let it be our care that we enter by this door. Let inferior shepherds learn their duty, so plainly suggested here: Let them learn to know their sheep, and take as particular notice as they can of each single person committed to their care; and let them go before them in all the paths of duty: for what could the greatest enemy to the flock do worse, than to lead them by example into the paths of destruction? JOHN X. 7 3

Happy souls who are entered in by this gate! Their safety, their comfort, is secure; they enjoy a holy liberty and plenty, and going in and coming out, they find pasture. If we are strangers to that entertainment and refreshment which arises from ordinances, (those green pastures which Christ has provided for his sheep in the wilderness,) we have a great deal of reason to fear that we belong not to his flock. He came that his sheep might have life, *and that they might have it more abundantly;* that greater provision might be made for their instruction and consolation now, till they are brought to those better pastures he intends for them above. May his grace prepare us for them! and his hand will certainly conduct us to them; nor need we fear the darkest passage in our way. 9 10

SECTION CXXXIII.

Christ describes himself as the good Shepherd, who will lay down his life for the sheep. John x. 11—21.

JOHN X. 11.

I AM the good Shepherd:

JOHN X. 11.

OUR Lord having thus represented himself as the door of the sheep, and intimated the regards to be maintained towards him, particularly by those that professed themselves teachers of others, now changed the similitude, and said, I may also very properly add SECT. 133. JOHN X. 11.

from hence that the eastern shepherds, at least those of Judea, gave particular names to their sheep, as most men do to their dogs and horses.—Their custom also was to lead the sheep, playing on some musical instrument.

d *I am the door, &c.*] It would be very impertinent to run a long parallel here between Christ and a door. The resemblance plainly centres in this one circumstance, that as a man must observe and pass through the door, in order to his making a regular and unsuspected entrance into a sheepfold; so he must maintain a proper regard to Christ, in order to his being a true teacher in the church, and must pass (as it were) through him, or by his authority, into his office. It is by a simile very nearly resembling this, that Christ elsewhere calls himself *the way*. John xiv. 6. § 173.

e *All that ever came before me, &c.*] If it could be shewn by any proper authority, that πρὸ ἐμοῦ ever signifies *in neglect of me*, or πρὸ ὑμῶν *passing by a door*, I should, with Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 327.) prefer that rendering to any other: but as this does not appear, it is evident that the words must be understood with the limitation added in the paraphrase; for otherwise they would imply such a reflection on Moses and the prophets as we know our Lord could never intend. Perhaps he might refer to such persons as Judas of Galilee, or Theudas, who had been the occasion of destruction to their followers. See Acts v. 36, 37.

f *That they may have it more abundantly.*] To refer this latter clause, at least ultimately, to the provision which Christ has made for the future and eternal happiness of all his people, seems best to suit the other parts of this discourse, as well as the genius of the whole Christian dispensation. Perhaps the word περισσὸν may intimate how much this provision exceeded that made by Moses.

SECT. 133. JOHN X.

that *I am* myself, by way of eminence, *the good Shepherd*,[a] the Person frequently foretold in scripture under that character, (Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; and Mic. v. 4.) and I most fully answer it in all its branches,—especially in this, that as *the good shepherd* on occasion *layeth down his* very *life for the* defence of his *sheep*, and will expose himself to any danger for their safety, (compare 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35.) I not only expose but sacrifice my life for the good of my people.

the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 *The hireling indeed, who is not the* true *shepherd*, and *whose own* property *the sheep are not*, as soon as he is apprehensive of approaching danger, and *sees the wolf*, for instance, or some other savage beast *coming*, immediately regarding nothing but his own safety, is only careful to secure himself, *and leaves the sheep and flees away; and so the wolf*, meeting with no resistance, *seizes* on some of *them, and disperses the* rest of the 13 *sheep. Now the hireling flees* on such an occasion *because he is an hireling, and is not concerned about* the safety of *the sheep*, but takes the work upon him merely for his own gain, and the wages he is to receive; and thus basely will those teachers act in a time of danger, who undertake the office merely in regard to their own secular advantage.

12 But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 But *I am the good Shepherd*, who have a true affection for my sheep, and am above the influence of all such mean and selfish views: and such is the relation that there is between us, and such the love we have to one another, that *I know* and acknowledge *my* [*sheep*,] and take the kindest and most tender care of them: *and* I *am* also *known*, ac- 15 knowledged, and confided in *by mine:* So that we mutually are dear unto each other; and *even as the Father knoweth me*, and owns his affection and regard to me by the sure tokens of his presence and approbation, *and I* also *know*, or acknowledge and honour *the Father*, in the delight with which I do his will; so the affection is reciprocal between me and my sheep: *and* as it is in love to them, as well as with an ultimate view to his appointment and his glory, that *I lay down my life for the sheep* he has given me, so also do my sheep acknowledge and confide in me, and so do I protect and patronize them.

14 I am the good Shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 *And* I would farther observe to you, as a point of great importance, that *I have other sheep which are not of this fold*,[b] (meaning thereby the elect of God among the Gentiles;) *them also must I* at length *bring* in; *and* I know that *they will hear* and obey *my voice*, notwithstanding that ignorance, vice, and misery in which they are now involved; *and* so, all being incorporated into one society, of which I am the Head, the Governor and Guardian, *there shall be one sheepfold* [*and*] *one Shepherd.*

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

17 And *for this reason* more especially *does the Father love me*, and approves it as an act of eminent duty and love to him, *because I* am come with this design into the world, to *lay down my life* for the redemption of my sheep, who are dear to him as well as to me, *that I may take it again* and possess it for ever, to be employed for his glory and 18 for the happiness of my people. For though I am shortly to die by the hands of most cruel enemies, yet *no one* deprives me of my life, or *takes it from me* against my will; for I have every moment a power to rescue myself at pleasure, and could even with mine expiring breath command immediate deliverance; *but* I will manifestly shew that *I lay it down of myself*, and voluntarily relinquish my body, sooner than my soul would in a course of nature have been dislodged from it;[c] and this in me will be a very regular, though wonderful act; for, as I have life in myself, (John v. 26.) *I have* full *power* and authority thus *to lay it down* when I shall think fit;[d] *and I have* also *power to resume it* at pleasure, by entering into and quickening my body again. And indeed *this commandment I have received of my Father*, and shall ere long fulfil the charge in both its branches.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

19 When our Lord uttered these remarkable expressions, *there was a division therefore again among the Jews*, (as there had been before, chap. vii. 43. sect. ci. and ix. 16. sect. 20 cxxx.) especially *on account of these* last *words. And many of them said, He has* certainly *a demon* dwelling in him, *and*, by the operation of that evil spirit, *is* apparently *distracted* with one of the most malignant kinds of lunacy: *why* then *do you* give yourselves the trouble to *hear him* while he goes on in such extravagant absurdities? 21 But *others* much more rationally *said, These are not* by any means *the words of a demoniac* or a lunatic, for there is the greatest consistence and energy in them; and besides, *could a demon* that made a man mad, *open the eyes of the blind*, as it is plain this man has often and very lately done? It is rather madness to imagine that an evil spirit has such power, or that he would employ it to such benevolent purposes.

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

a *I am the good Shepherd.*] Lamy (in his *Harmony*, p. 339.) very justly supposes that there might be some allusion here to Isa. xl. 11. But nothing can be more precarious than the argument he seems to draw from hence, for placing this discourse at the feast of tabernacles, even though it should be allowed that the xlth of Isaiah was read in the synagogue at that time of the year: for it is certain our Lord does not confine himself to the lesson for the day in his quotations from scripture, or his allusions to it.

b *I have other sheep which are not of this fold.*] There seems no reason, with Wolfius, to understand this of Jews living out of the land of Canaan, who could not with such propriety be said not to belong to the fold of Israel. The incorporating the Gentiles into one church with the Jews was indeed a grand event, worthy such particular notice: and it deserves our remark, that they are here called *the sheep of Christ*, even while they were yet in ignorance and idolatry, as he intended at length to bring them home.

c Voluntarily relinquish my body, &c.] That our Lord did so, evidently appeared from the strong cry he sent forth just before his death, with which the centurion was reasonably so much impressed. See Luke xxiii. 46, 47. and Mark xv. 39. § 191.

d Full *power* and authority *to lay it down*, &c.] This the word ἐξουσίαν expresses, and the manner of Christ's death abundantly proved it: and as no reasonable objection can be made to the equity and wisdom of the Divine Being in giving Christ such a power, so the use he made of it (as we may farther shew elsewhere) is truly admirable. See note l, on Luke xxiii. 46. § 191.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 133.

THERE is not, perhaps, any where to be found a greater instance of the force of prejudice than in these perverse Jews, who censured Christ as a lunatic and a demoniac for one of the gravest and most excellent speeches that was ever delivered. Let us review it with all due attention and regard. JOHN X. 20

Let us consider Christ as the good Shepherd, and humbly commit our souls to him, as ever we desire they should be safe and happy. We have known his kind regards to the flock in exposing and laying down his life for them. And he hath not laid it down in vain. Delightful thought! Our compassionate Shepherd, even when the sword of the Lord was awakened to smite him, has not so fallen as to rise no more; but as in this great and good work he voluntarily laid down, so he has also reassumed, his life, and still bears in his heart the same concern for his flock, and uses his renewed life and exalted dignity for their security and happiness. 11 15 18

Let us humbly acknowledge him as acknowledged by the Father: let us courageously and gratefully own him, and be ready to lay down our lives also for him. We are those other sheep of whom he spake, who were not originally of the fold, but by his grace are now brought in to the great shepherd and bishop of souls. Let us pray that the boundaries of his fold may be still more extended, and the whole number of his elect accomplished, that all the flock may at length appear together, and may be conducted by him to the regions of that immortal life which he determines to give it. 15 16

In the mean time, let us maintain all proper regards to him, and especially the most cheerful confidence in his care; repeating with evangelical views, and so with a peculiar sublimity of sense, those words of David as our own, (Psal. xxiii. 1—4.) *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters: he restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake: yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* 14

SECTION CXXXIV.

Christ discoursing of his union with the Father, is charged with blasphemy; and, being assaulted by the Jews, retires beyond Jordan. John x. 22, *to the end.*

JOHN x. 22.

AND it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication; and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

28 And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

30 I and *my* Father are one.

JOHN x. 22.

NOW it may be proper to observe, that the time when these discourses were delivered by our Lord, *was the feast of dedication*,[a] which was observed *at Jerusalem* in memorial of the purification of the temple after it had been polluted by the idolatries and impieties of Antiochus; *and* consequently *it was winter. And*, to shelter himself from the inclemencies of the weather, *Jesus was* then *walking in* the covered walk that went round *the temple*, and was now *in* that part of it which was called *Solomon's porch*.[b] SECT. 134. JOHN X. 23

Then several of *the Jews surrounded him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in* an anxious and uneasy *suspense? If thou art* indeed *the Messiah, tell us* so *plainly* and expressly: which they said with a malicious design to ensnare and accuse him. 24

And *Jesus answered them, I have* in effect *told you* over and over,[c] *yet you believe* me *not;* and, had I offered nothing more, *the works which I do in my Father's name* sufficiently declare it, as it is clearly to be seen that *they bear witness of me* in a language which you would easily understand if you were to judge impartially. *But you do not believe, because you are not* persons of such simplicity and sincerity as I described under the character *of my sheep.* For, *as I said unto you* but just now, (ver. 4, 14, 16.) *My sheep hear my voice, and I know* and take care of *them; and they*, like sheep accustomed to their shepherd, acknowledge and *follow me. And* the consequence of that will be such as would make it well worth your while to lay aside all these prejudices, and to join with them: for *I give unto them* an invaluable blessing, even *eternal life; and* guard them with such almighty power and constant care, that *they shall never perish, neither shall any* enemy, be he ever so subtile or ever so outrageous, be able to *pluck them out of my hand*,[d] or injure them while they remain in it. Nor indeed is it possible that any should; for *my Father, who gave* [*them*] *to me* on purpose that I might redeem and save them, *is* confessedly *greater than all; and* therefore they must needs be safe, as *none is able to pluck* [*them*] *out of my Father's hand.* Now, it is a most certain truth that *I and the* 25 26 27 28 29 30

a *The feast of dedication.*] As it is expressly said this feast was in winter, it is plain it could not be observed in remembrance of the dedication of Solomon's temple, which was just after harvest, (1 Kings viii. 2.) nor of that of Nehemiah's, which was in the spring, (Ezra vi. 15, 16.) but the feast here intended must be that instituted by Judas Maccabæus, on his having purified the temple and altar from the pollutions and idolatries of Antiochus Epiphanes. This was celebrated every year for eight days successively in the month of December, (1 Mac. iv. 52, 59.) and is mentioned by Josephus as a festival to which great regard was paid in his time. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xii. *cap.* 7. [al. 11.] § 6, 7. and Selden. *De Syned. lib.* iii. *cap.* 13. § 7.

b *Solomon's porch.*] Josephus informs us (*Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 3. [al. 2.] § 2, 9. and *lib.* xx. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 7.) that Solomon, when he built the temple, (finding the area of Mount Zion too small to answer his magnificent plan,) filled up a part of the adjacent valley, and built an outward portico over it towards the east. This was a most noble structure, supported by a wall 400 cubits high, and consisting of stones of a vast bulk, each stone (as it is said) being twenty cubits long, and six cubits high. And Josephus speaks of it as continuing even to the time of Albinus and Agrippa, which was several years after the death of Christ. This is called Solomon's porch, Acts iii. 11; and v. 12.

c *I have* in effect *told you* over and over.] What he had just been saying of himself, in the preceding verses, as the great Shepherd, was in some sense equivalent to a declaration of his being the Messiah.—I mention that discourse as what has just been delivered, because I think it most natural to explain the 22d verse as referring to what was said before, and not merely to what follows: for else the Evangelist would probably have said, After these things was the feast of dedication. Compare John v. 1; vi. 4; and vii. 1, 2.

d *Neither shall any* enemy *pluck them, &c.*] This is the plain import and energy of the original, (οὐχ ἁρπάσει τις αὐτα,) which is greatly enervated by adding the word *man* in the translation, as the authors of our English version have frequently done. (Compare Matt. xi. 27; Mark xiii. 5; and Jam. i. 13.) The sheep of Christ are exposed to so great danger from the infernal lion, (1 Pet. v. 8.) that I doubt not but this text most eminently refers to the care of their Shepherd to guard them from his assaults.

SECT. 134.

JOHN IX.

Father are one:[e] and the union between us is so strict and intimate, in nature as well as in affection and design, that his almighty power is mine, to be employed for the defence of my sheep; and no one can deprive them of eternal life without prevailing against him as well as me.

31 *Then the Jews*, transported with rage, *took up* some of the *stones* which lay in the court of the temple, where they were still repairing some of the buildings, and armed themselves with them *again*, as they had formerly done, (John viii. 59. p. 213.) in order *to stone him.*

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 But *Jesus*, with his usual mildness and strength of reason, *answered them, I have showed you many good works from my Father;* and *for which of these works do you* go about to *stone me?* or what have I ever done among you but acts of beneficence and kindness?

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 *The Jews replying, said unto him*, Whatever thy other works have been, it is very apparent, from what has just now passed, that *we do not stone thee for a good work, but for* the most detestable *blasphemy; even because thou, being* only *a* wretched, mortal, sinful *man, makest thyself God;* pretending to be one with him in so extraordinary a manner, that his omnipotence and other divine perfections are thine.

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 *Jesus*, not judging it proper at that time to bring the sublime doctrine of his deity into farther debate, *answered them, Is it not written in your law*, or in those sacred books which you own to be of divine original, (Psal. lxxxii. 6.) where it is plain the persons that are spoken of are princes and magistrates, "*I* have *said, Ye are gods;* and all of you are

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 " children of the Most High?" Now, *if* the Psalmist thus applied this character, and it appears *he called them gods to whom the word of God* then *came*,[f] merely with regard to that office which by divine designation they bore, (*and* certainly *the scripture cannot be broken*, nor can you, with any show of reason, pretend to censure the propriety of those

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken:

36 expressions which a divinely inspired writer has used;) How is it then that you are so offended now? or how *do you* pretend to *say concerning him whom the Father hath* so solemnly *sanctified*, or set apart to this great work in his eternal councils, *and* whom he at length has *sent into the world* under such an exalted character, *Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the son of God?* when you allow there is a sense in which even oppressive magistrates may be honoured with such a title.[g]

36 Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 And when I claim this character, and speak so highly of myself, I do not expect to be credited merely on my own affirmation; *if I do not the works of my Father*, such glo-

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 rious works as could not be performed by any but a divine agent, *believe me not. But if* it be apparent that *I do* such works, *though you believe not me*, and are regardless of my own testimony in the case, yet at least *believe the* mighty *works* that I perform; and let the evidence of these remove the prejudices you have entertained, *that ye may know and believe that the Father* [*is*] *in me, and I in him*, by such a union as abundantly justifies the expression which seems to give you such peculiar offence.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

39 *Then*, though they knew not what to answer him, the Jews were so enraged against him, that *they sought again to seize him*, that they might accuse him of blasphemy before the sanhedrim: *but he* withdrew himself, as he had done before, in an extraordinary manner, and so *escaped out of their hands.* (Compare Luke iv. 30. sect. xxxii. and John viii 59. sect. cv.)

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

40 *And* presently departing from Jerusalem, he *went* away *again* into the country *beyond Jordan, to the place* called Bethabara, *where* (as it has been observed before, John i. 28. p. 41.) *John was at first baptizing; and there he abode* for a while, till the fury of the

40 And went again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

41 multitude was a little abated. *And many* of the inhabitants of that place who had been formerly acquainted with the Baptist, and remembered the strong and repeated testimonies which he had borne to Jesus, *came to him* there to attend upon his preaching, *and said* among themselves, *John indeed did no miracle* himself, *but* he foretold extraordinary things of another; and we now find that *all* the *things which John said of this man were* exactly *true*, which is a divine attestation to the mission and authority of both.

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 *And many* of them *believed on him there*, and happily improved this little season of his recess among them, as the means of their instruction and establishment in piety.

42 And many believed on him there.

e *I and the Father are one.*] If we attend, not only to the obvious meaning of these words in comparison with other passages of scripture, but to the connection of this celebrated text, it so plainly demonstrates the deity of our blessed Redeemer, that I think it may be left to speak for itself, without any laboured comment.—How widely different that sense is in which Christians are said to be one with God, (John xvii. 21.) will sufficiently appear by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be, to draw that inference from their union with God which Christ does from his.

f *To whom the word of God came.*] I apprehend the *coming of the word of God to them*, which is here mentioned, refers to the message then delivered to them in the name of God, rather than, in the general, to their receiving a commission from him: but the difference is not very material.

g When you allow—magistrates, &c.] A late learned and pious paraphrast apprehends, that our Lord here vindicates his claim to supreme divinity, by pleading that the Jewish rulers are called gods, not in a general regard to their office as rulers, but as types of the Messiah, the great Sovereign of the church, who (as it is expressed at the close of this lxxxiid psalm) was to *inherit all nations.* But, not to urge that it seems improbable that such wicked magistrates as are there spoken of should be described as types of Christ, this explication seems to imply, that every person whose office was typical of the Messiah might be called a god; and, on the other hand, that a creature's being called by that name would intimate that he was a typical person: the consequences of which, I am sure, that worthy writer would abhor. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 4.) I think myself therefore obliged to acquiesce in that plain and natural sense of the passage which the generality of commentators, both ancient and modern, have given.—Jesus was charged here by the Jews with ascribing divinity to his human nature; and, in reply to this, he shows that calling himself the Son of God did not imply that; and that his works proved such a union of the human nature with the divine as he had before asserted, than which no answer could have been more wise and pertinent.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is worthy of remark, that we here see our Lord Jesus at a festival appointed only by human authority, in commemoration of a national deliverance. He came from Galilee to observe it in the temple, though it was winter; and brought with him, as at all times, a heart glowing with the most ardent and amiable zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of men, even of those who were studying to ensnare and destroy him. SECT. 134. JOHN X.

What prudence, mingled with spirit and sweetness, runs through his answers to them! What inestimable blessings does he propose, to invite them to enter into his fold! May we never forget those gracious words! May we ever be entitled to all the comfort of them! *I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Lord, may we be found in the number of those secure and happy souls, even of those who know thee and who obey thy voice, and follow thee, whithersoever thou leadest them, by thine example, thy providence, and thy Spirit! Then may we look on our eternal life and happiness as inviolably secure. Safely indeed may we trust it in his hands who could say, in so sublime and so glorious a sense, *I and the Father are one.* The enemies of our salvation must triumph then over omnipotence itself, before they can wrest the sheep of Christ out of his hands; nor will his fidelity to God, or his love to them, suffer them to be seduced by fraud, any more than destroyed by violence. 24, 25 28 27 30 28, 29

Blessed situation of thy little flock! O thou faithful, thou compassionate, thou Almighty Shepherd, gather thou our souls with theirs; and never suffer us to forget of how great importance it is that we still continue near thee, that we look up to thee for our defence and safety, and confide, not in our own power and wisdom, but in thine!

Who could have imagined that any heart could have been so base as to have intended evil, or any hands so cruel as to have armed themselves with instruments of death against such a Person, while speaking such words as these? Yet behold, these Jews do it, and that even in so sacred a place as the temple itself; as the genuine *offspring of those who slew the prophet and priest of the Lord,* even *at his altar.* (Compare Matt. xxiii. 31, 35. and Luke xi. 48, 51.) But his wise and gentle reply disarmed them for a few months; and the divine care and power in an extraordinary manner provided for his escape, and once more rescued him from their murderous hands. 31 32 39

Happy the inhabitants of the country about Jordan to which he retired! especially happy, in that they knew the day of their visitation! The testimony of John the Baptist is now recollected to excellent purposes, though he himself was mouldering in his tomb: nor is there any thing which a faithful minister will more earnestly desire, than that, even while dead, he may yet speak, for the honour of Christ and the salvation of souls. 40 41, 42

SECTION CXXXV.

Christ declares against divorces, except in the case of adultery; and adds some other particulars relating to the married state. Matt. xix. 1—12. Mark x. 1—12.

MATT. XIX. 1.

AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he [arose from thence, *and*] departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan. [Mark x. 1.]

MATT. XIX. 1.

AND, after the instructions that were given by our Lord to his disciples at Capernaum, (which were recorded above from sect. xciii. to xcvi.) *it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these discourses,*[a] *he arose from thence,* [*and*] *departed from Galilee,* where he had dwelt so long, and through which he had made such repeated journies. *And* after he had first been up at Jerusalem, (as was before related, John vii. 10. p. 199.) and several other things had happened which have already been considered in their proper place, *he came* at length (as was observed in the last section, John x. 40.) *into the borders of Judea beyond Jordan,*[b] where he spent some of the winter nights, crossing the river as he saw occasion. SECT. 135. MATT. XIX. 1

2 And great multitudes followed him, [and the people resort unto him again; and as he was wont, he taught them again,] and he healed them there. [Mark x. 1.]

And his arrival was no sooner known, but *great multitudes followed him* from all the neighbouring parts; *and* particularly, *the people* who had seen him formerly at Bethabara *resorted to him again,* (as was said, John x. 41.) *and, according to his* usual *custom, he* readily embraced the opportunity of preaching to them, and *taught them* there *again,* as he had done elsewhere; *and* as they brought many sick persons to him, he *healed them* all *there;* which could not but increase the throng. 2

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and [asked him,] saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? [Mark x. 2.]

And the Pharisees, who always had a watchful eye on his motions, and attended him with the most malignant designs, being now more especially irritated by the fame of his late miracles, which they had in vain endeavoured to suppress, (see John vii. 32, 47; and ix. 16, 24.) *came* hither also *to him,* with the view of getting some advantage over him by *tempting him* with what they thought a very artful and ensnaring question: *and,* that they might, if possible, entangle him in his talk so as to find some reason to accuse him, or to discredit him at least among the people, they *asked him, saying unto him,* What thinkest thou, Master: *Is it lawful for a man to dismiss his wife for every* slight *cause* 3

a *When Jesus had finished these discourses.*] The passages which Matthew and Mark have mentioned immediately before they introduce this story, are those discourses on humility and the forgiveness of injuries which have been considered above from sect. xciii. to xcvi. And I have sometimes been inclined to think, that this and the next following sections might have been introduced there, as previous to that feast of tabernacles which we have so often mentioned. But most harmonizers, without any scruple or apology, place them here, being determined, I suppose, by the close connection between the passages that are here related and those events that follow them, which happened but a very little while before Christ's death.—It is of very little importance to us, whether these discourses were delivered now or a few months before. However, he might truly be said to *arise from Galilee, and come into these parts,* though he took a considerable compass, and spent several weeks in the journey. Compare note o, on Luke ii. 39. p. 22, 23.

b *Beyond Jordan.*] Mark has expressed this with some little variation, διὰ τοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, *by the farther side of Jordan;* or, as the learned Beza and some other critics chuse to render it, *on the banks of Jordan;* and this may seem to be more suitable to what is said of Christ's coming to the coast of Judea, which was bounded by Jordan, and had no coasts beyond it. But it appears from John x. 40. that *Bethabara, where John at first baptized,* (John i. 28.) was the place to which our Lord removed, which was undoubtedly beyond Jordan, and over against Jericho. (Compare Josh. iii. 16. and Judg. vii. 24.) And this was so near to the coasts of Judea, that we might very well retain the usual version, and take the phrase as Matthew hath expressed it; especially as it is probable that Jesus, during his abode in these parts, might often cross the river, and pass from Bethabara to Judea, which lay on the opposite side.

SECT. 135.

of dislike which may be found in her?[c] or is adultery the only just reason for a divorce?

MATT. XIX.

And he said to them in reply, Have ye not read, (Gen. i. 27.) *that God, the* almighty and all-wise *Creator, from the* very *beginning of the creation,* when he would not fail to constitute human nature in such a way as might be most conducive to its happiness, in forming the first parents of mankind, *made them male and female,* or one man and one woman; which would neither allow of divorce or polygamy; *And* do you not remember, that when the woman was at first brought to him, the man *said,* as taught by an extraordinary revelation concerning the ends and obligations of marriage, which therefore may in effect be looked upon as a divine testimony,[d] "*For this cause,* or on account of "his engaging in the married state, *shall a man leave* both *his father and mother,* when "those dear relations of parental and filial tenderness shall take place, *and* shall closely *ad-*"*here to his wife; and they two shall be* joined in so intimate an union as to become "*one flesh.*" (Gen. ii. 24.) *So that* it appears of persons thus joined together, that *they are no longer two, but one flesh,* and should accordingly regard each other as members of one body. *What God therefore has* thus closely *yoked together, let not man separate;* but let the bond of marriage be esteemed as sacred, and incapable of being dissolved by any thing which does not make them cease to be one flesh, by making that of the one common to some third person. (See Whitby, *in loc.)*

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that [God,] he which made *them,* [from the beginning of the creation,] made them male and female? [Mark x. 6.]

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave [his] father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. [Mark x. 7, 8.]

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. [Mark x. 8, 9.]

7 *They say unto him,* by way of objection against this, *Why then did Moses,* under divine direction and inspiration, *command* "a man whose wife found no favour in his "eyes, because he had discovered," as it is there expressed, "some uncleanness in her," or (as it has been generally understood) some cause of distaste and aversion, "*to give* her *a* "*bill of divorce, and* so *to dismiss her?*" (Deut. xxiv. 1.)

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

MARK X.

And he replied and said unto them, How is it that you take this matter; or *what did* you allege that *Moses* did *command you?* Is there any thing in his writings that recommends divorce and separation upon light occasions?

Mark x. 3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 *And* upon this *they said,* If it may not be said that *Moses* does command or recommend it in itself, it is most evident from the passage we have mentioned, that he has *permitted* a man, in some cases, *to write a bill of divorce,* and to give it into his wife's hand, *and dismiss her;* on which foundation thou well knowest how frequently divorces prevail among us, and how justifiable they are generally esteemed.

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

MATT. XIX.

And Jesus answered and said to them, You state the matter now more justly than before; for it amounts merely to a permission; but I must observe to you, that it was *on account of the hardness of your hearts,* and the perverseness of your tempers,[e] that *Moses wrote you this precept,* [*and*] *gave you* such *a permission to put away your wives;* knowing that otherwise you might have been tempted to use them intolerably ill: *but,* as I just now told you, *it was not so from the beginning;* and the account which that writer gives of the original constitution of things, proves it to be an irregularity, how necessary soever he might find it in some cases to tolerate it, or rather, by making it irrevocable, to prevent men's doing it without deep consideration.

Matt. xix. 8. [And Jesus answered and said unto them,] Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, [wrote you this precept, *and*] suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. [Mark x. 5.]

MARK X.

And when the assembly was dismissed, and Jesus was retired from the multitude, as they were sitting together *in the house* where he lodged, *his disciples asked him again of the same matter,* as not being able fully to understand it, or to reconcile it with the precept of Moses.

Mark x. 10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

And he says to them, If you are willing to receive laws from me, you must submit to a greater restraint than Moses laid on the Israelites; for *I* expressly *tell you,* (as I formerly did, Matt. v. 32. sect. xxxix. and Luke xvi. 18. sect. cxxiv.) *Whosoever shall dismiss his wife, except* [*it be*] *for whoredom,*[f] which is a fundamental breach of the main article of the marriage covenant, by which they are one flesh, *and shall marry another, commits adultery against her* that was his former wife, and who continues still to be so in the

11 And he saith unto them, [I say unto you,] Whosoever shall put away his wife, [except *it be* for fornication,] and [shall] marry another, committeth adultery against her: [and whoso marrieth her which

c *To dismiss his wife for every cause.*] It is well known that there was a debate between the ancient rabbies (perhaps as old as our Lord's time) concerning the interpretation of the law relating to divorce, Deut. xxiv. 1. The school of Sammai maintained that the words ערות דבר, which we render *some uncleanness,* signified *adultery;* whereas the school of Hillel explained it of *any matter of dislike.* (See Selden, *Uxor. Hebr. lib.* iii. *cap.* 22.) Perhaps a medium between both would have been a juster interpretation than either; for it is certain that the phrase may with peculiar propriety express any blemish or disorder which a woman might unjustly and foolishly conceal before marriage, that was afterwards discovered. At least I think it plain, from our Lord's answer, that the disciples of Sammai were mistaken; which farther appears from the provision the Mosaic law made for punishing adultery with death.—The interpretation of Hillel generally prevailed; and the Pharisees, concluding Christ would, as he had done before, declare against divorces for trivial causes, (Matt. v. 31, 32; and Luke xvi. 18.) might hope to expose him to popular resentment for retrenching a liberty which the law allowed: but our Lord feared not the consequence of doing it.

d May in effect be looked upon as a divine testimony.] I think the ingenious author of *Revelation examined with Candour* solidly argues, from Adam's pronouncing concerning the obligation of a child's relation to its parent, which had never then existed, that he spake these words in consequence of some extraordinary divine illumination; which justifies the turn given in the paraphrase: nor could he without a revelation have known what had passed in his sleep, or ever have conjectured the original of woman to have been what he so plainly refers to. See *Revelat. exam. with Candour,* Vol. I. Dis. iii. p. 28—33.

e *On account of the hardness of your hearts.*] How much this was the character of the Jewish nation is too apparent. See Exod. xxxiii. 3; xxxiv. 9; Deut. ix. 6; xxxi. 27; Isa. xlviii. 4; Ezek. ii. 4; and Acts vii. 51.—Our Lord (as Grotius well observes) strongly intimates, that a more tender disposition may justly be expected from his disciples.

f *Except it be for whoredom;* επι πορνειᾳ.] Though *fornication* committed before marriage, and afterwards discovered, might be supposed to justify a divorce, *adultery* must much more evidently do it; and therefore it is plain the word must be taken in the extent which is here given it. (See note f, on Matt. v. 32. p. 78.) But it is by a dangerous latitude of interpretation, that Milton (Prose Works, page 105.) would explain the word as signifying *any thing which should be to the husband as grievous and intolerable as whoredom.*—The case of obstinate desertion, where the husband cannot by law recover his wife, which was the celebrated case of the pious Galeacius Caracciolus, and which we find to be supposed in 1 Cor. vii. 15. is quite of a different nature; nor can a man under such a calamity be said to put away his wife.—Erasmus has a remarkable note on Matt. xix. 3. which shows he was not far from Milton's opinion.

is put away, doth commit adultery.] [Matt. xix. 9.]
12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

sight of God; *and he that shall marry her who is* so *dismissed* without a sufficient cause, *commits adultery. And*, on the other hand, by a parity of reason, *if a woman*, not injured in the important article just now mentioned, *shall put away her husband*, or extort from him a bill of divorce,[g] *and be married to another* man, *she commits adultery;* and as she deserves to be abhorred by men, so must she expect to be punished by God, as guilty of that enormous and detestable crime, if she do not from her very heart repent of it. SECT. 135. MARK X. 12

Matt. xix. 10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

Then *his disciples say unto him, If this be the case between a man and his wife*, and the bond be thus indissoluble, surely *it is not expedient to marry;* since a man may by that means be caught in an inextricable snare, which may make him miserable all the rest of his life. MATT. XIX. 10

11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

But he said to them, All men cannot receive this saying of yours, that it is not expedient to marry; *but* only *they to whom it is given*, as a peculiar gift, to conquer those inclinations towards that state which God, for wise reasons, has wrought into the common constitution of human nature. 11

12 For there are some eunuchs which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

For there are [*some*] *eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb*, and whose natural temper and inclination is in this respect peculiar; *and there are* [*some*] *eunuchs who were made eunuchs by* the wickedness of *men*, who drive on that scandalous traffic which the luxury and effeminacy of the eastern world has rendered so common; *and there are* [*some*] *eunuchs who have*, as it were, *made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of heaven;* that is, who, by a resolute guard on their appetites and passions, have conquered the propensities of nature, that, being free from the incumbrances of marriage, and devoting themselves to a life of more sublime devotion, they might promote the interest of my gospel. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 7, 37.) *He* therefore, on the whole, *that* finds he *is able to receive* [*this saying,*] *let him receive it;* or, let him that is in his own conscience persuaded that he can glorify God most by a single life, chuse it. Others may, and ought to marry; but let none lightly rush into that state, on a supposition that the bond of it may be broken through at pleasure. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

FROM what we have been reading, we may justly take occasion to adore the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence in creating the human species male and female, and providing for his new-formed creature Adam so suitable and so amiable a companion, to enliven every other object of delight, and to crown the pleasures of paradise itself. 4

Let us also acknowledge the apparent interposition of a wise and kind providence, in maintaining such a proportion between the sexes even to this day, which so apparently tends to the benefit of both, as well as to the support of the race in future ages; as also in perpetuating in their hearts through succeeding generations that mutual tenderness for each other which the purest bosoms may feel and avow, and which is the foundation of such an union of souls as no other friendship will admit. 7 5

Let those who are married, considering the indissoluble bond by which God has joined them together, make it their constant care to promote the comfort and happiness of each other: and let them most cautiously guard against every degree of contention, or even of distaste, which might at length occasion an alienation in their affections, and render so close a bond proportionably grievous. 6

Let none rashly run into these important engagements, nor determine their choice by light considerations, of a low and transitory nature. And if any, on the whole, prefer the freedom of a single life to that state which, with its peculiar comforts, must necessarily have its peculiar cares and trials too, let them diligently improve that disengagement as an obligation to seek the kingdom of God with greater ardour, and to pursue its interest with more active zeal and application. 11, 12

To conclude: since it appears in this respect, as well as in some others, that the gospel revokes some indulgences which the law of Moses gave, let us endeavour to form our hearts by divine grace to a wisdom, seriousness, and spirituality which may suit this nobler dispensation; and while we are reading the precept of the Jewish legislator, let us remember we have a sublimer Master, and are to *do* and forbear *more than others*. (Matt. v. 47.) MARK X. 11, 12

SECTION CXXXVI.

Christ blesses the little children that were brought to him, and rebukes his disciples, who would have forbid them. Matt. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13—16; Luke xviii. 15—17.

MARK X. 13.

AND they brought [Luke, infants *and*] young children to him, that he should touch them, [*or* put *his* hands on them, and pray:] and [Luke, when] *his* disciples [Luke, saw *it*, they] rebuked those that brought *them*. [Matt. xix. 13. Luke xviii. 15.]

MARK X. 13.

AND while Jesus continued here, as the inhabitants of the neighbouring country on the banks of Jordan found their esteem for him continually increasing on their acquaintance with him, (John x. 41, 42. p. 264.) *they brought to him*, not only the sick, that they might be healed, (Matt. xix. 2. p. 265.) but also several *infants* [*and*] other *young children*, who, though they could walk and speak, yet were not capable of understanding his doctrine, *that he might touch them*, [*or*] *lay his hands upon them* in a solemn manner, *and pray* for them;[a] not doubting but prayers so acceptable to God as his, would prevail both for their present and future happiness. *And when his disciples*, and particularly the SECT. 136. MARK X. 13

g *If a woman put away her husband.*] Though it is certain that the Jewish law did not put it into a woman's power to divorce her husband, it is plain from Josephus that it was done, not only by several ladies of distinguished rank, but even that his own wife did it; (see Dr. Lardner's *Credibility*, part. i. Vol. II. p. 880. note d.) having probably learned of the Roman women, who, in this age, are known to have practised it in the most scandalous manner. See *Juv. Sat.* vi. ver. 222—230. Compare 1 Sam. xxv. 44. and 1 Cor. vii. 13.

a *Lay his hands upon them, and pray.*] This was a rite that was very early used, particularly by those who stood in any superior relation, when they were praying for a blessing on young persons. See Gen. xlviii. 14—20. I see no reason to think, with Elsner, that they were brought to Christ for the cure of some malady; for in that case, it is not to be imagined that the disciples would have been so inhuman as to prohibit them.

SECT. 136. apostles, who were about him, *saw it, they rebuked those that brought them*, as apprehending them too troublesome, and thinking it beneath the dignity of so great a Prophet to concern himself about such little creatures, who were incapable of receiving any instruction from him.

MARK X. 14 *But Jesus seeing it, was greatly displeased*, and moved with some degree of indignation against his disciples; for he had a tender love to children, and well knew that a proper notice of these might turn to some valuable account;[b] *and* therefore he *said to them, Let the little children alone, and do not* now, or at any other convenient time, *hinder them from coming to me:* I am pleased, rather than offended, to see them near me: *for of such is the kingdom of God;* persons of such a character are the true subjects of my kingdom, and heirs of eternal glory, to which many little children are received; and in token of it, the children of believing parents are to be admitted into my church by 15 baptism.[c] And *verily I say unto you*, as I have formerly told you, (Matt. xviii. 3, 4. sect. xciii.) and would now have you attend with seriousness while I repeat it, *Whosoever shall not* be willing to *receive the kingdom of God*, or the gospel-dispensation and the happiness it promises, *as a little child*, divesting himself of those prejudices and those secular views which men contract in their riper years, that he may come, as it were, to the humility and meekness, the simplicity and teachableness of a little child, compare Psal. cxxxi. 2.) *he shall not in any wise*, or on any terms, *enter into it*, be his genius ever so sublime, or his circumstances in life ever so considerable.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [Matt. xix. 14. Luke xviii. 16.]

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall [in no wise] enter therein. [Luke xviii. 17.]

16 *And* having said this, he would no longer be detained from showing his regard unto these little children, but, *having called them to him*, and ordered the infants to be brought, *he took them up in his arms*, tenderly embracing them with a holy complacency and love; *and*, as a farther token of the overflowing kindness and benevolence of his heart towards them, he *laid his hands upon them, and blessed them*, recommending them in a solemn manner to the divine blessing and favour; which accordingly descended upon them, to strengthen their constitutions and to sanctify their hearts. *And* after this *he departed from thence* to another place in the neighbourhood, where the young ruler attended him, as will be presently related.

16 And he [Luke, called them unto him, *and*] took them up in his arms, [and] put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them; [and departed thence.] [Matt. xix. 15. Luke xviii. 16.]

IMPROVEMENT.

16 LET us make a pause here, that we may more attentively review this delightful and instructive sight; that we may see this compassionate Shepherd of Israel, thus *gathering the lambs in his arms, and carrying them in his* 14 *bosom* with all the tokens of tender regard, (Isa. xl. 11.) rebuking his disciples who forbade their coming, and laying his gracious hands upon them to bless them. How condescending and engaging a behaviour! how encouraging and amiable an image!

Let his ministers view it, to teach them a becoming regard to the lambs of their flock, who should early be taken notice of and instructed, and for and with whom they should frequently pray; remembering how often divine grace takes possession of the heart in the years of infancy, and sanctifies the children of God almost from the womb. Let every first impression made upon their tender minds be cherished; and let not those whom Christ himself is ready to receive, be disregarded by his servants, who upon all occasions should *be gentle unto all*, and *apt to teach*. (2 Tim. ii. 24.)

13 Let parents view this sight with pleasure and thankfulness: let it encourage them to bring their children to Christ by faith, and to commit them to him in baptism, and by prayer. And if he who *has the keys of death and the unseen world*, (Rev. i. 18.) see fit to remove those dear creatures from us in their early days, let the remembrance of this story comfort us, and teach us to hope, that he who so graciously received these children has not forgotten ours, but that they are sweetly fallen asleep in him, and will be the everlasting objects of his care and 14 love; *for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Ibid. Let children especially observe this. The great and glorious Redeemer did not despise these little ones; nay, he was much displeased with those who would have prevented their being brought to him. As kindly would he, no doubt, have received you, ye dear children, who read or hear this; as kindly will he still receive you, if you go to him in the sincerity of your hearts, and ask his blessing in humble and earnest prayer. Though you see not Christ, he sees and hears you; he is now present with you, to receive you, to bless you, and to save you. Happy the weakest of you when lodged in the arms of Christ! nothing can pluck you from thence, or ever hurt you there.

15 In a word, let us all commit ourselves to him; and let us be disposed to become as little children, if we desire to enter into his kingdom. Let us not govern ourselves by the vain maxims of a corrupt and degenerate age. Let not pride, ambition, lust, or avarice, possess, torment, and enslave our minds; but, with the amiable simplicity of children, let us put ourselves into the wise and kind hands of Jesus as our Guardian, and refer ourselves to his pastoral and parental care, to be clothed and fed, to be guided and disposed of, as he shall see fit. For this

b Knew that a proper notice of these, &c.] Christ's shewing his regard in such a manner to them, not only must have been exceedingly pleasing to the parents, but the memory of this condescension might make tender and lasting impressions on the children themselves; and the sight must be very edifying and encouraging to other young persons who might happen to be present; not to say how instructive this gentleness to children may be to ministers, and how much their usefulness may, or might have been, promoted by a due regard to it. Nicephorus tells us, that the celebrated Ignatius, afterwards Bishop of Antioch, was one of these infants.—Our Lord might reasonably be the more displeased with his disciples for endeavouring to prevent their being brought, as he had so lately set a child among them, and insisted on the necessity of their being made conformable to it; Matt. xviii. 2, 3. § 93. p. 19.

—I am obliged to Dr. Scott's late version of St. Matthew's Gospel (which, according to the manner of the learned and ingenious author, is exact to a wonder) for the alteration I have made here, and for some other changes, which I take this opportunity of acknowledging with due gratitude.

c *For of such is the kingdom of God*, &c.] I acknowledge these words will not of themselves prove *infant baptism* to be an institution of Christ; but if that appears from other scriptures to be the case, (which I think most probable,) there will be proportionable reason to believe that our Lord might here intend some reference to it; and I cannot approve of rendering τοιουτων, *such as resemble these*. It is the part of a faithful translator not to limit the sense of the original, nor to fix what it leaves ambiguous.

purpose, O God, may we be born again by thy Spirit, and formed anew by thy grace! since by this method alone we can be *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, (Col. i. 12.) and be so the children of God as to be at length *the children of the resurrection*. SECT. 136.

SECTION CXXXVII.

A rich young man applying himself to Christ for direction in the way to eternal life, and afterwards parting with him out of regard to his possessions, gives our Lord an occasion of cautioning his disciples concerning the danger of riches. Matt. xix. 16, *to the end.* Mark x. 17—31. Luke xviii. 18—30.

MARK x. 17.

AND when he was gone forth into the way, [behold,] there came one [Luke, a certain ruler] running, and kneeled to him, and asked him. [Luke, saying,] Good Master, what [good thing] shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? [Matt. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 18.]

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is* God: [but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.] [Matt. xix. 17. Luke xviii. 19.]

19 [He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said,] Thou knowest the commandments, [Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness,] Defraud not; Honour thy father and [Luke, thy] mother; [and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.] [Matt. xix. 18, 19. Luke xviii. 20.]

20 And [the young man] answered and said unto him, Master, all these [things] have I observed from my youth: [What lack I yet?] [Matt. xix. 20. Luke xviii. 21.]

21 Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and [Luke, when he heard these things, he] said unto him, [Luke, yet one thing thou lackest; [if thou wilt be perfect,]

MARK x. 17.

AND as he went out from thence,[a] *into the way* to some other place which he designed to visit, *behold*, a most remarkable occurrence happened; for *there came one*, even *a certain magistrate* or ruler, who was a young person in very plentiful circumstances, *running* with an eager desire to converse with Jesus before he left that place; *and* he no sooner was come near him, but, *kneeling down to him* with the humblest respect, *he asked him* with great reverence and earnestness, *saying*, *Good Master*,[b] I am come to thee as a most wise and gracious Teacher, and beseech thee to answer me a question of the highest importance: *What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* for nothing lies with so much weight upon my mind as this, and I am determined to secure it at any rate. SECT. 137. MARK X. 17

And Jesus, upon this, *said to him*, *Why dost thou call me good*,[c] whom thou regardest only as a prophet sent from God, and dost not look upon to be any more than a mere man? Thou shouldst remember upon all occasions, that *none is* perfectly *good but one* glorious and immutable Being, [*even*] the ever-blessed and eternal *God;* nor can any man or angel deserve the title of good in any degree of comparison with him, from whom originally stream forth all those rays of goodness which are but imperfectly reflected from them. *But* as to the question thou hast asked; If thou art resolutely *determined to enter into life*, it is absolutely necessary thou shouldst *keep the* divine *commandments;* the perfect observance of which alone can give thee a legal claim to it, and in the wilful neglect of which thou must never on any terms expect it. 18

Then the young ruler, that *he* might fully understand the mind of Jesus, eagerly *says to him*, *Which* are those commandments on the observation of which my eternal life depends? 19

Jesus said, *Thou* undoubtedly *knowest the commandments* which God gave to Moses, written on the tables of stone at Mount Sinai, among which those of the second table, however neglected by the Pharisees, are by no means to be forgotten; such as, "*Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal;* "*Thou shalt not bear false witness* against thy neighbour; *Thou shalt not* covet "any part of his property, or take any methods to *defraud* him;"[d] and that which indeed stands in the front of all these, "*Honour thy father and thy mother.*" These are the six last commandments, which I now recommend to thy consideration; *and* they may all be summed up in that one comprehensive precept, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" (See Exod. xx. 12—17. and Lev. xix. 18.)

And the young man, not apprehending the large extent and spiritual meaning of these precepts, *replied*, with great cheerfulness and confidence, *and said to him*, *Master*, I have been early taught these precepts, and may venture to say, that *I have* conscientiously *observed all these* even *from my infancy*,[e] and have abstained from each of the vices and immoralities condemned in them; *what* then *do I farther need*, in order to secure the glorious prize after which I am seeking? 20

And Jesus looking stedfastly upon him, *loved him*, and felt the emotions of complacency mingled with tender compassion, in regard to so young a person, who had maintained so honourable a character in such an elevated station of life, and was under such concern about another world; yet at the same time, amidst all these hopeful circumstances, was governed still by a secret fondness for the possessions he enjoyed in this: *and*, 21

a *As he went out* from thence.] Both Matthew and Luke relate this story of the young ruler immediately after that in the preceding section; but Mark is more determinate than either of them in the connection, and more circumstantial in the narration.

b *Good Master.*] Wolfius observes that this was a title which the Jewish rabbies affected; which, if it were indeed so, might be an additional reason for our Lord's remark upon it.

c *Why dost thou call me good?*] It is certain that some very ancient manuscripts read this clause, Τι με ερωτας περι του αγαθου, *Why dost thou ask me what good thing is to be done?* But neither the number of copies, nor the turn of our Lord's answer, will by any means admit of such a reading.

d *Thou shalt not defraud.*] As Mark seems to put this for the tenth commandment, Dr. Hammond (*in loc.*) and Archbishop Tillotson (see his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 257.) suppose it a key to the sense of those words, *Thou shalt not covet;* the meaning of which, they argue, is as if it had been said, "Thou shalt not be so desirous of "thy neighbour's possessions as to be willing to injure the owner "by depriving him of them, that thou mayst secure them to thy-"self." But the apostle Paul strongly intimates that the sense of that command is much more extensive, (Rom. vii. 7;) and as the preceding commandments had forbid to invade the life, the bed, the property, or reputation of another, so this requires a guard on those irregular appetites and passions which might by insensible degrees lead men to murder, adultery, theft, or false witness.

e *I have observed all these* even *from my infancy.*] The phrase απο νεοτητος may indeed be very exactly rendered, *from my youth;* but as he was yet but a young man, it is probably here put for infancy or childhood. It is plain he did not understand the spiritual meaning and extent of the *law*, according to our Lord's explication of it in his sermon on the mount; or he would not have pleaded his exact obedience to it. But the Jews in general seem to have thought that, if they abstained from gross crimes, sacrifices might atone for smaller neglects or offences. And this compound seems to have been that righteousness of their own, in which, to their final ruin, they trusted for justification before God, in the neglect of the righteousness which is of God by faith. Compare Rom. x. 3; and Phil. iii. 9.

SECT. 137. MARK X.

as our Lord thought fit to manifest this fondness to himself and others, *when he had heard these things* which have been mentioned above, *he* was pleased to call him forth to a peculiar trial; and therefore *said unto him*, Thus far it is well; but *yet*, alas, *one thing thou* still *wantest*,[f] in order to prove that integrity of soul and that prevailing love to God, without which none can be entitled to future blessedness: by me he now commands

21 thee, *if thou wilt be perfect*, and determine to submit to all that he requires, to *go thy way* immediately and *sell all thy possessions*,[g] valuable as they are, *and* to *distribute* the money which arises from the sale of them *to the poor;* do this, *and thou shalt have* an infinitely more excellent *treasure in heaven: and*, in the assured hope of this, I call thee to *come* and *take up the cross, and* with courage and resolution to *follow me* as my constant attendant, though it should be even at the expense of thy life as well as thine estate.

22 *But when the young man heard that saying*, and saw that all his gay and delightful prospects for life must be given up in a moment, *he was* exceedingly concerned and *troubled* at it, *and* he *went away in great sorrow; for he was very rich*, [*and*] *had great possessions*, which were lately fallen into his hands; and how desirous soever he was of eternal life, he could not resolve to secure it at so great an expense.

23 *And when Jesus saw that* though *he was very sorrowful*, yet he chose rather to go away than to part with his estate in the views of eternal happiness, *he looked round* on all that were *about* him, *and said to his disciples*, Observe this instructive incident, and learn to make this reflection upon it: *How hardly shall they that possess* the *riches* of this world *enter into the kingdom of God!* Dwell upon the thought, and repeat it, in order, if possible, to wean your hearts from these delusive vanities which often prove so fatal to the soul: for *verily I say unto you*, So many snares attend such circumstances, *that a rich man will hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*, or be brought to such a relish for the gospel and its future blessings, as either to resign or improve his worldly possessions in such a manner as the laws of that kingdom require.

24 *And the disciples were* quite *astonished at his words;* for they were ready to imagine that, ere long, all the rich and great people of the country would appear for their Lord, and fix him on the throne of Israel.

But Jesus, answering again to that surprise which he saw in their countenances, *says to them* in the most condescending manner, My dear *children*, when you consider what I said more attentively, you will not so much wonder at it; for it is manifest that the generality of rich men place their chief confidence and delight in the things of this present world: and you know that true religion requires a heart abstracted from them, and placed on nobler objects: judge then for yourselves, *how hard is it for them that* thus *trust in*

25 their *riches, to enter into the kingdom of God! And* therefore *I say to you again* in yet stronger terms, that your common proverb may have its place here, That *it is easier* for the huge cable of a ship, or even *for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*,[h] *than* it is *for a rich man* to conquer the snares of his estate and the corruptions of his heart so far as *to enter into the kingdom of God*, and become the faithful, obedient subject of his Son.

26 *And when his disciples heard* [*this*] repetition and illustration of what was before said, *they were struck into exceeding great and inexpressible amazement* at it, *saying one to another*, And *who then can be saved?* Who that are rich can ever get to heaven? And what a discouragement will it be to others to see the rich and the great neglecting salvation, and turning the means of their happiness and usefulness into the instruments of their destruction?

27 *But Jesus, looking stedfastly upon them, saith unto them, With men it is* indeed *impossible*, and the strength of corrupt nature alone will not be sufficient to encounter such difficulties as these; *but* it is *not* impossible *with God* to animate their hearts against them: *for* his grace has an almighty energy, and *with God all things are possible*, [*even*] *the things which are* most *impossible with men*, and seem so insurmountable to human strength as to be reckoned utterly impracticable; to him therefore let the rich and poor unite their supplications, that each may be rendered superior to the snares which attend their respective circumstances.

go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. [Matt. xix. 21. Luke xviii. 22.]

22 [But when the young man heard that saying,] he was sad, and went away [Luke, very sorrowful;] for he [Luke, was very rich, *and*] had great possessions. [Matt. xix. 22. Luke xviii. 23.]

23 And [Luke, when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful,] he looked round about, and saith to his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. xix. 23. Luke xviii. 24.]

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words.—

—But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 [And again I say unto you,] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. [Matt. xix. 24. Luke xviii. 25.]

26 And when his [disciples heard *it*,] they were [exceedingly amazed, *and*] astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved! [Matt. xix. 25. Luke xviii. 26.]

27 And Jesus looking upon them, saith [unto them,] With men [this is] impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible, [Luke, *even* the things which are impossible with men.] [Matt. xix. 26. Luke xviii. 27.]

f *One thing thou wantest.*] Our Lord does not say he wanted but one thing; so that nothing can be concluded from hence against the necessity of an acquaintance with some truths, of which this youth, hopeful and amiable as he was, appears to have been ignorant. But it was to be charged on that want of sincere piety which his conduct presently discovered, that he did not come to the knowledge of them by a continued and submissive attendance on the teaching of Christ. See John vii. 17. § 99.

g *Sell all thy possessions.*] It is strange that the learned and accurate Dr. Clarke should suppose that Christ did not demand this in order to his being in a state of acceptance with God, but in order to his giving a testimony of exalted piety; or, at least, as necessary at that time to his being a preacher of the gospel. Our Lord's manner of proposing the trial, and his reflection on the young man's going away, plainly shew that it was, in those circumstances, necessary to his salvation. And indeed it is most apparent, that though God does not in fact require every man to distribute all his goods to others, and so in effect to become one of the number of poor to be relieved out of his own possessions, yet sincere virtue and piety demand an habitual readiness, not only to sacrifice our possessions, but our lives, at the command of God; and Providence does in fact call some out to trials as severe as this.—His refusal plainly showed he valued his worldly possessions more than eternal life: and our Lord, with great wisdom, took this direct and convincing method of manifesting both to himself and others, that secret insincerity and carnality of temper which prevailed under all these specious pretences and promising appearances.

h *Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.*] Theophylact, and after him some other critics, for κάμηλον read κάμιλον, which they explain of *a cable rope*, which might appear more fitly to be mentioned as what *could not pass through a needle's eye.* Others very precariously assert that there was near Jerusalem a low gate called the Needle's Eye, through which a camel could not pass unless his load were taken off. But I see no reason for departing from the received reading and interpretation: nor is there any thing in this proverbial expression, as it here stands, but what is very agreeable to the Eastern taste, and may be paralleled in other Jewish writers. See Dr. Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xix. 24. where it is shown there was a Jewish proverb to the same purpose of the elephant.

28 Then Peter [answered, and] began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee! [What shall we have therefore?] [Matt. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 28.]

Matt. xix. 28. And Jesus [answered and] said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [Mark x. 29. Luke xviii. 29.]

Mark x. 29. [And] there is no man, that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, [Luke, for the kingdom of God's sake, *that is,*] for my [name's] sake, and the gospel's, [Matt. xix. 29. Luke xviii. 29.]

30 But he shall receive [Luke, manifold more, *yea,*] an hundred-fold now in this [Luke, present] time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come [shall inherit] eternal life. [Matt. xix. 29. Luke xviii. 30.]

31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last [*shall be*] first. [Matt. xix. 30.]

Then Peter replied, and with some warmth and confidence *began to say unto him,* Well, Master, *behold* we have done what this youth, hopeful as he seemed, had not the resolution to do; for though indeed we had not much, *we have left all* the little that we had in the world, *and* have at all adventures *followed thee* with the sincerest zeal and affection: *what* reward *shall we therefore have?* for we persuade ourselves thou wilt not permit us finally to be losers in thy cause. SECT. 137. MARK X. 28

And Jesus answering said to them, You may depend upon it that you shall not, but will be found upon the whole to have acted the wisest part; for *verily I say unto you,* and assure you of it, *That you who have followed me* in my humiliation, shall at length be distinguished by proportionable honours: and *in the* great *renovation*[i] of all things, *when* all the children of God shall, as it were, be born anew from their graves; when created nature shall put on its fairest forms to receive them, and *the Son of man,* presiding over that august assembly, *shall sit on the throne of his glory,* exalted above the highest angels of God, *you also,* my faithful apostles, *shall sit* around me *upon twelve* radiant *thrones,*[k] *judging the twelve tribes of Israel;* concurring joyfully with me in the sentence which shall then be passed on the Jewish nation, and on all the professed members of my church, as they have been sincere or faithless in their profession, and in the observance of those laws which you, by authority from me, their exalted Sovereign, shall have given them. MATT. XIX. 28

And though some peculiar rewards are reserved for you with regard to your apostolic character, yet *there is no man* in any state or condition of life, whether in this or in any future age of the world, *who hath left,* or shall hereafter leave his *house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands;* in one word, none who shall undergo the loss of any temporal advantages *for the sake of the kingdom of God, [that is,] for my name's sake and the gospel's, But he shall receive manifold more* for it in the inward satisfaction and divine consolations attending real religion, [*yea*] even *an hundred-fold now in this present time,* more than all the comfort he could naturally have found in *houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands;* such shall be the delights of a good conscience, and the secret manifestations of divine acceptance and favour, which shall mingle themselves *with* all the *persecutions* he shall here endure;[l] *and* when they are over, as they will quickly be, *in the world to come he shall inherit everlasting life,* and be for ever enjoying that happiness which God has prepared for all his children, especially for such heroic souls as these, when all earthly relations are ceased, and the world itself is dissolved. MARK X. 29, 30

But such will be the issue and event of things under the gospel, that *many* [*who are*] *first* in the advantages and privileges they enjoy, *shall,* notwithstanding this, fall short of others, and *be last* in the great day of accounts; *and* those who are *the last shall* prove in this respect to *be* the *first:* for some, from whom it might be least expected, shall embrace the gospel, and courageously endure the greatest hardships for it; while others, with far greater advantages, shall reject it, and, under much stronger engagements, shall desert it. 31

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can behold, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart, this lovely youth perishing in sin![m] What could have appeared more promising than this solicitous concern about eternal life, in a young man rich in the possessions and high in the honours of the present world! To see him running with such eagerness to the feet of a Redeemer, kneeling down with such humility before him, calling upon him by so honourable a title, and professing so sincere a desire of instruction, could not but lead us to conclude, Surely this man was not far from the kingdom of God; nor do we wonder that Jesus beholding him loved him. Who would not have looked on such an object with complacency! Who would not have expected that this pleasant plan should have brought forth grapes; but behold, *it brought forth wild grapes!* (Isa. v. 2.) So have we seen, in the compass perhaps of our small ob- Ver. 17 21

i *In the great renovation* of all things.] I have given what appears to me the most natural sense of this difficult passage. Mr. Fleming agrees with our translators in connecting the words εν τη παλιγγενεσια with the preceding clause, and paraphrases the verse thus: "As for you, my apostles, who have followed me in this new "state of the church which is to be brought to the birth; when "I am to ascend to heaven, that I may govern the world from "thence by my word and Spirit, ye shall be to the whole Christian "church what the twelve heads of the tribes were of old to the "Jewish nation: my followers shall appeal to your decisions as "the rule of their faith and practice." (Fleming's *Christology,* Vol. I. p. 28.) But it seems plain to me, that our Lord refers in the following words to the time of final retribution, which he elsewhere mentions as that in which he should *sit on the throne of his glory,* Matt. xxv. 31, 32.—Mr. Pierce (on Heb. i. 5.) follows Brennius in expounding the regeneration of the time when Christ should be (as it were) *begotten again* by his *resurrection from the dead;* but the criticism seems very unnatural, and the objection mentioned above lies against it in its full force.—The laboured argument which Dr. Thomas Burnet deduces from hence, to prove the renovation of the earth at the millennium, is very precarious; since the words will so fairly admit of another sense, referring them to the general resurrection. See Burnet's *Theory,* Vol. II. p. 229, 230.

k *Shall sit upon twelve thrones.*] Our Lord well knew that Judas would fall from his office and dignity; but as Matthias filled his place, and so stood entitled to the promise, he did not think it fit to enter into any particular distinction; but speaks to the whole body of the apostles in words which he knew would be accomplished to the far greater part of those to whom they were addressed.

l *Shall receive—an hundred-fold now in this present time,—with persecutions.*] Dr. Massey, in his *Vernacula Sacra,* p. 18. proposes a very different version of this period, viz. "*Though he may not* "*receive* [εαν μη λαβη] *an hundred-fold* (or a sufficient recompense,) "*now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers,* "*and children, and lands;* yet *after persecution,* [μετα διωγμων] *and* "*in the world to come,* he shall receive *eternal life.*" But I neither think the authority of Theophylact sufficient to warrant our substituting διωγμων for διωγμων; nor can I find any satisfactory example of such an ellipsis as this version supposes in the original, if that variation were allowed; to which we may add, that the parallel passages both in Matthew and Luke lie strongly against the version proposed.

m Lovely youth perishing in sin.] Dr. Watts' excellent Sermon on this subject, and with this title, will, I doubt not, be recollected by multitudes on this occasion. There is so much beauty and pathos, so much wisdom and piety in it, that I could wish it might be attentively perused, especially by every one of my *younger readers;* for I would hope there are few capable of reading it without some serious impressions.

SECT. 137. MARK X.

servation and experience, many a fair blossom fall withering to the ground. So have the hopes of ministers and parents, and other religious friends, been disappointed with respect to many young persons, adorned with a variety of amiable qualifications, yet lacking *one thing*, and parting with Christ when put to the trial, after all the regard they have shown to his name, and all the pleasing expectations they have given of a willingness to serve him. O my young reader, whoever thou art, I earnestly pray that thou mayst not be added to that number!

19, 20 This unhappy youth imagined himself in the certain way of salvation because he was free from the stains of fraud and injustice, of adultery and theft, of perjury and murder, or any other gross and infamous sin. But behold, how awful a method Christ takes to open to him that insincerity of heart which he seems himself not to
21 have known! Observe how strange a command he gives him, to *sell all, and distribute to the poor.* We cannot say that the very same is directly required of us; yet, by this order that was given to him, we are obliged to part with our all when it cannot be preserved with a good conscience; and by the general rules of Christianity, and by its fundamental precepts, we are in duty bound conscientiously to use, not only a little part of our substance, but even the whole of it for God, as stewards who are another day to give up a strict account for all. And if we like not Christ and glory on these terms, our end will be no better than his. Of him we read, that after all his morality
22 and all his zeal, he went away from Christ, (though sorrowful,) because he had great possessions. O dear-bought wealth, which was the price of his soul!

Let us look upon him, and receive instruction; let us learn to be upon our guard against this vain world, that specious harlot, *who hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.* (Prov. vii. 26.) How universally are riches desired, how eagerly are they pursued, by persons in all stations and of all professions of life! Yet what do they generally prove but shining mischief and gilded ruin! If we believe the incar-
23—25 nate wisdom of God, they make our salvation exceeding hazardous. Yet who does not wish for them? Who does not think that he has wisdom and grace enough to stand the danger? But God knows otherwise, and therefore he keeps, or makes, so many of his children poor.—Let them be contented with their safer state: and let those
27 who are rich be importunate with God for those influences of his grace which can effect those things that are impossible with men.

On the whole, let us not think much of any thing which Christ demands, knowing that whatever we may lose,
29 or whatever we may resign, we shall gain far more by his favour. The testimony of a good conscience before him, a life of friendship with God, the consolations of his Spirit, and the hopes of his glory, will yield, even for the present, an hundred-fold more satisfaction than the possessions of the greatest riches, or the enjoyment of the most
30 tender and beloved relatives. How much more abundantly then will all be repaid in the heavenly state! And, if we cannot trust the promise of our Lord for it, we are no more real Christians than if we were publicly to worship Mammon, or Plutus, with all the idolatrous rites of the ancient heathens. December 28. 1855.

SECTION CXXXVIII.

Christ, by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, warns the Jews against envying the Gentiles those equal privileges to which they should be called in the Messiah's kingdom. Matt. xx. 1—16.

MATT. XX. 1.

SECT. 138. MATT. XX.

IN order to illustrate the observation which our Lord had just been making, "that many "who were first should be last, and many last should be first," he added the following parable, and said, This will be found to be the case in many instances; *for the kingdom of heaven*, or the gospel-dispensation, *is like* or may be fitly represented by the similitude of *a man*[a] *that was the master of a family, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard*, at the time when the vintage was to be gathered in. *And having agreed with the labourers for* the usual price of *a* denarius, or Roman *penny, a-day*,[b] *he sent them into his vineyard*, to be employed there in his service.

3 *And going out* again *about the third hour*,[c] (or at nine in the morning,) *he saw others standing unemployed in the market*, where it was customary for servants to stand in
4 order to their being hired. *And he said to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is* the *reasonable* value of your labour,[d] *I will* be sure to *give you. And they went away* to their work without any more particular agreement.

5 And *again going out about the sixth and ninth hour*, (or at noon, and at three in the afternoon,) *he did the same*, and sent others to work on the same general promise of giving them as much as they could reasonably expect.

6 *And* once more, *about the eleventh hour*, (or at five in the afternoon,) *going out* of his house, *he* returned to the market, and *found others standing unemployed: and he says*

MATT. XX. 1.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a-day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place,

4 And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and

a *Is like*, or may be fitly represented by the similitude of *a man*.] See note i, on Luke vii. 32. p. 116, 117.—Those who are acquainted with the Eastern manners, know that this parable is exactly suited to them in a variety of circumstances, which many learned commentators have observed, but which it does not seem necessary to enumerate here. See Petav. *Dogmat. Theolog.* Vol. I. p. 305, *et seq.*

b *A* denarius, or Roman *penny, a-day*.] It seems from hence, that this (which was in value about seven-pence halfpenny of our money) was the usual price of a day's service among the Jews; as Tacitus tells us it was among the Romans. (*Annal.* i. 17.) It is therefore justly mentioned, Rev. vi. 6. as a proof of the great scarcity of provisions, when a measure or chœnix of wheat, which was the usual allowance to one man for a day, and was about an English quart, was sold at that price.

c *About the third hour*.] Dr. Whitby in his Paraphrase explains the first call in the morning, of the earliest days of Christ's preaching; that of the third hour, as referring to the mission of the apostles when they were first sent forth to preach among the Jews: those of the sixth and ninth hours, of their preaching the gospel, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, to the Jews in Judea, and then to the dispersed in other parts: and that of the eleventh hour, of the calling of the Gentiles: but this seems an excessive nicety of distinction.—The Jews were ready to look upon themselves with complacency, as a people who had for many ages adhered to the worship of the true God, and in some periods had endured great extremities out of a regard to it; and it seems natural to interpret what is said (ver. 12.) of *bearing the burden and heat of the day*, with a reference to this, rather than to any peculiar hardship which the earlier converts among the Jews might have endured more than the believing Gentiles, many of whom met with much the same treatment on their embracing Christianity. See 1 Thess. ii. 14.

d *Whatsoever is reasonable*.] So I think the word δικαιον may be rendered, Phil. i. 7; Col. iv. 1; and 2 Pet. i. 13. and that it signifies, not only what a person may legally claim, but what he might equitably expect from a person of honour and humanity.

saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?
7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.
8 So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.
9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.
10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more: and they likewise received every man a penny.
11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the good man of the house,
12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.
13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?
14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.
15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?
16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

to them, Why do ye stand here and do nothing? Do you chuse thus to trifle away your time, and continue *the whole day unemployed? They say unto him*, No; but we continue here *because no one has hired us* to any kind of labour. Then *he says to them, Go ye also into the vineyard*, where you may be employed; *and whatsoever is* fit and *reasonable* to be given for your labour, *you shall receive.* SECT. 138. MATT. XX.

Now when evening was come, (or at six o'clock,) the time when workmen were paid off and sent home, *the lord of the vineyard says to his steward, Call the labourers* who have been working in the vineyard, *and pay them their wages, beginning from* those who were *the last* hired, and so going on *even to the first.* 8

And having thus been ordered to present themselves, *when they* accordingly *came* foremost *who* [*were hired*] *about the eleventh hour*, and so had entered last into the vineyard, *they each* of them *received* no less than *a penny*, the master having directed they should be thus generously rewarded. 9

And upon seeing this, *when* those who were *the first*, and had been working all the day, *came* to be paid, *they reckoned* with themselves *that they should have received* considerably *more; but they* were *also* paid the same, and only *received every one a penny. And when they had received* [*it*,] instead of being satisfied with what was promised them, *they murmured against the master of the house*[e] who had set them to work, *and said, Truly these last have laboured but one hour, and thou hast made them equal*, in the recompense they have received, *to us, who have borne the* whole *burden*, and gone through all the toil *and heat of the day* from morning to night. 10 11 12

But he calmly *answered and said to one of them*, who spoke in the name of the rest, *Friend*, it is most apparent that *I do not* in any degree *injure thee*, or any of thy companions: *didst not thou agree with me* to labour all the day *for a penny*, and hast thou not received it? *Take what is* justly *thine, and be gone*, without pretending to dictate to me in an affair wherein thou hast no manner of concern; *for I will* do as I see fit, and *give to this last* man, who came in but an hour ago, *even as* I do *to thee.*[f] *And indeed* what colour hast thou for a complaint? *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with* what is undoubtedly *mine own* property?[g] What if I pleased to give it to one who had done nothing at all for it? *Is thine eye evil*,[h] or dost thou look on with an envious and malignant countenance, *because I am* so *good*, that out of compassion to these poor men I freely give them what they could not justly have claimed? 13 14 15

And *thus* said Jesus at the conclusion of this parable: You see (as I have just been telling you, Matt. xix. 30.) there are some who seemed to be *the last* in privileges and advantages, who *shall be first* in the reward and happiness that shall be given to them; *and*, on the other hand, there are many in those respects *the first*, who shall be *last.* And this is a remark peculiarly applicable to the Jewish nation,[i] who will murmur at the calling of the Gentiles to equal dignities and privileges with themselves, and on that account will reject the gospel, and persecute you the preachers of it: *for* though *many are called*, and the messages of salvation are sent to vast multitudes, even to all the thousands of Israel, yet there are *but few chosen*;[k] a small remnant only will embrace the gospel so universally offered, and so be saved according to the election of grace, (Rom. xi. 5.) while the rest will be justly disowned by God, as a punishment for so obstinate and so envious a temper. 16

IMPROVEMENT.

May we by divine grace appear in the happy number of those who are not only called, but chosen too! If we are first in privileges and opportunities, let us be careful that our improvement be proportionable; otherwise we shall be last, and see ourselves another day exceeded, and perhaps condemned, by those who stood in a rank much below us. Ver. 16

We are called to a course of holy labour, even to work in our Lord's vineyard, or in every station, whether public or private, to do our utmost to promote the glory of God and the happiness of mankind. Let us not, with 1

e *They murmured against the master of the house.*] That this was the case of the Jews, upon a general notion of the Gentiles being, according to the Christian scheme, intended to be partakers with them in the same church-privileges, is plain from a variety of scriptures. See Acts xi. 2, 3; xiii. 45—50; xvii. 5, 13; xviii. 6, 13; xxii. 21, 22; xxviii. 29; Rom. xi. 28; and 1 Thess. ii. 16.

f *I will give to this last even as to thee.*] Since no murmurings can happen among the blessed, this must refer to the unbelieving Jews; but as it is certain they will have no place in the kingdom of heaven, we plainly see that it would be very absurd to pretend to draw doctrinal consequences from every incidental circumstance of a parable.

g *And indeed, is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*] That the particle *n* may be thus rendered, *And indeed*, has been observed before, note e, on Matt. vii. 9. p. 86. And as to what is here suggested, so many scriptures declare expressly, that God at the great day will *render to every one according to his works*, and intimate that there shall be an exact correspondence between every man's character and the reward which (through the riches of divine grace) shall then be bestowed, that it would be very unreasonable, from such a circumstance as this in the parable, to infer the contrary. But if any should maintain, that all the favours of Divine Providence and grace must now be dispensed only in proportion to the wisdom and goodness of the person concerned, I apprehend they would argue directly contrary to the whole design of this parable, and to what daily appears to be fact, which therefore cannot give way to any hypothesis.

h *Is thine eye evil?*] Here is an evident reference to that malignant aspect which is generally the attendant of a selfish and envious temper.

i Peculiarly applicable to the Jewish nation.] The remark itself is far more extensive, as I intimate both in the paraphrase and improvement. But as this was a memorable instance of it, so it is plainly what Christ had immediately in his view.

k *Many are called, but few are chosen.*] Grotius has a very learned and ingenious note on this text; but no genius or learning can be sufficient to prove what he seems to intend, that persons are called the chosen of God, merely with respect to the divine complacency in them on account of some distinguished virtue and excellence. Compare Deut. vii. 6—8; ix. 6; John xv. 16; Acts ix. 13, 15; Rom. xi. 5, 6; and 1 John iv. 19. To understand the expression here, of *chosen and excellent servants*, (as M. Le Clerc, Dr. Wall, and many others do,) is quite to contradict the design of the parable. On that supposition the master must have said, "These last "have done as much in one hour as you in many; or I chose them, "because I knew they were men remarkable for their diligence." This is the turn which the Talmudists have given to the parable in their insipid imitation of it, which may be seen in Dr. Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. xx. 1.

SECT. 138. MATT. XX. so many calls and so many advantages, stand all the day idle; but let us be active and patient, and cheerfully willing to bear all the burden and heat of the day in so good a cause; knowing that ere long the evening will come, and that he who employs us saith, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* (Rev. xxii. 12.)

6 Let such as have long neglected the great business of life be encouraged with this thought, that some were called at the eleventh hour; but let none presume on their having such a call, nor strain the parable so far as to imagine that an equal reward awaits all, without any regard to their characters or improvements; which is most contrary to the reason of things, to the word of God, and to the great intent of that day which is *to render to every man according to his deeds.* (Rom. ii. 6.)

9 The Gentiles are indeed now called to equal privileges with the Jews, to which this circumstance of the parable
11,12 refers: and we all see how odious a temper it was in that favourite nation to be offended with the gospel on that account, which should rather have recommended it to their more joyful acceptance. Let us be careful to avoid every degree of envy, whoever may be put on a level with us, or preferred to us. Let us acknowledge the sovereign
15 right of God to do what he will with his own, and let not our eye be evil because he is good. To prevent this, let us labour after that *unfeigned love to the brethren* which never will allow us to repine at their advancement to the greatest privileges, but will engage us to behold the favours that are shewn them with delight and satisfaction, and to rejoice in their honour and happiness as our own. So shall we exchange the basest and most uneasy passion of human nature, for that which is of all others the noblest and the most delightful.

SECTION CXXXIX.

Our Lord, hearing of the sickness of his friend Lazarus, and afterwards knowing that he was dead, determines to go from the country beyond Jordan to Judea, though against the persuasion of his disciples. John xi. 1—16.

JOHN xi. 1.

SECT. 139. JOHN XI. *NOW* while Jesus was on the other side Jordan, whither he had retired when he left Jerusalem, (John x. 40. sect. cxxxiv.) *there was one Lazarus of Bethany*, which was also *the town of Mary and Martha her sister, who was sick* of a very dangerous distemper. And, by the way, it is to be observed that *it was* [*that*] *Mary who* afterwards at a
2 public entertainment, in testimony of her high regard and veneration for him, *anointed the Lord with* a most precious *ointment*,[a] *and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother*
3 *Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore*, full of concern for their diseased brother, knowing where Jesus was, *sent to him, and said, Lord*, we beg that thou wouldst be pleased to favour us with a visit, whatever difficulties may lie in the way; for *behold, he whom thou* so tenderly *lovest*, even Lazarus thy friend, *is* so exceedingly *ill*, that, without thy interposition for his deliverance, nothing but death can be expected.

4 *But when Jesus heard* [*it*,] *he said, This sickness is not* designed by providence *to* end in his *death*, and final removal out of this world;[b] *but* shall serve *for* the remarkable illustration of *the glory of God*, and is suffered to prevail, chiefly with a design *that the Son of God may be glorified by it*, and his divine mission most signally confirmed.

5 *Now* it was well known that *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister* Mary, *and* this their brother *Lazarus*, with a peculiar affection, and had often visited them, and lodged at their house; and, in consequence of this, he was determined to order the affair in such a manner as he knew would be most for their final advantage, though it might for a while be an occasion of greater affliction.

6 *When therefore he had heard that he was sick, he then*, without declaring he had any thought of going to him, *abode* yet *two days* longer on the other side Jordan, *in the* same
7 *place where he was* before. And *then after that*, that is, on the third day, *he says to his disciples, Let us* now *go* back *again to Judea.*[c]

8 *The disciples say unto him, Rabbi*, it is *but* just *now* that *the Jews sought to stone thee*, (John x. 31. sect. cxxxiv.) *and dost thou* intend so soon to *go thither again*, as if it were to tempt the danger from which thou hast so lately with such difficulty escaped?

9 *Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?* Now *if any man* take the advantage of them, and *walk in the day, he* is prepared for all events, and *does not stumble* at any obstacle which may lie in his way; *because* the sun is then above the

JOHN xi. 1.

NOW a certain man was sick, *named* Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that, saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth

a *It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment.*] Some commentators have supposed that this refers to the story related by Luke, chap. vii. 37. *et seq.* (§ 60.) and have argued from thence that Mary Magdalene, whom they think to be the person there described as a woman that was a sinner, was the same with this Mary, the sister of Lazarus. But it seems much more probable that John himself should mention the fact that he has here referred to: which, if he has done at all, it must be that which he relates, John xii. 3. *et seq.* (§ 145.) where there can be no doubt but that the person who performed this instance of respect to Christ was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who was at Bethany near Jerusalem, and therefore must be different from Mary Magdalene, who was of Magdala, a town of Galilee at a considerable distance. Nor is there any ground from scripture to conclude that Mary Magdalene was the person who anointed Christ in Luke, which appears rather to be there described as the action of a woman of Naim, where Christ restored the widow's son to life. (Luke vii. 37.) (Compare note b, on Luke viii. 2. p. 121.)—Besides, the stories are related with such different circumstances, that it is strange they should be taken for the same fact; and as Luke no where tells us that the person he speaks of was named Mary, so neither have we any reason to suppose that the same person should anoint him twice.

b *This sickness is not to death*, &c.] Compare Matt. ix. 24; and Mark v. 39. p. 146. Our Lord afterwards so fully explains what he meant by this ambiguous speech, that nothing reasonable can be objected to it: but it is a remarkable instance of the candour and fidelity of the Evangelists here, and in the fore-cited places, so exactly to record the very words of Jesus, though malice might so easily cavil at them.

c *After that he says to his disciples*, &c.] From comparing Matt. xx. 17; Mark x. 32; and Luke xviii. 31. (§ 142.) many critics infer, that what is recorded there and in the following verses happened during the interval of Christ's delay to go to Bethany, after he had heard that Lazarus was sick: but I do not find that Christ went to Jerusalem now; and if he did, it seems that those events happened in his very last journey thither, and consequently should not be introduced here; especially as they break the thread of the story, out of regard to which, I think, some small transpositions may well be allowed in other places, though none be needful here.

not, because he seeth the light of this world.
10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that, he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.
14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead:
15 And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, (to the intent ye may believe;) nevertheless, let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

horizon, and *he sees the light of this world. But if any man* will rather chuse to *walk in the night*, it is no wonder at all if *he stumbles* then, *because there is no light in* the air around *him*. In like manner, I am desirous, as I lately told you, to do the will of my heavenly Father while the day, or opportunity of life, lasts, (John ix.4. sect. cxxx.) and I doubt not but I shall thereby approve myself in his sight, and secure his protection and favour.

These things he said to silence their objections, and to prepare their minds for what he 11
yet concealed: *and after this*, as he perfectly knew what had passed at Bethany, though so many miles distant from it, *he says to them, Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I am going* to him, *that I may awaken him;* thereby referring to his death, and to that raising him from it which he intended quickly to effect.

His disciples therefore, not apprehending his meaning, immediately *said, Lord, if he* 12
sleeps naturally and quietly, as thou seemest to intimate, *he will* probably *recover;* and there is the less reason for thy running the hazard of going thither to heal him.

But Jesus spake this *concerning his death*, which for many apparent reasons he chose 13
to represent under this gentle image;[d] *but they thought that he had spoken of* his *taking rest* as a living man does *in* a common *sleep*.

Then Jesus therefore, that he might not hold them any longer in suspense, or leave 14
them under a mistake, *said to them plainly, Lazarus is* indeed *dead. And*, as I could 15
not have permitted this to have happened in my presence, *I am glad on your account that I was not there; that you may* more confidently *believe* in me, and may find your faith confirmed by a farther remarkable display of my divine power, in some respects exceeding any thing you have yet seen: *but let us* now *go* directly *to him* at Bethany.

Then Thomas, who was also *called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples* and 16
brethren in the apostolic office, Since our dear Master will expose himself to so much danger among his inhuman enemies in Judea, *let us also go*, though it be only *that we may die with him;* for whatsoever he may suffer, it is infinitely better we should take our portion with him, even in death, than that we should desert such a friend in an article of the extremest danger.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy was this family of Lazarus in which Christ was so frequent a guest! how happy Lazarus and his Ver. 5
sisters, who were so peculiarly beloved by him! Yet sickness and death invaded that family; and this excellent 1, 3, 14
man, as it should seem, in flourishing circumstances, (ver. 19.) and perhaps too in early youth, was snatched away on a sudden, by what appeared a very untimely stroke. The friends of Christ must be sick and die as well as others; and *no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them* under the sun: (Eccles. ix. 1.) Let us therefore *judge nothing before the time:* (1 Cor. iv. 5.) This sickness and death of Lazarus was for the glory of God: and may all our personal and domestic sufferings be so! "To this, O Lord, may our life be con- 4
"secrated, and to this may our death be subservient! We shall not then feel our dying pangs in half their bitter-
"ness, when our hearts are inflamed with a zeal for thy glory, and when we see that even those pangs are pro-
"moting it."

Our Lord delayed his coming to this dear friend in his extremity; and perhaps it occasioned not only many an 6
anxious, but many a suspicious thought, both to Lazarus and his sisters; yet the intent of this delay was both gracious and important. Let us not limit our divine Master as to the time or manner of his appearance for us; let us not censure him if it be for a while put off. It is to exercise our faith and patience, and to make the mercy more signal and more welcome.

At length a resolution is formed to go into Judea, though but a little while ago the Jews had assaulted him, 7, 8, 15
even in a sacred place, with burning malice in their hearts, and the instruments of death in their hands. But when Providence called, none of these things could move our blessed Redeemer, *neither counted* he *his life dear unto him, that he might finish his course with joy.* (Acts xx. 24.) May we shew the like intrepidity of soul in his service! walking in the day, that we may not stumble, and taking all proper opportunities of performing the du- 9, 10
ties of life while the season of it lasts; and then, when the night of death comes, it will close our eyes in peaceful slumbers. The repose of the breathless corpse, insensible of alarms, and sorrows, and cares, will be a lovely emblem 11
of the sweeter repose of the soul in the arms of divine love, till ere long Christ shall come to awaken us out of our sleep, by that general resurrection of which this of Lazarus was a figure and pledge.

Let these glorious thoughts and expectations animate us to all the returns of affection, duty, and zeal. Let them teach us the temper of Thomas, when he said, *Let us go and die with him.* "Blessed Jesus! how much better "is it to die with and for thee, who art the resurrection and the life, than to prolong these wretched days of ab-
"sence, meanness, and affliction, by forsaking thee when thou art leading us into danger!"

d For many apparent reasons he chose to represent under this gentle image.] Our Lord might chuse the expression of Lazarus sleeping, partly out of tenderness, as being least shocking, when he spoke of so dear a friend, as Homer, when he represents Antilochus as reporting the death of Patroclus to Achilles, used the word κεῖται, *he is fallen*, rather than *he is slain:* (*Iliad. lib.* xviii. ver. 20.) and it may also farther be considered as an instance of our Lord's modesty: he does not immediately say, "*He is dead*, and I go by my almighty "power to burst the bonds of the sepulchre, and to command him "back to life again:" but, avoiding all parade and ostentation, he chuses the simplest and humblest expression that can be thought of. This fine remark (which Mr. Blackwall makes in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 297.) is admirably illustrated, in a great variety of particulars in the present story, by the ingenious Dr. Lardner, in his *Vindication* of it. He has treated the subject with a candour and rectitude of heart, equal to the accuracy of his critical skill, and even equal to that malignity and baseness of soul with which Woolston attacked it.

SECTION CXL.

Our Lord raises Lazarus from the dead, after he had been buried four days. John xi. 17—46.

JOHN xi. 17.

SECT. 140. JOHN XI.

17 'THEN *Jesus*, according to the resolution he had declared to his disciples, (ver. 7, 15.) departed from the country beyond Jordan, where he had continued for some time, and went towards Bethany; and *when he came* near the village, he *found that* his friend Lazarus was dead, and that *he had been now four days in the tomb.*

18 *Now Bethany*, the place where Lazarus had lived, *was* very *near to Jerusalem*, being but *about fifteen furlongs off*, (or somewhat less than two miles,) so that he was well

19 known in the city, and had many friends there. *And many of the Jews* who dwelt there,[a] when the funeral was over, *came to Martha and Mary*,[b] *that they might comfort them concerning* the loss of *their* beloved *brother*.[c]

20 And Jesus was no sooner come into the neighbourhood, but presently the news of his approach was brought to the afflicted family that had so long been impatiently desirous to see him. *Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming*, immediately *went out to meet him: but Mary*, who was mourning with her friends in private, was not as yet informed of his approach, and [*still*] *sat weeping in the house*.[d]

21 *Then Martha*, being told where she might meet with him, and having hastened to the place, *said unto Jesus, Lord*, we have been much surprised at thy delay, and cannot but be exceedingly troubled at it, that thou didst not immediately take notice of the message that we sent thee; for, surely *if thou hadst been here, my* dear *brother had not died*, but would have been given back to thy prayers, which in so many instances have been

22 successful even for the recovery of strangers. *But even now I know, that whatsoever thou shalt* think fit to *ask of God*, it shall assuredly be granted; and I am satisfied that *God will give* [*it*] *thee*, however great the favour be, if there be any method to repair the grievous loss we have sustained.

23 *Jesus*, beholding her distress with a compassionate concern, *says to her*, Martha, do not abandon thyself to overwhelming grief; for I assure thee that *thy* beloved *brother shall rise again* from the dead.

24 Then *Martha*, conceiving some secret and trembling hope from these words, yet desiring some farther confirmation of it, *says to him*, Lord, *I* well *know*, and stedfastly believe, *that he shall rise again in the* general *resurrection at the last day*; (compare chap. v. 29; and Luke xiv. 14;) but the distance of that leaves me still under a load of sorrow.

25 *Jesus* then *said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life*; (compare chap. v. 21; and Deut. xxx. 20;) by me the general resurrection shall be accomplished, and by me a most glorious and happy life shall be given to all my people, and be maintained even to eternal ages: *he* therefore *that believes in me, though he be dead*, yet he *shall* ere long *live* again, and his reanimated body shall be again united to that soul which in its separate state continues its dependence on my power and faithfulness; and even at present I can loose the bonds of death, and though thy brother now is holden by it, I can recall him,

26 when I please, to life: *And every one that is* now *living, and believes in me, shall never die*:[e] death shall be so disarmed and transformed, that it shall hardly deserve the name; the better part of him being immediately conveyed to immortal life and glory, and the body only sleeping a while in the dust, till I come to awaken it to everlasting vigour and joy. *Dost thou*, Martha, *believe this* to be true?

27 And *she says to him, Yes, Lord, I* firmly *believe* every thing thou sayest; for I am fully persuaded *that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world*, and has been so long promised, expected, and desired; and that all power therefore must belong to thee.

28 *And* Martha *having said these* [*words*,] and testified her faith, Jesus inquired for her

JOHN xi. 17.

17 THEN when Jesus came, he found that he had lien in the grave four days already.

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.)

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so

a *Many of the Jews*, &c.] It might be one reason why Jesus delayed his coming till the fourth day, that he might meet a great number of them, as, for wise purposes, he determined to make this miracle very public.

b *Came to Martha and Mary.*] The original has προς τας περι Μαρθαν και Μαριαν; but the learned Revius, in his *Notes on Valla* on this text, has produced incontestable authorities to vindicate our version here, and to show that there is no need to render or paraphrase it, as Beza and Wolfius would do, "That the men came "to join with those female friends who had before attended the "mourning sisters, and were now with them." The word Ιουδαιων, *Jews*, to be sure, includes persons of both sexes.—See also Raphel. *Not. ex Xenoph.* p. 137.

c *That they might comfort them, &c.*] Many ceremonies used by the ancient Jews in mourning for the dead, and in comforting the mourners, are collected by Dr. Lightfoot; (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on this place:) but the mention of them here would be tedious, rather than edifying.

d *Sat weeping in the house.*] She probably sat on the ground, which was the posture of mourners. Compare Job ii. 8; Ezek. viii. 14; and Matt. xxvii. 61.

e *That is living, and believes in me, shall never die.*] The sense that I have given in the paraphrase appears to me the most consistent sense that can be made of these remarkable words, and the equivalent passages: John v. 24; and viii. 51. And a very sublime and important sense it is, perfectly agreeable to the height of sentiment and language with which Christ is said elsewhere to have *abolished death*, and to have *destroyed the devil.* (2 Tim. i. 10; and Heb. ii. 14.) and with which Christians are said to be *come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, &c.* (Heb. xii. 22, 23.) and to *be raised up with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* (Eph. ii. 6.) See Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* ii. *cap.* 7. § 9—18.—To render the words before us, as Mr. Massey would do, (*Vernac. Sacra*, p. 8.) "*Whoever, while he lives,* "*believes on me, shall not die for ever*, or eternally," is both obscuring and enervating their sense, and (as I have shown elsewhere, note l, on John iv. 14. p. 58. and notes b, c, on John viii. 51, 52. p. 212.) is grounded on a criticism which cannot agree with the use of the phrase in question in parallel passages. Compare Matt. xxi. 19. § 149.—The opposition between this and the preceding verse, plainly shews that the former refers to the spirits of those who were dead, who are yet spoken of as believing in Christ; and is, I think, no contemptible proof of their remaining in a state of activity: but the doctrine is so very plain in scripture, as not to need the aid of such consequential arguments.

said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled;

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound

sister; and presently *she went away and called her sister Mary* as *privately* as she could, whispering in her ear, and *saying, The Master is hard by, and calleth for thee.* And *as soon as she heard* [*it*,] *she immediately arose, and*, having left the company that were about her, *came* forward with the utmost eagerness *to* meet *him. Now Jesus was not yet entered into the village, but* still *continued in the place where Martha met him*, waiting there for Mary's coming. SECT. 140. JOHN XI. 30

The Jews then who were with her in the house attempting *to comfort her* under her sorrow, *seeing that Mary arose up hastily and went out* of doors, *followed her, saying, Surely she is going to the sepulchre* of her brother, *that she may weep there*,[f] which will only aggravate and renew her sorrow; let us therefore endeavour to dissuade her from it. And thus, by their going after her, they were naturally led to be eye-witnesses of all that followed. 31

Then Mary, when she came to the place *where Jesus was, and saw him*, was so far from being afraid to avow her regards to him, (compare John ix. 22. sect. cxxx.) that she *fell down at his feet* and embraced them; with the greatest respect *saying to him*, as her sister had done before, *Lord, if thou hadst been here* sooner, surely *my* dear *brother had not died.* And she was so overcome with grief, that she could utter no more. 32

Jesus therefore, when he saw her thus *weeping, and the Jews* also *weeping that came with her, groaned* with a deep concern, as feeling a strong commotion *in* his own *spirit; and* judging it proper in this instance to indulge it, (though he always had every passion under the most entire command,) he voluntarily *afflicted himself* by opening his mind to a set of melting and painful ideas. *And* looking with a tender pity on the mourning relations of his deceased friend, *he said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord*, we desire thou wouldst *come and see;* wishing to bring him to the sepulchre, in some uncertain hope of what was afterwards done. 33 34

And as they were going along, *Jesus* himself *wept*, at the remembrance of the dead, in sympathy with the living, and in compassion to the obstinate Jews, whose final impenitence he foresaw, and knew how much the guilt of it would be aggravated in consequence of their being spectators of such a miracle. 35

The Jews therefore, seeing him in tears, *said, Behold, how he loved him*, and how his heart overflows with sorrow for his death! *But some of them*, who had a secret aversion to him, *said, Could not this man, who* is said to have *opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man also should not have died?* Could he not have come to cure him, or, as it is reported in some other instances, have effected it even at a distance? 36 37

Jesus therefore, understanding this invidious insinuation, and *groaning again within himself*, as in great anguish of heart, *comes to the sepulchre.* Now *it was a cave, and a* large *stone was laid upon* the mouth of *it. Jesus says* to them that stood by, *Remove the stone* which stops up the entrance:[g] but *Martha, the sister of the deceased, says to him, Lord*, he has been dead so long, that *he now smells* in an offensive manner;[h] *for he has been* [*here*] no less than part of *four days*, this being the fourth since his interment. (Compare ver. 17.) *Jesus says to her*, Why dost thou object against what I direct? *Did I not say unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God* remarkably displayed in a work of signal power and mercy? *Then they took away the stone from* the mouth of the tomb *where the deceased lay.* 38 39 40

And when it was removed, *Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast* graciously *heard me* in those secret groanings of soul which I have been pouring forth in thy presence: *And* indeed *I knew that thou always hearest me*, and art most ready to answer all my petitions; *but I* now *speak* [*thus*,] *because of the multitude that is standing by, that they*, comparing what they hear with what they are now to behold, *may* have increasing and more effectual engagements to *believe that thou hast sent me.* 41 42

And having said these words, he cried with a loud voice, suitable to the majestic part which he was now acting, and the dominion he had even in the empire of death itself, as well as that he might be heard by all the multitude that were present, *Lazarus, come forth. And* such an almighty energy went along with his word, that immediately, according to his command, *he that was dead came forth, bound* (as the dead usually were) *about* [*his*] *feet and hands with grave-clothes*, or with several rolls and foldings of linen that were wrapt about him, but which were so far loosened by the power of Christ as to permit him to move; *and his face was* also *bound about with a napkin.*[i] And *Jesus*, 43 44

[f] *She is going to the sepulchre, that she may weep there.*] How customary this was among the ancients, is particularly observed by Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 330.

[g] *Jesus says, Remove the stone*, &c.] Our Lord (as Bishop Hall justly observes) could with infinite ease have commanded the stone to roll away of itself, without employing any to remove it; but he judiciously avoided all unnecessary pomp and parade, and mingled all the majesty of this astonishing miracle with the most amiable modesty and simplicity.—There is no reason to imagine, as some do, that the stone lay on the top of the cave, and that the corpse was let down with cords; for then Lazarus could not, without a farther miracle, have ascended of himself. It is much more reasonable to believe the entrance was at the side of the sepulchre. Mr. Maundrell tells us (in his *Journey to Jerusalem*, p. 79.) that the ruins of Lazarus's house are still shown, and not far from thence his sepulchre, into which there is a descent of twenty-five steep stairs, which lead into two small rooms, in the farther of which the body is said to have been laid. But one cannot much depend on the genuineness of such antiquities. See *Sands's Travels*, p. 196.

[h] He has been dead so long, that *he now smells*, &c.] The word ὀζει has the same ambiguity with this which I have used, and seems rather more decent than that in our translation, though the meaning is plainly the same.—Martha's mind seems to have been in a painful struggle, tossed with a variety of passions, which prevented a perfect consistency in her behaviour.

[i] *His face was bound about with a napkin.*] If the Jews buried as the Egyptians did, the face was not covered with it, but it only went round the forehead and under the chin, so that on his returning to life, he might easily see his way out of the sepulchre.

SECT. 140. JOHN XI. on his coming forth in this confined posture, *says to them* that stood by, *Unbind him, and let him go:* for nothing more was needful to be done in a miraculous way, and he had strength enough to walk, his health and vigour being perfectly recovered with his life.

about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Thus was this illustrious miracle completely and publicly accomplished: and such was 45 the effect of it, that *many of the Jews therefore, who had come to* visit *Mary, and beheld what Jesus* did, were so affected with this marvellous instance of his power, that they 46 *believed on him* as the Messiah. *But some of them* were so obstinate and perverse, that they *went away to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done,*[k] on purpose that they might inflame them, and stir them up to take some method to prevent his growing influence among the people.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 25 LET us, by faith, continually regard Jesus (as his discourses and actions concur to represent him) as *the resurrection and the life:* believing on this glorious specimen here given of it, that he can and will finally cause *all that are in the graves* to *hear his voice, and* to *come forth;* (John v. 28, 29.) A most delightful thought, which we should often apply both to ourselves and to our pious friends! Let the consideration, that they are to arise in the 24 resurrection at the last day, moderate our sorrows for their removal, and forbid *our mourning as others that have no hope:* (1 Thess. iv. 13.) Were a resurrection on earth expected, though at the distance of several years, we should consider them only as persons absent on a long journey, and expect their return with patience and cheerfulness: but oh, how much more certain is the resurrection of the just than the issue of any of our journies or expectations in life!

31 We often go, in our thoughts at least, to the grave to weep; but let us not forget to raise our contemplations 35 higher, even to Jesus, who here expressed such tender sentiments of compassion, and wept when he saw the tears of others, though he knew he was going to wipe them away by restoring that friend whom they lamented.—He 33 afflicted himself, and it may be proper for us sometimes to do it, and to hold down our thoughts to those views of things which may give us pain and regret; if that attention be so adjusted and attempered as only to produce *a sadness of the countenance* that may *improve the heart.* (Eccles. vii. 3.)

39 Let the modesty with which our Lord conducted this grand and solemn scene, teach us to avoid all mean 41, 42 transports of self-applause, and all fondness for ostentation and parade. Like Jesus, let us in all our ways acknowledge God, and maintain a continual dependence on his influence, to be sought by fervent prayer; and then we may go forth to every duty with a courageous and cheerful assurance that he will carry us honourably and com- 40 fortably through it. Let us but stedfastly believe, and we shall see the glory of God: he will manifest his power for our help; and when our case appears to be remediless, then is the time for his almighty hand to save.

43, 44 Let us adore and trust in Him who was armed with so divine a power as to be able to rescue the prisoners of death, 26 and to recover the trophies of the all-conquering and devouring grave. And if we are true believers, let us learn to 39 take our part in the triumph, with a joyful assurance, that though we putrefy in the dust, and *after the skin worms devour our bodies, yet in our flesh we shall* at length *see God.* (Job xix. 26.)

It was surely a happy time that succeeded all the lamentations of these affectionate mourners. With what mutual congratulations and unutterable endearments did Lazarus and his sisters behold each other! With what humble gratitude and adoration did they all prostrate themselves at the feet of their Almighty Saviour! But who can conceive the greater transports which shall run through the whole redeemed world at the resurrection-day, when piety and friendship shall be perfected, and those who were dearest to each other, both in the bonds of nature and of grace, shall spring up together to an immortal undivided life! In the mean time, let us trust our friends with him, (with whom, if we are Christians indeed, we have trusted our souls,) believing that the separations he appoints are prudent and kind, and that even our prayers for their recovery are denied in mercy.

SECTION CXLI.

The sanhedrim being informed of the resurrection of Lazarus, by the advice of Caiaphas, agree that Jesus should be put to death. He retires to Ephraim, and they issue an order for apprehending him. John xi. 47, *to the end.*

JOHN xi. 47.

SECT. 141. JOHN XI. IT was before observed, (at the close of the last section,) that some who had been present at the resurrection of Lazarus, instead of being duly wrought upon by the miracle, went away and made an invidious report of it to the Pharisees: *the chief priest therefore and the Pharisees,* who were united in their enmity to Christ, being exceedingly alarmed at so astonishing an information, *convened the sanhedrim,* which was the great council of the 47 Jewish nation, *and said, What are we doing* in this strange conjuncture of affairs? and why do we seem to be dreaming, when things are come to such a crisis? It is of absolute necessity that some effectual method should immediately be taken; *for* it is not to be denied that, by some means or other, *this man,* whom we have been so solicitous to suppress, *does* 48 *many* of the most surprising *miracles* that were ever seen or heard of: And *if we suffer him* [*to go on*] *thus* uncontrolled, *all* the populace *will believe on him* as the promised Messiah, and will acknowledge him as the King of Israel; *and* what can we expect will be the consequence of this, but that the power of *the Romans,* so vastly superior to ours, will be armed against us, and their legions *will come and take away both our place and nation?*

JOHN xi. 47.

THEN gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

k *Went away to the Pharisees, &c.*] We have in this a most amazing instance of incorrigible hardness of heart, and a dreadful confirmation of our Lord's remark, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Luke xvi. 31. ¶ CXXV.

they will destroy Jerusalem, and this sacred temple where we are now assembled, and will extirpate all the people who are committed to our guardianship and care.

49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all;

And, while some of the council seemed apprehensive of the danger of attempting any thing against Jesus, *one of them*, [*even*] *Caiaphas*, *who*, among the many sudden revolutions which happened in the government about that time, *was high-priest that year* in which Christ was crucified,[a] *said to them*, while they were thus deliberating, *You* seem to *know nothing at all* of what the present urgency of affairs requires, or you would easily

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

find out a remedy in the death of this Jesus, who occasions such an alarm: *Nor* is this to be scrupled because he does not appear to have committed any crime which is made capital by our law; for *do you* not *consider* that the extreme danger of a state will justify such extraordinary steps as are necessary for its preservation; and *that it is* undoubtedly much *better for us that one* innocent man *should die for the* security of the *people*, *than that the whole nation* he belongs to *should perish* by our scrupling to take away his life?

51 And this he spake not of himself: but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:

Now this, by the way, was a very remarkable saying; and it is to be observed that *he spake* it *not* merely *of himself*, *but being high-priest that year*, and so a person of the greatest dignity and authority, he was moved by a secret impulse from God to utter these words, which might be esteemed as an oracle, and were capable of a much higher sense than he apprehended; and by them *he* in effect *prophesied*[b] *that Jesus should shortly die for the* security, redemption, and happiness of the Jewish *nation: And* indeed *not for the* Jewish *nation alone*, *but* for all the nations of the earth, even *that he also might gather together into one* glorious and happy society all *the* chosen *children of God that are dispersed abroad* in the most distant places and ages, among the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took council together for to put him to death.

From that very *day*, *therefore*, the members of the sanhedrim in general, (though some particular persons were averse to their proceedings,) having thus resolved upon the death of Jesus, sought for an opportunity to execute the malicious purpose *they* had formed, and *united their councils that they might* find out some convenient method to *slay him*.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

For this reason Jesus, who knew the secret resolution they had formed to take away his life, *walked no more openly among the Jews* in those parts till the appointed hour for his suffering was come; *but*, instead of visiting Jerusalem, he *went away from thence*, even from Bethany, where he now was, *into the country near the wilderness* of Judea, *to a* little *city called Ephraim*,[c] which lay not far from Bethel, on the confines of the tribe of Benjamin; *and there he continued* a while *with* a few of *his* select *disciples*, and afterwards took a little journey eastward towards the banks of the river Jordan,[d] from whence he had lately come to Bethany on account of Lazarus's death.

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

And soon after this, *the Jewish passover drew near; and many went up from* all parts of *the country to Jerusalem*, some little time *before the passover*, *that they might purify themselves* by some preparatory sacrifices,[e] in order to be ready for the celebration of that solemn festival. (Compare 2 Chron. xxx. 17.)

56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

Then, as the people came together, *they* diligently *sought for Jesus* there, some of them being desirous to see and hear him, and others wanting to discover him to his avowed enemies the Pharisees: and as it could not but be generally known that the surprising miracle which he had lately wrought had very much inflamed the rage and envy of his persecutors, they were suspicious whether he would venture to appear in public, *and said one to another*, *as they stood in the temple*, *What think ye* of his coming to the passover? Do you suppose *that*, after this alarm, *he will not* have the courage to *come to the feast? But both the chief priests and the Pharisees*, concluding that he would not fail to come according to his usual custom, no longer dissembled their malice, but published a mandate, by which they *had given* an express *command*, *that if any one knew where he was*, *he should* immediately *declare* [*it*] to them, *that they might apprehend* and bring *him* to his trial, as a disturber of the public peace, and a person dangerous to the state.

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should show *it*, that they might take him.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHERE shall we find such restless, such causeless, such incorrigible malice, as was in the hearts of these rulers against our blessed Saviour? What but divine grace can reclaim men, when to have heard of the resurrection of Lazarus from their own friends and confidents, who had just been eye-witnesses of it, instead of conquering their hearts, served only to inflame their murderous rage! Ver. 47

This is an instance where we evidently *see the place of judgment*, *that wickedness was there; and the place* 48—50

a *Was high-priest that year.*] It is well known that the high-priesthood among the Jews was not annual; but the many revolutions about that time might justify such a manner of speaking, which signifies no more than *in those days*, or *at that time*. (Compare Deut. xxvi. 3; Josh xx. 6; Ezek. xxxviii. 8; and Mal. iii. 4.) See Dr. Lardner's *Credibility*, Part i. Vol. II. p. 878, 879.

b *Being the high-priest that year, he prophesied.*] The Jewish high-priests had in former ages been often under the inspiration of a prophetic spirit: there was therefore some peculiar congruity in putting this oracle into his mouth, and the dignity of his office would add some peculiar weight and regard to what he said. It is a strange fancy of Dr. Lightfoot, that Caiaphas knew Jesus to be the Messiah, and that the sanhedrim founded their apprehension of danger from the Romans, in consequence of the regard shown to him, on a ridiculous interpretation of Isa. x. *ult.* and xi. 1. whence they inferred that the destruction of the temple should quickly succeed the coming of the Messiah. See his *Hor. Hebr.* on John xi. 48, 51.

c *To a city called Ephraim.*] This city (which is mentioned with Bethel, 2 Chron. xiii. 19.) is by some called Ephrem, and is generally supposed to have lain in the north-east part of the lot of Benjamin. See Reland's *Palestine*, p. 376. and compare note a, on Luke xiii. 23. p. 234.

d Took a little journey eastward, &c.] This we have reason to suppose, or Jericho would not have lain in his way to Jerusalem, which yet we find that Jesus passed through in his return. See Luke xix. 1. § 143.

e *That they might purify themselves* by some preparatory sacrifices.] Dr. Lightfoot (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on this place) has shown, that as a variety of circumstances might happen to multitudes which would require purification, so some sort of cleansing required no less than seven days.

SECT. 141. JOHN XI.

of righteousness, that iniquity was there. (Eccles. iii. 16.) The high-priest lays down a most dangerous, though plausible maxim, which is in effect no other than this, "That the murder of an innocent person by forms "of law," (which, as a noble sufferer observed, is surely the worst kind of murder,) "nay, even of a person who "by miracles demonstrated that he was an ambassador from God, was to be chosen, rather than, by protecting "and obeying him, to give umbrage to an earthly power which seemed superior to their own." When will the politicians of this earth learn to trust God in his own ways, rather than to trust themselves, and their own wisdom, in violation of all the rules of truth, honour, and conscience? Till then, like this foolish ruler, they will be caught in their own craftiness; and it is more than possible, that they may, in many instances, hasten the very distress they are contriving to avoid. For this was here the event: the Romans (called therefore *the people of Messiah the Prince*, Dan. ix. 26.) were sent as executioners of the divine vengeance, and the Jews were given up to a spirit of discord and madness, the terrible effects of which were such as cannot be read without horror, till their place and nation were taken away; nor could even the Roman general forbear declaring that the hand of God was apparent in their destruction.

Ver. 51, 52

Let us attend to this divine oracle which God saw fit to put into the mouth of so wicked a man. Jesus has actually *died for the people, even for all the children of God that are scattered abroad.* His death is substituted instead of theirs, and by it they are redeemed and delivered, and shall ere long be incorporated together, and all the happy colony be raised to an abode of eternal glory. Blessed harvest, which springs up from redeeming blood!

56, 57

Heroic love of the dear Redeemer, which at the proper time brought him to Jerusalem, where he knew that evil was determined against him! Let us follow him, in a courageous adherence to God and our duty, in the midst of danger and opposition; and not wonder if we are set up as the marks of infamy and reproach, when we see Jesus marked out by a public mandate, as if he had been a robber or a murderer; and find so numerous and grand a court of judicature, requiring their subjects to seize this most generous Friend of the whole world, as the grand enemy of God and his country.

SECTION CXLII.

Christ, setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem, prophesies of his sufferings there; rebukes the ambition of James and John; and renews his exhortations to humility. Matt. xx. 17—28. Mark x. 32—46. Luke xviii. 31—34.

MARK X. 32.

SECT. 142. MARK X.

AT length our Lord departed from the place of his retreat, and though he knew the resolution that his enemies had formed against him, yet he set out with his disciples, and, (taking Jericho in his road,) was determined to make his appearance in the temple at the approaching passover: *and as,* in pursuance of this design, *they were in the way going up to*

32 *Jerusalem, Jesus,* to show his readiness to meet sufferings and death in such a cause, *went before them; and they were* exceedingly *amazed* at the spirit and ardour which he discovered in so dangerous an expedition; *and as they followed* him, *they were afraid,* both for themselves and him. *And* while their hearts were thus impressed, *he took the twelve disciples again apart to himself,* into a convenient retirement which they met with *by the way, and began* particularly *to tell them what things should befal him* in that important journey, that he might thus prepare them for the sufferings he should undergo, and that the accomplishment of his predictions might be some confirmation to their faith, during a series of events which he knew would so severely try it. *And he said to them,*

33 *Behold,* and observe what I say, *We are* now *going up to Jerusalem, and* it is the last journey of this kind we shall ever take; for now *all things which are written by the* ancient *prophets concerning* the sufferings of *the Son of man, shall be* exactly *fulfilled; and the Son of man shall be betrayed* by one of his own company, who has professed the greatest duty and affection to him, [*and*] shall be ungratefully *delivered to the chief priests and the scribes,*[a] particularly to those who constitute the sanhedrim, and who have already published so severe an edict against him; (John xi. 57. sect. cxli.) *and* when they have him thus in their power, *they shall,* with great formality, *condemn him to death* as a

34 public enemy and disturber. *And,* as they have not now the power of capital executions in their own hands, they *shall deliver him* up *to the Gentiles,* even to the Roman governor and his soldiers; *and they,* instigated by the malice of the Jews, and utterly ignorant of the dignity and glory of his person, *shall mock and spitefully entreat him* in the most contumelious and reproachful manner, *and* shall cruelly *scourge him, and* carry their rude outrage to such a height, that they shall even *spit upon him; and,* when this scene of mockery is over, they *shall put him to* a most ignominious and painful *death; and,* as if he was a common slave, shall even *crucify him,*[b] and leave him to expire in the gradual agonies of the cross: *and* yet all their malice shall not be able to triumph over him: for *on the third day he shall rise again* victorious over the powers of darkness, and take pos-

MARK X. 32.

AND they were in the way going up to Jerusalem: and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again [Luke, unto him] the twelve [disciples apart in the way,] and began to tell them what things should happen unto him; [and said unto them,] [Matt. xx. 17. Luke xviii. 31.]

33 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, [Luke, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished:] and the Son of man shall be [betrayed, *and*] delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes: and they shall condemn him to death; [Matt. xx. 18. Luke xviii. 31.]

34 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock [Luke, and spitefully entreat] him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him, [and crucify *him:*] and the third day he shall rise again. [Matt. xx. 19. Luke xviii. 32, 33.]

a *Shall be betrayed and delivered, &c.*] The word παραδοθήσεται is the same both in Matthew and Mark; but plainly includes both his being *treacherously discovered* by Judas, and *given up* into the hands of his enemies. I have therefore retained the different words by which our translators render it, in the one place and the other.

b *They shall—scourge him, and spit upon him,—and crucify him.*] This prediction is a remarkable proof of the prophetic spirit which dwelt in Christ; for, humanly speaking, it was much more probable that he should have been *privately assassinated,* or *stoned* (as was before attempted) by some zealous transport of popular fury, than that he should have been thus solemnly condemned, and delivered up to crucifixion; a Roman punishment, with which we do not find he had ever been threatened. Indeed, when the Jews condemned him for blasphemy, for which the punishment appointed in the law was stoning, and Pilate at last gave them a general permission to take him and judge him according to their own law, (Matt. xxvi. 65, 66; John xviii. 31; and xix. 7.) it is wonderful they did not chuse to stone him: but *all this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled.* (Compare Matt. xxvi. 56; and John xix. 36.)

session of that glorious and universal kingdom which the prophets assign to the Messiah. (Compare Matt. xvi. 21. sect. lxxxix. and Matt. xvii. 22. sect. xcii.) SECT. 142.

Luke xviii. 34. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

And, plain as this declaration was, their prejudices were so great, that *they did not understand any of these things* thoroughly, being at a loss to reconcile his being slain, with the possession of that kingdom which he was to inherit; *and this matter was hid from them* to *so* great a degree *that*, after all our Lord had said, *they knew not the meaning of the things which were spoken.* (Compare Luke ix. 44, 45. p. 188.) LUKE XVIII. 34

Matt. xx. 20. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, [James and John,] worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him, [saying, Master, we would that thou should do for us whatsoever we shall desire.] [Mark x. 35.]

Nevertheless they apprehended thus much, that whatever difficulties lay in the way, they should certainly end in his triumph and glory. And upon this presumption, *then, the mother of Zebedee's children came* at their instigation *to him, with her sons James and John*, who were peculiar favourites of our Lord; and they all three fell down at his feet, *worshipping* [*him*] in a most respectful manner, *and desiring a certain* [*favour*] *of him* with great importunity, weakly *saying, Master, we would* earnestly beg *that thou shouldst* give us a general promise to *do for us whatsoever we shall request* of thee; for it would be a very great grief to us if we should not succeed in the important petition we have to present. MATT. XX. 20

Mark x. 36. And he said [unto her, *and*] unto them, [What wilt thou? *or*] What would ye that I should do for you? [Matt. xx. 21.]

And he said to her [*and*] *to them*, You cannot expect that, whatsoever kindness I have for you, I should at all adventures enter myself into so rash an engagement; tell me therefore particularly, *What wouldst thou* have? [*or*] *What would you* so earnestly desire *that I should do for you*, if I was fully disposed to grant your request? MARK X. 36

37 [She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons,] *and* they said, Grant unto us, that we may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy [kingdom *and*] glory.—[Matt. xx. 21.]

She says unto him, I entreat thee to *grant that these my two* dear *sons*, to whom thou hast shown so much regard, and who are so zealous for thy cause and interest, may be preferred to stations of the highest dignity, trust, and profit; [*and*] *they* joined with her in the same request, and *said, Grant us, that* when thou art established *in thy glorious kingdom*, which, as we apprehend, will shortly be erected in the world, *we may* not only have a place there, but may be fixed near thy throne, and *sit* in distinguished honour and authority, *the one at thy right hand, and the other at thy left*, as thy chief ministers of state.[c] 37

Matt. xx. 22. But Jesus answered and said [unto them,] Ye know not what ye ask: Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? [And] they say unto him, We are able [Mark x. 38, 39.]

But Jesus said to them in reply, Alas! you are under the force of such carnal prejudices and mistaken views, that *you know not what you ask*, or you would be ashamed of so unseasonable a petition. This is not a time to think of temporal grandeur and authority; but it is much more proper that I should ask you, and that you should put the question to yourselves, *Are you able to drink of the* bitter *cup of which I am* now *about to drink* so deep,[d] *and to be baptized with the baptism*, and plunged into that sea of sufferings *with which I am* shortly [*to be*] *baptized*, and, as it were, overwhelmed for a time? *And they say to him*, with a self-confident assurance, Yes, Lord, we doubt not but that for thy sake *we are able* to undergo all this. MATT. XX. 22

23 And [Jesus] saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup [that I drink of,] and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. [Mark x. 39, 40.]

And Jesus says unto them, You shall indeed both of you *drink of* this *my cup, of which I* am to *drink, and be baptized with the baptism* of extreme sufferings *with which I am* to be *baptized*;[e] for you shall endure great extremities for the sake of my gospel, and hazard your lives in its defence: but as to what you have now desired, *to sit on my right hand, and on my left*, in my kingdom of glory, this *is not* a privilege which is *mine to give* by partial friendship, or to the first and most importunate asker, nor can I dispose of it to any *but* [*to those*] *for whom it is prepared by my Father*, who has appointed that the exaltation and happiness of the other world shall be proportioned to the degrees of piety and holiness which are attained in this. 23

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they [began to be much displeased, *and*] were moved with indignation against the two brethren [James and John.] [Mark x. 41.]

And when the ten other apostles *heard* [*of it*,] and were acquainted with this motion which the sons of Zebedee had made, *they began to be much displeased* that they should aspire to a superiority to which each of them imagined he had himself an equal claim; [*and*] as they *were moved with indignation against the two brethren James and John*, they were going to expostulate the matter with some severity. 24

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said [unto them,] Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles ex-

But, to prevent the evil consequences which might arise from such an ill-judged debate, and to root out that envy and ambition which prevailed among them, *Jesus called them* all *to him, and said unto them, You* well *know that the princes of the heathen* nations[f] 25

c *We may sit, the one at thy right hand, and the other at thy left.*] There may perhaps be an allusion in these words to a circumstance which the Talmudical writers relate concerning the sanhedrim: that there were two officers of peculiar distinction, who sat on each side of the Nasi, or president of the court; the one called Ab Beth Din, or *the father of the justiciary*, who sat on the right hand of the president; the other Chacham, or *the sage*, who sat on the left. See, among many other writers on this head, Whist. *Miscell. Sacr.* Vol. I. *lib.* ii. Dissert. 3. § 46, 47.

d *To drink of the cup, &c.*] It was customary among the ancients to assign to each guest at a feast a particular *cup*, as well as *dish*; and by the kind and quantity of the liquor contained in it, the respect of the entertainer was expressed. Hence *cup* came in general to signify a portion assigned, (Psal. xvi. 5; xxiii. 5.) whether of pleasure or sorrow; and many instances occur in which it refers to the latter. Compare Psal. xi. 6; lxxiii. 10; Isa. li. 17, 22; Jer. xxv. 15, 17; Zech. xii. 2; John xviii. 11; and Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

e *You shall indeed drink of my cup, &c.*] Accordingly it is observable, that this James was the first of all the apostles who suffered martyrdom for Christ: (Acts xii. 2.) And John was scourged by the Jews, (Acts v. 40.) and afterwards banished by Domitian into the isle of Patmos, where he speaks of himself as *a companion of Christ's tribulation*: (Rev. i. 9.) Not to mention Tertullian's tradition, that at Rome he was plunged into boiling oil; by which, it is said, instead of being destroyed, he was sensibly refreshed; (Tertull. *Præscript. cap.* 36.) nor what the pretended Prochorus says of the attempt made by some heretics to poison him; which is generally referred to in the pictures of this apostle, where the venom is ridiculously represented as coming out of the cup in the form of a serpent, to signify that the poison did not take effect.

f *The princes of the heathen* nations.] Mark expresses it by οι δοκουντες αρχειν των εθνων, which we render, *they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles*, but this (with Gataker, *Cinn. lib.* i. *cap.* 3.) I take to be a pleonasm, and think it should be translated, *They who rule over the Gentiles*; and so it coincides with the clause inserted from Matthew. (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 16; xii. 23; xiv. 37; and Phil. iii. 4. Gr.) Instances are produced of the like use of the phrase in the best Greek authors, by Mr. Blackwall, in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 74. to which may be added, τους δοκουντας αδικειν, for αδικουντας, *Polyb. lib.* i. *cap.* 5. and των εν υπεροχη δοκουντων, Epictet. *Enchirid. cap.* 30, § 11.

SECT. 142. MATT. XX.

lord it over them in a very imperious manner; *and their great men*, in stations of subordinate government, imitate their tyrannical masters, and *exercise* an arbitrary *authority upon them* that are more immediately subject to their command; and that ambition which is so natural to the depraved heart of man, engages them eagerly to pursue such distinguished stations, which may give them an opportunity to gratify it. *But* my king-
26 dom is of another nature, and *it shall not be so among you;* for, instead of appointing any one among you as the chief who should govern the rest,[g] I tell you plainly, that you are to look on each other as brethren and equals, or rather, each to esteem others as worthier of regard than himself; indulge not therefore an ambitious temper, *but whosoever would* indeed *be great among you, let him*, instead of aiming at power and authority, chuse to *be your minister*, and attend on the rest with all the humblest offices of
27 condescension and love. *And whosoever would be chief among you*, or first in my esteem, and in future honour and happiness, *let him be* ready to behave himself on all occasions as *your servant;* [*yea,*] let him be *the servant*, not only of your little fraternity, but *of all* that are about him;[h] with all humility submitting to the meanest services, by which he may promote the spiritual interest and benefit of others.

ercise dominion over them; and [their great ones] exercise authority upon them. [Mark x. 42.]

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. [Mark x. 43.]

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, [*yea*, the servant of all.] [Mark x. 44.]

MARK X.

And wonder not that this should be required of you, when you consider how great an example you have of this temper in him who is so far your superior; *for even the Son of man*
45 himself, though a person of such illustrious dignity, and constituted to so glorious and lasting a kingdom, *came not to be waited upon, but to serve* others; and was not sent into the world to exercise a temporal dominion, and in a lordly way to rule over men, but to take upon him the form of a servant, and not only to labour but to die for their good, *and to give his* own *life* as *a ransom for many* who had forfeited their's to the justice of an offended God. Think not, therefore, that the disciples of such a self-denying Master are to dream of secular power, dominion, and grandeur; but rather study to mortify these very unbecoming desires after it.

Mark x. 45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. [Matt. xx. 28.]

46 *And*, quickly after this, *they came to Jericho*, where two blind men were cured by Christ, which was soon after followed with the remarkable conversion of Zaccheus, as will be seen in the next section.

46 And they came to Jericho.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 33 34 ASTONISHING grace and compassion of the Son of God in going up to Jerusalem at this passover, when he so circumstantially knew all the things which were to befal him there! not only that he should be put to death, but in what manner he should suffer, and what cruelty and what scorn should introduce the last scene of his agonies! Yet, with so sad a prospect in his eye, he marched on with distinguished alacrity, leading the com-
32 pany, as if he longed to encounter what they could not bear to see, or even to hear of. Glorious Captain of our salvation! give us the like alacrity in all the sufferings we are called to bear for thee!

35—37 Who would not grieve to see these good apostles still so much possessed with the spirit of this world, and still dreaming of preferment in a temporal kingdom? Who would not especially lament it, that his most intimate friends, James, and John the beloved disciple, should be the persons who should come to him with this
38 strange request? Justly did our Lord answer them, *You know not what you ask.* And may not the same answer often be made to us? When, therefore, he denies us the great things that we are seeking for ourselves, let us be satisfied with the denial he sees fit to give us; believing that it is wisdom and love, and not unkindness, that produces it.

39 Let us often ask ourselves, Can we share the sufferings which our Lord endured? If we do not desire to do it so far as he shall appoint, we are not worthy to be called his disciples. Let us then *gird up the loins of our minds*, and wait our Master's signal to go forth to any suffering or service that he shall require; ever
44, 45 ready to make ourselves the servants of all, and therein to imitate the humility of the Son of man, who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister:* yet, after all we can do or bear for him, let our trust still be in the merits of his righteousness and blood, who gave his life a ransom for many. So shall we be fitted for those distinguished honours in the heavenly world, in comparison with which, thrones and sceptres on earth are but empty pageants and childish toys.

SECTION CXLIII.

Our Lord, passing through Jericho in his way to Jerusalem, cures two blind men as he came out from thence, and converts Zaccheus the publican. Matt. xx. 29, *to the end.* Mark x. 46, *to the end.* Luke xviii. 35, *to the end;* xix. 1—10.

SECT. 143.

MARK X. 46.

MARK X. 46. MATT. XX. 30.

AND Jesus, being come to Jericho, proceeded on his journey towards Jerusalem; and being observed by many as he was passing through the city, they were all ready to run after him: *and* accordingly, *as he went out of Jericho with his disciples* in his train, *a great multitude* of other people *followed him.*

And, behold, an occasion offered for a remarkable display of his power and grace at his

MARK X. 46

AND as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, [a great multitude followed him.] [Matt. xx. 29.]

Matt. xx. 30. And be-

g Instead of appointing any one among you as the chief, &c.] As the request of these two brethren plainly showed that they did not understand our Lord's words to Peter, (Matt. xvi. 18, 19. § 88.) as designed to invest him with any *authority* over the rest of his brethren, so the answer which Christ here gives them, far from intimating any thing of that kind, concludes as strongly against any such *authority* as a *negative argument* can be supposed to do, and seems abundantly to justify the turn given in the paraphrase.

h *The servant of all.*] There is a gradation here not commonly observed. The word διακονος in the former verse, which, for want of a better word, we render *minister*, is a name which might be given to any who occasionally attended others, or was statedly employed to render them any particular kind of service; but δουλος, *servant*, signifies one whose whole business it is to serve, and who is indeed the property of another. The words, *of all*, do likewise increase the gradation.

hold, [Luke, it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho,] two blind men, [*the one* Bartimeus the son of Timeus, sat by the high-way side, begging.] [Mark x. 46. Luke xviii. 35.]

Luke xviii. 36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

Mark x. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth [passed by,] he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me! [*yea, they both* cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!] [Matt. xx. 30. Luke xviii. 38.]

Matt. xx. 31. And the multitude [Luke, which went before,] rebuked them, [and many charged him that he should hold his peace;] but they cried the more [a great deal,] saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David! [Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!] [Mark x. 48. Luke xviii. 39.]

Mark x. 49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded [them] to be called, [Luke, *and* brought unto him:] and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee. [Matt. xx. 32. Luke xviii. 40.]

50 And he casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And [Luke, when he was come near,] Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight: [They say, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.] [Matt. xx. 32, 33. Luke xviii. 40, 41.]

Matt. xx. 34. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; [Luke, and said unto him, Receive thy sight,] [*and* go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.] [Mark x. 52. Luke xviii. 42.]

Luke xviii. 43. And immediately [their eyes received sight, and they] followed [Mark, Jesus in the way,] glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God. [Matt. xx. 34. Mark x. 52.]

Luke xix. 1. And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho.

departure thence; for *it came to pass, that* Providence so ordered it, *as he was* yet *nigh unto Jericho*,[a] that *two blind men sat begging by the way-side*, as beggars use to do in places that are much frequented; [*the one*] of whom was well known by the name of *Bartimeus*, that is, *the son of Timeus*:[b] *And hearing the* noise of a great *multitude passing by, he*, together with his companion, *asked what that* unusual concourse of people *meant*, and how it was occasioned. *And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth*, that celebrated Prophet, who had performed so many miracles, *was coming by*, and a vast number of the people of the town were with him. *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth*, as he had frequently been told what remarkable cures of this kind he had performed in other places, he could not but look upon it as a happy circumstance, that he was now *passing by* the very place where he sat; and immediately *he began to cry out* with a loud voice, *and* with great eagerness to *say, Jesus, thou Son of David*, thou great and glorious Messiah, pity my sad condition, and *have mercy on me*, [*yea, they both*] *cried out, saying*, in the same manner, and with one voice, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou* illustrious *Son of David*, and exert thy almighty power to deliver us from this deplorable darkness and distress!

SECT. 143. MATT. XX. 30. LUKE XVIII. 36, 37 MARK X. 47

And some of *the multitude who went before* Jesus, *rebuked them* for their making such a clamour; *and* as the voice of Bartimeus distinguished itself on this occasion, *many* particularly *charged him that he should be silent*, and not be so importunate and troublesome: *but they*, knowing that if such an opportunity as this was lost it might never return, regarded nothing but the success of their petition, and therefore *cried out a great deal the more* earnestly, *saying*, as before, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!* and Bartimeus especially repeated it again and again, saying, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me*, and help me!

MATT. XX. 31

And Jesus, as he was advancing forwards in his way, observed how earnestly they cried; and as they still repeated their request, he graciously *stood still, and ordered them* both *to be called* [*and*] *brought to him*, that they might tell him what it was they so earnestly desired. *And* upon this the people had their expectations raised, and as they now concluded that they should see him work a miracle, *they* ran immediately to *call the blind man* and his companion, *saying to him*, as also to the other, *Be of good courage* and *rise* up, for *he calleth thee* to him, and you may therefore hope that he intends to grant your request. *And* Bartimeus joyfully received the message, and, *throwing aside his* upper *garment*, that it might not hinder him a moment, *he arose, and came to Jesus* with all possible haste and eagerness; the other blind man also following as fast as he could. *And when he was come near, Jesus*, to try his faith, and to encourage his dependence on his power and goodness, *answered and said unto him*, What is the mercy you so earnestly entreat? or *what dost thou desire I should do for thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni*, that is, my Master and my Lord, the favour which I beg is obvious from the circumstance in which thou seest me, even *that I may* be so happy as to *recover my sight*,[c] the loss of which I cannot but lament as a great calamity to me, from which I know that thou art able to deliver me. The other likewise by this time came up, making the same request; and *they* both joined to *say, Lord*, we beseech thee *that our eyes might be opened.*

MARK X. 49 50 51

Then Jesus had compassion on them both, *and touched their eyes; and*, as a testimony of his approbation of that eminent degree of faith which they had each of them expressed, and Bartimeus in particular in the strongest terms, he *said to him* and his companion, Be it unto thee as thou hast desired; *receive thy sight*, [*and*] *go thy way; thy faith has saved thee* from the sad condition thou wast in; and if thou continuest to exercise it in a reliance upon me, thy eternal salvation and happiness will be secure.

MATT. XX. 34

And immediately their eyes were opened, and *received sight*, so that they now could see distinctly; *and*, with a grateful sense of their deliverance, *they* joined the company, and *followed Jesus in the way* to Jerusalem, *glorifying God* for this amazing instance of his goodness to them: *and all the people* likewise, *when they saw* [*it*,] *gave praise unto God*, who, in remembrance of his mercy, had sent them so great a Prophet, to appear and act among them under the character of the Son of David.

LUKE XVIII. 43

And presently the news of this surprising miracle was spread abroad; *and* [*Jesus*] *having entered* (as was said before) into the city, and having *passed through Jericho*, a vast number of people had followed him from thence; and this new instance he had given of his miraculous power, increased his fame through all the neighbourhood, and drew the multitude, as he passed along, in crowds about him.

LUKE XIX. 1

a *As he was* yet *nigh unto Jericho.*] In our translation it is rendered, *as he was come nigh unto Jericho:* but the *original*, εν τω εγγιζειν, only signifies *when*, or *while he was near it:* compare Luke xix. 29;—to which may be added [in confirmation of the justice of this remark, which has been called in question by a writer of great eminence in the learned world,] Luke x. 9; xv. 1; xviii. 40; Rom. xiii. 12; and the Septuagint version of Isa. l. 8; Jer. xxiii. 23.—And it is necessary to understand it thus, in order to reconcile Luke's account of this miracle with that of Matthew and Mark, who both expressly say, it was performed *as he departed* or *went out of Jericho.* Some have indeed fancied, that he restored sight to one blind man as he entered in, and to another as he came out, (see Lightfoot's *Harmony*, ℣ lxix.) but this is improbable, especially considering how the multitude rebuked Bartimeus for his importunity, which surely they would never have done if such a cure as this had but just now been wrought at the other end of the same town.

b *The son of Timeus.*] It is very probable Timeus might have been a person of some note in that neighbourhood, whose son, by a complication of calamities, fell both into poverty and blindness.

c *That I may recover my sight.*] This the word αναβλεψω exactly signifies, and seems to import that he was not *born blind*, but lost his sight by some disease or accident, which made him so much the more sensible of the calamity. Yet I acknowledge it appears from John ix. 11, 18. that the word is sometimes used in a greater latitude.

SECT. 143. LUKE XIX.

And as he thus proceeded on his journey, *behold*, another most remarkable occurrence happened, in which the efficacy of his grace was signally displayed; for [*there was*] *a man* in that country *whose name was Zaccheus, who was the chief among the publicans*, or head collector of the customs in those parts; *and*, having heaped up abundance of wealth by his gainful employment, *he was* very *rich*. *And* the great things which he had heard of Jesus made such a powerful impression on his mind, that when he was informed that he was coming by that way, *he* diligently *sought* an opportunity *to see* this celebrated *Jesus, what sort of a person he was; but he could not* compass his design *because of the crowd* about him; *for he* himself *was* very *little of stature*. *And running* therefore *before* the rest of the company, without regarding what they might think or say of him, *he got up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him* there distinctly; *for* he perceived *he was to pass that way*, and the tree stood so near the road that he must go close by it. *And Jesus, when he came to the place* where he was, *looked up and saw him; and* knowing his disposition, character, and circumstances, he immediately *said to him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I* design thee a visit, and *must abide* for a while *at thine house;* and fully satisfied that I shall be a welcome guest, I take the liberty to invite myself thither. *And* Zaccheus was so overjoyed that Jesus should distinguish him in such a manner, that *he came down with* all the *speed* he could, *and gladly entertained him* at his house, thinking himself highly honoured by the presence of so excellent a Person.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him; for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully.

And the Pharisees, and other self-conceited *persons who saw* [*it*,] were very much offended at the particular regard that Jesus showed him; and they *all murmured, saying, He is gone in to refresh himself at a man's* house[d] *who is* certainly *a* notorious *sinner*, since he follows the scandalous employment of a publican.

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

But as *Zaccheus* now was quite another man than he had been before, and divine grace had changed his heart, that he might fully obviate these reflections, and manifest the truth of his conversion, he *stood forth* in the face of all the company, *and said to the Lord* with great reverence and affection, *Behold, O Lord*, I acknowledge the sins of my past life, and desire to testify my repentance for them by an entire and immediate reformation; as the first-fruits of which, I openly declare that *the half of my goods I give to the poor; and* out of the remainder, *if I wrongfully have taken any thing from any man* by injurious charges or oppressive claims,[e] *I* am ready, not only to *restore* a fifth part more than the principal, (which is all that the law requires in such cases besides the trespass-offering, Lev. vi. 2—5; and Numb. v. 7, 8.) but even to return [*him*] *four-fold*.[f]

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* four-fold.

And Jesus said to Zaccheus, and to them that were about *him, Surely to-day is salvation come to this house;* and it is evidently to be seen that spiritual blessings are imparted to it, and designed for it, when such a penitent and religious temper is expressed: *since*, notwithstanding all the sins he has committed, it is now manifest that even *this man also is a* true *son of Abraham*, not only descended lineally from him,[g] but of a character in some measure worthy of so honourable a descent. And therefore, notwithstanding all your murmurings, I rejoice in the consequences of this happy visit to him, as answering the great purposes of my life; *for the Son of man*, as I have formerly declared, (Matt. xviii. 11. sect. xciv.) *is come to seek and to save that which was lost;* and it is the grand design of his abode on earth to recover those who, like this poor Zaccheus in his unconverted state, were wandering in the way to everlasting ruin.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house; forsomuch as he also is the son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

IMPROVEMENT.

Thus did our Lord Jesus Christ, wheresoever he came, scatter blessings around him, both to the souls and the bodies of men. Who can wonder that Zaccheus had a curiosity to see such a person! And how happily did that curiosity end! Christ graciously observed him, and, with an amiable frankness and openness of heart, invited himself to be a guest at his house: chusing to accept the entertainment of a publican, and to distinguish with a particular regard, one that was so desirous to see him. And let us diligently observe how happy a change this visit produced in the master of the family. O Zaccheus, well wast thou repaid for thine hospitality when salvation came to thine house, and the Saviour himself bore witness to thee as a son of Abraham!

Ver. 2 3 5 9

What cannot the grace of God effect? This publican was in the morning contriving only how he might

d *He is gone in to refresh himself, &c.*] The phrase κατακυσαι παρα τινι, properly signifies *to bait at a person's house on a journey*, referring to the laying down their own burdens, or loosening them from their beasts at such times and places. See Wolfius, Vol. I. p. 733.

e *If I wrongfully have taken any thing, &c.*] The word συκοφαντησα (as Heinsius has abundantly shown) may properly signify any kind of *oppression*, especially under the *pretence of law*. (Compare Eccles. iv. 1; and v. 8. *Septuag.*) It seems therefore not so proper to limit it, as our translation does, to an injury done by a false accusation, which implies something of a formal trial, and defence of the party accused; whereas many frauds and oppressions might be practised by such a tax-gatherer where nothing of this sort occurred.

f *I restore him four-fold.*] This was the utmost that the Jewish law required, even in cases of a fraudulent concealment and conviction, (unless where an ox had been killed or sold, and so its labour lost to the owner, and the discovery rendered more difficult; Exod. xxii. 1;) for the phrase of restoring seven-fold (Prov. vi. 31.) seems only proverbial, to express making abundant satisfaction. But if a man not legally convicted or accused voluntarily discovered a fraud he had committed, besides his trespass-offering, he was to add to the principal only a fifth part. Lev. vi. 5. Zaccheus therefore shows the sincerity of his repentance by such an offer.—Some commentators (with Salmasius, *de Fœn.* p. 242.) have remarked, that oppressive publicans were, by the Roman law, required to restore four-fold; but this was only after judgment obtained, where they had been guilty of extorting by force; whereas before conviction it was enough to make restitution of what had been taken; and even after it, in common cases, all that the law required was restoring *twice as much*. (*Leg. locatio Vectigal. § quod. illic.* and *L. hoc edicto effic. Digest. de Publicanis.*) Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that had more than an eighth part of Zaccheus's possessions been unjustly gotten, he could not have been able to make such restitution, after having given away half of what he now had to the poor, even though he had stripped himself of all. Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 86.

g Descended lineally from him.] The name of Zaccheus (which is the same with Zaccai, Ezra ii. 9.) shows he was a Jew. See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* and Salmasius, *de Fœn.* p. 386.

increase his estate by all possible methods of gain; and, before evening, he cries out, *Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.* Thus does the Spirit of Christ operate on the soul, producing in it the fruits of righteousness and charity to our fellow-creatures, as well as of love to God and faith in the Redeemer. And surely the miracle by which the walls of Jericho were many ages before thrown down by the sound of rams' horns, was not greater in its kind than that which now triumphed over the heart of Zaccheus, and threw down all the obstacles which corrupt nature had formed against the entrance of Christ into it. SECT. 143. LUKE XIX.

Now were his eyes opened, and he saw in a moment how much more valuable the pearl of price was than all the riches he could part with to procure it. And he judged rightly of religion when he saw the necessity not only of faith, but of charity too; and not only of charity, but of restitution also to those whom he had injured, without which the highest pretences to charity are but presenting to God robbery for a burnt-offering.

Our Lord's progress is marked with another work of divine power and beneficence in opening the eyes of the blind. With what importunity was the cure desired! And when the petitioner was for a while discouraged, with what eagerness was that importunity repeated, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!* Thus will the sinner cry to Jesus when he sees how much he needs him. But alas! men are not aware of their spiritual indigence and distress: they say they *are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* (Rev. iii. 17.) MARK X. 46. *et seq.* 48

When once they come to be awakened to a just sense of their case, there is then room for hope, and great encouragement for their address. We may in such circumstances say to them, as was said to Bartimeus, *Be of good courage, rise, he calleth thee.* With pleasure should we deliver such a message; with pleasure should we lead on the lame and the blind, the weak and the trembling, in their application to Christ; and in all the instances in which his victorious grace is exercised, should join with those who have received it, in glorifying God, and in celebrating the praise of this Deliverer whom he has mercifully raised up for his people. 49 50 LUKE XVIII. 43

SECTION CXLIV.

Christ delivers the parable of ten pounds committed by a prince to his servants, and represents the vengeance taken by him on his rebellious subjects. Luke xix. 11—28.

LUKE xix. 11.

AND as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

LUKE xix. 11.

NOW Jesus, on occasion of Zaccheus's conversion, having expressly said that he was come to be a Saviour, the people, *as they heard these things*, were ready to conclude that at his coming to Jerusalem he would openly declare himself to be the promised Messiah; but *he continued* [*his discourse,*] *and spake a* ~~very useful and instructive~~ *parable, because he was* now drawing *near to Jerusalem,*[a] *and* he perceived *they thought that the whole kingdom of God would immediately be revealed* among them, and that he, as the Messiah, would assume the government, and not only free Israel from the Roman yoke, but spread his triumphs over all the heathen nations. In order *therefore* to rectify their notions on this head, and to warn them of the danger they would incur by rejecting him when they saw those secular views disappointed, *he* offered to their consideration this similitude; and *said,* SECT. 144. LUKE XIX. 11 12

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

A certain person of a noble birth went to a distant country, in order *to receive,* from a superior prince there, an investiture to *a kingdom* which was then fallen *to himself, and* of which the place where he dwelt made a part,[b] intending afterwards *to return,* and fix his residence in his own country. *And* before he set out on his journey, *having called ten of his servants, he delivered to them ten pounds,*[c] lodging one pound in the hands of each, *and said unto them, Trade* with this money *till I come* back to take an account of your improvement. (Compare Matt. xxv. 14. *et seq.* sect. clxv.)

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds; and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

But in the mean time, some of *his citizens,* among whom he had before lived in a more private character and station, *hated him, and sent an embassy after him,*[d] to prevent his establishment in his kingdom; expressly *saying, We* are at all adventures determined that we *will not have this man to reign over us,* and will endure all extremities rather than submit to his authority. And during his absence, which continued for some time, they thought themselves very secure in their insults. 13 14

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called

But, notwithstanding all the confidence of these rebellious citizens, they were unable to prevent his exaltation to the throne, or to deprive him of the right he had of reigning over them. *And it came to pass, that when he had received the kingdom, and was come back* with the full powers that were granted to him, *he commanded these* his *servants to* 15

a *Because he was near to Jerusalem.*] The following parable, considered in this view, as suited to the circumstance of time, and to the case of those to whom it was delivered, will appear a most wise and seasonable admonition; and by neglecting the instruction it was designed to give them, the Jews deservedly brought ruin on themselves.

b *Went to a distant country to receive a kingdom,* &c.] The parable seems to suppose this noble person to be the son of a prince, who, on some domestic or public revolution, was to enter upon the possession of his dominions, and to be confirmed in the government of them by the approbation of some more potent state; as the kings of Judea, and other neighbouring states, frequently were by the Romans: (see Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 14. [al. 26.] § 4, 5. *et lib.* xvii. *cap.* 9. [al. 11.]) He is therefore described as setting out with the view of being owned, at his return, as their undoubted sovereign. (See Le Clerc's *Harmony*, p. 397.) This representation of the matter is so natural, that one would wonder what room there could be for the controversy between Mallemansius and Athanasius de Paris about it. It is quite needless to pretend that this is an historical narration, that Archelaus is the nobleman referred to, &c.

c *He delivered to them ten pounds.*] The μνᾶς, or *mina*, as it is commonly called, contained sixty shekels; (Ezek. xlv. 12) and therefore, according to the common calculation of the worth of a shekel, placing it at half-a-crown of our money, it was seven pounds ten shillings; but according to Dr. Prideaux, who sets the shekel at three shillings, the mina was nine pounds sterling. Our Lord probably chose to mention this small sum to illustrate the munificence of the master in bestowing on the faithful servant so great and noble a reward. Compare ver. 17.

d *Sent an embassy after him.*] This is expressed in such a manner as may intimate their sending ambassadors to the superior court, to enter their protest against his being admitted to the regal power, and to declare their resolution to oppose his accession. And so it well represents the solemn manner in which the Jews renounced Christ, acting as in the name of the Lord, and with a pretended zeal for his authority and glory.

SECT. 144. *whom he had delivered the money, to be called to him, that he might know what improvement each* of them *had made.*

LUKE XIX. 17 *And the first* servant, who had gained the most, *came near, and said, Sir,* the improvement I have made of *thy pound* is such that it *has gained ten pounds* more. *And* when his lord had heard how diligent and careful he had been, *he said to him, Well done,* [*thou*] *good servant; since thou hast* thus *been faithful in a very little,* I will amply reward it; for I will not only give thee, for thine own, this treasure of which thou hast been giving me so good an account, but, as my dominion is now enlarged, and many towns and tracts of land are subject to me, I will advance thee to a most honourable station under me, and *be thou governor over ten cities.*

18 *And the second came* and delivered in his account, *saying, Sir, thy pound* which was committed to me *has* been improved in such a manner that it has *gained five pounds.*

19 *And* the improvement he had made was pleasing to his lord, and *he said likewise unto this,* Thou hast approved thyself a good and faithful servant, and I am pleased with thy diligence, and will reward it proportionably: *be thou also* governor *over five cities.*[e]

20 *And* after him *another* servant, who had been negligent and slothful, *came and said, Sir, behold* [*here is*] *thy pound which* was put into my hands; it is not at all diminished,

21 but *I have* carefully *kept* it *laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because* I knew *thou art an austere man,* [*who*] *takest up what thou didst not lay down, and reapest,* or expectest to reap, *what thou didst not sow*: and therefore, apprehending I might incur thy severity if any accident should befal this money in trade, I was determined not to

22 venture it out of mine hands, and now return it just as I received it. *But* when his lord heard him offer such a vile and groundless charge against himself as an excuse for his own negligence, *he* was filled with indignation, and *says to him, Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, O* [*thou*] *wicked servant:* thou hast taken upon thee to affirm *thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up,* as thou expressest it, *what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow*;[f] and thou mightest therefore, on thine own principles, conclude that I should expect to gather where I had deposited such a

23 sum of money, and to reap where I had thus sown: *And* if it had been so, and I had really been as severe as thou wouldst basely insinuate, *why didst thou not* [*then,*] for thine own security, *give my money into the bank, that when I came* to call for it at my return, *I might* at least *have received it with* the common *interest,* if not with the extraordinary improvement which might have attended a successful trade?

24 *And,* farther to testify his displeasure, *he said to* some of *them that stood by, Take away the pound* that was intrusted to him, *from* that idle, suspicious, unfaithful creature, who might otherwise have had that, and much more, allotted *him* for his own property,

25 *and give it to him that has ten pounds.* But they were much surprised at his assigning it to one who had before received so ample a reward; *and they said to him, Sir, he hath* already no less than *ten pounds,*[g] which, with the honour and preferment thou hast farther

26 added, is surely an abundant recompense. Nevertheless, the prince stood by his former award, and bestowed the other pound likewise upon him; declaring that his faithfulness and diligence was fit to be distinguished with the most favourable and repeated notice: And in this way it is, continued he, that I resolve to act; *for I assure you,*[h] *That to every one that hath,* or that improves what he hath, [*it*] *shall be given,* and he shall have yet more abundantly; *but from him that hath not,* or that acts as if he had nothing intrusted to his care, *even that which he hath,* and neglects to improve, *shall be taken away from him.* (Compare Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29; Mark iv. 25; and Luke viii. 18.)

27 And having thus inquired into the conduct of his servants, and treated them according to the different use they made of what had been intrusted with them, he then proceeded to pass sentence on his rebellious citizens who had refused to have him for their king: and, with a just resentment of their base ingratitude, he said, *But* as for those *mine enemies who* were determined to oppose my government, and *would not have me to reign over them, bring* them *hither* immediately, *and slay* [*them*] with the sword *in my presence,*[i] that others may learn a more dutiful submission by the execution of these rebels.

Now all this was as if our Lord had said, Thus shall I at length appear, not as a temporal sovereign, but as the great Eternal judge and victorious Ruler over all, when, having received power and dominion from my Father, I shall bring all to their final account, and with infinite ease triumph over those who reject and affront my authority:

unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou laidst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant: thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath, shall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

e *Be thou also* governor *over five cities.*] It is observable, that in Matt. xxv. 20—23. § 165. where the servants are represented as doubling the different sums intrusted to each, the reward is spoken of as the same; but here the sums intrusted being the same, and the improvement described as different, there is a proportionable difference in the reward: which, as it is a beautiful circumstance, was, no doubt, intended for our instruction.

f *Thou knewest that I am an austere man, &c.*] This is not an acknowledgment of the vile and detestable charge of God's demanding of men (as Dr. Guyse well expresses it) more difficult services than he has furnished them for, or would assist them in, which is, as that pious writer truly observes, a most unrighteous thought of God: but his lord only argues with him on his own base principles, and shows that even on them he would be justly condemned for his negligence.

g *They said to him, Sir, he hath ten pounds.*] So far as this seems to express any thing of envy in the fellow-servants, it is not to be regarded as a significant circumstance; but only as an incidental one, to intimate to us, that his lord gave to the diligent servant what he had gained for himself.

h *I assure you.*] This seems to be the import of that phrase which so often occurs, *I say unto you;* as if he should have said, You may take it on my authority.

i *Slay them* with the sword *in my presence.*] This is the exact import of the word κατασφαξατε. It does indeed properly express the dreadful slaughter of the impenitent Jews, by the sword of each other, and of the Romans; but that does not seem the chief design of the passage, which plainly relates to the far more terrible execution which shall be done on all impenitent sinners in the great day when the faithful servants of Christ shall be rewarded.

take heed therefore that you be not found in their wretched number, as many will be who pretend most eagerly to desire the Messiah's appearance. SECT. 144.

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

And when he had spoken these things, he continued his journey, and leading the way, *went* on *before* his disciples, *ascending to Jerusalem*, being determined to appear there at the approaching passover, though he well knew that he was to encounter persecution and death there. (Compare Mark x. 32. sect. cxlii.) LUKE XIX. 28.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us also hear and fear. Our Lord is gone, and has received his kingdom. He has delivered to us our stock to be improved in his service: let us be animated to diligence in it; for proportionable to that diligence will be our reward. Let us remember we labour for ourselves while we labour for him; as all the progress we make in wisdom and in goodness, renders our own souls so much the happier, and will render them so to all eternity. Blessed servants that have the applause of such a Master, and share a reward as liberal as that conferred on a faithful steward, who should be made governor of a province containing ten cities! Ver. 12, 13, 17, 19

Let us beware of a slothful neglect of our stock: let us beware of those hard thoughts of God which would discourage us from pursuing his service. Above all, let us take heed that we do not proudly and insolently reject the government of his anointed Son, and either say with our tongues, or declare by our actions, *We will not have this man to reign over us:* for if we do, we speak a word against our own lives. He will be glorified by us, or upon us. And oh, what shall we do if in that dreadful day he should bring us forth as the helpless prisoners of his justice, and command us to be slain in his presence! How can we withstand his power? or to the horns of what altar shall we flee for sanctuary? *O Lord, our flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and we are afraid of thy judgments:* (Psal. cxix. 120.) May we never be the miserable objects of them: but, having faithfully served thee here, may that be to us a day of honour, reward, and triumph, which shall be to every presumptuous rebel a day of shame and terror, of dreadful execution and eternal destruction! 20, 21, 14

SECTION CXLV.

Christ entertained at Bethany, and his feet anointed by Mary. The Jewish rulers contrive to kill Lazarus, Matt. xxvi. 6—13. Mark xiv. 3—9. John xii. 1—11.

JOHN xii. 1.

THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

Matt. xxvi. 6. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, [Mark xiv. 3.]

John xii. 2. There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary [an alabaster-box, *containing*] a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly; [Mark, and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head] [as he sat at *meat*,] and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. [Matt. xxvi. 7. Mark xiv. 3.]

JOHN xii. 1.

THEN Jesus came six days before the passover to Bethany, which was a village (as was said before, John xi. 18. sect. cxl.) that lay in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, *where* the abode of *Lazarus was who had been dead* and buried, [*and*] *whom he* lately, by an amazing miracle, had *raised from the dead.* SECT. 145. MATT. XXVI.

Now at this time, *when Jesus was in Bethany*,[a] where, by his frequently resorting thither, he was well known, and had many friends that very much rejoiced to see him, as he was *in the house of Simon the leper*,[b] In testimony of their high respect and great affection for him, *they made a* handsome *supper for him there*, and treated him in the evening; which was the usual time for entertainments with the Jews, especially on the evening of their sabbath-days, which was the season when this feast was made:[c] *and Martha*, who had formerly distinguished her care on a like occasion, (Luke x. 40. sect. cviii.) having seen that all things should be rightly ordered, *waited* on Christ at supper; *but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.* 6, JOHN XII. 2

Then Mary, the other sister of Lazarus, being deeply affected with the many instances that Christ had given her of his love, and especially with his late mercy to her family in recovering so dear a brother from the grave, was solicitous to give some uncommon token of her gratitude and respect to so excellent a guest; she therefore *took an* elegant *alabaster pot*, or *vase*, [*containing*] about *a pound* weight *of unadulterated ointment of spikenard*,[d] [*which was*] *exceeding valuable; and, having broke* the top of *the vessel*, or shook the perfumed balsam which was in it, that it might be the better liquified, and flow forth the easier,[e] *she* came behind him, and *poured* out the greater part of *it on his head as he sat at meat, and anointed the feet of Jesus* with the remainder; *and*, when she had done 3

a *When Jesus was in Bethany.*] Few passages in the Harmony have perplexed me more than this. I was long of opinion, with Origen and Theophylact, defended by Le Clerc and Dr. Whitby, and especially by Dr. Lightfoot (*Harmon. N. Test.* ¾ 71, 80.) and Mr. Whiston, (in his *View of Harmony*, p. 128, 129.) that the story recorded by Matthew, (chap. xxvi. 6—13.) and Mark (chap. xiv. 3—9.) was different from that in John; but, on maturer consideration, it appears to me more probable that Matthew and Mark should have introduced this story a little out of its place,—that Lazarus, if he made this entertainment, (which is not expressly said by John,) should have made use of Simon's house, as more convenient for it,—and that Mary should have poured this ointment on Christ's head and body, as well as on his feet,—than that within the compass of four days Christ should have been twice anointed with so costly a perfume, and that the same fault should be found with the action, and the same value set on the ointment, and the same words used in defence of the woman; and all this in the presence of many of the same persons: all which improbable particulars must be admitted, if the stories be considered as different.—But, after all, I can assert nothing confidently; for there is no impossibility in the thing taken either way.

b *In the house of Simon the leper.*] It is not to be thought that he was now a *leper;* for in this case he would not have been suffered to live in a town, nor would the Jews have come to an entertainment at his house: but either he was once a leper, and had been cured by Jesus, or else the name was given to the family, as some considerable person in it had been formerly a leper.

c When this feast was made.] Though Matthew and Mark relate the story where they are speaking of what happened but two days before the passover, it is more probable (as we have just now shown) that it is placed by John in its due order; and as the following days appear to be sufficiently distinguished, and Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, which John has fixed to the next day, (John xii. 12. ¾ 146.) must have been on the first day of the week, this entertainment, therefore, was on the evening of the day before, when the Jewish sabbath was over.

d *Unadulterated ointment of spikenard.*] I cannot take upon me absolutely to determine whether the word μύρινος signifies that the *ointment* was quite *genuine* and *pure*, (as Casaubon and L. Capellus assert,) or whether (as Grotius and Erasmus think) it be put for ἀμώμου, and refers to the particular part of the fragrant shrub *nardus*, of which the *ointment* was made. (See Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* xii. *cap.* 12.)—If the latter be the meaning of it, what is said of its great value must justify our calling it unadulterated.

e *Having broke* the top of *the vessel*, or shook the perfumed balsam, &c.] Sir Norton Knatchbull and Dr. Hammond maintain

SECT. 145. this, she, like the humble penitent mentioned above, (Luke vii. 38. p. 119.) *wiped his feet with the* long flowing *tresses of her hair; and the* whole *house was filled with the* fragrant and delicious *odour of the ointment.*

MATT. XXVI. 8 *But when his disciples observed it, there were some that were moved with inward displeasure* at what appeared to them so great an extravagance, *and said* with a low voice to each other, *Why was this waste of the ointment made*, and such a quantity of this rich balsam poured out to so little purpose? *And they* secretly *murmured against*

JOHN XII. 4 *her*,[f] and could hardly refrain from rebuking her for it. *One of his disciples therefore, [even] Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon*, that wretched person *who was about to betray* 5 *him*, as if he knew not how to bear such waste, expressed a peculiar emotion, and *said* aloud, *Why was not this* fine *ointment sold for a great deal* of money: for it must have been worth [*even*] *more than three hundred pence*;[g] *and* thus it might have served for the relief of many, if the price of it had been *given to the poor?* This would surely have been approved of by our Master as a much wiser and better way of disposing of it, 6 than thus to lavish it away on the luxurious entertainment of a few minutes. *Now this he said, not because he* at all *regarded the poor, but because he was*, notwithstanding all his pretended piety and zeal, *a* subtile *thief; and* as he *kept the bag* which contained their little stock, *and carried what was put into it*,[h] he thought if so large a sum had come in just before he went off with it, (which he was now preparing to do,) he should thus have had a fine opportunity of enriching himself.

MATT. XXVI. *But Jesus knowing* the design of Judas, and perceiving that others were secretly join- 10 ing with him in this severe and uncharitable censure, without taking any notice of that vile principle from which he knew [*it*] proceeded in him, directed his discourse to his disciples, and *said to them, Why do you* give such *trouble* and uneasiness to *the* good *woman*, of whose piety and friendship we have had so long an experience? *Let her alone* in what she is about; *for* what *she has* now *performed* is *a good work*, and she deserves to be 11 commended for the great respect she has been showing *towards me. For* as to what has been suggested now in favour of *the poor, you have* them *always with you; and* providence will continually so order it, that some compassionable objects shall be still among you, that *whenever you please you may* have an opportunity to *do them good; but me you have not always* with you; for I am soon to leave you, and to be placed beyond the

JOHN XII. 7. reach of your kindness. And indeed my departure out of the world is so near, that with respect to this action of our friend Mary which you are ready to condemn, I may say that

MARK XIV. *she has reserved this* ointment *for the day of my burial*:[i] And not knowing whether 8 she may have an opportunity of assisting in those last offices, *she has now done what she could; for in that she has poured* out *this ointment on my body, she has* in a manner *come before* the time thus *to anoint* and to embalm *my body for the burial;* so that you may almost look upon it as a work of piety and love to a dead friend, where a 9 generous heart will not be sparing. And, on the whole, though you have such hard thoughts of what she has been doing, it shall not finally turn to her reproach or damage; but as I graciously accept it, so *I assuredly say unto you*, That *wheresoever this gospel* of mine *is preached*, and it in time shall have its triumph *over the whole world, this* very action *also which this* pious and affectionate *woman has* now *performed, shall* be inserted in the history of my life, and *be spoken of* with honour *for a memorial of her* friendship and affection to me; so that her name shall be embalmed in such a manner as to be far more fragrant than the perfume which she has poured forth on my head and my feet. (Compare Eccles. vii. 1.)

JOHN XII. 9 Now these things passed at a public entertainment: *a great multitude of the Jews therefore*, who had been dubious whether Jesus would come up to the passover or not, (compare John xi. 56. sect. cxli.) quickly got intelligence of it, and *knew that he was there* in Bethany; *and they came* thither in crowds from Jerusalem, and that indeed *not only on account of Jesus*, who had been retired for some time, *but also* out of curiosity

Matt. xxvi. 8. But when his disciples saw *it*, [there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? And they murmured against her.] [Mark xiv. 4, 5.]

John xii. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold [for much, *even*] for [Mark, more than] three hundred pence, and given to the poor? [Matt. xxvi. 9. Mark xiv. 5.]

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Matt. xxvi. 10. When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? [let her alone; for she hath wrought a good work upon me.] [Mark xiv. 6. John xii. 7.]

11 For ye have the poor always with you, [and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good:] but me ye have not always. [Mark xiv. 7. John xii. 8.]

John xii. 7. Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

Mark xiv. 8. She hath done what she could: [for in that she hath poured this ointment on my body,] she is come afore-hand to anoint my body to the burying. [Matt. xxvi. 12.]

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that [this woman] hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. [Matt. xxvi. 13.]

John xii. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also,

that συντριψασα does not signify that she *brake* the vessel, which they think an improbable circumstance; but only that she shook it so as to break the coagulated parts of the rich balsam, and bring it to such a liquidity that it might be fit to pour out. Yet I must own that the original does not so naturally express this.

f *And they murmured against her.*] Whether this relates to more than Judas cannot certainly be said; since it is well known that the plural number is sometimes put for the singular. See Gen. viii. 4; xix. 29; Judg. xii. 7; and Matt. xxvii. 44.—Some have thought Judas Iscariot was the son of that Simon in whose house the feast was made; but the name was so common, that it cannot be concluded with any certainty.

g *More than three hundred pence.*] It is to be remembered that these were Roman pence, and consequently amounted to nine pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence; the expression only intimates a general guess at the value by a round sum, (for such three hundred denarii were, though the correspondent value with us is not so,) as if we should say on a like occasion, it must have been worth above ten pounds.

h *Carried what was put into it.*] The learned Elsner (I suppose to avoid the seeming tautology) would render εβασταζεν, *he took away*, or *carried off*, that is, for his own use, what was put into the purse or bag. He refers to John xx. 15, and Matt. iii. 11; viii. 17. as instances of such a use of it; to which he adds others from Polybius, Athenæus, and other good authors (Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 333.) But the meaning here may be, that he had not only the keeping of the bag at that time, but that it was his stated office to take care of it and manage its stock; and therefore I chuse not to follow Elsner's version, since εβασταζε never signifies *to carry off* a part privately, which would have been expressed by ενοφισατο, as it is, Acts v. 2.

i *She has reserved this for the day of my burial.*] Mr. Whiston (in his *View of the Harmony*, p. 129.) thinks this is as if our Lord had said, "She has spent but a little of this ointment now; but has "reserved the main part of it to pour upon my head some days "hence, which shall be so near my death, that it may be considered "as a kind of embalming." But besides the general reasons against believing the action repeated, which have been mentioned in note a, it is unnatural to suppose that, in the transport of her love and gratitude, she would use this little management of keeping back most that was in the vessel; or that, if she had, John would have mentioned the quantity she took, which was no way to his purpose, or have taken notice of the room's being filled with the odour of it: not to say that the prediction which Mr. Whiston supposes our Lord to utter, is quite trifling, and would seem to bespeak its own accomplishment in a manner which he never would have stooped to.

whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

that they might see Lazarus, whom he had lately *raised from the dead,* who now appeared publicly with him.[k] SECT. 145.

But the chief priests and other members of the sanhedrim were filled on this occasion with such rage and envy, that, as they had already resolved on the death of Jesus, they *consulted also how they might* find some method to *kill Lazarus,* either by public prosecution or private assassination: *For* they well knew that *many of the Jews* deserted them, and *went away* to Bethany *on his account, and* were so powerfully struck with the convincing evidence of so astonishing a miracle, that they *believed on Jesus;* and while such a monument of his power and goodness continued they were afraid lest more should revolt to him. JOHN XII. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

We see how happily Mary improved by sitting at the feet of Jesus, and what evidence she gave of her having *chosen the better part.* (Compare Luke x. 39, 42.) Like her, let us with humble thankfulness bestow our very best on him who has given us that and every thing else. She gladly poured out her choicest ointment on him whose name is to every true believer far more fragrant than *ointment poured forth.* (Cant. i. 3.) How does her generous love shame those who grudge every expense in the cause of Christ! Ver. 3.

When we are relieving the pious poor, we are, as it were, anointing the feet of Jesus: we are indeed performing a service far more acceptable than any thing of this kind could in itself be. Let us remember that we have the poor always with us; and that they are permitted to continue among us, that we may do them good whenever we please. Far be it from us to imagine that what we so spend is waste. Let all, who would not share in the guilt and punishment of Judas, abhor the vile hypocrisy of making a pretended concern for the poor a cloak for an opportunity of enriching themselves with their spoils; than which nothing can be more infamous, or can have a directer tendency to mingle the consuming curse of a righteous and almighty God with all that a man possesses. 8 4—6

The Pharisees conspired to kill Lazarus. What a mixture was this of cruelty and folly! What was his crime? or what could their hope be? From what death could not Christ have delivered him? or from what tomb could he not again have recalled him? Yet something like this is the madness of all who hate and persecute others for being the trophies of the Redeemer's victory and grace. 10

But let not his servants fear; *their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name.* (Jer. l. 34.) His work is perfect; and the day and hour is approaching, in which his triumph over all his enemies shall be so complete, that his friends shall be for ever secure, not only from being destroyed, but from being alarmed by them.

SECTION CXLVI.

Christ rides in triumph to Jerusalem on an ass's colt. Matt. xxi. 1—9; Mark xi. 1—10; Luke xix. 29—40; John xii. 12—19.

MATT. xxi. 1.

AND [Luke, it came to pass] [John, on the next day,] when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage [and Bethany,] unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two [of his] disciples, [Mark xi. 1. Luke xix. 29. John xii. 12.]

2 Saying unto them, Go [your way] into the village over against you; and straightway [as soon as ye be entered into it,] ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt [tied] with her, [whereon never man [Luke, yet] sat;] loose [him,] and bring [Luke, *him* hither] unto me. [Mark xi. 2. Luke xix. 30.]

3 And if any man say unto you, [Luke, Why do you loose *him?*] ye shall say [Luke, thus unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him:] and straightway he will send [him hither.] [Mark xi. 3. Luke xix. 31.]

Mark xi. 4. And [the disciples] [Luke, that were sent] went their way, and found [Luke, even as he had said unto them,] the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways

MATT. xxi. 1.

AND after Jesus had been anointed by Mary in the manner related in the preceding section, *it came to pass on the next day,* which was the first day of the week, that he proceeded on his journey with his disciples; and *when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage and Bethany,* or to the outward boundaries of these two places,[a] *at the* foot of the *mount of Olives,* which lay to the east of the city, *then Jesus,* as the time appointed for his sufferings was just at hand, being resolved that he would make a public entry into Jerusalem, *sent* out *two of his disciples, saying to them, Go your way into the village* which lies yonder *over against you; and immediately, as soon as you enter into it, you shall* there *find a she-ass* standing *tied* at a door, *and a* young *foal tied* also *with her, on which no man ever yet sat:* lay hold of the foal, and *untie him* directly, without any scruple or concern about the owner's leave, *and bring [him] hither to me: And if any man* should take notice of what you are doing, and *say to you, Why do you* offer to *untie* the foal, and lead [*him*] away? *you* in reply *shall say thus to him, Because* Jesus *the Lord has need of him: and,* in regard to the authority of my name and character, *he will immediately send him hither* with the dam, that I may use either of them as I shall chuse, to ride into the city: so that you may bring them both hither without any apprehension of accusation or scandal. SECT. 139. MATT. XXI. 2 3

And the two *disciples that were sent* on this errand presumed not to debate the reasonableness of the orders he had given them; but presently *went their way, and found, just as he had said unto them,*[b] *the colt* with its dam *tied abroad at the door* of a house, which stood *in a* very open *place* at the entrance of the village, *where two roads met: and, as Jesus* MARK XI. 4

k Who now appeared publicly with him.] Perhaps, after so extraordinary a series of providences as Lazarus had passed through, he might chuse to spend some time in retirement and extraordinary devotion; and it is natural to suppose he would endeavour to avoid the importunity of crowds who out of curiosity would be pressing in upon him, perhaps with some impertinent inquiries.

a *Were come to Bethphage and Bethany.*] As Bethany was the town from which our Lord set out, some have supposed there were two places of this name; of which the one was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, (as it is said, John xi. 18.) and the other that he was now come to, joined to the mount of Olives, and was but a sabbath-day's journey, or but eight furlongs distant from the city. (Compare Luke xxiv. 50. and Acts i. 12.) But it is hardly probable there were two places of the same name within a mile of each other; and it is much more natural to suppose that the limits of Bethany might extend to the mount of Olives, and be contiguous to the boundaries of Bethphage, which was part of the suburbs of Jerusalem, and reached from the mount of Olives to the walls of the city. See Lightfoot, *Harm. N. T.* § 72. and Whitby on Mark xi. 1.

b *Just as he had said unto them.*] The exact knowledge which our Lord showed of so many minute and most fortuitous particulars, must surely impress the minds of these messengers greatly, and establish the faith of his followers. It is observable that many such things occurred a little before his death, which, considered in this view, have a peculiar beauty. Compare Matt. xxvi. 31—35; Mark xiv. 15, 16; and Luke xxii. 10—13.

SECT. 146.

commanded them, they immediately began to *untie* the colt, that they might lead *him* away.

But as they were thus *untying the colt*, Providence so ordered it, effectually to prevent
LUKE XIX. 33 any clamour or reflection,[c] that the owners of it were near at hand, with several other persons. And *some of them that stood* by *there*, and particularly *the owners of it, said unto them, What are you doing* there? *Why do ye* offer to *untie the colt*, which you
MARK XI. 6 know is none of your own? *And they said to them, even as Jesus had ordered*, We mean no injury to you, or to the colt; but Jesus, the Messenger of the blessed God, *the great Lord* and Proprietor of all, *has need of him*, and would borrow him for a little while to ride into the city; and his character is too well known to give you any reason to fear you shall lose any thing by your readiness to accommodate him in this little instance. *And* on this *they* were thoroughly satisfied, and *let them go* away with it.[d]

7 *And* thus *they brought the colt to Jesus, and the ass* its dam went with it: *and*, as they had neither of them any saddle, they *threw their* loose *mantles upon* the backs of *them* both, that Jesus might take his choice which he would ride, and might sit the more easily and decently on either: *and* as he chose the colt, though (as was just now said) it had never been broke or backed before, *they set Jesus thereon*.[e]

8 *And many*, [*even*] *a very great multitude*, who now surrounded him *as he sat on the young ass*,[f] [*and*] *went on* to the city, in token of their respect to him, *spread their mantles in the way*, that he might ride as upon one continued carpet; *and others cut down* little *branches from the trees* that stood by the side of the road, and gathered flowers which grew near it, *and strewed them in the way*; according to the usual custom of expressing the public joy on the arrival of any illustrious prince. (Compare 1 Mac. xiii 51; and 2 Mac. x. 7.)

MATT. XXI. *Now all this was done* and permitted by Jesus, *that* what was prophesied of old concerning the Messiah might be fulfilled in him; and that by this occurrence *it might be*
4 literally *accomplished which was spoken by the prophet* Zechariah,[g] *saying*, (*as it is*
5 *written*, Zech. ix. 9.) "*Say ye to the daughter of Zion*, rejoice greatly and shout, O "daughter or inhabitant of Jerusalem, and *fear not* any of thine enemies: for *behold*, with "pleasing amazement, *thy King*, the great expected Messiah, *cometh unto thee, meek* "and having salvation; *and*, in token of the gentleness of his administration, and his strict "observance of the divine law,[h] he shall make his public entrance into thy city, not as "other princes affect to appear, in a proud triumphal chariot, or riding on a stately managed "horse, decked with a variety of splendid ornaments, and attended with a pompous caval- "cade; but he shall appear like one of thine ancient patriarchs or judges, in the earliest "and best ages of thy commonwealth, *sitting upon an ass; yea* he shall come upon *a* "*colt, the foal of an ass*, which, though it had never been backed before, shall in his "miraculous hands be tractable and gentle."

JOHN XII. 16 *Now* it is to be observed, that *his* apostles and other *disciples did not understand these things at first*, nor recollect the correspondence between the preceding prophecy and the event: *but when Jesus was* raised from the dead, and *glorified* at the right hand of the Father, from whence he sent down his Spirit to instruct them in the mysteries of his word and kingdom, *then they remembered that these things were written concerning him* as the Messiah; *and* [*that*] *they had done these things unto him* without any designed reference to the prophecy, which, at the time of its accomplishment, they did not so much as think of.

met: and they loose him, [as Jesus commanded them.] [Matt. xxi. 6. Luke xix. 32.]

Luke xix. 33. And as they were loosing the colt, [certain of them that stood there,] the owners thereof, said unto them, [What do ye?] Why loose ye the colt! [Mark xi. 5.]

Mark xi. 6. And they said unto them, even as Jesus had commanded, [The Lord hath need of him:] and they let them go. [Luke xix. 34.]

7 And they brought the colt [and the ass] to Jesus, and cast their garments [on them;] [Luke, and they set Jesus thereon.] [Matt. xxi. 7. Luke xix. 35.]

8 And many, [*even* a very great multitude,] [Luke, as he [John, sat on the young ass, *and*] went *on*,] spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches [from] off the trees, and strewed them in the way. [Matt. xxi. 8. Luke xix. 36. John xii. 14.]

Matt. xxi. 4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, [as it is written,] [John xii. 14.]

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, [Fear not;] behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. John xii. 15.

John xii. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

c Effectually to prevent any clamour or reflection.] Perhaps, had not the owners of the beasts happened to be by, and had not Luke expressly mentioned them, the malice of ancient or modern infidels would have found some occasion for raising an outcry on the ambiguity of the words, *The Lord has need of him*. Its being a weak and contemptible cavil would not have prevented their using it, as we learn by abundant experience.

d *They let them go.*] If these people were not (as they possibly might be) the acquaintance of Christ, they might easily meet with him at Jerusalem, if they had a mind to inquire after the ass and colt; or they might be left, according to their direction, at some house in the city, or be sent back by some of our Lord's attendants; though the Evangelists do not descend to such minute particulars. There is no appearance of Christ's intending to show his sovereignty in transferring the property of these creatures; and though, no doubt, he had a power to do it, his usual prudence would probably direct him to wave it at a time when so many eyes were upon him for evil.

e *They set Jesus thereon.*] As all the Evangelists but Matthew speak expressly of his riding on the colt, what Matthew says of bringing them both to Jesus, and putting on them their clothes, and setting him thereon, (though it be spoken in the plural number,) implies no more than setting him upon the mantles thrown on that which he made choice of, and is no intimation of his riding upon both.

f *As he sat on the young ass.*] John says, that *Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon:* but as the larger accounts given by the other Evangelists in a great measure supersede this, I could only bring in a part of that clause here; though in the whole of this work I am as careful as possible to omit no one circumstance that any of the sacred writers mention.

g *It might be* literally *accomplished which was spoken, &c.*] I shall not enter on a particular detail of the reasons which induce me to believe that the prophecy of Zechariah is here quoted according to its primary and literal sense; but content myself with referring the reader to Bishop Chandler's *Defence of Christianity*, p. 102—107. and Mr. Bullock's *Vindication*, p. 175, 176.

h His strict observance of the divine law.] The learned and ingenious Bishop Sherlock has set this fact in a most just and beautiful light, in his *Fourth Dissertation* annexed to the last edition of his *Discourse on Prophecy*. God, that he might keep the people of Israel in a more sensible dependence on himself, forbade the use of that strong, generous, and majestic animal, the horse, (Job xxxix. 19—25.) in their armies, as also of chariots, Deut. xvii. 16. (Compare Josh. xi. 6; Judges v. 15.) David therefore, who rode himself on a mule, and ordered Solomon to do so on his coronation-day, (1 Kings i. 33, 34.) burnt the chariots he took from the enemies, and ham-strung their horses, to make them unfit for war. (2 Sam. viii. 4.) And afterwards, when Solomon (1 Kings iv. 26.) and succeeding princes multiplied horses, they were rebuked by the prophets, and chastised by God for it. (See Isa. ii. 6, 7; xxxi. 1; and Hos. xiv. 3.) And the removal of them is spoken of as matter of promise in the days of the Messiah, Hos. i. 7; Mic. v. 10, 11; and Zech. ix. 10.—It is therefore with great propriety that Christ, in his most public triumph, chose, according to the prophecy before us, to *ride on an ass*.—Nor are we to imagine there was any thing mean and ridiculous in it; for the Eastern asses are a much larger and more beautiful animal than ours, and it plainly appears the patriarchs and judges of the Jewish nation thought it no disgrace to ride upon them; of which Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 3.) Moses, (Exod. iv. 20.) and Jair's family, (Judges x. 4.) are instances. Nay, magistrates are spoken of by the general description of those that *rode on white asses*. Judges v. 10. (Compare Numb. xxii. 21; 2 Sam. xvi. 2; xvii. 23; xix. 26.) So that all the ridicule which has fallen on this passage must, to speak with all possible charity, be retorted on the ignorance of those who have taken upon them to censure what they did not understand.

Luke xix. 37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives,

John xii. 12. Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! Blessed *is* the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

Luke xix. 37. [And] the whole multitude of the disciples [that went before, and that followed,] began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen: [Matt. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 9.]

38 [*And* cried,] saying, [Hosanna to the Son of David!] blessed [is he, *even*] the king that cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. [Matt. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 9.]

Mark xi. 10. Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. [Matt. xxi. 9.]

Luke xix. 39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

John xii. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.

And when he was come nigh to the city, [*and was*] *now at* the lower part of *the descent of the mount of Olives*, which lay, as was said before, to the east of Jerusalem, and was but a few furlongs from it, *A great multitude of people, who were come* from Galilee and other parts *to* celebrate *the feast* of the passover, *having heard*, by some who had run before the rest of the company, *that Jesus was coming* in this solemn pomp *to Jerusalem*, immediately resolved to go and usher him in with all possible respect: And accordingly they *took branches of palm-trees*, which were commonly carried before those who rode in public triumph, *and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna!* May God save and prosper him![i] *Blessed* [*be*] *the King of Israel, who comes in the name* and by the authority *of the Lord* our God, to redeem us, and to rule over us. (Compare Psal. cxviii. 25, 26.) SECT. 146. JOHN XII. 13

Now as he rode along in all this pomp, *the people who were with him*[k] *when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and* by that almighty voice *raised him from the dead*, among whom he had lain part of four days, *testified* [*it*] to the strangers who were come up out of the country, and told them what a glorious miracle they had been eye-witnesses to. [*And*] *for this cause* among others, and indeed with a peculiar regard to this, *the people also met him* from the city in the manner which has been described above, *because they heard that he had done this* astonishing *miracle*, which, in some circumstances, exceeded any which he had wrought before. 17 18

And the whole multitude of the disciples that had attended him from Bethany, both they *that went before* him, *and* they *that followed* after, in his triumphant procession, *began* greatly *to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works* and glorious miracles *which they had seen* performed by him on a great variety of occasions, and which they now particularly called to mind. [*And*] as they now were met by a vast concourse of people from Jerusalem, *they* joined together in their triumphs and congratulations, and *cried* with all their might, *saying*, "*Hosanna, to the* great illustrious *Son of* "*David*, who now vouchsafes to make his public appearance among us! *Blessed be he*, "[*even*] *the* long-expected *King* and Sovereign of God's people, *who* now *comes* to us *in* "*the name of the Lord!* May the most exalted honours be paid him! May continued "prosperity attend him! Let there be *peace in heaven*, and a rich variety of divine favours be dispensed from thence; *and*, in return for them, let *glory* be given to God *in* "*the* most exalted strains, and let all the *highest* orders of angels join in his praises! "*Blessed* and prosperous *be the* sacred *kingdom of our father David!* May it speedily "be established, and may it long flourish; even that kingdom which is not gained by the "alarms of war and garments rolled in blood, but *which comes in the name of the Lord*, "and renders itself, by that powerful influence on men's spirits which we now feel, victorious over whatsoever would oppose it! *Hosanna*, therefore, *in the highest* strains! "Repeat again and again your songs and your congratulations." Thus they expressed their joyful and rapturous expectations of his assuming the royal dignity, and vindicating Israel from the Roman oppression; and, emboldened by the display of his power in the resurrection of Lazarus, they feared not the resentment of their present masters, for declaring themselves thus openly in his favour. LUKE XIX. 37 MARK XI. 10

And some of the proud and envious *Pharisees*, who were *among the multitude* as spies rather than friends, were much offended at the high honours that were paid to Jesus, and maliciously *said to him*, with an intent to embarrass and expose him, *Master*, canst thou be pleased with all this noise? or can it be consistent with thy great humility to suffer it? Why dost thou not *rebuke thy disciples* for such dangerous acclamations as these? Dost thou intend to give encouragement to such seditious speeches, and to stand by the consequences which may follow them? LUKE XIX. 39

And Jesus, who was now determined to lay aside that reserve which for wise reasons *he* had formerly used, *answered and said unto them, I tell you, that* the reason for these acclamations is so plain, and the evidences of it so strong, that it must be great stupidity not to see, and great obstinacy not to own it: so that *if these should be silent*, one might almost expect that *the* very *stones should immediately cry out* to proclaim my kingdom: yea, God would even animate the stones on such an occasion, rather than he would suffer me to want this triumph, so evidently marked out by his prophets. 40

The Pharisees then, turning from him with envy and rage, *said to each other, Perceive ye* not *that you gain no* manner of *advantage* by all your consultations, and the decrees of your sanhedrim? *Behold, the* whole *world is gone after him*, till he has now thrown off the mask, and taken upon him to declare his pretences; which, if the people thus fall in with them, must necessarily end in our ruin, and perhaps in that of the whole nation. JOHN XII. 19

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold this meek triumph of the great Redeemer with pleasure! He entered the capital of his kingdom *riding upon an ass*; a circumstance in which he made, though by no means a ridiculous, yet to be sure a very JOHN XII. 14.

i *Hosanna!* May God save and prosper him!] I suppose few readers need to be informed that the Hebrew word *Hosanna*, signifies, *Save, we beseech thee.*

k *Now the people who were with him.*] It is impossible that their not understanding the prophecy of Zechariah now, or recollecting it afterwards, (which are the things mentioned in the preceding verse, John xii. 16.) should be the reason of what follows here. It appears then from hence, (and it is very material to observe it,) that ουν [*therefore*] is sometimes used in a looser sense, so as to answer to *and* or *now* in our language.

SECT. 146. humble figure; yea, he appeared exactly as the prophet described him, upon *a colt, the foal of an ass*—not yet grown up to its best form, nor adorned with any sumptuous or elegant furniture, but only covered with the mantles of his poor attendants, and perhaps with nothing better for a bridle than a cord which might have tied the foal at the door.

JOHN XII. 13 Let us imagine that we saw the Son of God, and the King of Israel, thus proceeding towards Jerusalem, and the people meeting him, and surrounding him with their acclamations: *Hosanna! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Do not our hearts spring at the sound? Do we not, as it were in spirit, go forth with them, and join in their sublime though simple song? Thus let us welcome him into our hearts! Let us echo it back! *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, with divine authority, and divine blessings in his hands! And blessed be the kingdom he hath erected! May perpetual prosperity attend it! May the north give up a swarm of subjects to it, and may not the south keep back her swarthy sons! May *nations be born at once*, and thousands together made *willing in the day of his power!* Surely if these are not our affectionate wishes, the warm and zealous sentiments of our very hearts, it may almost be expected that the very stones should cry out, to accuse and condemn our ungrateful stupidity.

MARK XI. 10 LUKE XIX. 40

JOHN XII. 19 Unhappy Pharisees, who looked on these triumphs with envy and rage, and grieved that *the world was gone after him!* Yet less unhappy, had they not renewed their attempts against him, those fatal attempts which ended in their ruin! But who that had seen the procession, and heard the shouts of the transported multitude, could have imagined or believed, that before the end of the week they should have turned their voices against him, and instead of *Hosanna*, should have cried out, *Crucify him?* Yet so it was: and Christ knew it would be so. Such is the uncertainty of popular applause! Who would then purchase it at the expense of his conscience, or even of his ease?

MARK XI. 10 These transports were raised by the hopes of a temporal kingdom; and when those hopes were disappointed, these transports were turned into rage. Oh that there may be none, under all the engagements of a Christian, and even of a ministerial profession, who proclaim Christ with great appearance of zeal, only that they may exalt themselves; and wish prosperity to his kingdom, only as it may promote their own interest in a world from which it was the great design of his death to redeem his servants.

SECTION CXLVII.

Christ having wept over Jerusalem, enters into it, and vindicates the temple a second time from the profanation of the traders. Matt. xxi. 10—16. Mark xi. 11. Luke xix. 41, *to the end.*

LUKE xix. 41.

SECT. 147. THUS our Lord went on in his triumphant progress toward Jerusalem; *and when he was come near* it, and had now the view of it before him, (the place where he was, commanding an extensive prospect of it,) *beholding the city* in all its present beauty and glory,

LUKE XIX. 42 and considering the calamities which would shortly be its ruin, *he* tenderly *wept over it*, *Saying, Oh that thou hadst known,*[a] *even thou* unhappy city, which art now on the very point of being devoted to final destruction! Oh that at length, though with the greatest obstinacy thou hast despised the messages of all thy prophets, thou hadst but known and

43 seriously regarded, *at least in this thy* latest *day* and opportunity of grace, *the* important *things which belong to thy peace*, and on which thy final happiness depends! *But now*, alas, *they are hid from thine eyes*, and God will leave thee, in his righteous judgment, to this affected ignorance and obstinate perverseness, till it end in thine utter ruin. *For* the time hastens on, and in a little while *the days shall come upon thee, when* thou shalt suffer all the hardships of the closest siege, and *thine enemies shall draw a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and press thee in on every side*,[b] so that with all thy numerous

44 inhabitants thou neither shalt be able to resist nor to escape them: *And they shall level thee with the ground* on which thou standest, *and* crush *thy children within thee* under thy ruins; *and shall not leave* so much as *one stone upon another in thee* of all thy splendid and sacred structures: and all these terrible calamities shall overwhelm thee *because thou didst not know* and consider *the* appointed *season of thy* merciful *visitation*, nor attend to those overtures of grace which I have so often made in person to thee, and have still urged with so much seriousness and tenderness.

MATT. XXI. 10 11 *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem* with great solemnity, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people; *and as he made his entrance* in such a public and remarkable way, *the whole city was in a* great *commotion* at so uncommon an appearance, *saying, Who is this* that comes in all this pomp, and is attended with these high congratulations? *And the multitude* that came with him, *said, This is Jesus the great Prophet*, who is *of Nazareth*

LUKE xix. 41.

AND when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Matt. xxi. 10. [And Jesus entered into Jerusalem:] and when he was come, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? [Mark xi. 11.]

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the Prophet, of Nazareth of Galilee.

a *Oh that thou hadst known.*] It is certain (as we have observed elsewhere, note a, on Luke xii. 50. p. 229.) that the particle *ει* is sometimes used to express *an ardent wish*, (compare Numb. xxii. 29; and Josh. vii. 7. *Septuag.*) and the connection here will very well bear it.—If our translation be retained, it must be acknowledged that the broken manner of speaking is very emphatical: our Lord will then seem to pause in a silent reflection on the happy consequences that would have attended their obedient regard to his invitations and addresses.—But to add the words [*it had been well,*] which some have proposed, would rather enervate than help the sense; as I think it would do in most of the passages which learned critics have produced from the Greek writers as instances of a like figure of speech. See Mr. Hallet, *On Script.* Vol. I. p. 11.

b *Thine enemies shall—compass thee round, &c.*] Josephus says expressly, that though it was thought a great and almost impracticable work to encompass the city with a wall, yet Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they in three days surrounded it with a wall of thirty-nine furlongs in circumference, with thirteen castles in its circuit; and by this means all hope was cut off that any of the Jews within the city should escape. (*Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 12. [al. 13.] § 1, 2.)—He also tells us, that when Titus had taken the city, and, contrary to his will, the temple was consumed with fire, he caused the foundations both of the temple and the city to be dug up and levelled with the ground, leaving only three towers and part of the wall to be a specimen of its former strength and grandeur: (*Bell. Jud. lib.* viii. *cap.* 1. [al. 18.] § 1.) And afterwards the whole was so entirely destroyed, that *not one stone* was *left upon another;* as Socrates relates, *Hist. Eccl. lib.* iii. *cap.* 20.—In short, the accomplishment of every part of this prediction is recorded by Josephus in so affecting and particular a manner, especially in the Sixth Book of his *Jewish War*, that I cannot but recommend the perusal of it to every Christian who has an opportunity of reading it

in Galilee, even he that is so celebrated all over the country for the fame of his doctrine and miracles. SECT. 147.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God; and, [when he had looked round about upon all things,] [Luke, began to] cast out all them that sold, and [Luke, them that] bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves: [Mark xi. 11. Luke xix. 45.]

And Jesus having come into the city by the eastern gate, alighted from the colt, and *went* directly *into the temple of God*, whither the people followed him: *and when he had looked round about*, and made his observation *upon all things* there,[c] as he perceived those profanations were again renewed which he had formerly so solemnly chastised soon after he entered on his public ministry, *he began* with a holy indignation to animadvert upon them, as he had done three years before,[d] and *to drive out all them that sold and bought in* the outer court of *the temple*, which was appointed for the Gentile proselytes to worship in, but was made use of by the Jews as if it were a common market-place; *and* with an irresistible authority he *overthrew the tables of the exchangers of* foreign *money* into the current coin, which those that came from distant parts might want to offer for the service of the sanctuary, (see Exod. xxx. 13, 14.) *and* likewise overturned *the seats of them that sold doves* for sacrifices. MATT. XXI. 12

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house [is, *and*] shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. [Luke xix. 46.]

And he said to them as he turned them out, Such practices as these profane the house of God, and shamefully pervert the use for which it was designed; for *it is written*, (Isa. lvi. 7.) "*My house shall be called an house of* "*prayer* for all people, to which they shall resort for the performance of religious worship:" *but you have* turned it into an house of merchandise, and *made it* (as the prophet speaks, Jer. vii. 11.) *a den of robbers*,[e] a place where traffic is carried on by persons of the most infamous character, who live by deceit and oppression, and practise the vilest extortion even in the house of the righteous and blessed God. (Compare John ii. 14—16. sect. xxi. and Mark xi. 15, 17. sect. cl.) 13

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

And there were many of *the blind and lame*,[f] who had no sooner heard of his arrival in the city but they immediately desired to be led to the place where he was; and they *came to him in the temple, and he* graciously *healed them* in the presence of all the people. 14

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were sore displeased,

But when the chief priests and scribes beheld the wonders he performed, and observed how *the* very *children* were *crying out in the temple, and* continued the song which the multitude had begun, *saying*, "*Hosanna to the son of David!* with joyful "acclamations we congratulate his coming, and bid him welcome into the city of his royal "father!" instead of being open to conviction, *they were filled with indignation* and resentment: *And they said to him, Dost thou hear what these* children *say?* and judge it proper to encourage these unthinking creatures in such language as this? *And Jesus says unto them, Yes*, I am sensible enough of what they say, nor is it needful or fit I should reprove them for it. Are you unacquainted with the scriptures; you that would have the people to regard you as the great teachers of the law? or *have you never read* what David says, (Psal. viii. 2.) "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings* thou "hast ordained that strength whereby *thou hast perfected* thine own *praise*, by the "weakness of the instruments made use of in thy service?"[g] You cannot but have read it, and I assure you, that as God in many instances has used, and in a little while will eminently use, some of the weakest and meanest of mankind to accomplish his great and glorious purposes, so this event is a most signal illustration of those words; and it is by a secret influence of God on the minds of these little ones, that they are led, as it were, to upbraid your silence and insensibility, by so remarkable and suitable an exclamation. 15 16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Luke xix. 47. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him;

And thus *he was* till the time of the passover, which was celebrated within five days after this,[h] *teaching daily in the temple: but the chief priests and the scribes, and* others of *the rulers of the people*, who had before decreed his death, according to the resolution which the sanhedrim had come to by the advice of Caiaphas, (John xi. 53. sect. cxli.) were still contriving how they might execute their horrid design, and diligently 47 LUKE XIX.

c *When he had looked round about upon all things.*] It is plain from this expression of St. Mark, that Jesus, when he went into the temple on the day of his public entry, took particular notice of all things there; which it is hardly probable he would do without reforming the abuses with which the Jews so shamefully profaned it; and Matthew so expressly joins his driving out the traders with the transactions of this day, that howsoever it appears from several instances that the Evangelists are not always exact in observing the order of time, it is highly reasonable to suppose that Jesus purged the temple on this day. Yet it appears so evident from Mark's account, (ver. 12—17.) that the traders were driven out on the next day, when Christ returned from Bethany to the temple, after he had cursed the fig-tree, that I cannot but suppose, with Mr. Whiston, (in his *View of Harmony*, p. 130, 131.) that this occurrence happened *twice*: and therefore I have only given here what Matthew and Luke relate of this matter, reserving Mark's account to the next day: (see § 150. note a, on Mark xi. 15.) Though, after all, I dare not be confident in a case where the greatest critics are so much divided in their sentiments.

d As he had done three years before.] I see no reason to wonder at the repetition of such an action as this, or to imagine that John would have placed this story so early in his history as he does, if it had not happened then as well as now. (See John ii. 14—16. p. 47, 48.) —Some have observed a greater severity in our Lord's treatment of those that sold doves now than before, as he now overthrew their seats, whereas he formerly contented himself with ordering the owners to take them away; (John ii. 16.) but I will not answer for the solidity of the remark.

e *A den of robbers.*] Bishop Smallbrooke well observes, (in his *Answer to Woolston*, Vol. I. p. 168.) that our Lord in this expression seems to allude to the custom which robbers in these parts had of sheltering themselves in dens and caves in the wilderness, where great multitudes of them often joined in sharing their plunder.

f *The blind and lame.*] Many such would, no doubt, be waiting in the several avenues of the temple, to ask alms at a time when there would be such a vast concourse of people: and there seems a peculiar propriety in our Lord's multiplying these astonishing miracles, both to vindicate the extraordinary act of authority he had just been performing, and to make this his last visit to Jerusalem as convincing as possible, that those who would not submit to him might be left so much the more inexcusable.

g *Out of the mouth of babes, &c.*] To *ordain strength*, which is the phrase the Psalmist uses in the passage here referred to, was in effect (as the Seventy render it) to *perfect praise*: so that there is no need to be solicitous about that little variation in the quotation. —This general observation of David was greatly illustrated by the Hosannas of these children; and yet much more by the triumph of the apostles, weak as in many respects they were, over all the opposition of Jews and Gentiles.

h Celebrated within five days after this.] This was the first day of the week, or our Lord's day; in commemoration of which Palm-Sunday was long ago denominated, and as ceremonies increased, was particularly observed. The passover was celebrated by Christ on the Thursday night following, and he was crucified on Friday. Some transactions of each intervening day are marked in the following history.

SECT. 147. LUKE XIX. *sought* an opportunity *to destroy him:* But they knew not how to effect it, *and could not* immediately *find* out *what they might do* for that purpose, or what safe method they might take to seize him: *for all the* common *people listened to him with* so *great attention* and pleasure, that they hung, as it were, on his lips while he spake,[i] and pressed upon each other for an opportunity of hearing him. The magistrates therefore
48 feared lest the populace should tumultuously rise in his defence, if they offered any public violence to him, and that thus they might endanger themselves while they sought to destroy Jesus.

48 And could not find what they might do; for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 41 NEXT to the sight of a bleeding and dying Redeemer, there can surely be none in the whole world more affecting than this which is here represented, even the Son of God weeping over perishing sinners, yea, over the sinners of Jerusalem. We might perhaps have been ready to think, that, foreseeing so circumstantially as we know he did, all the ungrateful and inhuman treatment he was to meet with in this nest of murderers, with the scene of his sufferings, and the very house of Caiaphas in his full view,[k] he should rather have taken up a proverb against it, and have anticipated the triumphs of that awful day when God would plead his cause with irresistible terror, and avenge the quarrel of his sacred blood. But, behold, he seems to forget himself and all his wrongs, great and cruel as they were, and, in the midst of a procession intended for his honour, he melts into tears, as if it were for
42 the calamity of a friend or a brother, and says, in the most genuine language of undissembled grief, *Oh that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!*
43, 44 *Behold*, O our souls, with wonder and with awe, at once *the goodness and severity of God!* (Rom. xi. 22.) The sinners of Jerusalem wept over, and yet abandoned to ruin! We have our part in all this: the tidings of the
42 gospel are the things which belong to our peace, the things on which our everlasting happiness depends. Let us remember that the time will come in which, if we do not attend to them, they will be hid from our eyes. There is a limited day of mercy and grace; and therefore *to-day, while it is called to-day*, let us *hear his voice, and not harden our hearts*, (Heb. iii. 15.) lest slighted mercy at length retire, and vengeance take its turn; a vengeance which will fall the heavier, and pierce the deeper, in proportion to all the long-suffering and goodness which have been exercised towards us in vain. Let all, and especially the ministers of Christ, learn compassion to souls by such an example; and when the strongest efforts of love prove ineffectual for their recovery, let us at least be mourning for them before the Lord, and weeping over the ruin which we cannot prevent.

MATT. XXI. Though Christ had cleared the temple from the profanations of these traders at the beginning of his ministry, he found the same pollutions returned at the close of it. And, alas, how often do we find it thus with respect to
12 our hearts! How soon do those weeds spring up again which we had been endeavouring with a resolute hand to root up; and how often are efforts for reformation forgotten, even when the attempt appeared at first to be most necessary! Let us learn of Christ not to be weary of well-doing, but with continued zeal renew our endeavours again and again.

15 The scribes and Pharisees envied Christ, but the children surrounded him with their Hosannas; and he graciously
16 accepts their feeble accents of praise, as ordained by God out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. Nor will he now despise the day of small things. Oh that we might have the pleasure to see little children pronouncing the name of Christ with reverence and love! And surely we who are parents must add, with a peculiar accent, Oh that our own may join in the choir! May they learn the song from our lips; and may our whole lives be one continued visible proof of the devotion and affection with which we present it! *Amen.*

SECTION CXLVIII.

Some Greeks that came to celebrate the passover at Jerusalem are introduced to Christ, who enters on an excellent discourse particularly suited to their circumstances; and retires in the evening to Bethany. John xii. 20—36. Matt. xxi. 17. Mark xi. 11.

JOHN xii. 20.

SECT. 148. JOHN XII. *AND among those that came up* to Jerusalem from different countries *to worship at the feast, there were some Greeks*, or persons who were descended from Grecian parents, and used that language, but had forsaken the idolatry of their ancestors, and devoted themselves
21 to the God of Israel:[a] *These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida*, a city *of Galilee*,[b] *and asked* it as a favour of *him* to introduce them to his Master, *saying*, in a very respectful manner, *Sir, we* earnestly *desire to see* and hear this *Jesus* of Nazareth,

JOHN xii. 20.

AND there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida, of Galilee, and

i They hung as it were on his lips while he spake.] This is the literal import of ἐξεκρέματο αὐτοῦ ἀκούων. To render it, (as in a late version,) *The populace were strongly attached to his doctrine*, is far from expressing the full sense.

k House of Caiaphas in his full view.] If we may credit the best accounts of Jerusalem which remain, this was exactly the case.—I cannot forbear referring my reader to Mr. Howe's excellent treatise, entitled, *The Redeemer's Tears wept over lost Souls*; in which, as in most of his practical works, there are such sublime and pathetic strokes of true, manly, and Christian eloquence, as do a great honour to the language and age in which they were written.

a *Some Greeks*—who had devoted themselves to the God of Israel.] It is strange that such learned critics as Isaac Vossius and Salmasius should imagine these worshippers to have been idolatrous Gentiles. Dr. Whitby and several other considerable writers have indeed thought they were such as are commonly called *proselytes of the gate*, that is, (as most readers well know,) persons who, having renounced idolatry, and being worshippers of the God of Israel, might, according to the law of Moses, be permitted to dwell in Judea, and to converse among the Jews, though not with entire freedom. And it has likewise been thought, that the regard which Jesus shewed to such, in vindicating the court of the Gentiles (where they assembled for religious worship) from the contemptuous profanations of the Jews, (Matt. xxi. 12, 13. p. 293.) might dispose these pious persons to address themselves to him.—But their attending at the passover leads me rather to imagine (with Arndius, *Miscel. Sac.* p. 6.) that they were what the rabbies now call *proselytes of righteousness*, that is, such as by circumcision obliged themselves to observe the whole law; (compare Acts ii. 5; viii. 27; xiii. 43.) Yet I will not venture confidently to affirm it.

b *Bethsaida of Galilee.*] This town lay on the borders of Syro-Phœnicia, from whence (as Grotius thinks) these Greeks might come; so that they might perhaps be acquainted with Philip as a neighbour; or otherwise we cannot say why this circumstance relating to him is here mentioned.—The learned Reland argues that there were two Bethsaidas, of which this lay to the north. See Reland, *Palestine*, p. 653.

desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

of whom we have been told such extraordinary things, and who has now been received into the city with such unusual regard.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

Upon this *Philip comes and tells* what their request was, to *Andrew*, who likewise was of Bethsaida, and had been first acquainted with Christ; (John i. 40, 44. sect. xxi. xxii.) *and then Andrew and Philip*, having agreed upon it, went and *told Jesus* that some Greeks who were come to the feast desired admittance to him.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.

[7] *And Jesus* immediately ordered them to be brought to him; and as they were approaching him, he *answered them, saying*,[c] At length *the hour is come*, and the appointed time is just at hand, *that the Son of man must be glorified;* and I would have you look on the approach of these Greeks as an earnest of the flowing in of all the Gentiles to me. 23

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

But wonder not if my death is to precede it; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and assure you of it as a most solemn and important truth, That *unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground and die* and waste away there, *it remains* single and *alone*, *but if it* seem to *die* and wither after it is sown, such is the principle of vegetation which it contains, that a new production of the like kind arises, and *it brings forth much fruit*. And so it is that I myself shall fall, and a new scene be opened, in which my kingdom shall seem to be utterly lost and gone; yet, like the spring corn, it shall assuredly revive, and appear beautiful and fruitful. 24

25 He that loveth his life, shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

But in the mean time, such difficulties are also to be expected by my faithful servants, that it is but fit I should inform these strangers of what I have once and again told you, that *he who loves his* own *life* too well to part with it for my sake, *shall lose it*, and expose himself to death in the worst and most dreadful sense of the word; *but he that* acts as if he *hates his life in this world*, by exposing it to the greatest dangers in the cause of my gospel, *shall preserve it* even *to everlasting life*, and secure a state of immortal glory and happiness. (Compare Matt. x. 39. sect. lxxvi. Mark viii. 35. sect lxxxix. and Luke xvii. 33. sect. cxxviii.) 25

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

If any man therefore would engage to *serve me* as one of my loyal people, *let him* resolve to *follow me* whithersoever I shall lead him, whatever dangers and difficulties may lie in the way: *and* let him know, for his encouragement, that *where I am*, or where I am shortly to take up mine abode, *there shall also my* faithful *servant be:* for I will assign him an inheritance in that blessed world where I am for ever to rest and reign after all the sufferings I have endured here: *and* I assure you that, among all that follow me, *if any man*, of whatever nation he be, or whatever his religious profession may before have been, will faithfully *serve me* here,[d] *him will* [*my*] *Father* also *honour*, and confer such rich rewards upon him as to make him for ever both great and happy. 26

27 Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Having said this, our Lord paused for a while, and entered on a deep contemplation of the very different views of things which lay before him: And then he added aloud, *Now is my* very *soul* distressed and *troubled* in an affecting view of my approaching sufferings; *and what shall I say?* What petition shall I offer to God on this occasion? Shall I say, *Father, save me from this* dreadful *hour*, and from all the agonies which I am to endure in the gloomy season before me?[e] Nay, *but for this cause* was I born into the world, and for this end *I came* even *to this* present *hour*, that I might bear the sufferings on which I am entering, and might redeem my people by them. And far be it from me to draw back from such engagements and undertakings: I will therefore much rather say, *Father, glorify thine own name*, and dispose of me and all my concerns in such a way as may most effectually answer that great end. 27

28 Father, glorify thy name.—

—Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

Then, at that very instant, while he was speaking, *there came a voice from heaven* [*which said,*] *I have both* already *glorified* [*it*] by the whole of thy ministry thus far; *and I will glorify* [*it*] yet *again* in a more signal manner by what farther remains before thee. 28

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

The multitude therefore who stood by and heard [*it,*] though not all in a manner equally distinct, were perfectly astonished at the awful sound; and some among them *said that it thundered*,[f] while *others* who were nearer, *said* that *an angel spake to him* from heaven. 29

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

But *Jesus answered and said* to his disciples, who stood near and distinctly heard it, *This voice* from heaven *came not* chiefly *for my sake*, who was before assured of the affection of my Father, and knew the purpose he had formed to glorify himself by me; 30

c *Jesus answered them, saying.*] The phrase here intimates the suitableness of the following discourse to this particular occasion, by attending to which many of the beauties of it will be discovered. Our Lord might perhaps enlarge on some of these hints; and if his hearers took a due notice of them, and made a proper report on their return home, it might prepare the way for the apostles, when they came by their preaching more fully to unfold and illustrate these important doctrines.

d *If any man serve me.*] Our Lord, by this indefinite expression, strongly intimates that his kingdom was to be of a very extensive nature; and that not only the proselytes of righteousness, but those of the gate, and indeed even the idolatrous Gentiles themselves, might, on their believing the gospel, be admitted into it.

e *What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?*] I suppose few need be told that the *pointing* of the New Testament is far less ancient than the *text*. It is agreeable to observe how many difficulties may be removed by varying it, and departing from the common punctuation: of which I take *this* to be one of the most remarkable instances. For as the text does not oblige us to it, it does not seem natural to suppose that our Lord actually offered this petition, and then immediately retracted it again.

f *Said that it thundered.*] Thunder often attended a voice from heaven: (see Exod. xix. 16, 19; Rev. iv. 5; vi. 1; x. 3.) In allusion to which, perhaps, the *voice* itself was called by the ancient Jews, *Bath Kol*, or *the daughter of the voice*, being ushered in with *thunder*, and, as it were, produced from it.—Elsner has shown that the heathens reckoned that sudden thunder was a sign that a prayer then offered met with the most favourable regard. (See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 334, 335.)—Dr. Lightfoot observes here (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) that Christ had *thrice* the testimony of *a voice from heaven*; first, when he entered on his public ministry, as the High-Priest of our profession, at his baptism; (Matt. iii. 17.) and then a second time, when a command was given to hear him, as the great Prophet of the church, at his transfiguration; (Matt. xvii. 5.) and now again, when he had made his public entry into Jerusalem, as a King.

SECT. 148. JOHN XII.

but it was uttered *for yours*, that you may not be offended at the treatment I shall meet with, and quit your hope in me, and regard for me, on account of any of the sufferings which are coming upon me. This indeed is a very critical and important time: for *now is the judgment of this world*,[g] which I am going to conquer and condemn, that by my death my followers may both be taught and enabled to triumph over it, and those may be convinced of sin that believe not in me: (compare Gal. i. 4; and John xvi. 8, 9.) Yea, *now shall* Satan, *the ruler* and god *of this world, be cast out* from that empire which he has so long usurped over the minds of men, and especially over the heathen nations. (Compare Eph. ii. 2; and 2 Cor. iv. 4.) *And when I am lifted up from the earth*,[h] though I may seem thereby to be made the trophy of mine enemies, yet such shall be the effect of that important event, that *I shall* thereby *draw all men to me;* that is, I shall lay a foundation for conquering the most stubborn hearts by so rich a display of my love; and shall, by a secret but powerful influence on their minds, persuade multitudes of all ranks and all nations to list themselves under the banner I raise. (Compare John iii. 14, 15. p. 52.)

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Now this he spake of his being lifted up from the earth, as *signifying by what death he should die*, even by crucifixion, in which the person suffering was lifted up on high, and hung as it were between heaven and earth: And in general it was understood by the people as implying some violent death shortly to come upon him. *The multitude* therefore *answered him, We have heard* it taught as a certain truth *out of the law*, or out of the volume of our sacred writings, *that the Messiah* is immortal and *abides for ever;* "that "his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion continues unto all generations;" (2 Sam. vii. 16; Psal. lxxxix. 29; cx. 4; Isa. ix. 7; Ezek. xxxvii. 25; Dan. ii. 44; vii. 14.) *and how* then *dost thou*, who now plainly professest thyself to be the Messiah, *say that the Son of man must be lifted up* from the earth, and die a violent death? *Who is this Son of man?*[i] Is he, as such language as this might seem to intimate, a different person from the Messiah, whom we have been taught to expect under the title of the Son of man? This was said by some of the multitude who were ill-affected towards him, and desired to find something to object against him.

33 (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?

Then Jesus said to them, Do not cavil at what I now say; but remember how short this opportunity is which, through the divine goodness, you now enjoy: *yet a little while is the light with you* which you may derive from me, or my servants who shall come to you in my name; *walk* therefore *while you have the light;* comply with the gracious purposes of God in making these discoveries to you, and regulate your temper and conduct by them; *that darkness may not overtake you*, that you may not be deprived of the gospel, and left in a night of ignorance and misery: *for* you know it is a most uncomfortable thing for a traveller to be benighted in his way, as *he that walks in darkness* wanders from place to place, and *knows not whither he goes*, or into what dangers he may fall the very next step he takes; and much more dreadful will it be for you to be deserted of God, and left to the darkness and folly of your own hearts. (Compare John xi. 9, 10. sect. cxxxix.) Let me therefore once more seriously and kindly exhort you, that *while you have the light* thus clearly shining around you, you *believe in the light*, and honestly follow it, *that you may be the children of light*, who, being now truly wise and good, shall be the heirs of holiness, glory, and joy everlasting.

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.—

These things Jesus spake, when the Greeks applied themselves to him; *and* as the unbelieving Jews were greatly irritated by the actions and discourses of the day, and would not be awakened to conviction, he *left them and departed* thence to a retired place: *and when now it was late in the evening, he* privately *went out of the city to Bethany, with* none to attend him but *the twelve* apostles; *and*, knowing that his enemies were watching to destroy him, and might have attempted to seize him by night if he tarried at Jerusalem, *he lodged there* at Bethany, *and concealed himself from them*, to avoid the assaults of their deliberate malice till his hour was come.

—These things spake Jesus, [and he left them] and departed; [Mark, and now the even tide was come, he went] [out of the city unto Bethany] [Mark, with the twelve;] [and he lodged there,] and did hide himself from them. [Matt. xxi. 17. Mark xi. 11.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 20, 21, 23, 22

WHO can wonder at the desire these Greeks expressed to see so celebrated a Person as Jesus was! We hope there was something more than mere curiosity in it, and that at length they saw him with believing eyes, and, according to his prediction, glorified him by a cordial acceptance of his gospel.—His disciples, we see, were ready to introduce them: and surely every faithful minister of Christ will undertake the task with pleasure, when he sees souls awakened by divine grace, and inquiring after Jesus with affectionate concern.

24 Blessed be God, it has already, in many instances, been seen that by the death of Christ an immortal seed was sown which has multiplied in all ages, and is still multiplying: Oh that it might have a greater increase! One

g *Now is the judgment of this world.*] Mr. Massey renders this, (in his *Vernac. Sacra*, p. 8, 9.) *Now is the world come to its crisis:* and Grotius and More (in his *Theological Works*, p. 207.) explain it of the *redemption of the world*, or its vindication from the bondage of Satan. But this is so unusual a sense of the word, that I chuse, with Dr. Whitby, to understand it of the *condemnation of the world*, or of the *judgment* passed upon its wicked principles and practices, and of the victory which Christians were to gain over it in consequence of the death of Christ. See John iii. 18, 19; xvi. 8, 11.

h *When I am lifted up from the earth.*] I think Dr. Whitby's note on this text sufficiently vindicates this version of εαν υψωθω. See the Greek Version of Deut. vii. 1; Judges vi. 3; xxi. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Kings xiii. 31; Job vii. 4; Prov. iii. 24; iv. 12; Jer. iii. 16; and compare John xiv. 3; 1 John iii. 2; and 3 John ver. 10. where εαν ελθω may signify, *when I come.*

i *Who is this Son of man?*] A writer of great note interprets this as if they had said, "Who is this that so absurdly, and inconsistently with the prophets, speaks of himself as the *Son of man*, "while he talks of being *lifted up*, and dying?" (See Dr. Sykes *On Christianity*, p. 110.) But the sense given in the paraphrase appears to me more natural, and I am pleased to find it in Grotius. This was a real and important difficulty; but it was fit some obscurity should for the present be left upon it, lest the plainness of the prediction should have prevented its accomplishment. Our Lord therefore gave the discourse a useful turn, and a few days more proclaimed the mystery which he had before revealed to his

would think that words so gracious as these should promote that increase, and operate upon every heart to produce a love to him sufficient to conquer every danger and opposition which may be met with in his cause: behold the promise which he has left upon record; "*If any man*, be he ever so mean and unworthy, will but faithfully *serve* "*and follow me*, whatever his former wanderings and rebellions may have been, *where I am, there shall also my* "*servant be*." Happy state indeed! not only, like these Greeks, to have a transient sight of Christ, but to be for ever with him! SECT. 148. JOHN XII.

How admirable is the love and stedfastness of our Redeemer, who procured so great a happiness for us at so dear an expense! and even when his innocent soul was troubled in the view of his sufferings, instead of declining them, 27
met them with joy! How should it animate us to renew that general comprehensive petition, than which none can be more suitable to us with regard to all the divine dispensations: *Father, glorify thine own name!* Glorify 28
thyself, O Lord! and to that great end dispose of us as thou pleasest; for we should abhor ourselves if we had any interest separate from thine!

We may be assured, as certainly as by a voice from heaven, that this great end shall be answered; and in this
we should rejoice. Behold, *the prince of this world is cast out!* Satan is vanquished by Christ! and Jesus is 31, 32
lifted up on the cross for a standard to all the nations. Behold the attractive magnet by which all men are to be drawn, by which all chosen people shall be brought to him, and so raised up to heaven itself! Let us *look unto him from the ends of the earth*, and labour with our cold hearts to awaken them to that lively and ardent affection which we owe to him who was crucified for us.

For ever adored be divine grace for this gospel-light which discovers to us so excellent an object! May we use it 35, 36
to saving purposes, and so walk in it, as that we may appear to be the children of light! Let us think of that last distribution of mankind, when the children and heirs of light and darkness are once for all to be separated. Let us think of the gloom of eternal night, which will shortly overtake those by whom the gospel is now despised; and remember how much it will be aggravated by the light we have so long seen. Do thou, O God, at whose word light arose out of darkness, *send forth*, by thine influences on our hearts, *thy light and thy truth*, that they may *lead and bring us to thine holy hill;* (Psal. xliii. 3.) and that we may have the satisfaction of knowing whither we go, even when *we walk through the* dark *valley of the shadow of death!* (Psal. xxiii. 4.)

SECTION CXLIX.

John's reflection on the infidelity of the Jews. As Christ was returning the next morning to Jerusalem, he curses the barren fig-tree. John xii. 37—43. Matt. xxi. 18, 19. Mark xi. 12—14.

JOHN xii. 37.

BUT though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

JOHN xii. 37.

NOW such was the perverseness of the Jews, and such the prejudice they had conceived against our Lord, that though he had sufficiently declared himself to be the true Messiah, and *though he had done so many* undeniable and glorious *miracles* at this and other times *before them*, in their most public places and most numerous assemblies, *yet* the greater part of them were hardened in their infidelity, and, notwithstanding all that he had said and done, they were in general so obstinate that *they did not believe on him* as the Messiah. 37
So that the saying of Isaiah the prophet was plainly *fulfilled* and verified in them,[a] 38
which he spake in the name of Christ and of his servants, referring expressly to the gospel times, (Isa. liii. 1.) "*Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm* "*of the Lord been* so effectually *revealed* or made bare[b] as to conquer those strong pre-"judices which men have entertained against thine appointed method of salvation?"

And *for this reason they were* now in a manner utterly *incapable of believing, because* many of them having long wilfully opposed the most sufficient and proper methods 39
of conviction, were at length given up by God to a judicial hardness and blindness; [*as*] the same prophet *Isaiah says elsewhere*, (Isa. vi. 10.) "Having refused to hearken to the 40
"voice of God, *he has* in righteous judgment *blinded their eyes and hardened their* "*heart*;[c] *lest they should* (as he adds in the name of God) *see with their eyes, and under-*"*stand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal* and save *them*, which, after "such obstinate perverseness, I am determined that I never will." (Compare Matt. xiii. 14, 15. p. 131; and Acts xxviii. 27.) *These things Isaiah spake when he saw his* 41
glory,[d] even the glory of Christ, who was then the medium of the divine manifestation,

SECT. 149. JOHN XII.

apostles in private, when he set out on his last journey to Jerusalem. (See Matt. xx. 18, 19. § 142. p. 279.)

a *So that the saying of Isaiah was fulfilled.*] It is apparent (as the late judicious Mr. Jeffery has observed in his *True Grounds, &c.* p. 110.) that the accomplishment of this prophecy could not be the end they proposed to themselves in their unbelief; and consequently that the expression ἵνα πληρωθῇ must be rendered as it is here: which may be applied to several other passages; and shows, by the way, how precarious that remark of Mr. Pierce is, by which he would make that phrase an argument that the scripture introduced by it is quoted not in any instance by way of accommodation, but always according to its original design and literal meaning.

b *Hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*] I apprehend this phrase may allude to the habit generally worn by the Easterns, and especially by persons of rank, which was a long robe without sleeves; so that when the arm was stretched out to perform any action which required strength, it would appear uncovered. (Compare Isa. lii. 10.) In this connexion it seems strongly to imply, that whenever true faith is produced in the mind, it is to be considered as the effect of a divine energy. See Eph. i. 19; and Col. ii. 12.

c *He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.*] As God is said to *harden the heart of Pharaoh* in one place, while in another it is said *he hardened his own heart;* (Exod. ix. 12; and viii. 15, 32.) and as we ought to be very tender of ascribing to God any thing that looks like a necessitating influence to impel men to sin, I apprehend that all we are here to understand by God's blinding and hardening these Jews is, that he permitted them to grow more and more prejudiced against the gospel, and, for wise reasons, acted in such a manner as he knew would in fact be abused by them to an increase of those prejudices. The learned, by consulting the originals of the places below, may see instances of a phraseology nearly resembling and illustrating this. Compare Lev. xiii. 3; Ezek. xiii. 19, 22; xiv. 9; xx. 25; Gen. xli. 13; Jer. i. 10; iv. 20; and Acts x. 15; where a person is said to do what he permits, or what he declares or foretells. The Evangelist in this quotation has not confined himself exactly to the words of the prophet, but the sense is plainly the same; and nothing was more usual with the Jews than to quote scripture in this way. See Surenhusius, *De Formulis Allegandi*, p. 367.

d *When he saw his glory.*] These words seem so plainly to refer to Christ, that I cannot but approve the argument which the learned Bishop Pearson draws from Isa. vi. 1. to prove that Christ was the Jehovah that spoke to the prophet. (Pearson *On the Creed*, p. 125.) Dr. Clarke indeed explains it of *seeing the Father's glory:*

SECT. 149. *and spake of him* and of his times in the awful words mentioned above, which had their terrible accomplishment in the men of this generation.

Nevertheless, at this very time *there were many even of the rulers* themselves *who* were inwardly convinced that he was the Messiah, and *believed on him* as such, still expecting that he would by some surprising providence be raised to the throne of Israel; but *they did not* think it convenient as yet to *confess* the convictions of their own hearts concerning [*him,*] *on account of* the declared enmity of *the Pharisees* against him, *lest* by them *they should be cast out of the synagogue*, and be exposed to the great ignominy and secular detriment which necessarily attended such a sentence. *For they* were such thoughtless and mean-spirited creatures, that they *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;* and durst not face the contempt of their fellow mortals, even to secure the approbation of their Maker. (Compare John v. 44. p. 99.) This was the state of things at Jerusalem, and this the effect of Christ's entrance into it, as related above.

JOHN XII. 42

43

42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

MARK XI. But though the malice of his enemies was known to Jesus, *and* he was sensible they were contriving to destroy him, yet *on the morrow-morning* he again set out with his disciples for Jerusalem: and *when they were come from Bethany, as he returned into the city, he was* very *hungry;* having come out early without eating, that he might neither incommode his friends, nor break in upon his secret or public devotions.[e] *And* as he was now *on the way, seeing a single fig-tree*[f] *at a* considerable *distance, which had* a fine spread of *leaves* upon it, and therefore appeared to be one of the earlier kind, *he went* up *to it,* [*to see*] *if he could find any thing upon it* to satisfy his hunger; *and when he came to it, he found nothing thereon but leaves only; for* there was not so much as any fruit in the bud; by which it plainly appeared that, though it looked so beautiful, it was a barren tree. Now it is to be observed, that our Lord turned out of the way because, as it was yet but early in the summer, *the time of* gathering *figs was not* [*yet*] come;[g] so that had this tree produced any, it might have been expected they would be growing still upon it. *And Jesus*, finding it to be a barren tree, that only made a promising appearance, but had produced no fruit, *said to it upon this occasion*,[h] As thou art fruitless now, continue always so; *let no man from henceforwards ever eat fruit of thee, nor any fruit hereafter ever grow upon thee. And his disciples heard* [*it,*] and took notice of the words; *and* as soon as he had spoken them, (though his disciples, as they were passing on, did not observe it at that time,) *the fig-tree immediately withered away;* Christ intending by that significant action to intimate that the curse of God should thus wither and destroy the Jewish nation, which he had before compared to an unfruitful fig-tree. (See Luke xiii. 6—9. sect. cxvi. p. 231.)

MARK XI. 12

13

14

Mark xi. 12. And on the morrow [in the morning,] when they were come from Bethany, [as he returned into the city,] he was hungry, [Matt. xxi. 18.]

13 And seeing a fig-tree [in the way] afar off, having leaves, he came [to it,] if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing [thereon] but leaves [only;] for the time of figs was not *yet*. [Matt. xxi. 19.]

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever: [Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.] And his disciples heard *it;* [and presently the fig-tree withered away.] [Matt. xxi. 19.]

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN XII. Ver. 37 How evidently necessary is the operation of divine grace to conquer the prejudices of a sinful heart, since even the preaching of Christ himself, enforced by all his stupendous miracles, could not overcome those prejudices without it! And how cautious should sinners be, that they do not stop their ears to the joyful sound of the gospel,

(*Script. Doct. of the Trin.* p. 58.) But it is difficult to say, on that supposition, what the Evangelist intended by adding that clause, [*and spake of him:*] and it would be quite unexampled to suppose that κυριον has two such different significations in the same line, as that the meaning should be, he saw the Father's glory, and spake of the Son. See Vitringa on Isa vi. 1. p. 142. *et. seq.*

e Might neither incommode his friends, nor break in upon his devotions.] This must certainly have been the reason of our Lord's hunger; for none can imagine that the hospitable and most sensibly obliged family of Lazarus would otherwise have suffered Jesus to come out without eating; or that, if he had eaten that morning, he would have been so hungry, before he had walked two miles, as to go out of the way to gather figs. To me there appears an inexpressible charm in this oblique hint; it shows how little the Evangelists were inclined to enter into panegyrics or reflections on the excellent character of their Master; and is a specimen of that simplicity and modesty which might, independent of other arguments, almost compel the assent of persons of a like temper, to the wonderful story which they relate in so genuine and unaffected a manner.

f *Seeing a single fig-tree.*] Though in the first edition I had only followed Mark, and rendered it, *seeing a fig-tree*, I think, upon farther consideration, that συκην μιαν, which is the expression Matthew uses here, (though our translators make no difference,) should have been rendered, *a single fig-tree*, which I have now inserted in the version.

g *The time of figs was not* [*yet*] come.] I shall not trouble the reader with an account of all the strange *solutions* which have been given to the difficulty which immediately arises in the mind on reading this clause; nor with the particular reasons which may be offered against each. The best view of them all, that I can recollect, may be had by consulting Witsius, in his *Meletemata;* and I think the best solution may be seen in Mr. Hallet's *Notes and Discourses*, Vol. II. p. 114—124. It is certain, as he has there proved from incontestable authority, and we have observed elsewhere, (note b, on Luke vi. 1. p. 100, 101.) that the climate of Judea being abundantly warmer than ours, the passover, though never later than April, commonly fell at the beginning of their harvest, that is, of their summer, which is there vehemently hot, not only in May, but in March and April; (in which last this passover probably fell:) compare Josh. iii. 15; iv. 19; v. 10, 11; and 1 Chron. xii. 15. (See also Lev. xxiii. 15—17. compared with Exod. ix. 31, 32; and Ruth ii. 23.) Now it is equally certain that one, and that the most delicate kind of figs, was ripe in Judea at the beginning of summer; (as we have a fine sort in England which are ripe before our harvest, having put out the autumn before, and stood the whole winter:) see Hos. ix. 10; Mich. vii. 1; Nah. iii. 12; Jer. xxiv. 2; Cant. ii. 11—13; and Isa. xxviii. 4. And the fig-tree opening its leaves, which every body knows do not appear till after the fruit, is spoken of as a sign of approaching summer, Matt. xxiv. 32. Our Lord therefore at this time might well expect to find fruit on this tree, since the time of gathering even these early figs was not yet come, which if it had, there would have been no room for the expectation, or the curse which followed it. That καιρος συκων does not signify, as some have fancied, a kindly season for figs, but the time of gathering them in, I think the learned Bishop Kidder has abundantly proved. (See his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, § ii. p. 38, 39.)—Compare Matt. xxi. 34; Mark xii. 2; and Numb. xiii. 23. It is true this interpretation of the story, though incomparably easier than any other I know, will require a transposition of the clause before us; as if it had been said, *He came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; for the time of figs was not* yet; *and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves.* But no interpretation whatever can make the last clause, as we read it, a reason for what stands immediately before it, that he found nothing but leaves; for it is well known, that if our common fig-trees have no young figs on them in March or April, they can produce none that year. None can deny another transposition of the like kind in the same Evangelist, Mark (xvi. 3, 4. § 194.) both of them probably being occasioned by an accidental interlineation in the *original*, and a mistake of some earlier transcriber, who did not bring in the interlined clause exactly in its due place. See instances of the like kind, Gen. xiii. 10; and Josh. xxii. 22. And if with Heinsius, Knatchbull, and Gataker, we should here read ὁ *where* instead of ὁ *not*, and render it, *where he was it was the season of figs*, we must admit of the same transposition, and consequently should gain no advantage at all, by a version which (as all learned men know) is very harsh, and attended with an inelegancy and impropriety which this would be no proper place to examine.

h *And Jesus said to it upon this occasion.*] It is plain that in this place this must be the sense of that phrase, *Jesus answered and said.* Compare note f, on Matt. xi. 25. p. 118.

and shut their eyes against its glorious light; lest God should leave them to their own delusions, and in his righteous judgment seal them up under final blindness and impenitence! Then will they never be converted and healed, but die with that poison in all the faculties of their souls, which will make them for ever restless and miserable. SECT. 149.

Can we find words sufficient to express the madness of these Pharisees, who, while they were in their consciences convinced that Jesus was the Christ, would not confess that conviction, and publicly pay their homage to him, *because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God?* Strange infatuation of the human mind! that it should be capable of believing there is a God, and yet of preferring the creatures before him; and should sometimes imagine the vain breath of popular applause or popular censure so considerable, as that God should be offended to please man; and all the honours and rewards of his heavenly presence lost, to secure a little regard from those who are perishing in their crimes, and will ere long be themselves the objects of everlasting shame and contempt. JOHN XII. 42, 43

May none of us ever indulge such a temper, or ever rest in an empty profession; lest, being like the fig-tree before us, which had leaves but no fruit, the curse of Christ should be pronounced upon us, which would immediately wither us amidst all our verdure! Let us remember that this was intended as one of those significant actions by which the holy messengers of God frequently intimated approaching judgments. Happy would it have been if some, instead of searching out objections against it, had seriously considered its design, and the sad aspect with which it looks on those who, like them, *receive the grace of God in vain!* MARK XI. 13, 14. MATT. XXI. 10

SECTION CL.

Christ arriving at Jerusalem, visits the temple again; and, after a repeated effort to reform the continued abuses there, discourses with the people in a manner which further exasperates the priests; and in the evening goes out of the city. Mark xi. 15—19. John xii. 44, *to the end.*

MARK xi. 15.

AND they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

MARK xi. 15.

AND, soon after the fig-tree had been cursed, *they come to Jerusalem; and Jesus entering*, as he had done the day before, *into the temple*, observed, as he was passing through the court of the Gentiles, that the people who had polluted it by their traffic were seated there again; and being displeased to see that sacred place so shamefully profaned, he presently renewed his testimony against them, and *began to drive out them that sold and bought in* the limits of *the temple*,[a] *and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and* also *the seats of them that sold doves: And* he *permitted not that any one*, for the sake of shortening his way, *should carry any* burden or any kind of *vessel through* the courts of *the temple;* but strictly insisted on a due reverence to it, as a place that was entirely set apart to God's immediate service. *And he taught* them at large the evil of such practices; *saying to them, Is it not written*, (as I observed but yesterday,) "*My house shall* "*be called an house of prayer*, and that not only for the Jews themselves, but (as the "prophet says) *for* the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, or for those "pious proselytes who from *all* the neighbouring *nations* shall resort to it?" (Isa. lvi. 6, 7.) *But you have* turned it to another use, and *made it* in effect *a den of robbers*, by suffering people here to carry on their trades, and to profane the place in which the Gentiles are to worship God, by scandalous extortion and unlawful gain. (Compare Matt. xxi. 12, 13; and Luke xix. 45, 46. p. 293.) SECT. 150. MARK XI. 16, 17

John xii. 44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

And then, as considerable numbers of people were now gathered about him, *Jesus cried*, or proclaimed with a loud voice, saying, Be it known unto you all, that in these extraordinary steps which I take for the reformation of abuses and the vindication of God's house, I act by his own immediate direction and authority; and *he that* cordially *believes in me, believeth not in me* alone, *but in him that sent me*, and thereby does an honour to the Father himself. *And he that sees me*, and regards me with a lively faith, *does* also in effect *see him that sent me*, as the perfections of the Father are displayed in me; whereas he that shuts his eyes against me excludes the only means of being brought to the true knowledge of him. For, full of the inspiration of his blessed Spirit, *I am come a light into the world, that every one who* really *believes in me might not* any longer *abide in darkness*, but might attain to the knowledge of all necessary truth, and the enjoyment of the most solid and excellent happiness. *And if any one* of you *hear my words* which I am so frequently and freely speaking, *and will not believe* in me, *I do not* now *condemn him*, or immediately execute judgment upon him; *for* (as I formerly declared, John iii. 17. sect. xxvi.) *I am not come* at present *to condemn the world*, or to perform any work of wrath and terror, whatever ill usage I may meet with in it; *but* the design of my appear- JOHN XII. 44, 45, 46, 47

[a] *To drive out them that sold and bought in the temple.*] The time when this was done is fixed by Mark to the day after Jesus made his public entry into Jerusalem; and so (as was observed before, note c, on Matt. xxi. 12. p. 293.) this must have been a different fact from that related by Matthew, which he has introduced on the preceding day, before the shoutings of the children. We have supposed it, therefore, to be repeated by our Lord; for as it is improbable that he would not purge the temple on the day of his triumphant entry, when Mark expressly says that *he looked round about upon all things*, so it is plainly intimated here that he did it, after his return from Bethany, on the next day. Nor is it at all unlikely that, after Jesus was departed out of the city, there would be people enough, if it were only out of opposition to him, who would be ready to encourage the traders (some of whom might, perhaps, be new comers) to return again to their places. And Jesus therefore seems (as Mr. Whiston has observed) to have asserted the regard that was due to the temple now, with more severity and exactness than he had done the day before, not suffering any one so much as to carry a vessel through the temple; which is a circumstance not mentioned either by Matthew or Luke in their account of the transactions of the preceding day. (See § 147.)—But I see no foundation at all for Mr. Whiston's conjecture, that on the former day Christ drove them out of *the Jews' court*, and now out of that of the Gentiles; for it is no way probable that the traders were ever allowed to introduce their wares into the inner-court, for which the Jews had a peculiar reverence. See Mr. Whiston's *View of the Harmony*, p. 131; and Dr. Whitby's note on Mark xi. 17

SECT. 150. JOHN XII.

ance is mild and gentle, and I am come *to save the world*, and to make its inhabitants happy for time and for eternity, if they will be so wise as to hearken to the proposals I offer. Nevertheless, though I do not immediately judge any, yet *he that rejects me, and does not receive my words*, will not escape final condemnation, but will find, to his surprise and confusion, that he *has one that judges him:* for *the word that I have spoken*, 48 though heard with indifference from day to day, is recorded in the book of God's remembrance; and as the time will come when the proposals I have made shall be reviewed, [*even*] *that* very word *shall judge him in the last* awful *day*,[b] as the tenor of it is so excellent, that to have rejected it will prove a man ignorant of God, and alienated from true 49 religion and goodness. *For I have not spoken of myself*, either on my own motion, or on any precarious conclusions drawn from principles divinely taught; *but the Father who sent me, he gave me* ample instructions and *a* particular *commandment what I should* 50 *say, and what I shall* yet *speak* in that part of my work which is still before me. *And* I will faithfully conform myself to his instructions, whether men be pleased or offended with me; for *I know that his commandment is* of the greatest consequence, and that *eternal life* depends upon the knowledge and observance of it; and *therefore* I would by no means vary in a matter of so much importance; but *whatever I say* unto you, *I speak* it *just as the Father has given* it *me in charge*, and alter nothing in the message he has sent me to deliver. So that the doctrine which I preach should be received as coming from the Father, and by rejecting it you will be guilty of despising his authority.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

MARK XI. 18

Thus did our Lord continue to reform abuses, and to teach the people with the utmost seriousness and earnestness, on the second day of that week in which he suffered. *And the scribes and chief priests* were much offended when they *heard* [*of it,*] *and* diligently *sought how they might* find out some expedient to *destroy him, for they* not only envied but *dreaded him, because all the people were* visibly *struck* into attention and wonder *at his doctrine*, and seemed disposed to receive it with a respect proportionable to its importance and solemnity.

Mark xi. 18. And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 *And*, that he might give them no unseasonable advantages against him, *when the evening was come, he went out of the city*, and spent the night, as he had done before, in a retired place with his disciples.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15, 17

How hard is it to purge a carnal heart, and disentangle it from the snares of a deceitful world! No sooner were these traders driven from the temple but they return to it again, and are as busy the next day in the pursuit of their unlawful gain as they had been before. And thus how often are convictions stifled by the love of this world! And if the voice of conscience, or the word of God, may interrupt us for a while in our unlawful courses, yet where it may affect our worldly interest, how ready are we to return to them again: and with what difficulty are we brought so far to lay aside our earthly projects, as not to take them with us into the house of God! Purge us, O Lord, from every irregular desire; pursue and perfect thine own work; and *incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness!* (Psal. cxix. 36.)

JOHN XII. 44, 45

Most important is that proclamation which our Lord made in the temple, and is still making to us in his word: believing in him, we believe in the Father; and seeing him, we see the Father. Let us be ready therefore to receive him out of regard to his divine authority, as well as with a view to our own happiness; for without him we can have no access unto the Father, nor can we ever see him as a reconciled God. The sacred light which he diffuses around him is not intended merely to amuse our eyes with pleasing speculations, but to animate our hearts with holy affections, and to *guide our feet into the way of peace*. (Luke i. 79.) If we desire therefore to escape an abode in eternal darkness, and to see light everlasting, let us faithfully follow him: otherwise we are *condemned already*, and that word which he spake will become to us *a savour of death unto death*, (2 Cor. ii. 16.) and will judge us in the last solemn and dreadful day, when it shall sentence those who would not be saved by it.

Let us now make that word the rule of our life, which shall then be the rule of our judgment. We may most comfortably venture our eternal all on the exact veracity of it. Christ has perfectly fulfilled the commission he 49, 50 received from his Father, as one that was faithful to him that appointed him; and stands so completely approved in his sight, that our only hope is, that we also may be accepted in him, and find mercy and grace for his sake.

SECTION CLI.

Jesus returning to the city in the morning, his disciples observe that the fig-tree was withered away: being come into the temple, he confounds the members of the sanhedrim, who questioned his authority, and reproves them by the parable of the complaisant but disobedient son. Matt. xxi. 20—32. Mark xi. 20, *to the end;* xii. 1. Luke xx. 1—9.

SECT. 151. MARK XI. 20.

Mark xi. 20.

NOW Jesus, having spent the night with his disciples in a retired place without the city, returned again to Jerusalem on the third day of the week in which he suffered; *and in the morning, as they were passing by* the spot of ground where he had cursed the barren fig-

Mark xi. 20.

AND in the morning, as they passed by, [when the disciples] saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots,

b *That* very word *shall judge him, &c.* ο λογος ον ελαλησα, εκεινος κρινει αυτον.] Our Lord by this manner of speaking, represents *his word* as a *person* that should sit in judgment upon unbelievers at the last day. (Compare Heb. iv. 12.) But I can see no ground for Mr. Fleming's interpretation, (*Christology*, Vol. I. p. 136.) who would render it, *The Logos, which I have spoken of, shall judge him;* as if he had said, "Though it is not my present business to "do it, yet I have a commission from my Father, which is here- "after to take place when I shall appear worthy of that great "name." I do not recollect that our Lord had given himself the title of Logos in any of his discourses with the Jews; and therefore can see no reason to suppose such a reference to it.

[they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!] [Matt. xxi. 20.]

21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst, is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God: [Matt. xxi. 21.]

23 For verily I say unto you, That [if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree; but also] whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; [It shall be done, *and*] he shall have whatsoever he saith. [Matt. xxi. 21.]

24 [And] therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire,[*and* shall ask in prayer,] believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. [Matt. xxi. 22.]

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which *is* in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which *is* in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and [when he was come into the temple,] [Luke, it came to pass, that] as he was walking, [Luke, as he taught the people, and preached the gospel,] there [Luke, came upon him] the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders [of the people:] [Matt. xxi. 23. Luke xx. 1.]

Luke xx. 2. And spake unto him, saying, Tell us by what authority dost thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority [Mark, to do these

tree on the day before, *when the disciples saw the fig-tree*[a] *dried up from the roots*, and so entirely stripped of its leaves, that, though it stood at some distance from the road, they easily discerned the change, *they* were greatly struck at the sight, and *wondered, saying, How soon is the fig-tree* that stands yonder *withered away*, though yesterday it seemed so flourishing! *And Peter, recollecting* what had passed, took notice of it to Jesus, and *said unto him, Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst* but yesterday *is* now quite *withered away*. SECT. 151. MARK XI. 21

And Jesus answering, says unto them, See that you *have* a stedfast *faith in God*, and a full confidence in his power and fidelity, when you feel him secretly moving on your spirits to stir you up to any miraculous operation.[b] *For I assuredly say unto you*, *That if you have* such a firm and stedfast *faith, and do not doubt* of God's being ready to stand by you, *you shall not only do* such miracles as *this of the fig-tree, but also* shall perform far greater things; yea, *whosoever*, under such an impulse, and with such a believing temper, *shall* attempt any thing as difficult and extraordinary as if he were to *say to this mountain* which we are now crossing, *Be thou removed* from hence, *and thrown into the* distant *sea; and shall not* at all *doubt in his mind, but* stedfastly *believe that what he says shall come to pass, it shall* accordingly *be done*, [*and*] *shall be to him just as he says. And for this reason*, to encourage you boldly to act as God shall direct and instigate you, *I say unto you*, That *whatsoever things you shall desire* [*and*] *ask* of God *in prayer*, to make it manifest that you are sent of him, and to confirm your doctrine; if you *believe that you* shall actually *receive them*, however difficult the things may be that you request, yet in such circumstances they shall certainly be done, *and you shall have them.* 22 23 24

But still I would subjoin one caution; that if you expect your prayers should prevail with God, you must take care to offer them in love as well as in faith; *and when you stand praying*,[c] in the presence of that Majesty of heaven whom you have offended by so many provocations, you should *forgive, if you have any matter* of complaint *against any; that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive* even your most cruel enemies, and much more your offending brethren, *neither will your Father in heaven forgive you your trespasses:* (compare Matt. vi. 14, 15; xviii. 35.) And if your trespasses be not forgiven, you have little reason to hope for such extraordinary interpositions in answer to your prayers; or if those interpositions were to be granted, you would receive no manner of advantage from them, while, amidst all the glory of working the most amazing miracles, you lay under the load of guilt and condemnation. 25 26

And after Jesus had been thus discoursing with his disciples by the way, *they come again to Jerusalem; and when he was come into the temple, it came to pass that as he was walking* there,[d] *while he taught the people* who flocked around him, *and* zealously *preached the gospel* of the kingdom to all that were desirous to be instructed in it, *the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people*,[e] who were contriving his destruction, *came upon him* in a body, with a strong desire to confound and overbear him: *And* they *spake to him* in such a manner as to express their high displeasure at what had lately passed, *saying*, Thou hast here taken upon thee to reform the temple, which is our province alone, and hast in a tumultuous manner driven out those who had our permission to traffic in the outer court; we insist upon it, therefore, that thou *tell us* 27 LUKE XX. 2

a *When the disciples saw the fig-tree.*] Matthew relates this story of the fig-tree, as if the notice that the disciples took of it, and the account that Jesus gave them of the power of faith, followed immediately upon his cursing it. But Mark has so expressly referred these circumstances to the next morning, and so particularly mentions Peter's recollecting what had passed before, that it is plain his order must be followed here, which Matthew has neglected, that he might give us the whole of the story together.

b *Have faith in God*, &c.] It is certain that the attempt of performing miracles in public, was a remarkable instance of faith in the divine power and fidelity; for they were generally introduced by some solemn declaration of what was intended, which was in effect a prediction of immediate success: (so Peter says, Acts iii. 6. *In the name of Jesus Christ, Rise up and walk:* ix. 34. *Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole:* and again, ver. 40. *Tabitha, Arise.*) And in pronouncing this, the person speaking pawned all his credit as a messenger from God, and consequently all the honour and usefulness of his future life, on the immediate miraculous energy to attend his words, and to be visibly exerted on his uttering them. And hence it is that such a firm courageous faith is so often urged on those to whom such miraculous powers were given.—But what kind of intimation of God's intended miraculous interposition the apostles in such cases felt on their minds, it is impossible for any, without having experienced it, to know. It is therefore an instance of their wisdom, that they never pretend to describe it, since no words could have conveyed the idea.

c *When you stand praying.*] There is no room to doubt that standing was their usual posture when they prayed; as Dr. Lightfoot observes with respect to the Jews, (*Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. vi. 5.) and the learned author of the *Inquiry into the Worship of the Primitive Church*, (chap. ii. § 1.) has shewn it to be the practice of the first ages of the Christian church. (Compare Matt. vi. 5; and Luke xviii. 11.) But as the word [*stand*] has no particular significancy here, I might have omitted it in the translation, as the Prussian editors have frequently done, but that I do not chuse to multiply expletives in the sacred writings.

d *It came to pass, that as he was walking.*] Luke, who tells this, as he does several other stories, in a less circumstantial manner, says it was *on one of those days*; but the insertion of that clause here would have been improper, considering how particularly the date of this fact is fixed by Mark. If the reader should happen elsewhere to meet with the omission of a word or two in any of the Evangelists, (which he very seldom will,) I hope he will not condemn it, till he reflect whether it may not be accounted for in the same manner.

e *The chief priests—and the elders of the people.*] These are titles that frequently occur, but it is not easy to fix a determinate idea to them.—By the *chief priests*, I think we may understand any peculiar distinction in the Aaronic family: so that it may include the high priest, his deputy or sagan, any of the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests who might happen to be in waiting, and likewise any of those whom the Talmudists called Catholicin, Amarcalin, and Memunnim, who (if their testimony may be credited) were appointed to preside over the other priests and Levites, and to regulate the watch, the singers, &c. A summary account of them may be seen in Reland, *Antiq. Heb.* part ii. *cap.* iii. § 4, 5.—By the *elders of the people*, some would understand those representatives who were called Viri Stationarii, that were appointed to attend in their courses at the hours of morning and evening sacrifice in the name of the whole Israelitish nation; but I rather suppose it may signify the members of the grand sanhedrim, to whom that title most eminently and properly belonged; which is the more probable, as they were the persons under whose cognizance the late action of Christ in purging the temple would most naturally fall. These, with the persons above-mentioned, probably appeared in a considerable company, on purpose to daunt him, and to bear an united testimony against him, if any thing exceptionable should fall from him on this occasion.

SECT. 151. roundly and plainly *by what authority thou dost* all *these* extraordinary *things? and who he is that gave thee this authority* on which thou presumest *to do them?*

And Jesus, that he might at once reprove the impropriety of the question in those circumstances, and in effect return an unexceptionable, though oblique, answer to it, *said to them in reply, I will also ask you one* plain *question* on this occasion: *and* pray *answer me* this *one thing, which if you tell me, I will likewise* give you all the satisfaction you can desire, and directly *tell you*, if ye do yet indeed need to be told, *by what authority I do these things.* You all remember *the Baptism of John*, which was attended by such multitudes of people, and even by many of your leading men: (compare Matt. iii. 7. sect. xvi.) Now I would gladly know what you think of its original: *From whence was it* that he had his commission? was it *from heaven*, as he openly professed? *or* was it merely a contrivance *of men? Answer me* this, and then I will immediately resolve your question.

And they were perfectly confounded at so unexpected a demand, and *reasoned among themselves*, as it was natural to do, after this manner, *saying, If we shall say* that John's baptism was *from heaven, he will say to us, Why therefore did ye not believe him*, and yield to his well-known and repeated testimony of me? *But if we shall say* that his baptism had no divine warrant, but was merely the device *of* some wicked and designing *men*, who by that grave solemnity endeavoured to introduce their own ambitious schemes, *we* have reason to *fear* that *all the populace* who are here assembled *will* rise up and *stone us; for they are all* firmly *persuaded that John was really a prophet* sent of God; and as vast numbers of them were baptized by him, they will never bear to hear him vilified, either as an enthusiast or as an impostor. *And* therefore *they* declined to tell him what were their real sentiments, and *answered Jesus by saying, We cannot* yet certainly *tell whence [it was;]* for it is a question which still lies before the sanhedrim, and which they have not yet expressly determined.

And Jesus immediately *replied and said unto them, Neither do I* think it at all necessary to *tell you by what authority I do these things;* for the other question naturally requires to be determined first,[f] and when you think proper to decide that, you may easily perceive that the same answer will serve for both.[g]

MARK XII. *And* having thus silenced the members of the great council, who had taken upon them to examine him for his late proceedings, *he began to speak unto them, [and] to the people* who were now assembled, *by* several *parables*, of which we shall give a more particular account.

MATT. XXI. And first, he said to the scribes and Pharisees with whom he had been discoursing, You have evaded a direct answer to my question, *but what think you* of your own conduct in these circumstances, and of all the high professions you make of an extraordinary reverence for God, and zeal in his service? I will plainly tell you my thoughts of it, which are very naturally connected with the present subject.

There was *a man* who *had two sons; and coming to the first, he said, Son, go* directly away and *work to-day in my vineyard*, where, thou knowest, there is business to do that requires thine attendance. *And he answered* in a very rude and undutiful manner, *and said, I will not: but afterwards* considering better of it, *he repented* that he had used his father so ill; *and*, to make the best amends he could, he *went* into the vineyard, and laboured diligently there. *And* when the first had given so undutiful an answer to his father, *he came to the second, and said* to him *in the same manner* as he had done to his brother: *and he*, being a smooth, plausible lad, *answered* with great submission and readiness, *and said, Sir, [I am going]* this moment to obey your commands:[h] and *yet*, after all, *he went not* to the vineyard, but spent the whole day elsewhere.

Now I would leave it to yourselves to judge *which of the two* youths I have been speaking of *did the will of [his] father*, and with which of them he would, on the whole, be best pleased. And without hesitation *they say to him*, Undoubtedly *the first* of them.

Then *Jesus*, upon this, *says to them*, The application of this parable is very easy; for thus it is, that notwithstanding your professions of a regard to God, yet in your practice you are disobedient children, and reject his gospel; and *verily I say unto you, That* even the most abandoned sinners of the age, such as *the publicans and common prostitutes*, are much more open to conviction, and more likely to be wrought upon than you; and so many of them have already been awakened to repentance, that their example might *lead you the way into the kingdom of God;* but, with all your pretences to sanctity, you will not follow them. *For*, though you have not integrity enough freely to own it, you know in your own consciences that *John came* not *unto you* in a suspicious

things?] [Matt. xxi. 23. Mark xi. 28.]

3 And [Jesus] answered and said unto them, I will also ask you [Mark, one question,] and answer me, [*even* one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.] Matt. xxi. 24. Mark xi. 29.]

4 The baptism of John, [whence was it?] from heaven, or of men? [Mark, answer me.] [Matt. xxi. 25. Mark xi. 30.]

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, [unto us,] Why then believed ye him not? [Matt. xxi. 25. Mark xi. 31.]

6 But and if we [shall] say, Of men; [we fear] all the people will stone us: for they be [all] persuaded that John was a prophet [Mark, indeed.] [Matt. xxi. 26. Mark xi. 32.]

7 And they answered [Mark, and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell] whence *it was*. [Matt. xxi. 27. Mark xi. 33.]

8 And Jesus [Mark, answering] said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. [Matt. xxi. 27. Mark xi. 33.]

Mark xii. 1. And he began to speak unto them [*and* to the people] by parables. [Luke xx. 9.

Matt. xxi. 28. But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, Sir; and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first:—

—Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of right-

f The other question naturally requires to be determined first.] That singular turn which the reader will observe to be given to this answer of our Lord in the paraphrase, by which I think the propriety of it to be much illustrated, I owe to that very accurate and learned friend who suggested the substance of note g, on John vii. 22. p. 201.

g The same answer will serve for both.] This was plainly the case; for as, on the one hand, the express testimony which John bore to Christ must be a sufficient proof of his divine mission, if that of John was allowed, (since, according to a Jewish maxim, *The testimony of one prophet was sufficient to confirm the authority of another:*) so Christ had spoken in such an honourable manner of John, that to condemn John as an impostor, would imply a like censure on the character of Jesus.

h Sir, *I am going.*] This was a proper emblem of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, who addressed God under the most honourable titles, and professed the greatest readiness and zeal in his service while their whole lives were a series of disobedience and rebellion.

eousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterwards that ye might believe him.

manner, but *in the way of righteousness; and* did, in all his ministry, maintain the uniform character of an upright and pious man, as well as of a plain and awakening preacher, yet *you believed him not; but the publicans and harlots*, of whom I spake, *believed him: and you* were still so obstinate, that even *when you saw* [*it*,] and perceived a growing reformation among the most abandoned of mankind, yet you *did not afterwards repent* [*so as*] *to believe him.* (Compare Luke vii. 29, 30. p. 116.) And therefore I solemnly warn you, that your condition will another day be worse than theirs; and that you shall see those whom you now despise and abhor, entering into the glory from which you shall be excluded. SECT. 151. MATT. XXI. 32

IMPROVEMENT.

How little do the most specious pretences of piety signify, if they are not animated by the heart, and confirmed by the life! How vain are all the complimental forms of religion, when addressed to that God who penetrates all the secrets of the soul, and can have complacency in nothing but real and solid goodness! Yet how many are there who are free of their promises both to God and man, but always fail when the time of performance comes! And how many, with these unhappy rulers in Israel, go on to pride themselves in a kind of external nearness to God, and perhaps in a boasted commission from him, who are themselves so far from his kingdom, that even publicans and harlots, who did not pretend to any religion, are more like to be brought into it than they, as being more open to a conviction of their sin and danger, and so more ready to embrace an offered Saviour! Let us dread the guilt of receiving the grace of God in vain, lest, by rejecting the calls of the gospel, and abusing the privileges we enjoy, our hearts be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, so as to perish in impenitence and unbelief. Ver. 28 29—31 32

In vain do we, like these Pharisees, inquire into the evidences of Christ's authority, if we are not heartily resolved to submit to it. Yet with such cavillers and hypocrites must his ministers expect to meet. May they learn, by the example of their great Master, to answer them with the meekness of wisdom, and to join the sagacity of the serpent with the gentleness and innocence of the dove! 23 24—27

The promises which are made to a miraculous faith in prayer, are not indeed our immediate concern; but we may truly infer from them some encouragement in favour of the prayer of faith, on whatever account and in whatever circumstances it be offered: At least we may infer the necessity of forgiving injuries, if we desire that our petitions should be received with favour. Let us remember it, and labour to approach the throne of a forgiving God with hearts not only clear of every malignant passion, but full of that cordial and universal benevolence which may engage us to pray for all men, and particularly for those who have least deserved our kindness, and seem least disposed to requite it. MARK XI. 23, 24 25, 26

January 15. 1856.

SECTION CLII

Christ utters the parable of the vineyard let out to unfaithful husbandmen; from which he takes occasion plainly to admonish the Jewish rulers of the danger and ruin they would incur by the schemes they were forming against him. Matt. xxi. 33, *to the end.* Mark xii. 1—12. Luke xx. 9—19.

MATT. xxi. 33.

HEAR another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, [*or a place for* the wine fat,] and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen; and went into a far country [Luke, for a long time.] [Mark xii. 1. Luke xx. 9.]

34 And [at the season,] when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive [from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.] [Mark xii. 2. Luke xx. 10.]

35 And the husbandmen [caught] his servants, and beat one, [and sent *him* away empty,] and killed another, and stoned another. [Mark xii. 3. Luke xx. 10.]

36 [And] again he sent [unto them] other servants, more than the first; and they did unto them likewise: and at him *who was the chief* they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled,] [Luke and empty.] [Mark xii. 4. Luke xx. 11.]

MATT. xxi. 33.

OUR Lord having thus reproved the priests and elders in the temple who had been questioning his authority, and shown how inexcusable they were in not believing John, though they could not deny him to be sent of God, continued his discourse, and said to them and to the people, *Hear* now *another parable*, in which you are very nearly concerned, as your own consciences must quickly tell you: *There was a certain* man, a *master of a* considerable *family* and estate, *who planted a vineyard, and* spared no cost to render it fruitful; for he *made a* strong *hedge round it*, to preserve it from the incursion of men or beasts, *and digged* [*a place for*] *a wine-press in it*, [*or*] a large cavity which might serve as *a fat for the wine*, to receive the liquor when pressed from the grapes;[a] *and* he also *built a tower* in it for the accommodation and defence of the labourers; *and* then he *let it out to husbandmen*, who were to pay him a certain acknowledgment out of the produce of it; *and* he himself departed thence, and *took a journey for a long time into a distant country.* SECT. 152. MATT. XXI. 33

And at the proper *season, when the time of* gathering in *the fruit approached*, and a return was to be made him from the profits of it, *he sent his servants to the husbandmen* who had farmed it, *that he might receive from the husbandmen* that proportion *of the fruit of the vineyard* which was due to him for the rent. *And the husbandmen*, wickedly conspiring to keep the vineyard to themselves, instead of receiving them with due respect, and returning the appointed payment, *seized his servants, and beat one* of the chief of those who arrived first, *and sent him empty away; and* as the demand grew more pressing, they took up the weapons with which their lord himself had furnished them for very different purposes, and *slew another, and stoned another* till they had driven him away. 34 35

And when their lord heard the report of this their injustice, *he* did not immediately arm himself against them, but *sent again other servants to* treat with *them, more* in number and higher in office *than the first: but*, still persisting in their wickedness, *they did the same unto them; and* particularly, *at him* [*who was the chief*] person employed to account with them, *they threw stones, and wounded him* dangerously *in the head, and sent him away* not only *empty*, but very dishonourably *and shamefully treated.* 36

a *A fat for the wine.*] Matthew uses the word ληνον, and Mark υπολήνιον. The former signifies the *wine-press*, the other the *cavity under it*, in which the vessel was fixed which received the liquor pressed from the grapes. The one of these naturally implies the other; but our Lord might without any impropriety mention both.

SECT. 152.

And again the third [*time*] *he sent another* of his principal servants; *and him also they wounded*, as they had done the former, *and* even were so outrageous, that they *cast him out* of the vineyard, [*and*] *killed him: and* in like manner they assaulted *many others* who came with or after him on the same errand, *beating some* of them, *and killing others* outright.

MARK XII. 5.

LUKE XX. 13

Then the lord of the vineyard, being still unwilling to proceed to the last extremity with them, though they had been so very wicked and ungrateful in the treatment of his servants, *said* to them that were about him, *What shall I do* farther to reclaim them? *I will send my* own *son* to them.[b] *Having yet therefore one son*, who was *his well-beloved*, and the heir of the family, *he sent him last of all to them*, as the only gentle expedient that remained, *saying*, *Perhaps they will reverence my son when they see him*:[c] for surely they must needs have some respect for him, and will not presume to offer him any injury.

MATT. XXI. 38

But when the husbandmen saw the son come into the vineyard, instead of paying any due regard to him, *they* grew yet more outrageous in their wickedness, and *reasoned among themselves, saying, This is* the only *heir* of the whole estate; *come, let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance*,[d] *that* [*it*] *may be ours* from generation to generation, and no descendants of our master may remain to give any disturbance

39 to us or our children in the possession of it. *And* with malignant hearts and cruel hands *they* fell upon their master's son, and *seized him: and*, fearing neither God nor man, they *cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him*,[e] exposing his dead body in a most contemptuous and insolent, as well as inhuman manner.

40 *When therefore the Lord of the vineyard* himself *cometh*, armed with a power which they will be utterly unable to resist, *what will he do*, think you, *to those treacherous* and cruel *husbandmen*, when he has them entirely at his disposal?

41 And, as the Jewish rulers did not understand that they themselves were these unfaithful husbandmen, *they say unto him*, There is no doubt but *he will wretchedly destroy those* wicked and incorrigible *wretches*, nor is the most tormenting death too severe for them to expect; *and* he *will* then *let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall* faithfully *render him the fruits* of it *in their* proper *seasons*.

LUKE XX. 16

Thus did they, before they were aware, condemn themselves; and [*Jesus added*,] You have answered right: *he shall* indeed quickly *come and destroy these husbandmen* of whom I speak, whoever they shall appear to be, with terrible severity, *and* will *give the vineyard to others*. Now all this was as if he had said, Consider your own concern in what you have heard: God has planted a church among you, and given you an excellent revelation of his will; abundant provision has been made, both for your protection and your improvement too: but you have ungratefully refused the fruits of obedience which were so justly his due; and when he has frequently sent his servants the prophets, with one message and demand after another, you, the rulers and teachers of Israel, to whom the cultivation of the vineyard has been committed, have treated them in a most ungrateful and barbarous manner; and now at last he has sent his Son, and you are going to seize on him, and to add that murder which you are now contriving to the guilt of all your other crimes.

MATT. XXI. 43

I leave it therefore to your own consciences to judge what the event must be. And *for this reason* now *I say unto you* plainly, *That the kingdom of God*, which you have thus vilely and ungratefully abused, *shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation which shall bring forth the fruits thereof*; that is, his gospel shall be taken from you, and be carried to the Gentiles, who will have more regard to the favour shown them, and improve it much better than you have done.

LUKE XX. 16

And when they heard this sad denunciation with which the parable concluded, and found that [*it*] was aimed at them, *they said*, *God forbid* that this should be the case with regard to us, nor can we ever believe that it will.

17

And Jesus looked upon them with great seriousness and solemnity in his countenance, *and said unto them, What is this then that is written?* (Psal. cxviii. 22, 23.) *Did you never read*, or never reflect upon *this* remarkable passage *in the scriptures*, "*The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head*-stone *of the corner*:[f] *This is*

Mark xii. 5. And again he sent another [*the third time*:] and him they [wounded also, and cast *him* out, *and*] killed: and many others, beating some, and killing some. [Luke xx. 12.]

Luke xx. 13. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my—son. [Mark, Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last [of all] unto them, saying,] It may be they will reverence [my son] when they see him. [Matt. xxi. 37. Mark xii. 6.]

Matt. xxi. 38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, [Luke, they reasoned among themselves, saying,] This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. [Luke, that *it* may be ours.] [Mark xii. 7. Luke xx. 15.]

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. [Mark xii. 8. Luke xx. 15.]

40 When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen! [Mark ii. 9. Luke xx. 15.]

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Luke xx. 16. [*Jesus said*,] He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. [Mark xii. 9.]

Matt. xxi. 43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Luke xx. 16. And when they heard *it*, they said, God forbid.

17 And [Jesus] beheld them and said [unto them,] What is this then that is written? [Did ye never read [Mark, this] in the scriptures,] The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: [This is the

b *I will send my son.*] The question is not here how prudent it would have been in a human father to venture his son in such a case as this; for the power which God had of raising Christ from the dead, and making all his sufferings redound to his glory and happiness, quite alters the case. The design is to show the patience of God, and the wickedness of the Jews, by this emblem, than which nothing could be more expressive.

c *Perhaps they will reverence my son, &c.*] Numberless predictions in the Old and New Testament plainly show that God foresaw Christ's death as a certain event. This therefore, like many others, is merely an ornamental circumstance, which cannot without absurdity be applied in the interpretation of the parable.

d *Come, let us kill him, &c.*] If such a proposal would have been the height of folly as well as wickedness in these husbandmen, it was so much the more proper to represent the part the Jewish rulers acted in the murder of Christ, which they were now projecting, and which they accomplished within three days. The admonition was most graciously given; but served only in an astonishing manner to illustrate that degree of hardness to which a sinful heart is capable of arriving.

e *And cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.*] So Matthew and Luke express it; but Mark has changed the order of the words, and says, *They killed him and cast him out of the vineyard*; if we may not render that clause, *They both slew him and cast him out*, so as not to determine which was done first. One cannot suppose Christ uttered it both these ways; so that, if there be no accidental transposition in Mark, he probably meant thereby to intimate what is hinted in the paraphrase, the exposing his dead body in a most daring defiance of public justice. Those that explain the *casting him out of the vineyard*, of *excommunication*, which preceded or attended the execution of a capital sentence, do not observe the proper import of the vineyard. See below, note i.

f *The head*-stone *of the corner.*] This I take to be the meaning of the words κεφαλὴν γωνίας, rather than *the chief corner-stone*, as it does not appear exactly to answer to ἀκρογωνιαῖον, (Eph. ii. 20; and 1 Pet. ii. 6.) which, as the connection in those places shows, (as well as the use of it in other authors,) signifies that great corner-stone which lay at the bottom of the building as its support. What is mentioned afterwards of this head-stone falling on a person, seems not to suit with the supposition of its being laid on or under the ground. Compare Zech. iv. 7.

Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?] [Matt. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10, 11.]

18 [And] whosoever shall fall upon [this] stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.[Matt. xxi. 44.]

19 And [when] the chief priests and the scribes [and Pharisees had heard his parables, they] the same hour sought to lay hands on him; for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. [Matt. xxi. 45. Mark xii. 12.]

Matt. xxi. 46. But—they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet: [and they left him, and went their way.] [Mark xii. 12. Luke xx. 19.]

"*the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes?*" Words which, though they might seem to be accomplished in the exaltation of David to the Jewish throne, are in their highest sense applicable to the Messiah,[g] who, though disdainfully rejected by you scribes and Pharisees and rulers of the people, whose office it is to build up the church, is nevertheless chosen by God to be its great support and ornament. *And* therefore let me plainly tell you, That *whosoever shall fall upon this stone*, that is, whosoever shall stumble at me and my doctrine while I am here on earth in this humble form, he *shall be broken* and damaged by it; *but on whomsoever it shall fall*, when raised up to so glorious an eminence, *it shall* even *grind him to powder*,[h] like a brittle potsherd crushed by the weight of some huge stone falling upon it from on high: (compare Dan. ii. 44.) So, whoever shall oppose me after my exaltation to glory, and the pouring out of my Spirit for the full revelation of my gospel and proof of my mission, he will bring upon himself aggravated guilt, and dreadful, unavoidable destruction. SECT. 152. LUKE XX. 18

And when the chief priests and the scribes and Pharisees had heard his parables which he had now delivered, *they* were so provoked at what he had said, that even *in that very hour* they *sought to lay* their *hands on him*, that they might prosecute him even to death; *for they* plainly *perceived that he had spoken this parable* of the wicked husbandmen that should be destroyed, *against them*,[i] and had in effect set them all at defiance by the application of so signal a prophecy to himself. *But they feared the people* who were then present in the temple, *because they esteemed him as a Prophet* sent from God, and would not have borne that immediate assault upon him which the rage of these rulers would otherwise have engaged them to make. *And* therefore, not daring for the present to attempt to seize him with an open violence, *they left him, and went away* to take counsel in private against him, and to lay a plot for his life, which they might execute with less hazard to themselves. 19 MATT. XXI. 46

IMPROVEMENT.

When we read this parable, and consider it as levelled at the Jews, we applaud the righteous judgment of God in revenging so severely upon them the quarrel of his covenant and the blood of his Son; but let us take heed to ourselves, *lest we also fall after the same example of unbelief.* (Heb. iv. 11.)

God has given to every man some part of his vineyard to cultivate and improve, or some advantages to know and serve him. And as for us who enjoy the Christian dispensation, we have particular reason to say, *The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places.* (Ps. xvi. 6.) What could he have done more for this part of his vineyard? How ungrateful therefore shall we be, and how miserable too, if we withhold the fruits he so reasonably expects; if we slight the messengers by whom he so frequently and so pathetically demands them; yea, if by wilful impenitence and unbelief we in effect renew the slaughter of his beloved Son, after that amazing favour he has done us, in charging him with an embassy of peace to us, whose aggravated crimes had long since deserved that he should have sent amongst us the messengers of his vengeance. Oh that we may never be condemned out of our own mouths in the censures we pass on the guilty Jews! Ver. 33 34, 36 37, 39 41

We cannot surely think of the awful threatening of our Lord without some secret terror for ourselves, when we consider how shamefully we of this nation have abused our privileges. *The kingdom of God*, said he, *shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* God had been just, had he long since executed such a judgment upon us: may he be merciful to us all in suspending and averting it! May his compassion particularly extend to those amongst us who reject Christianity: for the passage before us has a dreadful aspect upon such! Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; whether they will submit or whether they will oppose, *Christ is made the Head of the corner*, and God will for ever establish him as such. Woe to them who, instead of joining with him, and fixing the stress of their souls upon him, deliberately set themselves to oppose his cause and interest! On such undoubtedly will he fall like a mighty rock of adamant, and miserably crush them in pieces, and grind them to powder. 43 42 44

Thus did our Lord warn his enemies, most wisely and most graciously; but they despised the admonition, and hated him for what was so kindly intended. *They sought to lay hands on him*, because *he had spoken this parable against them.* High provocation indeed, to set their danger faithfully before them, that if by any means it were possible they might be awakened to escape it! But, alas, what can save those whose spiritual distempers are exasperated by the most proper remedies prescribed for their cure! LUKE XX. 19

g Though they might seem to be accomplished in the exaltation of David, &c.] Mr. Jeffery has justly observed, (in his *Review*, p. 119.) that on the principles of analogy this passage will be much to the present purpose, though it should be confessed that Psal. cxviii. was immediately meant of David; as it would prove that the great builders of Israel might *refuse* one whom God intended for *the Head-stone of the corner.*

h *On whomsoever it shall fall, &c.*] Dr. Whitby supposes that here is an allusion to the two different ways of stoning among the Jews; the former, by throwing a person down upon a great stone, and the other, by letting a stone fall upon him. But as I cannot see that the latter was at all more dreadful than the former, since in such a case a quick despatch might seem most desirable, it seems to me that the force and beauty of this pathetic passage would be in a great measure lost by such an interpretation.

i *They perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.*] One would think they could be at no loss for the interpretation of it, considering how nearly it resembles that in Isa. v. 1—7. with which they were, no doubt, well acquainted. Only it is to be observed, that there Israel is *the vineyard*, here the *true religion* is represented under that figure: accordingly, there it is threatened that *the vineyard* should *be destroyed*, but here that it should *be let out to other husbandmen*; each event suiting its connection.

SECTION CLIII.

Christ farther warns the Jews of the danger which would attend their rejecting the gospel, or resting in an insincere profession of it, by the parable of the marriage-feast and the wedding-garment. Matt. xxii. 1—14.

Matt. xxii. 1.

SECT. 153. MATT. XXII.

AND when the priests and scribes were retired, *Jesus*, being still surrounded with the multitude, *answered and spake to them again in parables* suited to the present circumstances of affairs, *saying*, *The kingdom of heaven*, or the dispensation of the gospel, *is like*, and may be well compared to that which happened in the case of *a man* [*that was*] *a king*,[a] *who made a* splendid *marriage-feast for his son: And* when all was prepared, 3 *he sent his servants to call those who had been* before *invited*, that they might come immediately *to the nuptial banquet*.[b] *But they* were so rude and foolish, that they *would not come* upon the summons.

4 *Again he sent other* of his *servants*, *saying*, Go and *tell them that were invited*, that I must insist upon their coming immediately; for *behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and* my other *fatted beasts are slain* and dressed,[c] *and all things are* just *ready* to be served up to the table, therefore *come to the marriage-feast* without any 5 farther delay. *But* such was the perverseness of the guests, that, notwithstanding this repeated invitation, they refused to come, and, *not regarding* [*it*,] *they went away*, *one* of 6 them *to his field* in the country, *and another to his merchandise* in the city. *And the rest* were so brutish, that, *laying hold on his servants* who came with the message, they shamefully *insulted* them in a very outrageous manner, *and* even carried their ingratitude so 7 far, that they *slew* some of *them*. *And when the king heard* [*of it*,] *he was* greatly *provoked; and*, not long after, *having sent his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and* even *burnt their city* where they dwelt,[d] which, being disaffected to him, had joined with these wicked men in concerting this gross and intolerable affront.

8 In the mean time *then*, upon the king's receiving intelligence of their insolent behaviour, *he says to his servants*, *The marriage-feast is prepared, but they who were* first *invited* 9 *were not worthy* of any part in it, or indeed of any invitation to it: Yet let not the provisions I have made be lost: *go ye therefore to the* most *public ways*, and particularly to the places where several streets and roads meet,[e] *and invite as many as you find* there *to the* 10 *wedding-banquet*. *And* accordingly *those servants went out*, as their lord had commanded them, *into the* streets and other [*public*] *ways, and assembled all that they met with, whether bad or good*, without any regard to their characters or circumstances: *and the feast was abundantly supplied with guests.*

11 *But* that, whatever habits they had on before, they might appear worthy to sit at such a table, *the king* had ordered clean white garments to be delivered to each of them, and appointed servants whose province it was to see that they were decently dressed; after which, *coming in to view the guests*, he *saw a man there* who, though such habits were provided, yet was *not clothed with a wedding-garment*;[f] but, either in contempt of the feast, or presuming his own habit might do as well as that which was offered him, had 12 refused to accept it. *And he said to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having* on *a wedding-garment* suited to the occasion? Was it not offered to thee? or hadst thou so little sense of decency and gratitude as to refuse to accept it in compliance with the order of my feast? *And he was* presently *struck speechless*,[g] being confounded

Matt. xxii. 1.

AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the *high*-ways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wed-

a *The kingdom of heaven is like a king.*] See note i, on Luke vii. 32. p. 116, 117.—It is observable, that Luke does not relate this parable here, because he had given us one very much like it before, which was spoken on a different occasion: (Luke xiv. 16—24. § 120.) For the same reason he omits the question of the lawyer, Matt. xxii. 35. most of the discourse against the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. and the parable of the talents, Matt. xxv. 14. *et seq.*

b *To call those who had been invited to the nuptial banquet.*] The word γαμος here properly signifies *a nuptial banquet*, in which sense it is often used by other writers. (See Raphael. *Annot. ex Polyb.* p. 93, and Wolfius, *in loc.*) It was sometimes customary to send two messages, as in the case here supposed; which represented the condescension the greater, and suited the repeated invitations given to the Jews by Christ himself during his life, and by the apostles after his death.

c *My oxen and* my *fatted beasts are slain.*] It was agreeable to the simplicity of the ancient ages, to mention these as the chief parts of a royal entertainment. Thus in Homer and other ancient writers, we see princes of the first rank and dignity feasting each other with nothing but the flesh of oxen, sheep, and swine.—Compare Isa. xxv. 6.

d *And*, not long after, *having sent his armies, &c.*] This clause must be supposed to come in by way of prolepsis or anticipation, for it is plain there could not be time, before the feast already prepared was served up, to attempt an execution of this kind.—This circumstance seems to point at the slaughter of the Jews, and the burning of Jerusalem and the other chief cities of their country by the Romans; who are here considered as the armies of their affronted prince, whose ambassadors they had indeed most cruelly and ungratefully murdered.

e *The* most *public ways*, &c.] The phrase διεξοδους των οδων, signifies *the ways* which were *most frequented*: which must be such as are mentioned in the paraphrase. (See Boisius, *Compar. in loc.*) This intimates that the Gentiles had as little reason to expect the call of the gospel, as common passengers and travellers to expect an invitation to a royal banquet.

f Who, though such habits were provided, yet was *not clothed with a wedding-garment.*] That persons making an entertainment sometimes furnished the habits in which the guests should appear, is evident from what Homer says of Ulysses being thus furnished by the Phæacians, (*Odyss. lib.* viii. ver. 402.) and from the account which Diodorus gives of the great hospitality of Gellias the Sicilian, who readily received all strangers, and at once supplied 500 horsemen with clothes, who by a violent storm were driven to take shelter with him: (Diod. Sic. *lib.* xiii. p. 375, Edit. Steph.) Now it was usual, more especially at marriage-feasts, for persons to appear in a sumptuous dress, adorned, as some writers tell us, with florid embroidery; (Dr. Hammond, *in loc.*) though many times white garments seem to have been used on such occasions: (compare Rev. xix. 8, 9.) But as it could not be expected that travellers thus pressed in should themselves be provided with a suitable habit, we must therefore conclude, not only from the magnificence of the preparations, to which we must suppose the wardrobe of the prince corresponded, but likewise from the following circumstance of resentment against this guest, that a robe was offered, but refused by him. And this is a circumstance which (as Calvin observes) is admirably suited to the method of God's dealing with us; who indeed requires holiness in order to our receiving the benefits of the gospel, but is graciously pleased to work it in us by his Holy Spirit; and therefore may justly resent and punish our neglect of so great a favour.

g *He was struck speechless.*] I render it [*struck speechless*,] be-

ding garment? And he was speechless.

with the majesty of the royal presence, and conscious of his own insolence and folly. SECT. 153.
Then the king, being justly incensed at so great an affront, resolved to punish it by a severe imprisonment: and therefore *said to* [*his*] *servants, Bind his hands and feet, and take him away* hence from all the joy and splendor of the guest-chamber, *and cast him out into the darkness which is without*;[h] and *there*, instead of the mirth and delight of my banquet, there *shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of the teeth* for anguish and despair. (Compare Matt. viii. 12. p. 112.) MATT. XXII. 13

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Nor imagine, said our Lord in the conclusion and improvement of the parable, that this will be the case of one alone; *for* though it be a dreadful truth, yet I must say, that even the greatest part of those to whom the gospel is offered, will either openly reject or secretly disobey it; and while *many* indeed *are called* to the gospel-feast, it will be manifest, by their disregarding it, there are *but few chosen* in such a sense as finally to partake of its blessings. (Compare Matt. xx. 16. p. 273.) 14

Thus did he strongly intimate to the Jews, that since they despised the rich provisions of his gospel-grace, incomparably more valuable than those of a royal feast, and since they used the messengers whom God had sent to them in so ungrateful and barbarous a manner, they must expect to be cut off and destroyed by those hostile armies which Divine Providence would speedily bring upon them; but that the gospel should be embraced by the Gentiles, and vast numbers of them be converted and saved by it. And he farther intended to insinuate, by the circumstance of the wedding-garment, that as God had made provision in his gospel for the sanctification of men's hearts, and the reformation of their lives, he expected true holiness and cordial obedience from all who professed to embrace it; and would another day take a strict review of all its professors, that he might separate habitual sinners from the number and the blessings of his people, and deliver them over to perpetual darkness and misery.

IMPROVEMENT.

How rich are the provisions of the gospel! a feast indeed becoming the bounty and majesty of the King of heaven, and proportionable even to the love which he bears to his own Son, in honour of whom it is made! Ver. 2

How wonderful is the grace which calls us to the participation of these provisions; us, who were originally *sinners of the Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise!* (Eph. ii. 12.) Yet has he graciously sent his messengers to us, and invited us to his house, yea, to his table, with the additional hope of yet nobler entertainments in reserve. May none of us reject so condescending a call, lest we turn his goodness into righteous indignation, and *treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath!* (Rom. ii. 5.) 9, 10 4—6

Let us also remember, that it is not every one who professes to accept the entertainment, not every one who talks of gospel-blessings, and seems to desire a share in them, that will be admitted to it. No: in order to our *partaking of an inheritance among the saints in light*, it is necessary that we be *made meet for it* by the holiness both of our hearts and lives. (Col. i. 12.) This is the wedding-garment, wrought by the Spirit of God himself, and offered to us by the freedom of his grace. And it is so necessary, that without it we must be separated from the number of his guests and friends, and even, though we had *eaten and drank in his presence*, must be *cast out into outer darkness*. (Luke xiii. 26.) 11 13

Frequently let us think of that awful day when the King will come in to see his guests; when God will take a most exact survey of every soul under a Christian profession. Let us think of that speechless confusion which will seize such as have not on the wedding-garment, and of that inexorable severity with which they will be consigned to weeping and gnashing of teeth. To have seen for a while the light of the gospel, and the fair beamings of an eternal hope, will add deeper and more sensible horror to those gloomy caverns; to have heard those glad tidings of great joy, and to hear them, as it were, echoed back in accents of final despair, how will it wound the ear, and pierce the very heart! May God prevent it, by *fulfilling in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him*, (2 Thess. i. 11, 12.) when the marriage-supper of the Lamb shall be celebrated, and all the harmony, pomp, and beauty of heaven shall aid its solemnity, its magnificence, and its joy! 12

SECTION CLIV.

Our Lord confounds the Pharisees and Herodians, when they hoped to have ensnared him by their question relating to the lawfulness of paying the Roman tribute. Matt. xxii. 15—22. Mark xii. 13—17. Luke xx. 20—26.

MATT. xxii. 15.

MATT. xxii. 15.

THEN went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

Luke xx. 20. And they watched *him*, and sent forth

SECT. 154.
THEN the Pharisees, stung with the severe but just rebukes he had been giving them in the foregoing parables, *went* out from his presence, and retiring, *took counsel* together *how they might ensnare him in* [*his*] *discourse*, and find something on which they might ground an accusation or complaint against him. *And they* narrowly *watched him* in MATT. XXII.

because the word φιμωθη is in the passive form, and is very expressive. It is applied to the *muzzling* of *cattle*, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Compare 1 Tim. v. 18; and 1 Pet. ii. 15.

h *Cast him out into the darkness which is without.*] The mention of this circumstance in this connection would incline one to think, either that the word αριστον (in ver. 4.) may signify *supper* as well as *dinner*, (which some critics have thought,) or that the king is represented as visiting the guests in the evening. But, not to insist on this, which is of little moment, it is well known that banquets of this kind were generally celebrated in rooms that were finely illuminated and richly adorned: (see note g, on Matt. viii. 12. p. 112.) And, considering how splendid and magnificent the entertainments of the Eastern princes were, it cannot be thought an unnatural circumstance, that such an affront as this, offered to the king, his son, his bride, and the rest of the company, should be punished with such bonds, and thrown into a dungeon.

SECT. 154. LUKE XX.

all his motions that day, *and sent out spies to* try if they could take *him* at an advantage, *who should pretend themselves to be righteous men*, that were come, for the ease of their consciences, to propose a scruple to him on an affair of great importance. Now those that were sent on this errand were persons of opposite sects; [*even*] *some* of the *disciples of* the leading men among *the Pharisees*, who were very solicitous for the freedom of their country
20 from every mark of slavery; *and* [*some*] of the sect *of the Herodians*, a party of men (as was before observed) peculiarly attached to the family of Herod, and consequently zealous in the interest of the Roman government, which was the main support of the dignity and royalty of that family. (See note f, on Mark iii. 6. p. 103.) And these, different as their principles were, combined together in an attempt upon Jesus, *that*, if an opportunity offered, *they might lay hold on his words*,[a] either to render him obnoxious to the people as an enemy to their liberties, or *to deliver him up* as a seditious person *to the power and authority of* Pontius Pilate, who was then *the* Roman *governor* of that province.

[unto him] spies, which should feign themselves just men, [Mark, *even* certain [disciples] of the Pharisees and of the Herodians,] that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. [Matt. xxii. 16. Mark xii. 13.]

21 *And when they were come* to him, in order to accomplish their design, *they* craftily accosted him with an air of great respect, and with flattering expressions of the highest esteem; and *asked him, saying, Master, we know* and are well satisfied *that thou art true* and upright, *and* as thou comest as a messenger from God, so, after the example of those faithful and courageous prophets who were in Israel in its better ages, thou *sayest and teachest rightly*, and art impartial and sincere in every thing that thou declarest; *neither carest thou for* the censure or applause of *any man; for thou regardest not the person of men*, so as to be influenced by complaisance or fear, or any private views whatever, to deviate from the strictest integrity and veracity; *but* plainly *teachest the* MATT. *way of God* and the path of duty *in truth*. We are come *therefore* to propose a ques- XXII. tion to thee, about which thou knowest that we Pharisees and Herodians are divided, and
17 to which an interested man who was governed by principles of human policy might, perhaps, be unwilling to answer: *tell us*, we pray thee, (for we have determined to submit our judgment and practice to thy sentiments in the matter,) *What thinkest thou? Is it lawful for us* Jews, who are the peculiar people of God, and are many of us in conscience tender of acknowledging any king but him, or one of our brethren appointed by his immediate delegation,[b] *to pay* the usual *tribute to Cæsar*, the Roman emperor, MARK *or not?* What dost thou advise in this case as right for us to do? *Shall we give* it to the XII. collectors, *or shall we not give* it? We must beg an immediate answer, for the tribute is
15 even now demanded of us. And here they ceased, as thinking they had him in an inextricable snare, and that he could return no answer which would not expose him to the severe resentment either of the Jewish people or of the Roman officers.

21 And [Mark, when they were come,] they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou [art true, and] sayest and teachest rightly, [neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men,] [Mark, but teachest the way of God in truth:] [Matt. xxii. 16. Mark xii. 14.]

Matt. xxii. 17. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful [Luke, for us] to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? [Mark xii. 14. Luke xx. 22.]

Mark xii. 15. Shall we give, or shall we not give?—

But Jesus, knowing their hypocrisy, which was indeed their reigning character, *perceived their craftiness* [*and*] *wickedness* in this address, however pious and respectful it appeared, *and* therefore *said to them, Ye hypocrites, why do ye tempt me* by such an ensnaring question, and seek to draw me into danger and destruction by it? Is this a MATT. proof of your regard and friendship to a faithful and impartial Teacher? But, that I XXII. may return a proper answer to your question, whatever be the view that you may have
19 in asking it, *show me the tribute money* which is demanded of you; and *bring me* MARK hither *a penny* or denarius, *that I may see it. And they brought him a* Roman XII. *penny. And*, looking upon it, *he says to them, Whose is this image* which is struck
16 upon the coin, *and* whose *inscription* and title is this [*which*] *it has* round it?[c] *And they*, without perceiving his design, immediately *answered and said to him*, It is *Cæsar's:* thereby in effect acknowledging that they were under his dominion, by their
17 admitting his coin as current among them. *And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's*;[d] and labour so to adjust your regards and duties to both, that you may not, on the one hand, under pretence of religion, do any injury to Cæsar, nor, on the other hand, under pretence of duty to Cæsar, violate any of the commands of God, or fail of that respect to him which he requires: whereby he plainly intimated that tribute was to be paid to

—But [Jesus,] knowing their hypocrisy, [Luke, perceived their craftiness] [*and* wickedness, and] said unto them, Why tempt ye me, [ye hypocrites?] [Matt. xxii. 18. Luke xx. 23.]

Matt. xxii. 19. Show me the tribute money: [Bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.] [Mark xii. 15. Luke xx. 24.]

Mark xii. 16. And they brought [unto him a penny.] And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription [Luke, *that* it hath?] And they [Luke, answered and] said unto him, Cæsar's. [Matt. xxii. 19—21. Luke xx. 24.]

17 And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render [therefore] to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. [Matt. xxii. 21. Luke xx. 25.]

a *That they might lay hold on his words.*] They hoped to have ensnared him by the question they came to propose, whatever answer he could have returned. If he asserted, on the one hand, that tribute was to be paid to Cæsar, the Pharisees, who generally maintained (as Judas Gaulonites had done) that such a subjection to a foreign power was inconsistent with the privileges of God's peculiar people, would have endeavoured to expose him to popular resentment, as betraying the liberties of his country. On the other hand, had he denied the lawfulness of this tribute, the Herodians would have had a very plausible pretence of accusing him to the Roman power as a seditious person, which his persecutors had afterwards the assurance to do: Luke xxiii. 2. § 186. (Compare Acts xvii. 7.) Nay, perhaps the very circumstance of taking upon him to determine such a question might, by these invidious inquirers, be construed as a pretence to sovereignty. See Voss. *Harmon. Evang.* p. 54, 55.

b One of our brethren, &c.] We are told that the grand argument which the followers of Judas Gaulonites, and others inclined to their party, urged as decisive against the authority of the Romans, was that text which prohibited their *setting a stranger to be king over them*, Deut. xvii. 15. And Grotius (in his note on Matt. xxii. 16.) seems to think it was this that formerly engaged them so vigorously to oppose the Chaldeans, and to refuse submitting to their government till Jerusalem was destroyed. See note a, on Luke xiii. 1. p. 231.

c *Whose is this image and inscription?*] Dr. Lightfoot tells us (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xxii. 20.) that the Jews have a tradition among them, that to admit of the title of any prince on their current coin, was an acknowledgment of subjection to him. It is certain their not daring to refuse this coin, when offered them in payment, was in effect a confession that they were conquered by the Romans, and consequently that the emperor had a right to their tribute.

d *And to God the things which are God's.*] Diodate, Raphelius, and some other commentators, interpret this as a caution against omitting the sacred tribute, on pretence of answering the demands of Cæsar, who (they say) had claimed it to himself. But I apprehend our Lord had a more extensive view; and that, as he cautions the Pharisees against using religion as a pretence to justify sedition, so he also warns the Herodians that they should not, as they were too inclinable to do, make a compliment of their religion to the Romans, by complying with those things which were forbidden by the divine law, that they might ingratiate themselves with Cæsar's party. See Prideaux's *Connection*, Vol. II. p. 366—368.

Cæsar as due to his government; yet did it in such a manner, and with such restrictions, as prevented the inconvenience of a more express declaration. SECT. 154.

Luke xx. 26. And [when they had heard *these words*,] they could not take hold of his words before the people, and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace, [and left him, and went their way.] [Matt. xxii. 22. Mark xii. 17.]

And when they had heard [*his*] wise and unexceptionable [*answer*,] *they* plainly found that they *could not take hold of his words before the people*, so as to incense and stir them up against him as no friend to their liberties; *and* they were equally unable to accuse him to the Romans of sedition, on account of any thing he had then said as derogating from the rights of Cæsar. *They* therefore *wondered at* the prudence and address of *his reply*, by which he had effectually disentangled himself from what they thought must unavoidably have ensnared him; *and* were so perfectly confounded, that they *held their peace, and left him; and*, deeply sensible of the disgrace as well as disappointment they had met with, they *went away* amazed and ashamed. LUKE XX. 26

IMPROVEMENT.

AGAIN does our Lord renew the repeated lesson he had before given us, both by precept and example, of uniting wisdom and innocence. How admirable was this mixture of prudence and integrity with which he confounded these Pharisees and Herodians, who, contrary as their principles and interests were, conspired against him! *For of a truth*, O Lord, *against thine holy Child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel, were gathered together!* (Acts iv. 27.) and their *words were softer than oil*, when *war* and murder *was in their hearts.* (Psal. lv. 21.) Ver. 25, 26

Let us not, with *the simple, believe every* flattering *word*, (Prov. xiv. 15.) since sometimes the highest encomiums may be designed as the instruments of mischief: and too often they prove so when they are not treacherously intended. 21

Our Lord was indeed the Person whom these artful hypocrites described; and was in that respect an excellent pattern to all his followers, and especially to his ministers. He knew no man in the discharge of his office: but, without regarding the persons of any, neither seeking their favour nor fearing their resentment, he taught the way of God in truth, and declared the whole of his counsel. MATT. XXII. 16

Let us particularly attend to his decision in the present case, and learn with the utmost readiness to *render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.* Our civil magistrates, by virtue of their office, justly claim our reverent regard; and tribute is most reasonably due to those who attend continually to the services of the public, and are, under God, the pillars of our common tranquillity and happiness. (Rom. xiii. 6, 7.) Let that tribute therefore be justly and freely rendered, with honour and with cheerfulness; as he is surely unworthy to share in the benefits of government, who will not contribute his part towards its necessary expense. But let it also be remembered, that the rights of God are sacred and inviolable: he, and he alone, is the Lord of conscience; and when that is invaded, it is easy to *judge whether man or God* is to be *obeyed.* (Acts iv. 19.) Let us be daily thankful, that in our own age and country these rights are so happily united. May a guardian providence continue to watch over both! and may we seriously consider how impossible it is, under such a government, to be good Christians without being obedient subjects, or to *fear God*, if we do not *honour the king!* (1 Pet. ii. 17.) 21

SECTION CLV.

Our Lord proves the resurrection to the Sadducees, and answers their foolish objection against it. Matt. xxii. 23—33. Mark xii. 18—27. Luke xx. 27—40.

LUKE XX. 27.

THEN [the same day] came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, [Matt. xxii 23 Mark xii. 18.]

28 Saying, Master, Moses [said *and*] wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, [Mark, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children,] that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. [Matt. xxii. 24. Mark xii 19.]

Matt. xxii. 25. Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no [Luke, children,] left his wife unto his brother. [Mark xii. 20. Luke xx. 29.]

Luke xx. 30. And the second took her to wife, and he [likewise] died childless. [Matt. xxii. 26. Mark xii. 21.]

LUKE XX. 27.

THEN, on that day in which our Lord had thus confounded the Pharisees and the Herodians, *some of the Sadducees came to him, who* (as it was before observed) were a set of pretended freethinkers among the Jews, that *deny there is any resurrection* of the dead,[a] or any future state in which the soul exists after death[b] to receive the reward of its actions. And they applied themselves to Jesus, *and asked him* a question, in which they put a case which they used often to urge against those who were of a different opinion from themselves, and with which they also hoped to puzzle him: *Saying, Master*, if there be, as we know thou teachest, a resurrection of the dead, how can this difficulty which we are going to propose be adjusted? *Moses*, as thou well knowest, *said* [*and*] *wrote to us* this precept, (Deut. xxv. 5.) "*That if a man's brother die, and leave a wife and no children behind him, his* surviving *brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother;*" the first child of this second marriage being esteemed the child of the deceased, so as to inherit his whole estate, and bear up his name. *Now* it so happened that *there were with us*, in a certain family in our neighbourhood, *seven brethren; and the first* of these brethren, *when he had married a wife, died* quickly after, *and, having had no children, left his wife* of course to be married *to his brother. And* upon this, *the second* followed the direction of the law, and *took her to wife; and he likewise*, after he had been some time married, *died childless*, as his elder brother did. *And* then *the third took her*, and SECT. 155. LUKE XX. 27 28 MATT. XXII. 25 LUKE XX. 30 31

31 And the third took

a *Who deny there is any resurrection.*] It is generally known that their master, Sadoc, from whom the Sadducees took their name, taught that God was not to be served from mercenary principles, that is, (as he crudely explained it,) from hope of reward or fear of punishment. His followers interpreted this as an implicit denial of a future state, and so imbibed that pernicious notion of the utter destruction of the soul at death, equally uncomfortable and absurd. See Drusius, *in loc.*—The story which they mention here, seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, as we meet with it in the old Jewish writers: see Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb in loc.*

b Or any future state, &c.] As it is expressly said, Acts xxiii. 8. that they *denied any spirit*, and consequently the existence of the soul in a separate state; so our Lord's answer here, and much of St. Paul's reasoning in 1 Cor. xv. goes on the supposition of such a denial on their part. See 2 Mac. xii. 42—44. where the author proves that Judas believed a resurrection, from his offering sacrifices for the souls of the slain.

SECT. 155.

he also died, as the others had done, without issue: *and in like manner also* all the rest went on, till every one of *the seven* brothers *had* married *her; and they* all *died, and left no children* behind them. *And last of all, the woman* herself *also died,* without any

LUKE XX.

issue, not having married into any other family but this. The question *therefore* is, *When*

33 *they shall rise,* as you say they all will, *in the* general *resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for all the seven had her to wife:* and as they stood in an equal relation to her in this world, they all seem to have exactly an equal claim to her in the next.

MATT. XXII.

Thus they attempted in a sneering manner to overthrow all the arguments for a future

29 state which might be advanced either from reason or from scripture. *And Jesus* therefore *answered and said to them,* It plainly appears, from your manner of stating the question, that *you are* greatly *mistaken,* and go entirely on a wrong supposition; *not knowing,* on the one hand, what is so plainly intimated in *the scriptures* of a resurrection, which, if well understood, implies no contradiction at all; *nor* attending, on the other hand, to *the power of God,* which is able with infinite ease to effect what to man seems most difficult and improbable.

LUKE XX.

And as to this particular difficulty which you now object, it ought to be considered that

34 *the children of this world* do indeed *marry and are given in marriage,* according to the wise provision which God has made by that institution for repairing the wastes of mortality,

35 by the production of new generations. *But they who shall be counted worthy to obtain that* blessed *world* which God has prepared for his people above, *and* to be admitted to the never-fading honours that will succeed *the resurrection* of good men *from the dead,* will be in very different circumstances *when they shall rise,* and *neither marry nor are given*

36 *in marriage: For they can die no more,* and therefore the rise of new generations is no longer necessary, *since* in this respect *they are equal to the angels of God in heaven,*[c] *and are the children of God,* and heirs of immortality and glory, *being the children of the resurrection,*[d] which shall instate them in a complete felicity, answerable to so near a relation to the Divine Being; and consequently all such difficulties as you have now been urging are entirely superseded by the happiness and perfection of so exalted a state.

37 *But as for* the evidence of *the resurrection* in general, not to insist on many plainer passages in the other books of scripture, for which you do not profess so great a regard,[e] I may say, that *even Moses* in effect *showed that the dead are* to be *raised, when,* speaking of what happened *at the* burning *bush,* (Exod. iii. 6.) *he calls the Lord,* from whom he there received his commission, "*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the "God of Jacob.*" And he had the highest authority for the expression; for, *have ye not read in the book of Moses, how God spake to him in the bush* by this title? and have ye not observed *what was* then in effect *spoken to you by God, saying* in express terms, "*I*

38 "*am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?*"[f] *Now* certainly *God is not* to be called *the God* of them who are entirely destroyed, and left to continue in the state *of the dead, but the God of* those who may be yet considered as *the living:* nor would he ever own the high relation of a God to those whom he finally abandons, and suffers to sink into nothing; much less would what he did for the holy patriarchs, whose names he commemorated with so much honour, answer such a title, since he left

her; and in like manner the seven also [Mark, had her:] And they left no children, and died. [Matt. xxii. 26. Mark xii. 21, 22.]

32 [And] last of all, the woman died also. [Matt. xxii. 27. Mark xii. 22.]

33 Therefore in the resurrection, [Mark, when they shall rise,] whose wife [shall she be of the seven?] for [all] [Mark, the] seven had her to wife. [Matt. xxii. 28. Mark xii. 23.]

Matt. xxii. 29. [And] Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. [Mark xii. 24. Luke xx. 34.]

Luke xx. 34. The children of this world marry and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, [Mark, when they shall rise,] neither marry nor are given in marriage; [Matt. xxii. 30. Mark xii. 25.]

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels [of God in heaven,] and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. [Matt. xxii. 30. Mark xii. 25.]

37 [But as touching the resurrection,] that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: [Mark, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him [that which was spoken unto you by God,] saying, I [am] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?] [Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Mark xii. 26.

38 For [God is not a God of the dead, but [Mark, the

c *Are equal to the angels of God in heaven.*] Matthew and Mark say only that they are *as the angels,* [ως αγγελοι,] and though Luke expresses it by a stronger word, [ισαγγελοι,] that they are *equal to the angels,* yet all arguments drawn from hence, as proving an entire equality of glorified saints with angels in all respects, must be apparently weak and inconclusive. It is indeed the glorious scheme of redeeming love, to incorporate angels and saints into one happy society under Christ as their common head; (Eph. i. 10.) but there are subordinations in united societies. And if the fall of the apostate spirits occasioned any thing like a vacancy in the celestial hierarchy, it would seem most probable it might be filled up from heavenly spirits of an inferior order, who might be preferred to the rank their degenerate brethren lost, as a reward for their approved fidelity to God. But it becomes us to be exceeding modest in our conjectures on such subjects as these, lest we incur the censure of *intruding into things which we have not seen.* Col. ii. 18.

d *And are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*] This plainly intimates that good men are called God's children, with a view to the inheritance to which they are adopted, on the final possession of which they enter at the resurrection. Compare Romans viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7; 1 John iii. 2; and Rom. viii. 29. See the *Essay on Divine Dispensations,* p. 8, 9.

e Other books of scripture, for which you do not profess so great a regard.] The Sadducees are thought by many to have agreed with the Samaritans in rejecting all the other parts of holy scripture but the five books of Moses; which is particularly contended for by Serrarius, (*Trihæres, lib.* ii. *cap.* 21; and *Minerval, lib.* iv. *cap.* 14.) But this is questioned by Drusius, *De Tribus Sectis, lib.* iii. *cap.* 9.) and Reland, (*Antiq. Heb.* part ii. *cap.* 11.) and Scaliger maintains the contrary, and shows that the passage from Josephus (*Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 10. [al. 18.] § 6.) which is commonly alleged in defence of that opinion, only relates to their rejecting all traditions. (*Elench. Trihæres, cap.* 16.) And indeed, as it appears from the Talmud that other parts of the Old Testament were often quoted by the Sadducees, and arguments were brought from thence against them by the Pharisees to prove the resurrection, which they endeavoured only to evade without disputing the authority of texts, though they were not taken from the law of Moses, it is more reasonable to believe, with Dr. Lightfoot, (in his *Hor. Heb.* on John iv. 25.) that they did not reject the other books of the Old Testament, but only gave a great preference to the five books of Moses; and, laying it down as a principle, to receive nothing as an article of faith which could not be proved from the law, if any thing was urged from other parts of scripture that could not be deduced from Moses, they would explain it in some other way. And this might be sufficient to induce our Lord to bring his argument to prove the resurrection from what Moses had said, and to confirm it by that part of scripture which was most regarded by the Sadducees, and upon which they now had grounded their objection to it.

f *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*] It is surprising to me to find learned men so much divided in their sentiments on this easy text. The force of the argument cannot surely rest on the word [*am;*] because, though it be in the Greek, it is not in the Hebrew, where the words may possibly signify, *I [have been] the God of Abraham, &c.* and the possibility of such a version would affect the conclusion on that supposition. But our Lord's argument is equally forcible either way: for it is evident that it cannot properly be said that God either actually is, or hath been the God of any whom he has suffered finally to perish: and (as the apostle strongly intimates) he would, humanly speaking, be ashamed, or think it infinitely beneath him, to own that relation to any for whom he had not provided a city, or a state of more permanent happiness than any which could be enjoyed in this mortal life. (See Heb. xi. 16.) So that the argument by no means turns (as Archbp. Tillotson and Grotius suppose) on the calamitous circumstances in which these patriarchs often were; but would have held good, had all their lives been as prosperous and glorious as that of Abraham seems generally, notwithstanding his peregrinations, to have been.—I cannot, as some modern writers of note do, fall in with Mr. Mede's notion, (in his *Works,* p. 801, 802.) that our Lord refers to the necessity of Abraham's being raised from the dead to inherit Canaan, in order to the accomplishment of God's promise to give it to him; both because I can see no such necessity, and because then I think it would have been much more to our Lord's purpose to have quoted the promise of the land of Canaan, than these general words.

God] of the living; for all live unto him: [Mark, Ye therefore do greatly err.] [Matt. xxii. 32. Mark xii. 27.]

them exposed to so many trials and calamities, which multitudes escape of whom he has never spoken in such language: *so that* those good men must be considered as still in existence; and therefore it may be concluded, by a strong train of consequences, that *all* the faithful *live unto him*;[g] for he, on the foot of Abraham's covenant, owns himself the God of all such; and consequently he must be an everlasting patron and friend to them, even to their whole persons, so as to recover their mortal part from the ruin and desolation of the grave. And *therefore*, on the whole, *you greatly err* in denying this doctrine; and your error tends to bring a disgrace on the whole series of divine revelation, and to weaken one of the strongest motives to a life of holiness and obedience. SECT. 155. LUKE XX. 38

39 Then certain of the scribes answering, said, Master, thou hast well said.

Then some of the scribes who were present being of the sect of the Pharisees, were pleased to hear a doctrine of their own so judiciously defended, and *said in reply, Master, thou hast spoken* so *well* upon this subject, that nothing solid can be objected to thy discourse. 39

Matt. xxii. 33. And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

And indeed *when* all *the multitude* that was present in the temple at that time, *heard* [*this*] unthought-of yet convincing argument, together with so clear an answer to a cavil in which the Sadducees used to triumph as invincible, *they were* greatly *astonished at his doctrine*, and plainly testified the admiration and delight with which they had attended his discourse. 33

Luke xx. 40. And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all.

And as the Sadducees had nothing to reply, they were ashamed and disappointed; *and after that they durst not* any more presume to *ask him any thing at all*,[h] but retired in silence and confusion. MATT. XXII. LUKE XX. 40

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what satisfaction should we read this vindication of so important an article of our faith and hope! Easily was this boasted argument of the Sadducees unravelled and exposed, and all the pride of those bold wits, who valued themselves so much on that imaginary penetration which laid men almost on a level with brutes, covered with just confusion. Indeed, objections against the resurrection, much more plausible than this of theirs, may be answered in that one saying of our Lord's, *Ye know not the scriptures nor the power of God.* Were the scripture-doctrine of the resurrection considered on the one hand, and the omnipotence of the Creator on the other, it could not seem incredible to any, *that God should raise the dead.* (Acts xxvi. 8.) MATT. XXII. 23—28 29

How sublime an idea does our Lord give us of the happiness of those who shall be thought worthy to attain it! *They shall be equal to the angels!* Adored be the riches of that grace which redeems us from this degenerate and miserable state, in which we had made ourselves so much *like the beasts that perish*, (Psal. xlix. 12.) to raise us to so high a dignity, and marshal us with the armies of heaven! LUKE XX. 35, 36

Let us esteem so glorious a hope aright, and with the greatest intenseness of soul pursue and insure it. And as for those enjoyments of this present world which are suited only to the mortality and imperfection of it, let us moderate our regards to them, and cultivate those higher entertainments with the most solicitous care, which will be transplanted into the paradise of God, and ever flourish for the delight of his immortal children. 34

Christ, we see, argues a very important point of doctrine from premises in which, perhaps, we might not have been able to have discovered it without such a hint. Let us learn to judge of scripture arguments not merely by the sound, but by the sense of the words. And as our Lord chose a passage from the Pentateuch, rather than from the prophets, for the conviction of the Sadducees, let us be engaged to study the tempers and even the prejudices of those with whom we converse; that we may, if possible, let in the light of divine truth on their hearts, on that side by which they seem most capable of receiving it. 37

In a word, let us with pleasure think of the blessed God under that gracious title by which he manifested himself to Moses at the bush. Still he is *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;* the God of our pious ancestors, the God of all our departed friends who are now sleeping in Jesus: for all their souls now live unto him, and their bodies shall ere long be awakened by him. In like manner, if we are *followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises*, when we are gathered to our fathers, and our names, perhaps, forgotten among succeeding generations, he will still be our God. He will show us, by the blessed experience of eternity, that when he treated with us by that title, and admitted us into the covenant by which he bears it, he intended for us something far nobler and better than the transient scenes of earth and of time could admit. MARK XII. 26 LUKE XX. 38

SECTION CLVI.

Christ discourses of the first and great command of the law, and confounds the Pharisees with a question relating to David's calling the Messiah his Lord. Matt. xxii. 34, *to the end.* Mark xii. 28—37. Luke xx. 41—44.

MATT. xxii. 34.

BUT when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

MATT. xxii. 34.

THUS Jesus defended the great doctrine of the resurrection from the vain cavils which were brought against it. *But* the debates of the day ended not here; for *when the Pharisees heard that he had* thus *silenced* and confounded *the Sadducees, they were* soon *gathered together* again, with a malicious view of carrying on the same design, to try if they could any way expose him to the people, and to make their remarks upon what he might say. SECT. 156. MATT. XXII. 34.

[g] *So that all* the faithful *live unto him.*] It is evident that γαρ must here have the force of an illative particle, and may be rendered [*therefore,*] or [*so that;*] for what it introduces is plainly the main proposition to be proved, and not an argument for what immediately went before. In this connexion the consequence is apparently just: for as all the faithful are the children of Abraham, and the divine promise, of being *a God to him and his seed*, is entailed upon them, it will prove their continued existence and happiness in a future state, as much as Abraham's. And as the body as well as the soul makes an essential part of man, it will prove both his resurrection and theirs, and entirely overthrow the whole Sadducean doctrine on this head.

[h] *After that they durst not ask him any thing at all.*] It is evident that this is meant of the Sadducees, and must be understood as limited to them; because in the very next section we read of a question which one of the scribes put to him.

SECT. 156.

And one of the learned *scribes*, [*who was*] also *a doctor of the law, came* with the rest; *and having* attended to the discourse between Jesus and the Sadducees, and *heard them reasoning together, perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him a*

MATT. XXII. farther *question*, intending *to make* another *trial of him* as to his understanding in the sacred books; *and said* to him, *Master*, I desire thou wouldst inform me *which is*

36 *the first* [*and*] *great commandment of all* that are contained *in the* whole *law?*[a] Is it a ceremonial or a moral precept that is the most important, and deserves the preference?

MARK XII. *And Jesus answered him*, The question thou hast put may easily be resolved; for

29 *surely the first*, that is, the most comprehensive and important *of all the commandments* of the law, [*is*] that which is contained in Deut. vi. 4, 5; x. 12. "*Hear, O Israel!*

30 "*Jehovah our God is* the *one* great and only *Lord: And* upon all occasions *thou shalt* "regard and honour him as such, and *love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and* "*with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength*;" that is, thou shalt consecrate to him all the united powers and faculties of thy nature; and thy understanding and will, thine affections and executive powers, shall be all in the most vigorous manner employed in his service. (See note c, on Luke x. 27. p. 215.) *This is the first and great commandment*, the principal and fundamental precept of the law, and there is no other which may not be considered in its degree as subordinate to this, and reducible

31 to it. *And the second*, in its sublime and comprehensive nature, [*is*] much *like unto it*, as well as given by the same authority,[b] [*even*] *this* contained in Lev. xix. 18. "*Thou* "*shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:*" For all the duties you owe to your fellow-creatures may be reduced to this; and where this undissembled and generous principle of love is, the rest will easily and naturally follow. On the whole, therefore, *there is no*

MATT. XXII. *other commandment greater than these.* And indeed I may say, that *all the law and the prophets depend upon these two commandments*; that is, it is the design of the whole

40 revelation, in its different periods and circumstances, to promote that virtuous and holy temper which may be expressed by the love of God and our neighbour.

MARK XII. *And the scribe*, who had proposed the question with a design to try him, was struck with the solidity and spirit of his answer, and *said to him, Truly* thou deservest to be

32 owned as a *Master* in Israel; for *thou hast spoken* to this important question excellently

33 *well:*[c] *for there is* indeed *one God, and there is no other besides him: And to love him*, as thou hast said, *with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength*, to consecrate all the intellectual and active powers of our whole nature to him; *and* for a man *to love* [*his*] *neighbour as himself*, from a sense of piety to God as well as benevolence to man, *is* far *more* important *than all* the *burnt-offerings and sacrifices* which the greatest prince could present at his altar; nor could the most exact and pompous ritual observances be acceptable without such virtues and graces as these.

34 *And Jesus, seeing that he answered* thus *wisely, said unto him*, It appears from these just sentiments of thine on this important head, that *thou art not far from the kingdom of God*; and such views of religion as these may be the happy means of preparing thee to receive the gospel in that fuller manifestation of it which is now approaching.

MATT. XXII. *And while the Pharisees were gathered together* during this conference, expecting to have found an opportunity to ensnare him, *as he was* still *teaching* the people *in the tem-*

41 *ple, Jesus* turned to the scribes and doctors of the law who were present, and *asked them, saying, How say the scribes* so commonly as they do, *that the Messiah is the Son of*

42 *David?* Let me ask you of that profession who are now here, *What think ye concerning the Messiah* in this respect? *Whose Son is he? They say unto him*, Nothing can be plainer than what thou representest as the general opinion; he is undoubtedly to be

43 [*the Son*] *of David. He saith unto them, How then does David himself*, speaking *by the* inspiration of the *Holy Spirit, in the book of Psalms*, acknowledge him to be superior to himself, and *call him Lord?*[d] for you cannot but know that there is a passage expressly to this purpose, (Psal. cx. 1.) which you readily allow to refer to the Messiah,

44 in which you find David *saying*, "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my* "*right hand* in exalted power and glory, with all the majesty and honour of a King, *till* "*I make* all *thine enemies thy footstool*, and cause thee to trample upon them at

35 Then one [of the scribes,] *which was* a lawyer, [came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well,] asked [him] a question, tempting him, and saying, [Mark xii. 28.]

36 Master, which [is] the [first *and*] great commandment [of all] in the law? [Mark xii. 28.]

Mark xii. 29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord: [Matt. xxii. 37.]

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first [and great] commandment. [Matt. xxii. 37, 38.]

31 And the second *is* like [unto it,] *namely*, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these. [Matt. xxii. 39.]

Matt. xxii. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Mark xii. 32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

Matt. xxii. 41. [And] while the Pharisees were gathered together, [while he taught in the temple,] Jesus asked them, saying, How say the scribes, that Christ is the Son of David? [Mark xii. 35. Luke xx. 41.]

42 What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? They say unto him, *The Son* of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David [himself,] in spirit [*or* by the Holy Ghost,] [Luke, in the book of Psalms,] call him Lord, saying, [Mark xii. 36. Luke xx. 42.]

44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? [Mark xii. 36. Luke xx. 42, 43.]

a *Which is the first and great commandment, &c.*] This was a point that often was disputed by the Jewish doctors; some contending for the law of circumcision, others for that of sacrifices, and others for that of the phylacteries. And though it was a rule among them, that the law of the sabbath was to give place to that of circumcision, yet they were not agreed as to the rest, which was the principal and most important precept; only in general they were inclined to give the preference to the ceremonial part.—Dr. Lightfoot remarks, (in his *Hor. Heb.* on Mark xii. 28.) that Christ answers the scribe out of a sentence which was written in the phylacteries, in which he avoided all occasion of offence, and plainly showed (as the scribe afterwards observes, Mark xii. 33.) that the observance of the moral law was more acceptable to God than all the sacrifices they could offer to him.

b *The second is like unto it.*] By quoting this with the former, he sufficiently guarded against a foolish notion which some say the Pharisees had, that the observation of one excellent precept of the law would excuse the transgression of many others. It is certain the Pharisees were ready to magnify duties of the first table, to the neglect of those of the second; on which account it was exceedingly proper to use such language as this.

c Excellently *well.*] It is in the original καλως, *beautifully*, or *finely*, which expresses his high satisfaction in the reply much more strongly than the word *well*.

d *How then does David himself by the Holy Spirit, &c.*] Our Lord, we see, always takes it for granted in his arguments with the Jews, that the writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions. (Compare John x. 35. § 134.) And I look on this as no contemptible argument for the inspiration of the New Testament; for we can never think the apostles of Christ to have been less assisted by the Divine Spirit in their writings, when they were in other respects so much more powerfully endowed with it.

45 If David [himself] then call him Lord, how is he [Luke, then] his Son? [And the common people heard him gladly.] [Mark xii. 37. Luke xx. 44.]

46 And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man (from that day forth) ask him any more questions. [Mark xii. 34.]

"pleasure." *If David himself therefore call him Lord*, and speak of him as his superior, SECT. 156.
as you see he doth, *how is he then his Son?*[e]

Now as the scribes and Pharisees were ignorant of the great doctrine of the divine nature of the Messiah, with respect to which, even before his incarnation, he was the Lord of MATT. XXII.
David and of the whole church, they were quite confounded with the question. *And the* vast crowd of *common people* that was about him, *heard him with* great *pleasure. And* 46
all his adversaries were at such a loss, that *no man could answer him* so much as *a word; neither did any one presume, from that day forward, to ask him any more* such ensnaring *questions*[f] as those by which they had now contrived to assault, and, if possible, to confound him.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER might be the design of the scribe in putting this question to Christ again, (which was in effect the same with what another had proposed before, Luke x. 25. sect. cvii.) we have reason to rejoice in the repetition of MARK XII.
so important an answer. Oh, that it might be inscribed on our hearts as with the point of a diamond! 28

The first and great commandment requires us to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind,* 29
and strength; and *the second, which is like unto it,* to *love our neighbour as ourselves.* But alas, what reason have we to complain of our own deficiency on both these heads! and how much need of being taught again even these *first principles of the oracles of God!* (Heb. v. 12.)

Can we say, with regard to the first, that the blessed God has the whole of our hearts? Is the utmost vigour of 30
our faculties exerted in his service? Do we make him the end of all our actions, of all our wishes, of all our pursuits? —Or are we indeed such equitable judges between ourselves and others, as the second of these great commandments 31
would require; so as to seek our own particular interests no farther than they may be subservient to, or at least consistent with, the good of the whole? Do we make all those allowances for others, which we expect or desire they should make for us?—Surely we must own we are far from having *yet attained,* or from being *already perfect.* (Phil. iii. 12.)—But if this be not in the main the prevailing and governing temper of our minds, in vain are 33
our burnt-offerings and our sacrifices; in vain are all the solemnities of public worship, or the forms of domestic and secret devotion; and by all our most pathetic expressions of duty to God, and friendship to men, we do but add one degree of guilt to another. Let us then most earnestly entreat that God would have mercy upon us, and by his Holy Spirit *write these laws in our hearts.*

On these subjects let scribes instructed to the kingdom of heaven insist, lest they be condemned by this expositor 32
of the Jewish law. And let those whose notions are thus wisely regulated, take heed, lest, while they seem *near to the kingdom of God,* by resting in mere notions, they come short of it, and sink into a ruin aggravated by their 34
near approach to the confines of salvation and glory.

As for the question of Christ with which the Pharisees were perplexed, the gospel has given us a key to it. Well MATT. XXII.
might David in Spirit call him Lord, who, according to the flesh, was to descend from his loins: for *before David* 41—43
or *Abraham was, he is.* (John viii. 58.) Let us adore this mysterious union of the divine and human natures in the person of our glorious Emmanuel; and be very careful that we do not oppose him, if we would not be found 44
fighters against God. Already is he *exalted at the right hand of the Father;* let his friends rejoice in his dignity and glory, and with pleasure wait the day of his complete triumph, when *all his enemies shall be put under his feet,* and even the last of them be *swallowed up in victory!* (1 Cor. xv. 25, 54.)

SECTION CLVII.

Christ discourses with the Pharisees in the temple, repeating the charges and cautions which he had formerly advanced at the house of one of that sect. Matt. xxiii. 1—22. Mark xii. 38—40. Luke xx. 45, *to the end.*

MATT. xxiii. 1.

THEN spake Jesus [in his doctrine,] [Luke, in the audience of all the people, unto his disciples,] [Mark xii. 38. Luke xx. 45.]

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

MATT. xxiii. 1.

THEN Jesus, in the progress of *his doctrine* and discourse, *spake to his disciples in the* SECT. 157.
audience of all the people who were present, and took occasion (as he had done formerly, Luke xi. 39. *et seq.* sect. cx.) to expose and caution them against the pride and hypocrisy
of the scribes and Pharisees, *Saying* openly and freely to them, *The scribes and the* MATT. XXIII.
Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses,[a] and are the public teachers and expounders of his law: *All, therefore, whatsoever they shall charge you to observe* in virtue of that law,[b] 3
pay a becoming deference and regard to, and be ready to *observe and do* accordingly; *but practise not* by any means *according to their works; for they say* well in many instances, *but do not* themselves *practise* according to what they teach.

e *If David himself therefore call him Lord, how is he then his Son?*] This implies both the existence of David in a future state, and the authority of the Messiah over that invisible world into which that prince was removed by death: Else, how great a Monarch soever the Messiah might have been, he could not have been properly called David's Lord, any more than Julius Cæsar could have been called the Lord of Romulus, because he reigned in Rome 700 years after his death, and vastly extended the bounds of that empire which Romulus founded.—Munster's Note on this text shows, in a very forcible manner, the wretched expedients of some modern Jews to evade the force of that interpretation of the 110th Psalm which refers it to the Messiah.

f *Presume from that day forward to ask him any more questions.*] The plain meaning is, they asked him no more such captious questions; for the memory of this confusion impressed their minds during the short remainder of Christ's continuance among them; and he was soon removed from them, so that they had no opportunities of doing it when that impression wore off.

a *Sit in the chair of Moses.*] Some think here is an allusion to those pulpits which Ezra made for the expounders of the law; (Neh. viii. 4.) and which were afterwards continued in the synagogue, from whence the rabbies delivered their discourses sitting. It is probably called Moses' chair, because it was that from whence the books of Moses were read and explained; so that he seemed to dictate from thence. It is strange that Lightfoot (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) and Gussatus, should explain this of a legislative authority; since the scribes and Pharisees, as such, had no peculiar authority of that kind.

b *In virtue of that law.*] If this limitation be not supposed, this passage will be inconsistent with all those in which he condemns the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees. Had he meant (as Orobio and some Popish writers have unaccountably pretended) to assert their infallibility, and to require an absolute submission to their dictates, he must have condemned himself, as it was known he was rejected by them. See Limborch, *Collat. Amic.* p. 58, 171.

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I therefore repeat it again, *Beware* of imitating the hypocrisy and following the example *of the scribes*;[c] *For*, by virtue of the traditions which in conjunction with the Pharisees they have added to the law, *they bind* together *grievous and insupportable burdens, and* without the least remorse *lay them on men's shoulders*, urging them by the heaviest penalties to conform to all their injunctions; *but they* dispense with [*themselves*] in the neglect of many of them, and *will not* so much as *move them with a finger of theirs*. (Compare Luke xi. 46. sect. cx.)

Mark xii. 38. Beware of the scribes: [Luke xx. 46.]
Matt. xxiii. 4. For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 *And* even when they do conform in other instances to their own rules, it is generally from a bad principle; for there is none of *all their works* but what *they* chiefly *do* with a design *to be viewed* and taken notice of *by men*, as examples of extraordinary piety. For this purpose, in particular, *they make their phylacteries* remarkably *broad*,[d] that it may be thought they write more of the law on those scrolls of parchment than others do, or desire to be more frequently reminded of divine things by the size of them; *and*, for the same reason likewise, they *make the fringes* and tassels which the law requires them to wear on the borders *of their garments*, as *large* as may be, that they may seem peculiarly desirous to remember the divine commandments, whenever they look upon them. (Compare Numb. xv. 38—40.)

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

LUKE XX. 46. MATT. XXIII. 6.

These are the self-conceited and vain-glorious men *who affect to walk in long garments*, that they may appear with an air of distinguished gravity and stateliness; *And love the uppermost places at feasts*, where guests of the first quality are used to sit; *and* are ambitious to secure *the highest seats* even *in the* very *synagogues*,[e] where they should meet

Luke xx. 46. Which desire to walk in long robes;—[Mark xii. 38.]
Matt. xxiii. 6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the [Luke, highest] seats in the synagogues; [Mark xii. 39. Luke xx. 46.]

7 to prostrate themselves in the divine presence with the lowest abasement of soul: *And*, on the same principle of vain-glory and ostentation, they desire to receive *salutations in the markets* and other places of common concourse, (compare Luke xi. 43. sect. cx.) *and to be called by men, Rabbi, rabbi*;[f] a title of honour which they are fond of having repeated in every sentence, and almost at every word.

7 And [salutations] in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, rabbi. [Mark xii. 38. Luke xx. 46.]

8 *But* as for you, my disciples, *be not you called Rabbi*, nor value yourselves on the name, if it should ever happen to be given you; *for one is your Master*, [*even*] *Christ; and ye are all brethren*,[g] and as such should treat each other with a loving freedom and

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ, and all ye are brethren.

9 familiarity. *And call not* [*any one*] *on earth your father*,[h] nor be fond of receiving this title from men who may be ready to speak of themselves as but children in comparison of you, and implicitly to follow all your dictates; *for one is your Father*, and that of the whole family, [*even*] *he* who dwells *in* the highest *heaven*, and before whom all the most distinguished honours of the children of men disappear, as less than nothing and vanity.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which *is* in heaven.

10 *Neither be ye called masters* and guides; *for one is your* great *Master* and Instructor, [*even*] *Christ*,[i] whose dictates you are ever to receive, and in whose name and authority

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 alone you are to teach others. *But*, on the contrary, *he that is*, and would appear in the eyes of God to be the *greatest among you, shall be* most eminent for condescension and humility, and will be ready to wait on the rest, and to behave himself on all occasions

11 But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant.

12 as *your servant*. (Compare Matt. xx. 26, 27. p. 282.) *And* what I have often told you will assuredly be found to be a certain truth, That *whosoever shall* attempt in an ambitious way to *exalt himself, shall*, sooner or later, by one method or another, *be abased; and whosoever*, on the other hand, *shall humble himself, shall be exalted* to the highest honour.[k]

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.

c *Beware of the scribes.*] The word *scribe* in general signifies any one conversant about books and writings; and is sometimes put for a civil officer, whose business probably resembled that of a *Secretary of state*: (2 Sam. viii. 17; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xix. 2.) at other times it is used at large for a man of learning and ability; (1 Chron. xxvii. 32; Jer. xxxvi. 26; Ezra vii. 6; Matt. xxiii. 34; 1 Cor. i. 20.) But as Biblical learning was most esteemed among the Jews, the word in the New Testament seems to be chiefly appropriated to those that applied themselves to the study of the law; (perhaps including those whose business it was to transcribe it.) Of these the public professors, who read lectures upon it, were called doctors or lawyers; and, probably, they who were invested with some public offices in the sanhedrim or other courts, scribes of the people. (Matt. ii. 4.)—But that the scribes, as Trigland labours to prove, (*De Secta Karæor.* p. 68.) were Karaites or textuaries, who rejected those traditions which the Pharisees inculcated, seems, from this text especially, utterly improbable. Our Lord commonly joins them with the Pharisees, and probably most of them were of that sect.

d *They made their phylacteries* remarkably *broad.*] I doubt not but most of my readers very well know that the Jews (understanding Exod. xiii. 9, 16; and Deut. vi. 8; xi. 18. which commanded them to *bind the law on their heads*, and to let it be *as frontlets between their eyes*, in a literal sense) used to wear little scrolls of parchment, on which those passages were written, bound to their foreheads and wrists. It is generally supposed they were called phylacteries in Greek, as being looked upon as a kind of amulet to keep them from danger. See Serrar. *Trikær.* p. 38; and Drus *De Tribus Sectis*, p. 263, 266.

e *The highest seats in the synagogues.*] The doctors had seats by themselves, with their backs towards the pulpit in which the law was read, and their faces towards the people. These were accounted the most honourable, and therefore these ambitious scribes and Pharisees contended for them. See Reland. *Antiq. Heb.* p. 61; Vitring. *De Synag. Vet.* p. 191, *et seq.* and Wolf. *in loc.*

f *To be called by men, Rabbi, rabbi.*] Many learned men have observed, that an extravagant notion of respect went along with this title, which was derived from רב, a word which signifies both *magnitude* and *multitude*, and seems intended very emphatically to express both the *greatness* and the *variety* of that learning which they who bore it were supposed to be possessed of. (L'Enfant's *Introd.* p. 98.)—Dr. Lightfoot tells us (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) that the words of the scribes are declared to be more amiable and weighty than those of the prophets, and equal to those of the law: so that Gamaliel advised to get a rabbi, that one might no longer doubt of any thing. More passages to this purpose may be seen in Dr. Gale's *Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 80. and in Whitby and Elsner, *in loc.* They fully show the necessity there was for such repeated cautions as our Lord gives, and are an abundant answer to what Orobio objects to our Lord's conduct in this respect; (see Limborch. *Collat.* p. 119.) for, considering their inveterate prejudices against Christ, it could never be supposed that the common people would receive the gospel till such corrupt teachers as these were brought into a just disgrace.

g *Ye are all brethren.*] It is observable that not one word is said of Peter's authority over the rest, either here or on the application made by Zebedee's children; though, had such an authority been intended, nothing could have been more natural or necessary, than to have mentioned and adjusted it. Compare note g, on Matt. xx. 26. p. 282.

h *Call not* [*any one*] *on earth your father.*] The Pharisees, no doubt, had this title given them; and Bishop Wilkins observes, that it is a title which assuming priests of all religions have greatly affected.

i *One is your Master*, [*even*] *Christ.*] It is remarkable that this occurs twice in the very same words, (here, and in ver. 8.) Our Lord knew how requisite it would be to attend to it, and how ready even his ministers would be to forget it.

k *Whosoever shall exalt himself, &c.*] Christ seems by the frequent repetition of this maxim, to intimate that he intended it not

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MATT. XXIII.

Then Jesus, turning from his disciples, to whom he had hitherto been speaking, addressed himself boldly to those crafty enemies who stood around him waiting for nothing *but* an opportunity of mischief, and said, *Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* [1] *for*, by the prejudices you are so zealous to propagate among the people, *you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*, and do all you can to prevent their regarding it; *for you neither go in yourselves, nor permit them that are* awakened to a desire of *entering, to go in;* and thus you make yourselves in some degree chargeable with their destruction as well as with your own, by the false notions you instil into their minds, and the prejudices you raise against me and my doctrine. (Compare Luke xi. 52. sect. cx.)

13 But woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.

Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, that impose upon men by specious forms of devotion! but these forms cannot impose upon God, nor prevent his vengeance from falling heavy upon you: *for*, by your cruel extortions, *you devour the houses of widows* and orphans, whose helpless circumstances, if you had any remains of humanity and generosity, might rather engage you to protect and vindicate them; *and* it is only *for a pretence* to cover these crying immoralities, that you *make* such *long* and seemingly earnest *prayers*, hoping thereby to engage the esteem and confidence of others, that you may have the greater opportunity to injure and defraud them: but this complicated wickedness shall cost you dear; for *therefore shall you receive greater* and more dreadful *damnation* than if you had never prayed at all, nor made any pretences to religion. 14

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. [Mark xii. 40. Luke xx. 47.]

Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites as you are! *for* with indefatigable industry *you* do, as it were, *compass the sea and the land to make one proselyte* to your own particular sect and party; *and when he is become* [*so,*] *you* often *make him* even *doubly more a child of hell than* you *yourselves are;* while, in order to approve the sincerity of his conversion to you, he is obliged to vie with you in all the excesses of your superstition and bigotry. 15

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, who have invented so many nice distinctions to make men easy in their sins, and subservient to your secular interests! *who say*, for instance, *Whosoever shall swear* only *by the temple, it is nothing;*[m] *but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple*, whether by that with which a part of it is overlaid, or by that which is laid up in its treasures, *he is obliged* by it. *Ye foolish and blind* [*creatures,*] is not the stupid sophistry of this distinction apparent to the weakest understanding? *for which* of these *is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold*, which without its relation to the temple would have nothing in it more sacred than any common metal? *And* ye also say, just with the same degree of sense and piety as before, *Whosoever shall swear* only *by the altar* of God, *it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gift which is upon it, he is obliged* to the performance of his oath. *Ye foolish and blind* [*wretches,*] what an idle and senseless distinction is this! *for which* can you suppose *is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift*, which, before it was brought thither, was only a common thing, and might be used to any of the ordinary purposes of human life? The truth of the case is *therefore* plain and obvious; *he that swears by the altar, swears* in effect *by it, and by all* the *things* that are offered *upon it* to him whose altar it is: *And he that swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him* also *that dwells in it*, even the eternal and ever-blessed Jehovah, who honours it in a special manner with the tokens of his presence: *And he that swears by heaven*, which some of you are foolish enough to think a little oath, *swears by the throne of* the most high *God, and by him who sits upon it*, and fills all the train of attendant angels with the humblest reverence and prostration of mind. Now, did you and your disciples consider this, that every oath by a creature is an implicit appeal to God, you could not surely talk of such expressions in so light and dangerous a manner as you commonly do. 16–22

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.

17 Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing: but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon:

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

IMPROVEMENT.

As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear. (Prov. xxv. 12.) Christ was indeed a wise and faithful Reprover; but the ears of these Pharisees were disobedient and uncircumcised. Let us, however, who are his disciples, attend to these instructions of our heavenly Master, and avoid every thing which has the remotest tendency to what he here condemns with so just a severity. Ver. 1 *et seq.*

Let not our zeal spend itself upon the externals of religion. Let us not impose heavy burdens upon each other; nor lay down rules for the conduct of others, by which we do not in like circumstances think fit to govern ourselves. Let us not impose our own decisions in a magisterial manner on our fellow Christians, nor affect to be called fathers, masters, and teachers; remembering that Christ alone is our Master, and God our Father, and that it is a dangerous presumption and folly to set ourselves in the place of either. Let us be upon our guard against that vain ostentation that would lead us to place any part of our happiness in precedence, and to value ourselves upon our rank, or upon any airy titles of honour by which, perhaps rather by accident than merit, we are distinguished 5, 4 8—10 6, 7 7

only for those who were to be teachers of others, but for all his disciples without exception. And it is well worthy of our observation, that no one sentence of our Lord's is so frequently repeated as this; which occurs at least ten times in the Evangelists. Compare Matt. xviii. 4; xx. 26, 27; xxiii. 10, 11; Mark ix. 35; x. 43, 44; Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14; xxii. 26; and John xiii. 14.

l *Hypocrites.*] Dr. More with great propriety observes, that the word *hypocrites*, [υποκριται,] in its most exact application, signifies *players*, who, according to the unnatural custom of the ancients, acted a part under a mask. More's *Theolog. Works*, p. 293.

m *Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing.*] It seems the Pharisees taught, that oaths by the creatures might be used on trifling occasions, and violated without any great guilt, (see note h, on Matt. v. 34. p. 78.) But they excepted oaths by the corban, and by sacrifices; in which it is plain, that without any regard to common sense or decency, they were influenced merely by a view to their own interest; and therefore represented these to the people as things of more eminent sanctity than even the temple or altar itself.

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from others; and which to a truly wise man, and especially to an humble follower of Jesus, will appear to be a very little matter. Let us desire that honour which arises from condescending to others, and serving them in love; that honour which springs from the divine approbation, which it will be impossible to secure without unaffected piety. (John v. 44.)

14 God forbid that our devotions should ever be intended as a cloak of maliciousness, or as the instrument of serving any mean and vile purpose! Such prayers would return in curses on our own heads, and draw down on them 15 aggravated damnation. God forbid that we should spend that time, and that ardency of spirit, in making proselytes to our own peculiar notions and party, which ought to be laid out in making them the servants of God through 16 Christ! God forbid that we should delude ourselves or others by such idle distinctions in matters of conscience, as these which our blessed Redeemer has with so much reason and spirit exposed!

17—22 Let us retain the greatest reverence for an oath, and not accustom ourselves to trifle with any thing which looks like it. Let us consider heaven as the throne of God, and often think of the majesty and glory of that illustrious Being that sits thereon; for a sense of his continual presence will form us to a better temper, and engage us, with a righteousness far exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, to walk before him in all his commandments and ordinances blameless.

SECTION CLVIII.

Christ continues his discourse with the Pharisees, reproving them for their hypocrisy, and threatening them with approaching judgments. Matt. xxiii. 23, *to the end.*

MATT. xxiii. 23.

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OUR Lord farther proceeded in his discourse, and said, *Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* you may justly expect the severest vengeance; *for ye* are careful 23 to *tithe mint, and anise, and cummin,* and every other common herb which grows in your gardens, *and* yet *have* wholly *neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and fidelity;*[a] *these* should chiefly have been regarded by you as what *ye ought* more especially *to have practised, and* indeed *not to have omitted the other,* as a reverent observance is due even to the least of God's commandments. (Compare Luke xi. 24 42. sect. cx.) *Ye blind guides* of blind and wretched followers, *who* do (as it is proverbially said) carefully *strain out a gnat* from the liquor you are going to drink, *and* yet can *swallow down a camel;*[b] you affect to scruple little things, and disregard those of the greatest moment.

25 *Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish,* and are mighty exact in the observance of external rites and washings of the body, *but* are regardless of the *inner parts,* and unconcerned about your hearts and consciences, which *are full of* uncleanness, and of all kinds of *rapine and intemperance.* 26 (Compare Luke xi. 39. sect. cx.) *Thou blind* and senseless *Pharisee, first* begin with the heart, and thereby, as it were, *cleanse the inside of the cup, and of the dish, that* thus *the outside of them may be clean also:* for the life will of course be reformed when the heart is purified.

27 *Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye resemble whited sepulchres, which indeed appear* fair and *beautiful without,*[c] *but within are full of the bones* 28 *of the dead, and of all* that *uncleanness* which arises from their putrefying bodies. *Even so you also do indeed outwardly appear righteous unto men,* who view nothing more than the external part of your character; *but* in the sight of an heart-searching God, who has a clear and perfect view of all that lies *within, you are full of* that *hypocrisy and iniquity* which is infinitely more loathsome to him than the most disagreeable objects can be to the human eye.

29 *Woe unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for,* under a pretence of your regard and veneration for their characters, *you* sumptuously *build* up *the sepulchres of the* ancient *prophets, and adorn the monuments of the* other *righteous* men of former genera- 30 tions, as desirous to preserve and honour their memories.[d] *And* ye *say, If we had been* living *in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the* holy *prophets* which they shed, but would have treated them in another man-

MATT. xxiii. 23.

WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous:

30 And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have

a *Fidelity.*] The word πιστις has undoubtedly this signification in many places: (compare Tit. ii. 10; Gal. v. 22; and Rom. iii. 3.) But there are many more in which it signifies *the confidence reposed in another;* and it is of great importance to observe this. See Col. i. 4; and 1 Pet. i. 21.

b *Strain out a gnat, and swallow down a camel.*] In those hot countries, as Serrarius well observes, (*Trihæres,* p. 51.) gnats were apt to fall into wine, if it were not carefully covered; and passing the *liquor through a strainer, that no gnat or part of one might remain, grew into a proverb* for exactness about little matters. Could any authority be produced in which καμηλον signifies *a large insect,* I should with great pleasure follow the translation of 1727, in rendering the latter clause, *swallow a beetle.*

c *Whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful without.*]—Though the first intention of whitening sepulchres might be only to mark them out, that they might be avoided; and so (as some Jewish writers, and particularly Maimonides, have observed) a heap of lime laid upon the grave might answer the end; it is evident they were sometimes adorned, (ver. 29.) probably not only with plastering and whitewashing, but with marble and other stone monuments: and, notwithstanding all the applause which Vitringa (*Observ. Sacr. lib.* i. p. 201.) gives to the interpretation which Dr. Lightfoot (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) and Dr. Pocock (*Port. Mos. cap.* v. p. 73.) have advanced, I conclude that such ornaments were here referred to; for I cannot think Christ would have called these sepulchres beautiful, if they had been nothing but heaps of earth covered with grass. Compare note e, on Luke xi. 44. § 110.

d *You build the sepulchres of the prophets, &c.*] I can by no means think, with Markius, (*Exercit.* p. 229.) many of whose criticisms are very low and fanciful, that Christ here blames the building the sepulchres of those holy men; which as Elsner (Vol. I. p. 160.) and Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 48.) show, was a piece of respect which most nations have paid to persons of distinguished merit, especially to those who fell in a good cause. What Vitringa (*De Synag.* p. 221.) tells us of the extraordinary honours paid to the sepulchre of Mordecai, is an agreeable illustration of these words. Josephus also, from *Nicolaus Damascenus,* mentions Herod's repairing in a very splendid manner the sepulchre of David, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvi. *cap.* 7. [al. 11.] § 1.) Compare Acts ii. 29.—Grotius is certainly right in saying, that the four verses in this paragraph are to be considered as one sentence; of which perhaps ver. 31. may be a parenthesis.

been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore be ye witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

ner than our fathers did. *So that you* really *bear witness to yourselves, that you are* SECT. 158.
the sons of those that murdered the prophets; and indeed your present temper and conduct more certainly speaks you to be their genuine offspring, and to be full of that very malignity which you pretend to condemn in them. (Compare Luke xi. 47, 48. sect. cx.) MATT. XXIII.
And do you [*then*] *fill up,* as soon as you think fit, what yet remains to be completed of *the measure of your fathers'* sins, that wrath may come upon this guilty land to the uttermost. 32

Ye painted and deceitful *serpents, ye brood of* specious but venomous and mischievous 33
vipers, how artfully soever you may evade human censures, *how can you* so much as hope by any of these vain pretences to *escape* what is infinitely more dreadful, that righteous sentence of the unerring Judge which will consign you over to *the damnation of hell?*[e] (Compare Matt. iii. 7. p. 32.)

Therefore,[f] *behold I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes* instructed to 34
the kingdom of heaven, to try you once more, and to give you the last call to repentance and reformation which you must ever expect: but I know that this last attempt will, with regard to the generality of you, be entirely in vain; *and* that [*some*] *of them ye will kill, and* carry your malice so far as to *crucify* them like common slaves: *and* when ye cannot effect that, [*some*] *of them ye will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute* [*them*] *from city to city.* For thus will God in righteous judgment permit ye to act, that ye 35
may become the distinguished trophies of his displeasure, as if he were reckoning with you for the guilt of all former ages; so *that upon you may* seem to *come* the vengeance due for *all the righteous blood which has been poured forth on the earth* from the beginning of the world; even *from the blood of Abel, that* eminently *righteous man,* whom his brother Cain then slew, *to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah,* one of the last of the prophets, *whom ye murdered* while he was ministering *between the temple and the altar;*[g] impiously presuming to intrude into the court of the priests, to perpetrate that most horrible murder as near as possible to God's most immediate presence. *Verily* 36
I say unto you, That even the guilt of all this righteous blood, and *all these things* that are included in the woes I have denounced, *shall come on this generation* of men; so dreadful are the calamities which God will shortly bring upon it. (Compare Luke xi. 49, 50, 51. sect. cx.)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [*thou*] *that killest the prophets, and stonest them that* 37
are sent unto thee by God for thy conversion and salvation; thou unhappy city, who hast so often been stained with the blood of the martyrs, that it is grown into a proverb, That a prophet can hardly perish any where else, (Luke xiii. 33.) *how often would I have gathered thy children together* unto me, *even* with as much tenderness *as a hen gathereth her chickens together under her wings* to protect them from the assaults of any bird of prey, or whatever else might threaten their safety; *and yet ye would not* hearken to my compassionate calls, but have hardened your hearts against my love, and repaid me with contempt, hatred, and persecution! *Behold,* the time is coming when you will see 38
your folly though too late; for *your* sacred *house,* in which you vainly trust, even this magnificent temple in which you now stand, *is* so near being utterly destroyed, that it may be said to be even already *left desolate to you,* so that the few who survive the general carnage shall be forced to sit down and weep over its ruins. *For* I am now making my 39
last visit here; and *I say unto you,* That *henceforth,* since you treat me so ill, *ye shall not see me* any more *till* even *ye shall say,* as the multitudes lately did, but with sublimer passions and nobler views, *Blessed is* [*he*] *that cometh in the name of the Lord!*[h] that

e *How can you* hope by any of those vain pretences to *escape* that sentence, &c.] Raphelius has abundantly proved that αποφυγειν κριμα (which is the same in sense with the original) properly signifies *to evade conviction* in a court of judicature, which is often done by the artifice of the criminal. *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 50, 51.

f *Therefore.*] Though Olearius here would render διατουτο, *in the mean time,* the version is so unexampled that I cannot acquiesce in it; and if the connexion, as it stands, could not be accounted for, I should think it better to connect this phrase with the close of the preceding verse, *How can ye escape the damnation of hell for this?* or avoid the judgment of God for this mixture of injustice, cruelty, and hypocrisy?

g *To the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah,* &c.] Though very learned men have interpreted this of four different persons, I do not, with the learned and candid Witsius, (*Miscel.* Vol. I. p. 269.) think it an inexplicable difficulty which of these is referred to. I scruple not, with Grotius, Drusius, Casaubon, Erasmus, and many more, to explain it of that Zechariah who is expressly said to have been slain in that remarkable manner between the temple and the altar, (2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.) though I take not upon me to determine whether (as Chrysostom asserts) Johoiada his father was also called Barachiah, which signifies *one that blesses the Lord,* as Jehoiada does *one that confesses him;* or whether the original reading was different from ours, as Jerome says he found in the gospel of the Nazarenes, or the Hebrew version of Matthew.—It is by no means necessary, with Capellus, to allow that it was a slip in the Evangelist's memory; but much more decent to suppose it an officious addition of some early transcriber, who might confound this martyr with Zechariah, one of the twelve minor prophets, who was indeed the son of Barachiah, but who does not by any means appear to have been murdered; nor is there any reason to imagine the Jews, so soon after their return from captivity, would have attempted so flagitious an act.—Though Theophylact understands the text of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, on the credit of an idle tale of Origen's, confuted by Jerome, in which he tells us that this good man was murdered in the temple, (see Erasmus, *in loc.*) he has had few followers; and indeed the story seems to have been made on the mistaken authority of the text in question. Yet after all, it seems still more unreasonable, with Archbishop Tillotson, (Vol. I. p. 197, 198.) to understand these words as a prophecy of that Zechariah, the son of Baruch, who, as Josephus says, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* iv. *cap.* 5. [al. v. 1.] § 4.) was assassinated in the middle of the temple, just before the Romans besieged the city. Had we more evidence of his being a righteous man, it would be harsh to suppose Christ, in such a connexion, to speak of a future fact as what was already done; or to charge that deed on the whole Jewish nation which was done, contrary to the decree of the sanhedrim, by two resolute villains. All the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah, seems to have been a proverb; and it might naturally arise from observing that Abel was the first, and Zechariah in Chronicles the last, eminently good man of whose murder the scripture speaks.

h *Till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh,* &c.] This was doubtless spoken after Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, (though Heinsius most unnaturally supposes it transplaced,) which shows the necessity of giving the words some such turn as they have in the paraphrase.—If we might be allowed, with Grotius, to translate εως αν ειπητε, *till ye would be glad to say,* or *wish ye had said, Blessed is he that cometh,* &c. this would give a very plain and easy sense, nearly parallel to Matt. xxvi. 64. where απ' αρτι is perhaps used in the same sense. And thus the words might be explained as if our Lord had said, "From the time of my present "appearance at this passover, you shall not see me any more till "that awful hour of judgment, in which I shall appear in such

SECT. 158. MATT. XXIII. is, till your calamities have taught you eagerly to wish for the Messiah, and divine grace shall have inclined you, as a nation, gladly to receive me under that character; but you little think through what scenes of desolation, exile, and misery, you must pass for succeeding ages, before that happy time comes. (Compare Luke xiii. 34, 35. p. 235.) And when he had thus spoken, he went out of the temple.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 23 MAY we ever remember how necessary it is that our righteousness should *exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees*, if we desire to *enter into the kingdom of heaven!* (Matt. v. 20.) May our zeal be employed on the great essentials of religion, justice, mercy, and fidelity, and not be laid out merely or chiefly on the circumstantials of it!

25, 26 27, 28 May we be concerned about the purity of our hearts, and not merely attend to the decency of our external behaviour! May we be, not like painted sepulchres, fair and beautiful without, and full of all uncleanness within, but rather like the vessel laid up before the Lord, whose outside shone with polished gold, while within it was replenished with heavenly manna! (Heb. ix. 4.)

29—32 How many, like these Pharisees, condemn persecution, and yet themselves are chargeable with the guilt of it! May that never be our character, lest we be judged out of our own mouths, and lest we thereby fill up the measure of our iniquities!

37—39 Behold the repeated tenderness of our compassionate Redeemer, even towards that guilty city *that killed the prophets, and stoned the messengers of God!* He *would*, with the gentlest and most solicitous care, *have gathered them, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings!* Thus does he still call and invite perishing sinners. Oh that the obstinacy of their own perverse and rebellious wills may not finally withstand all the overtures of his grace, lest eternal desolation be their portion, and they in vain wish for the repetition of those calls which they once so wantonly despised!

SECTION CLIX.

Christ applauds the liberality of the poor widow whom he saw casting her two mites into the treasury. Mark xii. 41, *to the end.* Luke xxi. 1—4.

MARK xii. 41.

SECT. 159. MARK XII. *AND Jesus*, having made an end of his discourse to the scribes and Pharisees, as he was going out of the temple, *sat down* at a little distance, *over against* that part of it which was called *the treasury*,[a] because there the chests for collecting the contributions of the people stood, and in the chambers over that cloister the sacred stores were kept; *and he looked up, and beheld*, with attentive observation, *how the people cast* their *money*, [*and*] brought

41 *their* offerings and free *gifts into the treasury*, at this public time; *and many rich men cast in much;* there being still this remainder of national goodness among them, though true religion was sunk to so very low an ebb.

42 *And there came* among the rest *a certain poor widow*, whose character and circumstances he well knew; *and she cast in there two* of the smallest pieces of brass coin then in use, called *mites*, *which*, both taken together, only *make a farthing* of the Roman money.

43 *And* our Lord was so pleased with this generous action of hers, that *he* took particular notice of it, and even *called his disciples to him* to hear his remarks upon it; *and* as they stood about him, he *says to them*, Look upon yonder woman, and observe the greatness of her piety and zeal; for *assuredly I say unto you, That this poor widow*, however she may seem to men to have given but a very little, inconsiderable matter, *has* appeared in the sight of God to have *cast in more than all they who have thrown* such

44 sumptuous gifts *into the treasury:* And, in proportion to her circumstances, it is much more; *for all these* who have presented such large sums, *threw in*, comparatively, but a little part out *of their* superfluity and redundancy of possessions *into the offerings of God: but she*, in the midst *of her poverty* and the daily straits to which she is exposed, *has cast in all* the little stock of money *that she had*, [*even*] *all* that she had by her for *her living;* not knowing where she should get the next mite for herself, to furnish out the necessary supports for her humble and indigent life.

MARK xii. 41.
AND Jesus sat over against the treasury: [and he looked up,] and beheld how the people cast money [*and* their gifts] into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. [Luke xxi. 1.]

42 And there came a certain poor widow; and she threw in [thither] two mites, which make a farthing. [Luke xxi. 2.]

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury, [Luke xxi. 3.]

44 For all [these] did cast in of their abundance [unto the offerings of God:] but she of her [penury] did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living. [Luke xxi. 4.]

IMPROVEMENT.

41 OUR Lord Jesus Christ had his eye on those who were bringing their gifts into the sacred treasury. Let us remember his eye is also upon us, to observe in what degree we are ready, on proper occasions, to contribute for the glory of God and the good of mankind; and in what proportion to the ability which God has given us. Let

42 not the poorest be discouraged from doing something for these good purposes, however little they may have it in their power to perform; since Christ may acknowledge the noblest charity in the smallest gift, as *wherever there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not* (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

43 Let us imitate the candour of our blessed Redeemer, and be ready to be pleased with little services. The circumstances of mankind are such, that few have it in their power to do great matters frequently for the service o

"pomp and power, that the proudest of you all shall have reason to "wish you had cordially joined in those Hosannas which you lately "rebuked." This interpretation, could the version be justified, I should vastly prefer to any other.

a *The treasury.*] This treasury received the *voluntary contributions* of the worshippers who came up to the feasts; and the money thrown into it was employed to buy wood for the altar, salt, and other necessaries not provided for in any other way.

others: but *the desire of a man is his kindness;* (Prov. xix. 22.) the principles and circumstances of an action recommend it more than the appearance it may make; and a multiplicity of little kind offices, in persons frequently conversant with each other, are the bands of society and friendship. We ought therefore to preserve an habitual tenderness and generosity of mind, and be mutually willing to oblige and to be obliged by them. SECT. 159. MARK XII. 44.

To conclude: let us not despise the poor, since there are many of them who will, in Christ's computation, be found eminently rich in good works; many whose mite will, in the treasury of God, have the value of a talent, and will condemn the sordid parsimony with which many of the rich and great have cast their presents into it; while what the latter part with out of their abundance bears no proportion, in the account of God, to what the former freely spare from their necessity. Happy is it for every truly pious and benevolent mind, that it is to give up its final account to him who searches the heart, and who is witness to those devout and charitable purposes which will always stretch themselves out beyond the limit of actions, and engage the charitable soul to wish more good than the power and revenues even of kingdoms could effect. January 23. 1755.

SECTION CLX.

Our Lord foretells the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and here insists on the remoter signs of its approach. Matt. xxiv. 1—14. Mark xiii. 1—13. Luke xxi. 5—19.

MATT. xxiv. 1.

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple; [Luke, and as some spake how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts,] [one of *them* saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings *are here.*] [Mark xiii. 1. Luke xxi. 5.]

2 And Jesus [answering,] said unto them, [Luke, *As for* these things which ye behold,] See ye not all these [great buildings?] Verily I say unto you, [Luke, the days will come, in the which] there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. [Mark xiii. 2. Luke xxi. 6.]

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, [over against the temple,] the disciples, [Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,] came unto him privately, saying, [Luke, Master,] tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, [when all these things shall be

MATT. xxiv. 1.

AND when *Jesus* had thus confounded his adversaries, and had foretold the desolation that their aggravated sins would shortly bring both on the city and the temple, (Matt. xxiii. 38. p. 317.) he left the place; and *going out* from thence, *departed from the temple*, where he had been discoursing to them. *And* as he was going away, *his disciples came to* [*him,*] and took that occasion *to show him the* splendid *buildings* and magnificent decorations *of the temple: and some*, observing what a noble structure it was, and *speaking how it was adorned with beautiful stones* of a prodigious size,[a] *and* with costly *gifts*, which many persons, in accomplishment of their vows for deliverances received, had hung up on the walls and pillars of it, besides what was laid up in its treasuries;[b] *one of* [*them*] *says unto him, Master, behold what* vastly large and curious *stones, and what* stately *edifices* [*are these.*] SECT. 160. MATT. XXIV. 1

And Jesus replying, said unto them, [*As for*] *these things which ye behold* with so much admiration, *do you not see* the splendour and magnificence of *all these great* and pompous *buildings*, which are the pride of the Jewish nation, and the wonder of all the rest of mankind? Yet, notwithstanding all the present grandeur of this stately temple, *verily I say unto you*, That *the days will* quickly *come in which* a victorious enemy shall profane its sanctity and deface its beauty, insomuch that *there shall not be left one* single *stone upon another here, that shall not be* entirely *demolished*,[c] till no remains of any part of it shall be preserved. 2

And when he was retired from the city, *as he sat* down *upon the mount of Olives*, which was *over against the temple*, and commanded the finest prospect of it from the east, *the disciples, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew*, who were favoured with a peculiar share of his intimacy and confidence, *came to him privately, saying, Master*, we entreat thee that thou wouldst *tell us when these* awful *things shall happen? and what* [*shall be*] *the sign of thy* second *coming*, when thou wilt execute thy vengeance on these thine enemies: *and of the end of the* present *age* and dispensation,[d] *when all these things shall be accomplished*, to make way for the brighter glories of that kingdom 3

a *Beautiful stones* of a prodigious size.] Josephus says that some of them were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad: [*Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 6.) See his large and beautiful description of the whole temple in that chapter, which is one of the most entertaining passages of such a kind I ever met with.

b Costly *gifts*, &c.] Hanging up such ανκθηματα, or *consecrated gifts*, was common in most of the ancient temples.—Tacitus speaks of the immense opulence of the temple at Jerusalem; (*Histor. lib. v.* § 8.) Amongst others of its treasures, there was a golden table given by Pompey, and several golden vines, of exquisite workmanship, as well as immense size; (for Josephus tells us, in the chapter cited above, § 4. that they had clusters [ανθεμωκεις] as tall as a man;) which some have thought referred to God's representing the Jewish nation under the emblem of a vine; Isa. v. 1, 7; Psal. lxxx. 8; Ezek. xv. 2, 6.—And Josephus likewise asserts, (*ibid.* § 6.) that the marble of the temple was so white, that it appeared to one at a distance like a mountain of snow; and the gilding of several of its external parts, which he there mentions, must, especially when the sun shone upon it, render it a most splendid and beautiful spectacle.

c *There shall not be left one stone upon another here, &c.*] It seemed exceedingly improbable that this should happen in that age, considering the peace of the Jews with the Romans, and the strength of their citadel, which forced Titus himself to acknowledge that it was the singular hand of God which compelled them to relinquish fortifications which no human power could have conquered. (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. [al. vii. 16.] § 1.) (Compare note b, on Luke xix. 43. p. 292.)—Bishop Chandler justly observes, that no impostor would have foretold an event so unlikely, and so disagreeable. *Defence of Christianity*, p. 472, 473.

d *The end of the* present *age.*] So συντελειχ του αιωνος may well be rendered. Compare Matt. xii. 32; Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. x. 11; Eph. ii. 2, 7; Heb. vi. 5; ix. 26. in all which places αιων may be rendered *age*.—Archbishop Tillotson and many other excellent writers would retain our translation, and suppose here are two distinct questions; *What should be the sign of his coming* to punish the ungrateful inhabitants of Jerusalem? and *What the sign of his final appearance* to the universal judgment? And that Christ answers the first question in the former, and the second in the latter part of the chapter: though where the transition is made, has been, among those that embrace this interpretation, matter of much debate.—Others have supposed the apostles took it for granted that the world was to be at an end when Jerusalem was destroyed; and that Christ was not solicitous to undeceive them, as their error might make them so much the more watchful; and therefore answers in ambiguous terms, which might suit either of these events.—But it seems much more natural to conclude, that they expected the wicked persecutors of Christ (in which number most of the magistrates and priests were) would by some signal judgment be destroyed; and that hereupon he would erect a most illustrious kingdom, and probably a more magnificent temple, which they might think described in Ezekiel: an expectation which they did not entirely quit even to the day of his ascension. (See Acts i. 6.) Our Lord, with perfect integrity and consummate wisdom, gives them an account of the prognosticating and concomitant signs of the destruction of Jerusalem; and then, without saying one word of any temporal kingdom to be erected, raises their thoughts to the final judgment, (to which the figures used in the former description might many of them be literally applied,) and sets before them an heavenly kingdom, and eternal life, as the great object of their pursuit. Matt. xxv. 34, 46.—This I take to be the key to this whole discourse; the particular parts of which have been admirably illustrated by many learned commentators; but the whole scope and connexion of it, so far as I can recollect, fully explained by none.

SECT. 160.

which thou wilt establish when all thy sufferings are over, and every thing which opposes thy triumph subdued?

And Jesus answering them, began to say, with an air of solemnity agreeable to the importance of the subject on which he was going to discourse, As to the event concerning which you now enquire, let me in the first place caution you, that you *see* [*to it*] in the most solicitous manner, *that no man deceive you* with false pretences to a divine revelation and commission. *For many shall come in my name*, and with the title peculiar to me, *saying, I am the Messiah*;[e] *and the time* of deliverance, so long promised and so long expected by the Jewish people, *is* now *come*,[f] when the yoke is to be broken off from their neck, and their enemies are to be subdued under them; *and* by these plausible pretences they *shall deceive many*; but *do not ye therefore go after them*; for all their promises and hopes will be in vain, and sudden destruction will overtake them and their followers.

MATT. XXIV. 4 5

But when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, among the Jews, *and seditions* raised by them in several places against the Romans, *see that you be not troubled*, [*and*] *terrified*, as if the great event that I have now foretold would immediately happen; *for all these things must first come to pass*, and be the gradual openings of it; *but the end* of them, in the utter destruction of the Jewish state, *is not yet*: nay, some of you, my disciples, will have several important services to perform here after these alarms are begun; services which, even by means of these alarms, you may pursue with some peculiar advantages.

6

And *then he* further added and *said to them*, Judea shall not be the only seat of war at that time: for in the neighbouring countries *nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*:[g] *and*, partly as the consequence of these ravages and slaughters, and partly by the immediate hand of Providence on sinful men who have rejected the gospel, as also to exercise the faith and charity of its professors, *there shall be* severe *famines and* mortal *pestilences; and* there shall also happen *great* and terrible *earthquakes in various places, and troubles* and anguish of mind in the apprehension of yet greater calamities. Here at home *there shall also be dreadful sights, and great signs from heaven*, particularly a comet like a flaming sword waving over Jerusalem, and the appearance of contending armies in the air.[h] *But all these things* [*are*] only *the beginnings of* those *sorrows* and alarms that will issue in the destruction of Jerusalem.

7 8

MARK XIII.

But take ye *heed to yourselves*, and be cautious how you behave; and though you meet with the severest persecutions, be not discouraged from persisting in the truth, and from continuing faithful in your regards to me: *for before all these things* shall happen, *they shall lay their* violent *hands upon you, and persecute you* with the greatest cruelty and rage; [*and*] *shall deliver* some of *you up to the* greater *councils*, [*and*] cite others of you *to* appear before the inferior courts in *the synagogues, and* shall cast some of you *into prisons, to be* severely *scourged*, [*and*] otherwise *afflicted* by confinement and a variety of hardships there;[i] *and* indeed they *shall* go so far as to *kill* some of *you* in a few years; *and* as for the rest, *ye shall be* generally *hated*, not only by the Jews here at home, but by those abroad, and *by all* the Gentile *nations* to whom you go; [*and*] *shall be brought before rulers and kings for my name's sake*, and *for a testimony against them* that the gospel has been offered to them in the most public manner, even to the greatest of men, to whom you might otherwise have had no access: (compare Matt. x. 17, 18. sect. lxxv.)

9

LUKE XXI. 12.

And it shall also *turn to you for a* public and honourable *testimony* of the innocence of your cause, however it may be misrepresented, and of the integrity and uprightness of your conduct.

MARK XIII. 10.

And indeed, notwithstanding this early and violent opposition, yet before the destruction

fulfilled?] [Mark xiii. 3, 4. Luke xxi. 7.]

4 And Jesus [answering them, began to say,] Take heed that no man deceive you. [Mark xiii. 5. Luke xxi. 8.]

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; [Luke, and the time draweth near:] and shall deceive many: [Luke, go ye not therefore after them.] [Mark xiii. 6. Luke xxi. 8.]

6 [Luke, But when] ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, [Luke, and commotions,] see that ye be not troubled [Luke, *and* terrified:] for all [Luke, these things] must [Luke, first] come to pass; but the end is not yet. [Mark xiii. 7. Luke xxi. 9.]

7 [Luke, Then said he unto them,] Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and [Luke, great] earthquakes in divers places, [and troubles:] [Luke, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.] [Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 10, 11.]

8 All these *are* the [beginnings] of sorrows. [Mark xiii. 8.]

Mark xiii. 9. But take heed to yourselves: for [Luke, before all these,] they [Luke, shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you, and*] shall deliver you up to councils, [Luke, *and* to the synagogues, and into prisons,] [to be] beaten [*and* afflicted, and shall kill you:] and ye [shall be hated of all nations, *and*] shall be brought before rulers and kings for my [name's] sake, for a testimony against them. [Matt. xxiv. 9. Luke xxi. 12.]

Luke xxi. 13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Mark xiii. 10. And the

c *Many shall come in my name*, &c.] See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13. [al. 12.] § 4, 5.—Christian writers have always with great reason represented Josephus's *History of the Jewish War* as the best commentary on this chapter; and many have justly remarked it as a wonderful instance of the care of Providence for the christian church, that he, an eye-witness, and, in these things, of so great credit, should (especially in such an extraordinary manner) be preserved to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this noble prophecy in almost every circumstance. (Compare Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* iii. *cap.* 8. [al. 14.]) But as it would swell my notes too much to enter into a particular detail of those circumstances, I must content myself with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent notes on the xxivth of Matthew, and to Archbishop Tillotson's large and accurate discourse on the same subject, in the second Volume of his *Posthumous Works: Ser.* 183—187. p. 547, *et seq.*

f *The time is come.*] The word ηγγικε may signify either the *approach* or *arrival* of the time, and may with great propriety express the *first opening* of a scene to be gradually disclosed; in which sense it is applied to Christ's kingdom, as preached by himself and his apostles during the time of his personal ministry.—Such pretended Messiahs did indeed arise towards the close of the Jewish state. (See 1 John iv. 1; Acts v. 36, 37. and Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6, 7.] § 6, 10.)—The Rhemish Jesuits, as much as they triumph in their infallible guide to the interpretation of scripture, ridiculously explain this as a prophecy of Luther and Calvin; which I mention only as one instance, among many more, of their contemptible ignorance or wicked prevarication.

g *Nation shall rise up against nation*, &c.] Grotius gives us a particular account of several wars of the Jews among themselves, and of the Romans with the Syrians, Samaritans, and other neighbouring nations, before Jerusalem was destroyed.—There were also earthquakes at this time in Apamea, Laodicea, and Campania; (see Tacit. *Annal. lib.* xii. § 43, 58; *lib.* xiv. § 27; *lib.* xv. § 22. Sueton. *Nero, cap.* 48; *Galb. cap.* 18.)—The famine in the days of Claudius is mentioned, Acts xi. 28. as well as recorded in history; (Sueton. *Claud. cap.* 18; and Euseb. *Hist. Eccl. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8.) and many perished by it in Judea. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 2. § 6.

h *Dreadful sights, and great signs from heaven*, &c.] Of these appearances, see Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 5. [al. vii. 12.] § 3. and Tacit. *Histor. lib.* v. § 13.—I cannot here but add an excellent observation of Mr. West, relating to the authors by whom this prophecy, which is expressed in terms so very plain and circumstantial, is recorded,—that Matthew and Mark were incontestably dead before the event, as Luke also probably might be; and as for John, the only Evangelist who survived it, it is remarkable that he says nothing of it, lest any should say the prophecy was forged after the event happened.—See West, *On the Resurrection of Christ*, p. 393.

i *Shall deliver you up to the councils*, &c.] All this was exactly accomplished: for Peter and John were called before the sanhedrim, (Acts iv. 6, 7;) James and Peter before Herod, (Acts xii. 2, 3;) and Paul before Nero the Emperor, as well as before the Roman governors, Gallio, Felix, and Festus. (Acts xviii. 12; xxiv. xxv. xxviii.)

gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, [settle *it* in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer; *and*] take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. [Luke xxi. 14.]

Luke xxi. 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Matt. xxiv. 10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Mark xiii. 12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Luke xxi. 16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends: and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. [Mark xiii. 13.]

18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

Matt. xxiv. 11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. [Mark xiii. 13.]

of Jerusalem *the gospel must first be preached among all* the heathen *nations* which are subjected to the Roman empire, (see note n,) and there also you will be followed with the like assaults and persecutions. *But when they shall bring* you before governors and kings, *and deliver you up* to the officers of justice, to be prosecuted as criminals in their most solemn courts, *settle it* at such times *in your hearts* as a constant rule *not to* draw up any formal speech, nor to *premeditate what answer* or apology *you shall make;* [*and*] be *not* anxiously *solicitous before-hand what you shall speak* in your defence, to vindicate yourselves and your religion from the unrighteous charges and aspersions of your enemies; *but whatsoever shall be given* in to *you*, and be strongly suggested to your minds *in that hour, that speak* boldly and resolutely; *for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit* himself, who shall assist and dictate to you. (Compare Matt. x. 19, 20. sect. lxxv. and Luke xii. 11, 12. sect. cxi.) *For* it is really my cause in which you are engaged; and therefore, though you are ignorant and unlearned men, and so may be apprehensive you shall be confounded in the presence of persons who are in rank and education so much your superiors, yet depend upon it, that *I will give you a mouth* to plead, *and wisdom* to answer whatever they allege against you, *which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict or withstand*, but shall be even astonished at the freedom and propriety with which you shall express yourselves, according to the various occasions which arise. (Compare Acts iv. 13, 14.)

And many that have owned themselves my followers *shall then be offended*, and give up all regard to the gospel, when they see the profession of it must cost them so dear; *and* having proved apostates, they shall become persecutors too, and *shall betray one another, and hate one another*, as being in their consciences secretly galled at the greater fidelity of their companions. *And* this wretched temper shall rise to such a height as to break through all the bonds of nature, insomuch that *one brother shall betray another*, not only to imprisonment but *to death: and the father*, on one hand, shall betray [*his*] *own son; and children*, on the other hand, *shall rise up* as witnesses *against* [*their*] aged *parents, and cause them to be put to death* without compassion or remorse. *And* these scenes, monstrous as they may seem, shall pass in your days, and before your eyes; nay, *you* yourselves shall have a painful share in them: For you, my apostles and servants, *shall be betrayed* and persecuted *even by parents and brethren and kindred, and* those that pretend to be the most faithful and affectionate *friends; and* [*some*] *of you shall they cause to be slain* by the hand of public and oppressive violence. *And* indeed this temper shall so generally prevail, that *ye shall be hated by* almost *all* ranks and orders as well as nations of *men, for the sake of my name* and gospel,[k] though they can find nothing else to object to your character, or accuse in your conduct; and they shall treat you as public enemies, while you are acting the most generous and benevolent part. (Compare Matt. x. 22. sect. lxxv.) *But* in the midst of all your sufferings be courageous and cheerful, as knowing you are the care of a peculiar and most gracious providence; so that, on the whole, you shall be safe, and *not an hair of your head shall* utterly *perish*,[l] or fall to the ground unregarded. *In your patience* therefore *possess ye your souls*,[m] and be calm and serene, the masters of yourselves, and above the agitation of any irrational or disquieting passion.

For though your discouragements are great, *and* particularly on this account, that (as I hinted before, ver. 5.) *many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many;* which some will urge as a farther excuse for suspecting and abusing you: *And* though, *because iniquity shall* thus *abound* under such a variety of forms, *the love of many* professing Christians, who should be your protectors and comforters, *will grow cool;* so that they shall be afraid or ashamed to entertain you, and shall be ready to throw up the cause which you so zealously defend: Yet sink not under the burden; *but* remember this, and let it animate you amidst all your difficulties, That *he who* resolutely *endures* all these extremities, and perseveres *to the end, shall* finally *be saved*, and have his life given him as a prey. (Compare Matt. x. 22.)

SECT. 160.

MARK XIII. 11

LUKE XXI. 15

MATT. XXIV. 10

MARK XIII. 12

LUKE XXI. 16

17

18

19

MATT XXIV. 11

12

13

k *Ye shall be hated by all men for the sake of my name.*] That not only the apostles but all the primitive Christians, were in general more hated and persecuted than any other religious sect of men, is most notorious to all who are at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history: A fact which might seem unaccountable, when we consider how inoffensive and benevolent their temper and conduct was, and how friendly an aspect their tenets had on the security of any government under which they lived. We are not to imagine (as Mons. St. Real weakly insinuates, in his ill-digested though elegant *History of the Life of Jesus*, p. 264.) that they had any peculiar aversion to the name of Christ. The learned Dr. Warburton has shown, beyond all contradiction, in his masterly manner, that the true reason of this opposition was, that while the different pagan religions, like the confederated demons honoured by them, sociably agreed with each other, the gospel taught christians, not only, like the Jews, to bear their testimony to the falsehood of them all, but also with the most fervent zeal to urge the renunciation of them as a point of absolute necessity; requiring all men, on the most tremendous penalties, to believe in Christ, and in all things to submit themselves to his authority: (see Dr. Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses*, Vol. I. book ii. § 6. p. 278—295.) A demand which bore so hard, especially on the pride and licentiousness of their princes and the secular interests of their priests, that it is no wonder they raised so violent a storm against it; which, considering the character and prejudices of the populace, it must be very easy to do.

l *Not an hair of your head shall perish.*] Our Lord had foretold but just before, (ver. 16.) that several of them should be put to death; he must therefore here intend to assure them, that when they came on the whole to balance their accounts, they should find they had not been losers in any the least instance; but that whatever damage they had sustained, it should be amply made up, and they at length placed in a state of entire security. This is plainly the import of this proverbial expression. See 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; and Acts xxvii. 34.

m *In your patience possess ye your souls.*] Though the word κτᾶσθαι does often signify *to acquire* or *procure*, (see Matt. x. 9; Acts i. 18; viii. 20; xxii. 28.) yet I cannot suppose, with Brennius, that our Lord intends here chiefly to intimate that fortitude and composure of spirit might have a tendency to secure their lives, as it would enable them calmly to deliberate on the several circumstances which might arise. I cannot but think, that the sense which the accurate and pious Dr. Wright gives of this passage, in that excellent piece of Christian philosophy, his *Discourse on Self-Possession* (p. 4, 5.) is much more natural, as well as more noble; as if our Lord had said, "By keeping the government of your own "spirits in these awful scenes, which will bear down so many "others, you will secure the most valuable self-enjoyment, as well

SECT. 160. MATT. XXIV. 14

And know, for your farther encouragement, that all their rage shall not be able to destroy the interest in which you are embarked, and to which you sacrifice so much; for I assure you, that *this* glorious *gospel of the kingdom* of heaven *shall* first *be preached in all the world, for a witness to all* its most distant *nations*;[n] *and then shall the end* of the Jewish state *come*, and God, having thus gathered for himself a people from among the Gentiles, shall destroy even this temple itself, in which they have trusted so much, and which they have foolishly looked upon as an inviolable pledge of his favour.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE whole of this prophecy most evidently shows us how vain and dangerous it is to trust in external privileges, and to cry out, as these foolish and wretched Jews did, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the* Ver. 2 *temple of the Lord*, are these buildings; when of this stately and magnificent structure, within less than half a century after it was finished, *not one stone was left on another* undemolished.

So particular a prediction, when compared with the event, must surely confirm our faith in Christ, as the great Prophet which was to come into the world. And we shall see reason to admire the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence in giving us, almost by a miraculous preservation of the author, such a commentary on this prophecy as is delivered down to us in the works of Josephus, the Jewish historian, which throw a much stronger light upon it than if they had been written by a christian on purpose to illustrate it.

LUKE XXI. 10, 11

Let us bless God that our own eyes have not seen such desolations and ruins, such commotions in the natural and moral world, such dissensions in civil life, such persecutions and hatreds amongst the nearest relatives, under the pretence of propagating religion: which, however propagated, is nothing without that love which is so often made the first victim to it.

MATT. XXIV. 13

Yet too plainly do we see, in one form or another, *iniquity abounding, and the love of many waxing cold.* Let us endeavour to revive on our own hearts a deep and lasting impression of divine things; and remember, whenever we are tempted to let go our integrity, that it is *he* alone *who endures to the end* that *shall be saved.*

LUKE XXI. 14 18, 19

Whatever our trials are, let us cheerfully confide in the protection of Divine Providence; nor let us despair of those continued influences of the blessed Spirit which may animate us to the most difficult services, and support us under the most painful sufferings. Let us therefore in patience possess our own souls, and maintain that composure and steadiness of spirit, as those that know how much more valuable it is than any enjoyment which can be taken away, or any temporal interest which can be brought into question. June 25. 1755.

SECTION CLXI.

Our Lord proceeds to describe the nearer prognostications of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the extreme severity of those calamities which should then fall on the Jewish nation. Matt. xxiv. 15—28. Mark xiii. 14—23. Luke xxi. 20—24.

LUKE xxi. 20.

SECT. 161. LUKE XXI. 20

OUR Lord having proceeded thus far in his discourse, added some more immediate signs by which the near approach of this terrible destruction might be determined; *and* said, *When you shall see Jerusalem encompassed* on every side *with* the Roman *armies*, [*and*] *the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, (Dan. ix. 27.) *standing where it ought not*, and displayed *in an holy place*; that is, when the standards of their desolating legions, on which they bear the detestable images of their idols, are planted on holy ground:[a] *then know that the desolation thereof is* just *approaching*. And by the way, now I mention that remarkable prophecy, *let every one that reads* it pause seriously upon it, that he may *understand* its meaning; for it contains one of the most eminent predictions which can any where be found, of the time, purposes, and consequences of my appearing; and the whole context is of great importance.[b] Now I say, when you see this signal, *then let them that are in Judea flee*, as fast as they can, from the fortified cities and populous towns, *to the mountains* and the wilderness, where they will be secure; *and* especially, *let them that are in the midst of it*, where Jerusalem stands, *depart* immediately *out* of it, before their retreat is cut off by the union of the enemy's forces near that

LUKE xxi. 20.

AND when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, [*and* the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,] [Mark, standing where it ought not,] [in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,)] then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. [Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark. xiii. 14.]

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not them that are in the coun-

"as be able most prudently to guard against the dangers which will "surround you."

n *This gospel—shall be preached in all the world, &c.*] The accomplishment of this extraordinary prophecy is admirably illustrated by Dr. Arthur Young, *On Idolatry*, Vol. II. p. 216—234. It appears from the most credible records, that the gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace's Eunuch, and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the Seven Asiatic churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul; as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain: in most of which places christian churches were planted in less than thirty years after the death of Christ, which was before the destruction of Jerusalem.

a Planted on holy ground.] Not only the temple, and the mountain on which it stood, but the whole city of Jerusalem, and several furlongs of land round about it, were accounted holy. (See note g, on Matt iv. 5. p. 38.) It is remarkable, that, by the special providence of God, after the Romans under Cestius Gallus made their first advance towards Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected and indeed impolitic manner; at which Josephus testifies his surprise, since the city might then have been easily taken. By this means they gave as it were a signal to the christians to retire; which, in regard to this admonition, they did, some to Pella, and others to Mount Libanus, and thereby preserved their lives. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 19. [al. 24.] § 7; and Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib.* iii. *cap.* 5. Of the idolatrous standards in the Roman armies, see Grotius's excellent note on Matt. xxiv. 15.

b The whole context is of great importance.] If any wonder that so important a prophecy is not more frequently insisted upon in the New Testament, I think we may justly answer, that it was not proper for the apostles to urge it, as the exact commencement and termination of the seventy weeks was a nice controversy out of their way, and not capable of being fully cleared up to the populace, with whom they were chiefly concerned; and as several of the events referred to in it had not their complete accomplishment till some years after most of their writings were published. But that the period is long since elapsed is certain, however it might be reckoned; as Dr. Bullock has excellently shown. See his *Vindication*, book ii. chap. 4. § 6. p. 216—218; and Dr. Sykes' *Of Christianity*, chap. 16. p. 297—301.

tries, enter thereinto. [Matt. xxiv. 16. Mark xiii. 14.]

Mark xiii. 15. And let him that is on the house-top, not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house. [Matt. xxiv. 17.]

16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. [Matt. xxiv. 18.]

Luke xxi. 22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Mark xiii. 17. But woe to them which are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. [Matt. xxiv. 19. Luke xxi. 23.]

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, [neither on the sabbath-day.] [Matt. xxiv. 20.]

19 For in those days [Luke, there shall be great] [tribulation *and*] [Luke, distress in the land, and wrath upon this people,] such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, [no, nor ever shall be.] [Matt. xxiv. 21. Luke xxi. 23.]

Luke xxi. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive away into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

centre; *and let not them that are in the* adjacent *countries*, by any means attempt to *enter into it* as a place of safety; for all its strength, and all its sanctity, will not secure its inhabitants. Let every one therefore retreat as fast as possible, *and let not him that is* taking the air *on the* battlements at the *top of the house, go down into the house, nor enter into it to take away any thing*, though ever so precious, *out of his house;* but let him go down by the outer stairs, as the shortest way, lest he should linger to his own destruction. *And let not him that is* at work *in the field*, and hath laid aside his upper garment as an incumbrance, *go back*, so much as a few steps, *to take his clothes*,[c] lest the enemy should surprise him before he can recover them. (Compare Luke xvii. 31. p. 253.) In a word, let every one flee for his life, and reckon himself sufficiently happy if he can escape with it, though in the most naked and destitute circumstances: *for these are days of* most terrible *vengeance*, to which most of the threatenings of the prophets, even from the days of Moses, do ultimately refer; and they shall be so full of distress and misery, *that all* the most dreadful *things which are written* in them *may* then be said[d] to *be* completely *fulfilled*.[d]

SECT. 161.

MARK XIII. 15 16

LUKE XXI. 22

But more especially there will be *woe* and terror *to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days;* as their incumbrances will be peculiarly great, and they that are with them will be driven in a wild consternation to consult their own safety, to the neglect of those whom common humanity might teach them to guard and assist.

MARK XIII. 17

And therefore *pray that* no additional circumstances of difficulty may attend you; as, for instance, that this *your* precipitate *flight may not be in winter*, when the roads are bad, and the days short and dark; *nor* fall out *on a sabbath-day;* for a short journey may not be sufficient; and the regard which most of the christians in these parts will have for that day, may make them scrupulous of violating a rest they think so sacred, by a longer march, even in a case of so much extremity. 18

And a case of extremity it will indeed be; *for in those days there shall be* a scene of *great tribulation* [*and*] *distress in the land* of Judea, *and* of dreadful *wrath* from heaven *upon* all *this people, such as the like has not been* known before, either here or elsewhere, even *from the beginning of the creation which God has made, unto this time; nor ever shall* the like *be* heard of any more:[e] as no people ever have been, or ever shall be, guilty of so aggravated a crime, and so inexcusable a series of impenitence and infidelity. *And* therefore *they shall fall by the edge of the sword* in multitudes, both within and without the city; *and* the consequence of all shall be, that the miserable remnant which survives the general carnage *shall be carried* away *captive into all* the most distant *nations* of the world,[f] and continue for many ages under great infamy, calamity, and oppression. *And*, in the mean time, *Jerusalem* itself *shall be trampled down* and kept in possession *by the Gentiles*,[g] *till the times* appointed for these triumphs and insults *of the Gentiles* shall *be fulfilled*, and the day come when God shall remember his ancient people in mercy.[h] 19 LUKE XXI. 24

c *Go back to take his clothes.*] These are as strong expressions as one can imagine to urge the speediest retreat. It is indeed observable, that this whole discourse abounds with very lively figures of oratory, and is heightened with the noblest beauties of description. Were it necessary to produce authorities to prove that husbandmen laid aside their upper garment when at work, they might be found in Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 109, 110.) but that learned critic has impaired the beauty of the text, by interpreting it as a caution *not to go home* to fetch them. *Not to turn back*, implies fleeing directly without *going back* (as we speak in the country) *so much as a land's length* to take them up: and so it rises on the former verse.

d *May* then be said to *be* completely *fulfilled.*] Among many admirable things to be found in that great original, Dr. Jackson's *Credibility of the Scriptures*, I cannot but reckon that part of it in which he shows how exactly the prophecies of Moses were accomplished in the slaughter and dispersion of the Jews in, and quickly after, this fatal war with the Romans. See the passages quoted below, in note m, p. 324.

e *Such as the like has not been—nor ever shall be.*] This Josephus expressly asserts to have been the fact; and whoever reads his account, or even that judicious abstract from him which Eusebius has given us, (*Hist. Eccles. lib.* iii. *cap.* 5, 6.) will see a sad illustration of all this; and, criminal and detestable as the Jewish nation now was, will hardly be able to forbear weeping over those complicated miseries brought upon them by plagues, and famine, and fires occasioned by the siege, and by the carnage made, not only by the Romans, but by the yet greater cruelties of the seditious and zealots within the city, who really acted the part of so many incarnate fiends rather than of men.

f *They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be carried captive, &c.*] It appears from Josephus that eleven hundred thousand Jews were destroyed in this war, and near an hundred thousand taken prisoners, and (according to Deut. xxviii. 68.) sold for slaves at the vilest prices. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. [al. vii. 17.] § 3.

g *Jerusalem shall be trampled down by the Gentiles.*] Their land was sold, and no Jew was allowed to inhabit there, (a rigour never used, that I know of, towards any other people conquered by the Romans:) nay, they might not come within sight of Jerusalem, or rather of Elia, the name given to the *new city*, which was built without the circuit of the former, when the foundations of the *old* were ploughed up. A heathen temple was afterwards built where that of God had stood; and a Turkish mosque pollutes it to this very day: so remarkably was the hand of God upon them. And it is well known, by the testimony of a heathen writer, (who ridiculously ascribes it to a fatal resistance in the element,) that Julian's impious attempt to rebuild their temple, and settle them in Jerusalem again, in professed contempt of this prophecy, was several times miraculously defeated by the irruption of balls of fire, which consumed the workmen. See Ammian. Marcel. *lib.* xxiii. *cap.* 1. p. 286.

h *Till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*] It is much easier to vindicate the authority of the words ἄχρι οὗ πλησθῶσιν from the objection of Dr. Mill, (*Proleg.* p. 133.) chiefly founded on their being omitted in the Cambridge Manuscript, than to determine the signification of them. I cannot suppose, with Messrs. Le Clerc and L'Enfant, that by the accomplishment of the times of the Gentiles, we are to understand the time when Constantine put an end to the Gentile idolatry in Jerusalem, and established the christian worship there. (Euseb. *Vit. Const. lib.* iii. *cap.* 26.) It seems reasonable to suppose that here, as in most other places, the Gentiles are opposed to the Jews; and, consequently, that all the period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, so expressly foretold in scripture, is here intended. (See Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xi. 17; xx. 40, 42; xxxiv. 13; xxxvi. 24, 28; xxxvii. 21—28; xxxix. 28, 29; Hos. iii. 5; Amos ix. 14. 15; and Zech. xiv. 10, 11.) With this indeed is connected the bringing in what St. Paul calls *the fulness of the Gentiles*, Rom xi. 25, 26. But unless it could be proved (which I do not recollect) that the inhabitants of Palestine shall then peaceably surrender it to the returning Jews, it seems most natural to suppose *the time of the Gentiles* here signifies the time when they shall be *visited* and *punished;* which is the sense in which this very phrase, and others nearly parallel to it, frequently occur in the Old Testament; as Brennius justly observes. (Compare Ezek. xxx. 3; as also Jer. xxvii. 7; l. 27; Ezek. xxi. 25, 29; xxii. 3, 4.) And, if this be the sense of it, it seems an intimation that the Turks, or some other anti-christian power, may continue possessed of the holy land till the restoration of the Jews; for one can hardly suppose their way into it should then be opened by the conquest of a christian nation.

SECT. 151. MARK XIII. MATT. XXIV.

And during the wars which are to bring on this sad catastrophe, *except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh could be saved;* the whole nation would be utterly exterminated from the earth, and the name of Israel no longer be had in remembrance:[i] *but for the elect's sake, whom he has* graciously *chosen* to be at length partakers of the blessings of his gospel, God will so order it in his providence, that *those days shall be shortened;* for he hath still purposes of love toward the seed of Abraham, which shall at length take place; (Rom. xi. 26.) and, in the mean time, he will make their continuing a distinct people, a means of confirming the faith of christians in succeeding ages.[k]

As these then are the counsels of the divine wisdom concerning this people, do not expect that when calamities begin to threaten them, any miraculous deliverer should be raised up for them: *and if any one shall then say unto you, Behold the Messiah* [*is*] *here, or, behold* [*he is*] *there, do not believe* [*it,*] or show the least regard to any such report. (Compare Luke xvii. 23. p. 252.) *For* as this unhappy people, who are now so obstinately rejecting me, will to the last support themselves with vain hopes of that kind, and be ready eagerly to hearken to every bold impostor, *false Messiahs and false prophets shall arise, and shall* pretend to *shew great signs and prodigies,*[l] managed with *so* much art, *as* might, *if* [*it were*] *possible,* be sufficient *to deceive* even *the very elect,* and to pervert my sincere followers and disciples themselves; though indeed their hearts shall be so established by divine grace as finally to be secured from the danger. *But be* ye cautiously *upon your guard* against so dangerous an imposition; for *behold, I have* expressly *foretold you all* these *things,* that on comparing the event with the prediction, your faith may be established by those very circumstances which in another view might have a tendency to shake it. *Therefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold,* we have found the expected Messiah, and *he is* now gathering his forces about him *in the wilderness* for the deliverance of his people, *do not go forth* to join yourselves to his followers; [*or*] if they shall say, *Behold,* [*he is*] *in the secret apartments* of some particular friend, where he is waiting to give satisfaction to those that desire it, *do not believe* [*it,*] nor give yourselves the trouble so much as to inquire into the affair. *For* you know there is and can be no other Messiah but me; and when I appear, it will be in a sudden, amazing, and irresistible manner; and *as the lightning breaks forth from the east, and shines* in a moment *even to the west* part of the horizon, *so* sudden and conspicuous *also shall the coming of the Son of man be,* both in his appearance to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the final judgment. (Compare Luke xvii. 24. p. 252.) And very extensive also will the desolation be; *for,* as I formerly told you, (Luke xvii. 37. p. 253.) *wheresoever the* dead *carcase is, there will the eagles* naturally *be gathered together;* and wherever the obstinate enemies of my kingdom are, they shall be sought out and destroyed; and here in particular I will send the Roman eagles against them, who shall consume and devour them as a helpless prey, not only at Jerusalem, but over the face of the whole country; and afterwards in some more distant regions, where the greatest numbers of Jews are settled.[m]

Mark xiii. 20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, [those days shall be shortened.] [Matt. xxiv. 22.]

21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not. [Matt. xxiv. 23.]

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show [great] signs and wonders, [insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.] [Matt. xxiv. 24.]

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. [Matt. xxiv. 25.]

Matt. xxiv. 26. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth: Behold, *he is* in the secret chambers, believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE XXI. 21. MARK XIII. 15, 16 MATT. XXIV. 21

If our Lord urges his disciples, with such speedy and solicitous haste to flee from the sword of God's temporal judgments, how much greater diligence should we give to *flee from the wrath to come!* What are any of the little interests of life, that out of regard to them we should be willing to continue one moment longer exposed to a danger which may sink us into everlasting perdition and despair!

We have here a lively description of that aggravated ruin which was brought upon the Jews for neglecting Christ,—even great tribulation, such as had never, from the very beginning of the world, fallen upon any other

i *Except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh could be saved,* &c.] Such were the quarrels that prevailed among the Jews, that numbers of them were destroyed by one another; and the whole country was become a scene of such desolation and bloodshed, that not only those who were shut up in Jerusalem, but the whole Jewish nation, would have suffered much more by the longer continuance of the siege, considering how much the same spirit prevailed among them in other places.—Mr. Reading, in his *Life of Christ,* p. 309, understands *the days being shortened for the elect's sake,* of the preservation of the christians at Pella, whose safety he supposes to have depended on the shortening of the siege, and whom he takes to be the elect intended here. (See Dr. Whitby, on Mark xiii. 20.) —Of the special providences by which the siege was shortened, see Grotius, on Matt. xxiv. 22.

k Their continuing a distinct people, a means of confirming the faith of christians, &c.] This I have shown at large in my *Ten Sermons,* Ser. x. p. 277—279; and the reader may see the remark farther illustrated by Mr. Addison, *Spectat.* Vol. VII. No. 495; and in Bishop Burnet's *Four Discourses,* p. 8—10.

l *False prophets shall arise, and show great signs and prodigies.*] This is not a mere repetition of what was said before, Matt. xxiv. 5. (p. 320.) but relates to those impostors who appeared during the time of the siege; of which see Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 5. [al. vii. 11.] § 2. and Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib.* iv. *cap.* 6. See also Grotius, on Matt. xxiv. 24.—As for the objection which is urged from this text, against admitting miracles as a proof of doctrines, I would here transiently observe two things: 1. That it cannot certainly be proved that the works here referred to were true miracles; they might be like the lying powers, signs, and wonders, mentioned 2 Thess. ii. 9. Or, 2. That if we should, for argument's sake, grant them to be real miracles, yet they are supposed to be wrought at a time when there were in the christian church teachers subsisting with superior miraculous powers. But it can never be inferred from such a supposition in that case, that God will suffer miracles to be wrought in proof of falsehood, when there are none of his servants to perform greater miracles on the side of truth. And when such superior miracles on the side of truth do exist, the opposite miracles at most can only prove that some invisible beings of great power, who are the abetters of falsehood, are strongly engaged to support the contrary doctrine; the consideration of which must excite all wise and good men to receive a truth so opposed with greater readiness, and to endeavour to promote it with greater zeal, as they may be sure the excellence and importance of it is proportionable to the solicitude of these malignant spirits to prevent its progress.

m In some more distant regions, &c.] There may perhaps be an oblique intimation in this passage, of the slaughter afterwards made on the Jews elsewhere, and particularly under Adrian and Trajan; when what had been foretold by Moses (Deut. xxviii. 49. *et seq.*) was remarkably fulfilled, and as an eagle flies upon its prey, their enemies pursued them to destruction: and the calamities they underwent were such, that (as Dio Cassius informs us, *Hist. lib.* 69.) 50,000 were slain, 500 of their fortresses were demolished, and 900 of their chief towns in Egypt, Crete, &c. were plundered and burnt to the ground: not to mention the terrible things they afterwards suffered in France, Italy, Spain, and other parts of Europe, in the decline of the Roman empire; of all which, see Dr. Jackson's *Eternal truth of the Scriptures,* book i. part 2. sect. 3. chap. 6, 10—13.

nation, nor shall ever be equalled. Thus was *his blood upon them and their children.* (Matt. xxvii. 25.) May we never know what it is to have this blood crying against us, for *trampling it under foot as an unholy thing!* (Heb. x. 29.) For surely to the Jews, who thus *rejected the counsel of God against themselves,* all these things which they suffered were but the beginning of sorrows; and the famine and sedition, pestilence and slaughter, by which so many thousands perished, served only to consign them over to infinitely more terrible *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,* which will at last fall on *every soul of man that doth evil,* whether Jew or Gentile. (Rom. ii. 8, 9.)

SECT. 161. MATT. XXIV. 7, 8

These unhappy creatures eagerly listened to the very name of a Messiah, by whomsoever it was assumed, while they rejected him whom God had sent them, and who had so long, and with so much importunity, been renewing to them the offers of life and salvation. May none of us ever know the sad impatience with which condemned sinners will wish, and wish in vain, for those overtures and messages of grace which they now despise! In that sense *wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together:* wherever there is the like unbelief and impenitence, there will be in its degree the like ruin. Christ has graciously told us these things before: may we humbly attend to the warning, that none of this terror and destruction may ever come upon us!

MARK XIII. 21, 22 MATT. XXIV. 28

SECTION CLXII.

Christ describes the total destruction of the Jewish state by strong figures, many of them literally suiting the day of judgment; to the mention of which he proceeds, declaring the particular time of it unknown. Matt. xxiv. 29—36. Mark xiii. 24—32. Luke xxi. 25—33.

Luke xxi. 25.

Luke xxi. 25.

AND there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring:

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.—

Matt. xxiv. 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. [Mark. xiii. 24, 25; Luke xxi. 26.]

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. [Mark. xii. 26; Luke xxi. 27.]

31 And [then] he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, [from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.] [Mark xiii. 27.]

OUR Lord proceeded in the awful representation of the judgments that were coming on Jerusalem, *and* said, Before this desolation shall be completely come, *there shall be* (as I told you, ver. 11.) some extraordinary *signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars*—eclipses, comets, and surprising meteors; *and on the earth* there shall be *anguish and distress of nations; the sea and the* proud *waves* thereof *roaring*, and breaking in upon the land with an irresistible inundation; *While men shall be* almost *expiring with fear*[a], *and* overwhelmed with the sad *expectation of those* calamitous *things which are coming upon the land:* for this shall not be like former invasions or captivities, which only produced some transient disorders in the state, or, at most, an interruption in the government for a few years; but it shall be attended with such a total subversion of it, and with such vast, extensive, and lasting ruin, that it shall be a most lively emblem of the desolation of the whole world at the last day.

SECT. 162. LUKE XXI. 25, 26

For, *immediately after the affliction of those days* which I have now been describing,[b] *the sun shall* as it were *be darkened, and the moon shall not* seem to *give her* usual *light; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens*, all the mighty machines and strong movements above, *shall be shaken* and broken in pieces[c]: that is, according to the sublimity of that prophetic language to which you have been accustomed, the whole civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the nation shall not only be shocked, but totally dissolved. *And then shall* there evidently *appear* such a remarkable hand of Providence in avenging my quarrel upon this sinful people, that it shall be like *the sign of the Son of man in heaven* at the last day; *and all the tribes of the land shall then mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming* as it were *in the clouds of heaven*[d], *with power and great glory;* for that celestial army which shall appear in the air marshalled round the city, shall be a sure token to them that the angels of God, and the great Lord of those heavenly hosts, are set as it were in array against them. *And* to pursue the allusion—as at the great day the angels shall in a literal sense assemble all his saints together, so also *he shall then send* forth *his messengers*[e] *with the great sound* of his gospel as *of a* loud *trumpet, and they shall assemble his elect from the four winds*, even *from one end of the heavens to the other*, or *from the uttermost part of the earth* one way, *to* those climates which lie under *the uttermost part of heaven* the other way; and multitudes of all nations shall obey the summons, though the Jews have ungratefully and fool-

MATT. XXIV. 29 30 31

a *Expiring with fear.*] This is the literal rendering of αποψυχοντων απο φοβου. The *signs* here spoken of seem to be some of the latest of those mentioned in the writers referred to above, in notes g and h, on ver 10, 11. p. 320.

b *Immediately after the affliction of those days.*] Archbishop Tillotson and Brennius, with many other learned interpreters, imagine that our Lord here makes the transition from the destruction of Jerusalem, which had been the subject of his discourse thus far, to the general judgment: but I think, as it would, on the one hand, be very harsh to suppose all the sufferings of the Jewish nation in all ages, to be called the tribulation of those days, so it would, on the other hand, be equally so to say that the general judgment, which probably will not commence till at least a thousand years after their restoration, will happen immediately after their sufferings; nor can I find any one instance in which ευθεως is used in such a strange latitude. What is said below, (in Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; and Luke xxi. 32. p. 326.) seems also an unanswerable objection against such an interpretation. I am obliged therefore to explain this section as in the paraphrase; though, I acknowledge, many of the figures used may with more literal propriety be applied to the last day, to which there may be a remote, though not an immediate reference.

c *The sun shall be darkened, &c.*] It was customary with the prophets, as it still is with the Eastern writers, to describe the utter ruin of states and kingdoms, not only in general by an universal darkness, but also by such strong figures as those here used, which all have their foundation in that way of speaking. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4, 10; lx. 20; Jer. xv. 9; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 30, 31; iii. 15; and Amos viii. 9.

d *Coming in the clouds of heaven.*] Sudden and irresistible destruction, in which much of the hand of God evidently appears, is (as Dr. Whitby justly observes) often expressed by God's coming in the clouds: (compare Psal. xviii. 9; l. 3, 4; xcvii. 2, 3; civ. 3; Isa. xix. 1; xxvi. 21; lxvi. 15.) But I think the celestial appearances described by Josephus, (as above, note h, on Luke xxi. 11 p. 320.) lead us into the exactest interpretation of this text, and greatly illustrate the propriety of these expressions here.

e *Send* forth *his messengers.*] Most translations, as well as our own, greatly obscure this text, by rendering the word αγγελους, *angels*; for though it generally signifies those *celestial spirits* who are on great occasions the messengers of God to our world, it is well known that the word refers not to their nature but to their office; and it is often applied to men, and rendered *messengers*. See Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 24, 47; ix. 52; 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. ii. 25; and Jam. ii. 25: In some of which places it signifies, as here, *preachers of the gospel*, who were sent forth to carry on God's great design of uniting all his chosen people in one society under Christ as their common head. Eph. i. 10.

SECT. 162.

ishly despised it; and the Son of man shall be honoured and trusted by millions now unborn, when this wicked and perverse nation has perished in their rebellion and infidelity.

And when these things begin to come to pass, be not you terrified and dismayed, but rather cheerfully *look upwards,*[f] *and lift up your heads* with joy and assurance; *for,* whatever happens, you will be secure; and as soon as you see the first appearance of these signs, you may comfortably conclude that *your* complete *redemption* and deliverance *draws nigh*;[g] for many of you will be safely brought home to the haven of eternal peace before these storms are ended, and the rest of you will not long survive them.

LUKE XXI. 28

Luke xxi. 28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 *And,* further to illustrate what he had been saying, *he spake to them a* very easy and familiar *parable,* saying, *Behold now,* [*and*] *learn a parable from* the example of *the fig-*
30 *tree, and all the* other *trees* that drop their leaves in the winter: *When* buds appear upon the fig-tree, and *its branch is now become tender, and* the sap rising in the other trees, *they shoot forth* their young *leaves,* and begin to open and spread, *you see and know of your own selves,* by the observation you have often made, *that summer is now near at*
31 *hand,* as these are certain prognostications of it: *So likewise you, when you shall see all these things come to pass,* may assuredly *know that* the destruction of the Jewish state, and the advancement of *the kingdom of God* in all its glory, *is just at hand,* [*even*] *at the doors;* or that the time is coming when the desolation I have been speaking of shall come upon Jerusalem, and the gospel shall be propagated all abroad, and take such root in the world, that you may assure yourselves it shall never be destroyed.

29 And he spake to them a parable: [Now] behold [*and* learn a parable of] the fig-tree, and all the trees: [Matt. xxiv. 32. Mark xiii 28.]

30 When [his branch is yet tender, and] they now shoot forth [leaves,] ye see and know of your own-selves, that summer is now nigh at hand: [Matt. xxiv. 32. Mark xiii. 28.]

31 So likewise ye, when ye [shall] see [all] these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand, [*even* at the doors.] [Matt. xxiv. 33. Mark xiii. 29.]

32 And *verily I say unto you,* and urge you to observe it, as absolutely necessary in order to understand what I have been saying, *That this generation* of men now living, *shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled;*[h] for what I have foretold concerning the destruction of the Jewish state is so near at hand, that some of you shall live to see it all
33 accomplished with a dreadful exactness: And the rest may die in the assurance of it; for another and yet more awful day shall come, when, in a literal sense, *heaven and earth shall pass away,* and the whole fabric of this visible world shall be dissolved before my majestic presence: *but my words shall not pass away* till they are perfectly fulfilled, and the efficacy of them shall remain in the eternal world which shall succeed these transitory scenes.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all [these things] be fulfilled. [Matt. xxiv. 34. Mark xiii. 30.]

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. [Matt. xxiv. 35. Mark xiii. 31.]

MARK XIII. 32

But though Jerusalem shall be destroyed before this generation disappear, yet *of that* great decisive *day* which is appointed for the dissolution and the judgment of the world, *and* of the *hour* or season when it shall open upon men, and shall bring on their final sentence, there is *no one* who *knows* the precise time,[i] *neither the angels in heaven, nor* even *the Son* of man himself,[k] with respect to his human nature, or as a part of what he is commissioned to reveal; for though it be determined by the divine decree, it is not known to any *but my Father alone,* or the indwelling Godhead from whom nothing can be concealed; and as he does not think fit to disclose it, let it be your care to improve this uncertainty as an engagement to the most diligent and constant preparation for its coming.

Mark xiii. 32. But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son, [but my Father only.] [Matt. xxiv. 36.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us now raise our contemplations to that awful day, when all that was figuratively spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem shall be literally accomplished; and let us consider our own intimate concern in it. Where will our hope and comfort, our light and our safety be, when *the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light,* when *the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken?* where, indeed, unless the almighty God, the everlasting Jehovah, by whose voice they were created, and by whose hand they shall be dashed in pieces again, shall condescend to be *our light and our salvation?* (Psal. xxvii. 1.) And if he indeed be so, then we may lift up our heads with joy, as knowing that our complete redemption draweth nigh, even that long-expected day, which, with all its solemn horrors, has still been the brightest object of our faith and our hopes.

MATT. XXIV. 29 LUKE XXI. 28

Then shall the Son of man indeed come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and send his

f *Look upwards:* ανακυψατε.] This is an expression which admirably suits the load of labour and sufferings under which the apostles would be depressed in this afflicted state. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 270.

g *Your redemption draws nigh.*] As the resurrection is the time when we shall in fact be fully redeemed, or delivered from all the sad consequences of sin, and therefore is called the *redemption of our bodies:* (Rom. viii. 23; compare Eph. iv. 30; and Hos. xiii. 14.) so, in a less proper sense, the deliverance from the toils and sorrows, temptations and infirmities, of this sinful and calamitous life, may, on the like principles, be called redemption. And if we may judge of the length of the apostles' lives by the extent of their labours, though we know not the time when many of them died, there is reason to conjecture it was not till about this period; which, by the way, would be an argument they were now most of them young men.

h *This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.*] Though Brennius and Mede (in his *Works,* p. 752.) have here the honour to be followed by so great an authority as Dr. Sykes, (*Of Christianity,* p. 60.) yet I must beg leave to say, that I cannot think the texts they collect sufficient to prove, that by *this generation* [η γενεα αυτη] we are here to understand *the Jewish nation through all ages;* as if our Lord intended to say, they should continue a distinct people to the judgment-day. What I have expressed in the paraphrase, is plainly the most obvious sense of the words, and seems to me an evident key to the whole context, especially when compared with Matt. xvi. 28. *There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* See note i, on that text, p. 182.

i *Of that day and hour no one knows.*] I cannot agree with Dr Clarke in referring this verse to the destruction of Jerusalem, the particular day of which was not a matter of great importance; and as for the season of it, I see not how it could properly be said to be entirely unknown, after such an express declaration, that is should be in *that generation,* and yet at some considerable distance; for otherwise there would not have been room for the gradual accomplishment of the many predictions uttered above. It seems therefore much fitter, with Dr. Whitby, (after Grotius,) to explain it of the last day, when heaven and earth shall pass away, which is sometimes called *that day* with a peculiar emphasis; a phrase answering to *the great* or *remarkable day.* Compare 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; and iv. 8.

k *Nor* even *the Son* of man himself.] There is not any thing in this assertion of our Lord, if we consider the two natures in him, that is inconsistent with his true divinity. For what is applicable only to one nature is frequently expressed in terms inclusive of his whole person. Thus, as the endowments of his human nature were communicated in a gradual manner to him, Jesus is said to have *increased in wisdom;* (Luke ii. 52.) and even while he was on earth, as he was present every where with respect to his divine nature, he speaks of himself as the Son of man who is in heaven. (John iii. 13.) Nor is it at all more strange that he should here be said not to know the day appointed for the final judgment, than that it should be elsewhere said that the Lord of glory was cruci-

angels to summon his elect, and to assemble them from one end of heaven to the other: *for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.* (1 Thess. iv. 16.) May we hear the summons with joy, and stand in our lot among his chosen ones! What though the day and season be unknown? It is enough for us that we know that all these interposing days and years, be they ever so numerous, will at length be past; for the promise of the great Redeemer is our security, and he *will hasten it in its time?* (Isa. lx. 22.) SECT. 162. MARK XIII. 32

These visible heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth shall be removed out of its place; but the sure word of his promise shall never pass away; even that promise which is engaged for the salvation of his people. Let us often review it; let us firmly realize it to our souls; and, seeing we look for such things, let us seriously consider *what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.* (2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.) 31

SECTION CLXIII.

Our Lord urges the suddenness of his appearance as an engagement to constant watchfulness; repeating several things which he had formerly said on that subject. Matt. xxiv. 37, *to the end.* Mark xiii. 33, *to the end.* Luke xxi. 34—36.

MATT. xxiv. 37.

MATT. xxiv. 37. BUT as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

OUR Lord having told them in the preceding words, that though the time of his appearance to the general judgment was uncertain, yet the destruction of Jerusalem should happen before that generation of men was passed away, went on with his discourse, and added, *But* this I will in general inform you, that, *as* sudden and unthought-of as the deluge was which came upon the world in *the days of Noah, so* unexpected and surprising *also shall the coming of the Son of man,* to execute his vengeance, *be. For as in the days which were before* the universal *deluge, they were* so inconsiderate and secure, that they went on with all their usual business, and spent their time in entertainments, *eating and drinking, marrying* wives *and giving* their daughters *in marriage,* thinking of nothing but present indulgence and future settlements in the world;[a] and went on thus in contempt of every serious admonition, even *until the* very *day that Noah entered into the ark; And knew not* nor suspected that any evil was approaching, *till the deluge came* with an irresistible violence, *and bore them all away* with a torrent of destruction: *so also shall the coming of the Son of man be;* and, notwithstanding men have been so frequently and plainly warned of it, yet multitudes shall be surprised in an unprepared state. (Compare Luke xvii. 26, 27. p. 253.) SECT. 163. MATT. XXIV. 38 39

38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

I formerly told you, with relation to the temporal desolation of your country, and I now repeat it, That of *two men* who *shall then be* at work together *in the field, the one shall be seized and the other dismissed;*[b] And of *two women* who *shall be grinding* corn *at the* same *mill, the one shall be seized and the other dismissed:* (compare Luke xvii. 35, 36. p. 253.) And I may say the like with respect to that important event of the final judgment: many who have been engaged in the same station and employments, and who were intimately conversant with each other, shall then be found exceedingly different in their characters and states; and some of them shall be made the prisoners of divine justice, while others shall not only be spared, but be signally favoured by God. 40

40 Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left:

41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And therefore, that no calamities of life or solemnities of judgment may be dreadful to you, *take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overloaded,*[c] and your rational powers depressed and stupified *by gluttony and drunkenness,* or distracted with worldly *and secular cares; and* by this means *that* awful and important *day* of which I have been speaking, *should come unexpected upon you. For* the character of the generality of mankind at that time will be such, that *it shall come on* the greatest part of *all* LUKE XXI. 34 35

Luke xxi. 34. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that

fied, (1 Cor. ii. 5.) and that God purchased the church with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.)

a *They were eating and drinking, &c.*] Dr. Woodward (in his *Theory of the Earth*, p. 98.) thinks these were modest expressions to signify their giving themselves up to all the extravagances of riot and lust; and Wolfius (*in loc.*) has most learnedly proved that γαμιζειθαι is often used in a very criminal sense. But how great reason soever there may be to believe that the Antediluvian sinners did so, these words may be intended to express no more than the security and gaiety with which they pursued the usual employments and amusements of life, when they were on the very brink of utter destruction.

b *Two men shall then be in the field, &c.*] Though in the paraphrase, for its better connection, I have introduced these words incidentally, and hinted how they may allusively be accommodated to the day of judgment, yet I doubt not they originally refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, to which alone they are properly applicable. After this paragraph there is not a word peculiar to that; but many circumstances are introduced which refer to the day of judgment, (and of death, as transmitting to it,) and which can only be thus understood. I therefore humbly conceive, that the grand transition, about which commentators are so much divided, and so generally mistaken, is made precisely after these two verses.—Our Lord, in the following verses of Matthew and Mark, directs their thoughts to that final solemnity in which they are so highly concerned, by repeating, almost in the same words, the cautions and advices he had formerly given, Luke xii. 35. *et seq.* § 114. in which whole context (as I there observed, note f, p. 227.) there is no reference to those temporal calamities that were coming on the Jews, which have been here the subject of almost the whole preceding discourse. And the remembrance of what had passed on the former occasion might more easily lead them into the distinct understanding of what was now added. Though it may not be improper to recollect, that the same pious care in their temper and conduct, which would be a preparative against national judgments, and entitle them to the special protection of Providence in them, would also secure them from any unwelcome surprise by a call to the tribunal of God.

c *Your hearts be overloaded.*] The word βαρυθωσιν properly signifies *burdened*, or *pressed down;* and so very elegantly and strongly expresses the hateful consequences of intemperance, and the load which it brings on those rational faculties which are the glory of the human nature.—The reader will observe, that Luke's account of this discourse is very short, in comparison with that of Matthew and Mark, for this obvious reason, that he had given the chief heads of it before, partly in a discourse of our Lord's last coming, which was delivered to a very numerous assembly in Galilee, (Luke xii. 35—48. § 114.) and partly in another discourse, relating only to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was delivered in his journey thither at the feast of dedication: (Luke xvii. 20—37. § 128.) Here therefore he chuses to omit what had been inserted on either of those occasions; as John, who probably wrote after the accomplishment of this prophecy, entirely omits it, as already so largely recorded by the former three; from whom, considering the circumstance of time, it came with infinitely better grace than it could afterwards have done from him.

SECT. 163.

them that dwell on the face of the whole earth,[d] *as a snare* upon a thoughtless bird which, in the midst of its security, finds itself inextricably taken. (Compare Eccles. ix. 12.)

dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Let me *therefore* address this most serious exhortation to you with an earnestness proportionable to its importance: *Watch ye* against every temptation to negligence and sin; *take heed* of every thing which might lull you into a dangerous security, *and pray always,* with the most fervent importunity, *that* through divine grace *you may be accounted worthy to escape all these* calamitous and destructive *things which shall* assuredly *come to pass* just in the manner I have described them, *and* may be happily enabled, even in the day of his universal judgment, *to stand* forth with courage and acceptance *before the Son of man*;[e] *for you know not when the time* of his appearance *is,* [*or*] *at what hour your Lord does come* to summon you before him.

LUKE XXI. 36

36 Watch ye therefore, [Mark, take ye heed,] and pray always; that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man: [for ye know not [Mark, when the time is,] *or* what hour your Lord doth come.] [Matt. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33.]

MATT. XXIV. 43

But this you know, and would do well to consider it, *that if the master of a house* that has at any time been plundered by robbers, *had known* exactly *in what watch* of the night *the thief would* have *come, he would* undoubtedly *have watched* then, *and* taking care to be provided for him, *would not have suffered his house to be broken open,* or have left the thief to make his advantage by coming at an unexpected time. And *therefore,* as it is of so much greater consequence on this occasion that you should be prepared against an unseasonable surprise, *be ye also ready,* and learn, from such a common occurrence, to be upon your guard: *for* I tell you again, That *at an hour when you think not* of it, *the Son of man cometh;* and multitudes of people will be as much surprised as if they had never heard in their whole lives that he would come at all. (Compare Luke xii. 39, 40. p. 227.)

Matt. xxiv. 43. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh.

MARK XIII. 34

[*For the Son of man is*] in this respect *as a man travelling to a distant country, who, as he was leaving his house, gave authority to his* head-*servants* to direct and oversee the rest in their business, *and* assigned *to every man* in the family *his* proper *work, and* particularly *commanded the porter to watch,* and to see to it that the doors were properly secured, and ready to be opened to him at his return.

Mark xiii. 34. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

MATT. XXIV. 45

And *who now* do you, my apostles, suppose *is the faithful and prudent servant,* of *whom his lord has* so good an opinion as to have *appointed* him *ruler over* the rest of *his household, to give them* [*their*] proper portion of *food in due season?* You must easily apprehend that the expression may with the utmost propriety be applied to that high office with which you are invested, and to the confidence placed in your integrity and wisdom.

Matt. xxiv. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 And, to excite you to discharge this office with the greatest fidelity, let me add, *Happy* indeed *is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find thus employed* in the proper duties of his important office, distributing to each his portion in a proper manner.[f]

46 Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

47 *Verily I say unto you* again, as I formerly did, *That he will* prefer him as highly as if a man should *make* his domestic steward, who had served *him* faithfully, *ruler* or director *of all his estate,* as a reward for his care in the due management of his office. (Compare Luke xii. 42—44. p. 227, 228.)

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 *But,* on the other hand, the faithless wretch that is dishonest in the execution of so high a charge shall be severely punished: and *if that wicked servant shall* presume to *say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; And shall* on that presumption *begin to beat* and abuse those of *his fellow-servants* who are more faithful than himself, *and to eat and drink* in a riotous and extravagant manner *with the* debauched and *drunken* part of them, or with other dissolute persons; he will do it at his peril: For *the lord of that servant shall* certainly *come in a day when he does not expect* [*him,*] *and in an hour when he is not* at all *aware,* and cannot have time to put on a face of better order, or to provide and invent artful excuses; *And,* seeing him in the midst of his revels and usurpations, he shall scourge him so severely, that he *shall* even *cut him asunder,*[g] *and appoint* [*him*] *his portion with hypocrites,* the most odious kind of sinners in the sight of God:[h] with these shall this false creature be righteously doomed to dwell for ever in those doleful regions where *there shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of teeth,* proportionable to his former indulgence and luxury, and to the importance of that trust which he so wickedly betrayed. (Compare Luke xii. 45, 46. p. 228.)

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken:

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of;

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MARK XIII. 35

Let me then caution you, O my apostles and ministers, never to suffer this important

Mark xiii. 35. Watch ye

d *It shall come on all them that dwell, &c.*] The exhortations that are connected with this clause limit the extent of the word [*all*] to a considerable number; for were it to be taken otherwise, there could have been no room to offer them.

e *To stand before the Son of man.*] I do not apprehend that this is merely the counterpart of escaping the things spoken of before. There were thousands of the Jews that, by one providence or another, escaped temporal destruction, who could with no propriety be said *to stand before the Son of man at his coming.* I have therefore paraphrased this latter clause as an advance upon the former, which gives this context a greater connexion and juster distinction, than the order in which most Harmonies place these verses.

f *Happy is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, &c.*] As no peculiar rewards were conferred on any of the apostles, or other faithful ministers, at the time of Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, this clause sufficiently proves a reference to the final judgment; and will not permit us, with Dr. Hammond, to understand the Gnostics, or, with Dr. Whitby, the apostate Jews, as particularly intended by the wicked servant mentioned afterwards; which seems plainly to refer to a debauched and persecuting clergy, hypocritically pretending to a distinguished zeal for christian forms and institutions.

g *Shall cut him asunder.*] That tearing and cutting persons into several pieces was a cruel punishment used among the ancients, none acquainted with antiquity can doubt; and Wolfius on this text has demonstrated it more copiously than any other critic I have seen. Yet, as the criminal is here represented as surviving this punishment, and consigned over to *wailing and gnashing of teeth* after it had been inflicted, I therefore, as before, (Luke xii. 46.) must understand it of being severely scourged, after which idle slaves were often thrown into a prison, where they lived miserably in every respect. To this our Lord alludes with a most obvious propriety. See § 114. p. 228. note l.

h *His portion with hypocrites.*] Mahomet in his Alcoran mentions Seven Caverns in Hell, the deepest and most wretched of which is to be inhabited by hypocrites. (*Sur.* iv. v. 144.) Elsner, who takes this for a Jewish notion, by a very singular criticism, supposes it, or something analogous to it, referred to here, and Rev. xxi. 8. where he thinks liars are the same with hypocrites:

therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; (at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning:
36 Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.
37 And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

exhortation which I have now been giving you, to be forgot in any circumstance of life; but *watch ye therefore* continually, *for ye know not when the master of the house cometh*, whether *in the evening*-watch, *or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:* Early and late hold yourselves in a prepared posture, *lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping* and negligent of your proper duty. *And what I say to you* in public characters, *I say to all* my disciples, in every station of life and in every age, *Watch;* for in every age and station you will have need to do it, and security may be attended with the most fatal consequences. SECT. 163. MARK XIII. 36 37

IMPROVEMENT.

What slothful hearts must we have if these repeated admonitions do not awaken us,—even *line upon line, and precept upon precept!* The patience of God is waiting upon us, as it did on the old world, *while the ark was preparing:* (1 Pet. iii. 20.) May we take the warning, and seek shelter before the door be shut against us! Let us therefore take heed, lest sensuality and secular cares overcharge and depress our hearts, and amuse us with vain delusions, till sudden and unavoidable destruction come upon us. (1 Thess. v. 3.) LUKE XXI. 36. MATT. XXIV. 49

We are by profession the domestics of Christ: Let us attend to the offices he has assigned us, though he seem at a distance. Let us diligently wait his coming, at whatever season. Let his ministers especially wait it; and be solicitous that they may be found so doing, conducting themselves like wise stewards of the mysteries of God, dispensing to every one his portion of food in due season. Then will our account be honourable, and our reward glorious. MARK XIII. 34. MATT. XXIV. 45—47

May God deliver us from the guilt and condemnation of the cruel, the imperious, and the luxurious servant, who *began to beat his fellows, and to eat and drink with the drunken*, since we are expressly told his dreadful doom! Justly does our Lord declare that to such a one he will appoint a portion with hypocrites, terrible as their portion must be; for no hypocrisy can be baser than to call ourselves the servants and ministers of Christ, while we are the slaves of ambition, avarice, and intemperance. Wherever such are found, under whatever mask and form, may he reform them by his grace, or disarm them of that power and influence which they continually abuse to his dishonour, and to their own aggravated damnation! Let us in the mean time be *exhorting each other daily, while it is called to-day, lest any* by insensible degrees *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;* (Heb. iii. 13.) and let us always remember, that every exhortation which we give to others returns with redoubled weight upon ourselves. 48, 49 51

SECTION CLXIV.

Christ enforces his exhortation to watchfulness, by the parable of the ten virgins. Matt. xxv. 1—13.

Matt. xxv. 1.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Matt. xxv. 1.

Our Lord, in order to impress upon the minds of his hearers a concern about the great and awful day of future judgment, to which the latter part of his preceding discourse had so plainly referred, went on to represent it under a variety of most lively figures, and particularly by the following parable; saying, *Then*, or in that day of final account when the faithful servant shall be rewarded and the treacherous hypocrite so severely punished, *shall the kingdom of heaven*, or the state of things under the gospel-dispensation, appear 1 to *be like* the case of *ten virgins*,[a] *who*, being invited to a marriage-feast, (which, according to the custom of this country, was to be celebrated in the night,) *took their lamps* as soon as it began to grow dark, *and went out* together *to meet the bridegroom*, and to light him to the house where the banquet was to be kept. SECT. 164. MATT. XXV.

2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

And it appeared by their conduct that *five of them were prudent* persons, *and five* of 2 them were *foolish* and inconsiderate, who made no provision against an accident which might very naturally happen. *They that were foolish, when they took their lamps,* 3 went forth with them lighted, but *did not take any oil with them* beside that which was at first poured in: *Whereas the prudent* maidens, considering that they might perhaps be 4 obliged to wait some hours, *took* a reserve of *oil* with them *in their vessels* which they carried *with their lamps*, to feed the flame when the former stock should be wasted.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

But while the bridegroom for a long time *delayed* his coming, as they were sitting near 5 the place from whence they expected him to come, *they all* of them *slumbered, and* at length *fell* fast *asleep. And in the* very *middle of the night*,[b] *there was a* loud *cry* 6 *made* in the street, *Behold, the bridegroom is coming! go ye out* immediately *to meet him*, and arise to attend the procession according to order.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.
8 And the foolish said

Then all those virgins presently *arose, and*, to prepare for his reception, *dressed their* 7 *lamps*, that they might shine as bright and appear as clean as possible. *And the foolish* 8 damsels in great surprise *said to the prudent, Give us* some *of your oil, for* you seem to

and observes very precariously, that, taking the fearful and unbelieving, or those that through cowardice apostatize, for the first sort of criminals, liars are the seventh class.

a *Ten virgins.*] This whole parable contains a plain reference to the custom which prevailed among the Jews then, and still prevails among many Eastern nations: (see *The Customs of the Jews and Indians Compared*, p. 41. *et seq.*) The bridegroom used to conduct his bride home in the evening by the light of lamps, which were used (as Elsner shows, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 114, 115.) by the Jews and Romans on the like occasion: they were carried by bridemaids, who used afterwards to sup with them; and some tell us their number must at least be *ten*.—It seems, from the circumstances of this parable, that if any of the neighbours besides those who were directly invited, thought it worth their while to pay their respect to the new married couple, it was esteemed a decent piece of civility to admit them to a share in the bridal feast, if they made their appearance at a proper time.

b *In the middle of the night.*] Perhaps the tradition which Jerome mentions, that asserted Christ would come to judgment at midnight, might be borrowed from hence; though to be sure it is a very absurd one, since that can be the case only under one meridian at a time.—A celebrated commentator has clouded this parable exceedingly, by attempting to explain it of the different efforts Christ's admonition concerning the destruction of Jerusalem would have on different persons.

SECT. 164. MATT. XXV.

have a great stock with you; whereas *our lamps are gone out*, and all our oil is spent. *But the prudent replied*, [*We cannot do it,*] *lest there should not be enough for us and you*, and so we should all be left on a sudden without light, and the bridegroom be disappointed and affronted; *but rather go ye to them that sell* oil in the neighbourhood, *and buy* some *for yourselves* as soon as possible, that ye may follow and join the procession.[c]

unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so:* lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 *And while they went to buy* it at that inconvenient time of night, *the bridegroom* and his retinue *came, and those* maidens *that were ready* to receive him, joined the company; and when they came to the bridal-house, they *went in with him to the marriage-feast; and*, to prevent disturbance, *the door was shut* and fastened.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

11 *And some time after, the other virgins also came*, and, knocking at the door, called with great importunity, *saying, Sir, Sir*, we desire you would *open to us*, who are also some of your guests, though by an unfortunate accident we are come a little too late.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 *But he*, being unwilling to be disturbed in the feast, and to open the door again, *answered* them, *saying, Truly I say unto you, I know you not* whence you are;[d] my house is already furnished with guests, and I will admit no more. Thus these thoughtless creatures entirely lost both their labour and expense, meeting with nothing but disappointment and shame. And such will be your case if you content yourselves with a mere empty profession of religion, while you sink into a careless and negligent conduct, and remain destitute of that principle of real piety which ought to give lustre and vigour to it.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 See to it, *therefore*, that you maintain a constant *watch*, not presuming on preparations to be made hereafter; *for* your removal may be much more sudden than you are aware, and *ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh* to receive his prepared people to himself, and for ever to exclude the hypocrite and the sinner from the entertainments of his heavenly kingdom.

13 Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us apply our hearts to the obvious instructions which this well-known parable so naturally suggests. We are under a religious profession: our lamps are in our hands, and we go forth as those that expect to meet Christ; as those that desire and hope to be admitted to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. But, alas, how few are there that are truly prepared for such a blessedness! Would to God there were reason to hope that the christian
2, 3, 4 church were so equally divided, that five of ten in it had the oil of divine grace in their hearts, to render them burning and shining lights!

5 Let even such as have it be upon their guard; for our Lord intimates that the wise as well as the foolish virgins are too apt to slumber and sleep, and carelessly to intermit that watch which they ought constantly to maintain.

6 There may be, at an unexpected time, a midnight cry. Happy the souls that can hear it with pleasure; being not only habitually, but actually, ready to obey the summons! Happy they that have their *loins girded* and their *lamps burning!* (Luke xii. 35.)

8, 9 The foolish virgins saw their error too late: they applied to the wise; but their application was vain. And as vain will the hope of those be who trust to the intercession of departed saints, or any supposed redundancy of
10—12 merit in them, while they are themselves strangers to a holy temper and life. In vain will they cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* The door of mercy will be shut for ever, and the workers of iniquity utterly disowned. The day of grace has its limits; and for those that have trifled it away, there remaineth nothing but *the blackness of darkness for ever.* (Jude, ver. 13.)

SECTION CLXV.

Christ repeats the parable of the talents, in a form something different from that in which he had before delivered it. Matt xxv. 14—30.

MATT. XXV. 14.

SECT. 165. MATT. XXV. 14 15

JESUS having delivered the preceding parable of the virgins, went on farther to illustrate the subject by the repetition of a parable resembling one which he had used some time before; (Luke xix. 12—27. sect. cxliv.) and said, Let me again remind you of the great importance of preparing for my coming by a diligent improvement of your gifts; *for* the time when [*the Son of man*] shall come, and the grand administration of judgment attending it, [*will be*] *as* the proceedings of *a man* [*who,*] *going a* long *journey, called his servants* together, *and delivered his effects to them. And to one* of them *he gave five talents,*[a] *and to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his respective capacity* to manage the sum, and to the prospect there might reasonably be of his improving it: *and immediately he went away*, and set forward on his journey.

MATT. XXV. 14.

FOR *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods:

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability: and straightway took his journey.

c *Buy for yourselves.*] This seems merely an ornamental circumstance; and it is strange that any Popish writers should consider it as favouring their doctrine of a stock of merits in the church, founded on works of supererogation; since, if it referred to them at all, (which there is no reason to imagine,) it would rather expose than encourage any dependence upon them.

d *I know you not.*] This circumstance in the parable is not absurd; for nothing intimated a personal acquaintance with them, and guests asking admittance with such a pretence might have been multiplied beyond all reason and convenience. At least, its significancy in the application is very apparent and important.

a *To one he gave five talents.*] According to Dr. Prideaux's calculation, if these were talents of gold, the value of the five must have been 36,000 pounds sterling, and if silver, 2,250 pounds. (See the *Preface to his Connexion*, p. 20.) And perhaps this great sum was chosen, to intimate the value and importance of those capacities and opportunities committed to every reasonable creature, and especially to every professing Christian. But I do not lay any very great stress on this remark, because it is plain, that as Homer uses the word ταλαντον for a sum, or perhaps a small wedge of gold, of considerably less value than the price of two fat oxen, (*Iliad*, ϑ. ver. 750, 751.) so the signification of it among much later writers is very indeterminate.

16 Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast *that is* thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And he who had received the five talents, went and engaged in business, *and traded with them* in so diligent a manner during the absence of his master, that he doubled the sum, *and produced five talents more. And in like manner he who* [*had received*] *the two* was so industrious in employing them to the best advantage, that *he also gained two more. But he who had received* but *one* talent, being displeased that he had been intrusted with no more, was seized with sullen indolence and servile fear, and *went away* directly, *and* attempted no improvement of it, but privately *digged* [*a hole*] *in the earth, and hid his master's money* in it till he should return home. SECT. 165. MATT. XXV. 18

Thus the matter passed off for a while; *but after some considerable time, the master of those servants comes* home *and makes up his accounts with them,* demanding from each the sum with which he had been intrusted, and inquiring what was the interest he had gained by it. 19

And he who had received the five talents came near *and brought other five talents* with them, *saying, Sir,* thou was pleased so far to intrust me that *thou didst deliver to me five talents* when setting out on thy journey; and such is the improvement I have made of them, that *behold, I have* doubled the sum, and *gained to them five talents more. And his master said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant,*[b] *thou hast been faithful in* the management of *a few things;* and, having proved thee to be so in this lower trust, *I will* prefer thee to a higher, and *set thee over many* more valuable *things* than these: in the mean time *enter thou into the joy of thy master,* and share with me in the banquet prepared for myself and my friends on this happy occasion of my return. 20 21

He also who had received the two talents came forward *and said, Sir,* thou wert so indulgent that *thou didst deliver to me* at thy going hence *two talents,* which I have endeavoured to employ as carefully as I could: and *behold,* by trafficking with them, *I have gained two other talents to them.* And *his master said unto him,* as he had done to the former, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant,* thy care and diligence is as agreeable to me as if thy trust had been greater; *thou hast been* evidently *faithful in a few things,* and *I will* in like manner prefer thee to a higher trust, and *set thee over many* more valuable *things* than these; in the mean time, come to the entertainment now prepared, and *enter thou* with thy companion *into the joy of thy master.* 22 23

But he also who had received the one talent,[c] *came and said,* with a sullen and gloomy countenance, *Sir, I knew thee that thou art a severe man,* and that it is a very difficult thing to please thee, since thou art so exact with thy servants as even to think of *reaping where thou didst not sow, and* of *gathering whence thou hadst not scattered* any thing that could be taken up; requiring more in many instances than it is possible for them to do, be they ever so careful: *And being terrified* with this thought, I concluded, that if by any accident thy money should miscarry under my management, thou wouldst show me no mercy; and therefore *I went away,* as soon as I had received it, *and hid thy talent in the earth,* in a place where it has been very secure; so that I have now taken it up, and *behold,* [*there*] *thou hast thine own* again, and wilt find it to be the full sum I received. 24 25

And his master answering, said unto him with a just indignation, *Thou wicked and slothful servant,* what a false and scandalous excuse is this, and how easily may it be retorted upon thee? For if it were indeed, as thou maliciously sayest, and *thou knewest* that I was such a tyrannical and unreasonable man as thou hast described, even *that I reap where I did not sow, and* expect to *gather* something up from *whence I had not scattered* it, thou mightest certainly depend upon it that I should expect to reap where I had sowed, and to gather where I had scattered that which, in this instance as well as the others, might have been an increasing seed. And *therefore,* if thou hadst been afraid to employ it in trade, as these my faithful servants have done, *thou shouldst have put my money to the bankers* upon sufficient security, *and* thus *when I came I might* at least *have received mine own with* the common *interest.* And then, turning to the attendants, he said, *Take ye therefore the talent* which he has thus abused *from him, and give it to him that has ten talents,* as a farther token of my acceptance and favour. *For* I would have all my servants observe, that I shall constantly make this a maxim in my behaviour, That *to every one that hath,* and diligently improves what he hath, more *shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not* improved it to any valuable purpose, *even what he hath shall be taken away:* (compare Matt. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18; xix. 26.) Such unfaithful creatures must expect to be stripped of all, and not imagine that I will perpetually suffer my trusts to be abused, and my business to be neglected. *And,* to deter others from such an idle and unfaithful conduct, *cast ye the unprofitable servant,* who has so wickedly abused my goodness, *into the* dreadful *darkness which is without;* and *there,* instead of the delight and joy to which my faithful servants shall be introduced, there *shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of the* 26 27 28 29 30

b *Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*] The original word has a peculiar force and energy, far beyond what I can exactly express in English. It was used by auditors or spectators in any public exercise, to express the highest applause when any part had been excellently performed. Bravely done! comes something near it, but is not equally elegant or forcible.

c *He who had received the one talent.*] This may intimate that we are accountable for the smallest advantages with which we are intrusted; but it cannot imply that they who have received much will ordinarily pass their account best; for it is too plain, in fact, that most of those whose dignity, wealth, and genius give them the greatest opportunities of service, seem to forget they have any Master in heaven to serve, or any future reckoning to expect; and many of them render themselves much more criminal than this *wicked and slothful servant* who *hid his talent in the earth.*

SECT. 165. MATT. XXV.

teeth. Now this horrible darkness to which my parable refers, is no other than the dungeon of hell, to which every unfaithful servant must expect to be condemned in that approaching day of general account: fail not therefore to observe and report what I now say, that it may give the alarm to all who need it.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can excite us to a becoming care and activity in the duties of life, if we are deaf to those various and important motives which this excellent parable suggests? We have each of us received our talents, whether five, or
Ver. 15 two, or one; and if we be faithful, it matters not much under which of these classes we fall. Our acceptance and reward will be proportionable to our diligence; nor will any be blamed because he has not received five, though many will be condemned for neglecting one.

19 Yet a little while and our Lord comes to reckon with us, and even now his eye is continually upon us. Let us ask our own souls, with what temper, with what courage, with what cheerfulness, shall we appear before him! Let us
24 think of that appearance with awe, but not with terror. Away with every unjust thought and reasoning, (with whatever artifice it be excused, with whatever honourable name it be dignified,) that would represent him as a rigorous and severe Master, and produce a servile dread, which would cut the sinews of industry, and sink the soul into a sullen, negligent despair.

30 Whatever our particular snares in life may be, let us think of the doom of the slothful servant, to awaken our souls, and to deter us from every degree of unfaithfulness. And, on the other hand, let us often reflect on that unutterable transport which will overflow the breast of every real christian, when his gracious Master shall condescend, in so honourable a manner, to commemorate his honest though feeble attempts of service; and shall say,
21, 23 *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!* May that joy be the great object of our hopes and pursuits! and may our daily care in the improvement of every talent lodged in our hands, be a token to us that it will be sure and great!

SECTION CLXVI.

Christ concludes this important discourse with a plain and affecting description of the last judgment, and of the different sentences then to be passed and executed on the righteous and the wicked. Matt. xxv. 31, *to the end.*

MATT. XXV. 31.

SECT. 166. MATT. XXV. 31

OUR Lord having hitherto described his last coming in a parabolical manner, thought it proper to conclude his discourse with a plainer account of it, which might serve as a key to many preceding passages; and he added, *When* that great and illustrious Person, whom you have so often heard of and so well known by the title of *the Son of man, shall come in* all *his* final *glory*,[a] in the most public honours of his mediatorial kingdom, to which all things shall then be completely subjected; (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28.) *and all the holy angels* who have long been subjected to him as his ministering servants, shall come *with him; then shall he sit upon his glorious* and majestic *throne*, conspicuous in the eyes of the
32 whole world, as the universal Judge. *And all the nations* of men who have lived on earth from the remotest ages of time, *shall be assembled before him*;[b] *and he shall separate them from each other* according to their different characters, which he most perfectly knows, with as much ease *as a shepherd separates the sheep* which belong to his flock, *from the goats* which may be mingled with them, and places them in distinct companies.
33 *And he shall set the sheep*, that is, the righteous, whom he will own as such, and whose characters resemble the innocence, meekness, and usefulness of that animal, *on his right hand*, in token of his favour to them, and of the farther honours he will bestow upon them: *but the goats*, that is, the wicked, who are so offensive to him that they may justly be represented by goats, he shall place *on* [*his*] *left*, to intimate his displeasure against them, and their final removal from amongst his people; nor shall the haughtiest and mightiest sinner be able to resist that appointment by which he is placed in this situation, to await his sentence.[c] (Compare Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 18.)
34 *Then*, when, by the ministry of the angelic attendants, they are thus separated from each other, *the* great *King* of glory and of grace, who presides over this grand solemnity, *shall*, with the most condescending endearment, *say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed* and favourite people *of my Father*, approach yet nearer to me, that, having been *assessors* with me in what yet remains of this day's awful proceedings, (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) you may go in with me to *inherit the kingdom* of holiness, glory, and joy, appointed for your portion in the divine purpose and decree, and *prepared for you from the foundation of*

MATT. XXV. 31.
WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

a *When the Son of man shall come in his glory.*] If we observe the correspondence between these words and those in chap. xxiv. 30, 31. p. 325. it may seem probable that Christ intended to teach his disciples to conceive of his *first coming* to the destruction of Jerusalem as a kind of emblem of his *final appearance to judgment*; and consequently it will authorize us to use some of the texts in the former chapter when discoursing of that great and important day. —I hope every reader will observe with what majesty and grandeur our Lord speaks of himself in this section, which is one of the noblest instances of the true sublime that I have any where read; and indeed few passages, even in the sacred writings themselves, seem to equal it. Methinks we can hardly read it without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes.

b *All the nations shall be assembled before him.*] Had the notion which prevailed among some later Jews, that the Gentiles should have *no part* in the *resurrection*, been as old as our Lord's time, it is easy to see these words might have been understood as a direct intended opposition to it.

c Nor shall the haughtiest sinner, &c.] I can imagine no more magnificent image than this: the assembled world distinguished with such unerring penetration, and distributed into two grand classes, with as much ease as sheep and goats are ranged by a shepherd in different companies.—The propriety with which our Lord speaks of himself in the following words by the title of *the King*, is very observable; and it adds unutterable beauty to the condescending words he is represented as speaking on this great occasion.

35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

the world. And I am now descended to receive you to this kingdom with all these public marks of approbation and honour; *for* I well remember your good deeds in the days of your flesh, and felt my own bowels refreshed by them, when *I was hungry, and ye gave me* [*food*] *to eat;* when *I was thirsty, and ye caused me to drink;* when *I was a stranger, and ye took me in* like one of your own families; When [*I was*] *naked, and ye clothed me;* when *I was sick, and ye looked after me;*[d] when *I was* shut up *in* the solitude, confinement, and affliction of a *prison, and ye came* kindly *to* condole with *me* in my sufferings, and to relieve my necessities there. SECT. 166. MATT. XXV. 35 36

Then shall the righteous, in humble amazement, be ready to *answer him, and say,* *Lord,* what service were we ever capable of doing thee, that can deserve such notice from thee? *When did we* ever *see thee hungry, and fed* [*thee?*] *or thirsty, and caused* [*thee*] *to drink? Or when did we* ever *see thee* in the destitute condition of *a stranger, and took* [*thee*] *in? or naked, and clothed* [*thee?*] *Or when did we* ever *see thee sick, or in prison, and came to thee* for thy relief? We never saw thee, blessed Lord, in such circumstances of distress, nor ever had an opportunity of showing any such kindness to thee, that thou shouldst now distinguish us in such a manner, and speak so honourably of the service we have done thee. 37 38 39

And the King, answering with renewed condescension from his exalted throne, *shall* not disdain to *say unto them,* I well know that ye abounded in such kind and compassionate actions to the necessitous and afflicted saints around you: and *verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did* [*it*] *unto one of the least* and poorest *of these my* dear *brethren* who now stand with you in this happy company, *ye* in effect *did* [*it*] *to me:*[e] and I declare it in the face of all the world, That I take and reward it as if I had been relieved in person, and joyfully welcome you to that blessed world where you shall be for ever reaping the harvest of these labours of love. 40

Then, when his faithful servants are thus acquitted and honoured, *he shall* turn and *say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed* and detestable creatures, *into the* agonies of that *everlasting* and unquenchable *fire* which was originally *prepared for the devil and his angels,*[f] whose companions you must for ever be in the regions of horror and despair. And ye cannot but know in your own consciences that ye well deserve it; *for I was hungry, and ye did not give me* so much as bread *to eat; I was thirsty, and ye did not give me* so much as water *to drink; I was* wandering among you as *a* poor helpless *stranger, and ye did not take me in* among your domestics and guests; I was *naked, and ye did not clothe me;* I was *sick, and in prison, and ye did not look after me,* or do any thing at all for my relief. 41 42 43

Then shall they also answer and say unto him, Lord,[g] we are surprised at so strange a charge, and cannot apprehend ourselves liable to it; for *when did we* ever *see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not,* to the best of our abilities, *minister to thee?* If we had ever seen thee in distress, we would not have neglected to relieve thee; but we had never any opportunity of doing it. 44

And *then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you,* and declare it in the most solemn manner, That *in as much as ye did* [*it*] *not to one of the least of these* once necessitous though now triumphant saints, who dwelt among you on earth, and needed your assistance, *ye did* [*it*] *not to me;* and I justly thought myself neglected and injured when you shut up the bowels of your compassion towards them. 45

And so, to conclude all, *these* miserable wretches, notwithstanding all the excuses they can urge, *shall go away into* a most dreadful state of *everlasting punishment; but the righteous,* through the abundant grace of God manifested by his Son, shall enter *into everlasting life:*[h] and thus the great scene shall close in the eternal happiness or misery of every human creature who has ever lived on the face of this earth. 46

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us now behold, with an attentive eye and a solicitous heart, the end of all the living; that awful scene in which the various dispensations of God to mankind shall terminate in the solemn day, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and sit on his magnificent throne. All nations and people shall be assembled before him, and we must make up a part of the assembly. The sheep and the goats must then be separated: and, O my soul, amongst which wilt thou then be numbered? Is there an enquiry, is there a care, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance? Ver. 31 32

d *I was sick, and ye looked after me.*] This seems the exactest sense of επεσκεψασθε με, which in general signifies to *take the oversight and care* of any thing that requires diligent inspection and attendance: (compare Jam. i. 27; and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 117) and it strongly intimates, that such an attendance on the poor in their illness is a very acceptable charity: and this is what many may have an opportunity of doing who have very little money to spare.

e *Ye did it to me.*] That *alms-deeds* should be remembered with peculiar regard in the day of judgment, was a notion that early prevailed among the Jews, as appears by the Chaldee Paraphrase on Eccles. ix. 7. which bears a remarkable resemblance to these words of Christ, and might perhaps be an imitation of them. See Mede's *Works,* p. 81.

f *Prepared for the devil and his angels.*] There is a remarkable difference between our Lord's expression here and in ver. 34. There the kingdom is said to have been *prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world;* whereas here the everlasting fire is not said to have been *prepared for the wicked,* but *for the devil and his angels.* Compare Rom. ix. 22, 23.

g *Then shall they also answer, &c.*] Perhaps it may only intimate this shall be the language of their hearts, which Christ perceiving, will reply to it. I see no necessity for supposing they shall actually plead thus. Multitudes will no doubt remember they have often heard what reply will be made to such a plea: God grant that none who read it here may be in the number of those to whom it will be made!

h *Everlasting punishment,—everlasting life.*] As the original word αιωνιον is the same in both places, I thought it proper to use the same word in the translation of both; and miserable are they that dare venture their souls on its signifying a limited duration in either.

SECT. 166. MATT. XXV. 41, 42, 43, 34, 35, 36, 40, 44, 45

Let us view the sentence we must shortly hear, as he who will himself pronounce it has been pleased to give us a copy of it.—Can we conceive any thing more dreadful than that which shall be passed on those on the left hand? To be driven from the presence of Christ as accursed, and to be consigned over to a devouring fire! and this not only to the tortures of a moment or an hour, (as in some painful executions that have been known here,) but to everlasting fire, yea, to fire prepared for the devil and his angels, where they will be perpetual companions and perpetual tormentors! Should not the thought that he is in danger, in hourly danger, of being sealed up under this sentence, awaken the most stupid sinner, and engage him eagerly to cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?*—And on whom is this sentence passed? Let us attentively observe it: Not merely on the most gross and abandoned sinners, but on those who have lived in an habitual neglect of their duty: not merely on those who have ravaged and persecuted the saints, (though surely their furnace will be heated seven times hotter than that of others,) but even on those who have neglected to relieve them.

On the other hand, let us seriously reflect what it will be to be owned by Christ before the assembled world, and to hear him saying, with a sweet smile, and with a voice of harmony and love, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* How infinite is the love that prepared that kingdom for us before we had a being! how rich the blood that purchased it! how overflowing the grace that bestows it on such mean, such undeserving creatures! *Bless the Lord, O our souls!* in the prospect of it. *Let men curse,* O Lord, if *thou* wilt thus *bless:* (Psal. cix. 28.) Let them load our names with infamy, if thou wilt adorn them with such glory: let all the kingdoms of the earth, and all the pomp of them, be despised and trampled under foot, when offered as an equivalent for this infinitely more glorious kingdom.

Let us attentively observe the character of those who are to receive it. They are the useful and the benevolent souls: such as have loved the Lord Jesus Christ, not only in his name, and ordinances, and promises, but have loved him in his laws and in his people too; and have known him in those humble forms in which he has been pleased, as it were by proxy, to appear among us. *I was hungry, and ye fed me; thirsty, and ye gave me drink,* &c.; for *in as much as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.* Amazing words! that the meanest saint should be owned by the King of glory as one of his brethren! Irresistible argument to those that do indeed believe these words, to stir them up to abound in every good word and work! Under this impression, methinks, instead of hiding ourselves from those who should be to us as our own flesh by virtue of our common union to him, we should not only hearken to their entreaties, but even search them out in those corners to which modest want may sometimes retire, and cast about in our thoughts how we may secure any happy opportunity of relieving some poor saint, for their sakes, and for their Master's, and even for our own. What if Christ came to us in person, as a poor helpless stranger? What if we saw him destitute of food and raiment, or in want of any other necessaries of life? Should we not contend for it as an honour which of us should receive him into our houses, which of us should entertain him at our table, which of us should even strip ourselves of our clothing to give it to him? And yet he tells us, that he is in effect with us in his poor members; and we invent a thousand cold excuses for neglecting to assist him, and send our compassionate Saviour away empty. Is this the temper of a christian? Is this the temper in which we should wish to be found at the judgment-day?

But we know not Christ in this disguise. Neither did these unhappy creatures on the left hand know him: they are surprised to be told of such a thing; and yet are represented as perishing for it. Away therefore with all those religious hopes (vainly so called) which leave the heart hardened, and the hand contracted from good works! *If we shut up the bowels of compassion from our brethren, how dwelleth the love of God in us?* (1 John iii. 17.) Or to what doth the love of Christ constrain us, if it be not to the exercise of gratitude to him, and the offices of cheerful and active friendship to those whom he now owns as his brethren, and whom he will not be ashamed to call so in the midst of his highest triumph? Blessed Jesus, how munificent art thou! and what a fund of charity didst thou lay up in the very words which are now before us! In all ages since they were spoken, how many hungry hast thou fed, how many naked hast thou clothed, how many calamitous creatures hast thou relieved by them! May they be written deep in our hearts, that the joy with which we shall finally meet thee, may be increased by the happy effect of this day's meditation!

SECTION CLXVII.

The Jewish rulers consult how they might take Christ, and Judas agrees with them to deliver him privately into their hands. Matt. xxvi. 1—5, 14—16. Mark xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11. Luke xxi. 37, *to the end;* xxii. 1—6.

LUKE xxi. 37.

SECT. 167. LUKE XXI. 37

THUS our Lord ended his discourses on this subject on the third day of the week in which he suffered; *and* thus he was generally employed, from the time of his public entry into Jerusalem to his last passover: *he was teaching by day in the temple, and at night he went out* of the city, *and lodged at the mount called* [*the mount*] *of Olives,* in the neighbourhood of which Bethany lay; in the retirements of which, particularly in the garden of Geths-mane, he often spent a considerable part of the night; being desirous to secure that only season of solitude, that he might prepare himself for his approaching sufferings by a proper series of extraordinary devotion. And as soon as it was light, he returned to the city; *and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, that they might* thus lay hold of every opportunity to *hear him;* and he was solicitous not to lose any time that might be improved for so profitable a purpose.

LUKE xxi. 37. AND in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

LUKE XXII. 1

Now it may not be improper here to observe, that *the feast of unleavened bread, which was* commonly *called the passover, drew near,* [*and*] *was* celebrated within *two days after* our Lord had delivered the prophecies and admonitions so largely recorded above.[a]

Luke xxii. 1. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover, [*and* was after two days.] [Mark xiv. 1.]

[a] *Two days after.*] I apprehend that the preceding discourses (from § 151.) were delivered on the Tuesday of the week in which he suffered; and he probably uttered the following words that evening, which was just two days before the paschal lamb was eaten. I do not find that any of the transactions of the Wednesday are recorded, besides the general account given above.

Matt. xxvi. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas; [Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 2.]

4 And consulted [how] they might take Jesus by subtilty, [and put him to death.] [Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 2.]

5 But they said, Not on the feast-*day*, lest there be an uproar among the people: [Luke, for they feared the people.] [Mark xiv. 2. Luke xxii. 2.]

Luke xxii. 3. Then entered Satan into Judas, sirnamed Iscariot, being [one] of the number of the twelve: [Matt. xxvi. 14. Mark xiv. 10.]

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them: [Matt. xxvi. 14. Mark xiv. 10.]

Matt. xxvi. 15. And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?

Mark xiv. 11. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. [And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.] [Matt. xxvi. 15. Luke xxii. 5.]

Luke xxii. 6. And he promised, and [from that time] sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. [Matt. xxvi. 16. Mark xiv. 11.]

And it came to pass, that *when Jesus had finished all these discourses*, and the appointed hour for his sufferings was now at hand, *he said to his disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh; and* in the plainest terms I now assure you *the Son of man is* then to be *betrayed* to his inveterate enemies, that, according to what I have often told you, (Matt. xvi. 21; and xx. 18, 19.) he may be put into the hands of sinful men *to be crucified:* prepare yourselves therefore for that trying season, that you may not be hurried into any thing which you may afterwards have reason to repent. SECT. 167. MATT. XXVI. 2

Then, that very evening, *the chief priests* of every class, *and* others employed in distinguished services in the temple, together with *the scribes and the* other *elders of the people*, who were members of the grand sanhedrim, *assembled together*, not indeed in the temple, where they usually met, but *at the palace of the high-priest, who was* then *called Caiaphas;* (as was observed before, John xi. 49. p. 279.) *And* there *they* entered into a secret conspiracy, and *consulted how they might* privately *take Jesus by some artifice*, without giving an alarm to his friends, *and* might *put him to death* as soon as possible, which, one way or other, they were determined to do. *But they* had such an apprehension of his interest in the people, that some of them were rather for delaying it, and *said*, It will be more advisable to wait till after the passover, and *not* to attempt to seize him *at the feast*, while there is such a concourse in the city from all parts; *lest* the design that we have formed against him should be discovered, and, considering how popular he is, *there should be a tumult* raised *among the people*, either to rescue him from our hands, or to revenge his death. Such were the cautious sentiments of some among them; *for they feared the people;* but others pushed the matter on with greater forwardness and zeal, and were by no means for deferring it; to which at length the rest agreed, upon finding a more favourable opportunity than they expected offering itself through the treachery of Judas. 3 4 5

For *then*, just at that very juncture of time, *Satan*, by divine permission, *entered into Judas, who was also called Iscariot, and was* (as we observed before) *one of the number of the twelve* apostles who were chosen by our Lord from the rest of his disciples to the most honourable trust as well as the most endearing intimacy:[b] and as this malignant spirit had before suggested to him the horrid design of betraying his Master, he now strongly impressed his mind, that during his retirement he might easily find a convenient time for executing it, and might be sure of being well rewarded for it by the rulers of the Jews. *And*, under this impression, *he* immediately *went away* from Christ and his company to the house of Caiaphas, whom he knew to be a most inveterate enemy to his Master; *and* having found means of introducing himself and communicating his general design, he *conversed with the chief priests and captains* of the temple, who were not yet gone away, and deliberated *how he might* with the greatest convenience and security *betray him unto them. And* as the sordid wretch proposed it with a covetous view, before he would come to any agreement with them, *he said*, without the least appearance of shame or remorse, *What are you willing to give me, and I will* undertake to *deliver him to you* at a time and place in which you may effectually secure him without the danger of giving any alarm to the people? LUKE XXII. 3 MATT. XXIV. 15

And when they heard his proposal, they thought [*it*] very practicable; and *they were glad* of so unexpected an offer from one of his own disciples to facilitate their measures, *and* therefore readily *promised* in general *to give him* a sum of *money* as a reward for that service; *and* at last *they* expressly *agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver*,[c] which was the price to be paid for a slave who had been slain: (see Exod. xxi. 32.) and as they proposed it to express their contempt of Jesus, so God permitted Judas, covetous as he was, to acquiesce in that mean and trifling sum, (though he might easily have raised it higher,) that thus the prophecy might be fulfilled in which it had been particularly specified. (See Zech. xi. 12, 13.) MARK XIV. 11

And he promised to take a punctual care in the affair; *and* accordingly *from that time* he diligently *sought* a proper *opportunity to betray him unto them*, that they might come upon him privately, and apprehend him *in the absence of the multitude:* nor was it long before this happened, as we shall quickly relate in its place. LUKE XXII. 6

IMPROVEMENT.

We see with what unremitting vigour the great Author and Finisher of our faith pressed forward towards the mark, and how he quickened his pace as he saw the day approaching; spending in devotion the greatest part of the night which succeeded to his most laborious days, and resuming his work early in the morning! How much happier were his disciples in these early lectures, than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may come morning after morning to place ourselves at his feet, and lose no opportunity of receiving the instructions of his word, and seeking those of his Spirit. LUKE XXI. 37 38

But while his gracious heart was thus intent on doing good, the chief priests and rulers of the people were no less intent on mischief and murder. They *took counsel together how they might put him to death:* They set MATT. XXIV. 3, 4

b *One of the number of the twelve*, &c.] This was a circumstance of such high aggravation, that, it is observable, each of the Evangelists hath marked it out in this view. Compare with these places John vi. 71. p. 159.

c *Thirty pieces of silver.*] A slave was rated by the law at thirty shekels of silver, which, if we reckon them at half-a crown, (which is supposed to have been about their real value,) amounted to no more than three pounds fifteen shillings of our money—*a goodly price that he was prized at of them!* Zech. xi. 13.

SECT. 167. LUKE XXII. 3, 4, 6

upon his head the price of a slave, and find an *apostle* base enough to accept it! Blush, O ye heavens, to have been witness to this; and be ashamed, O earth, to have supported so infamous a creature! Yet this was the man who, but a few days before, was the foremost to appear as an advocate for the poor, and to censure the pious zeal of Mary, which our Lord vindicated and applauded. (John xii. 4—8. p. 288.) Let the fatal fruits of his covetous disposition, instigated by Satan, be marked with abhorrence and terror; and if we see this base principle harboured in the breasts of those who call themselves the disciples and ministers of Christ, let us not wonder if, by God's righteous judgment, they are given up to those excesses of it which bring upon them lasting infamy and endless perdition.

SECTION CLXVIII.

Christ having directed his disciples where to prepare the passover for him, comes to Jerusalem for the last time before his death, and sits down with them to the celebration of it. Matt. xxvi. 17—20. Mark xiv. 12—17. Luke xxii. 7—18. John xiii. 1.

LUKE xxii. 7.

SECT. 168. LUKE XXII. 7 8 9 10 11 12 MARK XIV. 16 17

NOW after this infamous bargain which Judas made with the chief priests to betray into their hands his innocent and divine Master, on the fifth day of the week, before the evening when *the first day of unleavened bread came,*[a] *in which,* according to the precept of the law, which had expressly limited the time of it, *the passover must be killed,* or the paschal lamb be slain, in commemoration of the Israelites' being preserved from the destroying angel, and delivered out of Egypt, Jesus determined to keep the passover with his disciples. *And,* that he might in a due manner celebrate it with them, *he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John,* from the place where he had spent the night before in retirement with them, *and said, Go* to Jerusalem *and prepare the passover for us, that we may* once more *eat* [*it*] together.

And they said unto him, Lord, we are ready to perform the charge; and, that we may be under no uncertainty as to the place, only desire thou wouldst particularly tell us *where,* or at what house, *wilt thou have us go and prepare for thy eating the passover* with us.

And he said unto them, I will give you a sign which shall put the matter out of doubt: *Go* directly *into the city to such a one* as I will point out to you: [*and*] *behold, as soon as* ever *you are entered into the city, a man will meet you* in the street *carrying a pitcher of water* in his hand; *follow him* immediately *into the house where he enters;* for I know it will be a place very fit for our accommodation.[b] *And wheresoever he goes in, you shall say to the master of the family,* We are come to thee with a message from Jesus *the Teacher;* and he *says to thee* by us, *My time is* now very *near,*[c] and before I make my last remove, *I will celebrate the passover at thy house: where* then *is the dining-room?* or what convenient chamber hast thou to spare, *where I may* come and *eat the passover with my disciples,* and be secure from the interruption of any other company? *And* upon this *he will* take you up stairs, and *show you a large upper room* which will conveniently hold us all; and you will find it *furnished* with all proper utensils, *and prepared* by all necessary circumstances of purification of every kind, so as to be, on the whole, in very good order: *there* provide the unleavened bread, the lamb, and the bitter herbs, and *make* all things *ready for us* against the time of our coming; for we shall be able to find the house without any direction from you.[d]

And after he had given these particular instructions to *his* two *disciples,* they *went out* from thence, *and came into the city, and found* the man carrying the water, whom they followed into a house, where there was, just *as he said to them,* a commodious dining-room at liberty, and well furnished: *and* as the master of the house was free to let them have it, *they did as Jesus had appointed them, and made the passover ready* against the time when he should come to eat it.

And in the evening, when the proper *hour* for eating the passover *was come, he came* directly to the house where his messengers were, *and sat down* to the table *with* all *the twelve apostles* around him, to taste (according to the usage of those days) the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs, before the lamb was served up.[e]

LUKE xxii. 7.

THEN came the [first] day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. [Matt. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12.]

8 And he sent [two of his disciples,] Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. [Mark xiv. 13.]

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we [Mark, go and] prepare [for thee to eat the passover?] [Matt. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv 12.]

10 And he said unto them, [Go into the city to such a man, *and*] behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. [Matt. xxvi. 18. Mark xiv. 13.]

11 And [Mark, whereso-ever he shall go in,] ye shall say unto the good-man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, [My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house:] where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? [Matt. xxvi. 18. Mark xiv. 14.]

12 And he shall show you a large upper room furnished [and prepared:] there make ready [for us.] [Mark xiv. 15.]

Mark xiv. 16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them; and they [did as Jesus had appointed them,] and made ready the passover. [Matt. xxvi. 19. Luke xxii. 13.]

17 And in the evening [Luke, when the hour was come,] he cometh, [*and* sat down] with the twelve [Luke, apostles.] [Matt. xxvi. 20. Luke xxii. 14.]

a *The first day of unleavened bread came.*] There is no room to question that the time when Christ sent his disciples to prepare the passover, was on the Thursday of the week in which he suffered; and though the first day of unleavened bread, most strictly so called, was the fifteenth day of Nisan, and began with the evening that the passover was eaten, yet it is not improbable that the Evangelists might sometimes speak according to the usual way of reckoning days among other nations; and so, as the use of leaven among them was to cease by sun-set at farthest, and they were obliged to eat their supper, which was the chief meal, with unleavened cakes, it might naturally enough be called by this name.

b *A man will meet you,* &c.] As Samuel, having anointed Saul, for the confirmation of his faith gave him several predictions relating to some very contingent occurrences he was to meet with in his journey, (see 1 Sam. x. 2—7.) so our Lord seems by these predictions to have intended the same with regard to his disciples, and also to give them a most important hint that he foresaw all the particular circumstances which were to befal him at Jerusalem when he went up thither for the next and last time before his sufferings.—The sending them to Jerusalem in this manner, seems to intimate that he did not go thither himself that morning, so that it is very probable he spent most of the day in retirement for meditation and prayer.

c *My time is near.*] Every body knew that the time for eating the passover was near; so that these words must be supposed to have a farther view. And I am therefore ready to believe that the owner of this house, to whom our Lord sent this message by the name of The Teacher, might be a person who (though unknown to Peter and John,) was in his heart at least a disciple of Christ; and our Lord might give this intimation, that it was to be a time of more than ordinary importance to him, that it might be some secret support to this man's faith under that violent shock it was soon to receive by his approaching sufferings.

d We shall be able to find the house, &c.] The same prophetic gift which enabled Christ to predict these circumstances, would, no doubt, guide him thither; and it is a beautiful modesty in the sacred historian, only to hint obliquely at it: but I apprehend it the part of a paraphrast to set these particulars in a fuller and stronger light.

e To taste the unleavened bread, &c.] I must here entreat my

John xiii. 1. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Luke xxii. 15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Now it is here to be observed, that *before* he began to eat *the feast of the passover, as Jesus knew that his hour was come when he should depart from this* calamitous *world,* in which he had sojourned for a while, to return *to the* bosom of the *Father,* in which he originally dwelt, he was solicitous to order every circumstance of his conduct in this last intercourse with his disciples, so as might most effectually promote their edification and comfort, and make it clearly manifest, that *having* always tenderly *loved his own that were in the world, he loved them* in the most perfect manner, even *to the end* of his life,[f] and would decline nothing which might be for their advantage. SECT. 168. JOHN XIII. 1

And, to express the fervency and strength of this affection, *he said to them,* as they sat together before supper was brought in, I assure you that *I have most earnestly desired to eat this passover with you,* though I know it will be the last I shall celebrate with you, and we shall rise from it but a few hours *before I* am to *suffer* from mine enemies the most cruel insults and torments, which shall end in my death; yet such is my love to my people, and such my desire to glorify my heavenly Father, that no passover was ever so welcome to me as this: *For* now I see the days of my humiliation almost finished; and *I say unto you, That* after this *I will not* celebrate any other passover with you, nor *eat of it any more till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God,* or till the institutions of the gospel shall have perfected those of the law, and the ordinances of both are superseded by the more perfect enjoyments of the heavenly world. LUKE XXII. 15, 16

And then, *having received the cup* with which it was usual for them to begin the feast, *he gave thanks* to God for the redemption of Israel, in commemoration of which the passover was instituted, and for giving them this opportunity of celebrating this holy banquet together; *and* then *said, Take this* cup, and let it go round, *and divide* [*it*] *among yourselves,* and bless the God of your fathers. And see that you do it with a devotion suitable to the distinguished solemnity which you have now before you; *for I say unto you, That* after what passes this evening, *I will not drink* any more with you *of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come,* and that complete and spiritual redemption, which is typified by this ordinance, shall be fulfilled and perfected. 17, 18

IMPROVEMENT.

We may well assure ourselves, that the same divine penetration and prophetic discernment which enabled the blessed Jesus thus circumsfantially to foretell to his disciples those most contingent occurrences which were to determine the place where they should prepare the passover, would also open to him a prospect of all that was to follow. All the scenes that were to be passed through on this fatal night and the succeeding black and bloody day, were no doubt attentively viewed: the agony of the garden, the traitorous kiss of Judas, the cowardly flight of all the other apostles, the insults of his seemingly victorious and successful enemies, the clamorous accusations, the insolent buffetings, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, the cross, and all that he was to endure upon it from the hand of God and men. Yet behold, with all these in his view, he goes on with a holy alacrity, and this *sun of righteousness rejoiceth as a champion to run his race!* (Psal. xix. 5.) Yea, when he is sitting down to the paschal supper, (though therein was exhibited, in a most lively emblem, the bitterness of his own sufferings,) he utters these gracious and emphatical words, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* Ver. 10—13, 15

So justly might it be said of him, as we see it is, that *having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.* O blessed Jesus, may the ardour, the courage, and the permanency of our love to thee, bear at least some little proportion to that wherewith thou hast condescended to love us! May we long, from time to time, to celebrate with thee that christian passover which thou hast ordained to succeed the Jewish, as the memorial of thy sacrifice! Yea, may we long for the last solemnity of this kind, which will ere long come, after which we shall no more drink with thee of the fruit of the vine, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God! In the mean time may we be cheered with *thy love,* which is indeed far *better than wine,* (Cant. i. 3.) and, thus supported with those reviving cordials which thy gospel administers, may we *keep ourselves in the love of God, and in the vatient expectation of thy final,* most glorious, and welcome *appearance!* (2 Thess. iii. 5. and Jude, ver. 21.) JOHN XIII. 1, LUKE XXII. 16, 18

reader, if he has an opportunity, to consult Ainsworth's excellent note on Exod. xii. 8. where he has collected from authentic Jewish writers the best account I have any where seen in so little room, of the various ceremonies with which the passover was eaten, by which the subsequent story is greatly illustrated. Among others, the following circumstances should be recollected:—That the master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine, which having solemnly blessed, that is, having adored the name of God over it, he divided among the guests, (Luke xxii. 17.) and afterwards washed his hands:—Then the supper began with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, which when the master and the rest of the company had tasted, one of the younger persons present, generally a child, asked the reason of what was peculiar in that feast, (according to Exod. xii. 26.) which introduced the haggadah, that is, the showing forth or declaration of it; (in allusion to which we read of *showing forth the Lord's death,* 1 Cor. xi. 26.)—Then the master rose up and took another cup, and washed his hands again, before the lamb was tasted; and in this interval, I suppose, Christ also washed the feet of his disciples. Then, after eating the passover, followed another cup, which, after having delivered to each a piece of bread, was the sacramental cup at this supper:—Then, after some pious and friendly discourse, the whole family, after having drunk at least a fourth cup, sang some psalms of praise: and so the solemnity ended.—Agreeable to this is the account given in the *Religious Ceremonies of all Nations,* Vol. I. p. 215—217.

f *He loved them to the end.*] I shall in the next section hint at my reasons for agreeing with those critics who place the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet at the beginning of the paschal supper, rather than a night or two before.—At present, I would only observe that this verse seems intended by John to introduce not merely the story which immediately follows it, but the whole account of Christ's behaviour to his friends in these last scenes of his life: and therefore, as he prefixes it to the first circumstance that he has mentioned of this passover, I apprehend it proper to begin the whole story with it; especially since the words which I have placed next after it are full of that love which he expressed to them, even to the last.

SECTION CLXIX.

Christ rebukes the ambition which his disciples most unseasonably expressed as they were sitting down to supper, by washing their feet, and adding several excellent admonitions to the exercise of humility, immediately before the eating of the paschal lamb. Luke xxii. 24—27. John xiii. 2, 3—17.

JOHN xiii. 2.

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NOW when our Lord had thus sat down to eat the passover with his disciples, (as was said before,) *supper being come*,[a] and the antepast or introduction to it having been despatched as above; Just in the interval between that and the serving up the paschal lamb, *there was a* most unseasonable *contention among them*,[b] as they sat at table with Jesus, *which of them should be accounted the greatest* in that kingdom of which he had been speaking, and which they interpreted of a temporal dominion that should succeed his approaching sufferings. (Compare Mark ix. 34; and Luke ix. 46. p. 189.)

[*And*] upon this, *though Jesus knew that the Father*, by the sure engagements of an immutable covenant, *had given* the government of *all things into his hands*, and was just going actually to invest him with all power both in heaven and upon earth; *and that, as he came forth from God* as his Messenger to men, so *he was returning to God* again; yet, conscious as he was of so great a dignity, was nevertheless willing to give his disciples an example of the deepest humility in this his last interview with them before his passion: With this design, and in order to shame them out of that ambitious contention which he observed among them, in a more forcible manner than any words alone could do, *he riseth from supper*;[c] *and* whereas it was only usual for the head of the family at such a time to wash his own hands, he *lays aside his* upper-*garments, and taking a towel, tied it round him* like a kind of apron: *And then pouring water into a* large *ewer*, or sort of cistern commonly used on these occasions, *he began* himself *to wash the feet of* [*his*] *disciples, and to wipe* [*them*,] after they were thus washed, *with the* long ends of the *linen cloth with which he was girded*, which hung down to his feet.

Then, when he had done with those who sat nearest to him, *he comes to Simon Peter:* and offering to do the like for him, [*Peter*] was so affected at his condescending to perform such a mean office, that he *says to him, Lord, dost thou* go about to *wash my feet?* It is a thousand times fitter that I should wash thine; nor can I bear to see thee demean thyself thus. *Jesus answered and said to him, Thou knowest not now* the design of *what I am doing, but thou shalt know hereafter;* and as I shall presently explain the meaning of this action, so the time will quickly come when many other things in mine undertaking and conduct, much more mysterious than this, shall be cleared up to thee. Yet still *Peter* refused, and *said to him*, with more warmth than before, Lord, whatever be the intent of the action, I cannot suffer it by any means, and am determined *thou shalt never wash my feet.* But *Jesus answered him*, Alas, Peter, that was rashly spoken; for there is a sense in which, *if I do not wash thee, thou hast no portion with me:* intimating thereby, that if he were not cleansed from sin by his blood and Spirit, he could never partake of the happiness of his people; and that, in the mean time, it became him to submit in this instance to his direction. Upon which, *Simon Peter*, struck with so awful an admonition, immediately *says to him*, with that eager affection so natural to his temper,

JOHN xiii. 2.

AND supper being ended,—

Luke xxii. 24.—There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

John xiii. 3. [*And*] Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God,

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet

a *Supper being come.*] The reasons brought by Bishop Kidder, (in his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, part iii. chap. 3. p. 60, 61.) by Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Heb.* on Matt. xxvi. 6.) and since by Dr. Whitby, (in his notes on this place,) to prove that this supper was not the passover, but another supper at Bethany a night or two before, I have briefly obviated in the paraphrase or notes on the places on which they are grounded, and therefore cannot think it material to trouble the reader with a particular detail of them. The chief reasons which determine me to the contrary opinion (besides some others, of which a good summary is given in Dr. Guyse's valuable note on this place) are these: Such a disposition of the story best suits several of the circumstances of the paschal supper, (particularly the contention about superiority, and the inquiry about Judas, both which must, on the other hypothesis, have been superseded,) and the propriety of it is especially evinced from John xiii. 38. where our Lord says to Peter, *The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice;* which must be spoken the very *night Jesus was betrayed*, and yet is so connected with this story of washing the disciples' feet, by ver. 21. and ver. 31. that they cannot without great violence be separated: and it is certain, John xiii. 1. will have a peculiar energy according to this plan; which therefore most critics have followed.—The reader will observe here, that I have rendered δειπνου γενομενου, *supper being come*, which is the sense in which the word is often used elsewhere: thus, John xxi. 4. πρωιας γενομενης, is, *when morning was come:* Acts xii. 18; xvi. 35. ημερας γενομενης, *when day was come;* and Acts xxi. 40. σιγης γενομενης, *when silence was made:* in all which places, and in many more that might easily be collected from the Greek writers, it would be absurd to translate the word *ended*. Nay, Luke iv. 42. γενομενης ημερας, signifies, *when the day was coming on.* (Compare Mark i. 35. note f, p. 71.) It is indeed an ambiguous term; but the rendering above is here to be preferred, 1. Because it was much more natural to wash the feet of guests before than after supper: 2. Because it is expressly said in ver. 1. to have been done before the passover; which, if the preceding reason be admitted, determines the point: 3. Because part of the discourse, which John mentions as happening after the feet were washed, is mentioned by the other Evangelists as passing at supper; nay, John himself, when he speaks, in ver. 26. of Christ's dipping the sop, and giving it to Judas after this, plainly shows that supper was not ended.—As the latter part of this 2d verse comes in by way of parenthesis, I have transposed that clause, and inserted it afterwards in ver. 21. to introduce what relates to Judas in the next section; a freedom which will, I hope, be easily excused.

b *There was a contention among them.*] If the reasoning above be allowed, we must certainly transpose Luke's account of this contention about superiority; for none can imagine it should follow immediately after Christ had been giving them so affecting a lesson of humility. But Luke seems less exact in the order of this story than the other Evangelists; and particularly relates what passed concerning the person that was to betray him after the Eucharist, though both Matthew and Mark place it before.

c *He riseth from supper.*] As it is here asserted that *Christ rose from supper*, we must allow that, in some sense, *supper was begun*, that is, as I suppose, the antepast had been taken, which is mentioned by the Jews as preceding the *paschal lamb:* (see Ainsworth's note, quoted above, note e, p. 432.) They tell us that it was then usual for the master of the family to wash his hands; and, if I am rightly informed, the Jews continue the custom still.—This seems a more natural manner of explaining the clause before us, than to suppose, with Grotius, or Vossius, (*Harm. Evan. lib.* i. *cap.* 14. sect. 1.) or Dr. Edwards, (*Exercit. on* Luke xxii. 21.) that after the paschal lamb they ate another distinct supper, and that this washing happened in the interval between them. Though Vossius is pleased to call this a *very little lamb*, (*unus Agniculus*,) I cannot but think (especially considering how early the ewes yean in Judea) that it might be big enough plentifully to sup thirteen people; and as all which remained uneaten till morning was to be burnt, (Exod. xii. 10.) one cannot suppose that our Lord would be inclined to multiply dishes on this occasion, especially as the former part of the night was to be spent in watching and prayer.

SECT. 169.

JOHN XIII.

LUKE XXII.

JOHN XIII.

Lord, if this washing is to be a token of my interest in thee, I most gladly acquiesce in it, and am heartily desirous that thou shouldst wash, *not my feet only, but also my hands and my head* too; for I desire that all my intellectual and all my executive powers may be sanctified by thy grace, and be entirely devoted to thy service.

10 Then *Jesus*, willing to lay hold on a hint which gave him an opportunity of pursuing so useful a thought, *says* further *to him, He that* is washed already, or that *has* just *been bathing*,[d] *needs only to wash his feet*, which may indeed easily be soiled by the shortest walk, *and* when that is done, he *is entirely clean*; as if he should have said, The truly good man needs not that deep repentance and universal change which is absolutely necessary to others, though he should, by renewed acts of penitence and faith, be cleansing himself from smaller pollutions, which are in some degree inseparable from the infirmity of human nature: *and*, in this sense, I know that *you*, my apostles, *are clean: but* yet I must add, you are *not all so*. *For* as he was acquainted with the secret dispositions of 11 their hearts, so *he knew who would betray him*; (compare John vi. 64. p. 169.) and *therefore he said, you are not all clean*,[e] because he knew the heart of Judas was polluted with reigning sin, and was so far enslaved under the power of the devil as to have consented to the perpetration of the vilest wickedness.

12 *When therefore he had* thus *washed their feet, and had taken his* upper-*garments* and put them on, *he sat down* at the table *again, and said to them, Do you know* the meaning and design of *what I have* now *been doing to you* in the form of a servant? *And*, to explain the matter, *he said to them*, I must again remind you of what I formerly told you, but what you seem so ready to forget, (see Matt. xx. 25, 26; and Mark x. 42, 43. p. 282, 283.) *The kings of the Gentiles* do indeed *lord it over them; and they that* 25 *exercise* the most magisterial and arbitrary *authority upon them, have* a set of flatterers about them who encourage them in it, as an instance of true greatness of mind, and give them *the* vain *title of* grand *benefactors* to nations and men.[f] *But you*, my disciples, 26 [*shall*] *not* [*do*] *thus*; for you are to show yourselves the friends of the world, not by governing, but by serving: be not ambitious therefore in contending for superiority, *but let him who is eldest among you be as* humble and obliging as if he were *the youngest* and most dependent of all;[g] *and he that presides* over the rest in any office of peculiar trust and influence, [*let him be*] as humble and condescending *as a servant*. Of this I 27 have now been giving you an instance, which surely you cannot quickly forget: *for which* of the two *is* naturally accounted *greater* by a stranger who happens to come in, *he that sits at the table, or he that* stands and *waits* upon the guests? *Is* it *not* evident that it must be *he that sits at the table?* *But I am among you as one that waits* on the rest; and you have just now seen me putting on the form of a servant, and performing to you, while you sat at the table, one of the lowest offices of menial attendants,[h] in the very garb and posture in which any of the least of them could appear. *You call me* indeed your *Teacher and Lord; and* therein *you say well; for* [*so*] *I am*, and such authority have I received of my Father. *If therefore I*, who am [*your*] *Lord* and Master, *and* 14 whom you know to be a divinely inspired *Teacher*, have condescended to so mean an office, and *have* thus *washed your feet*, and in all other instances have shown my readiness in love to serve you, surely *you also ought to wash one another's feet*, and should be ready to submit to all the humblest offices of mutual friendship. *For I have* in this 15 instance *given you an example, that as I have done to you, you also should do*, on all proper occasions, to one another.[i] And to engage you to the like humanity, *Verily*, 16 *verily, I say unto you*, as I have formerly said, (Luke vi. 40; and Matt. x. 24. p. 109, 153.) *The servant is not greater than his Lord, nor* is *the messenger greater than he that sent him*; it will therefore very ill become you to disdain any thing which I have not disdained. These are plain instructions, but remember they are capable of being improved 17 to the noblest practical purposes; and *if* indeed *you know these things*, and form a right

only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Luke xxii. 25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors:

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat; but I am among you as he that serveth.

John xiii. 13. Ye call me master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

d *He that has been bathing.*] This rendering of the word λελουμένος is confirmed by Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 337, 338.) and gives as it were a compendious paraphrase upon it. Clarius has well observed, that as the ἀποδυτηριον, or room in which they dressed themselves after bathing, was different from that in which they bathed, the feet might be so soiled in walking from one to the other, as to make it necessary immediately to wash them again.

e *You are not all clean.*] Some have observed that Judas did not decline the honour of having his feet washed by Christ, though Peter did; and have considered it as an instance of his pride. But if the discourse between Christ and Peter happened before he came to Judas, it had been indecent for Judas to renew an objection which had just been thus over-ruled: and if Christ came to Judas before Peter, he might be unwilling to be the first to dispute the point, lest Christ should confound him, by inquiring whether he declined it from a consciousness of any peculiar unworthiness. Guilt naturally suggests such suspicions and precautions.

f *Have the title of benefactors.*] It is indeed possible that our Lord may here refer to the title of ευεργεται, given to some of the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ, or to the ambiguity of the Hebrew word נדיבים, which (as Beza has observed) signifies both *princes* and *benefactors*: but the general sense given in the paraphrase seems to me much more probable, especially on comparing it with the Syriac Version, where there is no such ambiguity, though one would most of all have expected it.

g *Who is eldest among you, &c.*] As μειζων is here opposed to νεωτερος, *the youngest*, I render it *eldest*, as it is rendered Rom. ix. 12. See Gen. xxv. 23; 1 Sam. xvii. 14; *Septuag.* and compare 1 Kings ii. 22.

h Performing one of the lowest offices, &c.] This was so to a proverb. See 1 Sam. xxv. 41. and Grotius, *in loc.*—Dr. Evans well observes (*Christian Temper*, Vol. I p. 81.) that our Lord chose this kind office, though not absolutely necessary in itself, more strongly to impress the minds of his disciples, and to show that they ought to regard, not only the necessary preservation, but the mutual comfort, of each other.

i *I have given you an example, &c.*] Some have understood these words as ordaining this to be a continued rite among christians; and Barclay insists, in his *Apology*, (p. 467—470.) that this ceremony of washing the feet has as much to recommend it for a standing ordinance of the gospel, as either baptism or the breaking of bread. But though some anciently conceived the practice of it to be thus enjoined, (see Dr. Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, book ii. chap. 14.) and the Moravian churches still retain it; yet as no such rite as this has ever generally prevailed in the christian world, and as in many places and circumstances it would be an inconvenience rather than a kindness to do it for our friends, I cannot think these words of our Lord, so plainly capable of another sense, are to be interpreted with so much strictness. See Itigii *Dissert. de Pedilavio, &c.*—Into what a farce this is turned at Rome on some occasions, may be seen in the *Religious Ceremonies of all Nations*, Vol. I. p. 417

SECT. 169. conception of them, *you are happy if you practise them;* for nothing will conduce more to your honour and comfort than an obedient regard to my instructions and example, especially in all the instances of humility and condescension; but if you neglect to act JOHN XIII. agreeably to them, your seeing them, and hearing them, will be worse than in vain.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a mournful reflection is it, that corrupt nature should still prevail so far, even in the hearts of such pious LUKE XXII. men as the apostles in the main were, that after so long a converse with Christ they should still be so unlike him, and bring their eager contentions about superiority, in a state of temporal grandeur they were never to see, into the 24 last hours they spent with their Master, and even to one of the most holy and solemn ordinances of religion! Such are the vain dreams of ambition, and with such empty shadows does it amuse the deluded mind!

JOHN XIII. But let us turn our eyes to him whom we justly call our Teacher and our Lord; for surely, if any thing can effect a cure, it must be actions and words like these. The great Heir of all things, invested with universal dominion, and 13, 14 just returning to his heavenly Father to undertake the administration of it—in what a habit, in what an attitude, 4, 5 do we see him! Whom would a stranger have taken for the lowest of the company, but him who was high over all created nature? Blessed Jesus, it was not so much any personal attachment to these thy servants, as a regard to the edification of thy whole church, which engaged thee to this astonishing action; that all thy ministers, that all thy 15 people, in conformity to thy example, might learn a readiness to serve each other in love!

But why are we so slow to receive this lesson! And why is our practice often so contrary to it! Surely to cleanse 8 us from these dregs of pride and carnality, we need in a spiritual sense to be washed by him. Let us gladly submit to that washing, if we desire to secure any part in him. Which of us in this view may not see reason to cry out 9 with Peter, *Lord, not* our *feet only, but also* our *hands and* our *head!* May our whole nature be thus purified! 10 and, warmly emulous of conforming to so bright an example, may we ever be maintaining a watchfulness over our own spirits; correcting the first appearances of irregularity, and washing away every lightest stain which our feet LUKE may contract in this various journey! So shall we be great in the sight and favour of our Master; and, numbering XXII. ourselves among the least of his servants, shall be distinguished by peculiar honours, in proportion to the degree in 26 which we think ourselves most unworthy of them.

SECTION CLXX.

Christ, while they are eating the paschal lamb, declares that one of his apostles should betray him, and at length marks out Judas as the person, who upon this retires with a resentment which confirmed him in that fatal purpose. Matt. xxvi. 21—25. Mark xiv. 18—21. Luke xxii. 21—23, 28—30. John xiii. 2, 18—30.

LUKE xxii. 28.

SECT. 170. THEN Jesus went on, as he was eating the passover, to instruct, admonish, and comfort his disciples, by a series of most wise and pious discourse; and said, Depend upon it, you will find that humble and benevolent temper which I have recommended to you the way LUKE XXII. to the highest honours, if you have patience to wait the proper time; for as *ye are they who have continued* faithfully and affectionately *with me in* all *my trials* and afflictions;

29 So by a sacred and inviolable covenant *I appoint unto you a kingdom,*[a] and solemnly engage myself to bestow it upon you, *even as my Father has appointed* a kingdom *unto* 30 *me,* and is quickly about to raise me to it. Now the exalted honours which I shall there receive are incomparably beyond those about which you seem so solicitous; let me therefore awaken a nobler ambition in your minds, while I assure you *that you may* expect to *eat and drink at my table in* that *my kingdom,* or to be treated as my distinguished favourites and most intimate friends; yea, and in my final and most triumphant appearance, when I shall sit on the throne of my glory, you may expect to be assessors with me on that grand occasion, *and* to *sit upon thrones,* as I formerly promised you, (Matt. xix. 28.) *judging the twelve tribes of Israel,*[b] and condemning the whole impenitent world for their contempt of that gospel which you, as the chief ministers of my kingdom, are to offer and unfold to them.

LUKE xxii. 28.
YE are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

JOHN XIII. But when I speak in this manner of your final honour and happiness, *I speak not of you all: I know* the real character, and all the most secret views and transactions of those 18 *whom I have chosen;* and could long ago have fixed a mark of infamy on the traitor, and have put it out of his power to execute his wicked purpose; *but,* as I chose him to be one of my companions, I leave him to go on, *that the scripture may be fulfilled,* which says, (Psal. xli. 9.) "*He that eateth bread with me,* and has been nourished by my "care and favour, *hath lift up his heel against me,* like an ungrateful brute that kicks at

John xiii. 18. I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.

a *I appoint unto you a kingdom.*] It is well known that the word διατίθεμαι properly signifies *to covenant*, or, to *bestow in virtue of a covenant;* and therefore the last clause of this verse may probably refer to what divines commonly call *the covenant of redemption*, to which there are so many references in scripture, and concerning the reality of which we could have no doubt, if the references were not so express; considering, on the one hand, the great importance of that undertaking of our Lord's to which it refers; and, on the other, the plain declarations of those prophecies which his Spirit suggested, and the confidence with which he has promised those blessings, which, as Mediator, it empowers him to bestow. It is therefore astonishing that any should treat it as the creature of a systematic brain. For the engagements in it on Christ's part, see Psal. xl. 6—9; Heb. x. 6—9; Isa. lxi. 1—3; Luke iv. 18, 19; Isa. l. 5, 6. And for those on the part of the Father, see Heb. x. 5, Isa. xi. 2, 3; l. 8, 9; lii. 13, 15; liii. 10—12; lv. 4, 5; xlix. 1—10; Luke ii. 31, 32; xxii. 29; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Rev. vii. 16, 17.

b *Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*] The interpretation given of this promise here, (and before on Matt. xix. 28. § 137. p. 271.) appears to me preferable to that which refers it only or chiefly to the power which the apostles had in the christian church, as the authorized ambassadors of Christ. It by no means implies that Paul and Barnabas, the apostles of the Gentiles, shall be excluded from the honour of being assessors with Christ in his kingdom; (compare 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 21.) but seems plainly to allude to the courts of judicature among the Jews, where the inferior judges sat in a semicircle round the chief judge, who had his seat in the middle point of it. Compare Rev. iv. 4; xxi. 14.

"the kind master who feeds him."[c] Such treatment David met with from those whom he trusted; and such I know that I am to expect.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

And this *I tell you now before it comes to pass, that when it comes* to be accomplished, *you may* be so far from doubting of the truth of my mission upon that account, that, on the contrary, you may more firmly *believe that I am* [*he*] that I told you I was, even the true Messiah. And, whatsoever therefore I shall suffer, let not your zeal to carry on my cause be lessened, but stedfastly persist in your adherence to it, with a firm persuasion that I will support you in it; for in this view I look upon your interest as my own, and, as I formerly declared, (Matt. x. 40. sect. lxxvi. and Luke x. 16. sect. xcvii.) so now *I most assuredly say unto you, Whoever entertains* and shows regard to you, or *any of my* other *messengers*, as coming in my name, *entertains me; and whoever entertains me, entertains him that sent me;* as, on the other hand, when you or they are slighted, the affront redounds to me and to my Father.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

21 When Jesus had thus said, [—2 The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him,—] he was troubled in spirit, and [Mark, as they sat and did eat, Jesus] testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That one of you [Mark, which eateth with me] shall betray me; [Luke, *and* behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, *is* with me on the table.] [Matt. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18. Luke xxii. 21. John xiii. 2.]

Now *when Jesus had thus said*, he made a solemn pause: (*The devil*, as was observed before, *having already*, by his vile and pernicious insinuations, *put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot*, [*the son*] *of Simon*,[d] *to betray him* into the hands of his murderous enemies.) And, as our Lord well knew that Judas was then watching for an opportunity to accomplish his horrid purpose, which he would execute that very night, *he was* much *troubled in spirit* to think of so ungrateful and impious a design in one so near him, and so much obliged to him; *and as they sat* together, *and were eating* the paschal supper, *Jesus* openly *testified and said* with a deep sigh, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, That*, how incredible soever the hint I just now gave you may seem, *one of you who is eating with me* in this friendly and intimate manner will quickly *betray me* to those that thirst for my blood; [*and*] *behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me* [*is*] now *with me on the table.*

22 Then the disciples [were exceeding sorrowful, and] looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake: [Luke, and they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing:] [and began every one of them to say unto him, [Mark, one by one,] Lord, is it I?] [Matt. xxvi. 22. Mark xiv. 19. Luke xxii. 23.]

Then the disciples were exceedingly grieved to hear of his being betrayed at all, and much more to be told that it should be by one of their own number, while, no one being singled out from the rest, the suspicion lay in common among them; *and* they *looked* stedfastly *on each other* for some time in silence, *doubting of whom he spake*, and studious to observe in whose countenance they might read any peculiar confusion which might look like an indication of guilt: *and*, as they none of them knew where to fix it but the vile wretch himself, *they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it could be that was about to do this thing;* and, earnestly desirous to be freed from the suspicion of such heinous wickedness, they applied themselves to Christ, *and began every one of them to say to him, one by one, Lord, is it I* that am this guilty creature?[e] Thou knowest that my very heart abhors the thought, and I hope I shall never be capable of entertaining it.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Now one of his disciples, namely John, *whom Jesus loved* with a peculiar tenderness, and honoured with the most intimate friendship, sat next him at the table, on his right hand; and as they were all in a reclining posture, each of them resting on his left elbow, so, in the place where John was seated, he *was leaning on the bosom of Jesus*.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

And as the question was almost gone round, and Jesus made no answer to it, but rather seemed to be swallowed up in mournful contemplation, *Simon Peter therefore* looked upon John, and *beckoned to him* with a motion of his head,[f] by which he intimated his desire *that he should* privately *ask* him *who it might be of whom he spake*.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

He then lying down closer *on the breast of Jesus*, that he might put the question without being heard by the rest of the company, secretly whispered and *said to him, Lord, who is it?*

26 Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

Matt. xxvi. 23. And he answered and said [unto them, *It is* one of the twelve:] He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. [Mark xiv. 20.]

And Jesus *answered* him with a low voice, *It is he to whom I shall give this sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop* in a thick kind of sauce made of dates, raisins, and other ingredients beaten together, and properly diluted,[g] *he gave it to Judas Iscariot*, [*the son*] *of Simon*, putting it towards that part of the dish which was nearest him, and directing it towards him. Upon which Judas put forth his hand to take it: *and* while he was just in this posture, others continuing the same question to Jesus, *he answered and said to them*, [*It is*] *one of the twelve:* [*even*] *he that* now *dippeth his hand with me in the dish, this very person shall betray me*.[h] And let him not vainly hope that I

MATT XXVI.

24 The Son of man [in-

c *He that eateth bread with me*, &c.] When these words are so plainly to be found, Psal. xli. 9. it seems very unnatural, with Mr. Jeffery, (in his *Review*, p. 187.) to imagine they refer to Psal. lv. 12, 13. because something like the sense of them occurs there. Nor is it necessary, with Mr. Pierce, (*Dissert.* iii.) to suppose a trajection in these two verses, and render them, *I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen; but I tell you this before-hand, that when it shall come to pass that the scripture shall be fulfilled, "One that "eateth of my bread hath lift up his heel against me," ye may believe that I am he.* I rather think, with Brennius, that it is an accommodation, and that the sense and connexion are to be explained accordingly, as in the paraphrase.

d *The devil having already put it into the heart of Judas*, &c.] That Satan entered into Judas before he went to the chief priests and agreed to betray his Master to them, had been observed before, Luke xxii. 3. p. 335; and that this clause of John xiii. 2. would be inserted here, was intimated in the close of note a, § 169. p. 338. where I accounted for this transposition.

e *To say to him, one by one, Lord, is it I?*] I look on this as a strong proof that the facts mentioned John xiii. 23—26. did not happen a night or two before; for if Christ had then privately marked out Judas to John and Peter as the traitor, the information must surely have reached the rest of the company by this time.

f *Beckoned to him* with a motion of his head.] This is certainly the import of the word νευει, which might more exactly be rendered *nodded*.

g In a thick kind of sauce made of dates, &c.] The Jews still retain such a sauce, which they call *charoseth*, made of such kind of ingredients, about the consistence of mortar, to represent the clay in which their forefathers wrought while they were under bondage to the Egyptians. See Buxt. *Synag. Jud. cap.* 18. and the *Religious Ceremonies of all Nations*, Vol. I. p. 215.

h *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.*] Some very ingenious persons imagine that Christ by this phrase only declares it was one who sat on the same side of the table with him, and so eat out of the same dish: and, if it were so, there might seem a gradation in the discovery not observable on any other interpretation. But (not to insist upon it) that the lamb, which was to be roasted whole, Exod. xii. 9. was also to be served up in one dish, I cannot

SECT. 170. shall exert my miraculous power to rescue myself from the hands of mine enemies, after he has delivered me to them, and secured to himself the wages of unrighteousness; for *the Son of man*, great and powerful as he will finally appear, *is indeed going* to sufferMATT. XXVI. ings and death,[i] *as it is written* in the scriptures, [*and*] *determined* in the divine counsels, *concerning him*:[k] *but* as those prophecies and counsels have no influence to destroy 24 the free agency of the persons concerned in his death, so there will be a most terrible *woe to that man by whom the Son of man is* so perfidiously *betrayed*, and who presumes to set a price on his royal and sacred blood: *it had been well for that man if he had never been born*; for a speedy and most dreadful vengeance awaits him, which will make the immortality of his being his everlasting curse.

25 *Then Judas, who* was indeed the person that *betrayed him, answered* in some confusion, lest by his silence he should seem to confess his guilt, *and said, Master, is it I* that shall do this thing, and to whom thou referrest in these severe words? And *he said to him, Thou hast said* [*right*;] thou art the very person, and I will conceal it no longer.[l]

JOHN XIII. *And after* he was thus expressly marked out, not only by *the sop* which Jesus gave him,[m] but also by the answer which he had returned to his question, *Satan entered into* 27 *him* with greater violence, and stirred up in his bosom such indignation and rage at the disgrace he had met with, that he could bear the place no longer, but prepared abruptly to leave it before the table was dismissed. *Then Jesus said to him, What you* are going to *do, do quickly*; farther intimating to him his perfect knowledge of the appointment he had made with the chief priests and elders, and admonishing him, at it were, not to lose 28 the opportunity by over-staying his time. *But* the reference being thus particular to what none of the company but himself was privy to, *no man at the table knew* what was his 29 meaning, or *for what purpose he spake this to him. For some* [*of them*] *thought, because Judas had the* keeping of the common *purse* on which they were to subsist during their stay at Jerusalem, *that* it was as if *Jesus had said to him*, Take the first opportunity to *buy those* sacrifices, and other *things, which we shall need for the feast* to-morrow, and on the following days;[n] *or that* perhaps he intended *he should give something to the poor*, which Christ used to do, though their stock was so small; but always did it in a very private manner, which made it the more probable that he should only give such an oblique hint of that intention. Of this they thought, rather than of any bad design of Judas; for they did not imagine that, if he was to prove the traitor, his wickedness could immediately take place; or that he was so utterly abandoned as to go away to accomplish it with those awful words of his master sounding, as it were, in his ears.

30 But *he* was capable of committing the crime, even with this aggravation; and *therefore having*, as was said, *received the sop*, he *immediately went out* without any farther reply; *and* as *it was night*, which was the time he had appointed to meet those who were consulting the death of Jesus, under the covert of it he went to them, and fulfilled his engagements, in a few hours after, by delivering his Master into their hands.

deed] goeth, as it is written [Luke, *and* determined] of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born. [Mark xiv. 21. Luke xxii. 22]

25 Then Judas which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

John xiii. 27. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast: or that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

IMPROVEMENT.

LUKE XXII. WHO would not gladly continue with Christ in the strictest fidelity, amidst all the trials which can arise, when he observes how liberally he repays his servants, and how graciously he seems to relish his own honours the more, in 28 proportion to the degree in which those honours are shared with them,—appointing them a glorious kingdom, and 29, 30 erecting thrones for each of them! And surely, though the apostles of the Lamb are to have their peculiar dignity in the great day of his triumph, there is a sense in which he will perform to every one that overcometh, that yet

but conclude that, if this had been our Lord's meaning, on his saying here, (as Mark relates it,) in the same breath, εις εκ των δωδεκα, *one of the twelve*, he would have added εις εκ των εμβαπτομενων, *one of those that dip*, rather than ο εμβαπτομενος, which plainly signifies, *the very person that dippeth*.

i *The Son of man is indeed going.*] As we often, in common speech, say a person is going or gone, to intimate that he is dying or dead, so Elsner shows (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 119.) that the word υπαγει has the same ambiguity. Compare Josh. xxiii. 14; and Psal. xxxix. 13.—The repetition of that title of *the Son of man*, which is twice used here in the same verse, has a peculiar energy and dignity, not commonly observed.

k *As it is determined.*] As this passage is not liable to the ambiguities which some have apprehended in Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28. (which yet seem, on the whole, to be parallel to it in their most natural construction,) I look upon it as an evident proof that those things are, in the language of scripture, said to be determined or decreed, (or exactly bounded and marked out by God, as the word αφιζω most naturally signifies,) which he sees will in fact happen, in consequence of his volitions, without any necessitating agency; as well as those events of which he is properly the Author; (and, as Beza well expresses it, *Qui sequitur Deum, emendate sane loquitur*, We need not fear falling into any impropriety of speech when we use the language which God has taught,) I say, without any necessitating agency; because I apprehend that this text, among many others, must entirely overthrow the scheme which Mr. Colliber, (in his *Inquiry into the Divine Existence*, p. 97—102.) has so laboriously endeavoured to establish; and which the author of the *Persian Letters from Paris*, (Letter lvi.) so confidently asserts, "That where God foresees an event, he always determines to ren-"der it necessary, and so to suspend the moral agency and ac-"countableness of the creature concerned in it." Were this the case, nothing could be more unjust (on the principles of these authors) than to foretell punishments to be inflicted for such actions; which is plainly the case here, and indeed in most other places where evil actions are foretold.

l *Thou hast said right.*] This is plainly the import of the original phrase, *It is as thou hast spoken.* (See Matt. xxvi. 63—65; Mark xiv. 61, 62; Luke xxii. 70; John xviii. 37.) Thus, *Now you say something*, signifies among us, *You speak right.*

m *After the sop.*] It seems very unnatural to apprehend, with Dr. Reynolds, (in his *Works*, p. 101, 102.) that Judas was encouraged, by Christ's giving him the sop, to hope that Christ would, after all, provide for his own safety, and admit him into favour again. Christ's words above expressly cut off all such hope; and I believe every reader will judge the common account given of the connexion much more probable.

n *Which we shall need for the feast.*] This is one of the passages which have led Grotius and other considerable critics to conclude that our Lord kept the passover at least one day sooner than the rest of the Jews. The controversy is too large to be critically discussed here: I content myself with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent Dissertation on the subject, (in his *Appendix* to Mark xiv.) only observing, that the supposition of Christ's anticipating the day appointed by the law, is so improbable, that I think it more reasonable to suppose that the word *feast*, or *passover*, may signify the offerings attending the *whole feast*, and particularly those presented on the *first day of unleavened bread*; which is certainly the sense of the word elsewhere. (See Deut. xvi. 2; and 2 Chron. xxxv. 7—9.) And if this be admitted, it will obviate the most plausible argument for Grotius's opinion, which is that taken from John xviii. 28. Others grounded on John xiii. 1, 2; xix. 14; and Matt. xxvi. 5. are obviated in the paraphrase or notes on those places, as the attentive reader will easily perceive.

more condescending promise, I will grant him to *sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* (Rev. iii. 21.) Let our souls in that confidence be strengthened to all the labours and sufferings to which he may call us forth. SECT. 170.

It is a melancholy reflection, that there should be any one in this select company to whom this endearing promise did not belong; especially one who, having eaten of Christ's bread, should, in such a sense and degree as Judas, lift up his heel against him. Deliver us, O Lord, from any share in that guilt! We are treated as thy friends; we are set at thy table: let us not ungratefully kick against thee, while *the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib!* (Isa. i. 3.) JOHN XIII. 18

If we would not do it, let us be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy. Happy are they whose hearts witness to their sincerity in the presence of him that searches them, and can cheerfully say, *Lord, is it I?* Let them say it humbly too, lest the infirmity of nature prevail upon them beyond their present purpose or apprehension, and lead them on to do that, the very thought of which they would now abhor. MATT. XXVI. 22

How artfully must Judas have conducted himself, when, on such an intimation, no particular suspicion appears to have fallen on him! But how vain is that artifice, be it ever so refined, which, while it preserves a character in the sight of men, cannot in the least degree impose upon Christ! The day will come when he will lay open the false and ungrateful hypocrite in a more overwhelming manner than that in which he here exposed Judas; and, whatever advantage he may have gained, either by professing religion or by betraying it, he will undoubtedly find that *it had been good for him that he had never been born.* MARK XIV. 19. MATT. XXVI. 23—25

One would have imagined that an admonition like this, which laid bare the secrets of his heart, and warned him so plainly and faithfully of his danger, might have wrought some remorse in his heart, or at least have proved some impediment to the immediate execution of his design: but, being now given up, by the righteous judgment of God, to the influence of Satan and the lust of his own depraved mind, he is exasperated rather than reclaimed by it; and immediately goes forth, under the covert of the night, to hasten the accomplishment of that work of darkness, the consequences of which had been so awfully represented. O Lord, let thy grace and thy love do that for us which thy terrors alone cannot do! Let our hearts be melted by that nobler principle, and taught to abhor every thing which would displease thee! Oh, let them flow forth into such workings of compassion to the afflicted, as engaged the blessed Jesus to relieve the poor out of his own little stock; and into those sentiments of candour which would not permit the apostles, even after this admonition, to imagine Judas altogether so bad as he indeed was, but led them to put the mildest construction on their Master's ambiguous address to him! Such may our mistakes be, wherever we do mistake; the errors of a charity which would not by excessive rigour injure the vilest sinner, and much less the least and weakest of God's servants! JOHN XIII. 27, 30 29

SECTION CLXXI.

Christ having exhorted his disciples to mutual love, forewarns them of their approaching trial, and foretells Peter's fall, immediately before the eucharist. Luke xxii. 31—34. John xiii. 31, *to the end.*

JOHN xiii. 31.

THEREFORE when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

JOHN xiii. 31.

IT was observed in the preceding section, how Judas, being marked out both by Christ's actions and his words, quitted the place in a mixture of rage and confusion: *when therefore he was thus gone out,*[a] *Jesus said* to the rest of his disciples as they sat at the table with him, *Now is the Son of man* just on the point of being *glorified* far more remarkably than ever; *and God* in a most illustrious manner *is* to be *glorified in him,* by the signal and extraordinary circumstances of his abasement and exaltation. And you may assure yourselves, that *if God be glorified in him, God will also glorify him in* and with *himself,* in such a degree as shall in the most convincing manner declare his intimate relation to him; *and* the time *will presently* come when he will eminently *glorify him:* for the Son of man is very shortly to enter on the honours of his celestial and universal kingdom, and, in the mean time, some rays of divine glory shall shine through all that cloud of ignominy, reproach, and distress which shall surround him. SECT. 171. JOHN XIII.

32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 32

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you: Ye shall seek me; and, as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 33

My dear *little children,* whom I love even with parental tenderness, and whom my heart pities under all your trials and sorrows, it is *yet* but *a* very *little while* longer that *I am* to continue *with you;* a few hours more will part us: and when I am gone, *ye shall seek me, and* wish for my presence and converse; but, *as I said to the Jews,* that *whither I go, ye cannot come,* (John vii. 34; and viii. 21. p. 202, 208.) *so now I say to you,* Ye cannot come to the place whither I am going.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye 34

But observe my parting words, and let them be written on your very hearts; for *I give* it *you* as *a new commandment,*[b] and

a *When therefore he was gone out.*] The reader will observe, that if the former reasoning relating to the order of this part of the story be just, Judas certainly went out before the eucharist was instituted. And indeed one cannot reasonably suppose Christ would have commanded him to drink of the cup, as the blood shed for him for the remission of his sins, when he had just before been declaring in effect, that his sins should never be forgiven.

b *A new commandment.*] I apprehend this expression signifies much more than merely *a renewed command.* (Compare 1 John ii. 7, 8; and 2 John, ver. 5.) It seems a strong and lively intimation that the engagements to mutual love peculiar to the christian dispensation, are so singular and so cogent, that all other men, when compared with its votaries, may seem uninstructed in the school of friendship, and Jesus may appear, as it were, the first professor of that divine science. Jamblicus (*Vit. Pythag. cap.* 33.) seems very injuriously to have preferred the Pythagoreans to all other men on that account; but it may be observed, that both he and Eunapius, like many moderns, seem to have had very little regard to truth, when falsehood might cast a slur on christianity.—Dr. Clarke well observes, that our Lord seems to have laid this peculiar stress on charity, as foreseeing that general corruption and destruction of true christianity, which the want of it would cause among those that should call themselves his church. (Clarke's *Sermons,* Vol. III. p. 297.)—Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 137—139.) has the best note I ever saw on the passage, though I think it hardly reaches the full spirit of it; in which he shows that Xenophon calls the *laws of Lycurgus* καινοτατοι νομοι, *very new laws,* several hundred years after they were made; because, though they had been commended by other nations, they had not been practised by them.—Perhaps our Lord may here insinuate a reflection, not only on that party spirit which prevailed so much in the Jews, but likewise on the emulations and contentions among the apostles themselves, which mutual love would easily have cured. In this sense it is still a new commandment to us, who generally act as if we had not yet got time to learn or even to read it.

SECT. 171. JOHN XIII.

press you by new motives and a new example to a duty which hitherto, alas, has been too little regarded; and from henceforth would have you to consider it as confirmed by a new sanction, and to keep it ever fresh in your memories, *That ye love one another* with a most sincere and ardent affection, such as mankind have never known before; yea, I would now enjoin you, *even as I have loved you, that ye also* would *love one another* with a friendship which may carry you through such difficulties and sufferings as I am going to

35 endure for you all. This will be the most acceptable and the most ornamental token of your relation to me; and I recommend it to you as the noblest badge of your profession:[c] for *by this shall all men know that you are my disciples* indeed, *if* they see *you have* that lively and generous *love for each other* which nothing but my gospel can be sufficient to inspire.

36 On this Jesus paused, that they might have an opportunity to reflect seriously on the important charge he had given them. And *Simon Peter*, touched with what he had said of his being ready to go whither they could not come, *said to him, Lord*, permit us to enquire, *whither art thou going? Jesus answered him*, I tell thee, Peter, *Whither I am going thou canst not* directly *follow me now;* for thou art intended for service in my church for many future years: *but* let it suffice thee, that *thou shalt follow me afterwards*

37 in the same way,[d] and dwell perpetually with me. *Peter said to him* in a transport of eager and tender affection, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Whatever difficulties and dangers may be in the way, the prospect of them does not discourage me; for *I will* most willingly *lay down my life for thy sake*, and had much rather die than part with thee.

38 But *Jesus answered him, Wilt thou* indeed so readily *lay down thy life for my sake?* Alas, thou knowest not thine own weakness, or thou wouldst never talk thus confidently.

LUKE XXII.

And the Lord added with great earnestness, and *said, O Simon, Simon*, I must tell thee that an hour of terrible trial is just at hand, which will press harder than thou art aware, on

31 thee and all thy companions here: for *behold Satan*, as in the case of Job, (Job ii. 4, 5.) *has requested* of God a permission [*to assault*] *you* all by furious and violent temptations, *that he may* toss you up and down, and *sift* [*you*] *like wheat* in a sieve: (compare

32 Amos ix. 9.) *But I*, foreseeing the danger to which thou, Peter, wilt peculiarly be exposed, have graciously prevented thee with the tokens of my friendly care, and *have prayed* to my Father *for thee, that* he would communicate to thee such supplies of grace, that *thy faith may not* utterly *fail* and sink under the violent shock it is to receive: *and* let me now exhort thee, that *when thou art returned* from those wanderings into which I know thou wilt fall, to the paths of wisdom and duty,[e] thou wouldst be sure to make it thine immediate care to *strengthen thy brethren*, and do thine utmost, all the remainder of thy days, to engage all over whom thou hast any influence, to a steady adherence to my cause in the midst of the greatest difficulties.[f]

33 *And* such was still the confidence that Peter had of his own stedfastness and zeal, that *he said to him*, with renewed eagerness and warmth, *Lord*, what I said but now is the deliberate sentiment and resolution of my heart: lead me therefore whither thou pleasest: for *I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death* itself; and whatsoever I may suffer by continuing with thee, none of the most cruel of thine enemies shall ever be able to part us.

34 *But* Jesus, that *he* might convince him of his weakness, and prevent his ever trusting in his own heart again, *said* to him, *Peter*, I know the sincerity of thine intention, yet *I most assuredly say unto thee, It shall not be* the time of *cock-crowing to-day*,[g] *before* thou shalt be so terrified at the faces of these enemies whom thou now defiest, *that thou shalt thrice deny that thou* so much as *knowest me*, and shall solemnly disclaim all regard to me. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 34; and Mark xiv. 30. sect. clxxxi.)

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?—

LUKE xxii. 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.

34 And he said, [Verily, verily, I say unto thee,] Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. [John xiii. 38.]

c The noblest badge of your profession.] It is well known that the founders of new societies appoint some peculiar ornament, sign, or mode of living, by which their followers may be known from others. This seems to be here alluded to.

d *Thou shalt follow me afterwards.*] I am ready to think our Lord here obliquely hints at what he afterwards farther signified in his command to Peter after his resurrection, when he ordered him to follow him, (John xxi. 18, 19. § 201.) namely, that Peter should die on the cross for his sake; which ancient history assures us that he did. See Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib.* iii. *cap.* 1.

e *When thou art returned*, &c.] Και συ ποτε επιστρεψας, στηριξον τους αδελφους σου. I cannot think the authorities which the learned Elsner produces, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 276, 277.) sufficient to induce us, with Sir Norton Knatchbull, to translate these words, *Do thou, some time or other, convert and strengthen thy brethren.*—For the signification of επιστρεφειν, see Acts ix. 35; xi. 21; xiv. 15.

f Make it thine immediate care, &c.] I can see no objection against taking the charge in this comprehensive sense: and as I question not but Peter, after he had wept his fall so bitterly as we know he did, applied himself to rally his dispersed brethren, and to prevent their fleeing from Jerusalem till the third day was over, in the morning of which he was up betimes, and early at the sepulchre of our Lord: (see John xx. 2, 3. § 194.) So indeed the strain of his epistles shows his long and affectionate remembrance of this solemn charge. Many passages of the first are peculiarly intended to animate his christian brethren to a courageous adherence to Christ amidst the greatest dangers: 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; ii. 19, 20; iii. 14—18; iv. 12—19; v. 8, 9, 10; and the second has several cautions to guard them against the seductions of error, in some instances more to be dreaded than the terrors of the severest persecution. 2 Pet. i. 10, 12; ii. 1, 2, 20, 21; iii. 2, 17.

g *It shall not be* the time of *cock-crowing to-day.*] A careful perusal of § 181. compared with this, will show why I have not here brought in the account which Matthew and Mark have given us of Christ's admonitions to Peter and his brethren on this head; which appear to be the renewal of this some hours after. As it is plain from thence, and the event that the cock actually crew before Peter's third denial, we must certainly take the words of Luke and John, as in this version, for the common time of cock-crowing, which probably did not come till after the cock which Peter heard had crowed the second time, and perhaps oftener. For it is well known those vigilant animals, on any little disturbance, often crow at midnight or before it; though they do not come from their roost till about three in the morning, which was usually called the cock-crowing. (Mark xiii. 35.) See Dr. Whitby's note on Matt. xxvi. 34.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 171. LUKE XXII. 33

ALAS, how ready are we to forget ourselves; and how much safer are we in Christ's hands than in our own! How frequently do we resolve like Peter, and in how many instances do we fall like him! We see the malice of Satan, and how eagerly he desired to try the apostles, and even to sift them as wheat: we see also the gracious care of our Redeemer, who, foreseeing the danger of his servants, laid in an unsought remedy, to which they respectively owed their security or their recovery.

Let us rejoice that the great enemy is under such restraints, and can have no power against us, unless by permission from above. Let us rejoice that Christ is a constant and invariable Friend to his people, and still appears as an Advocate with the Father, and as a tender, faithful Shepherd, watching over them for good, while Satan is *seeking to devour them.* (1 Pet. v. 8.) If at any time that adversary get an advantage over us, let us endeavour, in the strength of divine grace, an immediate recovery, and when restored, let us exert ourselves to strengthen our 32
brethren; for surely it is most reasonable that we, who are surrounded with such various and such sensible infirmities, should *have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* (Heb. v. 2.)

In this instance, as in all others, let us be mindful of the dying charge, the new commandment of our dear Lord; JOHN XIII.
and let us show, upon all occasions, this distinguishing badge of our relation to him, even our love to each other. 31, 34
So will our profession be adorned, and the Son of man be farther glorified by the conduct of his servants on earth: so shall he at length glorify us with himself, and, after a short absence, call us to follow him into those regions of 36
perfect love which must of course be the seats of everlasting joy.

In the mean time, send down, O gracious Emmanuel, thy Spirit of love on all thy followers, that we may no longer glory in the little distinctions of this or that party, but may show we are christians by this resplendent ensign 35
of our order! May we bind it on our shoulders as a mark of honour, and wear it as a crown upon our heads, that the spirit of hatred, reproach, and persecution may vanish like an unwholesome mist before the sun, and it may again be universally said, as of old, *Behold how these christians love one another!* Amen.

SECTION CLXXII.

Christ, at the conclusion of the passover, institutes the eucharist. Matt. xxvi. 26—30. Mark xiv. 22—26. Luke xxii. 19, 20.

MATT. xxvi. 26.

AND as they were eating, Jesus took bread, [Luke, and gave thanks,] and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, [Luke, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.] [Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19.]

Matt. xxvi. 26.

SECT. 172. MATT. XXVI. 26

SUCH was the admonition that Christ gave to Peter, and such was his discourse with his disciples while they were at supper,; *and* now, *as they were eating*, or just as they had finished, the paschal supper,[a] *Jesus took* a cake of *bread, and having* in a solemn manner *given thanks* to his heavenly Father, *and blessed* [*it*,] that is, having implored the divine blessing on it, and on the ordinance then to be instituted, that it might in all succeeding ages tend to the edification and comfort of his people,[b] *he brake* the bread into several pieces, *and gave* some of [*it*] *to* each of *the disciples* present, *and said, Take* this bread, and *eat* it with reverence and thankfulness; for *this is my body*, that is, it is the sensible sign and representation of my body,[c] *which is* freely *given*, and is speedily to be broken, bruised, wounded, and even slaughtered *for you. Do this* hereafter in your assemblies for religious worship, *in* a pious and affectionate *commemoration of me*, that you may keep up the memory of my dying love, may openly profess your dependence on my death, and impress your hearts with a becoming sense of it, (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 24.)

27 And [Luke, likewise also] he took the cup [Luke,

And in like manner, after they had supped, he also took the cup,[d] that is, another cup, different from that which he had before divided among them; (Luke xxii. 17. p. 337.) 27

a Just as they had finished the paschal supper.] Maimonides and other rabbies tell us that it was a rule among the Jews, at the end of the supper, to take a piece of the lamb for the last thing they eat that night. (See Ainsworth, as quoted before, note e, p. 337.) If this custom was as old as Christ's time, it would make this action so much the more remarkable. It would plainly show that the bread here distributed was a very distinct thing from the meal they had been making together; and might be, in the first opening of the action, a kind of symbolical intimation that the Jewish passover was to give way to another and nobler divine institution.

b *Blessed it.*] It is not expressly said in the original that Christ blessed *it*, that is, *the bread*; (nor indeed that he brake *it*,) but it is very reasonable to imagine that this thanksgiving was attended with a prayer that the divine blessing might accompany the bread. And it is so very plain, from 1 Cor. x. 16. that the apostles taught christians to bless the cup, that I cannot but wonder that one of the most accurate and penetrating writers of our age should scruple to allow that *Christ blessed the sacramental elements.* The same word is used in Matt. xiv. 19; Mark vi. 41; viii. 7; and Luke ix. 16. where it is certain an extraordinary *blessing* attended *the bread* and *fishes* in answer to his prayers. (See also Mark x. 16; Luke ii. 34; and Gen. ii. 3. *Septuag.*) It would indeed be absurd to interpret this of his conferring a virtue on bread so set apart, to work as a charm either on men's bodies or souls; but I hope few christians are so ill-instructed as to imagine this to be the case in the Eucharist; and all wise and faithful ministers will, no doubt, be solicitous to preserve them from so wild and mischievous a notion.

c *This is my body.*] When I consider that, (as a thousand writers have observed,) on the same foundation on which the Papists argue for transubstantiation from these words, they might prove, from Ezek. v. 1—5. that the prophet's hair was the city of Jerusalem; from John x. 9; and xv. 1. that Christ was literally *a door* and *a vine*; and from Matt. xxvi. 27, 28; and 1 Cor. xi. 25. that *the cup* was *his blood*, and that Christ commanded his disciples to drink and swallow the cup; I cannot but be astonished at the inference they would deduce from hence. Had Irenæus or Epiphanius reported such a thing of any sect of ancient heretics now extinct, one would have been so candid to human nature as to suppose the historian misinformed. As it is, one is almost tempted to suspect it to be the effect of arrogance rather than error, and to consider it as a mere insolent attempt to show the world, in the strongest instance they could invent, what monstrous things the clergy should dare to say, which the wretched laity should not dare to contradict, nay, which they should be forced to pretend they believed. In this view the thought is admirable, and worthy the most malicious wit that ever lorded it over the heritage of God. But it may deserve some serious reflection, whether it be not an instance of infatuation to which God has given them up, that it may be a plain mark to all that will use common sense, of the grossest error in a church which claims infallibility; and may not be intended by Providence as a kind of antidote against the rest of its poison.

d *After they had supped, he also took the cup.*] A learned divine of the Establishment, who has favoured me with many sheets of accurate remarks on this work, (which were of so great use to me in correcting it for the second edition, as to demand my public acknowledgments,) has objected to the supposition here made of its being *another cup*, which I have asserted in the paraphrase. But, with all due deference to his penetration, (which is indeed very great,) I must beg leave to observe, that it still appears most probable to me that it was as I there represent it; not merely because Luke mentions *a cup* taken *before the bread*, (Luke xxii. 17. p. 337.) but because, in the passage before us, (ver. 20.) he adds to that the mention of *a cup after it.* It is well known the Jews used several cups of wine at the passover, and one of them with the antepast, at the very beginning of the feast. (See note e, on Mark xiv. 17. p. 336, 337.) I know not how far so accurate a writer as St. Luke might farther intimate this distinction, by using the word δεξαμενος (ver. 17.)

SECT. 172. *and when he had given thanks* to his heavenly Father, and implored his blessing upon it as a solemn sacramental sign, *he gave* [*it*] *to them, and said, Drink ye all of it,* that is, of the wine which it contains: *and* accordingly *they all drank* some *of it. For, said he to them* as he delivered it into their hands, *This cup* of wine *is* a representation of *my blood,* [*even*] of *that* blood which is the great basis *of the new covenant,* [*or*] is itself the seal of *the new covenant*[e] established *in my blood, which is shed for you* [*and*] *for many* more, as the great ransom to be paid *for the forgiveness of sins:*[f] receive it therefore with a firm resolution to comply with the engagements of that covenant, and with a cheerful hope of its invaluable blessings; and do this as often as ye drink it, in a thankful commemoration of me, and with a proper care to distinguish between this and a common meal, appropriating what you do in this ordinance entirely to a religious purpose. (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 25.) *And* then our Lord repeated what he had said as they were sitting down to supper, (Luke xxii. 18. p. 337.) *Verily I say unto you, That from this time I will drink no more of this produce of the vine,*[g] *until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of God my Father:* that is, till, being risen from the dead, I have received my mediatorial kingdom, and we shall share together in much nobler entertainments than earth can afford, even in its highest religious solemnities, which shall then be happily superseded.

MATT. XXVI. 28, 29

30 *And when,* according to the usual custom at the close of the passover, *they had sung an hymn* of praise to God at the conclusion of the eucharist,[h] and had passed some remaining time in those discourses and in that prayer which will be the subject of the following sections, *they went out to the mount of Olives,* where our Lord had determined to spend some time in devotion, though he knew that Judas and his enemies would come thither to seize him.

MATT. XXVI. 30

after supper,] and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: [and they all drank of it.] [Mark xiv. 23. Luke xxii. 20.]

28 For [he said unto them,] This [Luke, cup] is my blood of the new testament [Luke, or the new testament in my blood,] which is shed [Luke, for you *and*] for many, for the remission of sins. [Mark xiv. 24. Luke xxii. 20.]

29 But [verily] I say unto you, I will [no more] drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of [God] my Father. [Mark xiv. 25.]

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. [Mark xiv. 26.]

IMPROVEMENT.

MATT. XXVI. 26

LET us now review, with most thankful acknowledgment, this gracious legacy of our dying Redeemer, this reviving and nourishing ordinance, which he instituted for the benefit of his church *the same night in which he was betrayed:* (1 Cor. xi. 23.) So tenderly did his love for them prevail, when his heart was full of his own sorrows! May we always consider to what purposes this holy rite was ordained; and as we shall see the wisdom of the appointment, so we shall also be both awakened to attend to it, and assisted in that attendance!

LUKE XXII. 19, 20

It is the memorial of the death of Christ, by which we represent it to others, and to ourselves. May we be ever ready to give this most regular and acceptable token, that we are not ashamed to fight under the banner of a crucified Redeemer!—It is also the seal of the new covenant in his blood. Let us adore the grace that formed and ratified that *everlasting covenant,* so well *ordered in all things, and* so *sure:* (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) And whenever we approach to this sealing ordinance, may we renew our consent to the demands of that covenant, and our expectation of those blessings which are conveyed by it! a consent and expectation so well suited to the circumstances of its being ratified by the blood of Jesus. Thus may every attendance nourish our souls in grace, and ripen them for glory; that at length all may be fulfilled and perfected in the kingdom of God.

MARK XIV. 25

In the mean time, may God, by the influences of his Spirit, give to all professing christians right notions of this ordinance, and a due regard for it; that, on the one hand, none may, under the specious pretence of honouring it, live in the habitual neglect of so plain and important a duty; and that, on the other, it may never be profanely invaded by those who have no concern about the blessings of that covenant it ratifies, and impiously prostitute it to those secular views, above which it was intended to raise them! And may none that honour the great Author of it, encourage such an abuse, lest they seem to lay the very cross of Christ as the threshold to the temple of those various idols to which ambitious and interested men are bowing down their souls!

with respect to the first cup, which strictly expresses receiving it from the hand of another, probably of the servant who waited at the table, whereas λαβὼν (*taking*) is the word used, ver. 19. of which ποτηριον here in ver. 20. is governed; which might have been equally proper, if the cup stood on the table before him, as the bread used in the eucharist probably did.

e The seal of *the new covenant.*] It seems very evident, that when the sacramental cup, here and in 1 Cor. xi. 25. is called *the new covenant,* it must signify *the seal* of it; just as when *circumcision* is called *God's covenant,* Gen. xvii. 10. and it is there said, ver. 13. *My covenant shall be in your flesh,* we must understand *the seal* of it: and if by *the seal of the covenant* be meant, as I here explain it, and as most take it, "an appointed token of our accepting that co-"venant, and of God's favour to us on supposition of the sincerity "of that acceptance;" it is so plain that the eucharist, as well as baptism, is such a seal, that they who disapprove the word deny not the thing. (See *The Plain Account of the Lord's Supper,* p. 168, 169.) I have rendered the word διαθηκη, *covenant,* rather than *testament* or *will,* because it is evidently the more usual signification of the word; and because the old covenant, to which the new is opposed, cannot with any propriety be called a testament, with reference to the death of any testator, which is the idea chiefly insisted on by those who would retain our common version here. And, by the way, it appears, on this principle, that the title of our Bible is improperly and obscurely rendered, by a piece of complaisance to the old Latin versions, of which they were by no means worthy, and which they cannot at all the better deserve for that sanction which the papal authority has given to one of them, though it seems thereby to have been preferred to the original.

f *In my blood, which is shed*—as the great ransom to be paid *for the forgiveness of sins.*] I apprehend this ordinance of the eucharist to have so plain a reference to the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, and to do so solemn an honour to that fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that I cannot but believe, that while this sacred institution continues in the church, (as it will undoubtedly do to the end of the world,) it will be impossible to root that doctrine out of the minds of plain, humble christians by all the little artifices of such forced and unnatural criticisms as those are by which it has been attacked. Unprejudiced and honest simplicity will always see the analogy this ordinance has to *eating the flesh of the Son of God, and drinking his blood;* and will be taught by it to feed on him as the Lamb that was slain by the gracious appointment of God, *to take away the sin of the world.* The enemies of this heart-reviving truth might as well hope to pierce through a coat of mail with a straw, as to reach such a truth, defended by such an ordinance as this, by any of their trifling sophistries.

g *I will drink no more of this produce of the vine.*] This may seem an intimation, that though Christ drank with them after his resurrection, (Acts x. 41.) he did not make use of wine. Perhaps their poverty might not allow them often to drink it; and we do not find that he was ever present at any feast; at least we are sure he never celebrated another passover with them. Nor does it appear that he partook of the eucharist with them, or ever administered it, but at this time of its institution.

h *An hymn* of praise to God.] The hymn that was usually sung by the Jews at the passover, is what they call the Hallel, which began at Psal. cxiii. and ended with Psal. cxviii. some of which Psalms might be used by our Lord at the close of the eucharist, as very suitable to this occasion; though it is uncertain whether (as Grotius and some others think) it might not be some other hymn more closely adapted to the celebration of the eucharist. I thought it proper here to conclude the story of the passover, and to mention their going out, though that did not immediately follow on their singing the hymn. Some such little anticipations seem to me an advantage rather than an impropriety in any Harmony, especially when attended with a paraphrase or notes, and divided into such short sections as those must be which are intended for the use of families.

SECTION CLXXIII.

Christ having warned his apostles of the danger to which they would be exposed, comforts them with the views of future happiness, and with the assurance of his own gracious presence, and that of his Father, in the way to it. Luke xxii. 35—38. John xiv. 1—14.

LUKE xxii. 35.

LUKE xxii. 35. AND he said unto them, When I sent you out without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? and they said, Nothing.

SECT. 173.

LUKE XXII.

THOUGH we mentioned Christ's going out to the mount of Olives after he had instituted the eucharist, it is very material to observe, that before he quitted the guest-chamber in which he had supped, he entertained his disciples with some large and affectionate discourses, and put up an excellent prayer with them, which we shall now relate. *And,* to introduce these discourses, *he said to them, When I sent you,* my apostles, *out* on your important embassy some time ago, *without either purse* to supply you with money, *or scrip* to take provisions with you, *or shoes* besides those on your feet, (Matt. x. 9, 10. p. 150.) *did you want any thing* necessary for the support of life? *And they said,* No, Lord: we very well remember that the care of providence over us was such that we wanted *nothing;* but wherever we came we found the hearts of strangers opened even with surprising freedom to assist and relieve us.

35

36 Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse let him take *it,* and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Then he said to them, This was indeed the case in your former mission; *but now* you must expect much harder usage than before, and will be exposed to greater sufferings and dangers in the prosecution of your ministry; and therefore *let him that has a purse take [it,] and also a scrip,* if he has one; *and let him that has no sword* be ready even to *sell his garment and buy one* with the price of it; so long a journey and so sharp a conflict is before you, that you had need be well armed and furnished for it.

36

37 For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me: And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

For I assure you, That my enemies are now about to apprehend me as a malefactor, and, after all the love that I have shown to an ungrateful world, *this* remarkable prophecy *which is written* concerning me, (Isa. liii. 12.) *must yet be accomplished in me,* "*And he was* "*numbered with the transgressors:*" *for* indeed all *the things* which are written *concerning me* in the scripture prophecies must quickly *have an end,* and receive their accomplishment in my sufferings and death. Now you may easily guess at the reception you are like to meet with when you come to preach in the name and authority of one who has suffered as a malefactor, and yet demands faith and obedience as an almighty Saviour.

37

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords that we are furnished with already,[a] which we are resolved, in case of any violent assault, to use in thy defence. *And he said to them, It is enough* for weapons of this sort: my chief intent is to direct you to another kind of defence, even that which arises from piety and faith.[b] *Let not your heart* therefore *be troubled,* though I am going to leave you in a world where you will seem likely to become an helpless prey to the rage and power of your enemies: *believe in God,* the almighty Guardian of his faithful servants, who has made such glorious promises to prosper and succeed the cause in which you are engaged; and *believe also in me* as the promised Messiah, who, whether present or absent in body, shall always be mindful of your concerns, as well as ever able to help you.[c]

38

JOHN XIV.

John xiv. 1. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

1

2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.

And, to establish your faith and comfort, accustom yourselves often to look forward to the heavenly world, as those who are well assured that *in my Father's house,* from whence I came, and whither I am going to take up my residence, there *are many mansions;*[d] and it is really a spacious and glorious abode, where there will be ample room to receive you, and every thing to accommodate you in the most delightful manner: *and* indeed *if* it were *not* so, as I know you have still acted with regard to the happiness of a future world, though too much mingled with inferior views, *I would* before this time *have told you* so expressly, and not have permitted you to impose upon yourselves by an airy dream;[e] much less would I have said so much as I have done to confirm that expectation: but as it is in itself a glorious reality, so *I am* now *going,* not only to receive my own reward, but *to prepare a place for you* there;[f] or to make room for your coming

2

a *Here are two swords.*] Probably (as Mr. Cradock conjectures in his *Harmony,* part ii. p. 209.) some of the apostles brought these swords along with them, in their journey from Galilee and Peræa, to defend them against robbers. It afterwards appears that one of them was Peter's. See John xviii. 10. § 183.

b My chief intent is to direct you to another kind of defence, &c.] This is strongly intimated by his saying, *Two swords* were *enough;* for they could not be sufficient to arm eleven men.

c *Believe in God, believe also in me:* Πιστευετε εις τον Θεον, και εις εμε πιστευετε.] These words are so very ambiguous, that (as Erasmus observes) they may be rendered as here, or as in our English translation; or, *Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me;* or, *Believe in God, and ye believe in me;* and different commentators have taken them in all these very different senses. But it appears most natural to render πιστευετε alike in both places; and it is certain, an exhortation to faith in God, and in Christ, would be very seasonable, considering how weak and defective their faith was. (See ver. 9.)—The transition from the passage in Luke to this in John, appears so easy, placing the paragraphs in this order, that I wonder no Harmonizer should have observed it before.

d *In my Father's house are many mansions.*] M. Le Moyne thinks Christ alludes to the various apartments in the temple, and the vast number of persons lodged there. Μοναι signifies *quiet and continued abodes,* and therefore seems happily expressed by our English word *mansions,* the etymology and exact import of which is just the same.

e *And if not, I would have told you.*] Heinsius's version of these words seem much less natural: he would connect and render them, [ει δε μη, ειπον αν υμιν, πορευομαι, &c.] as if our Lord had said, "*Had it* "*not been so, I would* have spoken in another manner, and *have* "*told you, I am going to prepare a place for you;* but now I have "no reason to say that, the place being already prepared." But it is hard to say what sense can be made of ver. 3. on this interpretation.—That the pious Jews considered all the glories of the Messiah's kingdom as introductory to the happiness of a future state of eternal glory, appears from a variety of scriptures; and indeed it is difficult to say how they could think otherwise, considering how much this had been insisted on; or how they could have been good and pious, had not this been their chief aim. Compare Matt. iii. 12; v. 8, 12; vi. 20; vii. 21; xiii. 43; xix. 16; xxii. 30. Luke xiv. 14; xvi. 9. John iii. 15, 36; vi. 54, 68; xi. 24—27.

f *I am going to prepare a place for you.*] When the glory of heaven is spoken of as *prepared before the foundation of the world,* (Matt. xxv. 34.) this only refers to the *divine purpose:* but as that

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thither, and to dispose every thing for your most honourable and comfortable reception. *And if I* thus *go and prepare a place for you*, you may depend upon it that this preparation shall not be in vain, but that *I will* certainly act so consistent a part as to *come again and receive you to myself*;[g] *that*, as we are now united in so dear a friendship, *you also*, after a short separation, *may be where I am*, and may dwell for ever with me. *And* surely I may say in the general, after all the instructions I have given you, that *you know whither I am going; and you know the way* that leads thither, and by which you may safely follow me; which I exhort you, therefore, that you would resolutely keep.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

But such was still the expectation that his disciples had of his erecting a temporal kingdom, that *Thomas*, upon hearing this, *says to him*, *Lord*, thou hast never yet informed us of the place, and *we know not* so much as *whither thou art going*,[h] *and how* then *can we* possibly *know the way* thither? *Jesus says to him*, I have already intimated to you I am going to the Father; and did you but consider this, you would soon see that *I am* myself *the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*;[i] that I am to guide, instruct, and animate my followers in their passage to eternal glory, and that their progress will be sure and vigorous in proportion to the steadiness of their faith in me, and the constancy of their regards to me: and this indeed is the true and only way you can take; for *no man cometh to* the knowledge and enjoyment of *the Father*, to whom I am returning, *but by* means of *me*, whose proper office it is to introduce sinful creatures to his presence and favour. *If*, therefore, *you had known me* aright, *you would* surely *have known my Father also*,[k] in whose glory my ministrations so evidently centre; *and* such indeed are the discoveries that I have made of him, and such the manifestations of the divine perfections which you have seen in me, that in effect it may be said, *That from henceforth you know him, and have*, as it were, already *seen him.*

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Then *Philip*, one of the apostles, hearing these words, *says to him*, with a pious ardour becoming his character, *Lord*, do but *show us the Father*, and bring us to the sight and enjoyment of him, *and it is* happiness *enough for us*; we desire no more, and resign every other hope in comparison of this. *Jesus says to him*, *Have I been with you* then *so long a time*, and conversed among you in so familiar a manner for successive years, *and hast thou not* yet *known me*, *Philip?* if thou hadst well considered who I am, thou mightest have better understood what I have now been saying; for *he that has seen me*, *has* in effect *seen the Father*, as I am the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: (Heb. i. 3.) *And how* [*then*] *dost thou say*, after all that has passed between us, *Show us the Father.*

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?

Dost thou not then *believe*, though I have before affirmed it so expressly, (John x. 38. p. 264.) *that I* [*am*] *in the Father, and the Father is in me*, by so intimate an union as to warrant such language as this?[m] *The words which I speak to you* from time to time, in which I discover and inculcate this important truth, *I speak not* merely *of myself; but* it is really *the Father who dwells in me* that gives me my instructions thus to speak; and it is *he* that operates together with me, and *performs the* miraculous *works* that you have so often seen, which are sufficient to demonstrate the truth of this assertion, mysterious as it is, and incredible as it might otherwise seem. *Believe me* therefore in what I have said, *that I* [*am*] thus *in the Father, and the Father is in me; or*, if what you have so long known of my general character and veracity will not engage you to take it merely on my single testimony, *at least believe me on account of those works* in which you have so frequently beheld the Father acting with me, and which indeed afford so obvious an argument of it, that one might imagine the sight of a few of them might convince one that was before a stranger to me.

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.

And yet *verily, verily, I say unto you*, That you shall have, if possible, a yet stronger

12 Verily, verily, I say

was founded in *Christ's mediatorial undertaking*, (Eph. i. 4—6.) it might properly be said, that when Christ went into heaven as our *High-priest*, to present (as it were) his own blood before the Father on our account, and as our *Forerunner* to take possession of it, he did thereby *prepare a place for us*; which the apostle expresses (Heb. ix. 23, 24.) by his purifying or consecrating the heavenly places in which we are to dwell, which would have been considered as polluted by the entrance of such sinful creatures into them,—as the tabernacle, when new-made, was, by having passed through the hands of sinners, on which account an atonement for the altar itself, which was considered as most holy, was the first act performed in it when it was opened. (Exod. xxix. 36, 37.) And an atonement for the whole tabernacle, as polluted by the access of sinners to it, was to be repeated annually. Lev. xvi. 16.—It may not however be improper to observe, that the word τοπος is often translated *room*; (Luke ii. 7; xiv. 10, 22; 1 Cor. xiv. 16.) and thus the signification here may be, that Christ went to heaven *to make room for them*, or to remove those things out of the way which obstructed their entrance. This must at least be included, though the word σωματα may perhaps express still more.

g *I will come again, &c.*] This coming ultimately refers to Christ's solemn appearance at the last day to receive all his servants to glory; yet, (as was hinted before on note f, on Luke xii. 40. p. 227.) it is a beautiful circumstance, that the death of every particular believer, considering the universal power and providence of Christ, (Rev. i. 18.) may be regarded as Christ's coming to fetch him home; whereas Satan is spoken of as having naturally the power of death, Heb. ii. 14.

h *We know not whither thou art going.*] It is probable Thomas might think that Christ intended to remove to some splendid palace on earth, to set up his court there for a while, before he received his people to the celestial glory.

i *I am the Way, &c.*] Our Lord had so lately delivered the same sentiment in language much like this, (John x. 9. p. 261.) that it might well have been expected they should have understood him now.

k *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.*] This is a most important truth; but it does not determine to what degree he must be explicitly known, in order to receive saving benefits by him.

l *Lord, show us the Father.*] The explication given in the paraphrase seems to be a more probable sense than that in which Mr. Fleming understands it, as if Philip had said, "Let us have a vision "of *the Father* in a corporeal form, to testify the necessity of thy "removal from us." (See Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 202.) I cannot apprehend that the apostles thought the Father visible.

m *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.*] It is remarkable that Philo, speaking of the *Logos*, has this expression, that *he is* Πατρος οικος εν ω δικαιοκλι, *the Father's house in which he dwells*; which is nearly parallel to what the apostle says of Christ, Col. ii. 9. that *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. See Dr. Scott's *Christian's Life*, Vol. III. p. 559. note 2.

unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also: and greater *works* than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father.

evidence than what you have already received: for *he that believes in me,*[n] that is, many of my disciples in these early ages, and each of you in particular, shall receive such an abundant communication of the Spirit, that *the* miraculous *works which I perform, he shall perform also; yea,* works in some respect *greater than these shall he perform; because I go to my Father,* who has thought fit to reserve the most amazing gifts of the Spirit to honour my return into glory; in consequence of which, you shall be enabled to speak with all foreign tongues, to give the Spirit by the imposition of your hands, and to propagate the gospel with such amazing success, as to make more converts in one day than I have done in the whole course of my ministry. SECT. 173. JOHN XIV. 12

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

And, in a word, you may depend upon it, that *whatsoever you shall ask in my name,* under the influence of that Spirit, and subservient to the great end of your life and ministry,[o] *I will* certainly *do it, that* so *the Father may* still *be glorified in the Son;* who, when he is ascended up to heaven, will from thence be able to hear and answer prayer, and, even in his most exalted state, will continue to act with that faithful regard to his Father's honour which he has shown in his humiliation on earth. And in this confidence, I repeat it again, for the encouragement of your faith and hope, that I will be as affectionate and constant a Friend to you in heaven as I have ever been upon earth; and *if you shall ask any thing in my name, I will* not fail to *do* [*it.*] 13

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it.* 14

IMPROVEMENT.

As we see, in the beginning of this section, that care of Christ over his servants which may engage us cheerfully to trust him for providential supplies when employed in his work, so we see, in the remainder of this, and in the following discourses, the most affectionate discoveries of the very heart of our blessed Redeemer, overflowing in every sentence with the kindest concern, not only for the safety but the comfort of his people. We see a lively image of that tenderness with which he will another day *wipe away all tears from their eyes:* (Rev. vii. 17.) Surely when he uttered these words he was also solicitous that our hearts might not be troubled; and therefore has provided a noble cordial, the strength of which shall continue to the remotest ages, even faith in his Father and in him. O may that blessed principle be confirmed by what we have now been reading! LUKE XXII. 35, 38 JOHN XIV. 1

Let us observe with what a holy familiarity our Lord speaks of the regions of glory; not, as his servants do, like one dazzled and overwhelmed with the brightness of the idea, but as accustomed and familiarized to it by his high birth.[p] *In my Father's house are many mansions,* (delightful and reviving thought!) and many inhabitants in them, who, we hope, through grace will be our companions there, and every one of them increase and multiply the joy. 2

It was not for the apostles alone that Christ went to prepare a place: he is entered into heaven as our Forerunner; (Heb. vi. 20.) and we, if we are believers indeed, may be said, by virtue of our union with him, to *sit together in heavenly places in him.* (Eph. ii. 6.) Let us continually be tending thither, in more affectionate desires and more ardent pursuits. We *know the way;* we hear *the truth;* oh may we also feel *the life!* By Christ, as the true and living way, may we come to the Father; that we may have eternal life, in knowing him, *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent!* (John xvii. 3.) In Christ may we see him, and have our eyes and our hearts open to those beams of the divine glory which are reflected from the face of his only-begotten Son, who is *full of grace and truth!* (John i. 14.) Has he been thus discovered to us, as our Father and our God? let it suffice us: let it diffuse a sacred and lasting pleasure over our souls, though other desirable objects may be veiled or removed; and engage us to maintain a continual *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* (1 John i. 3.) 4, 6 9 8

To this we are invited by every declaration of his readiness to hear and answer our prayers: and though those miraculous powers of the Spirit are ceased, whereby the apostles were enabled to equal, or even to exceed the works of their Master, yet as we have so many important errands to the throne of grace, in which the glory of God and the salvation of our souls is concerned, let us come with a holy boldness to it, in dependence on Jesus, that great High-priest over the house of God, who is passed into the heavens, and amidst all the grandeur of that exalted state, regards his humble followers on earth, and ever appears under the character of their Advocate and their Friend. 13, 14 12

SECTION CLXXIV.

Christ proceeds in his discourse with his disciples, recommending a regard to his commandments as the best proof of their love to him; promising his Spirit, and declaring his readiness to meet his approaching sufferings. John xiv. 15, *to the end.*

JOHN xiv. 15.

IF ye love me, keep my commandments.

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OUR Lord went on with his discourse to his apostles on this solemn occasion; and observing the lively flow of their affection to him in this tender conjuncture of circumstances, he added, *If you* do indeed *love me,* express that love by a constant care to *keep my com-* JOHN XIV. 15

n *He that believes in me.*] It is most evident, in fact, that though this promise be expressed in such indefinite language, it must be limited as in the paraphrase.

o *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name,* under the influence, &c.] As reason in general requires some such limitation as is here given in the paraphrase, so the conclusion of the verse plainly implies it; for it was only by the grant of such petitions that the Father could be glorified in the Son.

p With what a holy familiarity our Lord speaks of the regions of glory, &c.] This is the remark of the pious Archbishop of Cambray, in his incomparable *Dialogues on Eloquence,* (which may God put it into the hearts of our preachers often and attentively to read!) and is much illustrated by observing how the apostles, when describing the heavenly state, employ the most pompous and energetic language, and seem indeed to labour for words, and to be almost dazzled with the lustre and oppressed with the weight of the subject: (compare Rom. viii. 18, 19; 1 Cor. ii. 9; xv. 50. *et seq.* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18: v. 1—9; xii. 2—4; and 1 John iii. 2.) But Christ speaks of it with a familiar ease and freedom; just as a prince who had been educated in a splendid court, would speak with ease of many magnificent things, at the sudden view of which a peasant would be swallowed up in astonishment, and would find himself greatly embarrassed in an attempt to explain them to his equals at home.

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mandments; for that will be a surer test and more acceptable expression of your regard to me, than all your trouble and concern at parting with me. *And* thus you may depend on the correspondent expressions of my friendship to you:[a] and particularly, that *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter,*[b] *that he may* more than supply the want of my bodily presence, and *abide with you,* not for a season only, as I have done,

17 but *for ever;* [*Even*] *the* blessed *Spirit of truth* and grace, *whom the world cannot* possibly *receive* as a Comforter, *because it neither sees him nor knows him,* being altogether destitute of his sanctifying influences, and refusing to admit his testimony to me; *but you know him* in some measure, even now, by his powerful operations in you and by you; *for he* already *dwells with you* in part, *and shall* quickly *be* more abundantly *in you,* by a much ampler communication both of his gifts and graces.

18 Encourage yourselves therefore with the pleasing expectation, and be assured that *I will not leave you* neglected, like a family of helpless *orphans* who have no friend or guardian surviving;[c] but *I will come to you* by my spiritual presence, and visit you by the most

19 valuable tokens of my constant care. For it is but *yet a little while and the world seeth me no more,* as it has done for some time past, though it knows me not; *but* after I have done conversing with the world, I will appear again to you, and *you* shall *see me* in such a manner as to feel the blessed effects of my distinguishing regard to you; for *because I live, you also shall live* by means of those divine influences you shall derive from me, to cherish the workings of grace in your hearts, and to train you up to a growing meetness

20 for sharing with me in eternal life. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.) And *in that day* when I fulfil this promise to you, *you shall* experimentally *know,* by the most evident and reviving tokens, *that I* [*am*] indeed *in my Father, and* that *you* also are *in me, and I in you,*

21 by a most intimate and inseparable union. But this will only be the privilege of such as evidence their love to me by an obedience to my word; for *he that has my commandments* discovered to him, *and* diligently *keeps them, he it is that loveth me;* but none besides have any title to this character, whatever specious pretences they may make to it: *and he that* thus shows that he *loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will* also *love him, and* in a most condescending and endearing manner *will manifest myself to him.*

22 *Judas* was very much surprised at this; *not* Judas *Iscariot;* for he, as it was said before, was gone out before the Lord began this discourse: (chap. xiii. 31. sect. clxxi.) and had he been there, he was always too much on his guard to have dropped any hint of his view to Christ's temporal kingdom;[d] but another apostle of that name, who was also called Thaddeus and Lebbeus, the son of Alpheus, and the brother of James, (see note f, on Mark iii. 18. p. 106.) a near relation to our Lord himself:[e] 'this Judas, upon hearing Christ express himself in such a way, *says to him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?* Dost thou not then intend to make a public appearance, which will be obvious to the eyes of all?

23 *Jesus answered and said to him,* As to that it may be sufficient to tell you, that, as I said before, (ver. 21.) *If any man* sincerely *love me, he will* in an humble and obedient manner keep and *observe my word; and* if he shall be found to do so, *my Father,* who at all times has a tender regard to my honour and interest, *will* undoubtedly *love him; and we will* both of us *come to him* by the favourable tokens of our presence, *and will make* [*our*] constant *abode with him:* you are therefore to understand what I said of manifesting myself to him that loves me, not of any corporeal and sensible appearance, but of such a spiritual and intimate correspondence as the invisible Father of glory and grace maintains

24 with his people through me. But, on the contrary, *he that does not* really *love me, does not observe* and keep *my words* with any constancy and resolution; and therefore must expect no such spiritual and eternal benefits, whatever outward privileges he may enjoy: see to it therefore, that you diligently hearken *and* attend to what I say; for *the word which you hear* me speak *is not* originally or merely *mine, but* it is [*the word*] *of the*

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

a Thus you may depend on the correspondent expressions of my friendship to you.] The connexion may possibly intimate, that they might hope for an abundant degree of the Spirit's communication, in proportion to the prevalency of their love to Christ.

b *He will give you another Comforter.*] It is well known that the word παρακλητος may signify a *comforter*, an *advocate*, or a *monitor;* and it is evident the blessed Spirit sustained each of these characters; but this being a consolatory discourse, I chose to use the former, as our translators have done. Toland says it is by no contemptible criticism that the Mahometans (instead of παρακλητον) read περικλυτον, that is, *the Illustrious*, which answers to *Mahommed* in the Arabic language: and so urge this as a prophecy of him. (Tol. *Nazaren.* p. 13.) Yet he would probably have thought this criticism very contemptible in any but the enemies of christianity.

c *I will not leave you orphans.*] Elsner justly observes, that the case of those who have lost the presence and patronage of some dear friend, though not in strict propriety a father, is elegantly and tenderly expressed by this word ορφανους. (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 17. Gr.) See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 341.

d Was always too much on his guard, &c.] It is observable, that Judas Iscariot was so finished a hypocrite, that we never find him saying one word of Christ's temporal kingdom, though probably the hope of preferment and gain in it was the chief consideration which engaged him to follow our Lord. Let the reader indulge me while I tell him that he owes this remark to that incomparable person, the late Rev. Mr. David Some of Harborough; and let him join with me in lamenting the fatal modesty which engaged him with his dying breath to consign to the flames those writings which (unfinished as some of them might have appeared) would probably have been the means of spreading among thousands that spirit of wisdom, piety, and love, into which the whole soul of the author seemed to be transformed.

e A near relation to our Lord himself.] His father Alpheus seems to have been the same with Cleopas; for as Judas and James were the sons of Alpheus, (Luke vi. 15, 16.) so James is elsewhere said to be the son of Mary, (Matt. xxvii. 56; and Mark xv. 40.) who was the wife of Cleopas, and sister to the mother of our Lord; (John xix. 25.) Judas is therefore numbered with James, and Joses, and Simon, among the brethren or near kinsmen of our Lord, (Matt. xiii. 35; and Mark vi. 3;) and being so nearly related to Jesus, he might think himself peculiarly concerned to inquire into the meaning of an assertion which seemed inconsistent with the prospect of a temporal kingdom, in which, perhaps, he expected some eminent office.

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Father that sent me, who has particularly given it in charge to me, that I should thus insist upon practical and universal holiness as one great end of my appearance.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

And accordingly you know that I have strongly insisted upon it as such; and *these things I have spoken to you* again and again, *while I continued* personally present *with you: But* when *the Comforter* that I have promised you is come, [*even*] *the Holy Spirit, whom the Father* after my departure *will send in my name*, to act as the great Agent in my cause, and to negociate the affairs of my kingdom, *he shall teach you all things* which it is necessary for you to know, *and remind you of all things which I have said to you*, that you may not only recollect them in the fullest manner for your own instruction, but be able to record them for the edification of my church in succeeding ages. In the mean time, as I am now departing from you, *peace I leave with you* as my legacy; and, as a blessing of the greatest moment and importance to you, *my peace I give unto you;* such a peace as none but I can impart; a peace with God and yourselves, as well as with your fellow-creatures, which will be the spring of solid and lasting happiness: and it is *not as the world* often *gives* and wishes peace, in an empty form of ineffectual, and often, perhaps, unmeaning compliment, that *I give* it *unto you;* but, as I most sincerely wish it, I will most certainly secure it to you. *Let not your heart* therefore *be troubled* at the thoughts of my departure, *neither let it be afraid* of what may befal you when I am gone; for I will help you to possess your souls in quietness and peace, and will establish it upon the firmest basis.

26

27

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

You need not then to be discouraged at the separation that will now be made between us; for as *you have heard how I said to you*, that *I go away*, so also you have been informed of my intention in it, *and* know that I have added, I will *come* [*again*] *to you:* and surely *if you loved me* with a wise and rational affection, it would allay your sorrows in the mean time, and howsoever you might have a mournful sense of your own loss, *you would rejoice* on my account, *because I said, I go to the Father; for my Father*, whose servant I am as Mediator, *is* in this respect *greater than me*, and consequently it must be my honour and happiness to be in a state of greater nearness to him than the present world will admit. *And now I have told you* this that I have been discoursing to you, concerning my own removal, my return to the Father, and the descent of the Spirit upon you, *before it comes to pass; that when it does come to pass, you may* more firmly *believe*, not only on account of the extraordinary nature of the events themselves, but also on account of their exact and evident correspondence with these predictions of mine.[f]

28

29

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

It will be your wisdom the rather to observe and review these things, as *I shall not hereafter* have time to *discourse much* more *with you* about them; *for* Satan, *the prince of this* apostate *world, is coming* to encounter me, and is raising a storm against me which will quickly separate us: *nevertheless* I have this comfort, that *he has nothing in me*, no guilt of mine to give him power over me, nor any inward corruption to take part with his temptation. *But* he is permitted thus to attack me, and I contentedly submit to my approaching sufferings, *that the world may* see and *know*, on the most substantial evidence, *that I love the Father* so well as to refuse nothing whereby his glory may be advanced; *and even as the Father has commanded me, so I do*, how painful or expensive soever that obedience may be. And therefore, that we may be prepared for this hour of temptation that is coming upon us, *arise, let us go* from *hence*,[g] and retire to a place where we may more conveniently attend our devotions; and where I may be ready, when my cruel enemies shall come to apprehend me, to yield myself into their hands, and to submit to what my Father has appointed for me.

30

31

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY, if we are not entirely strangers to the divine life, we cannot read such discourses as these without feeling some warm emotions of love to Christ: and if indeed we feel them, let us consider how they are to be expressed. Our Lord directs us to do it in the most solid and the most acceptable manner, by a constant care to *keep his commandments;* and sure such commandments as his cannot be grievous to a soul that truly loves him: (1 John v. 3.) The more we live in the practice of them, the more cheerfully may we expect the abundant communications of his Spirit to animate and strengthen us. Ver. 15, 21, 16, 17

If we are christians indeed, let us not, in any circumstance of life, look on ourselves as helpless and abandoned orphans. Human friends may forsake us; but Christ will come to us: he will manifest himself to the eye of faith, though to the eye of sense he is invisible; and his heavenly Father will love us, and watch over us for good: yea, he will come and dwell in the obedient soul by the gracious tokens of his intimate and inseparable presence. And do we any of us experience this? We have surely reason to say that by way of admiration which the apostle said by way of inquiry, *Lord, how* and whence *is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world!* What have we done to deserve these gracious and distinguishing manifestations! Nay, how much have we done to forfeit them! even more than many from whom they are withheld! 18, 21, 23, 22

With unutterable joy let us review this rich legacy of our dying Lord: *peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you.* Lord, evermore give us this peace with God and with our own consciences! for if thou wilt give quietness, *who can make trouble?* (Job xxxiv. 29.) How serenely may we then pass through the most turbulent scenes of life, when all is quiet and harmonious within! Thou hast *made peace through the blood of* 27

f *You may* more firmly *believe*, not only on account, &c.] It is very judiciously observed by Dr. Jenkin, (in his excellent *Defence of Christianity,*) that when miraculous events are also the accomplishment of prophecies, the degree of evidence arising from them is the greatest that can possibly be conceived.

g *Arise, let us go hence.*] See note a, in the next section.—That

SECT. 174. JOHN XIV.

thy cross; (Col. i. 20.) may we preserve the precious purchase and inestimable gift inviolate, till it issue in everlasting peace! In this let our hearts be encouraged; in this let them rejoice: and not in our own happiness alone, but also in that of our now glorified and exalted Redeemer. As the members of his body, we ought certainly to maintain a pleasing sympathy with our Head, and to triumph in his honour and felicity as our own. If we love Christ, we should rejoice because he is gone to the Father. And the same consideration may in its degree comfort us when our pious friends are removed: if we love them with a rational and generous friendship, and are not too much influenced by selfish affections under that specious name, our joy for their exaltation will greatly temper the sorrow which our own loss must give us.

30 Our Lord uttered these words in the near views of a grievous assault from the prince of this world, who is the prince of darkness; but there was no corruption in him to take part with the enemy. Too much, alas, does he find in us to abet his temptations: let us earnestly pray that the grace of Christ may be sufficient for us: and that as
31 his love to the Father engaged him to go through this painful conflict with the tempter, his love to us may make us partakers of his victory. In his name let us set up our banners, and the powers of hell shall flee before us.

SECTION CLXXV.

Christ represents himself under the emblem of a vine, and exhorts his disciples to faith and persevering obedience. John xv. 1—11.

JOHN XV. 1.

SECT. 175. JOHN XV.

SOME accident occasioning a little delay before they left the guest-chamber in which they had eaten the passover, our Lord improved the precious moments in addressing his disciples to the following purpose:[a] *I am*, said he, *the true* and most excellent *vine*,[b] by its union with whom my church is nourished; *and my Father is the husbandman* who has planted this vine, and by whom it is cultivated, that it may produce delightful clusters for
2 his service. And *every branch* that is *in me* by an external profession, *which* yet is found to be a barren branch, and *bears no fruit, he taketh* quite *away;* that is, he cuts it off in his righteous judgment, *and* entirely separates it from me: but *every* [*branch*] *which brings forth fruit, he purgeth;* that is, he prunes and dresses it, and, on the whole, exercises such wise and kind discipline towards it (though that discipline may sometimes seem severe) as may best answer the great end of its production, *that it may bring forth* yet *more fruit*, than which there can be nothing more desirable.[c]

3 And thus it is with you; for, *now* the traitor is gone out, I may affirm, without the exception that I made before, (compare John xiii. 10, 11. sect. clxxi.) that *you are* all thus purged, in such a manner as to be *clean, by means of the word which I have spoken*
4 *to you*, whose sanctifying influence has operated on your hearts. *Continue* therefore *in me*, by the renewed exercise of humble faith and love; *and I* will be *in you*, to nourish and supply you, as from a living root, with every necessary grace: for *as*, in the natural world, *the branch cannot bear fruit of itself*, but must presently wither, *unless it continue in* a state of union with *the vine*, and be nourished by sap from thence; *so neither can you* be able to produce the fruits of genuine and acceptable obedience, *unless you continue in me*, and have the life of grace maintained within you by a vital union with me.

5 I repeat it again, as a matter of the utmost moment, That *I am the vine*, and *ye* [*are*] *the branches*, in the sense I have already explained. *He* therefore *that abides in me* by such an intimate and vital union, *and* in whom also *I* abide by the operations of my Holy Spirit *in him, he*, and he only, *bringeth forth much fruit*, to the honour of his profession, and the comfort of his own soul: but the glory of it is still to be referred to me; *for separate from me you can do nothing*, though you stand in the foremost rank of my
6 followers, and have already made some considerable attainments. And *if any one* that calls himself my disciple, *does not* maintain such a regard to me as that he may be said to *abide in me*,[d] *he is* rejected and *cast out* with disdain and abhorrence, *as a* fruitless *branch* lopped off from the vine, *and* by consequence *is* presently *withered; and* as [*men*] *gather* up such dry sticks, *and throw them into the fire, and* there *they are burnt*, as a worthless kind of wood fit for nothing but fuel, (see Ezek. xv. 2—4.) so, in like manner, such will be the end of those unhappy creatures; they shall be gathered as fit fuel for

JOHN XV. 1.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

xxi sometimes signifies *though*, or *nevertheless*, as I have rendered it, ver. 30. see note e, on John xvii. 25. § 180.

a Some accident occasioning a little delay, &c.] This may be gathered from the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, where our Lord had said, *Arise, let us go hence:* for it seems very unreasonable to imagine that our Lord would address so important a discourse as this to eleven persons as they were walking, especially in the streets of Jerusalem, at this public time; much less would he pour out so solemn a prayer as that in chap. xvii. in such a circumstance: yet John xviii. 1. (§ 181.) strongly implies that all that follows between this and that, happened before he went forth from Jerusalem. I conclude, therefore, that all this passed before they quitted the house where the passover was eaten, though they probably rose from the table as soon as those words, *Arise, let us go hence*, were spoken. A short delay might leave room for this; for any one who will make the trial, will find that these three chapters may be deliberately read over in a quarter of an hour, and therefore might be spoken in that small interval of time.

b *The true* and most excellent *vine.*] So *the true light* (John i. 9.) and *the true bread* (chap. vi. 32.) evidently signifies. (See Raphel. *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 141.)—His having lately drunk with his disciples of the *fruit of the vine*, and having afterwards declared that he would *drink no more of it till he drank it new in the kingdom of God*, (Mark xiv. 25. p. 346.) might possibly occasion Christ's alluding to it: (see Grotius, *in loc.*) Or perhaps they might now be standing near a window, or in some court by the side of the house, where the sight of a vine might suggest this beautiful simile. (Compare Psal. cxxviii. 3.) That circumstance was, no doubt, common in Judea, which abounded with the finest grapes. See Gen. xlix. 11, 12; Numb. xiii. 23; and Deut. viii. 8.

c *That it may bring forth more fruit.*] This strongly suggests a very sublime and important thought, viz. that one of the noblest rewards God can bestow on former acts of obedience, is to make the soul yet more holy, and fit for farther and more eminent service, though it should be by such painful afflictions as resemble the pruning of a vine.

d *If any one does not abide in me.*] It is strange that any should think this text a conclusive argument against the doctrine of perseverance; when to be in Christ, (ver. 2.) so plainly signifies making an external profession of christianity, whether vain or sincere.

divine wrath, and their external relation to me will not preserve them from everlasting burnings. SECT. 175.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

But as for you my faithful servants, I assure you, for your encouragement, that *if you* stedfastly *abide in me, and* take care that in consequence of it *my words abide in you*, so that you maintain a suitable regard to all my instructions, promises, and commands, this blessed union will entitle you to such signal degrees of the divine favour, that *you shall ask* in prayer *whatsoever you will, and* if it be, upon the whole, subservient to your own happiness, and to the public good, *it shall be done for you.* And let it therefore be your care to make the suitable returns of gratitude and obedience; for *in this is my Father* most eminently *glorified, that you*, my apostles, *bring forth much fruit*, by exerting yourselves to the utmost for the propagation of my gospel in the world, and endeavouring to enforce your instructions by the holiness of your lives: *and* in this likewise *you shall* appear to all to *be my* true *disciples*, and to act worthy of your character and relation to me. JOHN XV. 7

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

And it is surely with the highest reason I would engage you to make this your aim: because *as the Father hath loved me, so have I* also *loved you*, with the most constant and invariable affection: *continue* therefore *in my love*, and always be solicitous so to behave, as may, on your part, maintain the friendship inviolate. And *if you* diligently and constantly *keep my commandments*, then *you will* assuredly *continue in my love; even as I have* always *kept my Father's commandments, and* so *continue in his love;* for this is the most solid evidence of it, which I give to my Father, and require from you. 9 10

These things I have spoken to you, not to grieve you by any intimation that I suspect the sincerity of your regards to me; but that you may be so fortified and animated against the temptations of life, *that my joy* and complacency *in you*, as my faithful friends, *might* still *continue; and* [*that*] *your joy* in me *may be* maintained in its *full* height, and may greatly increase, as it certainly will, in proportion to the advancement of your resolution and zeal in my service. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

How desirable is it that we may learn from this discourse to regard Christ at all times as the spiritual Head, from whom life and vigour are to be derived to all his people! Let us, by the exercise of an unfeigned faith, abide in him as the true vine; as being always sensible that without him we can do nothing; and that if we are in him only by an external profession, we are not only in danger of being cut off and taken away, but shall, in the end, be cast into the fire. May we rather be purged and pruned, though it should be with the most painful dispensations of providence, if by this means our fruitfulness may be promoted, to the glory of God and to the benefit of the world! May his word operate daily upon us, to cleanse us from remaining pollutions! and if we thus desire to be clean, let us *take heed to our way, according to* the tenor of that *word.* (Psal. cxix. 9.) Ver. 1 4,5 6 2 8 3

We see our encouragement to pray; let us take it from Christ, and not be dismayed, nor yield to unbelieving suspicions. As the Father has loved Christ, so does he also love his people: Let us preserve and cultivate this sacred friendship; and, whatever it may cost us, let us endeavour to continue in his love, and to avoid whatever would forfeit it; making it above all things our care to keep his commandments. Christ always observing those of his heavenly Father, cannot but always and invariably continue the object of his love and delight: may our conduct be such as that he may see reason to rejoice in us! and then we shall also have the surest foundation for a sublime and solid joy. 7 9 10 11

SECTION CLXXVI.

Christ renews his exhortation to mutual love, and declares the Jews inexcusable in their unbelief. John xv. 12, *to the end.*

JOHN XV. 12.

THIS is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

JOHN XV. 12.

OUR Lord, in order to impress the principles of mutual friendship and benevolence on the minds of his disciples in the most powerful manner, recommended it to them at large on this tender occasion, and proceeded in his discourse to the following purpose: *This is* in a peculiar manner *my commandment* to you, which, by all the obligations you are under to me, I charge and conjure you to observe, *That ye* all do most cordially and constantly *love one another, even* if it be possible, with as great an ardour *as* that with which *I have loved you;* so as to be ready to sacrifice your lives for each other, as I expose and resign mine for you. (Compare John xiii. 34; and 1 John iii. 16.) And surely I can give no more solid and important evidence of my affection to you; for *no man has* ever manifested, or can indeed imagine, *greater* and more disinterested *love than this, that a man should* be willing, not only on some sudden alarm to hazard, but on the coolest deliberation to submit to *lay down his life for* the preservation and happiness of *his friends.* Now as I am about to give you this grand demonstration of my love, so I assure you that *you are* and shall be acknowledged as *my friends*, and shall certainly share in the blessings of my death and life, *if you* practically acknowledge my authority, and are so influenced by my love as to *do whatsoever I command you.* *I do not any longer call you servants*, though I have sometimes used the phrase, and formerly have seen it necessary in some points to treat you with reserve; *for the servant* is not let into the secrets of his master, and *knoweth not* particularly *what his lord doth:*[a] *but I have* not SECT. 176. JOHN XV. 12 13 14 15

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth: but I have called

a *I do not any longer call you servants; for the servant knoweth not*, &c.] Mr. Locke (in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 105.) refers this to the caution with which our Lord had spoken of his being the Messiah; some instances of which have been already pointed out. See note r, on John iv. 26. p. 59.

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JOHN XV.

only in words *called you* my *friends*, (Luke xii. 4. sect. cxi.) but on the whole have treated you as such; *for all things that I have heard* and received in charge *from my Father, I have*, so far as was convenient, *declared to you*[b] in the most condescending and endearing manner, as you very well know.

ed you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

16 Remember that *you have not* first *chosen me, but I*, by my sovereign and effectual grace, *have chosen you* to the honourable office of my apostles and ambassadors; *and have* appointed and *ordained you that you should go* and publish what you have heard from me to all the world, *and* be so qualified and assisted, that you may *bear* abundant *fruit* in the most distant countries, *and* [*that*] the blessed effect of *your fruit should continue* even to the remotest generations:[c] yea, I have also raised you to such a happy circumstance, and made you so eminently the favourites of heaven, *that*, as I lately told you, (ver. 7.) *whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may* perform it for you; and you may certainly depend upon it, he will *give it you.*

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 But then again I would remind you, that if you would continue thus the objects of these his gracious regards, you must carefully practise your duty to each other as well as to him; for *these things I command you, that ye love one another;* and this you should

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 the rather do, as you will be the mark of common hatred and persecution. Yet *if* you find *the world hate* and injure *you*, you have no reason to be offended or surprised at this; for *you know, that* mild and benevolent as my conduct has always been, yet *it has hated me*

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19 your Chief and Lord,[d] *before* it discharged its venom and malignity on *you*. Indeed, *if you were* like the rest *of the world*, and your doctrines and practice were conformable to its customs and maxims, *the world* is so generally under the power of selfish prejudices, that it undoubtedly *would love its own*, and you might expect much better treatment from it:[e] *but because* this is not your character, and *you are not* thus *of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*, not only to separate from, but to oppose its vices and enormities, and even to be leaders in that holy and necessary opposition, it is no wonder that *upon this account the world hateth you*, though the cause in which you are engaged be indeed so honourable, and your lives so useful and beneficent.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 *Remember* and recollect upon this occasion, *the word which I spake to you* some time ago, (Matt. x. 24; and Luke vi. 40.) and which I have but lately repeated, (John xiii. 16.) *The servant is not greater than his lord*, nor the messenger greater than him that sent him: *if* therefore *they have persecuted me*, and Providence has permitted them to do it, you may reasonably conclude *they will also persecute you*, and you cannot justly complain if you have your share of sufferings; and *if* you have seen that *they have* generally *kept my*

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 *saying*, I will give you leave to suppose *they will also keep yours.*[f] *But* when you see, as you very quickly will, not only my doctrine rejected, but my person assaulted, abused, and murdered, it must be a sensible warning to you to prepare for the like usage; and *all these things they will* in fact *do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him that sent me;* for their ignorance of that God to whom they boast so near a relation,

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 does indeed lie at the bottom of their opposition to me. And a dreadful account they will have to give for it; for *if I had not come and spoken* thus plainly *to them, they would* comparatively *have had no sin;*[g] *but now they have no excuse* or pretence *for their sin*, but, being committed against so clear and strong a light, it stands exposed in its

22 If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23 most odious colours: Yea, it appears rebellion against God, as well as ingratitude to me; for *he that hateth* and opposeth *me*, *hateth* and opposeth *my Father also*, whose commission I bear;[h] and this is what they have done, after all reasonable methods have been

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

b *All things that I have heard from my Father I have declared to you.*] Our Lord had, no doubt, the fullest view of the scheme of redemption undertaken by him; but the apostles not being yet able to bear many things, (compare chap. xvi. 12. § 177.) especially relating to the calling of the Gentiles, and the abolition of the Mosaic law, he wisely deferred the discovery of them: so that these words must be taken with the limitation mentioned in the paraphrase, and signify that he had done it so far as was convenient.

c *That you should go and bear fruit, &c.*] This was a security to them that they should be preserved from immediate dangers, and that their life should be guarded by Providence till some considerable services had been accomplished by their means. When our Lord adds, that your fruit should continue, he may allude to the custom of keeping rich and generous wines a great many years, so that in some cases (which was especially applicable to the sweet Eastern wines) they might prove a cordial to those who were unborn when the grapes were produced. In this view there is a beautiful propriety in the representation, which I hope will be particularly felt when these reviving chapters are read.

d *It has hated me* your Chief.] The words in the original, (εμε πρωτον υμων μεμισηκεν,) which we render, *It hated me before* it hated *you*, may (as Dr. Lardner well observes) be more literally rendered, *It hated me your Chief;* which makes the expression more lively, and exactly parallel to Matt. x. 24, 25. § 75. (See Lard. *Credib.* part i. Vol. II. p. 693.) Thus ων πρωτος ειμι εγω, 1 Tim. i. 15. is well translated, *of whom I am chief.*

e *If you were of the world, the world would love its own.*] This seems to me a strong intimation, that even in nations which profess christianity, if true religion fall, as it very possibly may, to a very low ebb, they that exert themselves remarkably for the revival of it, must, on the very principle here laid down, expect hatred and opposition; and that the passages in scripture relating to persecution are not so peculiar to the first ages, or to christians living in idolatrous countries, as some have supposed. Would to God the malignity to be found in some of us against our brethren, did not too plainly illustrate this remark! Men will probably experience the truth of it, in proportion to the degeneracy of those around them, and to the vigour and resolution with which they bear their testimony against prevailing errors and vices. Yet it is certain that the imprudence and bigotry of some very good men has sometimes made matters worse than they would otherwise have been, and perhaps has irritated the vices of their enemies, so as in part to have been accessary to their own damage, and the much greater mischief of those that have injured them.

f *If they have kept my saying, &c.*] I am surprised that such a multitude of learned commentators, and among the rest Gataker and Knatchbull, should contend that τηρειν λογον should here be understood of observing a person's discourse with a malignant design to carp at it. (See Wolfius, *in loc.*) Παρατηρειν has indeed that sense, Mark iii. 2; Luke vi. 7; xiv. 1; xx. 20: But no certain argument can be drawn from hence, especially considering how constantly the phrase before us is taken in a good sense, for an obedient regard, in this very discourse, in which it often occurs. See John xiv. 15, 21, 23; xv. 10; xvii. 6.

g *They would have had no sin.*] It is so evident from the word of God, (see Rom. i. 20, 21; and ii. 12—15.) as well as from the reason of things, that sin may be imputed to those who have no revelation, that it is most evident this is only a Hebraism; as when, according to the pathetic manner of speaking especially in use among the Eastern nations, that is said to be nothing at all, which, when compared with something else, is inconsiderably small. See Psal. xxxix. 5; Isa. xl. 17; 1 Cor. i. 28; iii. 7; and compare John ix. 41.

h *Hateth my Father also.*] How much is it to be wished that those who make light of Christ, while they pretend a great venera-

taken for their conviction. If I had wrought no miracle at all, nay, *if I had not done among them such* extraordinary *works as no other man* ever *did*, not even their prophets, or Moses himself, *they had not had* any degree of *sin* comparable to that which they are now under; *but now*, as they have rejected my superior miracles, which they have seen with their own eyes, at the same time that they own the evidence of those which Moses wrought, of which they have heard only by distant report, they manifest such an obstinate perverseness of temper, that I may truly say, *they have both seen and hated both me and my Father;* and God himself will justly resent and punish it as an indignity that shows their enmity to him. *But* [*this is all permitted,*] *that the word which is written in their law*, or in their sacred volume, concerning David, (Psal. xxxv. 19.) *might* eminently *be fulfilled* in me, as many ancient prophecies foretold that it should, "*Surely* "*they have hated me without a cause.*"[i]

SECT. 176. JOHN XV. 24 25

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

But when the Comforter is come, whom, as I told you, (chap. xiv. 26.) *I will* shortly *send to you from the Father*, [*even*] *the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father*, and is to reside in my church, *he shall bear* a convincing *testimony to me*, to vindicate my character from all the infamy they are maliciously attempting to throw upon it. *And you also*, weak as you now appear, *shall* by his powerful assistance *bear* a courageous and convincing *testimony* to me, *because you have been with me from the beginning* of my ministry, and therefore are the best qualified to give an account of my whole conduct, which, the better it is known, the more it will justify my cause, and expose the wickedness of those that rise up against me.

26 27

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE Son of God condescends to speak under the character of a Friend; and with what humble gratitude should we attend to his words! He lays aside the majesty of a sovereign to assume this more tender relation; and surely our overflowing hearts must inquire, Blessed Jesus, what shall we do to express the friendship on our side? Let us observe what he has here declared, *Ye are my friends* indeed, *if ye do whatever I command you.* Lord, we *will run the way of* these *thy commandments, when* on this noblest principle *thou shalt enlarge our hearts!* (Psal. cxix. 32.) Ver. 15 14

He has loved us with an unexampled affection, which has approved itself stronger than death; and in return, he requires us to love one another. How gracious a command! How merciful to our fellow-creatures and to ourselves, who should infallibly feel the benefit of the practice of it, both in the delight inseparable from benevolent affections, and in the circulation of kind and friendly offices, which, degenerate as human nature is, few are so abandoned as not to endeavour to repay! Who would not imagine that the whole world should feel and obey the charm? And yet, instead of this, behold, they hate Christ, and his servants for his sake, though without a cause, and against the strongest engagements. Miserable creatures! who by a necessary consequence, whatever they may fondly imagine, hate the Father also, and stand daily and hourly exposed to all the dreadful terrors of an almighty enemy. 12, 13 18, 25 23, 24

Let us not wonder if the world hate us; nor greatly regard if it injure us. *We are not of the world*, nor *is the servant greater than his lord:* but surely the opposition which the gospel brings along with it, is nothing, when compared with those blessings which it entails on all who faithfully embrace it. Were the sufferings and difficulties a thousand times greater than they are, we ought to esteem the Pearl of price, the most happy purchase at any rate; and to be daily returning our most thankful acknowledgments, that Christ sent forth his apostles, qualified with such a knowledge of himself, and assisted by such power from his Spirit, appointing them to go and bring forth fruit, even fruit which should remain to the remotest ages. Through his guardian care, it still remains in the world: Oh may it flourish more abundantly among us! and may its efficacy on our hearts and lives be more apparent! And may divine grace convince those who now reject and oppose it, that in the midst of such various evidence of his having come and spoken to them, they have no cloak for their sin! but with whatever fond excuses they may amuse themselves and others, it will quickly appear that *the bed is too short to stretch themselves on it, and the covering too narrow to wrap themselves in.* (Isa. xxviii. 20.) 19, 20 26 22

SECTION CLXXVII.

Christ warns his disciples of the sufferings they must expect, and labours to reconcile them to the thoughts of his remove, as what would on the whole be advantageous to them, as the occasion of sending the Spirit, which would be so great a support to them and their cause. John xvi. 1—15.

JOHN xvi. 1.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whoso-

JOHN xvi. 1.

CHRIST farther added, in his discourse to his disciples, *These things I have spoken to you* concerning the opposition which you are to expect from the world, and the proportionable supports you will receive from the Spirit, *that* when the storm arises, *you may not be offended* and discouraged, and much less be drawn to renounce your profession in order to avoid the danger. *They shall* indeed excommunicate, or *cast you out of the synagogues; yea*, that is not all, for *the hour is* shortly *coming, that whosoever kill-* SECT. 177. JOHN XVI. 2

tion for the Father, would seriously attend to this weighty admonition, lest haply they be found even to fight against God! (Acts v. 39.)

i *They have hated me without a cause.*] It appears to me very evident that Psal. xxxv. cannot be, strictly speaking, a prophecy concerning the Messiah, especially from ver. 13, 14. which represent a person incapable of helping others in their sickness, otherwise than by fasting and prayer; whereas Christ (and, so far as we can find, he alone) had a power of working miracles whenever he pleased. Nevertheless, that the enemies of the Messiah should hate him without a cause, was expressly foretold, (Isa. liii. 3—9; Dan. ix. 26; and Zech. xii. 10.) not to mention the argument arising from comparing all the places in which his innocence and holiness are described, with those which refer to his sufferings. So that I apprehend the turn given in the paraphrase sufficiently justified.

SECT. 177. JOHN XVI.

eth you,[a] *shall think that he offers* [*an acceptable*] *service to God:*[b] to so mad a rage shall their zeal arise, and so thick is the darkness with which their minds are veiled. *And* all *these* cruel *things they will do unto you, because they have not known either the* 4 *Father or me;* which if they had done, instead of injuring me, and exercising such inhumanities towards you my apostles, they would have received us with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness. *But I have spoken these things* plainly *to you,* and forewarned you of them, *that when the season comes* in which they shall happen, *you may remember that I told you of them,* and so may turn what has so discouraging an aspect into a farther confirmation of your faith. *And I did not* indeed *say these things to you at the beginning* of my ministry, *because I was* then *with you,* and could easily 5 suggest proper instructions and consolations as new circumstances of difficulty arose: *But now I* speak them, because I *am* departing from you for a while, and am *going away to him that sent me* into the world; *and yet none of you asketh me, Whither dost thou go?* nor is concerned to make those inquiries about that better world where we are to dwell 6 together, which surely might well become you in such a circumstance. *But because I have spoken these things unto you,* and talked of leaving you for a time, your natural affections have been greatly moved, and *sorrow has filled* and pierced *your* very *hearts,* so that you seem almost stupified with it.

4 sure and thankfulness. *But I have spoken these things* plainly *to you,* and forewarned you of them, *that when the season comes* in which they shall happen, *you may remember that I told you of them,* and so may turn what has so discouraging an aspect into a farther confirmation of your faith. *And I did not* indeed *say these things to you at the beginning* of my ministry, *because I was* then *with you,* and could easily 5 suggest proper instructions and consolations as new circumstances of difficulty arose: *But now I* speak them, because I *am* departing from you for a while, and am *going away to him that sent me* into the world; *and yet none of you asketh me, Whither dost thou go?* nor is concerned to make those inquiries about that better world where we are to dwell 6 together, which surely might well become you in such a circumstance. *But because I have spoken these things unto you,* and talked of leaving you for a time, your natural affections have been greatly moved, and *sorrow has filled* and pierced *your* very *hearts,* so that you seem almost stupified with it.

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 *But I tell you the* exact *truth* of the case, when I say that *it is* on the whole *advantageous to you,* as well as proper for me, *that I should go away,* considering the agreement made between the Father and me in the council of peace between us; *for if I do not go away,* and appear in heaven under the character of the great High-Priest, *the Comforter will not come to you,* since the gift of the Spirit is the fruit of my purchase, and is appointed to be consequent upon my being glorified; (John vii. 39. sect. ci.) *but* 8 *when I go* from hence, *I will* not fail to *send him to you. And when he comes, he will* abundantly display the efficacy of his grace, not only in the comforts he will give you under all your troubles, but in the wonderful success with which he will enable you to carry on my cause; and will effectually *convince the world,* by your ministry,[c] *of sin,* 9 *and of righteousness, and of judgment.* He will convince the world *of* that aggravated *sin* which they are guilty of *because they do not believe in me;* to the truth of whose mission he will bear an unanswerable testimony by his enlightening influences and mira- 10 culous operations: He will convince them *of* my *righteousness* and innocence, *because* it will evidently appear that *I go to my Father,* and am accepted of him, when I send the Spirit from him in so glorious a manner; (compare Acts ii. 33; and Rom. i. 4.) *and* that my righteousness may therefore be relied on for the justification and acceptance of my people, since *you see me no more* appearing among you in the form of a servant, but are assured that, having finished what I was to do on earth, I am taken up to heaven, and 11 received into glory: *And* he will convince them *of* my being invested with the power of executing *judgment, because the prince of this world,* the great head of the apostasy, *is* now as it were already *judged* and condemned, and shall then be triumphed over in a very remarkable manner, when his oracles are silenced, and he is cast out from many persons, and countries too, which he before possessed: (compare John xii. 31. sect. cxlviii.) And Satan being thus divested of his power, my gospel shall be propagated through the world, and a full proof at length be given of my sovereign authority, in my coming to execute judgment upon all ungodly sinners.

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me:

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more:

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 *I have yet many* other *things to say to you* with relation to matters of considerable moment in the settlement of my church: *but* I wave them at present, because I know that 13 *you are not able to bear* [*them*] *now,* and are not yet prepared to receive them.[d] *But when he,* [*even*] *the Spirit of truth, is come,* according to the promise I have given you, *he,* as a faithful Guide, *will lead you into all* necessary *truth: for he will not* exceed his

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not

a *Whosoever killeth you.*] As the lower kinds of excommunication among the Jews were attended only with separation from synagogue worship, and from familiar converse, (Luke vi. 22.) or, in cases of greater guilt, with confiscation of goods and forfeiture of all their substance, (Ezra x. 8.) the highest kind of it was a capital sentence, (Lev. xxvii. 29.) the execution of which, when regularly pronounced, was indeed an act of duty and obedience to God, while they had the power of life and death in their hands: but after it was wrested from them, some might perhaps think it an act of very acceptable piety and zeal, to attempt such executions, though at the hazard of their own lives; (of which the forty conspirators against Paul do therefore so boldly avow a design, even to the high-priest, as if it were meritorious rather than criminal; Acts xxiii. 14, 15.) And to such sort of facts these words of our Lord may peculiarly relate.—Permit me to digress so far as to add, that I apprehend, in other cases, after they were thus disarmed of the power of life and death, they had (as I may elsewhere prove) a dependence upon the interposition of Providence to add that efficacy to their censures, which their power, infringed as it was, could not give: in reference to which, this highest sentence of excommunication was in the decline of their state called, *Anathema Maran-atha,* or a sentence which the Lord would remarkably come to execute, though they themselves could not carry it into effect. St. Paul therefore, with a peculiar beauty and propriety, (but never, so far as I can find, fully explained,) applies it to a crime not capable of conviction before any human judges; even the want of a sincere love to Christ, though under a christian profession. See 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

b *Shall think that he offers* [*an acceptable*] *service to God.*] The words λατρειαν προσφερειν τω Θεω, might (as Abp. Leighton observes) be rendered, *offers an oblation* or sacrifice *to God.* This intimates, as that excellent man glosses on the text, (*Serm.* xvii. p. 302.) that "the servants of Christ should be considered not only as sheep for "the slaughter, but as sheep for the altar too." The rage of persecuting enemies, and, beyond all comparison, the murders committed by papal cruelty in the name of the Lord, in their hecatombs of whole burnt-offerings, (if I may be allowed an expression which falls so far short of the dreadful truth,) too justly illustrate the remark. But how God will resent the murder of his children upon his altar, the day when he makes inquisition for blood will declare.

c *He will convince the world.*] So the word ελεγξει properly signifies. Compare John viii. 9, 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Tit. i. 9; and Jam. ii. 9.—For the illustration of this and the following verses, see Archbishop Tillotson's *Works,* Vol. III. p. 287—289.

d *But you are not able to bear them now.*] Those other things to which our Lord refers, might probably relate to the abrogation of the ceremonial law, to the doctrine of justification by faith, the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the like; which might have given some offence to the disciples, till their remaining prejudices were removed. However, the prudence of Christ in this respect is an excellent pattern for ministers; and we had need to pray earnestly for the instructions and assistances of the Spirit of God, that we may neither forget nor abuse it.

speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you.

commission, and, like a careless or unfaithful messenger, *speak* merely of *himself: but,* SECT. 177.
like a wise and good ambassador, *whatsoever he shall hear* and receive in charge, [*that*] *will he speak; and he will show you things to come,* as far as may be necessary to prepare and qualify you for the great work you shall be called to; and will acquaint you with JOHN XVI.
future events, the prediction of which, as delivered by you, may be a lasting testimony 14
to the truth of my gospel. And *he shall* indeed *glorify me* in the most signal manner; *for he will take of mine,* or of those doctrines which relate to me, and those benefits which I procure and bestow, *and will* reveal and *show* [*it*] *to you* in the most clear and attractive light. And indeed *all things whatsoever the Father hath are mine;* and *therefore, to* 15
express the whole system of evangelical truth, *I said* unto you, *that he will take of mine, and will show* [*it*] *to you;* since whatsoever he reveals to you in the name of God, may be called mine, as all truth proceeds from me, and all real goodness is my cause and interest in the world.

IMPROVEMENT.

How great is the ignorance and folly of them that persecute their brethren in the name of the Lord, and kill his Ver. 2
dear children under the pretence of offering him an acceptable sacrifice! Thus were the apostles treated by those
that knew not the God for whom they professed all this burning zeal. Let us bless God that we are providentially 3
sheltered from those effects of it which might otherwise bear so hard upon us; and let us diligently watch over our
hearts, that no irregular affections may work there, and no uncharitable sentiments be harboured. When, like the
apostles, our hearts are filled with sorrow, let us be cautious that they may not be stupified by it, so that any call of 5, 6
duty should pass unheard, or any opportunity of religious advancement unimproved; and let us not be indolent in
our inquiries into the meaning of those dispensations which we do not understand; but seriously consider whether
we are not sorrowful for that which is indeed designed for our advantage, and in the issue will be matter of re- 7
joicing to us.

We hear to what purposes the Comforter was sent. His coming was designed in a peculiar manner for the advantage of the apostles, and was of greater service to them than the continuance of Christ's presence with them in the body would have been, not only to support and comfort them under all their trials, but to acquaint them with all necessary truth, and fully to instruct them in the mysteries of godliness. And he came also for the conviction 8
of an apostate world; for the important errand he was sent upon was to awaken men's minds, and to convince 9
them of their own guilt, and of Christ's righteousness, and of that awful judgment which should be executed on the 10, 11
most inveterate of his enemies. Let us often think of the force of the Spirit's testimony to the truth of christianity, and endeavour to understand it in all its extent. Let us bless God that the gospel and the character of his Son were thus vindicated; and rejoice in the views of that complete conquest to which Satan is already adjudged. In the mean time, let us earnestly pray that the influences of the Holy Spirit may be communicated to us in such 13
a manner that Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him; and that the things of Christ may be taken and shown 14, 15
to us by that Spirit; for it can only be done by means of his influence and operations.

SECTION CLXXVIII.

Our Lord concludes his discourse with assuring his disciples that his separation from them would not be final, but that he would still act in their favour as their Guardian, and make them finally victorious. John xvi. 16, *to the end.*

JOHN xvi. 16.

JOHN xvi. 16.
A LITTLE while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

OUR Lord continued and concluded this excellent discourse to his apostles, in words SECT. 178.
to the following purpose: It is yet but *a little while and you shall not see me* any more
conversing with you upon earth, as I have hitherto done: *and* yet *again,* for your en- JOHN XVI.
couragement and comfort, I assure you that it is but *a little while* longer, *and you shall see me* again on terms of much greater advantage, *because I go to the Father:* plainly
intimating thereby, that he would be so mindful of their interest with the Father, as ere 16
long to bring them to an eternal abode with him.[a]

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

But their thoughts were so taken up about other things, and they had still such ex- 17
pectations of his establishing an earthly kingdom, that, notwithstanding what he now had said was far from being obscure, they did not at first penetrate into the meaning of it: [*some*] *of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he says to us? A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me; and*
why does he add, *Because I go to the Father?*[b] *They said therefore* among themselves, 18

18 They said therefore,

a Intimating—he would bring them to an eternal abode, &c.] As this sense is evidently much more important, so it appears to me more natural and easy than that of Mons. Le Clerc, who understands it as if Christ had said, "Though I am quickly to disappear "from you, and be lodged in the grave, I shall soon come again, "and make you another visit of some length, before I return to "heaven by my ascension." His going to the Father was no proof of this, though it strongly proved his ability to introduce them to the heavenly world. I apprehend that the whole joy which Christ's resurrection and ascension, as connected with each other, gave them, is referred to in the following discourse, which, therefore, is so paraphrased as to include all that is pertinent and material in the explication above.

b *What is this that he says, &c.*] There are so many passages in the preceding parts of this discourse which relate to Christ's going to his Father, (chap. xiv. 2, 12, 28; xv. 26; xvi. 10.) that it is a strange instance of the dulness of the apostles, that they did not understand him here. Perhaps it is recorded on purpose to show what an alteration the Spirit afterwards made in them.—It is indeed difficult to imagine what could perplex them, unless it were that they suspected the words, *A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me, &c.* might intimate, that after he had gone to the Father, and made a short stay there, he would come again, and settle an earthly kingdom; and they might desire an explication in this view. Accordingly, after having told them, that though they were sorrowful, he would come and see them again after his resurrection, (ver. 20, 22.) and would introduce them to a state of comfortable converse with God by prayer, and a joy of which none should deprive them, (ver. 23—27.) he adds, (ver. 28.) that he was quickly leaving the world to go and reside with the Father, from whom he came; thereby gently intimating that no temporal reign was to be expected. And if we suppose him thus to have glanced obliquely at the most secret sentiments of their hearts, it will account for that confession of his omniscience which

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What is this little while of which he speaks? we know not what he says, and cannot apprehend what he means by it.

Now Jesus, as the secret workings of their hearts were open to his view, *knew that they were desirous to ask him* for some farther explication of what he had been saying, and yet that they were afraid of being upbraided for the slowness of their apprehensions; and therefore kindly prevented their confusion, *and said to them, Do you enquire of one another concerning this which I said, A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me?* Surely, if you reflect a little, it cannot be very difficult to understand the meaning of that. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall* shortly *weep and lament* for a while on account of my being taken away from you,[c] *and* in the mean time *the world shall rejoice* as if it had prevailed against me; *and you shall be sorrowful* at the loss of my presence; *but* then you have this to comfort you in that interval of distress, that *your sorrow shall* quickly *be turned into joy.* Just as *a woman, when she is in labour, has* great anxiety and *sorrow because her hour* of distress and agony *is come; but when she has brought forth a child, she* forgets the pangs she endured, and *remembereth* [*her*] *tribulation no more, for joy that a man is born into the world*, and added to her family for its future honour and support. *And so* it is that *you indeed have sorrow now*, in expectation of the melancholy scene which is approaching; and it will very much increase your trouble to see me in a few hours more torn away from you, with inhuman violence, hung as a malefactor on the cross, and buried in the grave: *but* when your hopes are at the lowest ebb, *I will* quickly *see you again* after my resurrection, *and your hearts shall rejoice: and* afterwards, though I am absent from you in the body, yet I will fill you with such consolation by my Spirit, that *no one shall*, by any means whatever, *deprive you of your joy*, which shall sweetly mingle itself even with your heaviest afflictions.[d]

19 What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith

19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do you inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 *And in that day* when I have sent the Comforter, *you shall not enquire any thing of me*,[e] nor be puzzled with much greater difficulties than those which I have now been explaining; but divine illuminations shall be poured in upon you in the richest abundance, and with it the spirit of earnest and successful prayer; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and repeat the important assurance which I before gave you, (chap. xiv. 13, 14; and xv. 16.) *That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give* [*it*] *you.*

24 *Hitherto ye have* not been used to regard me under the character of a Mediator between God and man, and therefore have *asked nothing in my name;* but then, having received a fuller revelation of the doctrine of my intercession, you may come with a cheerful boldness to the throne of grace, and freely *ask* whatever shall be necessary for you; *and* depend upon it *you shall receive* such a liberal supply, *that* in the midst of all your temporal discouragements, *your joy* in God *may* still *be* maintained in its *full* height.

25 *These* weighty and important *things I have* often *spoken to you in* the obscurity of *parables*, which have appeared dark and mysterious to you; *but the hour* or time *is coming when I will speak no more to you in parables* or dark sayings, *but I will tell you what* 26 *relates to the Father with* all openness and *plainness* of speech. *In that day you shall ask in my name*, and shall present your supplications to the Father with an express acknowledgment of your dependence upon me for the success of your petitions; *and I do not* merely *say to you, that I will ask the Father on your account*, and plead with him for the acceptance of your prayers, though you may assure yourselves that I shall always 27 be ready to do it; But I represent it not to you in such a view as if every favour were obtained, and as it were extorted, merely by my importunity, from one who has himself no regard for your happiness; *for*, on the contrary, I assure you that *the Father himself* most tenderly *loves you*, and therefore will be ready to grant your requests, and to watch over you with paternal affection and care, *because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, as the messenger of his grace to men; and have accordingly relied upon me with such stedfastness, that you have ventured your all upon that belief. 28 And you have therein acted a very prudent and happy part; for *I* indeed *came out from the Father, and am come into the world* to scatter a divine light upon it, and to conduct men into the paths of life and peace: and now *again*, having despatched my errand, *I am leaving the world, and am going* back *to the Father*, where I shall keep my stated abode, and whither I will shortly conduct you to a more glorious kingdom than you ever expected here. This is the sum of what I have been telling you, and was particularly my meaning

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

immediately follows this 28th verse; (ver. 29, 30.) the reason of which would not appear merely from his discovery that they doubted about something, which their countenances and whispers might show.

c *Ye shall weep and lament*, &c.] Whatever immediate reference this may have to the sorrows of the apostles immediately on the death of Christ, before his resurrection, I question not but it includes all their subsequent afflictions in the days of fasting, when the bridegroom was taken away from them, as it is elsewhere expressed in a parallel phrase, (Matt. ix. 15.) which must express much more than the abstinence of the one day he lay in the grave, supposing (which is very possible) they had then but little relish to their food. See p. 143.

d *No one shall deprive you of your joy.*] As this promise will be for ever accomplished to all Christ's faithful servants, so it is observable how the apostle Paul, in his more abundant afflictions, attests his experience of its truth, when he says, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, (2 Cor. vi. 10.) and mentions his share in the joy of christians as a most important and sacred oath. (1 Cor. xv. 31.)

e *You shall not inquire any thing of me.*] We render it *ask;* but I thought it proper to make some distinction between ερωταω, which properly signifies, *to make an inquiry*, and αιτεω, which is, *to present a request.* See Dr. Calamy, *On the Trinity*, p. 154. Yet I confess the former is sometimes used almost in the same sense with the latter; (see Matt. xvi. 1.) and the word seems to have the same ambiguity with *demand* in English.—The argument some have drawn from hence against praying to Christ, on the preceding criticism, has no appearance of weight; and did ερωταω signify *to pray*, would prove (if it proved any thing) that Paul lived, and Stephen died, in a very unwarrantable, and perhaps an idolatrous, practice.

in what I said before, (ver. 16.) "Yet a little while and ye shall see me again, because I go "to the Father." SECT. 178.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

And *his disciples*, struck with the correspondence of what he said to what was secretly passing in their own minds, *said to him*, Lord, *behold, now thou speakest* very *plainly* to us, *and usest no parable* or obscure form of expression; so that we clearly understand thy meaning, and rejoice in it. And *now we know* by this farther token, even thy discerning our inmost doubts on this head, *that thou knowest all things, and hast no need that any one should ask thee* any particular questions, to inform thee of those scruples which thou seest when first rising in the mind: *on this account* therefore *we* firmly *believe that thou camest out from God.* JOHN XVI. 30

Jesus answered them, Do you now at length *believe?* and do you apprehend your faith to be so firm, that nothing shall be able any more to shake it? Let me advise you not to be too confident; for I assure you, that in a very little time you will be found to act as if you had not any faith in me: pray, therefore, that God would fortify you against those trials of which I have warned you once and again. For *behold, the hour is coming, yea,* is so near at hand that I may even say it *is now come, that you shall* all *be scattered* and dispersed, and *every one* of you return *to your own* habitations and employments, or otherwise shift for yourselves as well as you can; *and* to consult your own security, you *shall* flee away and *leave me alone;* but *yet I am not,* properly speaking, *alone, for the Father is with me,* and he will comfort and support me in the absence of all human friends. 31, 32

These things have I spoken thus largely *to you, that* whatever difficulties may arise in life, having been thus warned, and furnished with such consolations as these, *you might have* lasting *peace* and serenity of soul by the exercise of your faith *in me. In the world* indeed *you shall have* and must expect *affliction; but be courageous* and cheerful in your combat, for *I have* myself *overcome the world;* and, being possessed of a power infinitely superior to it, I will make you partakers in my victory over all its terrors and its snares. 33

IMPROVEMENT.

We are, perhaps, often regretting the absence of Christ, and looking back with emulation on the happier lot of those who conversed with him on earth in the days of his flesh: but if we are true believers in an unseen Jesus, it is but a little while and we shall also see him; for he is gone to the Father, and will so successfully negotiate our affairs there, that whatever our present difficulties and sorrows are, they shall end more happily than those of a woman who, after all the pangs and throes of her labour, through the merciful interposition of Divine Providence, is made the joyful mother of a living child. Ver. 16, 21

In the mean time, we have surely no reason to envy the world its joys and triumphs: alas, its season of weeping will quickly come! But our lamentations are soon to be turned into songs of praise, and our hearts to be filled with that solid, sacred, and peculiar joy, which, being the gift of Christ, can never be taken away. 20, 22

While we are in this state of distance and darkness, let us rejoice that we have access to the throne of grace through the prevailing name of Christ. Let us come hither with holy courage and confidence, and ask that we may receive, and so our joy may be full. With what pleasure may we daily renew our visits to that throne before which Jesus stands as an intercessor; to that throne which is possessed by the Father, who himself loveth us, and answers with readiness and delight those petitions which are thus recommended! May our faith in Christ, and our love to him, be still on the increasing hand; and our supplications will be more and more acceptable to him whose *loving-kindness is better than life!* (Psal lxiii. 3.) 23, 24, 26, 27

Surely we shall be frequently reviewing these gracious discourses which Christ has bequeathed us as an invaluable legacy. May they dwell with us in all our solitude, and comfort us in every distress! We shall have no reason to wonder if human friendship be sometimes false, and always precarious; the disciples of Christ were scattered in the day of his extremity, and left him alone, when they were under the highest obligations to have adhered to him with the most inviolable fidelity. May we but be able like him to say, that our Father is with us; and that delightful converse with God which we may enjoy in our most solitary moments, will be a thousand times more than an equivalent for whatsoever we lose in the creatures. In the world we must indeed have tribulation; and he that has appointed it for us knows that it is fit we should; but since Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings, has overcome the world, and disarmed it, let us seek that peace which he has established, and press on with a cheerful assurance that the least of his followers shall share in the honours and benefits of his victory. 32, 33

SECTION CLXXIX.

Christ offers up a solemn prayer to the Father, that he himself might be glorified, and that those who were given him might be kept through his name. John xvii. 1—12.

JOHN xvii. 1.

THESE words spake Jesus; and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy

JOHN xvii. 1.

OUR Lord *Jesus spake these words* which are recorded in the preceding chapters, *and* then *lifted up his eyes to heaven,* and poured out a most affectionate and important prayer to his Father; an excellent model of his intercession in heaven, and a most comfortable and edifying representation of his temper, both towards God and his people. And, that it might more effectually answer these great ends, he uttered it with an audible voice, *and said,* O my heavenly *Father, the* appointed and expected *hour is come* in which I am to enter on my sufferings, and to complete the work for which I came into the world; and SECT. 179. JOHN XVII. 1

SECT. 179. JOHN XVII.

therefore I pray that thou wouldst *glorify* me *thy Son*, in those signal appearances for my honour and support in death, in my recovery from the grave, and mine ascension into heaven, which thou hast promised to me, and which I know that thou wilt punctually fulfil;[a] *that thy Son also*, in the whole series of his conduct, both in this world, and in that to which he is now returning, *may* successfully *glorify thee*, and accomplish the purposes of thy saving love; *According as thou hast*, by the engagements of thy covenant, *given him* that *power over all flesh*, that absolute dominion over all the human race, which he will ere long receive and exert; *that he may give eternal life to all that thou hast given him* by that covenant to be redeemed and saved. *And this is* the sure way to that *eternal life*;[b] even *that they may know thee*, who art *the only* living and *true God*, in opposition to the idols they have ignorantly worshipped; *and* may know also and believe in *Jesus Christ*, *whom thou hast sent* into the world as the only Saviour: and to this therefore thou wilt bring them, and wilt make use of what I have already done, and shall yet farther do, as the means of effecting it.

It is with unutterable pleasure that I now reflect upon it, O my Father and my God, that *I have* eminently *glorified thee on earth* during the whole of my abode here; that I have been faithful to the trust that was reposed in me, in all that I have said and done through the course of my ministry; and greatly do I rejoice that *I have* now gone so far as to be just upon the point of having *finished*, by my sufferings and death, *the* important *work which thou gavest me to do*. *And now* therefore, O my heavenly *Father, do thou glorify me with thine own self, with the* original *glory which I had with thee before the world was* created,[c] and which for the salvation of thy people I have for a while laid aside, that I might clothe myself in this humble form.

I have manifested thy name, and revealed the glory of thy power and grace, *to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: they were* originally *thine*, the creatures of thine hand, and the happy objects of thy sovereign choice;[d] *and* in consequence of thy gracious purposes *thou gavest them to me*, that they might be instructed and sanctified, and formed for the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world: *and* such accordingly has been the influence of my doctrine upon their hearts, that *they have* readily embraced it, and hitherto have resolutely *kept* and retained *thy word* and gospel. And, notwithstanding the mean appearance I have made to an eye of sense, their faith has owned me through this dark cloud: and even *now*, in this my humble state, *they have* perceived and *known that all things whatsoever* which I have said and done, and all the credentials which *thou hast* in fact *given me*, and which so many overlook, *are* indeed *of thee;* and that I am truly what I profess myself to be, a Divine Messenger to the children of men, and the Saviour that was promised to come into the world. This plainly appears to be their firm persuasion; *for the words which thou gavest to me, I have given to them*, I have revealed already much of my gospel to them, and begun to deposit it in their hands; *and* in the midst of great discouragement and opposition, giving attention to the words I spake, *they have received* [*them*] with faith and love, *and* made it manifest, by their embracing and adhering to my doctrine, that they *have known in truth* the divinity of my mission, so as to be fully satisfied in their own minds *that I came out from thee* with a commission to reveal thy will; (compare John xvi. 27, 30.) *and* while I have been rejected by an ungrateful world, they have regarded me as the true Messiah, and have shown they *have believed that thou didst* indeed *send me* on the great errand of their salvation. *I therefore pray for them* who have attended me as my apostles, and for all those who are, or shall be, brought to the same faith and the same temper, that thou wouldst support them under every trial, and wouldst regard them in a peculiar manner as the objects of thy care; *I pray not* thus *for the* unbelieving *world, but for those whom thou hast* graciously *given me*, and I am confident that my prayer for them shall not be in vain; *for they are* not only mine, but *thine* too, chosen by thy grace, and devoted to thy service. *And* indeed *all mine* interests and my people *are thine, and thine are* also *mine; and* while thy glory is advanced by their establishment, *I* likewise *am*, and finally shall be, *glorified in them:* so near and intimate is our relation to each other; so sincere and active thy paternal affection to me, O my heavenly Father, and my filial duty to thee.

And now I am to continue *no longer in the world: but these* my faithful servants *are* yet *in the world, and* some of them are to remain a considerable time in it, exposed to various hardships and dangers: whereas *I* (delightful thought!) shall soon have done with

Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are

a *Glorify thy Son.*] All the circumstances of glory attending the sufferings of Christ; as, the appearance of the angel to him in the garden, his striking down to the ground those that came to apprehend him, his curing the ear of Malchus, his good confession before Pilate, his extorting from that unjust judge a testimony of his innocence, the dream of Pilate's wife, the conversion of the penitent robber, the astonishing constellation of virtues and graces which shone so bright in Christ's dying behaviour, the supernatural darkness, and all the other prodigies that attended his death; as well as his resurrection and ascension, and exaltation at God's right hand, and the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the consequent success of the gospel, are all to be looked upon as an answer to this prayer.

b *This is eternal life.*] Christ might insert this clause (though neither a petition, plea, nor any other part of prayer,) on purpose to remind his apostles of the importance of their office; as they were sent to spread that knowledge which he here calls eternal life, because the eternal happiness of men depends upon it.

c *The glory which I had with thee before the world was.*] To suppose, with the Socinians, that this refers only to that glory which God intended for him in his decrees; or, with Mr. Fleming, that it refers only, or chiefly, to his being *clothed with the shekinah*, seems to sink and contract the sense far short of its genuine purpose. See Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 247; and Whitby, *in loc.*

d *They were* originally *thine.*] There can surely be no reason to imagine from the sacred story, that the apostles were chosen to their great office on account of any extraordinary degrees of piety and virtue, previous to their being called to follow Christ. So that I can see no natural sense of these words but what I have expressed in the paraphrase. Compare John xv. 16. p. 354.

in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

this weary wilderness, and *am coming to thee*, who art the centre of my soul, and the supreme object of my complacency and desire.[e] But while I am separated from these my servants, so dear to thee and to me, vouchsafe, *O holy Father*, to *keep these whom thou hast* thyself *given me*, and let them be preserved *through thy name;* let them be kept in safety by thy mighty power, and be established in the faith by a constant regard to thee, and a sense of thy presence impressed on their hearts; *that they* may still continue united to us, and to each other, in cordial affection, and *may be one even as we* [*are*] one. Do not, O gracious Father, forget these my friends, in whose cause I have so affectionately engaged; for thou art witness, that *while I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name*, and through the influences of thy grace; [*yea,*] *I guarded them whom thou gavest me* with a most constant care, *and none of them is lost, unless it be* counted as a kind of exception, that *the son of perdition* perishes by his iniquity;[f] that wretched creature, who in a lower sense was indeed given to me, but never, like the rest, was taken under my special care, but is left to fall into deserved ruin,[g] *that the scripture might be fulfilled* which foretold it as the dreadful consequence of his treachery. (See Psal. cix. 8. *et seq.* compared with Acts i. 20.)

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JOHN XVII. 11, 12

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH pleasure let us behold our gracious Redeemer in this posture of humble adoration, lifting up his eyes to God with solemn devotion, and pouring out his pious and benevolent spirit in those divine breathings which are here recorded. From his example, let us learn to pray; and from his intercession, to hope. We know *that the Father heareth him always;* (John xi. 42.) and singularly did he manifest that he heard him now, by all that bright assemblage of glories which shone around him in the concluding scenes of his abode on earth, and in those that attended his removal from it: and in all this too did the blessed Jesus manifest his zeal for the glory of the Father. May we emulate that holy temper! and when we pray even for our own consummate happiness in the heavenly world, may we consider it as ultimately centring in the honour and service of God! Ver. 1

Well may we be encouraged to hope for that happiness, since Christ has an universal power over all flesh, and over spirits superior to those that dwell in flesh; with which he is invested on purpose that he may accomplish the salvation of those whom the Father has given him, even of every true believer. We see the certain way to this life, even the knowledge of God in Christ: let us bless God that we enjoy so many opportunities of obtaining it: and earnestly pray that he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would by his divine rays shine forth on our benighted souls; and so animate us in his service, from the noblest principles of gratitude and love, that we may be able to say, even in our dying moments, with somewhat of the same spirit which our Lord expressed, *Father*, we *have glorified thee on earth, and finished the work which thou gavest us to do;* and therefore, being no more in the world, we come unto thee. Then may we hope, in our humble degree, to partake of that glory to which he is returned, and to sit down with him on his victorious throne. 2, 3, 4, 11

In the mean time, may our faith see and our zeal confess Christ! May we acknowledge his divine authority, having come out from the Father! May we be united in love to him, and to each other; and be kept by that divine word which is the security of his people, that none of them shall be lost! Let the son of perdition, who perished even from among the apostles, teach us an humble jealousy over our own hearts, whatever external privileges we enjoy; and engage us to maintain a continual regard to *him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy!* (Jude, ver. 24.) 7, 8, 12

SECTION CLXXX.

Our Lord concludes his prayer, recommending his apostles, and succeeding christians in every future age, to the favourable regards of his Father; and praying for their union on earth and glory in heaven. John xvii. 13, *to the end.*

JOHN xvii. 13.

AND now come I to thee, and these things I speak in

JOHN xvii. 13.

SECT. 180.
JOHN XVII. 13.

OUR Lord proceeded in that excellent address to God which he had begun in the former section, in such words as these: *And now*, O my heavenly Father, *I come unto thee* with unutterable pleasure; *and these* [*words*] of this prayer *I speak* thus openly in the

e *And I am coming to thee.*] It is very plain that this clause could not be intended as an additional argument to introduce the following petition; for Christ's coming to the Father was the great security of his people: but it seems rather to be a short reflection on that dear subject, so familiar to his mind, with which he for a moment refreshed himself in the course of this humble and pathetic address. This I have endeavoured to represent in the paraphrase.

f *Unless it be the son of perdition.*] I am surprised that so many very learned divines, and amongst the rest, even Bishop Burnet himself, (whom I cannot mention but with the greatest honour,) should so roundly infer from these words, that the giving to Christ, in the preceding clauses, cannot imply an election to glory, since it is here intimated that Judas, who perished, was given as well as the rest. (See Burnet, *On the Articles*, p. 160.) The objection to a mere English reader might appear unanswerable: but those so conversant in the original might easily have observed, that if this text will prove that Judas was in the number of those given to Christ, in the same manner, Luke iv. 26, 27. will prove, directly contrary to plain fact and the whole tenor of the argument, that the woman of Sarepta was a widow in Israel, and Naaman the Syrian a leper in Israel too; John iii. 13. that Christ ascended into heaven before he began his ministry; Rev. ix. 4. that the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, were either grass or trees; and Rev. xxi. 27. that there are some of the most abominable of mankind whose names are written in the book of life. See also Matt. v. 13; xii. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 13. In all which places, as well as the preceding, it is plain that εἰ μη is not used strictly as an exceptive particle; and that if it has any thing like that force, it is only to intimate that what it introduces may, in a less proper sense, be reduced to the number of things mentioned before it. And this I take to be its precise sense in this text; for which reason I render it [*unless it be,*] though in some of the former instances it has not so much signification as that, but is used with as great a liberty as [*except*] by Milton, when he says of Satan,

> ——— God and his Son *except*,
> Created thing nought valued he nor shunn'd.

Thus likewise εαν μη is used, Gal. ii. 16; John v. 19; xv. 4.—The words before us might indeed refer to the apostles, (compare John xviii. 8, 9. § 183.) but I do not see any necessity of confining them to Christ's care for their preservation, for the reason given above.

g Is left to fall into deserved ruin.] The *son of perdition* signifies one who *deservedly perishes;* as a *son of death*, (2 Sam. xii. 5.) *children of hell*, (Matt. xxiii. 15.) and *children of wrath*, (Eph. ii. 3.) signify persons *justly obnoxious to death, hell*, and *wrath*.

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hearing of my disciples, while I as yet am with them *in the world, that they* who now hear me, and those too for whose benefit it may be afterwards recorded, *may have my joy*, even that holy consolation of which I am the Author and Support, abundantly *fulfilled in them*. And it indeed becomes me to be thus solicitous for their comfort and happiness; for *I have given them thy word*, which they have faithfully received: *and* in consequence

14 of this, though they are indeed the greatest friends and benefactors of mankind, yet *the world has* ungratefully *hated them*, and will be sure to persecute them with the utmost violence, *because they are not of* the same spirit with *the world, even as I* myself, in whose cause they are engaged, *am not of the world*, so as to conform to it in my temper

15 and conduct. Since therefore for my sake they stand thus exposed to hatred, injury, and oppression, I most affectionately bear them on my heart before thee, O my heavenly Father! yet *I do not pray that thou shouldst take them* immediately *out of the world*, bad as it is; since I know the purposes of thy glory, and their own improvement and usefulness, will require their longer continuance in it; *but* I pray *that thou wouldst preserve them from* being either corrupted or overwhelmed by *the evil* which perpetually

16 surrounds them, and that the subtlety and malice of the evil one may never overpower them. For I well know that they will meet with many trials which will bear hard upon them, because (as I have said) *they are not* of a temper suited to the common sentiments and practice *of the world, even as I*, their Lord and Master, *am not of the world*.

17 To arm them therefore against so formidable an attack, and to maintain and cultivate this holy temper in them, I would entreat thee to complete the work that is so happily begun, and to *sanctify them* more and more *through thy truth*;[a] and as *thy word* and gospel which they are to preach *is* the great system of sanctifying *truth*, whereby real holiness is to be for ever promoted, may these thy servants feel more and more of its vital

18 energy on their own souls, to qualify them for the office of dispensing it to others! For *as thou hast sent me into the world* to be the messenger of this grace, *I also have sent them into the world* on the same errand, to publish and proclaim what they have learned

19 of me. *And* it is in some measure *for their sakes*, as well as for the salvation of all my people, that *I* now *sanctify myself*, or set myself apart as an offering holy to thee; *that they also*, taught by my example, and animated by my dying love, *may be* truly *sanctified through the truth*, and completely fitted for their important office.

20 And in presenting these petitions for them, I am not chiefly influenced by the personal attachment of private friendship, but I consider them under their public character; *nor do I pray for these* my apostles *alone*, or offer myself merely for them, *but for them also who shall* hereafter *believe on me through their word*, whether it be preached or written; even for those who are yet unborn, and on whom the ends of the world shall come:

21 *That*, being animated by the same spirit, and inspired with the same love, *they all may be* truly and intimately *one, as thou, Father*, [*art*] *in me, and I in thee: that they also may* in friendship and happiness *be one in us*, united to us and to each other, and deriving from us the richest supplies of divine consolation; *that* so *the world*, seeing their benevolence, and charity, and holy joy, *may believe that thou hast sent me*, and that a

22 religion productive of such amiable fruits is indeed of divine original.[b] *And the glory which*, by the covenant of redemption, *thou gavest* unto *me*, *I have*, as authorized by thee, *given* unto *them*, by my faithful and invariable promise, as the great encouragement of their faith and hope;[c] *that they may* all *be one, even as we are one*, and, in consequence of such a blessed union, may dwell together with us, and with each other, in

23 eternal felicity: Thus therefore may it ever be, *I* dwelling *in them, and thou in me; that they*, who now enjoy the first beginnings of this happy state, *may* at length *be made* completely *perfect in one*, and be united in the most cordial love, without any jarring affection, or the least mixture of sorrow and complaint; that so the clearest demonstration may be given of the efficacy of thy grace, *and that the world* by this means *may know that thou hast sent me*, while they perceive them under my forming care to become visibly and justly the favourites of heaven; *and* it may thus be manifest to all that thou *hast loved them as thou hast loved me*, and hast extended this mercy to them for my sake.

24 But no improvements, either in holiness or comfort, in this world, can completely answer the purposes of my love and the promises of my grace to them; and therefore, O my *Father*, permit me to say that *I will*, that is, I importunately ask it, and, in consequence of the mutual transactions between us, I am bold to claim it as matter of right, *that they also whom thou hast* graciously *given me*, even all thy chosen and sanctified people, *may* at length *be with me where I am*, in that heavenly world to which I am now

the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

21 That they all may be one, as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst

a *Sanctify them through thy truth.*] I see no reason to conclude, with Mr. Mede, that εν τη αληθειᾳ must be put for εις την αληθειαν, that is, *for the service of the gospel.* That was indeed the remote end which our Lord had in view; but the more immediate was, that their own souls might be transformed and purified by it.—*To sanctify*, signifies in general, *to set apart* to any appropriate use: and is used with peculiar propriety with reference to *a sacrifice*; which seems to be the sense in which our Lord applies it to himself in ver. 19. Compare Exod. xiii. 2; xxxix. 1; and Lev. xxii. 2.

b *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*] This plainly intimates that dissensions among christians would not only be uncomfortable to themselves, but would be the means of bringing the truth and excellence of the christian religion into question: and he must be a stranger to what hath passed and is daily passing in the world, who does not see what fatal advantage they have given to infidels to misrepresent it as a calamity, rather than to regard it as a blessing to mankind. May we be so wise as to take the warning, before we are quite destroyed one of another! (Gal. v. 15.)

c *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them*, &c.] As it was plainly in his Father's name, and by the authority of his commission, that Christ had given them this promise, which with a lively faith they had affectionately embraced; so this was one of the strongest arguments that could be urged for the complete accomplishment of it.

me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

removing; *that they may* there *behold* and contemplate, with everlasting, delightful admiration, *my glory which thou hast* by thy sure appointment *given me*,[d] and art just ready to bestow; *for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world*, and didst then decree for me that mediatorial kingdom with which thou art now about to invest me. SECT. 180. JOHN XVII.

And herein thou wilt not only be merciful, but faithful and just too, as it is congruous to those essential perfections of thy nature, *O* most *righteous Father*, thus to distinguish me and my followers with a peculiar glory: for *though the world has not known* or acknowledged *thee*,[e] yet *I have known thee*, and have accordingly directed the whole of my ministrations to thy glory; *and these* my servants too *have known that thou hast sent me*, and will courageously assert it, even at the expense of their very lives. *And I have declared thy name to them, and will*, as I have opportunity, farther go on to *declare* [*it*,] both by my word and by my Spirit: *that* their graces and services may be more eminent; that even *the love with which thou hast loved me may be* dwelling *in them; and* that *I* also may take up my constant residence *in them*, by my spiritual presence, when my bodily presence is removed, as it will quickly be. 25 26

IMPROVEMENT.

We have indeed perpetual reason of thankfulness that our gracious Redeemer spake these words in the world, and recalled them thus exactly to the memory of his beloved disciples so many years after, that we in the most distant ages of his church might, by reviewing them, have his joy fulfilled in us. Let us with pleasure recollect that those petitions which Christ offered for his apostles were expressly declared not to be intended for them alone, but, so far as circumstances should agree, for all that should believe on him through their word, and therefore for us, if we are real and not merely nominal believers. For us doth he still pray, not that God would immediately take us out of the world, though for his sake we may be continually hated and injured in it, but that he would keep us from the evil to which we are here exposed. For our sakes did he also sanctify himself as a propitiation for our sins, that we might also be sanctified through the truth; for he *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* (Tit. ii. 14.) Ver. 13 20 14, 15 19

May these wise and gracious purposes of his love be fulfilled in us! May we be one with each other, and with him! May that piety and charity appear in the whole series of our temper and behaviour, which may evidently show the force of our religion, and reflect a conspicuous honour upon the great Founder of it! And may all concur to train us up for that complete felicity above, in which all the purposes of his love centre! It is the declared will of Christ, and let us never forget it, that his people should be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory which the Father has given him. And there is apparent congruity, as well as mercy, in the appointment, that where he is, there also should his servants and members be. The blessed angels do undoubtedly behold the glory of Christ with perpetual congratulation and delight; but how much more reason shall we have to rejoice and triumph in it, when we consider it as the glory of one in our own nature, the glory of our Redeemer and our Friend, and the pledge and security of our own everlasting happiness! Let us often be lifting up the eyes of our faith towards it, and let us breathe after heaven in this view! in the mean time, with all due zeal, and love, and duty, acknowledging the Father and the Son, that the joys of heaven may be anticipated in our souls, while the love of God is shed abroad there by his Spirit, which is given unto us: even something of that love wherewith he has loved Jesus our incarnate Head. 21 24 25 26

February 17, 1861.

SECTION CLXXXI.

Jesus retires from the guest-chamber to the garden of Gethsemane, and in his way thither renews the caution which he had given to Peter and the rest of the apostles. Matt. xxvi. 31—35. Mark xiv. 27—31. Luke xxii. 39. John xviii. 1.

JOHN xviii. 1.

[AND] when Jesus had spoken these words, he [came out, and] went forth, [as he was wont,] with his disciples, over the brook Cedron, [to the mount of Olives,] where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples [also followed him.] [Luke xxii. 39.]

Matt. xxvi. 31. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for

JOHN xviii. 1.

AND when Jesus had spoken these words that are mentioned above, and had concluded his discourse with this excellent prayer to his heavenly Father, *he came out* from the guest-chamber where he had celebrated the passover, *and, according to* his usual *custom* every night, *went forth with his disciples* out of the city, and crossing *over the brook Kedron*, which lay on the east side of Jerusalem, he came *to* the foot of *the mount of Olives, where there was a garden* belonging to one of his friends, *into which* he had often been used to retire; and though he knew his enemies would come this very night to seize him there, yet *he entered* into it,[a] *and his disciples also followed him.* SECT. 181. JOHN XVIII. 1

Then, as they were on the way thither, *Jesus says to them*, Notwithstanding all the faith you have professed in me, and all the affection which I know you bear me, yet not only one or another, but *all* of *you, shall be offended because of me this very night*; and the hour is just at hand, when you will be so terrified by the distress befalling me in your presence, that it shall prove the sad occasion of your falling into sin, by your forsaking MATT. XXVI. 31

d *My glory which thou hast given me.*] This may express the lustre and beauty of Christ's personal appearance, the adoration paid him by the inhabitants of the upper world, and the administration of the affairs of that providential kingdom which it is his high office to preside over.

e *Though the world has not known thee.*] That καὶ here signifies *though*, the connexion plainly demonstrates; and Elsner produces many instances of it: (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 334.) To which the following instances from the sacred writers may be added, among many others: Luke xviii. 7; John xiv. 30; Acts vii. 5; and Heb. iii. 9.

a *A garden into which he entered.*] Christ probably retired into such a private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, which perhaps he might not so well have enjoyed in the city at so public a time, but also that the people might not be alarmed at his being apprehended, nor in the first sallies of their zeal and rage, attempt to rescue him in a tumultuous manner.—Kedron was, as its name signifies, *a dark shady vale* between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, through which a little brook ran, which took its name from the place. (Compare 2 Sam. xv. 23.)

SECT. 181. MATT. XXVI. 32

me, your Master and Friend, and leaving me in the hands of the enemy: *for it is written,* (Zech. xiii. 7.) "*I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered:*" I am that Shepherd, and you the timorous sheep, to be dispersed by the assault made on your Keeper. *But,* as it is afterwards added there by way of encouragement, "I will turn my hand upon the little ones," to reduce and recover them from this dissipated state; so likewise I assure you for your comfort, that *after I am risen* from the dead, as I shall soon be, *I will go before you into Galilee,* and there give, not only you my apostles, but all my disciples, the amplest demonstration both of my resurrection and my love, whereby your hearts shall be established in the firmest adherence to me: and upon this he named the particular place where he would meet them.[b]

it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. [Mark xiv. 27.]

32 But after [that] I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. [Mark xiv. 28.]

33 *But Peter* was so grieved to hear him say that they should all be offended, and be scattered from him, that, with a confident assurance of his own stedfastness, he *answered and said to him,* My dearest Lord, there is no trial can surmount the love I bear thee! and whatsoever danger or distress may be at hand, I am absolutely resolved and determined upon it, that *though* every one besides, and even *all* the rest of these my brethren, *should be offended because of* the calamities that are coming on *thee,* and upon this account should be induced to forsake thee, *yet will I never be offended,* but will follow thee even to the last.

33 [But] Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, [yet] will I never be offended. [Mark xiv. 29.]

34 *Jesus said to him,* Peter, this confidence does not at all become thee, especially after the warning I gave thee at supper;[c] but I repeat it again, and *verily I say unto thee, That to-day,* yea, [*even*] *this* very *night* which is now begun, *before the cock crow twice, thou shalt* repeatedly *deny me* in the most shameful manner; for after thou hast heard it once, thou shalt not be admonished, but before it crow a second time, thou shalt repeat the fault; nay, thou shalt do it *thrice,* and every time with new aggravations.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this [day, *even* in this] night, before the cock crow [twice,] thou shalt deny me thrice. [Mark xiv. 30.]

35 *But Peter* upon this, instead of being awakened to a humble sense of his own weakness, *spake the more eagerly,* [*and,*] with a mixture of grief and indignation at the thought, *said to him,* Lord, no danger whatsoever can induce me to be guilty of such baseness; for such is the sincerity and strength of my affection to thee, *that though I should die with thee* on the place, *yet I will not deny thee in any manner* or degree,[d] but would a thousand times rather fall by thy side in a brave and resolute defence, than so much as seem to neglect thee, or in any respect to fail of the strictest and most affectionate fidelity. *Likewise also said all the disciples,* with equal sincerity of present intention, though neither he nor they had courage enough to abide by that resolution. Jesus therefore insisted no farther on the matter, but left them to be taught by the event.

35 [But] Peter [spake the more vehemently, *and*] said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee [in any wise.] Likewise also said all the disciples. [Mark xiv. 31.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 31 So feeble is the heart of man, and yet so ready to trust to its own strength! So gracious is the Lord Jesus
32 Christ, that great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who gave himself to be smitten for his flock when they had forsaken him; and then returning, sought them out again, and fed them in richer pastures than before!

How reasonable is it that our hearts should be fixed in the most inflexible resolution for his service! How fit
35 that we should every one of us say, with the utmost determination of soul, *Lord, though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee!* For how could death wear a more graceful or a more pleasing form, than when it met us close by our Saviour's side, and came as the seal of our fidelity to him?

Surely this is the language of many of our hearts before him, especially when warmed and animated by a sense of his dying love to us. Yet let us not be high-minded; for Peter, after this declaration, denied his Master; and
34, 35 the same night in which they had protested they would never leave him, *all the disciples forsook him and fled.* (Matt. xxvi. 56.) Nor, on the other hand, let the view of that frailty discourage, though it ought to caution, us; for the time came when each of them behaved as they here spoke; and they who in his very presence acted so weak a part, through the influences of his strengthening Spirit, resisted unto blood, *and loved not their lives unto the death,* for the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. xii. 11.)

b He named the particular place where he would meet them.] An appointment to meet in so large a region as Galilee would without this have been of very little use; and Matt. xxviii. 16. (§ 202.) expressly declares such an appointment. We do not know the exact place, but we there learn from Matthew, it was a certain mountain: probably it might be near the sea of Tiberias; not only because we find Christ on the borders of that sea after his resurrection, (John xxi. 1. § 200.) but also because, as he had resided there longer than any where else, he had, no doubt, the greatest number of his disciples thereabouts; and it lay pretty near the centre of his chief circuits, and therefore must be most convenient, especially for those beyond Jordan, where many had of late believed in him. See John x. 40—42. § 134.

c After the warning I gave thee at supper.] See Luke xxii. 34; and John xiii. 38. p. 344. I persuade myself that an attentive comparison of those texts with these before us in Matthew and Mark, will convince the reader that these admonitions were first given at the table, and now repeated as they went out: nor can I find any way of forming them all harmoniously into one compound text, without such a supposition.

d *Spake the more eagerly,—I will not deny thee in any manner* or degree.] Εκ περισσου ελεγε μαλλον,—ου μη σε απαρνησομαι. I think the energy of these original expressions cannot be reached in a version: I have therefore attempted it in the paraphrase: and must observe, that if Mark's gospel was reviewed by Peter, as the ancients say, (and particularly Clemens Alexandrinus, as quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15. on which see Dr. Lardner's *Credibility,* part ii. Vol. II. chap. 22. § 5.) it is peculiarly worth our notice, that the aggravations attending Peter's denial of our Lord should be more strongly represented by Mark than by any other Evangelist; which, in that case, probably was done by his own particular direction, and may be regarded as a genuine proof of his deep humiliation and penitence. Compare Mark xiv. 66—72. with Matt. xxvi. 69—75; Luke xxii. 54—62; and John xviii. 25—27. § 184.

SECTION CLXXXII.

Jesus enters into the garden of Gethsemane, and falls into his agony there; during which his disciples fall asleep, for which he gently reproves them, and warns them of the enemies' approach. Matt. xxvi. 36—46. Mark xvi. 32—42. Luke xxii. 40—46.

MATT. xxvi. 36.

THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane; and [Luke, when he was at the place, he] saith unto [his] disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. [Mark xiv. 32. Luke xxii. 40.]

37 And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, [James and John,] and began to be sorrowful, [sore amazed,] and very heavy. [Mark xiv. 33.]

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me; [Luke, *and* pray, that ye enter not into temptation.] [Mark xiv. 34. Luke xxii. 40.]

Mark xiv. 35. And he went forward a little, [Luke, and was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down,] and fell [on his face] on the ground, and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. [Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 41.]

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; [O my Father, if it be possible,] take away this cup, [*and* let *it* pass] from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt. [Matt. xxvi. 39.

37 And he cometh [unto the disciples,] and findeth them sleeping; and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? [What,

MATT. xxvi. 36.

SECT. 182. MATT. XXVI.

THEN, after this discourse with his disciples, *Jesus comes with them to the place* we mentioned above, which was *called Gethsemane*, as being a very pleasant and fertile garden,[a] *and when he was* arrived just *at* the entrance into *the place* whither he was used to retire, *he says to* eight of *his disciples*, *Sit ye* down *here* a while, and observe what passes abroad, *while I go and pray* in *yonder* retirement.

And as this was a very extraordinary passage of his life, *he took* along *with him Peter*, 37 *and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John*, who had been witnesses of his transfiguration, and were now chosen by him to be witnesses of his agony. *And* as he went on with them towards a more retired part of the garden, *he began to be in* a very *great* and visible *dejection, amazement, and anguish of mind*,[b] on account of some painful and dreadful sensations which were then impressed upon his soul by the immediate hand of God. *Then* turning to his three disciples, *he says to them*, My friends, you never saw 38 me in so great distress as now; for *my soul is surrounded* on all sides *with* an extremity of anguish and *sorrow*, which tortures me *even* almost *unto death*; and I know that the infirmity of human nature must quickly sink under it, without some extraordinary relief from God; to him therefore I will apply with the greatest earnestness: and do you in the mean time *continue here and watch with me*,[c] considering how liable we are to be surprised; [*and*] let me remind you also to *pray* for yourselves, *that you may not enter into* that dangerous *temptation* of which I have just been giving you notice, or may be kept from falling by it. See Matt. xxvi. 31. sect. clxxxi.

MARK XIV.

And going on a little way from thence into a more retired part of the garden, *when he was* now *withdrawn about a stone's throw from* the place where he left *them*, *he* first humbly *knelt down*, *and* then, as the ardour of his devotion increased, he *prostrated* 35 *himself on his face to the ground, and prayed, That if it were possible, that* dreadful *season of sorrow*, with which he was then almost overwhelmed, *might* be shortened and *pass from him*. *And he said, Abba, Father*, I know that *all things* proper to be 36 done *are possible to thee*; and, *O my Father, if it be* so far *possible* as to consist with what thy wisdom has appointed for the advancement of thy glory, and the salvation of thy people, I earnestly beseech thee that thou immediately wouldst *take away this cup* of bitterness and terror;[d] [*yea*,] *let* [*it*] now *pass from me*, and let comfort and peace return to my soul: *nevertheless*, if thou seest it necessary to continue it, or to add yet more grievous ingredients to it, I am here ready to receive it in submission to thy will, and resolutely say upon the whole, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*; for though nature cannot but shrink back from these sufferings, it is the determinate purpose of my soul to bear whatsoever thine infinite wisdom shall see fit to appoint.

And upon this, rising up from the ground on which he had lain prostrate, *he comes* 37 again *to the* three *disciples*, *and*, notwithstanding the distress that he was in, and the command that he had given them to watch, he *finds them* all *asleep*; *and he* particularly *says to Peter*, (who had but lately made such solemn protestations of his peculiar zeal and fidelity,) What, *Simon, dost thou sleep* at such a time as this? and after thou hadst just declared thy resolution to die with me, *couldst thou* so soon forget thy promise to stand by me, and *not* so much as *watch* or keep awake but for *one hour*, when

a *Called Gethsemane*, as being a very pleasant and fertile garden.] It is well known that גת שמנים *gath shemanim* signifies *the valley of fatness*. The garden probably had its name from its soil and situation, and lay in some little valley between two of those many hills, the range of which constitutes the mount of Olives; and it is with some peculiar reference to this situation, that some have rendered it *torcular olei*, or *a fat of oil*.

b *He began to be in great dejection, amazement, and anguish of mind.*] The words which our translators use here, are very flat, and fall vastly short of the emphasis of those terms in which the Evangelists describe this awful scene: for λυπεισθαι signifies *to be penetrated with* the most lively and piercing *sorrow*; and αδημονειν to be quite *depressed* and almost overwhelmed with the load. Mark expresses it, if possible, in a more forcible and stronger manner; for εκθαμβεισθαι imports the most shocking mixture of *terror* and *amazement*: and περιλυπος, in the next verse, intimates that he was *surrounded with sorrow* on every side, so that it broke in upon him with such violence, that, humanly speaking, there was no way of escape. I have endeavoured, as well as I could, to express each of these ideas in the paraphrase.—Dr. More truly observes, that Christ's continued resolution, in the midst of these agonies and supernatural horrors, was the most heroic that can be imagined, and far superior to valour in single combat, or in battle; where, in one case, the spirit is raised by natural indignation, and in the other, by the pomp of war, the sound of martial music, the example of fellow-soldiers, &c. See More's *Theolog. Works*, p. 28.—Dr. Whithy will not allow that these agonies arose from the immediate hand of God upon him, which he thinks not to be the case even of the damned in hell. But it seems impossible to prove that it is not. He rather thinks it might arise from a deep apprehension of the malignity of sin, and the misery brought upon the world by it. But considering how much the mind of Christ was wounded and broken with what he now endured, so as to give some greater external signs of distress than in any other circumstance of his sufferings, there is reason to conclude there was something extraordinary in the degree of the impression: and it surely comes much to the same, whether we say that God, by his own immediate agency, impressed some uncommon horrors on his mind, or that the strength of his spirits, and perhaps the tone of his nerves, were so impaired, that the view he had of these things should affect him to a degree of exquisite and uncommon sensibility.

c *Watch with me.*] Had they done this carefully, they would soon have found a rich equivalent for their watchful care, in the eminent improvement of their graces by this wonderful and edifying sight.

d *Take away this cup.*] Nothing is more common than to express a portion of comfort or distress by a cup, alluding to the custom of the father of a family, or master of a feast, to send to his children or guests a cup of such liquor as he designed for them. See note d, on Matt. xx. 22. p. 281: and with the texts which are referred to at the end of that note, compare Psal. xvi. 5; xxiii. 5; lxxv. 8; Jer. xvi. 7; xlix. 12; Lam. iv. 21; Ezek. xxiii. 32, 33; Hab. ii. 16; and Rev. xiv. 10; xvi. 19. In some of which texts there may, perhaps, be a reference to the way of executing some criminals by sending them a cup of poison; which is well known to have been an Eastern, though not (so far as I can learn) a Jewish custom.

SECT. 182. I was in such an agony? And you that were so ready to join with him in the same profession, could neither of you be mindful of me: and in this time of my extreme distress, *were ye* all *so unable* to perform your resolution as not *to watch one* single *hour with me?* I must again exhort you to *watch and pray* with the greatest earnestness, *that ye may not enter into* and fall by that dangerous *temptation* which is now approaching:[e]

could not ye watch with me one hour?] [Matt. xxvi 40.]

MARK XIV. 38 *the spirit indeed is forward*, and ready to express the dutiful regard that you have for me, and I know your resolutions of adhering to me are very sincere; *but* yet, as your own present experience may convince you, *the flesh is weak*;[f] and as you have been so far prevailed upon by its infirmities as to fall asleep at this very unseasonable time, so, if you are not more upon your guard, and more importunate in seeking for assistance from above, it will soon gain a much greater victory over you.

38 Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: the spirit truly *is* [willing,] but the flesh *is* weak. [Matt. xxvi. 41.]

39 *And* when he had thus gently admonished them, *he went away again the second time* to a little distance from them, *and prayed* as he had done before, *speaking* much *the same words*, or expressing himself to the like effect, with the same ardour and submission, *saying, O my Father, if* it be necessary, in the pursuance of the great end for which I came into the world, that I should endure these grievous sufferings, and *this cup cannot pass from me without my drinking it*, and wringing out, as it were, the very dregs of it, I will still humbly acquiesce and say, *Thy will be done*, how painful soever it may be to flesh and blood.

39 And again he went away [the second time,] and prayed, and spake the same words, [saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.] [Matt. xxvi. 42.]

40 *And returning back* to his three disciples, *he found them asleep again; for* the fatigue and trouble they had lately undergone had exhausted their spirits, and *their eyes were* quite *weighed down* with weariness and sorrow: and he admonished them again as before: *and* they were so thoroughly confounded that *they knew not what to answer him;* and yet immediately after, they were so weak and senseless as to relapse into the same fault again.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy;) neither wist they what to answer him. [Matt. xxvi. 43.]

MATT. XXVI. 44 LUKE XXII. 42 *And* having roused them for the present from their sleep, *he left them, and went away again and prayed the third time, speaking* much *the same words* as before, or offering petitions to the same effect:[g] *Saying, Father, if thou pleasest to take away this cup from me*, and to excuse me from the continuance of this bitter anguish and distress,[h] it is what would greatly rejoice me, and with due submission I would humbly ask it;

Matt. xxvi. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words;

Luke xxii. 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

43 *nevertheless*, as I said before, *not my will but thine be done.* *And* in this last address, his combat was so violent and severe, that he was almost overwhelmed; and therefore, for his assistance against the powers of darkness, which united their force against him in the most terrible manner, *there appeared to him an angel from heaven*, standing near him in a visible form, *strengthening him* by that sensible token of the Father's protection and favour, and suggesting such holy consolations as were most proper to animate his soul in such a struggle.[i]

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 Yet with all these assurances that he was still the charge of heaven, and quickly should be made victorious over all, his terror and distress continued; *and being in an* unspeakable *agony, he prayed* yet *more intensely* than before, insomuch that, though he was now in the open air, *and* in the cool of the night, *his sweat* ran off with uncommon violence; yea, so extraordinary was the commotion of animal nature, that blood was also forced in an amazing manner through the pores together with the sweat, which *was as it were great drops of blood falling down* from his face, and dropping in clots *on the ground*, as he bowed himself to the earth.[k]

44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 *And rising up from prayer* after this dreadful conflict, *he came* back *to his disciples*

45 And when he rose up

e *Watch and pray*, &c.] How poorly is this exhortation answered by those vigils and nocturnal offices of the Romish church, which are said to have had their original from hence! *Rhemish Testam.* p. 79.—I think it more proper, on a review, to render ὅτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε in the preceding verse, with Dr. Hammond, *Were ye so unable, &c.* than to retain our version of ὅτως, *what*, which seems a less common and less forcible sense.

f *The spirit indeed is forward* and ready, *but the flesh is weak.*] So gentle a rebuke, and so kind an apology, (as Archbishop Tillotson very justly and beautifully observes,) were the more remarkable, as our Lord's mind was now discomposed with sorrow, so that he must have the deeper and tenderer sense of the unkindness of his friends. (See Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 435.)—How apt are we to think affliction an excuse for peevishness! But how unlike are we to Christ in that thought, and unkind to ourselves as well as our friends, to whom, in such circumstances, with our best temper, we must be more troublesome than we could wish!

g *Speaking* much *the same words.*] It is plain, by comparing ver. 39. and 42. that the words were not entirely the same; and it is certain that λογος often signifies *matter;* so that no more appears to be intended than that he prayed to the same purpose as before.

h *If thou pleasest to take away this cup from me.*] The observing reader will easily perceive by the paraphrase, that I do not suppose our Lord here prayed to be excused entirely from sufferings and death. Such a petition appears to me so inconsistent with that steady constancy he always showed, and with that lively turn (John xii. 27, 28. p. 295.) in which he seems to disown such a prayer, that I think even Hooker's solution, though the best I have met with, is not satisfactory. (Hooker's *Eccles. Polity, lib.* v. § 48.) It appears to me much safer to expound it, as Sir Matthew Hale does, (in his *Contemplations*, Vol. I. p. 59.) as relating to the terror and severity of the combat in which he was now actually engaged. (See Limborch's *Theol. lib.* iii. *cap.* 13. § 17.) This throws great light on Heb. v. 7. *He was heard in that he feared.*—Since the former editions, I have had the pleasure to find this interpretation beautifully illustrated and judiciously confirmed by the learned Dr. Thomas Jackson, in his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 813, 817, 947.

i *An angel from heaven strengthening him.*] Some of the ancient christians thought it so dishonourable to Christ that he should receive such assistance from an angel, that they omitted this verse in their copies; as Jerome and Hilary inform us. It is indeed wanting in some manuscripts: but far the greatest number of copies have it; and could Hilary have proved it a spurious addition, he would, no doubt, have done it, since it so directly contradicts the wild notion he seems to maintain, that Christ was incapable of any painful sensations. (See Dr. Mill, *in loc.*)

k *His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, &c.*] Many expositors have thought, as M. Le Clerc did, that the expression [ὁ ἱδρως αὐτου ὡσει θρομβοι αιματος] only implies that his *drops of sweat were large and clammy like clots of gore:* but Dr. Whitby observes, that Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention bloody sweats as attending some extraordinary agony of mind; and I find Leti, in his *Life of Pope Sixtus V.* p. 200. and Sir John Chardin, in his *History of Persia*, Vol. I. p. 126. mentioning a like phenomenon; to which Dr. Jackson (in his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 819.) adds another from Thuanus, *lib.* x. p. 221.—Dr. Scott and Mr. Fleming both imagine that Christ now struggled with the spirits of darkness: the former says he was now surrounded with a mighty host of devils, who exercised all their force and malice to persecute and distract his innocent soul; and the latter supposes that Satan hoped, by overpowering him here, to have prevented the accomplishment of the prophecies relating to the manner and circumstances of his death. (See Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 149. and Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 130.) But however this be, I can hardly think, as Dr. Scott suggests, that there was some supernatural agency of those evil spirits in the drowsiness of the disciples, since the sacred historian is silent on this head, and refers it to another cause.

from prayer, and was come to his disciples [Mark, the third time,] he found them sleeping for sorrow. [Matt. xxvi. 45. Mark xiv. 41.]

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Matt. xxvi. 45. And he saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; [It is enough;] behold, the hour is [come,] and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [Mark xiv. 41.]

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. [Mark xiv. 42.]

the third time, and notwithstanding the repeated admonitions he had given them, he again *found them sleeping; for* their senses were quite stupified, and their spirits exhausted with *sorrow*. *And he said to them, Why do you* still go on to *sleep* at such a season as this? This drowsy disposition makes it necessary to renew my exhortation, and to call upon you yet once more to *arise and pray that you may not enter into* a circumstance of very dangerous *temptation*. But as all this did not sufficiently rouse them, *and* he knew those that came to apprehend him were just now entering the garden, *he* altered his voice, and *said to them* in an ironical manner, You may *now sleep on* if you can, *and take your rest* as long as you please: I have been calling you to watch; but *it is* now *enough;* for this season of watching is over, and I have no farther need to press you to it: you will now be roused by another kind of alarm than what my words have given; for *behold, the* long-expected *hour is* at length *come, and the Son of man is* even now *betrayed into the hands of* the most inhuman *sinners*. *Arise*, therefore, *and let us go* along with them whithersoever they shall lead us: for *behold, he that betrayeth me is just at hand*. Accordingly Judas and his retinue immediately appeared, and seized him in the manner which will be next related.

SECT. 182.

LUKE XXII. 46

MATT XXVI. 45

46

IMPROVEMENT.

On the most transient survey of this amazing story, we cannot but fall into deep admiration. What a sight is here! Let our souls turn aside to behold it with a becoming temper, and surely we must wonder how the disciples could sleep in the midst of a scene which might almost have awakened rocks and trees to compassion. Ver. 40, 43

Behold the Prince of life, God's incarnate and only-begotten Son, *drinking of the brook in the way*, (Psal. cx. 7.) and not only tasting, but drawing in full draughts of that bitter cup which his heavenly Father put into his hands on this awful occasion. Let us behold him kneeling, and even prostrate on the ground, and there pouring out his *strong cries and tears to him that was able to save him from death*. (Heb. v. 7.) Let us view him in this bloody agony, and say, *If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* (Luke xxiii. 31.) If even Christ himself was so depressed with sorrow and amazement, and the distress and anguish he endured were such, that in his agony the sweat ran from him like great drops of blood, when *our iniquities were laid upon him*, and it *pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief*, (Isa. liii. 6, 10.) how must the sinner then be filled with horror, and with what dreadful agonies of anguish and despair will he be overwhelmed, when he shall bear the burden of his own iniquities, and God shall pour out all his wrath upon him? Behold how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!* (Heb. x. 31.)

LUKE XXII. 41, 42

44

Here was no human enemy near our blessed Redeemer; yet such invisible terrors set themselves in array against him, that his very soul was poured out like water; nor was there any circumstance of his sufferings in which he discovered a greater commotion of spirit. Nevertheless, his pure and holy soul bare all this without any irregular perturbation. In all this he sinned not by a murmuring word or an impatient thought: he shone the brighter for the furnace of affliction, and gave us at once the most wonderful and the most amiable pattern of resignation to the divine disposal, when he said, *Father, not as I will but as thou wilt*.—May this be our language under every trial! Lord, we could wish it was; and we would maintain a holy watchfulness over our own souls, that we may be so! But in this respect, as well as in every other, we find that even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. How happy is it for us that the blessed Jesus knows our frame, and has learnt, by what he himself suffered in our frail nature, to make the most compassionate allowance for its various infirmities! Let us learn to imitate this his gentle and gracious conduct, even in an hour of so much distress. Let us bear with, and let us pity each other, not aggravating every neglect of our friends into a crime, but rather speaking of their faults in the mildest terms, and making the most candid excuses for what we cannot defend. Let us exercise such a temper even in the most gloomy and dejected moments of life; which surely may well be expected of us, who ourselves need so much compassion and indulgence almost from every one with whom we converse; and, which is infinitely more, who owe our all to the forbearance of that God of whose mercy it is that we are not utterly consumed.

MATT. XXVI. 38

39, 42

41

SECTION CLXXXIII.

Jesus is betrayed by Judas, and seized by the guard, to whom, after glorious displays of his power, he voluntarily surrenders himself, and is then forsaken by all his disciples. Matt. xxvi. 47—56. Mark xiv. 43—52. Luke xxii. 47—53. John xviii. 2—12.

JOHN xviii. 2.

AND Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

JOHN xviii. 2.

NOW when our Lord was thus retired to the garden, *Judas also that betrayed him knew the place; for Jesus often resorted thither* in company *with his disciples*,[a] and had particularly done it again and again since his coming up to spend this passover at Jerusalem. (Compare Luke xxi. 37. p. 334.) *Judas therefore, taking* with him *a band* [*of soldiers*,] or a Roman cohort, with their captain, (see ver. 12.) *and* some Jewish *officers*, sent for that purpose *from the chief priests and* other *Pharisees* belonging to the sanhedrim, who were chiefly concerned in this affair, *comes thither with torches, and lamps, and* hostile *weapons;* which they brought with them, though it was now full moon, to use their arms, if they should meet with any opposition, or to discover him by their lights, if

SECT. 183.

JOHN XVIII. 3

a *Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples.*] It was probably a garden which belonged to one of Christ's friends, and to which he had a liberty of retiring whenever he pleased. And here accordingly he often used to spend some considerable time in prayer and pious converse, in the evenings or nights after his indefatigable labours in the city and temple by day. It is indeed amazing how flesh and blood could go through such incessant fatigues; but it is very probable Christ might exert some miraculous power over his own animal nature, to strengthen it for such difficult services, and to preserve it in health and vigour; otherwise the copious dews which fall by night in those parts, must have been very dangerous, (as I have elsewhere hinted, § 86. note c,) especially when the body was heated by preaching in the day, and often by travelling several miles on foot.

SECT. 183. he should go about to hide himself, as they foolishly imagined he might, among the private walks or other recesses of the garden.

MARK XIV. 43 *And immediately, while he was yet speaking* to his disciples, and giving them the alarm mentioned in the close of the last section, *behold*, this very *Judas, one of the twelve* apostles, *came* into the garden, *and with him a great multitude* of persons of very different stations and offices in life, who were sent with authority *from the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of the people;* and, more effectually to execute their orders, they were armed *with swords and staves*, to seize him by violence, if any resistance should be made to the attempt; and there were also with them some persons of superior rank and quality, who, full of impatient and malicious zeal, could not forbear mingling themselves with the dregs 44 of the people upon this infamous occasion. (See Luke xxii. 52. p. 369.) *Now he that betrayed him went* a little *before* the rest of *them;* [*and*] that they might not be mistaken in the person, he *had given them a signal* by which they might distinguish Jesus from any others who might chance to be with him,[b] *saying, He whom I shall kiss* at my first entering into the garden, *is the person* you are commissioned to take;[c] be sure therefore to *lay hold of him* immediately, *and lead him away safely;* for he has sometimes made strange escapes from those that have attempted to take him, and if he get away from you 45 after this signal, it will be your fault, and not mine.[d] *And* accordingly, *being come* into the garden, *he drew near to Jesus to kiss him*, as a signal to the company to seize him; [*and*] *going directly to him*, with an air of the greatest respect, as if he had been impatient of his absence during those few hours which had passed since he saw him last, and was quite transported with joy to meet him again, *he said*, with the fairest appearances of duty and friendship, *Hail* to thee, *Rabbi, Rabbi!* May the greatest pleasure and happiness MATT. continually attend thee! *And* upon this *he kissed him. But Jesus*, well understanding XXVI. the perfidious purposes concealed under this fond address, answered with great mildness, 50 yet with becoming spirit, and *said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?* and whence is all this ceremony and transport? Think of it, *Judas!* Is this the friendship thou hast so often boasted? Alas, *dost thou betray* him whom thou canst not but know to be *the Son of man, with* such *a* treacherous *kiss?*[e] And dost thou think that he can be imposed upon by this poor artifice? or that God, who has promised him so glorious and triumphant a kingdom, will not punish such baseness and cruelty to him?

JOHN XVIII. *Then Jesus*, though he fully understood what was to follow this perfidious salutation, as *knowing all* the dreadful *things that were coming upon him,*[f] yet did not attempt to 4 escape, or to withdraw himself out of the power of his enemies: nevertheless he determined to show them that he could easily have done it; and therefore, as they now upon the signal that was given them, were drawing near to seize him, he *went forth* towards his enemies, *and said to them*, with the greatest composure of mind, *Whom do you* come to *seek* 5 here? And *they* were so confounded at the air of majesty and intrepidity with which he appeared, that without saying they were come for him, they only *answered him*, We are come to seek *Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus says to them*, You have the person then before you; *I am* [*he.*] *And Judas also who betrayed him*, then *stood with them;* and he who formerly had followed Christ as one of his disciples, now sorted with his open and 6 avowed enemies. *Then as soon as he had said to them, I am* [*he,*] there went forth such a secret energy of divine power with those words, that all their united force was utterly unable to resist it, so that *they* presently *drew back*, as afraid to approach him, though unarmed and unguarded, *and fell* at once *to the ground*,[g] as if they had been struck with 7 lightning. Yet a few moments after, recovering from this consternation, they arose and rallied again; and *then* as they came up the second time, *he asked them again, Whom do* 8 *ye seek?* *And they said* to him as before, *Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus answered* them, *I have* already *told you that I am* [*he:*] *If therefore you seek me* alone, you may *let*

Mark xiv. 43. And immediately, while he yet spake, [lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came,] and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders [of the people.] [Matt. xxvi. 47. Luke xxii. 47.]

44 And he that betrayed him [Luke, went before them, *and*] had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, [hold him fast,] and lead *him* away safely. [Matt. xxvi. 48. Luke xxii. 47.]

45 And as soon as he was come, he [Luke, drew near unto Jesus to kiss him; *and*] goeth straightway to him, and saith, [Hail,] Master, Master! and kissed him. [Matt. xxvi. 49. Luke xxii. 47.]

Matt. xxvi. 50. [But] Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? [Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?] [Luke xxii. 48.]

John xviii. 4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he.* And Judas also which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he,* they went backward and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he.* If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

b *Had given them a signal.*] As those that came to apprehend him were strangers to Jesus, and it was now night, and there were twelve persons together, probably dressed much alike, such a signal might be thought more necessary.

c *He whom I shall kiss is the person.*] It is indeed probable, as Dr. Guyse and others observe, that our Lord, in great condescension, had used (according to the Jewish custom) to permit his disciples thus to salute him, when they returned to him after having been any time absent.

d *Lead him away safely;* for he has sometimes made strange escapes, &c.] Compare Luke iv. 30; John viii. 59; x. 39. I am ready to imagine from this precaution, that Judas might suspect that Christ would on this occasion renew the miracles he had formerly wrought for his own deliverance, though he had so expressly declared the contrary. See Matt. xxvi. 24. § 341.

e *Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?*] There is great reason to believe that our Lord uses this phrase of *the Son of man* to Judas on this occasion, (as he had done the same evening at supper twice in a breath,) in the sense here given; (compare note i, on Matt. xxvi. 24. § 170.) and it adds a spirit to these words that has not often been observed, which the attentive reader will discern to be attended with much greater strength and beauty than if our Lord had only said, *Dost thou betray* me *with a kiss?*

f *Knowing all things that were coming upon him.*] Our Lord not only knew in general that he should suffer some great evil, and even death itself, but was acquainted also with the particular circumstances of ignominy and horror that should attend his sufferings: which accordingly he largely foretold, (see Matt. xx. 18, 19. and the parallel places, p. 280.) though many of these circumstances were as contingent as can well be imagined. It is impossible to enter aright into the heroic behaviour of our Lord Jesus Christ, without carrying this circumstance along with us. The critics are in raptures at the gallantry of Achilles in going to the Trojan war, when he knew (according to Homer) that he should fall there: but he must have a very low way of thinking, who does not see infinitely more fortitude in our Lord's conduct on this great occasion, when this circumstance, so judiciously though so modestly suggested by St. John, is duly attended to.

g *They drew back, and fell to the ground.*] As there were scribes and priests among them, they must have read of the destruction of those companies which came to seize the prophet Elijah, (2 Kings i. 10, 12.) a fact which bore so great a resemblance to this, that it is an amazing instance of the most obdurate wickedness that they should venture to renew the assault on Christ, after so sensible an experience both of his power and mercy. Nothing seems more probable than that these wretches might endeavour to persuade themselves and their attendants, that this strange repulse was effected by some demon in confederacy with Jesus, who opposed the execution of justice upon him; and they might, perhaps, ascribe it to the special providence of God, rather than to the indulgence of Jesus, that they had received no farther damage. The most corrupt heart has its reasonings to support it in its absurdest notions and most criminal actions.

these my companions and friends *go their way* in safety ;[h] and indeed I shall insist upon that as a condition of surrendering myself to you, which you may easily perceive I could refuse if I thought fit. And this he said, *that the saying he uttered* before *might* farther *be* illustrated and *accomplished*, " *Of those whom thou*, my heavenly Father, *hast given me*, " *I have lost*, and will lose, *none*."[i] (See John xvii. 12. p. 361.)

SECT 183.

JOHN XVIII. 9.

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none.

Matt. xxvi. 50. Then came they, and laid [their] hands on Jesus, and took him. [Mark. xiv. 46.]

Luke xxi. 49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword ?

And *then*, as he was speaking this, *they* that were sent to apprehend him *came and laid their hands upon Jesus, and took him* prisoner, without his making any manner of resistance. *Now*, upon this, *when his disciples saw* that they had seized him, and began to apprehend *what would be the consequence* of these things, *they said to him, Lord, shall we smite* these impious wretches *with the sword ?* for we doubt not but, as few as we are, thou canst render us victorious over this armed multitude. *And*, without staying for his answer, *behold, one of them that were with Jesus*, [*even*] *Simon Peter*,[k] *having a sword, stretched out his hand and drew it* with a rash, inconsiderate zeal, *and smote a servant of the high-priest, whose name was Malchus*, who was one of the forwardest, and seemed particularly officious in seizing Christ ;[l] *and* he struck full at his head, intending to cleave him down, but the stroke glanced a little on one side, so that he only *cut off his right ear.*

MATT. XXVI. 51

51

Matt. xxvi. 51. And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, [John, *even* Simon Peter, having a sword,] stretched out his hand, and [John, drew it, and] struck a servant of the high-priest's, [John, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.] [Mark xiv. 47. Luke xxii. 50. John xviii. 10.]

Then Jesus, being determined to surrender himself into the hands of his enemies, and still to show that such a surrender was the effect not of compulsion but of choice, *said unto Peter, Return thy sword into the sheath again ; for* I will not have recourse to this or any other method of defence : and indeed, *all that take the sword shall perish by the sword*, and they that are most ready to take up arms are commonly the first that will fall by them ; which might be intended as an intimation that the Jews, who were now drawing the sword against him, should ere long perish by it in a very miserable manner, as they quickly after did in the Roman war : and that the sword of divine vengeance, in one form or another, would quickly find out all his implacable enemies. And besides, Peter, *dost thou think* that I want the aid of thy feeble arm, and *that I cannot now entreat my Father, and* have such interest with him, that *he would presently furnish me with* a celestial army for my guard, marshalled in dreadful array, and consisting of *more than twelve legions of angels ?*[m] *But how then*, if I should thus stand on my defence, *shall the scriptures be fulfilled*, even the very prophecies which I came to accomplish, which have so expressly foretold *that thus it must be ?* Or how should I approve my submission to him that sent me ? You only look at second causes, and have but an imperfect view of things ; but I consider all the sufferings I am now to meet as under a divine direction and appointment, and regard them as *the cup which my Father has given me ;* and, when considered in that view, *shall I not* willingly submit to *drink it ?* Shall I not acquiesce in what I know to be his will ? or would it be the part of a dutiful and affectionate Son to dispute the determinations of his paternal wisdom and love ?

51

52

JOHN XVIII. 11

52 Then said Jesus unto [Peter,] Put up again thy sword into [the sheath ;] for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. [John xviii. 11.]

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be ?

John xviii. 11. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?

Then, without any opposition, he surrendered himself into the hands of those that came to apprehend him : and all uniting in their enmity against him, *the band* of Roman soldiers, *with the captain* at their head, *and the Jewish officers* that came with them, *seized Jesus* as a malefactor, *and* presently *bound him* to prevent his escape. *But* as they were binding him, *Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye* at least that I may have my hands at liberty *thus far*, and stay but for a moment while I add one act of power and compassion to those I have already done : *and* calling Malchus to him, *he touched his ear, and* immediately *healed him*.[n]

12

LUKE XXII. 51

12 Then the band, and the captain and officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him.

Luke xxii. 51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far ? And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Then Jesus said in that same hour to the chief priests, and to the captains of the temple guard,[o] *and to the elders* of the people, or to those members of the sanhedrim *who*

52

52 Then Jesus said [in that same hour] unto the

h *Let these go their way.*] What tenderness was here towards those who had so lately neglected him, (sleeping while he was in such an extreme agony,) that yet he would not suffer them to be terrified by so much as a short imprisonment ! and the words also intimate that he intended presently to dismiss them, as probably not thinking it convenient to appear before his judges with such an attendance. His disciples, perhaps, might consider this speech as an excuse for their forsaking him ; but had they viewed it in a just light, it would rather have appeared a strong engagement upon them to have waited for that fair dismission which our Lord seemed about to give them.

i *I have lost none.*] Jansenius justly observes that it was a remarkable instance of the power of Christ over the spirits of men, that they so far obeyed his word as not to seize Peter when he had cut off the ear of Malchus, or John, while he stood by the cross, though they must know them to have been of the number of his most intimate associates.

k *Even Simon Peter.*] None of the Evangelists but John mentions the name of Peter on this occasion ; which, perhaps, the others omitted lest it should expose him to any prosecution ; but John, writing long after his death, needed no such precaution.

l *Smote a servant of the high-priest, &c.*] One would have thought, as Bishop Hall observes, he should rather have struck Judas ; but the traitor, perhaps, on giving the signal, had mingled himself with the crowd ; or Peter might not understand the treacherous design of his kiss ; or seeing Malchus more eager than the rest in his attack on Christ, he might postpone all other resentments to indulge the present sally of his indignation.—Though this might seem a courageous action, it was really very imprudent ; and had not Christ, by some secret influence, overawed their spirits, it is very probable (as the pious Sir Matthew Hale observes) that not only Peter, but the rest of the apostles, would have been cut to pieces. (Hale's *Contemplations*, p. 254.)

m *More than twelve legions of angels.*] The Roman armies were composed of legions, which did not always consist of the same number of men, but are computed at this time to have contained above six thousand ; and twelve legions were more than were commonly intrusted with their greatest generals. (See note e, on Luke viii. 30. p. 140.) How dreadfully irresistible would such an army of angels have been, when one of these celestial spirits was able to destroy 185,000 Assyrians at one stroke ! 2 Kings xix. 35.

n *He touched his ear, and healed him.*] As this was an act of great compassion, so likewise it was an instance of singular wisdom ; for it would effectually prevent those reflections and censures on Jesus which the rashness of Peter's attack might otherwise have occasioned.

o *The captains of the temple.*] There was indeed a Roman guard and commanding officer which attended near the temple during the time of the great feasts, in order to prevent any sedition of the Jews : (see Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 4. [al. 6.] § 3 ; and *Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 8.) And this appears to be the band and captain mentioned here by John, ver. 12. where the word in the original is χιλιαρχος, which plainly shows it was a *Roman officer*, and is the title given to Lysias, (Acts xxi. 31. *et seq.*) who was commander of the garrison kept by the Romans in the castle of Antonia ; from whence there were detachments sent at the time of the feasts, and posted in the porticoes of the temple, to suppress any tumults among the people, when such great numbers flocked together.—But for these captains of the temple spoken of by Luke, there is no doubt but they were Jewish officers, who are said by John to have attended with the former ; of whom it is to be observed, that as the priests kept watch in three places of the temple,

SECT. 183. (as was said before, p. 367.) *were* so forgetful of the dignity of their character as to *come to him* themselves with the dregs of the populace, at this unseasonable time, and on this infamous occasion: to these he said, [*and*] *to the multitude* that now surrounded him, For

LUKE XXII. 53 what imaginable reason *are you come out* against me, *as against a robber* that would make a desperate resistance, armed in this way, *with swords and staves*, as if you came *to seize me* at the hazard of your lives? *When I was with you every day*, as I have been for some time past, [*and*] publicly *sat teaching in the temple*, you had opportunities enough to have secured me, if there was any crime with which you could have charged me; yet then *you did not apprehend me*, [*or*] offer to *stretch out* [*your*] *hands against me*. *But* I know the reason better than you yourselves do: you have hitherto been kept under a secret restraint, which is now removed; and *this is your hour* in which God has let you loose against me, *and the power of darkness* is now permitted to rage with peculiar violence; for it is under the instigation of Satan and his infernal powers that you now act,

MATT. XXVI. 56 with whatever pious names you may affect to consecrate the deed. *And* in *all this*, I know that both you and they are secretly over-ruled by Divine Providence, to accomplish events most contrary to your own schemes; and it *is done that* what is written concerning me in *the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled?*[p] I therefore resign myself into your hands, though I have given you abundant evidence that I am not destitute of the means of deliverance, if I was inclined to use them.

chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, [*and* to the multitude,] Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves [for to take me?] [Matt. xxvi. 55. Mark xiv. 48.]

53 When I was daily with you, [*and* sat teaching] in the temple, ye [Mark, took me not, *and*] stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. [Matt. xxvi. 55. Mark xiv. 49.]

Matt. xxvi. 56. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.—

Then all the disciples, who but a little while before had solemnly protested that they would never leave him, when they now saw him bound in the hands of his enemies, according to his repeated predictions, *forsook him and fled*;[q] each of them shifting for his own safety as well as he could, and seeking to shelter himself either among friends or strangers.

—Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled [Mark xiv. 49, 50.]

MARK XVI. 51 *And a certain youth* who lodged in a house near the garden, and was waked by the noise of this tumult, *having* an affection for Jesus, and apprehending him in danger, arose out of bed with nothing but *a linen cloth* in which he lay, *thrown about his naked body*: and he *followed him* a little way after the rest of his disciples were gone, transported into a forgetfulness of his own dress, by his concern for Jesus: *and the young men* that made a part of the guard, suspecting he was one that belonged to Jesus, *laid hold on him.*

Mark xiv. 51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him.

52 *But he, leaving the sheet* which was wrapped about him in their hands, *fled away from them naked*, in the utmost consternation. After which Jesus was led to the palace of the high-priest, and condemned there in the manner which will presently be related.

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE heroic behaviour of the blessed Jesus, in the whole period of his sufferings, will easily make itself observed by every attentive eye, though the sacred historians, according to their usual but wonderful simplicity, make no

JOHN XVIII. 4 encomiums upon it. With what composure does he go forth to meet the traitor! With what calmness does he receive that malignant kiss! With what dignity does he deliver himself into the hands of his enemies, yet plainly showing his superiority over them, and leading, as it were, even then, captivity captive!

8, 9, 11 We see him generously capitulating for the safety of his friends, while he neglected his own; and afterwards, not only forbidding all the defence they attempted to make, but curing that wound which one of his enemies had

LUKE XXII. 51 received in this assault on him. With what meek majesty did he say, Suffer ye at least thus far! *And he touched his ear, and healed him.* We hear his words, we behold his actions, with astonishment: but surely our indignation must rise within us when we see so amiable and excellent a Person thus injured and abused; when we see the

47, 48 MATT. XXVI. 56 Son of man betrayed with a kiss: betrayed by his intimate friend, who had *eaten of his bread*, and yet *lifted up his heel against him*; (John xiii. 18.) and at the same time forsaken by all his disciples, even by him whom he most tenderly loved, and who had so often leant on his bosom. Let us not wonder if some of our friends prove false, and others seem to forget us, when we have the greatest need of their assistance. When we deserve so much less friendship than Christ did, let us not think it strange if we find but little more. Nor can we reasonably be so

JOHN XVIII. 6, 12 much amazed as we might otherwise have been, to see sinners going on under the most awful rebukes of Providence; when we consider that these wretches who had been struck down to the ground by one word of Christ's mouth, should immediately rise up and stretch forth their impious hands against him, to seize and bind him; though they might well have known that they lived only by his indulgence and forbearance, and that the same word that struck them down to the ground could have laid them dead there. Touch our hearts, O Lord, by thy grace, or it will be in vain that we are smitten with thy rod!

MATT. XXVI. 53 In all the remainder of this story, let us remember that Jesus voluntarily gave himself up to sufferings which he circumstantially foreknew,—even though he could have commanded to his assistance whole legions of angels. His

and the Levites in twenty-one, so their leaders were called στρατηγοι του ιερου, or *captains of the temple*; and Josephus more than once speaks of one of the Jewish priests by this title. (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 6. [al. 5.] § 2. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 3; and *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 17. § 2.) (See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.* and Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* part i. Vol. I. book i. chap. ii. § 15.)

p *That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.*] This was a consideration which, if duly applied, might have prevented his disciples from being offended at his sufferings: and it strongly intimates that he still kept up the claim which he had formerly made of being the Messiah; and that what he was now to go through, was so far from being at all inconsistent with that claim, that, on the whole, it was absolutely necessary in order to make it out to full satisfaction.

q *All the disciples forsook him and fled.*] Perhaps they were afraid that the action of Peter should be imputed to them all, and might bring their lives into danger. But whatever they apprehended, their precipitate flight in these circumstances was the basest cowardice and ingratitude; considering not only how lately they had been warned of their danger, and what solemn promises they had made of a courageous adherence to Christ, but also what an agony they had just seen him in, what zeal he had a few moments before showed in their defence, and what amazing power he had exerted to terrify his enemies into a compliance with that part of his demand which related to the safety of his friends. He had also at the same time intimated his purpose of giving them a speedy and kind dismission; so that it was very indecent thus to run away without it, especially as Christ's prophecy of their continued usefulness in his church was equivalent to a promise of their preservation, whatever danger they might now meet with. But our Lord probably permitted it, that we might learn not to depend too confidently even on the friendship of the very best of men.

Father's will, was an answer to all that nature could plead in its own cause; and the good hand from which this cup of his severest sufferings came, reconciled him to all the bitterest ingredients it contained. How reasonable, then, is it that we, who, having had fathers of our flesh that corrected us, submitted to the rod and gave them reverence, should *much rather*, after the example of our innocent and holy Redeemer, *be in subjection to the Father of* our *spirits, and live!* (Heb. xii. 9.) SECT. 183. JOHN XVIII.

SECTION CLXXXIV.

Jesus is conducted to the palace of Caiaphas; Peter follows him thither, and denies him thrice. Matt. xxvi. 57, 58, 69, *to the end.* Mark xiv. 53, 54, 66, *to the end.* Luke xxii. 54—62. John xviii. 13—18, 24—27.

JOHN xviii. 13.

JOHN xviii. 13.

AND *they* led him away to Annas first, (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year.)

24 (Now Annas—sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest.)

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Matt. xxvi. 57. And they that had laid hold on Jesus, [Luke, took him and] led *him* away, [Luke, and brought him into the house of] Caiaphas the high-priest, where [all the chief-priests, and] the scribes, and the elders, were assembled [with him.] [Mark xiv. 53. Luke xxii. 54.]

John xviii. 15. And Simon Peter followed Jesus [afar off,] and *so did* another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest. [Matt. xxvi. 58. Mark xiv. 54. Luke xxii. 54.]

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

Luke xxii. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them, [with the servants to see the end,] [Mark, and warmed himself at the fire.] [Matt. xxvi. 58. Mark xiv. 54.]

Mark xiv. 66. And as Peter [sat without] beneath in the palace, there cometh [unto him] one of the maids of the high-priest, [John, the damsel that kept the door.] [Matt. xxvi. 69. John xviii. 17.] 67 And when she saw Peter, [Luke, as he sat by the fire] warming himself, she looked [Luke, earnestly] upon him, and said, [Luke, This man was also with him:] [John, Art not

THE officers *and* people having thus apprehended Jesus in the manner described above, *they led him away* from the garden of Gethsemane to those who had employed them, and brought him *first to* the house of *Annas; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high-priest that year,*[a] or bore the office at that time; *And Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest,* as judging it most proper that the rest of the council should upon this occasion be convened at his palace. *Now* this *Caiaphas was he* whom we mentioned above, (John xi. 49—51, sect. cxli.) *who gave* it as his *advice to the Jews, that it was fit that one man,* though innocent, *should die for* the preservation of *the people;* in which words he uttered a kind of oracle, which (as we there observed) contained a far nobler and sublimer sense than he himself intended or understood. SECT. 184. JOHN XVIII. 14

And they who apprehended Jesus, took and led him away from Annas like a criminal in bonds, *and,* according to the directions which Annas had given them, *brought him to the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest; where,* though it was now the dead time of the night, *all the chief-priests, and the scribes, and the elders,* or the chief persons of the sanhedrim, with their proper officers, met together on a summons from Caiaphas, and *were assembled with him,* waiting for Jesus to be brought before them. MATT. XXVI. 57

And though *Simon Peter* had at first forsaken Christ, and shifted for himself, as the rest of his companions did, yet afterward he *and another disciple,* even the Evangelist John, bethought themselves, and determined to return; and accordingly they *followed Jesus afar off,*[b] desiring to see what would become of him: *and* as *that* other *disciple was known to the high-priest,*[c] he was admitted without any objection or impediment, *and went into the palace of the high-priest with Jesus* and the guard that attended him. *But Peter,* who had no interest or acquaintance there, *stood* waiting *without at the door: That other disciple, therefore, who was known to the high-priest went out* of the inner room into which Jesus was then carried in order to his examination, *and spake to her that kept the door* to open it; *and* so by her consent *brought in Peter. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the* large *hall, and were set down together, Peter,* hoping to pass undiscovered by mingling with the rest of the company, *sat down among them with the servants,* that he might be at hand *to see the end* of this affair, *and warmed himself at the fire,* while they were examining Jesus with circumstances which we shall afterwards mention.[d] JOHN XVIII. 15 16 LUKE XXII. 55

And, during the time that this important event was depending, *as Peter was sitting* among the servants *without* the room where Jesus was examined, and thought to have continued unsuspected *in the hall below, there came to him one of the maid-servants* belonging to the family *of the high-priest,* who was indeed *the* same *damsel that* (as we just now said) had *kept the door: And seeing Peter as he sat warming himself by the fire, she fixed her eyes earnestly upon him, and* observing in his countenance the appearance of great concern, she *said* to some that stood near her, I cannot but think that *this man* is a follower of Jesus, and *was also* one that used to be *with him:*[e] and upon this MARK XIV. 66 67

a *Led him away, first to Annas, &c.*] It appears from Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 2. [al. 3.] § 2. p. 873. Havercamp.) that Annas, whom he calls Ananus, had been high-priest before his son-in-law Caiaphas; and it seems to have been by his interest, that first Eleazar his own son, and then Caiaphas, who married his daughter, and probably had been his deputy, obtained that dignity: so that though he had resigned that office himself, yet the people paid so much regard to his experience, that they brought Jesus first to him, who, no doubt, took all necessary care to prepare Caiaphas for receiving him, as he could not but know that this was a most critical juncture. We do not read of any thing remarkable which passed at the house of Annas; for which reason his being carried thither is omitted by the other Evangelists. Cyril adds, και απεστειλαν αυτον δεδεμενον προς Καιαφαν τον Αρχιερεα, *and they sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest;* which addition Erasmus, Beza, and many others have thought it necessary to admit, both to account for the word πρωτον, *first,* in the preceding clause, and to reconcile John with the other Evangelists, who all agree that the scene of Peter's fall was the palace of Caiaphas, not of Annas. Yet as almost the same words occur in ver. 24. it is sufficient to transpose that verse, and introduce it here; which is intimated in the margin of some of our Bibles. For the phrase of being high-priest that year, see note a, on John xi. 49. p. 279.

b *Followed Jesus afar off.*] It appears from hence, that Peter and John recovered themselves quickly after their flight, or else they could not have followed him at some distance, and yet be so near as to be ready to go into Caiaphas's house with him.

c *That disciple was known to the high-priest.*] We cannot imagine the acquaintance was very intimate, considering the great diversity of their rank and station in life; but a thousand occurrences occasion some knowledge of each other, between persons whose conditions are as unequal.

d *And warmed himself at the fire,* while they were examining Jesus, &c.] It is remarkable that all the Evangelists record the fall of Peter, and none with circumstances of greater aggravation than Mark, whose gospel is said to have been reviewed by Peter himself, and indeed written from his preaching. (See note d, on Mark xiv. 31. p. 359.) Though Christ's examination happened during this interval, (which occasions Matthew, Mark, and John to interrupt this story to recount that,) I rather chose, as Luke has done, to take the whole of it together, as best suiting the design of this work.

e *This man was also with him.*] Her sex, and perhaps we may add, her office, will not permit us to suppose that she had been in the garden with the multitude that apprehended Jesus: she therefore must guess by Peter's countenance, that he was one of his friends; unless possibly she had seen them together in the temple or elsewhere.

SECT. 184. presumption, she charged him directly with it, and said, Tell us truly, *Art not thou* thyself *also* [*one*] *of this man's disciples?*[f] There is a great deal of room to think it; *yea*, I am fully satisfied that *thou wast also with* him, even with this *Jesus the Nazarene of Galilee*,

LUKE XXII. 57 who is now on his trial. *And* Peter was so surprised at this unexpected discovery, that *he* roundly and confidently *denied him before them all*,[g] *and said, Woman*, I profess that *I am not* his disciple; nay, that *I do not* so much as *know him*;[h] *nor do I understand what thou meanest* in charging me with being one of his associates; for I am sure thou

MARK XIV. 68 mightest as well have fixed on any other person in the company. *And* upon this, turning away as one who was affronted at the charge, *he went out into the portico*;[i] *and* while he was there *the cock crew*.[k]

JOHN XVIII. 18 *And the servants and officers* who had brought Jesus thither, and were now waiting for the issue of his trial, still *stood there* in the hall, *having* (as we before observed) *made a* large *fire of coals; for* they had been abroad in the night, and *it was cold*,[l] *and they were warming themselves* at the fire. *And Simon Peter*, having staid a while in the portico, where he not only must have been incommoded by the sharpness of the air, but was, no doubt, in a restless commotion of mind on account of what had passed, came in again, and, having mingled with the servants, *stood* at the fire-side *to warm himself*

MATT. XXVI. 71 *amongst them. And when he had* thus *been gone out into the portico*, and was returned into the hall, *after a little while another maid saw him again, and said to them that were there*, (as her fellow-servant had done just before,) Whatever he pretends, I verily believe *this* [*man*] *was also with Jesus of Nazareth: and* presently [*she*] *began to say* openly *to them that stood by, Surely this is* [*one*] *of them* that have endeavoured to bring all the nation into confusion, and while he would pass for a friend, is crept in

JOHN XVIII. 25 hither as a spy. *They therefore*, taking notice of what both these women had spoken, began to tax him with it, and *said to him*, What, have we a rebel so near us? Let us know plainly who thou art: *art not thou also*, who pretendest to enter these doors as a

LUKE XXII. 58 friend, [*one*] *of his disciples* who has been doing so much mischief? *And* as he seemed in great confusion, *another man* that stood by *saw him* perplexed, and therefore charged it home upon him, *and said*, It is certainly so; *thou art also* [*one*] *of them*, and deservest

MATT. XXVI. 72 to suffer with thy Master. *And Peter*, as he could not bear his being taxed so closely with it, that he might take off all suspicion of his belonging unto Jesus, *again denied* [*him*] in the strongest manner, even *with an oath*,[m] *and said, Man*, why dost thou talk thus? I solemnly assure thee, and call God to witness to it, that *I am not* one of them; and that indeed *I do not* so much as *know the man*, but came in hither out of mere curiosity to learn the occasion of this public alarm, without the least interest in him, or any concern at all on his account, whatever may become of him.

LUKE XXII. 59 *And* as he still continued there, imagining that he should now be safe from any farther challenge, *after a while, about the space of one hour after* he had thus denied him, *another man* in the company *confidently affirmed* that the former charge was just, *saying, Of a truth this man was also with him*, and is a follower of this Jesus; *for* it is plain *he also is a Galilean*, and every one knows that most of his disciples are of that country.

MARK XIV. 70 *And* upon this *they that stood by came to him, and said to Peter again, Surely* it is as this man asserts; and, notwithstanding thy denying it, there is no room to doubt but *thou art also* [*one*] *of them, for thou art* certainly *a Galilean: and* I know it, said one that was there, by *thy speech:* for such I have observed to be thy dialect and accent as *agrees* [*to that*] country, [*and*] plainly *discovers thee* to be of Galilee, as most of this man's sedi-

JOHN XVIII. 26 tious followers are. And *one of the* domestic *servants of the high-priest, being a relation of his whose ear Peter had cut off*, pressed the charge home upon him, and *said*, How can you have the assurance to deny it? Take heed what you say: *did not I* myself *see*

MATT. XXVI. 74 *thee in the garden with him? Then Peter*, being terrified to the last degree to think of the danger to which he should be exposed if he was discovered to be the person that made

thou also *one* of this man's disciples?] And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth [of Galilee.] [Matt. xxvi. 69. Luke xxii. 56. John xviii. 17.]

Luke xxii. 57. And he denied him [before them all] saying, Woman, [John, I am not;] I know him not, [Mark, neither understand I what thou sayest.] [Matt. xxvi. 70. Mark xiv. 68. John xviii. 17.]

Mark xiv. 68. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew.

John xviii. 18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold,) and they warmed themselves; and [Simon] Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. [John xviii. 25.]

Matt. xxvi. 71. And when he was gone out into the porch, [Luke, after a little while] another [maid] saw him [again,] and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth: [and *she* began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.] [Mark xiv. 69. Luke xxii. 58.]

John xviii. 25. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples?

Luke xxii. 58. And another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them.

Matt. xxvi. 72. And [Luke, Peter] again denied [it] with an oath, [John, and said,] [Luke, Man, I am not;] I do not know the man. [Mark xiv. 70. Luke xxii. 58. John xviii. 25.]

Luke xxii. 59. And [after a while,] about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him; for he is a Galilean. [Matt. xxvi. 73. Mark xiv. 70.]

Mark xiv. 70. And they that stood by [came unto him, and] said again to Peter, Surely thou [also] art *one* of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*, [*and* betrayeth thee.] [Matt. xxvi. 73.]

John xviii. 26. One of the servants of the high-priest (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Matt, xxvi. 74. Then [John, Peter denied again,

f *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?*] One would imagine, from the word [*also*,] when it is read in the connexion John has placed it in, that in this question she referred to John; as if she had said, Art not thou one as well as thy companion? And if this were admitted, it would be a plain intimation that John acknowledged himself a disciple of Christ. But it must be owned that the other Evangelists use the same word [*also*,] though they say nothing of John's being with Peter.

g *He denied him before them all.*] How must these people be surprised when they saw (as, no doubt, some of them did) this timorous disciple, within the compass of a few weeks, when he was brought with John before the council, not only maintaining the cause and honour of Jesus, but boldly charging the murder of this Prince of life on the chief men of the nation, and solemnly warning them of their guilt and danger in consequence of it, Acts iv. 5—12. Perhaps, when it is said there, (ver. 13.) that *they took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus*, the meaning may be, that some of them, or their attendants, remembered Peter and John as the two persons who had followed Jesus thus far, when the rest had forsaken him. Compare John xviii. 15, 16.

h *I do not know him.*] Jesus was so public a person, and so well known to thousands not at all in his interest, that this additional falsehood was most unnecessary; and as it frequently happens when people allow themselves to transgress the bounds of truth, it was more like to entangle and discover him than to clear him.

i *He went out into the portico.*] I apprehend that the word προαυλιον most exactly answers to the Latin word *vestibulum*, by which many good interpreters render it. And considering the magnificence of the Jewish buildings at this time, it is reasonable to conclude that this, which belonged to the high-priest's palace, was some stately piazza or colonnade; and therefore I chose rather to render it *portico* than *porch*, a word equally applicable to the meanest buildings of that kind.

k *The cock crew.*] It is strange this circumstance did not remind him of our Lord's prediction, and bring him to some sense of his sin: perhaps it did; and he might return persuaded that he should be more courageous if he met with a second attack.

l *For it was cold.*] It is well known that the coldness of the nights is generally more sensible in those hotter countries than among us.

m *With an oath.*] Dr. Clarke conjectures that Peter was suffered to fall fouler than any of the rest of the apostles, (except Judas the traitor,) and to make more remarkable mistakes in his conduct that we might be thus cautioned against that extravagant regard which would afterwards be demanded to him and his pretended successors. Clarke's *Seventeen Sermons*, No. x. p. 236.

and] began to curse and to swear, *saying*, [Luke, Man, I know not what thou sayest;] I know not [this] man [of whom ye speak.] And immediately, [Luke, while he yet spake,] the cock crew [the second time.] [Mark xiv. 71, 72. Luke xxii. 60. John xviii. 27.]

the attack on the servant of the high-priest, which might in such a circumstance expose him even to capital punishment, *denied* it *again* more violently than ever; *and*, that he might not any more be called in question, he *began to curse and to swear*, and solemnly to imprecate the judgment of God upon himself if it were so; [*saying*] as he had done before, I tell thee, *man, I know not what thou meanest* by such a false and groundless accusation; *I do not* so much as *know this man of whom you speak*, and was so far from being in the garden with him, that I am absolutely a perfect stranger to him. *And* he had no sooner thus denied him in this shocking manner, but *immediately, while he yet spake*, the words of Jesus were fulfilled, and, according to the warning he had given him, *the cock crew the second time.*[n] SECT. 184. MATT. XXVI. 74

Luke xxii. 61. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord [Jesus,] how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow [Mark, twice,] thou shalt deny me thrice. [Matt. xxvi. 75. Mark xiv. 72.]

62 And Peter went out; and [Mark, when he thought thereon, he] wept bitterly. [Matt. xxvi. 75. Mark xiv. 72.]

And Jesus, having been examined by the council in a more retired room, was now brought back into the hall, while they were consulting what they should do with him, so that he stood within hearing when Peter thus ungratefully denied him; and hearing such shocking language from a voice so familiar to him, just as those dreadful words proceeded out of his mouth, *the Lord turned* about *and looked upon Peter* with a mixture of earnestness and tenderness in his countenance, which, through the secret energy of the Spirit that went along with it, pierced him to the very heart: *and* then *Peter recollected the word of the Lord Jesus, how he had said to him* but that very evening, *Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* (See Mark xiv. 30. p. 364.) *And Peter* could no longer bear the place, nor stand in the sight of his injured Master, but immediately *went out*,[o] quite overwhelmed with grief and shame; *and covering* [*his head*] with his mantle,[p] he seriously reviewed that heinous crime, in which he had discovered so much weakness and ingratitude; and when he attentively thought thereon, and entered into all its aggravating circumstances, *he wept bitterly*, and most earnestly entreated the divine pardon for so great and inexcusable a sin. LUKE XXII. 61 62

IMPROVEMENT.

How loudly does this affecting story speak to us in the words of the apostle, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* (1 Cor. x. 12.) Peter professed the warmest zeal, and gave his Lord repeated, and, no doubt, very sincere assurances of the firmest resolution in his cause; and yet except Judas the traitor, none of his brethren fell so low as he. But a few hours before he had been with Christ at the sacred table, and had heard from his own lips those gracious discourses which, as echoed back from his word, do still strike so strongly on the heart of every true believer. He had just seen those words remarkably and even miraculously verified, that *Jesus having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end.* (John xiii. 1.) How reasonably then might it have been expected that his own should also have continued their most zealous and constant affection to him! But Peter, who, if possible, was more than doubly his as a disciple, as an apostle, as a distinguished intimate, most shamefully denies him; and that not only once, but a second, yea, and a third time, even with oaths and curses, as if he would by that diabolical language give a sensible proof that he did not belong to Christ: and who indeed that had heard it, would have imagined that he did? Nay, to aggravate it yet farther, it was done in the presence of the other disciple, and even of Christ himself, who surely was much more painfully wounded by this perfidiousness of Peter, than by all the rage and fury of his enemies. *Lord, what is man!* What is our boasted strength but weakness! and, if we are left unto ourselves, how do our most solemn resolutions melt like snow before the sun! *Be thou surety for thy servants for good!* (Psal. cxix. 122.) MATT. XXVI. 69—74 MARK XIV. 66—71 JOHN XVIII. 15, 16

The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. So may he graciously look upon us, if we at any time make any approach towards the like sin! May he look upon us with a glance which shall penetrate our hearts, and cause floods of penitential sorrow to flow forth! *Peter went out and wept bitterly.* He quitted that dangerous scene where temptation had met and vanquished him; and chose retirement and solitude to give vent to his overflowing soul. Thus may we recover ourselves; or rather, thus may we be recovered, by divine grace, from those slips and falls which in this frail state we shall often be making! Let us retire from the business and the snares of life, that we may attend to the voice of conscience, and of God speaking by it; and may so taste the wormwood and the gall, that our souls may long have them in remembrance. To conclude: let us express the sincerity of our godly sorrow by a more cautious and resolute guard against the occasions of sin, if we would not be found to trifle with God when we pray *that he would not lead us into temptation, but* would *deliver us from evil.* LUKE XXII. 62

n *The cock crew.*] To reconcile this with what the Jews pretend, that all the cocks used to be removed out of Jerusalem at the time of the passover, some would render ο αλεκτωρ εφωνησεν, *The watchmen proclaimed the hour of the night:* but this is so unnatural an interpretation, that, rather than admit it, one would question the truth of that Jewish tradition; or conclude, that if the custom it asserts did prevail in Christ's time, some cock was accidentally left behind, or returned unobserved to this place. The hurry of such a night as this, might have occasioned much greater neglects than this supposes.

o *And Peter went out.*] It is observable that Luke in two or three lines here calls him *three times* by the name of Peter; that memorable name which Christ had given him with a particular view to that fortitude and resolution with which he was to defend the gospel: perhaps thereby intending to intimate, how low this courageous hero was now fallen, and yet to what a height of holy magnanimity he was afterwards raised, and thereby enabled to stand as a rock in that sacred cause, and so fully to answer the name with which his Master had honoured him.

p *And covering his head* with his mantle.] Raphelius, and some learned critics, would render επεκαλυψεν, *throwing himself out of the company* in a passionate manner, which it is very probable he did; but others, and particularly Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 165, 166.) and Lambert Bos, (*Exercit.* p. 21, 22.) with much better authority, would translate it, *covering his head*, which was a token of mourning and shame well becoming Peter on this occasion. (Compare 2 Sam. xv. 30; Esth. vi. 12; and Jer. xiv. 3, 4.)—As for our version, [*when he thought thereon,*] I can find no passage in antiquity in which the word has such a signification; though to be sure that phrase expresses what was truly the case. I have therefore inserted it in the paraphrase, as I would take every opportunity of paying all due respect to so valuable a translation as ours is in the main.

SECTION CLXXXV.

Jesus is examined at the high-priest's hall, and afterwards condemned by the sanhedrim on confessing himself to be the Messiah. Matt. xxvi. 59—68. Mark xiv. 55—65. Luke xxii. 63, *to the end.* John xviii. 19—23, 28.

JOHN xviii. 19.

SECT. 185. JOHN XVIII.

WE now return to the examination of Jesus before the council, the thread of the story having been a little interrupted on the sad occasion of Peter's fall. *The high-priest therefore asked Jesus,* as he stood before him, *concerning his disciples, and concerning his doctrine:* what it was that he taught, and with what view he had gathered so many followers.

JOHN xviii. 19. THE high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 *Jesus answered him,* and said, What I have taught has been delivered in the most public manner, and *I have spoke* it *openly* and freely *to the world; I have always,* as I had proper opportunity, *taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews continually resort* in the greatest numbers; *and have said nothing in secret,* even to my most intimate friends, but what has been perfectly agreeable to the tenor of my
21 public discourses. *Why dost thou* therefore *ask me,* whose testimony in my own cause will not, to be sure, be much regarded in such a circumstance as this, when I am standing as on a trial for my life? *Ask those that heard me, what I have spoken to them* in the whole series of my ministry; for *behold they know* it, and I am willing to appeal to any impartial person among them, as to the innocence, propriety, and usefulness of *what I have said.*

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 Such was the calm and rational reply which Jesus made to those that examined him. *But when he had spoken these things, one of the officers* belonging to the court, *who* then *stood by,* rudely *gave Jesus a blow,*[a] *saying, Dost thou* presume to *answer the high-priest thus,* by sending him to others for a reply to his question?

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?

23 And *Jesus,* with his usual mildness, *answered him, If* thou hast been one of my hearers, and canst say that *I* at any time *have spoken evil,* either of God or man, in the course of my preaching, thou wilt do well to *bear* thy *testimony concerning that evil:*[b] *but if* I have spoken *well, why dost thou strike me?* Can reason be answered by blows? or can such a sober appeal to it deserve them?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?

MATT. XXVI.

Now the chief priests and the elders of the people, *and the whole sanhedrim,* with all its officers, not being able to make out a sufficient accusation against Jesus from such answers as these, maliciously endeavoured by the vilest means to have something criminal alleged against him; and as they were determined to condemn him, that they might colour over their proceedings with some form of law, they *sought for false evidence against Jesus, that they might put him to death;* and managed the trial in so partial and unjust a manner, that they did in effect invite any of the most infamous of mankind to come and depose against him, with the assurance of being favourably heard: *But they found none* that fully answered their purpose;[c] *for though many false witnesses came* [*and*] *falsely testified against him, yet they found none* sufficient; [*for*] *the testimonies* they gave *did not* so far *agree* together as that a capital sentence could be passed upon him on that evidence; since such a case required, at least, the concurrent oath of two persons. (See Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15.)

Matt. xxvi. 59. Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought [for] false witness against Jesus, to put him to death. [Mark xiv. 55.]

60 But found none: [for] though many false witnesses came, [*and* bare false witness against him,] yet found they none; [*for* their witness agreed not together.]

—At the last [there] came two false witnesses, [*who* arose, and bare false witness against him.] [Mark xiv. 56, 57.]

At last there came two false witnesses, [*who,*] maliciously wresting some words he had formerly spoken relating to his own death and resurrection, *rose up, and falsely testified against him, Saying,* upon their oaths, *This fellow said,* in our hearing, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it* up again *in three days:* and would any one talk of destroying it, unless he was an enemy to that holy place? or think of building it again so soon, unless he was in league with Beelzebub? [*Yea,*] one of them, designing to aggravate the matter, confidently affirmed,[d] *We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days'* time *I will build* up *another* which shall be *made without* the help of *hands,* in obedience to my command. *Yet neither*

MARK XIV.

61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

Mark xiv. 58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did

a *Gave Jesus a blow.*] As the word ραπισμα is supposed by many etymologists to be derived from ραβδος, *a staff* or *stick,* Beza would therefore render it, *he smote him with a staff;* but the word is apparently used for *any blow;* and to limit it, as our translators do, to what we commonly call *a slap on the face,* does not seem reasonable; though Suidas explains it so, and Matt. v. 39. intimates it may have that sense.

b *If I have spoken evil,* either of God or man, in the course of my preaching, &c.] The pious and ingenious Mr. Bonnel (whose exemplary life deserves frequent reading, and whose Harmony is in the main very judicious,) is the only writer I have met with, who seems to give the true sense of this clause. He urges the use of the word κακον for *Christ's teaching,* (ver. 20, 21.) and observes, that *bearing witness* could not refer to the answer he had just made to the high-priest, but might properly be used as to the course of his preaching, which the high-priest had not heard. He also supposes, that in Christ's appeal to his hearers, the person who smote Christ was singled out by his eye, among others, as one who had been his auditor; and that the language of the blow was in effect as if he had said, "This is what I think your preaching deserves." But as he himself seems to assign another reason for this blow, even the pretended rudeness of the answer Christ had made to the high priest, I have not followed Mr. Bonnel in my paraphrase on the preceding verse. See Bonnel's *Harmony,* p. 362.

c *Sought for false evidence,—but found none.*] As this was a great proof of Christ's innocence, (for otherwise his confederates might have been glad to purchase their own security by impeaching him,) so it is a singular instance of the power of God over men's minds, that for all the rewards these great men could offer, no two consistent witnesses could be procured to charge him with any gross crime. Possibly the exertion of his miraculous power in striking to the ground those that were most forward to seize him, might intimidate the spirits of some who might otherwise have been prevailed upon.

d Designing to aggravate the matter, &c.] This is one instance, among many others, in which the bow of malice has been broke by overstraining it, and innocence cleared up by the very extravagance of those charges which have been advanced against it.—It is observable, that the words which they thus misrepresented were spoken by Christ at least three years before. (Compare John ii. 19. p. 48.) Their going back to find matter for the charge they brought, was a glorious though silent attestation of the unexceptionable manner in which our Lord had behaved himself during all the course of his public ministry.

their witness agree together.

Luke xxii. 66. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes, came together, and led [Jesus from Caiaphas] into their council. [John xviii. 28.]

Mark xiv. 60. And the high-priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? [Matt. xxvi. 62.]

61 But [Jesus] held his peace, and answered nothing. [Matt. xxvi. 63.]

Luke xxii. 67. [And they said,] Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe.

68 And if I also ask *you*, you will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

Matt. xxvi. 63. And [again] the high-priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of [the blessed] God? [Mark xiv. 61.]

64 [And] Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: [I am:] nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand [Luke, of the power of God,] and coming in the clouds of heaven. [Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxii. 69.]

Luke xxii. 70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Matt. xxvi. 65. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. [Mark xiv. 63, 64.]

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death: [Luke, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.] And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.] [Mark xiv. 64. Luke xxii. 71.]

thus did their testimony exactly *agree*, nor was sufficient to convict him; as evidently appears from comparing the different words in which it was expressed: and as this difference was observed in court, they could not for shame proceed upon the evidence so as to condemn Jesus to death for words which no two persons could pretend to ascertain; nor would they indeed have amounted to a capital crime, if they had jointly been charged upon him. SECT. 185. MARK XIV. 59

However, they resolved to try him in full council, even on this slender evidence, hoping that some further discovery would arise in the process of the examination. *And* accordingly, *as soon as it was day*, after a very short recess, *the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes*, who made up the sanhedrim, *assembled together: and they led Jesus away from* [*the house of*] *Caiaphas* the high-priest, *to their council*, or to that magnificent chamber where their court used to sit for the despatch of public business. *And*, producing what imperfect evidence they had, to give some colour to their proceedings, while no regard was shown by Jesus to such false and frivolous accusations, *the high-priest stood up in the midst* of the council, *and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these men testify against thee?* Is it true or false? *But Jesus*, knowing how vain it would be to plead for himself in so unrighteous a court, whose members came determined to condemn him, *was silent, and made no reply.* LUKE XXII. 66 MARK XIV. 60 61

And they said to him, Why art thou so much upon the reserve? Dost thou give up the pretensions thou hast formerly made, or dost thou still maintain them? *If thou art* indeed *the Messiah, tell us* plainly, and it will bring matters to a short issue.[e] *And he said to them, If I tell you* ever so plainly, I know that *you will not believe: And if I also ask* [*you*] wherefore it is that you persist in this unreasonable infidelity, *you* will only overbear me with renewed violence, and *will neither answer nor dismiss me.* LUKE XXII. 67 68

And again the high-priest answered and said to him, Think not that such evasions will suffice in an affair of such importance as this: thou knowest I have a way of coming at the certain truth, and therefore *I adjure thee* in the most solemn manner, *by* the name and authority of *the living God*, whose high-priest I am, and to whom he has committed the power of administering this oath,[f] *that thou tell us* directly, in the plainest terms, *whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of the* ever-*blessed God*, or not? MATT. XXVI. 63

And Jesus boldly *said to him, Thou hast said* [*right*,] and mentioned me by my true and proper title;[g] for *I am* indeed the Messiah, nor will I ever recede from that claim: and *moreover*, though you may now condemn me to death for asserting it, yet *I* solemnly *declare to you* all, That *hereafter* the day will come when *you shall see the Son of man*,[h] who now stands in this despised and lowly form at your tribunal, exalted to all the dignity and glory which that high title imports, *sitting at the right hand of the power* and majesty *of God, and coming* with irresistible strength *in the clouds of heaven*, to take vengeance on the proudest of his enemies.[h] 64

And upon this, as they were willing to make sure of so important a confession, *they* pressed him with the question again, and *all said*, as in amazement, *Art thou then* really *the Son of God*, who is promised under the character of the Messiah? and wilt thou actually abide and stand by this profession, that thou art? *And he said to them*, I will never retract it; *ye say* right, and may be assured *that I am.* LUKE XXII.

Then the high-priest, with all the hypocritical forms of pious indignation, *rent his clothes*, as in grief for the great dishonour done to God by so false an oath,[i] and so presumptuous a claim as he pretended this to be; *and* he *said, He has* now *spoken* the most direct *blasphemy*, in professing himself to be the Son of the most high God: *What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy* with your own ears: *What think ye* therefore as to the punishment he deserves? *They answered and said, He is guilty of* the most notorious of all crimes, and deserves immediately to be put to *death*;[k] *what need have we* indeed *of any other testimony? for we ourselves have heard* [*it*] *from his own mouth. And* thus *they all condemned him as guilty of a capital crime;* and accordingly sentence was passed upon him, no witness appearing in his defence, and none daring to plead his cause;[l] though some of the council who had a friendship for him, and MATT. XXVI. 65 66

e *If thou art the Messiah, tell us.*] Probably these wretches hoped to gain a great advantage against Jesus either way; if he confessed it, they would condemn him on that confession; and if he denied it, they would expose him on that denial, as afraid to maintain the pretensions he had made.

f To whom he has committed the power of administering this oath.] That the Jewish high-priests had indeed such a power, may appear from comparing Exod. xxii. 11; Lev. v. 1; and Prov. xxix. 24; xxx. 9.

g *Thou hast said right.*] See note l, Matt. xxvi. 25. § 170.

h *You shall see the Son of man*, &c.] There seems a plain reference here to the view in which the Son of man is represented, Dan. vii. 13, 14. where he is said to come with the clouds of heaven to receive a dominion, &c. or to appear as God did on Mount Sinai, in a chariot of clouds, attended by angelic hosts. Our Lord looked very unlike that person now; but nothing could be more awful, majestic, and becoming, than such an admonition in these circumstances. Dr. Whitby excellently proves, in his note on Matt. xxvi. 64. that *the right hand of power* is a phrase equivalent to *the right hand of God.*

i *Rent his clothes.*] Though the high-priest was forbidden to rend his clothes in some cases, when others were allowed to do it, (Lev. xxi. 10.) yet in case of blasphemy, or any public calamity, it was thought allowable. (See 1 Mac. xi. 71. and Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. 15. § 2, 4.) Caiaphas therefore by this action expressed in the strongest and most artful manner, his horror at hearing so vile a wretch, as he pretended Jesus was, thus claiming the sovereignty over Israel, and a seat at the right hand of God; and this when adjured upon oath on so solemn an occasion.

k *They answered and said, He is guilty of death.*] A man who did not know the mighty influence of attachment to an hypothesis by frequent observation, would be astonished that any learned, accurate, and candid writer should not be able to see the mark of a judicial process and sentence here; and yet should see them in the case of Stephen: Yet this is really the case.

l No witness appearing in his defence, &c.] Dr. Samuel Harris, in his *Observations on the Old Testament*, (p. 109. *et seq.* quart. edit.) has with much greater learning and ingenuity than solidity, endeavoured to prove this circumstance referred to in Isaiah's words, chap. liii. 8. *Who shall declare his generation?* and his first and second Dissertation prefixed to his Essay, chiefly centre in this point.

SECT. 185. particularly Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, disapproving these unrighteous proceedings, either absented themselves or withdrew. (Compare Luke xxiii. 50, 51; and John xix. 38. sect. cxcii.)

LUKE XXII. 63 *Then the men that* attended the court, and *had Jesus in custody*, finding he was condemned by the sanhedrim, *insulted him* with renewed injuries and affronts, *and* carried that insolent usage yet further than they had done before;[m] for *some* of them, with rude indignity, *began* even *to spit in his face, and to buffet him; and others* scornfully 64 abused and *beat him: And*, in derision of his title to the character he claimed, *having covered his eyes, the officers* and servants *struck him on the face with the palms of their hands, and* on the head with staves: and, in a scoffing and contemptuous manner, *asked* 65 *him, saying*, Now show us how thou canst divine; and if thou art indeed the true Messiah, *prophesy to us, O [thou] Christ, who is he that smote thee?* Such were the vile indignities they offered him; *and many other things they blasphemously spake against him:*[n] so that, on the whole, had he been the vilest malefactor, they could not have used him worse; and common humanity, even in that case, would not have allowed of such barbarous insults.

Luke xxii. 63. [Then] the men that held Jesus, mocked him, [Mark, and some began to spit in his face,] [Mark, and to buffet him:] and [others] smote *him*. [Matt. xxvi. 67. Mark xiv. 65.]

64 And when they had blindfolded him, [Mark, the servants] struck him on the face [with the palms of their hands,] and asked him, saying, Prophesy [unto us, thou Christ,] who is it that smote thee? [Matt. xxvi. 67, 68. Mark xiv. 65.]

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 63—65 MARK XIV. 60, 61 JOHN XVIII. 23 MATT. XXVI. 59, 60 THUS was the patient Lamb of God surrounded by his blood thirsty enemies: Thus did the *dogs encompass him*, and the *strong bulls of Bashan beset him on every side:* (Psal. xxii. 12, 16.) Thus was he *brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:* (Isa. liii. 7, 8.) *He was taken from judgment*, and suffered the worst kind of murder, even that which had the appearance of being legal. But those gentle words which he dropped in the midst of all the injuries which were offered him, are surely worthy ever to be recorded and remembered. It had always been his care to *provide things honest in the sight of all men:* and as he answered with a most graceful and courageous appeal to all that heard him, as to the innocence and usefulness of his doctrine,—so it is well worthy our observation and reflection, that God so far restrained the rage and malice of hell, that no such false witnesses arose against him as could on the whole asperse his character, or bring it under any brand of public infamy; though Judas, as well as others, might have sought a reward, or at least an indemnity, for their own villany in accusing him. And indeed it is no inconsiderable instance of God's providential government of the world, that wicked men are restrained by this one remainder of reverence for the divine omniscience, and dread of his vengeance, from destroying the reputations and lives of his children; especially in countries where (as in our own) the punishment which human laws inflict on perjury is so much below its desert.

63, 64 When Jesus was examined on oath he witnessed a good confession, and cited those that were now his judges to appear at his bar. Nor was it a vain boast! *The Son of man* is now *sitting at the right hand of power*, and will ere long *come in the clouds of heaven:* and then they that condemned, and insulted, and *pierced him, shall mourn because of him.* (Rev. i. 7.) May we be now so wise as to *kiss the Son* in token of our humble allegiance to him, *lest he be* then justly *angry* with us: yea, lest *we* immediately *perish from the way, when his wrath is but beginning to be kindled!* (Psal. ii. 12.)

SECTION CLXXXVI.

Jesus is brought before Pilate. The Jews demand judgment against him, and Pilate examines him. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2, 11—14. Mark xv. 1—5. Luke xxiii. 1—4. John xviii. 28—38.

MATT. xxvii. 1.

SECT. 186. SUCH were the vile proceedings of this horrid and malignant night, and thus was Jesus condemned and treated as a malefactor by the Jewish rulers. *And as soon as morning was come, all the chief priests*, having put Jesus out of the room where the sanhedrim met, MATT. XXVII. 1 *consulted with the elders of the people, and the scribes, and the whole sanhedrim,*[a] what method they should take to execute this sentence they had passed *against Jesus*, and *how* they might contrive *to put him to death* in the most severe and contemptuous manner.

MATT. xxvii. 1.

[AND straightway] when the morning was come, all the chief priests [held a consultation with the] elders of the people, [and scribes, and the whole council,] against Jesus, to put him to death. [Mark xv. 1.]

2 *And* after he had been insulted by the servants at the council-chamber, *when*, for the greater security, *they had bound him* again,[b] *the whole multitude of them arose, and led him away* from thence *to the prætorium*, (as it was properly called,) or to the judgment-hall, in which the Roman magistrate was used to sit for the despatch of public business: for the Jews being now a conquered people, and not having the power of life and death in

2 And when they had bound him, [Luke, the whole multitude of them arose, and] they led *him* away [John, unto the hall of

m Carried that insolent usage yet further than they had done before.] Luke mentions these indignities before his being led to the council, in which he tells us he was examined on oath as above: but Matthew and Mark mention them as immediately succeeding his being condemned as guilty of blasphemy, in the answer he made when adjured by the high-priest; and do not so particularly as Luke distinguish what happened in his examination at the house of Caiaphas from other subsequent circumstances. The attentive reader will observe how they are formed in our compound text into one consistent narration. I do not see it necessary to suppose that Christ answered to two adjurations, the one some hours after the other. Matthew and Mark naturally enough relate the whole of his examination together, though carried on in two different places; and it is probable some insults preceded, and others, yet more violent, followed, his being thus solemnly condemned by the sanhedrim as *guilty of death*.

n *Many other things they blasphemously spake against him.*] There is something very remarkable in this expression. They charged him with blasphemy in asserting himself to be the Son of God; but the Evangelist fixes that charge on them because he really was so.

a *All the chief priests consulted, &c.*] Many critics explain this of their adjourning to consult together, from the house of Caiaphas, to the place where the sanhedrim used to meet: but it appears from Luke, this was the place where they had before assembled and passed sentence upon Jesus, after his first examination in the house of Caiaphas; and his account of this matter is so circumstantial, that I think it more reasonable to take these words in the order in which they are explained in the paraphrase. Compare Luke xxii. 66. page 375.

b *When they had bound him* again.] They bound him when he was first apprehended, but had, perhaps, loosed him while he was under examination: or else they now made his bonds stricter than before, that so they might secure him from any danger of a rescue or escape, as he passed through the streets of Jerusalem.

judgment,] and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. [Mark xv. 1. Luke xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28.]

their hands, they could not execute Jesus without a warrant from the Romans;[c] *and* therefore, to procure their order for his death, as well as to render it the more ignominious and painful, they determined immediately to carry him to them; and to ask, not a confirmation of the sentence which they had passed upon him as a blasphemer, but a new sentence of crucifixion against him as a seditious enemy to Cæsar's government. Accordingly, having conducted him to the prætorium, they in a solemn way *delivered him*, as a state prisoner of considerable importance, *to Pontius Pilate the* procurator or *governor*, whom Tiberius Cæsar had some years before this sent among them. SECT. 186. MATT. XXVII. 2

John xviii. 28. And it was early, and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

And though by this time it was broad day-light, yet *it was* very *early* in the morning, *and* much sooner than the governor used to appear: he was therefore called up on this extraordinary occasion, but *they themselves went not into* the palace, of which *the judgment-hall* was a part, because it was the house of a Gentile, and they were apprehensive *lest they should be polluted, and* so *prevented from eating* those sacrifices which were offered on this first day of unleavened bread, and were looked upon as a very considerable part of *the passover*, of which the paschal lamb, which they had eaten the evening before, was only the beginning. JOHN XVIII. 28

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

Pilate therefore, willing in this instance to oblige the heads of the nation he governed, complied so far with their religious scruples, that, leaving the prætorium, he *came out* of his house *to them;* and finding it was an affair of solemnity, he erected his tribunal in an open place adjoining to it, as the Roman magistrates often did: *and* when Jesus was presented as a prisoner before him, Pilate *said* to them, *What accusation do you bring against this man?* 29

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

They answered and said to him, with some indecent smartness in the expression, (the consequence of a secret indignation to find themselves curbed by a superior power,) We could not but have hoped you were so well acquainted with the sanctity of our court, and the integrity of our character, as to conclude, that *if this* man *were not a notorious offender*,[d] *we would not have* brought and *delivered him to thee;* for as we would be far from any thought of punishing an innocent man, so, if his crime had not been very great, we might have dealt with him ourselves without thy concurrence. 30

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.—

Then Pilate said to them, Take ye him back to your own court again, *and judge him according to your law:* for I am by no means desirous of interfering with you in the regular exercise of your judicial power. And this he said with a view of shifting off from himself an affair to which in the general he could be no stranger;[e] and which he easily saw would be attended with many perplexing circumstances. 31

—The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

Then the Jews said to him again, You well know that *it is not* now *lawful for us to put any man to death* without your concurrence; (compare Matt. xxvii. 2. above.) but it is a capital crime of which the prisoner here before you is convicted; and as, after a fair trial, he has received such a sentence in the sanhedrim, we only wait your warrant to proceed to execution.

Luke xxiii. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king.

And as Pilate could not but enquire of what crime he had been convicted, they resolved to mention that charge which might render him most obnoxious to the Roman power, and to represent the matter in its most malignant view; and accordingly *they began* with great violence *to accuse him, saying*, It is not merely on a religious account that we have brought him before you, but *we have* also *found this* seditious [*fellow*] *perverting the* whole Jewish *nation*, from one end of the country to the other, *and* in effect *forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar*, by *saying, that he himself is Messiah, a King* whom many of the Jews have expected to rescue them from all subjection to a foreign power; and this claim he has had the assurance to avow in open court; so that it is but a necessary piece of respect to thee, and to the emperor, whose lieutenant thou art, to bring him hither to be LUKE XXIII. 2

c Not having the power of life and death in their hands, &c.] That the Jewish sanhedrim had a power of trying and condemning men for crimes which the Jewish law made capital, cannot I think be doubted, and has all along been taken for granted in this work, and since the publication of the first edition, it has been abundantly confirmed by Mr. Biscoe's learned and elaborate dissertation on the subject, in his *Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, chap. vi. part. i. p. 23, *et seq.* But that they had at this time a power of executing such sentences without the express consent of the Roman governor, neither Mr. Maune's remarks, (*Essay* i. p. 13—19.) nor Mr. Biscoe's much larger argumentation, seem to me satisfactorily to prove. I still think what Dr. Lardner has written on the other side of the question unanswerable; and indeed wonder that any can doubt of the matter after reading this story. For surely nothing but a sense of necessity could, on the whole, have brought the Jewish rulers to Pilate on this occasion; since the rendering the execution itself precarious, would have balanced the argument their cruelty might find, in the contingency of its being more painful, if it should in fact be obtained. Compare John xviii. 31. above. (See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* part i. book. i. chap. 2. sect. 5, 6. Vol. I. p. 65—106. and Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xx. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 1.) And indeed the Jewish writers own that no such power was exercised by the sanhedrim for forty years before the destruction of the temple, as Dr. Lightfoot shows by several quotations from the Talmud, (*Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xxvi. 3. and John xviii. 31.) though he supposes it was only lost by their disuse of it, and was not taken from them by the Romans.—The chief arguments for their having such a power, (from Matt. xxvi. 66; John viii 33; xviii. 31; Acts vii. 57, 58; xii. 2; xxii. 4, 5; xxiii. 27; xxiv. 6; xxvi. 10.) are either directly answered in the notes, or obviated in the paraphrase, on those places.

d *A notorious offender.*] So I render κακοποιος in this connexion, because they had still the power of inflicting slighter punishments; so that their bringing him to Pilate was a proof that they judged him to have incurred a capital sentence. The word *malefactor* has much the same sense in our ordinary speech.

e With a view of shifting off from himself, &c.] Pilate could not be entirely ignorant of the case before him; for he began his government at Jerusalem before Jesus entered on his public ministry; and, besides many other extraordinary things which he must formerly have heard concerning him, he had, no doubt, been informed at large of his public entrance into Jerusalem, the beginning of the week; and also of his apprehension, in which the Jewish rulers were assisted by a Roman cohort, which could hardly be engaged in that service without the governor's express permission. It plainly appears by his whole conduct, how unwilling he was to engage in this cause; he seems therefore cautious not to enter into the full sense of what the Jewish rulers intended when they called him a malefactor; and answers them in ambiguous language, which they might have interpreted as a warrant to execute Christ, if they found it necessary, and yet, which would have left them liable to be questioned for doing it, and might have given him some advantage against them; which a man of his character might have wished. Their reply shows they were more aware of this artifice than commentators have generally been.

SECT. 186. condemned, and indeed to leave him to be executed by you. And though they aimed at nothing more by this, than to make sure of their murderous designs, and to add new circumstances of shame and agony to the execution, yet Providence was pleased to over-

JOHN XVIII. 32 rule it with a wise intent, *that the saying of Jesus might* thus *be fulfilled, which he spake* more than once, (see John iii. 14; xii. 32, 33; and Matt. xx. 19.) *signifying* or implying *by what* kind of *death he should die*, even by being lifted up from the earth, or by crucifixion, which was a Roman punishment; whereas, according to the Jewish law, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) he would have been stoned, (as his servant Stephen afterwards was,) having been impiously adjudged by them to have deserved death as a blasphemer. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 65, 66; and Mark xiv. 64. p. 375.)

John xviii. 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

MATT. XXVII. 12 *And when he was* thus *accused by the chief priests and elders,*[f] who aggravated the matter by the addition *of many* other *things* either entirely false or grossly misrepresented; reproaching him as a blasphemer, a sabbath-breaker, and a magician; and, in a word, omitting nothing which they thought might blacken his character, *he made* them *no*

13 *answer* at all. *Then Pilate said to him, Dost thou answer nothing* to all this? *Hearest thou not* the several charges they produce against thee, or hast thou no concern to vindicate thyself from what they have alleged? *Behold*, and consider, *how many* and how

14 great *things they witness against thee. But still*, as *Jesus* knew how little all his apologies would signify, he continued silent, and *did not answer him to any one word; so that Pilate the governor was greatly astonished*, and knew not how to account for so uncommon a behaviour.

Matt. xxvii. 12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders [of many things,] he answered nothing. [Mark xv. 3.]

13 Then saith Pilate unto him, [Answerest thou nothing?] Hearest thou not? [Behold,] how many things they witness against thee. [Mark xv. 4.]

14 And [Jesus yet] answered him to never a word, insomuch that [Pilate] the governor marvelled greatly. [Mark xv. 5.]

JOHN XVIII. But yet, as the governor had heard an honourable report of Jesus, and observed in this silence an air of meek majesty and greatness of spirit, rather than any consciousness of guilt,

33 or any indication of a fierce contempt, he was willing to discourse with him more privately before he proceeded farther. *Pilate therefore entered again into the prætorium*, which he had quitted to oblige the Jews, (ver. 29. p. 377.) *and called Jesus* in: *and* [*as*] *Jesus stood before the governor* there, *Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou* indeed *the king of the Jews*, and dost thou really pretend to any right to govern them?

34 *Jesus answered him, Dost thou say this of thyself*, from the knowledge of any seditious practices which thou hast ever observed in me? *or* is it only what thou hast gathered from the present clamour made against me, and *have others told it thee concerning me?*

35 *Pilate* immediately *replied, Am I a Jew?* or do I know any thing of your peculiarities, further than I am informed by others? I do not at all pretend to it: but thou knowest that *thine own nation, and* those who are esteemed the most sacred persons in it, even *the chief priests* themselves, *have delivered thee to me* as a malefactor, and have charged thee, among other crimes, with treason against Cæsar, in setting up for king of the country: tell me therefore freely, *what hast thou done* to deserve such a charge? for the more frank thou art in thine acknowledgment, the greater favour mayst thou expect.

John xviii. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus: [and Jesus stood before the governor,] [Luke, and Pilate asked him, saying,] Art thou the king of the Jews? [Matt. xxvii. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3.]

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done?

36 *Jesus answered* him, *My kingdom is not of this world*, nor is it my business or design to erect a temporal dominion, and to establish any claim which should at all interfere with that of Cæsar, or of which any prince has reason to be jealous. Indeed, if I would have entertained such views, I might have found support and encouragement from the very persons who are now my accusers: and *if* I had asserted that *my kingdom was of this world*, and had favoured such methods of defence, *my servants*, who professed of late so great and public a regard to me, *would* resolutely *have fought that I might not have been delivered to the Jews*,[g] or would attempt even now to rescue me out of their hands: *but now my kingdom is not from hence*, not to be erected here; and therefore I have been so far from arming my followers with secular weapons, that the guard who came to apprehend me know I forbade their making use of those they had.

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 *Pilate therefore said to him*, Thou speakest however of thy kingdom and thy subjects: *art thou then* really *a king?*

And Jesus answered him and said, therein courageously witnessing a good confession, (1 Tim. vi. 13.) *Thou sayest* [*right;*] *I am* indeed, as thou hast said, *a King;* the King of the Jews, and the appointed Head and Governor of the whole Israel of God; nor will I ever basely seek my safety by renouncing my divine claim to the most excellent majesty and extensive dominion: nay, *for this purpose was I born, and for this end I came into the world* from another and much better abode, *that I might bear witness to the* cause of *truth* in general, and in particular to this great and fundamental branch of it: and I have given such ample proof of this, that *every* honest and well-disposed *person who is* indeed a friend *of the truth, heareth my voice*, and pays an entire deference to my instructions.[h]

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?—

—[And] Jesus answered [Luke, him, and said,] Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. [Matt. xxvii. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3.]

f *And when he was* thus *accused, &c.*] The reader may perhaps observe that I have transposed Matt. xxvii. 11. and Mark xv. 2. But it is only because I think the other Evangelists relate the story in such an order as to show the propriety of this little transposition.

g *My servants would have fought, &c.*] Though our translation of ηγωνιζοντο may be more literal, yet, considering that our Lord was now actually in the hands of his enemies, I think it plain that it is to be taken in such an extent. It may be objected, that the number of Christ's disciples, had all the five hundred been assembled in arms, could have been no match for the Jewish and Roman power at Jerusalem. But it is to be remembered, that (as Dr. Lardner with his usual good sense observes) the populace appeared zealously on Christ's side but a few days before; and the reason of their turning against him was his not assuming a temporal kingdom, as they certainly expected he would have done. (See Lardn. *Credib.* part i. book i. chap. 5. Vol. I. p. 301.) And we may farther add, that a very small body of forces, under a leader endowed with such miraculous power as Jesus lately exercised, might have been sufficient to vanquish all the Roman legions. Compare note i, on John vi. 14. p. 161.

h *Every person who is* a friend *of the truth heareth my voice.*] What our Lord here says incidentally, is to be regarded as an uni-

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith [to the chief priests, and *to* the people,] I find no fault at all [in this man.] [Luke xxiii. 4.]

Pilate says to him, What is the *truth* which thou referrest to, and speakest of as thy business to attest? *And when he had said this*, as Jesus made a pause, and did not immediately make him any answer, his hurry would not allow him to wait for it: so *he went out again to the Jews, and said to the chief priests, and the people* assembled with them abroad, I have examined the prisoner you brought me in private; and I must freely declare that *I find no fault at all in this man*, nor can I perceive that he is any enemy either to the rights of Cæsar, or the tranquillity and happiness of the Jews; and therefore do not see how I can with any justice condemn him to die. But his accusers refused to acquiesce in this, and advanced a more circumstantial charge against him, which gave occasion to that examination before Herod which will be related in the next section. SECT. 186. JOHN XVIII. 38

IMPROVEMENT.

How much exactness in the ceremonials of religion may be found in those who have even the most outrageous contempt for its vital principles and essential duties! Yea, how much of that exactness may be made subservient to the most mischievous and diabolical purposes! These wolves in sheep's clothing would not enter into the house of a heathen, lest they should be polluted, and become unfit to eat the passover; yet they contrive and urge an impious murder, which that very heathen, though he had much less evidence of Christ's innocence than they, could not be brought to permit without strong reluctance, and a solemn, though vain, transferring of the guilt from himself to them. Ver. 28

Justly might our Lord say, in the words of David, *They laid to my charge things that I knew not.* (Psal. xxxv. 11.) But what can defend the most innocent and excellent against malicious slanders and defamations! Or who can expect, or even wish, wholly to escape, when such accusations are brought against Christ, even by the rulers of his nation, who should have been men of distinguished generosity and honour! But instead of this, they were all an assembly of murderers, and lay in wait for their prey like so many devouring lions. LUKE XXIII. 2. MATT. XXVII. 12

Pilate would renew the examination of the cause; and so far he acted a cautious and an honourable part. Yet, alas, how many that set out on such maxims want courage and resolution to pursue them! But the courage of Christ never failed. He *witnessed before Pontius Pilate* the *good confession* we have now been reading, (1 Tim. vi. 13.) and owned himself a King, though at the same time he declared (what it were to be wished all his followers had duly regarded) that *his kingdom is not of this world.* Greatly do we debase it if we imagine it is; and most unworthy is it of those that call themselves the ministers of his kingdom, to act as if they thought it was. Yet such is the wickedness of some, and such the blindness of others in the Roman church, that though, of all the churches in the world, it is manifestly the most secular kingdom,[1] it arrogates to itself the name, not only of a part, but of the whole, of Christ's kingdom here below. JOHN XVIII. 29—33 37 36

Christ came to bear witness to the truth; and a careful attendance to his testimony will be the best proof we can give that we love the truth, and the best method we can take to make ourselves acquainted with it. And of so great importance is the truth, that it surely deserves the attentive inquiry and the zealous patronage of the greatest and the busiest of mankind. Let us not therefore, when we begin to ask what it is, like Pilate, hurry on to some other care before we can receive a satisfactory answer; but joyfully open our minds to the first dawnings of that celestial day, till it shine more and more, to irradiate and adorn all our souls. On the whole, imperfect as the character of this unhappy governor was, let us learn from him candidly to confess the truth, so far as we have discovered it: let us learn, more steadily than he, to vindicate the innocent and worthy, and on no terms permit ourselves, in any degree, to do harm to those in whom, on a strict and impartial inquiry, we can find no fault. 37 38 LUKE XXIII. 4

SECTION CLXXXVII.

Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, who having treated him with great contempt, sends him back again. Pilate in vain endeavours to persuade the Jews to consent to his release, who impiously prefer Barabbas, and persist in their demands of a sentence of crucifixion against Jesus. Matt. xxvii. 15—18, 20—23. Mark xv. 6—14. Luke xxiii. 5—23. John xviii. 39, *to the end.*

LUKE xxiii. 5.

LUKE xxiii. 5.

AND they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that when Pilate came out of the palace he bore an open testimony to the innocence of Jesus, and declared to the priests in the presence of the people, that "he found no fault at all in him:" *but they* not only continued strongly to urge their accusation, but *were more violent* than before, *saying*, We assuredly know that *he stirs up* all *the people, teaching* the most dangerous and seditious doctrines *throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee*, that factious country, where he has been most busy, and from thence making a progress *even to this place*, and gathering up followers every where by the way, to the apparent danger and damage of the state. SECT. 187. LUKE XXIII. 5

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent

And when Pilate heard them speak *of Galilee, he* presently *inquired if the man* whom they had brought before him *was a Galilean. And finding that he was of* that country, and therefore that he properly belonged to *Herod's jurisdiction*, who was tetrarch of Galilee, *he* willingly embraced this opportunity to clear himself of so perplexing an affair, and immediately *sent him* away *to Herod*,[a] *who* being *himself* a 6 7

versal maxim, *all sincere lovers of the truth will hear him:* and accordingly St. John, with all simplicity, depending on the evidences which he and his brethren had given of their mission from Christ, lays down the same test, 1 John iv. 6. *We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us.*

1 It is manifestly the most secular kingdom.] This Mr. Boyse of Dublin has finely illustrated in his most ingenious discourse on these words.

a *He sent him to Herod.*] It may not be improper, for the sake of those who are less acquainted with the Jewish history, to observe, that this was Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, by whom John the Baptist had been beheaded, and whom Christ had justly re-

SECT. 187. Jew, *was also at Jerusalem in those days*, having come up to celebrate the passover there.

him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time.

LUKE XXIII. *And when Herod saw Jesus, he rejoiced exceedingly; for he had a long time been* very *desirous to see him, because he had heard much concerning him* in Galilee, (compare Luke ix. 7, 9. sect. lxxvii.) *and he* now *hoped* that he should have an opportunity so 8 far to satisfy his curiosity as *to see some miracle done by him*, and might be able also to determine whether he was, as he had once suspected, John the Baptist risen from the dead.

8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 (Compare Matt. xiv. 2. p. 156.) *And he examined him in many words*, concerning a variety of particulars both as to his pretensions and the proof of his mission, as well as the tenor of his doctrine: *but* as Jesus knew this was not a proper time and circumstance to enter into those questions, of which Herod might long ago have been sufficiently informed, *he made no answer.*

9 Then he questioned with him in many words: but he answered him nothing.

10 *And the chief priests and scribes*, whose malice had prompted them to attend him thither, *stood* in the presence of the king, *eagerly accusing him* of the same crimes which they had before charged him with in their application to Pilate.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

11 *And Herod, with* those of *his soldiers* who now attended him as his life-guard, looked upon Jesus with disdain, and *treated him in a* very *contemptuous manner*, like a poor inconsiderable creature who no way answered the account they had heard of him, neither saying nor doing any thing to gratify their curiosity; *and having derided* [*him*] for pretending to be a king, (as it was urged by his accusers he had done,) in public contempt of that claim, whatever it was, Herod *clothed him with a splendid robe*,[b] *and sent him back to Pilate*, thereby intimating that he left him to do what he pleased with his prisoner, but that for his own part he apprehended his pretensions to royalty worthy of derision rather than serious resentment.

11 And Herod with his men of war, set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 *And*, whatever Pilate's real intentions were, the compliment of sending Jesus to be examined by him, was so well taken by Herod, and Herod's sending him back to the Roman governor was, on the other hand, such a public instance of regard to him, that *the same day Pilate and Herod became friends*, and were reconciled *to each other: for before* this, *they were at enmity between themselves.*[c]

12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

13 *And Pilate, having* received an account of what had passed before Herod, *called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and* with them the rest of *the people* who had 14 appeared against him as his accusers, And *said to them, You have brought me this man*, Jesus of Nazareth, *as one that has perverted the people*, and taught doctrines injurious to your religion, and also to the civil peace and the Roman government; *and behold, I have examined* [*him*] both *in your presence* and in private, *and* heard all that could be alleged against him; but I must solemnly declare that I *have found no crime in this man as to the things that you have charged him with;* nor can I in my conscience think that you have made good any of the accusations you have brought against him: 15 *Nor yet has Herod* been able to make any such discovery; *for I sent you to him* with the prisoner, that you might do your utmost to convict him before that prince, who being a person of your own religion, and well acquainted with your laws and customs, might have known more of the matter than myself; *and* yet *behold*, it appears to have been Herod's judgment, that *nothing worthy of death has been done by him*;[d] for, instead 16 of sending him back like one who deserves a capital sentence, he has treated him like an idiot rather than a traitor, so as plainly to show that he thinks him merely the object of ridicule, or to deserve at most but some slight punishment. And *therefore, when I have chastised him* by scourging, which will be an admonition to him for the future not to use those wild, enthusiastical expressions which have given so much umbrage and suspicion, *I will let* [*him*] *go:* and I believe you may depend upon it that he will give us no farther trouble; nor would he have interest enough to do it, if he were inclined to the attempt.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him.

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

MARK XV. 6 *Now it was usual at the feast* of the passover, [*and*] even was grown by custom in a manner *necessary*,[e] *for the* Roman *governor*, when such multitudes were assembled from

Mark xv. 6. Now at that feast [the governor was wont,] [Luke, *and* of neces-

presented as a fox. (Luke xiii. 32. p. 235.) He was son to Herod the Great, under whom Christ was born; and uncle to Herod Agrippa, (by whom James was beheaded and Peter imprisoned,) who was *eaten by worms*; (Acts xii. 2, 3, 23.) and great-uncle to that Agrippa who was by Paul's discourse *almost persuaded to become a christian.* (Acts xxvi. 28.)—Christ's arraignment before him, when he was sent back uncondemned, was a great additional proof of the falsehood of those accusations which the Jews had brought against him as a seditious person, and particularly as one who had stirred up the people in Galilee.

b *A splendid robe.*] This expression, σθῆτα λαμπραν, does not so properly signify, (as Le Clerc renders it,) *a white robe*; nor was it, as he supposes, intended as a declaration of his innocence. It was rather some gorgeous garment which belonged to Herod or some of his officers, and was, perhaps, grown old, and they clothed him with it in derision of his having pretended to be a king. This usage was exceedingly insolent: perhaps the remorse of conscience which Herod had felt on account of the murder of John the Baptist, might render him cautious how he joined in any attempt on the life of Jesus, which we do not find that he did.

c *They were at enmity between themselves.*] The cause of this enmity can only be conjectured: perhaps it might be the slaughter which Pilate had made of some of the Galilæans who had come up to sacrifice at Jerusalem. (See Luke xii. 1. § 116.) But M. Saurin truly observes, that, considering on the one hand the jealousy of the Jews where any foreign power was concerned, and on the other the oppressive measures generally taken by those who are invested with commissions, like this which Pilate bore, over conquered countries, and especially the accounts we have of his own bad character and conduct, their reconciliation is much more wonderful than their enmity. See Saur. *Serm.* Vol. X. p. 246, 247.

d *Nothing worthy of death has been done by him.*] The phrase πεπραγμενον αυτω, must here have this signification, as the margin of our Bible renders it: for though this is something of an unusual construction, yet as Raphelius (*Annot. ex Polyb.* p. 259.) has produced many instances of the like nature, it would be much harsher to suppose that a capital sentence, or any treatment from Herod which should intimate he thought Jesus deserved it, should be called, αξιον θανατου, *something worthy of death.*

e *Usual—and* in a manner *necessary.*] There was no law to oblige him to this; but as acts of grace are generally popular things, this seems to have been first freely used by the Romans to please their tributaries, and now by custom was in a manner established. I find no substantial reason to believe there was in the original of this custom any reference to the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage at this time.

sity he must] [release unto the people] one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. [Matt. xxvii. 15. Luke xxiii. 17.]

7 And there was [then a notable prisoner,] named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him [Luke, in the city,] who had committed murder in the insurrection, [John, *and* was a robber.] [Matt. xxvii. 16. Luke xxiii. 19. John xviii. 40.]

8 And the multitude [therefore, when they were gathered together,] crying aloud, began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. [Matt. xxvii. 17.]

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, [John, Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover:] [Whom] will ye [John, therefore] that I release unto you? [Barabbas? or Jesus, which is called Christ,] the king of the Jews? [Matt. xxvii. 17. John xviii. 39.]

10 (For he knew that the chief-priests had delivered him for envy.) [Matt. xxvii. 18.]

11 But the chief priests [and elders] moved [*and* persuaded] the people, [that they should ask] that he should rather release Barabbas unto them, [and destroy Jesus.] [Matt. xxvii. 20.]

Matt xxvii. 21. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?—

Luke xxiii. 18. And [John, then] they [John, all] cried out [John, again] all at once, saying, [John, Not this man, but Barabbas:] Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas. [Matt. xxvii. 21. John xviii. 40.]

Mark xv. 12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do [with Jesus, which is called Christ,] whom ye call the king of the Jews? [Matt. xxvii. 22.]

13 And they [all] cried out again, [*and* say unto him,] Crucify him: [Let him be crucified.] [Matt. xxvii. 22.]

Luke xxiii. 20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them:

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And [Mark, Pilate] said unto them the third time, Why? what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go. [Matt. xxvii. 23. Mark xv. 14.]

all parts, *to release to the people* any *one prisoner whom they desired* to be set at liberty, whatever crime it was that he was charged with. *And there was then* in Pilate's custody, *a* very infamous and *noted prisoner, whose name was Barabbas, that lay bound with some* other ruffians *who had made an insurrection in the city* in conjunction *with him*, and *who had* also *committed murder in the insurrection; and*, besides the part he had acted in this seditious riot, *he was* a fellow of a most abandoned character, and known to be *a robber* who had infested the highways with his villany; so that it was generally concluded he would receive sentence of death, and would be executed that day. *And* as the power of reversing or executing such sentences then lay in the Romans, *the people therefore, when they were gathered together* about the tribunal, *began with* a great noise and *clamour to demand* of Pilate [*that he would do*] at this passover *as he had always done to them* upon the like occasions, and would discharge a prisoner. SECT. 187. MARK XV. 7 8

And Pilate, hoping that he might preserve the life of Jesus, whose innocence he so clearly saw, determined to attempt it by this method; and accordingly, that he might induce them to chuse him, he proposed no other alternative than that scandalous and outrageous criminal whom we have just now mentioned, and *answered them, saying, You have* indeed *a custom, that I should release to you one at the passover*, and I am ready now to oblige you in this affair: *whom will you therefore* chuse *that I release unto you? Barabbas*, that seditious and murderous robber? *or* this *Jesus, who is called Christ*, who, in I know not what strange sense, is pretended to be *the king of the Jews*, and whom you see before you in the fine robe in which Herod has thought fit to array him? *For he knew that the chief priests* and rulers *had* not *delivered him up* into his hands from a regard to justice, but merely *out of envy* at his popularity; and therefore he was willing to make the proposal to the people in such a form as might be most likely to secure his life. 9 10

But the chief priests and elders, who were exceedingly solicitous to obtain their end, lest this artifice of the governor should defeat all their laboured scheme, *excited* the most forward of the people, [*and*] effectually *persuaded the mob* they had brought with them, *that they should ask* the governor, with a continual noise and clamour, *that he would rather release Barabbas to them;* that by this means the point they had in view might be secured, *and they might* be sure to *destroy Jesus*. *And* therefore, when *the governor answered* them in this manner, *and said to them* again, Take notice that your choice lies only between these, and therefore now determine for yourselves, *which of the two do you desire I should release unto you? Then*, as their principals had prompted them, *they all cried out again with one consent*, in the same noisy and tumultuous way as before, *saying*, We will *not* have *this* [*man*,] *but Barabbas: away with this* [*man*,] *and release unto us Barabbas*. And thus, when Pilate would have let him go, they denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. (Acts iii. 14.) 11 MATT. XXVII. 21 LUKE XXIII. 18

And Pilate, to divert them from the purpose they were so unreasonably set upon, *again answered and said to them, What therefore would you have me do with* this *Jesus who is called Christ*, and *whom*, if I may believe your own rulers, so many of *you* are ready to *call* and own as *the king of the Jews?*[f] *And they all* presently renewed their clamour, and *cried out again*, as before, [*and*] with one voice *said to him, Crucify him: let him* immediately *be crucified;* for he is fit to be treated as the vilest slave, rather than to be called our king.[g] MARK XV. 12 13

Pilate therefore, being still *desirous to release Jesus, spake to them* yet *again;* urging them seriously to consider what they did, in thus preferring such an abandoned miscreant as Barabbas to so innocent a person. *But they*, without so much as offering any farther reason, persisted in their importunity, and *cried* out as before, *saying, Crucify* [*him*,] *crucify him.* LUKE XXIII. 21

And Pilate was so intent on delivering him, that he *said to them the third time, Why* will you be so cruel as to insist upon it? *what evil has he done?*[h] I declare to you all, as I told you but now, (ver. 14. p. 380.) that *I have found no capital crime in him: I will therefore*, as I said, (ver. 16.) *chastise him* by scourging, and then I hope your rage will be moderated, *and* you will be prevailed upon to agree that I should *let* [*him*] *go* without any farther punishment. 22

But they, without pretending to answer the argument he had alleged, overbore it by a wild fury, and *were urgent* in pressing him *with loud* and importunate *voices; and* the more he opposed them, they *cried out the more abundantly* and violently, *demanding* 23

23 And they were instant with loud voices, [Mark, and cried out the more

f *Whom you call the king of the Jews.*] Pilate often repeats this title; and it may seem strange that he should use it so frequently. Probably he might do it partly to ridicule those pretences, and bring contempt on the scheme of a Messiah; and partly to procure from the Jews, in their zeal against Jesus, the strongest and most public professions of their subjection to Cæsar.

g *Let him be crucified.*] By this cry they declared the greatest degree of rage that can be imagined; for it was as if they had said, "Let him whom you call our king, be treated like one of the vilest "of your slaves who has committed the most enormous crime." To have inflicted such a punishment as this on any free Jew, would probably have been sufficient to have thrown the whole city and nation into an uproar; but now they were deaf to every thing but the clamour of passion, and in their madness forgot with how dangerous a precedent they might furnish the Roman governor. And indeed it turned dreadfully on themselves, when such vast numbers of them were crucified for their opposition to the Romans, during the time of their last war. See note o, in the next section, on Matt. xxvii. 25.

h *Why? what evil has he done?* Τι γαρ κακον εποιησεν.] Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xenoph.* p. 64.) has well proved that γαρ is often used by the correctest Greek writers, and particularly *Xenophon*, as an elegant expletive, especially to introduce a question.

SECT. 187. LUKE XXIII. 23

that, whatever was the consequence of it, *he might be crucified: and* on the whole, notwithstanding the farther remonstrance of Pilate on the admonition of his wife, (which will be mentioned in the next section,) *their voices, and [those] of the chief priests*, (who, to encourage the cry, had so little sense of common decency as themselves to join in it,) *prevailed* with the governor, though contrary to the convictions of his own conscience, to comply with their request.

he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed. [Matt. xxvii. 23. Mark xv. 14.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 7—10 11 21, 23 18, 19 MARK XV. 13, 14

Behold how all imaginable circumstances seem to conspire to increase the infamy thrown on that sacred head which now most worthily wears a crown of eternal glory! *Of a truth*, O Lord, *against the holy Child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles* and the chief priests, *and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done.* (Acts iv. 27, 28.) The wisest person on earth was by Herod and his soldiers derided as a fool; the most deserving was condemned by the chief priests; and the most innocent was treated as a criminal by Pilate, and furiously demanded as a public victim by the Jews. All the proofs of his innocence are overborne by a loud and a senseless cry; and those hosannas with which the streets and temple were so lately echoing, are exchanged into, *Crucify him, crucify him!* So uncertain is human applause, and so unrighteous may human judgments be!

But in the midst of all, the blessed Jesus stands collected in himself. Firm as a rock, he bears the violence of the storm, and is not moved by all the furious waves that beat upon him; and when he saw a robber and a murderer preferred before him, and a sentence of the most cruel death clamorously called for and demanded against him, he silently *commits himself to him that judgeth righteously*, who ere long *brought forth* his *righteousness as brightness, and* his *salvation as a lamp that burneth.* (Compare 1 Pet. ii. 23; and Isa. lxii. 1.)

Lord, if thou callest us out to share in thy sufferings, may the Spirit of God and of glory thus rest on us! And may neither the scorn nor the rage of our enemies separate us from thee, who did so courageously bear all this for us; nor may they ever sink us into any weakness of behaviour unworthy of those who have the honour to call themselves thy followers!

SECTION CLXXXVIII.

Pilate having again and again renewed his efforts to persuade the Jews to consent that Jesus should be released, at length yields to their importunity, and delivers him up to be crucified. Matt. xxvii. 19, 24—31. Mark xv. 15—20. Luke xxiii. 24, 25. John xix. 1—16.

JOHN XIX. 1.

JOHN XIX. 1

THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged *him.*

SECT. 188. JOHN XIX. MATT. XXVII. 27

THEN, as the priests and people of the Jews continued their clamorous demand that Jesus should be crucified, *Pilate* thought it most advisable to seem at least to consent to it, and *therefore took Jesus and scourged him;* hoping that, after he had been severely scourged, the rage of the populace would be something abated, and they might at last be prevailed upon to consent that he should be dismissed.

Then the soldiers of the governor,[a] knowing that it was the Roman custom to scourge prisoners just before they were put to death, interpreted Pilate's order on this head as a declaration that he was immediately to be crucified: and therefore they *took Jesus, [and] led him away into the common-hall* in Pilate's palace, which was *called the prætorium*, (as being the place where the prætor, a Roman magistrate, used to keep his court,) *and* there they *gathered to him the whole band* or cohort, to insult and torment him, not being concerned to keep any measures with a person whom they looked upon as entirely aban-
28 doned to their will. *And having stripped him* of that splendid garment in which Herod had contemptuously dressed him, in order to vary the mockery and affront, *they* wantonly *clothed him in* a vest of imperial *purple, [and] put on him a scarlet robe* over it, that in
29 this gaudy dress he might have something of a mock resemblance to a prince: *And*, farther to ridicule his pretensions to royalty, which they considered as an affront to their nation and emperor, *the soldiers having* maliciously *platted a crown of thorns, put it upon his head,*[b] *and* put *a* large *reed* or cane *into his right hand*, to represent a sceptre: *and* they *began* in a ludicrous manner *to pay their* homage and *salutations to him* as to a new-created prince on his coronation-day; *[and] bowing the knee before him, they did him reverence* in a scoffing way, *and mocked him, saying*, All *hail*, thou most magnificent *king of the Jews!* Hail mighty monarch! we give thee joy on thine accession to the crown! *and* then approaching him as if they would have offered him some present, as
30 usual on such occasions, *they smote him with their hands; And* proceeded so far as to *spit upon him*, even in his very face; *and* at last *took the reed* or cane out of his hand,[c]

Matt. xxvii. 27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus *and* [led him away] into the common-hall [called Prætorium,] and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers.* [Mark xv. 16.]

28 And they stripped him, and [clothed him with purple, *and*] put on him a scarlet robe: [Mark xv. 17. John xix. 2.]

29 And when [John, the soldiers] had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they [began to salute him, *and*] bowed the knee before him, [*and* worshipped him,] and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews: [John, and they smote him with their hands:] [Mark xv. 17, 18, 19. John xix. 2, 3.]

30 And they [did] spit upon him, and took the reed,

a *Then the soldiers, &c.*] The Evangelist John so plainly speaks of their *crowning our Lord with thorns*, and these other indignities, as previous to Pilate's last attempt to save him, that I think it proper to transpose those verses in Matthew and Mark which mention these circumstances as after his condemnation, and immediately preceding the execution. Some of them might probably be repeated after Pilate had delivered him to be crucified, while the instruments of death were preparing: and therefore Matthew and Mark mention the whole series of those cruelties together: or the word τοτε, *then*, (which is used by Matthew,) may only signify that it was done *about that time*, not determining the order of each particular so absolutely as to be inconsistent with the most accurate and distinct account which John gives of the whole process of this affair. Many instances of the indeterminate use of that particle occur in the Evangelists: See Matt. ix. 14; xxiv. 40; Mark xiii. 14, 26; Luke xxi. 10, 21; and John xix. 16.

b *Having platted a crown of thorns, &c.*] It is certain they intended hereby to expose his pretended royalty to ridicule and contempt: but had that been all, a crown of straws might have served as well. They undoubtedly meant to add cruelty to their scorn, which especially appeared in their striking him on the head when this crown was put on. If the best description of the Eastern thorns are to be credited, they are much larger than any commonly known in these parts.

c *Took the reed* or cane out of his hand.] The word καλαμος does indeed sometimes signify *a slender reed;* (Matt. xi. 7; xii. 20; and 3 John, ver. 13.) but it includes all kinds of canes; and it is most probable this was a walking-staff, which they put into his

and smote him on the head. [Mark xv. 19.]

and barbarously *struck him* with it *on the head;* and so, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood: all which this holy Sufferer bore with the utmost meekness and composure, neither reviling nor threatening them, but silently committing himself to the righteous, invisible Judge. (1 Pet. ii. 23.)

SECT. 188.

MATT. XXVII.

Matt. xxvii. 19. When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

In the mean time Pilate was taken up with trying and condemning some other prisoners who were to be executed that day; *and while he* thus *was sitting on the tribunal* he had erected, *his wife*, having by this time been informed that Jesus had been brought before him, and was going to be given up to death, *sent* a very importunate message *to him*,[d] *saying*, I beseech thee, see to it that thou *have nothing to do with* the blood of *that righteous One* against whom the Jews are now demanding judgment; *for I have suffered many things to-day on his account in a dream*,[e] and have had such terrible views represented to my imagination in my sleep this very morning, that I cannot but look upon it as something divine; and conclude that if thou dost upon any terms consent to his death, it will be attended with dreadful consequences to thyself and thy family. 19

John xix. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Pilate therefore, alarmed by such a message as this, went into the common-hall himself to see what they were doing with the prisoner; and when he beheld with strong emotion all those indignities and torments which Jesus had borne, and saw how severely the soldiers had scourged him, thinking that the sight of him in so sad a condition might move the Jews to compassion, he determined to make one trial more. And accordingly he *came out again* to the public tribunal where the Jews were assembled, *and* having ordered Jesus to be led thither, he *said to them*, just before he appeared, *Behold, I am bringing him out to you* again, *that ye may know* and observe it, *that I* can *find no fault in him*, though the tortures he has now undergone are such as must surely have brought him to confession, if he were indeed guilty. JOHN XIX. 4

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

Then, as he spake these words, *Jesus came out* of the prætorium *wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe*, now also dyed in his own blood, which streamed forth from all parts of his body: *and* [*Pilate*] *said to them, Behold the man!* view him attentively; and when you see what dreadful things the poor unhappy creature has suffered, let that content you; for surely, considering his innocence, he has suffered already much more than enough. 5

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*.—

When therefore the chief priests and [*their*] attending *officers saw him*, fearing lest the people should relent, *they* presently renewed their exclamations, and eagerly *cried out* as before, *saying*, We know the man sufficiently: away with him to the cross; *crucify* [*him*,] *crucify* [*him*;] and immediately order the wretch to be executed. 6

—Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify *him*, for I find no fault in him.

Pilate on this *said to them*, If ye are thus resolute and inexorable, I leave him in your hands, to dispose of him as you think fit: *take ye him* therefore, if it must be so, *and crucify* [*him*] yourselves; but I desire to discharge myself from having any thing to do in it, either by myself or by my Roman guards; *for*, as I have told you again and again, *I find no fault in him* worthy of any such punishment.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

The Jews then *answered him*, There is no room to represent him as a faultless person, nor any reason to be backward to condemn him; but these objections you have made oblige us to mention one circumstance, which for the horror of it we would willingly have concealed: *we have a* divine *law* which we received from heaven, by which blasphemy is forbidden on the highest penalties; *and by* this *our law he ought to die*, though he were not chargeable with sedition and treason, *because he has made himself the Son of* the most high *God*, in such a sense as no creature can be; and this he declared but this morning in open court. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; Mark xiv. 62; and Luke xxii. 70. p. 375.) 7

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

When Pilate therefore heard this expression, he was still *more afraid* than before;[f] for the Romans believed many poetical stories of men begotten by their deities, and thought them a kind of demi-gods, who could not be injured without engaging their divine parents in the quarrel. 8

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

And therefore, apprehending that his wife's dream might also take its rise from such a cause, *he entered again into the palace, and* taking him aside, he *said to Jesus*, Tell me plainly from *whence* thou camest, and from whom *art thou* descended? and what is this divine original which thou art charged with claiming?[g] *But Jesus*, know- 9

hand as a sceptre, for a blow with a slight reed would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings.

d *His wife sent to him.*] While Rome was governed by a commonwealth, it was unusual for the governors of provinces to take their wives with them; but afterwards it grew customary, and the motion made against it in the fourth year of Tiberius was rejected with some indignation. See Tacit. *Annal. lib.* iii. *cap.* 33, 34.

e *I have suffered many things to-day on his account in a dream.*] Perhaps the word σημερον, *to-day*, may imply that she had dreamt these things that morning, since Pilate rose; and as the heathens imagined those dreams most significant which came about break of day, she might, on that account, lay the greater stress upon them. Jansenius thinks she had now a representation of those calamities which afterwards befel Pilate and his family: (See note g, in the Improvement.) But it is an unaccountable thought of Mr. Fleming, that the devil might be the author of this dream, by which he might endeavour to prevent the death of Christ according to the prophecies. His two arguments, from her calling Christ a man, (which is merely taken from our version, for in the original it is only τω δικαιω εκεινω, *that righteous One*,) and from the disquiet which this dream gave her, are too inconsiderable to need a particular reply. See Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 325.

f *He was* still *more afraid* than before.] Though I think, with Mr. Cradock and several others, the interpretation given in the paraphrase the most natural, yet I cannot forbear mentioning that of Dr. Lardner, who thinks he was afraid of a sedition among the Jews, from his knowledge of their great obstinacy in any thing in which religion might seem to be concerned; and he adds, he might be the more reasonably alarmed on this head, as since the beginning of his government he had met with two remarkable instances of their stiffness; one in an attempt he made to bring the image of Cæsar into Jerusalem; the other in a design he had formed of supplying the city with water at the expense of the sacred treasury of the temple. See Lard. *Credib.* part i. Vol. I. p. 330—338.

g *Whence art thou?*] It is strange Mr. Locke should think, (as he does, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 133.) that Christ declined giving him an answer, lest when he heard he was

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ing that his innocence was already apparent, even to the conviction of Pilate's conscience, *gave him no answer* to that question.

Then Pilate in surprise *said to him*, What, *dost thou* make me no reply, and *not* so much as *speak to me* in such a circumstance as this, in which thy life is so evidently concerned? *Dost thou not know, that I have power* and authority *to crucify thee, and* 10 *have power to release thee* if I please, notwithstanding all the clamorous demands of thine enemies?[h]

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 *Jesus* calmly *replied, Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above*, from the God of heaven, whose providence I acknowledge in all these events:[i] *therefore he who has delivered me to thee*, even the Jewish high-priest with his council, having far greater opportunities of knowing him and his law, *hath the greater* and more aggravated *sin*; yet thou thyself canst not but know, that on the principles of natural equity, an innocent person ought not to be given up to popular fury.

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 *And from this time Pilate* was so far satisfied of the injustice of the prosecution, and of the innocence of Jesus, that he *endeavoured* the more *earnestly to release him. But the Jews* still insisted on his passing sentence on him to be crucified; and apprehensive of the governor's design, that they effectually might put a stop to his intention of discharging him, they eagerly *cried out, saying, If thou let this man go* off with his life, *thou art not Cæsar's friend*, though thou bearest his commission, and representest his person; for *every one that makes himself a king* of Judea *speaks against Cæsar* our emperor, and in effect arraigns the legality of his government here.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.

13 *When Pilate therefore heard that speech*, he was very much alarmed, as he well knew how suspicious a prince Tiberius was, and how many spies he kept on all his officers, that nothing might be done or permitted by them in any of the provinces, which could at all interfere with his authority:[k] and, that he might not then be charged with any want of zeal for Cæsar's interest, *he brought Jesus out* of the palace again, *and* once more *sat down on the tribunal*, which was then erected (as was said before, p. 377.) without the palace, *in a place called* in Greek, Lithostraton, or *the Pavement*, on account of a beautiful piece of Mosaic work with which the floor was adorned: *but in Hebrew* it was called *Gabbatha*, or the High-place, because it stood on an eminence, so that the judge, being seated there on his tribunal, might be heard and seen by a considerable number of people.[l]

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 *And it was* then *the preparation of the passover*, or the sixth day of the week, and consequently the day which fell before the paschal sabbath, which was observed with some peculiar solemnity; (see John xix. 31. sect. cxcii.) *and* the morning was so far advanced, that it [*was*] drawing on apace *towards the sixth hour*, and was now about the third hour, or nine in the morning,[m] which obliged them to despatch, that they might

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!

born at Bethlehem, he should have any such apprehensions as Herod had entertained. Pilate probably knew nothing at all of that prophecy, as Herod himself indeed did not, till he had learned it from the Jewish scribes whom he consulted on Christ's birth. (Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6. p. 24.) The answer which our Lord had made to his former inquiries, showed how far he was from declining any danger; and the true reason of his present silence was, that Pilate's unsteady conduct rendered him unworthy of any farther information.

h *Dost thou not know that I have power to crucify thee? &c.*] Even they who maintain that the Jews had a power of executing capital sentences in Christ's time, acknowledge that power to have been under the control of the Roman governor; and that it was in fact so often controlled, that at last the Jewish sanhedrim removed from the chamber in which alone they could regularly pass them, that they might not have the mortification of seeing continually how little their decisions availed, when the most notorious criminal, if he had but money, could buy a pardon from their common masters. So that the dispute, after all the noise it has made in the learned world, seems at last to terminate in this nicety, "Whether the consent of the Roman governor were ex- "pressly asked before the Jews proceeded to an execution, or were "taken for granted if the contrary did not appear?" Or, in other words, "Whether the efficacy of a sentence passed by the Jews "were owing to the express consent or the connivance of the "Romans?" The conduct of the Jews in this case seems to prove the former of these to have been the true state of the affair; and vindicates not only the substance of what Dr. Lardner has maintained, but the particular manner in which he expresses it. See note e, on Matt. xxvii. 2. p. 377.

i *Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above.*] Some have thought that the word ανωθεν, *from above*, refers to the situation of the temple, which stood much higher than the prætorium; and that it is as if Jesus had said, "I know that whatever thou dost against me, is only in consequence "of the sentence passed in yonder court held above; so that their "guilt is greater than thine." But though this would very well account for the connexion of the latter part of the verse, I cannot think it altogether just; for had Providence permitted Pilate to seize Christ as one dangerous to Cæsar's dignity, he would have had as much power of putting him to death as he now had. It is therefore much more reasonable to suppose it refers to the permission of God's providence. No thought was more proper to the occasion; and I think the interpretation I have given to the latter clause, in this view, is natural, though not very common. But if any are not satisfied with it, they may consider whether δια τουτο may not be connected with the beginning of the verse, so that it might be translated, *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, unless it were given thee from above for this purpose.* (Compare note f, on John vii. 21. § 99.)

k As he well knew how suspicious a prince Tiberius was, &c.] Every body that knows the character of Tiberius, especially as illustrated by Suetonius in his excellent History, will see how naturally Pilate might be apprehensive on this head.

l *In Hebrew, Gabbatha.*] There are various etymologies of this word. I think the most probable is that which derives it from גבה, *elevavit*, and so it intimates its being *raised on high*. It was, perhaps, a kind of stage or scaffold, in the midst of a spacious area belonging to the palace, in which the governor might place himself on public, and especially on judicial, occasions. It plainly appears from the connexion of the words, that it was not in his house, but somewhere without, probably in some open place.

m *Was* drawing on apace *towards the sixth hour*, and was now about the third hour, &c.] Difficulties which seem to me quite invincible, attend the reading which is generally received, [*It was about the sixth hour,*] whether we reckon it, according to the Roman method of computation, six in the morning, or, according to the Jewish computation, twelve at noon.—The best commentators I know, (and among the rest of late, Dr. Guyse,) think the whole difficulty of reconciling these words of John with Mark, who tells us (chap. xv. 25. § 189.) that Christ was crucified at the third hour; and with Matthew and Luke, who exactly agree with him in fixing the time of that darkness which happened while Christ hung upon the cross, (compare Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44; and Mark xv. 33. § 191.) is easily solved by understanding it, according to the Roman account, of six in the morning. But as John was a Jew, and elsewhere seems to use the Jewish account, (John i. 39; iv. 6, 52.) that very supposition is in general improbable. Or if, out of regard to the considerations which the learned, but here dubious and perplexed, Zeltnerus has urged, (see Zeltner. *Hor. Pilat.* p. 14. *et seq.*) we were to grant it in general a supposable case, very strong objections will lie against supposing it here. For though we should, with many critics, take it for granted that the passover here fell late in April, (which was the latest it could fall,) the sun would not rise at Jerusalem till near five o'clock, and one cannot suppose the sanhedrim assembled till about break of day. How then is it possible, that their condemnation of Christ, his arraignment and examination, first before Pilate, then before Herod, together with Pilate's repeated examinations of him, and conferences with the Jews about him, as also the change of dress, scourging, crowning with thorns, &c. should be despatched by six? The very contents of the preceding sections seem to demonstrate the contrary. On the other hand, it could not be twelve at noon, since Mark assures us to the contrary, and his account is confirmed

have execution done, as usual, before noon. And Pilate, finding he must, after all, yield to the people, and consent to the death of Jesus, lest his former struggle should be misrepresented at Rome, was resolved to manage this incident so as to procure from the Jews a public acknowledgment of Cæsar's authority: *and* therefore, pointing to Jesus as he now appeared in this mock pomp of royalty, *he says to the Jews*, who were present in vast numbers, *Behold your king*, if you think fit to own him, as it is said many of you have done. *But they* again *cried out* with indignation and disdain, *Away with* [*him,*] *away with* [*him*;] we are so far from owning him, that we desire thee to *crucify him*. *Pilate says to them*, What, *shall I crucify your king?* How strange and how extravagant a demand is this! And *the chief priests answered*, in the name of all the people, *We have no king but* the emperor Tiberius *Cæsar*, whose royal authority we all of us acknowledge, and will always maintain.

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15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

And Pilate, seeing that it signified nothing any longer to oppose the popular torrent, *but that they rather grew* more *tumultuous* by the delay, was determined however to do all he could to make his own conscience easy in complying with this their unjust request; and therefore *he took water and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude,*[n] *saying*, I call heaven and earth to witness that *I am innocent of the blood of this righteous* [*man*;] *look you* [*to*] the consequences of shedding [*it,*] and remember you are answerable for them, whatever they may prove. *And all the people answered, saying*, We will venture those consequences:—*may his blood*, if innocent, *be on us, and on our children!* and may the curse of shedding it lie upon us throughout all generations![o]

MATT. XXVII. 24

Matt. xxvii. 24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

And when they had said this, *Pilate*, who now was something easier in his own mind, and was *desirous to satisfy the people*,[p] since he perceived it could be done no other way, *pronounced sentence that what they demanded should be done*, and that Jesus should be put to death.

LUKE XXIII. 24

Luke xxiii. 24. And Pilate, [willing to content the people,] gave sentence that it should be as they required. [Mark xv. 15.]

And in pursuance of that sentence, *he released to them Barabbas, who* (as was said before) *was thrown into prison for sedition and murder;* but *whom*, aggravated as his crimes were, *they had* importunately *desired* in preference to Christ; *and having* (as we related above, John xix. 1. p. 382.) already *scourged Jesus*, he did not renew that torture;[q] however, *he delivered him to their will to be crucified*, with such circumstances as they thought proper; and they soon shewed that their tender mercies were cruel.

25

25 And he released to them [Barabbas,] that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; [and when he had scourged Jesus,] he delivered him to their will to be crucified. [Matt. xxvii. 26. Mark xv. 15. John xix. 16.]

And when the Jewish mob had thus prevailed, *after they had mocked* and insulted him for a while, just as the Roman soldiers had before done in the prætorium, deriding his pretences to a kingdom, and abusing him like the vilest slave, *they took the purple robe off from him,*[r] *and having dressed him* again *in his own garments*, they *led him away to be crucified* in the manner which we shall presently relate.

MATT. XXVII. 31

Matt. xxvii. 31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the [purple] robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. [Mark xv. 20.]

both by Matthew and Luke. (See the places just now quoted, and note d, on Mark 15. 25. sect. clxxxix.)—I cannot therefore but conclude, with Columelus, (*Observ.* p. 77.) Beza, and Erasmus, that instead of the sixth we should read the third hour, that is, nine in the morning. For this we have the authority of the Cambridge manuscript, and of Peter of Alexandria, who expressly asserts it was τριτη, *the third*, in the original copy, which he says continued till his time; and though, as Dr. Mill abundantly shews in his *Annotation* on this place, all the best manuscripts and ancient versions are on the other side, I am obliged here to follow the superior authority of common sense: however, in submission to the greatest number of copies, I have still retained the common reading in the version, and have only given what I apprehend to be the true reading in the paraphrase.—Some other unsatisfactory hypotheses will be touched on in the note last referred to. See a large and accurate view of them in Wolf. *Cur. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 969—976.

n *He took water and washed his hands, &c.*] It is well known that the Jews in some cases were appointed to *wash their hands*, as a solemn token that they were not themselves concerned in the murder committed by some unknown person: (see Deut. xxi. 6—9.) but as this was also a rite that was frequently used by the Gentiles in token of innocence, it is more probable that Pilate, who was a Gentile, did it in conformity to them. See Grotius, *in loc.* and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 122, 123.

o *May his blood be on us, and on our children!*] As this terrible imprecation was dreadfully answered in the ruin so quickly brought on the Jewish nation, and the calamities which have since pursued that wretched people, in almost all ages and countries; so it was peculiarly illustrated in the severity with which Titus, merciful as he naturally was, treated the Jews whom he took during the siege of Jerusalem: of whom Josephus himself writes, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 11. [al. vi. 12.] § 1.) that μαστιγουμενοι κατεστρεβλουντο, *having been scourged and tortured in a very terrible manner, they were crucified* in the view, and near the walls of this city; perhaps, among other places, on Mount Calvary; and it is very probable this might be the fate of some of those very persons who now joined in this cry, as it undoubtedly was of many of their children. For Josephus, who was an eye-witness, expressly delares, "that the "number of those thus crucified was so great, that there was not "room for the crosses to stand by each other; and that at last they "had not wood enough to make crosses of." A passage which, especially when compared with the verse before us, impresses and astonishes me beyond any other which I recollect in the whole story. If this were not the very *finger of God* pointing out their crime in *crucifying his Son*, it is hard to say what could deserve to be called so.—Elsner has abundantly shown, that among the Greeks, the persons on whose testimony others were put to death, used, by a very solemn execration, to devote themselves to the divine vengeance, if the person so condemned were not really guilty. (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 123—125.)—We are told by Grotius, (*De Jure Bell. et Pac. lib.* iii. *cap.* iv. § 9. No. 2.) that Titus commanded the women and children of the Jews to be exposed in theatres, and there to be devoured by wild beasts: a fact which I should have thought it extremely proper to mention here, if any authority were produced to support it. But as I cannot meet with any such account in Josephus, I am ready to ascribe what Grotius says of it, to a slip of memory in that great critic; especially considering how improbable it was, that so humane a prince as Titus should be guilty of such almost unexampled cruelty. On the contrary, in the only passage I recollect, where Josephus speaks of exposing the Jewish captives to wild beasts, (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 9. [al. vii. 16.] § 2.) it is expressly said, that Titus sold all who were under seventeen years old.

p *Desirous to satisfy the people:* το ικανον ποιησαι.] As his former administration had given them a great deal of disgust, he might very probably think it absolutely necessary thus to appease them: yet they afterwards followed him with their accusations to his ruin; and thus, by the righteous judgment of God, he lost all the advantage which he hoped to gain by this base compliance, as Felix did, when he afterwards injured Paul on the same unworthy principles. Acts xxiv. 27.

q *Having* already *scourged Jesus:* φραγελλωσας.] Many critics, and among the rest Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 125.) have shewn that scourging used to precede crucifixion; but as John, who is most exact in his account of this part of the story, mentions his having been scourged before, and says nothing of the repetition of it, (which, considering Pilate's conviction of his innocence, he would probably spare,) I chuse to interpret the word in this manner, which the original will very well bear.

r *They took the purple robe off from him.*] It is observable, as we have seen above, p. 382. that Matthew (chap. xxvii. 28.) mentions *a scarlet robe*, χλαμυδα κοκκινην, and Mark (chap. xv. 17. as well as here,) *a purple garment*, την πορφυραν. I take not upon me to determine whether either of these words be used for the other, waving, as in some other cases, the most exact signification; or whether there were *two garments* used, *a purple vest*, and over that *a scarlet robe*. However, it is probable, whatever they were, Pilate, or any of his chief officers, would not cover his bleeding body with any thing better than an old and perhaps tattered habit, which answered their contemptuous purpose much better than the best which the governor's wardrobe could have afforded

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 188. JOHN XIX. 1 — LET us now, by a lively act of faith, bring forth the blessed Jesus to our imagination, as Pilate brought him forth to the people. Let us with affectionate sympathy survey the indignities which were offered him when he *gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and hid not his face from shame and spitting.* (Isa. l. 6.) Behold the man wearing his purple robe and thorny crown, and bearing the reed which smote him, in his right hand for a sceptre! Behold, not merely the man, but the Son of God, thus vilely degraded, thus infamously abused! Shall we, as it were, increase his sufferings, and, while we condemn the fury and cruelty of the Jews, shall we *crucify him to ourselves afresh, and put him to an open shame?* (Heb. vi. 6.) Or, shall we overlook him with slight and contempt, and *hide our faces from him,* who for our sake thus exposed his own? (Isa. liii. 3.)

7, 8 Let the caution even of this heathen judge, who feared when he heard he so much as pretended to be the Son of God, engage us to reverence him, especially considering in how powerful a manner he has since been *declared to be so.* (Rom. i. 4.) Let us in this sense have nothing to do with the blood of this just Person. Let his example teach us patiently to submit to those sufferings which God shall appoint for us, remembering that no enemies and no calamities we meet with could have any power against us, except it were given them from above.

MATT. XXVII. 24, 26 How wisely was it ordered by divine Providence, that Pilate should be obliged thus to acquit Christ, even while he condemned him; and to speak of him as a righteous Person, in the same breath with which he doomed him to the death of the most flagitious malefactor! And how lamentably does the power of worldly interest over conscience appear, when, after all the convictions of his own mind, as well as the admonitions of his wife, he yet gave him up to popular fury! O Pilate, how gloriously hadst thou fallen in the defence of the Son of God! and how justly did God afterwards leave thee to perish by the resentment of that people whom thou wast now so studious to oblige![s]

LUKE XXIII. 24, 25

MATT. XXVII. Who can without trembling read that dreadful imprecation, *May his blood be on us, and on our children!* Words which, even to this day, have their remarkable and terrible accomplishment in that curse which has pursued the Jews through seventeen hundred years. Lord, may it at length be averted, and even turned into a blessing! May they *look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn,* till all the obstinacy of their hearts be subdued! till they bow down in glad submission to that King whom God has set on his holy hill, and thus are brought themselves to reign with him in everlasting honour and joy!

SECTION CLXXXIX.

Jesus, being delivered up by Pilate to the rage of the people, bears his cross to Calvary, and is there nailed to it. Matt. xxvii. 32—34, 38. Mark xv. 21—23, 25, 27, 28. Luke xxiii. 26—34. John xix. 16—18.

JOHN xix. 16.

SECT. 189. JOHN XIX. 16 — NOW after Pilate had passed sentence upon Jesus, to satisfy the restless clamour of the Jews, and had delivered him to the soldiers to be crucified, his prosecutors, having gained their point, hastened his execution; *and* having insulted and abused him, (as was said before,) *they took Jesus and led him away* to that terrible punishment.[a]

JOHN xix. 16. AND they took Jesus, and led him away.

LUKE XXIII. 32 — *And,* to expose him to the greater ignominy and reproach, and to prejudice the people more strongly against him, *there were also two other* [*men, who were*] condemned to die upon the cross for a robbery, and were well known to be great *malefactors,* that were *led* out of Jerusalem *with him, to be executed* at the same time; that in such company he might be thought to suffer for the worst of crimes.

Luke xxiii. 32. And there were also two other malefactors led with him, to be put to death.

JOHN XIX. 17 — *And* Jesus, thus attended as a criminal, was led through the city, *carrying* a heavy part of *his cross* on his shoulders, according to the custom of those who were to be crucified: and in this manner *he went out* of the city *to a place* which lay on the western side of Jerusalem, but a little without the boundaries of it,[b] *which was called in the Hebrew* language, *Golgotha,* [*or*] *the place of a skull;* because the bodies of many criminals, having been executed on that little eminence, were buried there.

John xix. 17. And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha.

LUKE XXIII. 26 — *And as they led him on,* Jesus was now so faint with the loss of blood, so very sore with the lashes and bruises he had received, and so fatigued with the load of such a large piece of timber, that he was not able to proceed so fast as they desired, especially considering how little time they had before them to finish their work. And as he was advancing slowly to the place of execution, *they met* on the road a poor African, who was *a native*

Luke xxiii. 26. And as they led him away, [they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name,] Mark, the

s Leave thee to perish, &c.] Josephus (*Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 4. [al. 5.] § 1, 2.) expressly assures us, that Pilate, having slain a considerable number of seditious Samaritans, was deposed from his government by Vitellius, and sent to Tiberius at Rome, which died before he arrived there. And Eusebius tells us, (*Hist. Eccles. lib.* ii. *cap.* 7.) that quickly after, (having, as others say, been banished to Vienne in Gaul,) he laid violent hands upon himself, falling on his own sword. Agrippa, who was an eye-witness to many of his enormities, speaks of him in his oration to Caius Cæsar, as one who had been a man of a most infamous character; (*Philo. Jud. in Leg.* p. 1034.) and by that manner of speaking, as Valesius well observes, it is plainly intimated he was then dead. Probably the accusations of other Jews following him, had before that proved his destruction.

a *They took Jesus and led him away.*] It is evident this text is parallel to Matt. xxvii. 31. and Mark xv. 20. But I have here, as in some other instances of two or more parallel passages, put one at the conclusion of a former section, and the other at the beginning of the next, for a better connexion.—I may also add, that this seems to me the exact place of Matt. xxvii. 3—10. in which the Evangelist relates the tragical end of Judas; but I hope I shall be indulged in transposing it, partly that I may preserve a better proportion in the length of the sections, and chiefly that I may not interrupt the important story of Christ's passion: and I more easily allow myself to do it, because probably the very same consideration engaged Matthew a little to anticipate it. Let it only here be observed, that the death of this traitor seems to have happened before that of his Master: so speedily did the divine vengeance pursue his aggravated crime.

b *Carrying* a heavy part of *his cross, went out* of the city, &c.] Dr. Lardner has abundantly proved from many quotations that it was customary, not only for the Jews, (Numb. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13; Acts vii. 58.) but also for the Sicilians, Ephesians, and Romans, to execute their malefactors without the gates of their cities. (See his *Credibility,* part i. Vol. I. p. 354, 355.)—What our Lord carried was not the *whole cross,* but only that *transverse piece of wood* to which his arms were afterwards fastened; and which was called *antennæ,* or *furca,* going across the *stipes* or *upright beam,* which was fixed in the earth. This the criminal used to carry, and therefore was called *furcifer.* See Bishop Pearson, *On the Creed,* p. 203, 204.

father of Alexander and Rufus, who passed by, coming out of the country, *and*] they laid hold on *him*; [*and* him they compelled to bear his cross:] and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus. [Matt. xxvii. 32. Mark xv. 21.]

of Cyrene, named Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who afterwards became christians, and were of some note in the church: this Simon at that time was *passing by as he came out of the country* to Jerusalem; [*and*] *they* immediately *laid hold on* [*him*] as one fit for their purpose, finding him a strong man, and it may be, suspecting that he was a favourer of Jesus; [*and*] pretending that the authority of the Roman governor empowered them to press any they met for this service, they *compelled him to carry* at least one end of *his cross; and* accordingly *on him they laid the cross, that he might carry it after Jesus.* 26

SECT. 189. LUKE XXIII.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

And a great multitude of people crowded after him to see the crucifixion; *and* particularly, a considerable number *of women* who had attended his ministry with great delight, *followed him* on this sad occasion; *who* were so tenderly affected with the moving sight, that they not only pitied him in their hearts, but *also* vented their concern in tears, and *bewailed and lamented him* in a very affectionate manner. 27

28 But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

But Jesus turning to them, said, Alas, ye *daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me*, who am willing to submit to all the sufferings appointed for me, as what I know will issue in the salvation of my people, and in my exaltation to the highest glory; *but* rather *weep for yourselves and for your children*, in consideration of the dreadful judgments that these crimes will quickly bring upon this wretched people, whose calamities will be of much longer duration than mine. 28

29 For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

For, let it be remembered by you as my dying words, *behold the days are* surely and quickly *coming*, and some of you may live to see them, *in which* the innocent blood which this people have imprecated upon themselves, shall come down upon their heads in so terrible a manner, that *they shall* have reason to *say, Happy* [*are*] *the barren* women, *and the wombs which never bare* children, *and the breasts that never suckled* them: for as relations are multiplied, sorrow shall be multiplied with them, and parents shall see their children subject to all the miseries which famine, and pestilence, and sword, and captivity, can bring upon them. 29

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Then shall they who are now triumphing in my death, be trembling with horror in expectation of their own; and, considering present calamities as the forerunners of future, yet more intolerable miseries, shall *begin*, in despair of the divine mercy, *to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us* from the more dreadful pressure of God's wrath, which is kindled against us. 30

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

For if they do these things in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry? If such agonies as these fall upon me, who am not only an innocent person, but God's own Son, when I put myself in the stead of sinners, what will become of those wretches who can feel none of my supports and consolations, and whose personal guilt makes them as proper fuel for the divine vengeance as dry wood is to the consuming fire? 31

MATT. XXVII. 33

Matt. xxvii. 33. And when they were come to [the] place called Golgotha, that is to say, [the] place of a skull, [Luke, *or* Calvary:] [Mark xv. 22. Luke xxiii. 33.]

At length they arrived at the place of execution: *and when they were come* thither, even *to the place* which (we before observed) was *called* in Hebrew *Golgotha, that is to say, the place of a skull*, a little without the city [*on*] Mount *Calvary*, (which was the usual place for executing criminals, and seemed a proper spot of ground for the purpose, as on account of its eminence the malefactors crucified there might be seen at a considerable distance, and by a great number of spectators;) *They* proceeded to the fatal purpose for which they came: and as it was customary to give to dying criminals a potion of strong wine mingled with spices, to cheer their spirits, and render them less sensible of their sufferings, the soldiers who attended him *gave him* nothing better *to drink* than *vinegar mingled with gall*, by that odious mixture farther expressing their cruelty and contempt: *and when he had tasted* [*of it*,] that he might submit to every distasteful circumstance which Providence allotted to him, *he would not drink* any large draught of it, as knowing it would answer no valuable end to do it. 33 34

34 They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

MARK XV. 23

Mark xv. 23. And they [*also*] gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh; but he received *it* not.

And, as some of his friends had on that occasion provided a cordial cup, *they gave him* [*also*] a draught of generous *wine to drink, mingled with myrrh* and other spices, which they thought proper on that sad occasion;[c] *but he did not receive* [*it*,] determining to bear the full force of his pains unallayed by any such preparation, and to maintain his thoughts in the most vigorous exercise.

25 And it was the third hour, and [there] they crucified him: [Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 18.]

And it was now *the third hour* of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning,[d] when they thus brought him to Mount Calvary; *and there*, when all things were made ready, *they* nailed his hands and his feet to the cross, and *crucified him.* 25

27 And with him they crucify [Luke, the malefactors, *or*,] two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left,]

And they also *crucified with him the two malefactors*, [*or*] *robbers*, that were mentioned before, *the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; and* they placed *Jesus in the midst*, as a mark of 27

c *They gave him also wine to drink, mingled with myrrh.*] Some think this was *sour wine*, called *vinegar* by Matthew; but I apprehend the reasons which Dr. Edwards has produced (*Exercit.* part ii. No. 2. p. 178—188.) sufficiently prove that this wine mingled with myrrh was a different mixture from the vinegar and gall which he received so far as to taste it. Probably those pious women, some of them (as the story shows) persons in plentiful circumstances, whose zeal engaged them to follow him to Calvary, and afterwards so liberally to prepare unguents and aromatic drugs for his embalming, had provided on this sad occasion some rich wine tempered with choice spices, which with perfect propriety he refused to taste, lest malice should insinuate he intended thereby to render himself insensible of the terrors of death.

d *It was* now *the third hour* of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning.] I can by no means agree with Vossius and some other critics, to read it here the sixth hour; for there ought to be very cogent reasons for departing from the authority of all the best copies and ancient versions: (See Dr. Mill, *in loc.*) Nor can I think, with Heinsius, that these words in Mark refer not to the hour of the day in which Christ was crucified, but to the length of time he had been upon the cross when his garments were divided, which Mark had spoken of just before, in ver. 24. For as Mark mentions the sixth and the ninth hour, (ver. 33.) this interpretation would oblige us to conclude, either that Mark used two very different ways of computation within the compass of a few verses, or else that Christ did not expire till he had been nine hours on the cross. And as these objections equally lie against Godwyn's hypothesis, (*Moses and Aaron*, book iii. chap. i.) that we are here to distinguish between the four larger and twelve smaller hours into which the day was divided, I do not think it necessary more particularly to consider it, though the learned Gerhardus in his *Harmony*, prefers it to all others. Compare note m, on John xix. 14. § 188. p. 384.

SECT. 189.

the greatest indignity, to prejudice the multitude the more against him, and to induce them to regard him as the most infamous criminal of the three. *And* thus *the scripture was* remarkably *fulfilled*, (Isa. liii. 12.) in *which* the prophet Isaiah, speaking with an amazing plainness of the sufferings of the Messiah, *saith*, "*And he was numbered with the* "*transgressors.*"[e]

[John, and Jesus in the midst.] [Matt. xxvii. 38. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 18.]

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

MARK XV. 28

LUKE XXIII. 34

And Jesus made no manner of resistance to this cruel violence, nor did he revile them even when they were distorting his limbs as on a rack, and nailing his hands and his feet on the full stretch to the accursed tree; but, in the midst of his anguish, he breathed out his soul in a compassionate prayer for his murderers: and pleading the only excuse which the most extensive charity could suggest, he *said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing*:[f] The Roman soldiers, who were the immediate instruments of his death, having indeed but little knowledge of him; and the Jews, who were the authors of it, through their obstinate prejudices not apprehending who he was: "for if they had "known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

Luke xxiii. 34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN XIX. 17, 18

HERE let us pause a while, and make a few serious reflections on this amazing story, which the Evangelists relate with so much simplicity. Behold the Son of God bearing his cross, fainting under the load of it, and at length extended upon it and nailed to it! *Him they took, and with wicked hands crucified and slew him.* (Acts ii. 23.) Blessed Jesus, was it for this that thou didst honour our nature by an union to thine own, and come from thy throne of glory to visit these abodes of misery and guilt! Was it for this that so many gracious discourses were

MARK XV. 27, 28

delivered, and so many works of love and power performed! for this, that thou mightest be treated as the worst of criminals, and suspended on a cross in the air, as if unworthy of a place on earth even to die upon! Amazing and lamentable sight! Justly, O sun, mightest thou blush to see it! justly, O earth, mightest thou tremble to support it!

LUKE XXIII. 27, 28

Lord, like these pious women who had the zeal and fortitude to attend thee when thine own apostles forsook thee and fled, we would follow thee weeping: yet not for thee, but for ourselves,—that our guilt had brought us under a condemnation from which we could be redeemed by nothing less than the precious blood of the Son of God, that *Lamb without blemish and without spot.* (1 Pet. i. 19.)—We would behold herein *the goodness and the severity of God:* (Rom. xi. 22.) for while the riches of his goodness are displayed in his providing a ransom for the redemption of lost sinners, an awful proof is given of the severity of his justice in his not sparing his own Son, nor exempting him from the sorrows and sufferings due to sin, when he came to put himself in the stead of sinners: and may we not in such a view *tremble for fear of him, and be afraid of his judgments?* (Psalm cxix. 120.) Who can support the weight of his indignation, especially when it shall come aggravated by the

31 abuse of so much love! *If these things be done in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry?* And if such sufferings be inflicted, where there was not any personal guilt to kindle the flame, on one who only answered for the sins of others, what then will be the end of those who, by their own iniquities, are become as fuel prepared for the fire, and are as vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?

33 How shocking is it to behold the vile indignities that were put upon a suffering Jesus, and to reflect upon the cruel treatment that he met with from his insulting enemies! Yet have not we been verily guilty concerning this matter? (Gen. xlii. 21.) Are not we chargeable with despising Christ? and have we not *crucified the Son of God*

34 *afresh, and put him to an open shame?* (Heb. vi. 6.) O may that apology be heard in our favour,—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* For surely sinners do not know what they do, when they pierce Christ by their sins, and turn away their faces from him. But under all his sufferings, how amazing was his meekness! and how compassionate the concern which he expressed for his most cruel persecutors! May we learn patience, and love to our enemies, from so bright an example of it! May we like him, *bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us!* (Matt. v. 44.) Instead of being ingenious to aggravate their faults, and to paint them in the most shocking colours, let us rather seek for the best excuses which even the worst of causes will fairly bear; influenced by that charity which, unconstrained, *believes no evil*, and *hopeth all things* even against hope. (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.)

Ibid. Gracious Saviour! thy dying prayer, and thy dying blood, were not like water spilt upon the ground; they came up in remembrance before God when thy gospel began to be preached at Jerusalem: and multitudes who were now consenting to thy death, *gladly received thy word, and were baptized:* (Acts ii. 41.) and they are now in glory, celebrating that grace which has taken out the scarlet and crimson dye of their sins, and turned that blood which they so impiously shed, into the balm of their wounds, and the life of their souls.

SECTION CXC.

Christ's garments are divided by lot; and while he is himself insulted on the cross, he shows his mercy to the penitent thief. Matt. xxvii. 35—37, 39—44. Mark xv. 24, 26, 29—32. Luke xxiii. 34—43. John xix. 19—24.

SECT. 190.

JOHN XIX. 23.

JOHN XIX.

THE soldiers therefore, when they had thus *crucified Jesus, took his garments*, which according to custom they had stripped off, that the shame of suffering naked might be

JOHN XIX. 23.

THEN the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and

e *And he was numbered with the transgressors.*] I chuse, in quotations from the Old Testament, to keep as close to our English version of the passage quoted as the Greek will allow me, that the memory of the hearer may assist him in distinguishing the text; else I should have rendered ανομων, *criminals*, as the word פשעים, which Isaiah uses, seems also to signify. The least offence is a transgression of the law of God, or a stepping over the boundaries he has prescribed; but this imports much more.

f *Father, forgive them, &c.*] This is one of the most striking passages in the world. While they are actually nailing him to the cross, he seems to feel the injury these poor creatures did to their own souls, more than the wounds they gave him; and, as it were, to forget his own anguish in a concern for their salvation. I render τι ποιουσι, *what they are doing*, as thinking that version most expressive of the present circumstance; and indeed it is the exact import of what grammarians call the present tense.

made four parts, to every soldier a part: [Mark, casting lots upon them, what every man should take;] and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. [Matt. xxvii. 35. Mark xv. 24. Luke xxiii. 34.]

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be: that the scripture [spoken by the prophet] might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. [Matt. xxvii. 35.]

Matt. xxvii. 36. And sitting down, they watched him there:

37 And set up over his head [the superscription of] his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS [John, OF NAZARETH,] THE KING OF THE JEWS. [Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 38. John xix. 19.]

John xix. 19. And Pilate wrote [the] title, and put it on the cross.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in [letters of] Hebrew, [and] Greek, [and] Latin. [Luke xxiii. 38.]

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he said, I am king of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

Matt. xxvii. 39. And [Luke, the people stood beholding: and] they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, [Mark xv. 29. Luke xxiii. 35.]

40 And saying, [Ah,] thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself; [and] if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. [Mark xv. 29, 30.]

41 Likewise also the chief priests, [Luke, and the rulers also with them, derided *him, and*] [mocking, said among themselves,] with the scribes and elders, [Mark xv. 31. Luke xxiii. 35.]

42 He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be [Luke, Christ, the cho-

added to all the agony of the cross; *and* as it was usual for the executioners to have the garments of the criminal whom they put to death, they *made four parts* of his clothes, assigning *to each soldier* of the quaternion employed on that occasion *a part*, and *casting lots upon them, which* of the four *each man should take; and* they took *also the vest*, or inner-garment: *now the vest* had this curious circumstance attending it, that it *was without* any *seam* at all, being *woven from the top throughout* in one whole piece.[a] And as this was considered by them as more valuable than ordinary, *they said therefore one to another, Let us not* spoil this coat, as we must do if we go about to *tear it* into four parts, *but let us cast lots for it, whose* the whole of *it shall be:* and accordingly they did so, *that the scripture spoken by the prophet* David in the person of the Messiah *might* thus *be* literally *fulfilled, which saith,* (Psal. xxii. 18.) "*They divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture.*"[b] *These things therefore the soldiers did,* though with the utmost freedom as to themselves, yet by the secret disposal of Providence, which, by an undiscerned influence on their minds, led them to act in a remarkable correspondence to the divine oracle. *And* having done this, *they sat down* near the cross, *and guarded him* and the other two who were crucified with him, that none might come *there* to rescue them before they were quite dead.[c]

SECT. 190.

JOHN XIX.

24

MATT. XXVII.

36

And, as the usual method was in cases of crucifixion, *they put* upon the cross, *over his head, a superscription* in capital letters,[d] containing the substance *of his* pretended *crime, written* in these remarkable words, *THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And* indeed it was *Pilate* who *wrote* [*this*] *title, and* ordered them to *put it on the cross;* which, howsoever it was designed as a reproach to Jesus, was in effect a declaration of his real character; and, by the secret providence of God, was overruled in a remarkable and public manner to proclaim the kingdom of Christ, while it was only meant to expose and ridicule his title to it. *Many of the Jews therefore* that came up to the feast of the passover, *read this inscription; because the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city,* and lay but just without the gates: *and,* that the inscription might be generally understood, *it was* expressed, by Pilate's order, in three languages, and *written* both *in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin letters,* so that it might easily be read by Jews, Romans, and most other foreigners.[e]

37

JOHN XIX.

19

20

Now when the inscription was drawn up, *the chief priests of the Jews* were very much offended at the form in which it was expressed, and *therefore* objected against it, and *said to Pilate, Do not write, The king of the Jews;* for we entirely disown him under that character, as thou well knowest; *but* rather write *that he said, I am the king of the Jews.* But *Pilate,* who was very much displeased at the importunity by which, contrary to his inclination and judgment, they had extorted from him the sentence of death he had passed upon Jesus, *answered* with some warmth, *What I have written, I have written;* and, whoever may object against it, I am determined it shall stand as it is.

21

22

When therefore they were unable to procure any alteration, they were determined publicly to turn it into a jest, and therefore some of them went in person to Calvary, to insult and scoff at Jesus, even in his last moments. *And the* common *people* that *stood beholding* the execution, reviled him; *and* even *they that passed by* on the road *blasphemed him, shaking their heads* at him, in an upbraiding, scornful manner; *And saying, Ah, thou* vain boaster, *that wouldst destroy the temple, and build it* again *in three days!* let us now see if thou canst *save thyself, and if thou art* indeed *the Son of God,* give us a proof of thy power now, and *come down from the cross;* for in thy present circumstances that will be the most proper miracle thou canst work in confirmation of thy pretended mission. *And in like manner also, the chief priests,* together *with the scribes and elders, and the rulers also* themselves, the malice of whose hearts had made them to forget the dignity of their characters, and to attend among the mob upon this base and barbarous occasion, joined *with them* in their scoffs, and with a scornful sneer *derided him;* [*and*] *mocking, said one to another,* Ay, this is *he* that *saved others,* and undertook to give them perfect deliverance and everlasting happiness; [*but*] now you see *he cannot save himself* from the most infamous execution: *if he be* really *the* true *Messiah, the Elect of God,* and,

MATT. XXVII.

39

40

41

42

a *Woven from the top throughout* in one whole piece.] Perhaps this curious garment might be the work and present of some of the pious women who attended him, and ministered to him of their substance. (Luke viii. 3.) The hint here given of its make, has set some mechanical heads to work to contrive a frame for weaving such a vest; and a good cut of it may be seen in Calmet's *Dictionary,* on the word VESTMENTS. Vol. III. p. 119.

b *They divided my garments among them, &c.*] We are no where told that David's goods were thus divided; and there are several other passages in the xxiid psalm, particularly that in which mention is made of piercing his hands and his feet, to which no circumstance of David's personal sufferings seems to have borne any resemblance. It therefore seems to me exceeding probable, that in this scripture and some others, the mind of the prophet was thrown into a preternatural ecstasy, in which, on some secret intimation given to him that he therein personated the Messiah, he wrote expressly what the Spirit dictated, without any particular regard to himself; so that David might, for any thing I can find, with equal propriety have written such a psalm, if his whole life had been as prosperous and peaceable as the reign of Solomon his son. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 10—12.)

c That none might come to rescue them, &c.] This was the more necessary in this kind of execution, because the wounds given in crucifixion were not generally mortal. The person crucified died partly by the loss of blood, if any large vessel was pierced by the nails, when nails (as here) were used; but chiefly by the violent distortion of the limbs, which were stretched forth as on a rack: a circumstance which must, no doubt, occasion exquisite anguish.

d *They put over his head a superscription.*] This Bishop Pearson (*On the Creed,* p. 205.) and Dr. Lardner, (*Credibility,* part i. book i. chap. 7. § 10. Vol. I. p. 347.) have abundantly proved to be usual in cases of any extraordinary punishment.

e *In Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin letters.*] It was written in Latin, for the majesty of the Roman empire; in Greek, for the information of the vast numbers of Hellenists who made use of that language, as indeed most provinces of the Roman empire did; (see Brerewood's *Inquiries,* chap. i.—iv.) and in Hebrew, as it was the vulgar language of the place.—Thus the inscription set up in the temple, to prohibit strangers from coming within those sacred limits, was written in all these three languages. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 2. [al. vii. 4.] § 4.

SECT. 190. in consequence of that divine choice, be *the king of Israel*, as he has so often pretended, *let him now come down from the cross* [*and*] *save himself* from death, *that we may see* a demonstration of his saving power, *and we will* then *believe him*.[f] Nay, they were at MATT. XXVII. 43 once so profane and so stupid as to borrow on this occasion the words foretold by David, (Psal. xxii. 8.) and to say, "*He trusted in God*, and boasted of his interest in him; *let him deliver him now, if he will have him*, or if he delighteth in him;" *for he* has often *said, I am the Son of God:* the priests themselves not observing that this was the very language which the murderers of the Messiah are there described as using.

LUKE XXIII. 36 *And the soldiers also* who kept guard at that time, joined with the rest of the spectators, and *mocked him; coming to him, and offering him vinegar* to drink in the midst of 37 his agonies; (compare John xix. 29. p. 392.) *And saying*, as the rulers and people had done, *If thou art* really, as thou hast frequently pretended, *the king of the Jews*,[g] before thou undertakest to deliver them, *save thyself* from our power, and so begin to assert thy claim to a supreme authority.

39 *And one of the malefactors also*,[h] *who hung on the cross with him*, regardless of that innocence and dignity which Jesus manifested under all his sufferings, and unaffected with a sense of his own aggravated guilt, *upbraided him with the same* [*reproach, and*] scornfully *blasphemed him* as an impostor, *saying, If thou art the Messiah*, why dost thou not 40 *save thyself and us*, who are now dying with thee? *But the other*, awakened to a sense of his sin, and convinced in his heart that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, *answered* his companion, *and rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God*, even now *when thou* thyself *art in the same condemnation?* In such an awful circumstance as this, dost thou dare to increase thy crimes with thy dying breath, and to behave thyself so insolently in 41 the immediate view of God's righteous tribunal? *And we indeed* are *justly* thus condemned; *for we receive* no more than *what is due for the* notorious *crimes we have committed: but this* [*man*] *has done nothing* by any means *amiss*, nor is there the least insolence or absurdity in that high claim which he has made, though appearances be for 42 the present so much against it. *And* having thus rebuked his companion, and testified his full persuasion of the innocence of Jesus, *he* then directed his discourse to him, and *said to Jesus*, looking upon him with the humblest and the most contrite regard, *Lord*, though this wretch derides thy mission, I firmly believe it; and I beg that thou wouldst graciously *remember me when thou comest into* that *thy kingdom*, to which I doubt not but God 43 will raise thee in spite of death and hell.[i] *And Jesus*, turning towards him, *said to him*, with a mixture of the greatest dignity and mercy, *Verily I say unto thee*, and solemnly assure thee of it as a most certain truth, that *this* very *day thou shalt be with me in paradise*, sharing the entertainments of that garden of God, the abode of happy spirits when separate from the body;[k] and there shall thy departing soul, as soon as thou hast breathed thy last, immediately begin to reap the fruits of that faith which breaks through so dark a cloud, and honours me in the midst of this infamy and distress.

sen of God,] the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, [Luke, *and* save himself,] [that we may see,] and we will believe him. [Mark. xv. 31, 32. Luke xxiii. 35]

43 He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

Luke xxiii. 36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar;

37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

39 And one of the malefactors [also] which were hanged [*or* crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth, *and*] railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. [Matt. xxvii. 44. Mark xv. 32.]

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN XIX. 23, 24 How great and glorious does the Lord Jesus Christ appear in the midst of all those dishonours which his enemies were now heaping upon him! While these rapacious soldiers were dividing the spoils, parting his raiment among them, and casting lots for his vesture, God was working in all, to crown him with a glory which none could take from him, and to make the lustre of it so much the more conspicuous by that dark cloud which now surrounded him.

MATT. XXVII. 39—43 His enemies upbraided him as an abandoned miscreant, deserted both by God and man; but he (though able to have come down from the cross in a moment, or by one word from thence to have struck these insolent wretches dead on the place, and to have sent their guilty spirits to accompany the fiends under whose influence they were)

f *He saved others, &c.*] Nothing could be baser than thus to upbraid him with this saving power, which was not a vain pretence, but had produced so many noble and stupendous effects. And it was equally unreasonable to put the credit of his mission on his coming down from the cross: a vigorous spring might possibly have forced the nails from the hands and feet of a crucified person, so that he might have leaped from the cross. What Christ had so lately done before their eyes, and in part on themselves in the garden, was a far more convincing display of a divine power, than merely to have descended now, could have been. And though they promise upon this to believe him, there is no room to think they would have yielded to conviction; but all they meant was to insult him by it, as thinking it impossible he should escape out of their hands.

g *If thou art the king of the Jews.*] As this claim seemed to them the most derogatory to the Roman authority, it is no wonder that the soldiers grounded their insults on this, rather than on his professing himself the Son of God.

h *One of the malefactors also.*] We are told indeed by Matthew, in the plural number, that *the thieves cast the same in his teeth;* and Mark also says, that *they that were crucified with him reviled him;* and hence some infer, that he who afterwards proved penitent, at first joined in the blasphemy: but had that been the case, surely Luke, in so particular a narrative as his, would not have omitted it. I therefore rather conclude, with most critics, that it is what is commonly called an enallage of numbers, the plural being (as elsewhere) put for the singular. (See note f, on Mark xiv. 5. § 145. p. 288. and note a, on Mark i. 21. § 35. p. 69.)

i *When thou comest into thy kingdom.*] Some have inferred from hence, that this malefactor had learnt something of Christ in prison, and have urged the possibility of his having exercised, perhaps, a long and deep repentance there, against the supposition of the sudden change that most have supposed in this case. But Christ's kingdom was now the subject of so much discourse, that he might, on that day, and indeed in a few minutes of it, have learnt all that was necessary as the foundation of this petition. I cannot therefore but look on this happy man, (for such, amidst all the ignominy and tortures of the cross, he surely was,) as a glorious instance of the power as well as sovereignty of divine grace, which, (as many have observed,) perhaps, taking the first occasion from the preternatural darkness, wrought so powerfully as to produce, by a sudden and astonishing growth in his last moments, all the virtues which could be crowded into so small a space, and which were eminently manifested in his confessing his own guilt, in his admonishing his companion for a crime which he feared would prove fatal to him, in his vindicating the character of Christ, and reposing his confidence in him, as the Lord of a kingdom beyond the grave, when his enemies were triumphing over him, and he himself, abandoned by most of his friends, was expiring on a cross. The modesty as well as the faith of his petition, may also deserve our attentive remark.

k *Thou shalt be with me in paradise.*] Bos has shown (in his *Exercit. Philol.* p. 49, 50.) that this expression, μετ' εμου εση, *thou shalt be with me*, was the language used when inviting guests to an entertainment; and the word *paradise* originally signified a garden of pleasure, such as those in which the Eastern monarchs made their magnificent banquets. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Xenoph.* p. 119.

yet patiently endured all, and was as a deaf man who heard not their reproaches, *and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.* (Psal. xxxviii. 13.) But as soon as the penitent thief addressed him with that humble supplication, the language of repentance, faith, and hope, *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,* he immediately hears and answers him: and in how gracious and remarkable a phrase! *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!* What a triumph was here, not only of mercy to the dying penitent, but of the strongest faith in God, that when to an eye of sense he seemed to be the most deserted and forgotten by him, and was on every side beset with the scorn of them that were at ease, and with the contempt of the proud, he should speak from the cross as from a throne, and undertake from thence, not only to dispense pardons, but to dispose of seats in paradise! SECT. 190. LUKE XXIII. 42, 43

Most ungrateful and most foolish is the conduct of those who take encouragement from hence, to put off their repentance perhaps to a dying moment: most ungrateful, in perverting the grace of the Redeemer into an occasion of renewing their provocations against him, and hardening their hearts in their impieties: and most foolish, to imagine that what our Lord did in so singular a circumstance, is to be drawn into an ordinary precedent. This criminal had, perhaps, never heard of the gospel before: and now how cordially does he embrace it! Probably there are few saints in glory who ever honoured Christ more illustriously than this dying sinner, acknowledging him to be the Lord of life, whom he saw in the agonies of death; and pleading his cause when his friends and brethren forsook him and stood afar off. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 56. and Luke xxiii. 49.)

But such is the corruption of men's hearts, and such the artifice of Satan, that all other views of him are overlooked, and nothing remembered but that he was a notorious offender, who obtained mercy in his departing moments. The Lord grant that none who read this story here, may be added to the list of those who, despising the forbearance and long-suffering of God, and not knowing that his goodness leads to repentance, have been emboldened to abuse this scripture, so as to perish, either without crying for mercy at all, or crying for it in vain, after having treasured up an inexhaustible store of wrath, misery, and despair! (Rom. ii. 4, 5.)

SECTION CXCI.

Jesus, having recommended his mother to the care of John, and suffered many agonies and indignities on the cross, expires. Amazing prodigies attending his death, and alarming the consciences of the spectators.

Matt. xxvii. 45—54. Mark xv. 33—39. Luke xxiii. 44—48. John xix. 25—30.

JOHN XIX. 25.

JOHN XIX. 25. NOW there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary *the wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

AND while he suffered all these insults and sorrows, *there stood near the cross of Jesus,* Mary *his mother,*[a] *and his mother's sister,* (whose name was also *Mary,*) who was [*the wife*] *of Cleopas,*[b] *and Mary Magdalene;* and with them also John, his intimate friend, the relater of this story. SECT. 191. JOHN XIX.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son.

Jesus therefore seeing his mother, and John *the disciple whom he* peculiarly *loved, standing near,* his affectionate care and regard to both so wrought in his heart in the midst of all his agonies, that he *said to his mother, Woman,*[c] *behold thy son:* consider that dear friend of mine as thy own child, and treat him with the same affection and care which thou wouldst show to me under that near relation.[d] And *then he said to that disciple, Behold thy mother,* and entertain towards her that reverence and love which a child owes to a worthy parent; for I now solemnly with my dying breath bequeath her to thy care. *And from that hour that disciple took her* home *to his own* [*house,*] and maintained her most cheerfully and respectfully, as if she had indeed been his own mother. 26 27

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home.*

MATT. XXVII.

Matt. xxvii. 45. Now [Luke, it was about the sixth hour, and] from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto

And Jesus having hung upon the cross about three hours, it was *now* near noon, or, according to the Jewish manner of expressing the time, *it was about the sixth hour; and from the sixth hour, there was* an amazing and supernatural *darkness over the whole land* of Judea *till the ninth hour,*[e] or till three o'clock in the afternoon: during which 45

a *His mother.*] Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, nor the reproaches and insults of the people, could restrain her from performing the last office of duty and tenderness to her Divine Son on the cross. Grotius justly observes, that it was a noble instance of fortitude and zeal. Now a sword (according to Simeon's prophecy, Luke ii. 35.) struck through her tender heart, and pierced her very soul; and perhaps the extremity of her sorrows might so overwhelm her spirits, as to render her incapable of attending the sepulchre, which we do not find that she did; nor do we indeed meet with any thing after this concerning her in the sacred story, or in early antiquity; except that she continued among the disciples after our Lord's ascension, which Luke observes, Acts i. 14. Andreas Cretensis, a writer of the seventh century, does indeed tell us, she died with John at Ephesus, many years after this, in an extreme old age; and it appears from a letter of the council of Ephesus in the fifth century, that it was then believed she was buried there. But they pretend to shew her sepulchre at Jerusalem, and many ridiculous tales are forged concerning her death and assumption, or being taken up into heaven, of which the best Popish authors themselves appear heartily ashamed. See Calmet's *Dictionary,* Vol. II. p. 141.

b *His mother's sister, Mary* [*the wife*] *of Cleopas.*] It is not determined in the original whether she was the *wife,* or *mother,* or *daughter* of Cleopas; but critics generally suppose she was his wife, and that he was also called Alpheus, and was the father, as this Mary was the Mother, of James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, who are therefore called our Lord's brethren or kinsmen. (Matt. xiii. 55.) See note e, on John xiv. 22. p. 350.)—Grotius indeed thinks that Cleopas was her father, and Alpheus her husband. After all we cannot certainly determine it: but, like most other undeterminable points, it is a matter of no great importance. I know none who has set it in a plainer and juster light than Dr. Edwards, *Exercit.* part ii. No. I. p. 163. *et seq.*

c *Said to his mother, Woman.*] We have observed elsewhere, that Joseph probably was dead some time before; (compare note b, on John ii. 1. p. 45. and note a, on John vi. 42. p. 166.) and as Jesus now shewed the tender concern he had for his mother, in committing her to the care of John, so this concern that he expressed for her support, must have affected her no less than if he had called her, Mother; which some have thought he might not chuse to do, to avoid exposing her to the abuses of the populace, by a discovery of her near relation to him. But *woman* was a title he before had used in speaking to his mother, where no such caution was necessary; and it was frequently applied in ancient times, even to persons that were the most respected. See note d, on John ii. 4. p. 45.

d *Behold thy Son.*] Some have explained these words as if they only signified, "*Behold* a person who will carry it to thee as *thy* "*son,* and will take care of thee." But as the tenderness of Jesus for his mother is expressed in the next verse, in the direction that he gives to John to treat her as his mother,—it seems more natural to understand this former exhortation as expressive of his kindness for John, and so to take it as a direction given to his mother to regard him as her son with all the affection of a tender parent.

e *There was darkness over the whole land.*] There are so many places in which γη signifies *a particular country,* and not *the whole earth,* I have chosen here to follow our translation; and the rather, because the further we suppose this darkness to extend, the more unaccountable it is that no Heathen writers should have mentioned it except Phlegon; if he is indeed to be excepted. A darkness over the whole earth at once, must have been preternatural at any time;

SECT. 191. time, it was as dark as if there had been a total eclipse of the sun, though in a natural way it was impossible, as it was now full moon.[f] *And* this darkness, with which the face of nature seemed overspread, was a lively emblem of the darkness and distress of spirit with MATT. XXVII. which the Lord of nature was then overwhelmed, and with which he struggled in the solemn silence and unutterable bitterness of his soul. But *about the ninth hour, Jesus cried* 46 *with a loud voice, saying*, in the Hebrew, or rather in the Syriac language, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*[g] *that is, being interpreted* into other words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* which was as if he had said, O my heavenly Father, wherefore dost thou add to all my other sufferings those which arise from the want of a comfortable sense of thy presence? Wherefore dost thou thus leave me alone in the combat, destitute of those sacred consolations which thou couldst easily shed abroad upon my soul, and which, thou knowest, I have done nothing to forfeit?[h]

the ninth hour. [Mark xv. 33. Luke xxiii. 44.]

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, [Eloi, Eloi,] lama sabachthani? that is to say, [being interpreted,] My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [Mark xv. 34.]

47 Jesus, by the use of these words, borrowed from the beginning of the twenty-second Psalm, gave the spectators a useful hint that the whole of it referred to him; and it might well have led them to observe how many passages of it had then a literal accomplishment in him: but if this was any part of the design, it was not apprehended by them; for the Jews took them in a different sense, *and some of them that stood by there, hearing* [*that*] sound of Eli, *said* in a scornful and insulting manner, *Behold, this* [*man,*] who has been used to talk as if he had earth and heaven at command, resolves to keep up the air of the Messiah to the last, and therefore *calls for Elijah* his forerunner, as if he had any authority to bring that great prophet down from paradise to his assistance.[i]

47 [And] some of them that stood [by] there, when they heard *that*, said, [Behold,] this man calleth for Elias. [Mark xv. 35.]

JOHN XIX. Immediately *after this* doleful cry, *Jesus, knowing that all things* he had to suffer in the way to death, *were now* upon the point of being perfectly 28 *accomplished*, and finding himself parched with a violent drought, as the consequence of what he had so long endured both in mind and body, *that the scripture might be fulfilled.* (Psal. xxii. 15, and lxix. 21.) where the Messiah is described as crying out, "My "tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," to show that he endured all that had been foretold concerning him, *said, I thirst.*

John xix. 28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 *Now there was set*, as usual on such occasions, *a vessel full of vinegar* near the cross;[k] *and immediately* upon his mentioning his thirst, *one of them ran and took a spunge, and filled* [*it*] *with* this *vinegar; and putting it round* [*a stalk of*] *hyssop*, which they had fastened *on* the top of *a* kind of cane or large *reed, they put it* up *to his mouth, and* in a MATT. contemptuous manner *gave* it *him to drink. But the rest* of them that stood by, *said*, XXVII. *Let* [*him*] *alone*, and *let us see whether Elijah*, whom he has just been calling upon, 49 *will come and save him* from the cross; [*and*] indeed he must *take him down* quickly, if at all. So little were their hearts affected with this preternatural darkness, which had continued now three hours; and thus cruelly did they insult him, even in his expiring moments; which had been most inhuman, though he had really been the vilest malefactor.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: [and straightway one of them ran and took a spunge, and filled *it* with vinegar,] and put it upon hyssop, [on a reed,] and put it to his mouth, [and gave him to drink.] [Matt. xxvii. 48. Mark xv. 36.]

Matt. xxvii. 49. The rest said, [Let alone,] let us see whether Elias will come to save him, [*and* take him down.] [Mark xv. 36.]

JOHN XIX. 28. LUKE XXIII. 46 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar*, and thus had perfectly fulfilled the prophecies relating to his sufferings, *he said, It is finished:* the important work for which I came into the world is now completed, the demands of the law are satisfied, the justice of God is atoned, and my sufferings are now at an end. *And crying out again with a* great *strong voice*, which plainly showed that much of the strength of nature was yet in

John xix. 30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.

Luke xxiii. 46. And [when he had cried again

and it is morally impossible that a multitude of accounts of it should not, even by a tradition of many hundred years, have been transmitted to posterity. What is said of the Chinese chronicles mentioning it, must be very uncertain: and as for Josephus's omission of it, I think Dr. More with reason accounts for it, by his unwillingness to mention a fact which had so favourable an aspect on christianity: and the Jews would no doubt disguise it as much as they could, and perhaps might persuade him, and others who heard the report of it at some distance of time or place, that it was only a dark cloud or a thick mist, which the followers of Jesus had exaggerated, because it happened when their Master died. Such representations are exceeding natural to hearts corrupted by infidelity.

f As it was now full moon.] Mr. Shuckford, in his *Preface* to the third volume of his excellent *Connexion of the Sacred and Profane History of the World*, has advanced some important considerations to prove that it is at least very uncertain whether the Jewish months, according to the Mosaic institution, began with a new moon, and consequently whether their passover, which was fixed to the fourteenth day of the first month, must always happen at full moon: but he allows that, towards the decline of their state, it did. And indeed Josephus, who, being a Jewish priest, is an unexceptionable witness in this case, seems to put it beyond all possibility of doubt; expressly asserting, that the day of expiation, and consequently their other feasts, were reckoned by the age of the moon. (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* iii. *cap.* 10. § 3. Δικαιτη του μηνος κατα σελληνην.)

g *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*] It is evident these are Syro-Chaldaic, and not properly Hebrew words: for in the original of Psal. xxii. 1. it is not, as here, אלהי אלהי למה מבקרני, but אלי אלי למה עזבתני. Dr. Edwards thinks our Lord in his agony repeated the words twice, with some little variation, saying at one time, *Eloi*, and at the other, *Eli*. This is possible; and if it were otherwise, I doubt not but Mark has given us the word exactly, and Matthew a kind of contraction of it. See Edward's *Exercit.* p. 193—196.

h *Why hast thou forsaken me?*] The pious and judicious Lord Chief Justice Hale, has a strange reflection on these words: "We "may (says he) with reverence conceive, that at the time of this "bitter cup, the soul of our blessed Redeemer was for the present "overshadowed with so much astonishment and sorrow, as to over-"power and cover the distinct sense of the reason of his sufferings, "at least in some measure and degree." (Hale's *Contemplations*, Vol. I. p. 72.) But the sense given in the paraphrase is much more natural. Thus in a most humble and affectionate manner he reminds his heavenly Father that he was only by imputation a sinner, and had himself done nothing to incur his displeasure.—I chuse not, with Dr. More, (in his *Theological Works*, p. 292.) to render it, *How far*, or to what degree, *hast thou forsaken me?* because, though this would be a just version of למה, the Greek word ινατι, which answers to it in Matthew, is not liable to such ambiguity.—I conclude with adding, that this interruption of a joyful sense of his Father's presence, (though there was, and could not but be, a rational apprehension of his constant favour, and high approbation of what he was now doing,) was as necessary as it was that Christ should suffer at all. For had God communicated to his Son on the cross those strong consolations which he has given to some of the martyrs in their tortures, all sense of pain, and consequently all real pain, would have been swallowed up; and the violence done to his body, not affecting the soul, could not properly have been called suffering.

i *And some of them that stood by, &c.*] Whether this was, as Dr. Edwards (*Exercit.* p. 196—203.) and Mr. Cradock (*Harm.* p. ii. 256.) suppose, the mistake of some Hellenist Jews, who did not understand the Syro-Chaldaic language; or whether it proceeded from his being raised so high, that, amidst the rude noise around him, they did not distinctly hear, I do not pretend to say. Perhaps the malice of those who did hear what he said, might misrepresent his words, to prevent any serious reflections on the Psalm from which they were taken, and to expose him to farther contempt.

k *A vessel full of vinegar.*] It is well known that vinegar and water (which mixture was called posca) was the common drink of the Roman soldiers: perhaps, therefore, this vinegar was set here for their use, or for that of the crucified persons, whose torture would naturally make them thirsty.

with a loud voice,] he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he [John, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.] [Matt xxvii. 50. Mark xv. 37. John xix. 30.]

Matt. xxvii. 51. And behold, [Luke, *while* the sun was darkened,] the veil of the temple was rent in twain, [Luke, in the midst,] from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; [Mark xv. 38. Luke xxiii. 45.]

52 And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Mark xv. 39. And when the centurion which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, [Luke, *and* saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man:] truly this man was the Son of God. [Matt. xxvii. 54. Luke xxiii. 47.]

Matt. xxvii. 54. And they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things

him, *he said*, with a lively faith and holy joy, *Father*, for so I will still call thee, though that claim is thus derided by mine enemies, I am now coming to thee, and *into thy hands I commit my* departing *spirit*, depositing it with thee as a sacred trust, which I am confident thou wilt receive and keep. *And when he had said thus, declining his head, he* voluntarily *dismissed* or delivered up *his spirit*, and expired.[l] SECT. 191. LUKE XXIII.

And behold, God, by a very awful and miraculous interposition, avowed the relation which his Son claimed, and evidently appeared to take the charge of that dear and excellent spirit which Jesus so solemnly recommended to him: for immediately upon his death, [*while*] *the sun was* still *darkened*, as was observed before, (ver. 45.) *the veil of the temple*, which separated between the holy and the most holy place, though made of the richest and strongest tapestry, *was* miraculously *rent in two in the midst, from the top to the very bottom;* so that while the priest was ministering at the golden altar, it being the time of evening sacrifice, the sacred oracle was laid open to full view:[m] God thereby declaring, as it were, the abolition of the whole Mosaic ritual, which depended on a distinction between those two parts of the temple; and intimating that a passage was opened into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, which was now poured out on Mount Calvary. *And* at the same time, to increase the terror, *the earth trembled*, even to the very spot of ground on which the temple stood, *and* several of *the rocks* in the neighbouring parts *were torn asunder*:[n] *And* some of *the tombs* there *were opened* by the earthquake: *and*, which was much more astonishing, a little while after, while the monuments continued unclosed, *many bodies of* those *holy men who were sleeping* there, *were raised* from the dust of death,[o] *And came out of the tombs after the resurrection of* [*Jesus,*] *and entered into* Jerusalem, *the holy city, and appeared unto many*;[p] attesting the truth of that important fact, and declaring their own rescue from the grave, as a kind of first-fruits of his power over death, which should at length accomplish a general resurrection. MATT. XXVII. 51 52 53

And when the Roman *centurion, who stood over against him* and guarded the execution, *saw that he so cried out* with such strength of voice, *and* such firm confidence in God, even at the moment when he *expired;* [*and*] also *saw what was* [*then*] *done* in so miraculous a manner, in those amazing prodigies that attended his death; *he glorified God* by a free confession of his persuasion of the innocence of Jesus, *saying, Certainly this was a righteous man;* [*yea,*] notwithstanding all the vile reproaches which have been cast upon him, *truly this man was* what he declared himself to be, even *the Son of God* himself.[q] *And* the soldiers also that attended the centurion, even *they that were with him guarding Jesus* on the cross, *seeing the earthquake, and those* other *things which were* MARK XV. 39 MATT. XXVII. 54

l *He dismissed* or delivered up *his spirit*, and expired.] The Evangelists use different words in expressing our Lord's death, which I a little wonder that our translators render in the same manner, *he yielded* or *gave up the ghost*. Mark and Luke say, εξεπνευσε, *he expired;* John, παρεδωκε το πνευμα, *he yielded up his spirit;* but Matthew's language is yet more singular, αφηκε το πνευμα, *he dismissed his spirit:* (as the same word, αφημι, is used Matt. xiii. 36; Mark iv. 36; xi. 6. and elsewhere.) Now this expression seems admirably to suit our Lord's words, John x. 18. *No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself, &c.* (see the paraphrase and note there, p. 262.) showing, as the strong cry which so much impressed the centurion did, that he died by the voluntary act of his own mind, according to the power received from the Father, and in a way peculiar to himself, by which he alone, of all men that ever existed, could have continued alive, even in the greatest tortures, as long as he pleased, or have retired from the body whenever he thought fit. Which view of the case, by the way, suggests an illustration of the love of Christ, manifested in his death, beyond what is commonly observed; inasmuch as he did not use this power to quit his body as soon as ever it was fastened to the cross, leaving only an insensible corpse to the cruelty of his murderers, but continued his abode in it with a steady resolution as long as it was proper, and then retired from it with a majesty and dignity never known, or to be known, in any other death; *dying*, if I may so express it, *like the Prince of life*.

m While the priest was ministering at the golden altar, &c.] This being so high a day, it is probable that Caiaphas himself might now be performing the solemn act of burning incense just before the veil; which if he did, it is inexpressibly astonishing that his obdurate heart should not be impressed with so awful and significant a phenomenon. There is no room to doubt but many of the other priests who had a hand in Christ's death, saw the pieces of the veil; which, considering its texture, and the other circumstances, must as fully convince them of the reality of this extraordinary fact, as if they had actually been present when it was rent.

n *The rocks were torn asunder.*] Mr. Fleming tells us, (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 97, 98.) that a deist lately travelling through Palestine was converted by viewing one of these rocks, which still remains *torn asunder*, not in the weakest place, but cross the veins; a plain proof that it was done in a supernatural manner. Sandys, in his excellent *Travels*, p. 164. has given an accurate description and delineation of this fissure; and Mr. Maundrel, in his *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, p. 73, 74. tells us, that it is about a span wide at the upper part, and two spans deep; after which it closes, but opens again below, (as may be seen in another chapel below, contiguous to the side of Calvary,) and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. He adds, that every man's sense and reason must convince him that this is a natural and genuine breach.

o *Many bodies of holy men were raised.*] That ingenious writer Mr. Fleming, who abounds with a vast number of peculiar conjectures, thinks that these were some of the most eminent saints mentioned in the Old Testament; and that they appeared in some extraordinary splendour, and were known by revelation as Eve's original and relation was to Adam, or Moses and Elijah to the disciples at the transfiguration. He ventures particularly to conjecture who they were; but does not mention David among them. (Fleming, *On the first Resurrection*, p. 29—38.) But Mr. Pierce (*On Colos.* p. 68.) maintains, that it is very improbable that, had other saints of former ages risen, David should have been excluded; and since Acts ii. 34. proves that he did not now rise, he concludes that the saints who rose were some who died but a little before, perhaps such as had believed in Christ, and were well known to the surviving disciples. It was to be sure a most surprising event; and Dr. Whitby supposes John v. 25. was a prophecy relating to it.

p *And came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus, &c.*] Consequently it seems that the tombs stood open all the sabbath, when the law would not allow any attempt to close them. What an astonishing spectacle! especially if their resurrection was not instantaneously accomplished, but by such slow degrees as that represented in Ezekiel's vision: (Ezek. xxxvii.) Yet I do not take upon me to say that it was so; for it is unprofitable too particularly to conjecture on such circumstances, which are not recorded. For this reason also I pretend not to say what became of these persons; though, as one can hardly imagine they either immediately returned to their graves, or that they continued to live on earth, (because it is only said, they appeared to many,) it seems most natural to imagine they ascended into heaven with, or after, our Lord; perhaps from some solitude, to which they might be directed to retire during the intermediate days, and to wait in devout exercises for their change; for surely, had they ascended in the view of others, the memory of such a fact could not have been lost.

q *Certainly this was a righteous man, &c.*] The most learned Mr. Wasse of Aynho, (whose death, since the publication of my first volume, is an irreparable loss to the commonwealth of letters,) has a dissertation on these words of the centurion in the first number of the *Bibliotheca Literaria*, to which I am indebted for several hints in the paraphrase on these verses; but I have ventured to depart from him, in not entirely incorporating Matt. xxvii. 54. with Mark xv. 39. and Luke xxiii. 47. as the two latter only mention the effect of this surprising sight on the centurion, while Matthew gives us also an account of the effect it had upon the soldiers, who very probably might repeat the words their officer had spoke but just before, in expressing their sentiments on this occasion. I shall only add, that Elsner, in a very learned note on this place, has shown that some of the heathens had a notion among them, that prodigies, especially storms and earthquakes, sometimes attended the death of extraordinary persons peculiarly dear to the gods; and among other passages, mentions that of Plutarch, in which he tells us, that when Ptolemy had crucified Cleomenes, while the body hung dead on the cross, a large serpent wound itself round his face,

SECT. 191. now *done, feared greatly, and said* in like manner, *Truly this* Jesus of Nazareth, whom we have been thus insulting and murdering, *was the Son of God;* and his heavenly Father will certainly avenge his quarrel very terribly on us, and on the whole nation of the Jews, who have delivered him to us.

that were done; *and* they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

LUKE XXIII. 48 *And all the multitude*[r] *that were come together* on this remarkable occasion, *to* see *this* doleful *spectacle*, even some of those who but a little before had been insulting him in his dying agonies, *when they saw the things which were done, returned, beating their breasts* for sorrow and remorse; in terrible expectation that some sad calamity would speedily befal them and their country for the indignities and cruelties they had offered to a Person for whom God had expressed so high a regard, even in his greatest distress.

Luke xxiii. 48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 48 JOHN XIX. 25, 26 LUKE XXIII. 44, 45 AND surely we, when we return from such a view of it as this, have reason to smite upon our breasts too, and to be most deeply affected with what we have heard and seen in this lively description. Let us set ourselves, as with the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple, at the foot of the cross; and see whether *there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger:* (Lam. i. 12.) Well might the sun grow pale at the sight; well might the earth tremble to support it! How obdurate must the hearts of those sinners be who could make a mock of all his anguish, and sport themselves with his dying groans! But surely the blessed angels, who were now, though in an invisible crowd, surrounding the accursed tree, beheld him with other sentiments; admiring and adoring the various virtues which he expressed in every circumstance of his behaviour: and which, while this Sun of Righteousness was setting, gilded and adorned all the horizon. Let us likewise pay our homage to them, and observe with admiration his tenderness to his surviving parent; his meekness under all these injuries and provocations; his steady faith in God in an hour of the utmost distress: and his concern to accomplish all the purposes of his life, before he yielded to the stroke of death.

JOHN XIX. 26, 27 28—30

MATT. XXVII. 46 Yet with what amazement must the holy angels hear that cry from the Son of God, from the darling of heaven, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Let not any of the children of God wonder if their heavenly Father sometimes withdraw from them the sensible and supporting manifestations of his presence, when Christ himself was thus exercised; and let them remember that faith never appears with greater glory than when, in language like this, it bursts through a thick cloud, and owns *the God of Israel*, and *the Saviour*, even while *he is a God that hideth himself* from us. (Isa. xlv. 15.) May we, in our approaching combat with the king of terrors, find him enervated by the death of our dear Lord, who thus conquered even when he fell! May we thus breathe out our willing and composed spirits into our Father's hands, with a language and faith like his, as *knowing whom we have believed, and being persuaded that he is able to keep what we commit to him until that day!* (2 Tim. i. 12.)

LUKE XXIII. 46

MATT. XXVII. 51—53 With pleasure may we survey the awful tokens by which God owned his dying Son, and wiped away the infamy of his cross. The veil is now rent by the death of Jesus; let us be encouraged to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, and to draw near to *the holiest of all, into which he has entered with his own blood.* (Heb. iv. 16; ix. 12.) May God render the knowledge of the cross of Christ the blessed means of shaking the consciences of men with powerful convictions, and of raising them from the death of sin, to a life of holiness! And may we be so *planted together in the likeness of his death*, that we may at length *also* be planted *in the likeness of his resurrection!* (Rom. vi. 5.)

SECTION CXCII.

While Christ continues hanging on the cross, his side is pierced, but his legs are not broken: Joseph begs the corpse, and lays it with respect in his sepulchre. Matt. xxvii. 55—61. Mark xv. 40, *to the end.* Luke xxiii. 49, *to the end.* John xix. 31, *to the end.*

LUKE xxiii. 49.

SECT. 192. LUKE XXIII. 49 MATT. XXVII. 56 *AND* while our Lord was thus expiring on the cross, *all his* familiar *acquaintance* mingled themselves with the crowd of spectators, and *stood at a distance, viewing these things* with weeping eyes and sympathizing hearts: *and* of this number there were *many* pious *women*,[a] *who had attended him when he was in Galilee, and* had there *ministered to him*, and liberally assisted him and his disciples with their substance; (compare Luke viii. 2, 3. p. 121.) [*and*] *had* now *followed him from Galilee* to Jerusalem, where they had constantly attended on his preaching in the temple, nor would they leave him in this great and last trial: *Among whom* there *was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses; and* there was also *the mother of* the apostles James and John, whom we have so often mentioned as *the sons of Zebedee* the fisherman;[b]

LUKE xxiii. 49.

AND all his acquaintance, and [many] women, [Mark, who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him, *and*] followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things: [Matt. xxvii. 55. Mark xv. 40, 41.]

Matt. xxvii. 56. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the [less] and [of] Joses, and the mother of

and defended it from birds of prey; from whence the Egyptians concluded he was a hero more than mortal, and a son of the gods. See Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 126, 127.

r *All the multitude.*] That is, great multitudes; for it is no way necessary to suppose that every individual person present was thus impressed. The conviction produced by these prodigies undoubtedly made way for the conversion of such a multitude by the preaching of the apostles, on the descent of the Spirit, which was but seven weeks after, when these things were fresh in their memories, Acts ii. 41.

a *Many* pious *women.*] I hope I shall give no offence by saying, what I am sure I say very seriously, that the frequent mention which is made in the Evangelists of the generous and courageous zeal of some pious women in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in these last scenes of his suffering, might very possibly be intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex, which probably, in the sight of God, constitute by far the better half of mankind: and to whose care and tenderness, the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyment of their lives.

b *And the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*] Though the construction of the original be dubious, yet I think it very rational to conclude that this mother of the sons of Zebedee, or of James the greater and John, was a different person from the mother of James the less and Joses: both as the sons of Zebedee, though such distinguished friends of Christ, are never called his brethren, as James and Joses are, (Matt. xiii. 55. and Mark vi. 3. p. 148.) and as some scriptures plainly intimate that no more than two of the apostles were the sons of Zebedee. See Matt. x. 2; xxvi. 37; Mark iii. 17.

Zebedee's children, [and Salome, and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.] [Mark xv. 40, 41.]

and Salome also,[c] *and many other* zealous and affectionate *women who came up with him to* this passover at *Jerusalem*, and who had the courage to attend him, even when his apostles themselves had forsaken him and fled. SECT. 192.

John xix. 31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

Then, as the day was drawing to a close, *the Jews* were very solicitous, *because it was* now *the preparation* for the sabbath, *that the bodies might not remain* all night *upon the cross*, which their law expressly forbade; (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) and more especially, they were concerned that this profanation might not happen *on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath*, being the first which followed the passover, *was a great day* of peculiar solemnity:[d]) they went therefore and *entreated Pilate* that he would send an order to the soldiers who were watching the crucified persons, *that their legs might be broken*, the more effectually to despatch them if they were not quite dead, *and* [*that*] *they might* then *be taken away*.[e] And Pilate upon this gave orders that it should accordingly be done: *the soldiers, therefore*, who guarded the execution, *came and brake the legs of the first* malefactor, or of him that hung nearest the place where they had been sitting: *and* then passing by Jesus, who hung in the middle, they went and brake the legs *of the other who was crucified with him*. *But coming* afterwards *to Jesus, they did not break his legs, as they saw* it was needless, since it was plain *he was already dead;* and they were now impressed with some degree of reverence even to his corpse, by the amazing prodigies which they had just now seen. *But* yet *one of the soldiers* had so much boldness and inhumanity, that he *pierced his side with a* long lance or *spear* which he had in his hand; *and immediately there came out* of the wound both *blood, and water* mingled with it;[f] which made it plainly appear that, had he been living, the wound would have been mortal, having reached his very heart; and consequently put it out of all doubt that he was really dead before he was taken down from the cross. JOHN XIX. 31 32 33 34

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

And as this was so important, and indeed so fundamental a point,[g] it may not be improper to add, that it was *one who saw* [*it*] who *has borne* [*this*] *testimony*, and recorded so remarkable a circumstance; *and* therefore *his witness is* undoubtedly *true; and* now he is writing this, he solemnly declares that *he knows*, by the most certain testimony of his senses, *that what he saith is true;* and he makes this declaration, *that you*, whoever you are, into whose hands this history may come sooner or later, *may believe*, and may be confirmed in your adherence to that gospel which is established on the death and resurrection of Christ. 35

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

For, however inconsiderable *these things* may appear, they *were* permitted in the course of Divine Providence to be *done, that* thus *the scripture might be* remarkably *fulfilled* in what it says concerning the paschal lamb, which did in so many circumstances resemble Christ, (Exod. xii. 46; and Numb. ix. 12.) "*Not a bone of it shall be broken:*"[h] a precept which, among many others, was given on purpose to lead the minds of believers to reflect on the harmony and unity of design carried on (though by such a variety of persons, in no concert with each other) under the Old Testament, and under the New. 36

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And again, there is *another scripture* which *says* concerning the Jews, when they are to be converted to the Messiah in the latter days, "*They shall look on him whom they have "pierced;"* (Zech. xii. 10.) for which reason God permitted them not only to pierce the hands and the feet of Jesus with nails, but also to open his side by that deep and large wound which we have now been mentioning. 37

Mark xv. 42. And now [John, after this,] when the even was come, (because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath;) [Matt. xxvii. 57. John xix. 38.]

And quickly *after these things, as* it was near sun-set, and *the evening was now come, because* (as we have observed) *it was the preparation, or* the close of *the day before the sabbath*, (John xix. 31.) for it was Friday evening, and the sabbath, which would begin at six o'clock, was near at hand, in which no work could lawfully be done; *Behold, there came* to the governor's palace *a* certain *rich man of Arimathea, (a city of the Jews,* anciently called Ramoth, which lay in the tribe of Ephraim, and was the city of Samuel, that celebrated prophet,) and he was *named Joseph*, and was a person of considerable note, *being an honourable counsellor*, or member of the sanhedrim, who had a general reputation as *a benevolent and upright man. The same* was not concerned with the rest of his fellow-senators in putting Jesus to death, and *had not given* the concurrence MARK XV. 42 LUKE XXIII. 50 51

Luke xxiii. 50. Behold, [there came a rich man of Arimathea,] [Luke, a city of the Jews,] named Joseph, [Mark, an honourable counsellor,] *and he was* a good man, and a just: [Matt. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 43. Luke xxiii. 51.]

51 The same had not con-

c *And Salome.*] This Salome, who is mentioned here by Mark, is commonly supposed to be the mother of Zebedee's children mentioned by Matthew: but as it is expressly said there were many other women present, she might possibly be some other disciple, and there is no sufficient reason to conclude they were the same. (Compare Mark xvi. 1.)

d *For that sabbath was a great day.*] It was (as Dr. Whitby in his paraphrase has well observed) not only a sabbath, but the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, from whence they reckoned the weeks to pentecost; and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn: so that it was indeed a treble solemnity.—(See note b, on Luke vi. 1. p. 100.)

e *Might be taken away.*] It was customary, as Bishop Pearson (*On the Creed*, p. 218.) has abundantly proved, to let the bodies of persons who had been executed, continue on the crosses or stakes, till they were eaten up by birds of prey; but as this was forbidden to the Jews, the Roman governors probably used to oblige them by permitting such bodies as belonged to them to be buried.

f *There came out blood and water.*] I do not pretend to determine whether this was, as Dr. Drake supposes, (in his *Anatomy*, Vol. I. p. 106.) the small quantity of water inclosed in the pericardium, in which the heart swims; or whether the cruor was now almost coagulated, and separated from the serum: either way, it was a certain proof of Christ's death; for he could not have survived such a wound, had it been given him in perfect health.

g So important and fundamental a point.] The grand evidence of Christ's mission in his resurrection, which implies the certainty of his death: and thus crucifixion might have seemed, on a slight view, a less proper execution than some others, such as beheading, burning, and the like; but this wound would effectually exclude all pretences of his having been taken down alive by his friends; and accordingly that is an evasion which, false and malicious as his enemies were, we do not find they ever had recourse to.

h *Not a bone of it shall be broken.*] Dr. Arthur Young (in his *Historical Dissertation on Revelation, designed to prevent Superstition*, Vol. I. p. 196, 203, 204.) has a particular thought on the reason of this prohibition, that it was intended to oppose the manner in which the Egyptian sacrifices were sometimes pulled to pieces: but I think the reason suggested in the paraphrase much more certain and important. It is very well illustrated in *An Essay on the several Dispensations of God, &c. Pref.* p. xxii. *et seq.*

SECT. 192.

of *his vote to the counsel and action of them* that condemned him; [*but was one*] *who also himself* humbly and affectionately *waited for the kingdom of God, being* indeed *a disciple of Jesus, though secretly;* because he durst not openly profess his belief in him

LUKE XXIII.

for fear of the Jews and their rulers, who were so strongly prejudiced against him. *This man,* awakened by the prodigies attending his death to greater courage than he had before,

52 though he knew it must necessarily draw upon him the hatred and contempt of his brethren, yet *went in boldly to* the presence of *Pilate,*[i] *and begged* his permission *that he might take away the body of Jesus,* to preserve it from farther insults, and bury it in a decent and respectful manner.

MARK XV.

And when *Pilate* heard his request, considering how lingering an execution that of the cross was, he *thought it strange if he were already dead,* and would not easily believe it;

44 *and* therefore, *having called the centurion to him* who was appointed to guard the bodies,

45 *he asked him whether he had been dead any time. And when he knew* [*it*] *of the centurion,* and was certainly informed that, besides all the appearances of his having been dead before, he was afterwards stabbed to the very heart, *Pilate,* without any farther scruple, *gave him leave,* [*and*] *commanded the body to be delivered to Joseph:* which he might be the more willing to do, as he was thoroughly convinced that Jesus was innocent; and it was generally thought by the heathens, that the spirits of the departed received some advantage from the honours of a funeral paid to their bodies.

46 *And Joseph therefore,* being thus authorized by Pilate, *having bought* a large piece of *fine linen, came* to Mount Calvary, *and* with proper assistance *took down the body of Jesus* from the cross, *and wrapped it* up *in a* kind of winding-sheet of *clean linen cloth.*

JOHN XIX.

And there came also at the same time with Joseph to the cross, *Nicodemus,* another member of the sanhedrim, of whom repeated mention has been made in the preceding story,

39 and *who* was he that, *at the first* beginning of his public ministry, *came to Jesus by night;* (John iii. 1, 2.) *and,* as he was now grown more courageous than before, to testify his great regard for Jesus, he *brought* with him *a mixture of myrrh and aloes,* [*that*

40 *weighed*] *about an hundred pounds.* To prepare *then* for his interment, *they took the body of Jesus,* without regarding the reproach to which it might expose them, *and swathed it up in* a great many folds of *linen,*[k] together *with the spices, (according to the Jewish custom of burying,)* intending to embalm it in a more exact manner as soon as the sabbath was over; and hoping that in the mean time the spices lying near the body might preserve it from the least taint of corruption.

41 *Now* it happened very commodiously for his immediate interment, that *in the* very neighbourhood of the *place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the*

42 *garden a new sepulchre* belonging to Joseph. *There laid they Jesus therefore in* [*Joseph's*] *own new tomb, which he had* lately ordered to be *hewn in stone out of a* solid *rock:* to which therefore there could be no passage but by the door, and *in which no man was ever yet laid,* so that there could be no room to imagine any other person rose from thence. And this they did without first carrying the body into any house to embalm it; *because* (as we have said before) *it was the Jewish preparation-day, and the sabbath drew on,* which did not allow their undertaking a work of so much labour and time: to be ready therefore for the rest commanded on the sabbath-day, they used no farther ceremony in interring him, and chose a most convenient place to do it with despatch, *for the sepul-*

MATT. XXVII.

chre was very *near at hand.* And Joseph, having thus interred him in his own tomb, and so (as it was prophesied concerning the Messiah, Isa. liii. 9.) " made his grave with the rich

60 " in his death,"[l] he took care to make all things secure; *and having rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre* to block up the entrance, *he went away* to his own home.

LUKE XXIII.

And when Joseph and Nicodemus came and took down Jesus from the cross, *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary,* who (as was said before) was *the mother of* James the

55 less and *Joses,* (Matt. xxvii. 56. p. 394, 395.) *and* the rest of *the women also who came with him from Galilee,* and so affectionately attended during the time of his crucifixion, were now desirous to see how they disposed of him; and therefore, when they carried off the corpse, these pious women *followed after* them, *and sitting over against the sepulchre,* into which they saw them enter, *beheld* with diligent observation *where and how his*

56 *body was laid.* And perceiving that they did not embalm him, but only wound him up in linen with the dry spices, they resolved to perform this last office of duty and affection to him

sented to the counsel and deed of them: [*but was one*] who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, [John, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.] [Matt. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 43. John xix. 38.]

52 This man went [Mark, in boldly unto Pilate, and begged [John, that he might take away the body of Jesus.] [Matt. xxvii. 58. Mark xv. 43. John xix. 38.]

Mark xv. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, [John, Pilate gave him leave,] [*and* commanded the body to be delivered] to Joseph. [Matt. xxvii. 58. John xix. 38.]

46 And [Joseph] bought fine linen, and [John, came therefore, and] took down [John, the body of Jesus,] and wrapped [it in a clean linen cloth.] [Matt. xxvii. 59. Luke xxiii. 53. John xix. 38.]

John xix. 39. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight.*

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore [*in Joseph's* own new tomb, which he had hewn] [Luke, in stone] [Mark, out of a rock,] [John, wherein was never man yet laid:] because [Luke, that day was the] Jews' [Luke, preparation, and the sabbath drew on;] for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. [Matt. xxvii. 60. Mark xv. 46. Luke xxiii. 53, 54. John xix. 41.]

Matt. xxvii. 60. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. [Mark xv. 46.]

Luke xxiii. 55. [And Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary,] [Mark, the mother of Joses,] and the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and [sitting over against the sepulchre,] beheld [Mark, where] and how his body was laid. [Matt. xxvii. 61. Mark xv. 47.] 56 And they returned

i *Went in boldly to Pilate.*] It was indeed a courageous act for this rich and noble senator thus publicly to own his friendship to Jesus in the midst of his greatest infamy; and a person of such sagacity could not but know that, if a resurrection should happen, nothing would have been more natural than that he should have been brought into question as a confederate in the pretended fraud of conveying him away.

k *Swathed it up in linen.*] This I take to be the most literal translation of the words εδηταν αυτο οθονιοις; for οθονια were a kind of *linen rollers,* in which, as Elsner has shown, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 347.) the Easterns swathed up their dead. It was, no doubt, by miracle, that when Christ arose, he disentangled himself from these swathes.

l Made his grave with the rich in his death.] Let me here be permitted to mention the criticism of a celebrated divine on this passage of Isaiah, which having never (that I know of) been published, may be new to many, as it was to me. Observing that the word עשיר may be *the dual number,* and that עמיר is *the singular,* he would suppose a kind of hendiadys in the construction, and render it, " *His death and burial shall be with two criminals and with one* " *rich man:* that is, after having expired between two malefactors, " a rich man (that is, Joseph of Arimathea) shall undertake the " care of his funeral."—But I must acknowledge that no version of the words pleases me so well on the whole as that of Dr. Sykes, which I read since I wrote the paraphrase above: יתן, *Nevertheless he shall avenge* or recompense *his grave upon the wicked, and his death upon the rich:* or, which is equivalent to the former, but perhaps more exact, *He shall avenge his grave* (that is, his death, which brings *him* down to it) *on the wicked, and on the rich when he dies,* במתיו. See Dr. Sykes on the *Truth of Christianity,* p. 256.

and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment.

in the completest and most respectful manner they could; *and* therefore *they immediately returned* into the city, *and*, before the day of preparation was quite finished, they *provided* a great quantity of *spices and balms* for that purpose, that nothing might prevent them from engaging in it as soon as the first day of the week should open; *and*, in the mean time, they *rested on the sabbath-day, according to the* divine *commandment*, which they would not violate even on so solemn an occasion as this. SECT. 192. LUKE XXIII. 56

IMPROVEMENT.

WE have seen the sorrows of our expiring Lord: let us now, like these pious women, raise our eyes to him with an holy and unfeigned affection, and behold him pale and breathless on the accursed tree. Let us view him by faith, till the eye affects the heart, and till we learn to glory in nothing but his cross, whereby the world may be *crucified to us, and we* may be crucified *to the world.* (Gal. vi. 14.) MATT. XXVII. 55, 56

How wonderfully does the providence of God appear to have regarded the body of Jesus, which had so long been the temple of the indwelling Deity, even when it was deserted of that spirit which had lately animated it, and while it hung (amazing thought, that it ever should have hung!) between the bodies of two thieves on a cross, without the gates of Jerusalem! He who has all hearts in his hand, interposed by a secret but powerful influence on the soldiers, who brake the legs of the malefactors to spare those of Christ; that so nothing which looked like a prophecy of him, should want its proper accomplishment. But his side was pierced; and how deep was the wound, when immediately there came out of it blood and water! Happy emblem of the blessed effect of his death! *He came both by water and blood,* (as *he who saw and testified* this important fact leads us to improve it, 1 John v. 6.) and by this means atones the injured justice of God, and purifies the souls of them that believe in him. JOHN XIX. 31, 32 33, 36 34 35

Our indignation rises against the man that could, by such an outrage as this, abuse the dead body of our Redeemer; but oh, let us seriously remember the hand which our sins had in all that was now done! *He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities:* (Isa. liii. 5.) And therefore it is said concerning those on whom the ends of the world are to come, that *they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* (Zech. xii. 10.) May we mourn over him with a genuine, evangelical sorrow, when we consider whom we have pierced, and how deep and how often we have pierced him, and upon what slight temptations; and under how many engagements rather to have bathed his wounds with our tears, and even to have exposed our own hearts to the sharpest weapon by which the madness of sinners might have attempted to injure him. 37

The boldness of Joseph, and even of Nicodemus himself, deserves our notice on such an occasion. They are not ashamed of the infamy of his cross, but come with all holy reverence and affection to take down those sacred remains of Jesus; nor did they think the finest linen, or the choicest spices, too valuable on such an occasion. But who can describe their consternation and distress, when they saw him whom they trusted should have delivered Israel, a cold and bloody corpse in their arms; and left him in the sepulchre of Joseph, whom they expected to have seen on the throne of David!—We leave for the present his enemies in triumph, and his friends in tears, till his resurrection, which soon confounded the rage of the former, and revived the hopes of the latter; hopes which must otherwise have been for ever entombed under that stone with which they now covered him. But happy and comfortable is the thought, that this his transient visit to the grave has (as it were) left a perfume in the bed of dust, and reconciled the believer to dwelling a while in the place where the Lord lay. MARK XV. 43 46 JOHN XIX. 40 MATT. XXVII. 60

SECTION CXCIII.

Judas confessing his guilt, returns the money he had received from the chief priests, and then hangs himself. The Jews the next day demand and procure a guard to be set on Christ's sepulchre. Matt. xxvii. 3—10; 62, *to the end.*

MATT. xxvii. 3.

THEN Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

MATT. xxvii. 3.

HAVING thus finished the account of the death of Jesus, it may be convenient here to mention the miserable end of that perfidious disciple by whom he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies. The Jewish rulers having delivered Jesus to the Roman governor, and having prevailed upon him to give orders for his execution, *then Judas who had betrayed him, when he saw* to his surprise *that he was condemned* by Pilate, and that they were leading him forth to die upon the cross, to which he seemed determined to submit, though he could so easily have rescued himself from it,[a] was seized with great terror and agony of conscience; and, *repenting* of the fatal bargain he had made, whereby he had brought such a load of guilt on his own soul, he *carried back the thirty pieces of silver* which they had given him, *to the chief priests and the elders*, while they were together in the temple that morning: for they resorted thither with a specious appearance of piety, before they followed the multitude to Calvary to see the execution. *And* coming in among them in a wild disorder, he *said* to them, O Sirs! *I have sinned* in a most desperate manner, *in that I have betrayed innocent blood* to you; for I am well convinced that Jesus my Master has done nothing to deserve this punishment to which you have delivered him, and I am not able to bear the thought of the concern I have had in it. *And they* SECT. 193. MATT. XXVII. 3 4

4 Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that.*

a *Then Judas, &c.*] For the proper place of this story, which is here inserted out of its order, see note a, on John xix. 16. p. 386. Matthew has introduced it immediately after the Jews had delivered Jesus to Pilate; but after this the Jews were so intent on persuading Pilate to consent to his death, that there was hardly time for the sanhedrim's adjourning to the temple, where this occurrence happened, before they had prevailed with Pilate to condemn him: and as Judas must have often heard his Master say he should be crucified, Pilate's order for his execution must have more sensibly affected him than the Jews' passing sentence on him, who had not then the power of putting any one to death.—The word τοτε, *then*, with which the Evangelist begins this story, may be taken in some latitude to introduce the mention of an occurrence which happened about that time, whether a little before or after, and need not be interpreted with so much rigour as to determine it to an assertion of observing the exactest order in all circumstances. See note a, on Matt. xxvii. 27. p. 382.

SECT. 193. MATT. XXVII.

answered with the steady coolness of those who knew no shame or remorse for their wickedness, *What* [*is that*] *to us*, whether thou thinkest him innocent or not? *See thou* [*to that:*] it is sufficient for us that we know he is guilty, whether such a wretch as thou art approvest or condemnest our sentence. *And throwing down the pieces of silver* money *in the temple*, in their very presence, with all the marks of agony and distress, *he withdrew; and going away* to the brow of a hill, in some retired and melancholy place, *he* there *hanged himself;* but the rope breaking by the force with which he threw himself off, he fell down the precipice, and burst asunder with the force of his fall, so that all his bowels gushed out;[b] and he lay expiring, in a most painful and terrible manner, a spectacle of horror to all that beheld him alive or dead, as a multitude of spectators did. (Compare Acts i. 18, 19.)

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 *And the chief priests, taking* up *the pieces of silver*, were at some loss how they should dispose of them: for they *said, It is not lawful* for us *to put them into the* chest which is called Corban, or the sacred *treasury, because it is the price of blood*, and would in effect be offering to God the life of a man. And these hypocrites scrupled such a point of ceremony, while they still persisted in their resolution to destroy Jesus, which, if 7 they had desired it, they might yet have prevented. *But* afterwards, when they met in a body about some other business, *having consulted together* what they should do with those pieces of money, *they bought with them* that close in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem which is called, *The potter's field,*[c] *for a burying-place of foreigners* who had no sepulchres of their own, and whose bodies they scrupled to lay with those of their own 8 holy nation. And *therefore*, by the way, *that field was called* in the Syriac language, Aceldama, that is, *The field of blood;* (Acts i. 19.) and it bears that name even *to this day*, because it was purchased with that money which was the price paid for the blood of Jesus, and was in effect the purchase of the blood of Judas too.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

9 *Then was that fulfilled*, in a very remarkable manner, *which was spoken by the prophet,*[d] (Zech. xi. 13.) *saying*, "*And I took the thirty pieces of silver*," (which sum, the reader will observe, was *the* usual *price of one who was sold* for a slave, or of one *whom the children of Israel did sell*, being esteemed among them, on an average, but the equitable price of such a one: and was here the price of the blood of the Son of God him- 10 self, that infinitely valuable Person.[e]) "*And they were given for the potter's field, as* " (saith the prophet,) *the Lord commanded me* in vision, in token of his just displeasure " against those who had put such an affront on his pastoral care."[f]

9 (Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value:

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.)

62 But to return *now* to the main story. When, notwithstanding the confession of Judas, the Jews had crucified Christ, and his friends had taken down his body from the cross, and

62 Now the next day that followed the day of

b *And going away, he hanged himself;* but the rope breaking, &c.] This method, which M. Le Clerc, (*Harm.* p. 527.) and several other learned critics have taken, of reconciling Matthew with what is afterwards said of this fact, (Acts i. 18.) that *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*, appears to me much preferable to that of those who would render απηγξατο, *he was stifled*, or *suffocated with excess of grief;* (see La Motte, *Of Inspir.* p. 155.) a version which none of the authorities I have seen, seem sufficient to justify. Nor is it necessary to suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xxvii 5. and Acts i. 18.) that Judas was carried away by the devil, and strangled in the air, and being thrown from thence in the sight of all the city, was dashed in pieces by the violence of the fall.

c *The potter's field.*] Thirty pieces of silver may seem a very inconsiderable price for a field so near Jerusalem: but, as Grotius well observes, the ground was probably much spoiled by digging it up for earth to make potters' vessels, so that it was now unfit for tillage or pasture, and consequently of small value.

d *Which was spoken by the prophet.*] Most copies read it, *by Jeremiah the prophet;* yet it is universally known that these words are found no where in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah. (Chap. xi. 13.) It appears to me very unnatural to say, with Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) that all the prophetic writings might be called the book of Jeremiah; because in ancient times the prophecy of Jeremiah was put at the beginning or the volume of the prophets: nor would the granting this fact account for the expression of its being spoke by him. Nor am I at all convinced by Mr. Joseph Mede's reasonings, (see his *Works*, p. 963.) that these words, though recorded by Zechariah, or rather found in his book, were originally spoken by Jeremiah, and by some accident displaced: a principle on which the whole credit of the prophecies might be destroyed. It would be a much less dishonour to the sacred writings, to suppose a small error in the pen of some early transcriber, who might, (as Bishop Hall prettily conjectures,) by the mistake of one letter only, (supposing the word to be contracted,) write Ιερου for Ζεχου. And though it is certain that Jeremiah was the received reading as early as Origen's time, yet there is room to doubt whether any prophet was named in the first copies, as the Syriac version, which is allowed to be made in the most early times, says only, *It was spoken by the prophet*, without mentioning by whom. On the whole, I think it more respectful to the Evangelist, to suppose that some officious transcriber might either insert or change the prophet's name, than to impute it, as Dr. Mill seems to do, to a slip in the author's memory.

e *The price of one who was sold*, &c.] We may either render the words του τετιμημενου, ον ετιμησαντο απο υιων Ισραηλ, *of one who was sold*, even of one *whom the children of Israel did sell*, and so consider them as expressive of the common price a slave was rated at among them: or we may render them, *of him that was sold or valued*, (even their own Messiah,) *whom the very children of Israel sold* at this shameful price. And I think either of these versions would suit the original, and convey a lively and proper sense: I have therefore suggested both in the paraphrase, though in the version, which could not well be equally ambiguous, I have preferred the former.

f *And they were given for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.*] It is plain these words are not exactly quoted, either from the Hebrew or the Septuagint; yet I cannot think the difference so great as it at first appears, since those words in the parenthesis, (την τιμην του τετιμημενου, ον ετιμησαντο απο υιων Ισραηλ,) which are not in either, may be considered as the words of the Evangelist himself, (to which he was naturally led by those of the prophet, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them;*) and if, which might easily happen, εδωκαν be written for εδωκα, as ελαβον is ambiguous, it may be rendered yet nearer to the original, *I took—and gave them, &c.*—As for the general propriety of applying these words to this occasion, I think it may well be vindicated; for the connexion and sense of the prophecy in the Old Testament seems to be this. In order to represent to Zechariah the contempt which Israel put upon their God, he had a vision to the following purpose: He thought God first appointed him to appear among them as a shepherd; (making him by that emblem a representation of himself:) after some time, he directs him to go to the rulers of Israel, and ask them, What they thought he deserved for his labour in that office? They gave him the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver; and this in the house of the Lord, where the court sat. On this, God, as resenting this indignity offered to him in the person of his prophet, orders him to throw it down with disdain before the first poor labourer he met, who happened to be a potter at work by the temple gates, as a fitter price for a little of his paltry ware, than a suitable acknowledgment of the favours they had received from God. Now surely, if there was ever any circumstance in which the children of Israel behaved themselves so as to answer this visionary representation, it must be when they gave this very sum of thirty pieces of silver as a price for the very life of that Person whom God had appointed their great Shepherd. And, in order to point out the correspondence the more sensibly, Providence so ordered it that the person to whom this money went should be a potter, though the prophecy would have been answered if he had been a fuller, or of any other profession. It may also be farther observed, that God's ceasing to be the Shepherd of Israel, which was represented by the prophet's breaking his pastoral staves, was never fully answered till their final rejection after the death of Christ; which may farther lead us to refer the affront of their giving the pieces of silver to this event.—I do not remember ever to have seen this matter set in what seems to me its just and most natural light; but Grotius has some valuable hints upon it, which I wonder he did not pursue farther.

the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make *it* as sure as you can.

66 So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

laid it in Joseph's tomb on the evening of the sixth day of the week, *on the morrow*, or on the sabbath itself, *which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests, and* other *Pharisees* who belonged to the grand sanhedrim, *assembled together* in a body *to* wait upon *Pilate*, as with an address of solemn importance: *Saying, Sir, we remember that this* notorious *deceiver*, who was yesterday put to death for his crimes, and is well known to have practised many arts to impose upon the people, *while he was yet living, said, After three days I will rise again* from the dead:[g] We desire *therefore*, that since his friends have been entrusted with the care of interring him, thou wouldst *order that the sepulchre* where he is laid may *be* strictly guarded and *secured till the third day* is past, *lest his disciples* should *come by night and steal him away, and* upon this should *tell the people* that, according to his own prediction, *he is risen from the dead: and* so *the last deceit will be worse than the first*, and the deluded populace will be more eager to profess their regard to him after his death, than they ever were while he was living.

And Pilate said to them, You have a guard in waiting about your court in the temple; *go your way* therefore, and order as many of them as you think fit to march to the sepulchre, and to keep sentry there all night, and thereby *make* [*it*] *as secure as you* possibly *can*.

And accordingly *they went* and took a detachment of soldiers with them to the garden of Joseph; *and* having first satisfied themselves that the corpse was there,[h] they *secured the sepulchre* as well as they possibly could, *sealing the stone*, that it might not be broke open without a discovery of the fraud;[i] *and* also *setting a guard* near it, who took care to place themselves so, that they could not but take an immediate alarm if any had presumed to make the least attempt to open the sepulchre and remove the body, or even to embalm it.

SECT. 193. MATT. XXVII. 63 64 65 66

IMPROVEMENT.

In how fatal a manner does the way of transgressors deceive them! Judas, no doubt, but a few hours before, was thinking with eager impatience of receiving this sum of money, which was the wages of unrighteousness: but though he might for a little while roll it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, yet how soon was it *turned* into *the gall of asps within him!* (Job xx. 12—14.) Ver. 3

We see the force of conscience even in the worst of men. He that had slighted all the warnings that his Master gave him, and neither was affected by the remembrance of his goodness to him, nor by the fear of his displeasure, while he was set upon accomplishing his covetous design, no sooner comes to feel the sting of an awakened conscience, but he is filled with horror, and is unable to endure the cutting anguish of his own reflections. And thus could God, in a moment, drive the most hardened sinner into all the agonies of remorse and despair, by letting loose his own thoughts upon him, to prey upon his heart like so many hungry vultures, and make him a terror to others and an executioner to himself. 5

We must surely admire the wisdom of Providence in extorting, even from the mouth of this traitor, so honourable a testimony of the innocence of Jesus, though to his own condemnation. And who could have imagined that the supreme court of Israel itself should have been so little impressed with it as coldly to answer, *What is that to us? See thou to that.* Is this the language of rulers, yea of priests? But they had cast off the fear of that God whose ministers they were, and had devoted themselves to gain and ambition. They therefore felt no remorse, even when Judas trembled before them, and appeared almost distracted under the sense of a crime in which they had been confederates with him. But their consciences were seared as with a red-hot iron, and all their familiar converse with divine things served only, in such a circumstance, to harden their hearts: as tempered steel gathers strength from the furnace and the hammer. 4

Judas repents; he confesses his crime; he throws away the reward of his guilt: yet was there nothing of godly sorrow in all this. Despairing, he becomes his own executioner; and flies to death and to hell as a refuge from the rage and fury of an awakened conscience. Fatal expedient! thus to seal his own damnation! But the righteous judgment of God erected him as a monument of wrath, and verified our Saviour's declaration, *It had been good for that man if he had never been born.* (Matt. xxvi. 24; and Mark xiv. 21. sect. clxx.) Tremble, O our souls, at this thought; that Judas, even one of the twelve, should fall into such depths of sin and ruin! May we each of us be jealous over ourselves; and may we never presume to censure whole bodies of men for the fault of particular members, when we find there was a traitor and reprobate among the holy band of the apostles! 5

We see the restless and implacable malice of Christ's enemies, which pursued him even to his tomb, and there 63, 64

g *After three days I will rise again.*] Their intending to make the sepulchre secure only till the third day ended, showed that they understood our Lord's expression of rising after three days, to be (as indeed it was) equivalent to a declaration that he would rise on the third day. See note f, on Matt. xii. 40. p. 126. Compare also Deut. xiv. 28. with xxvi. 12.

h Having first satisfied themselves that the corpse was there.]—Common prudence would teach them to do this; and perhaps they might feed their cruelty with viewing the dead body, as Herodias did with that sad spectacle, the Baptist's head. See note q, on Mark vi 28. p. 157.

i *Sealing the stone.*] Some have conjectured they might also cement it with lead, or bind it with iron; but the sabbath would hardly have allowed this. The guard would prevent violence, and the seal would be a security against any fraud of theirs in confederacy with the disciples, if that could possibly have been suspected. I have also hinted in the paraphrase above, that this precaution of sealing the sepulchre might prevent any attempt, not only to remove the body, but to embalm it. For it is to be considered, that they had great reason to believe, that when two such eminent persons as Joseph and Nicodemus had already paid such a public honour to the corpse, they would desire also to embalm it; which accordingly they did really design. This would be such an additional reflection on the proceedings of the sanhedrim, as they would certainly desire to prevent. A mandate from Pilate for this purpose they could not be sure of obtaining, had they asked it; nor would an act of their own court have been free from uncertainty and inconvenience. This method of sealing the stone was therefore the most artful expedient that could be imagined; which would effectually prevent it, without letting it be publicly known that they had the least suspicion of any such design. I state the matter thus largely, in regard to one of the most learned persons of the age, who seems to think this a very considerable difficulty. But, with respect to the principal point of his rising from the dead, it is surely most senseless to say, with that wretched opposer of the miracles of Christ, who has brought upon himself such just infamy, that this sealing the stone intimated a contract between Christ and them, that he should rise in the sight of the Jewish rulers on the third day. Probably their design was on the fourth day to have opened the sepulchre, and have exposed the corpse to public view; which, had it been in their power, had been the most prudent step they could have taken. But they do not seem to have been mad enough to think, that if Jesus rose from the dead, it must be just when they thought fit to attend.

SECT. 193. endeavoured to blast his memory by fixing upon him the character of an impostor. They demanded and procured a guard for his sepulchre. And here also we have a repeated instance of God's *taking the wise in their own craftiness:* (Job v. 13.) The seal and the guard served only more fully to attest the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, which they were set to overthrow, and to grace the triumph they were intended to oppose. Thus shall all the rage and all the artifice of his enemies at length promote the purposes of his glory: thus shall *meat* at length *come out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong.* (Judg. xiv. 14.) *The wrath of man,* O Lord, *shall praise thee;* and *the remainder of it shalt thou restrain,* and shalt triumph over it, either by thy grace or by thy vengeance. (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

MATT. XXVII. 65, 66

SECTION CXCIV.

Christ rising from the dead, the guards flee away in astonishment: Mary Magdalene finding the sepulchre open, calls Peter and John, who, having entered into it, return; while Christ himself makes his first appearance to her. Matt. xxviii. 1—4. Mark xvi. 1—4. Luke xxiv. 1, 2, 12. John xx. 1—17.

MARK xvi. 1.

SECT. 194. *AND when the sabbath was over,*[a] which ended in the evening, (as was often observed before,) *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary* who was [*the mother*] *of James* and Joses, *and Salome,* with Joanna, and some other pious women,[b] were so intent on embalming the body of Jesus, that they had another consultation about it; and, not satisfied with the preparation they had made before, they *bought* more *spices* and ointments,[c] *that,* after a short repose, as soon as ever they could see to do it, *they might go and anoint him* with them, and pay him all the respect of an honourable interment.

MARK XVI. 1

2 Now Mary Magdalene, with the other Mary and Salome, were ready before it was day; *and* setting out *very early in the morning,*[d] *while it was yet dark, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, they went to take a view of the sepulchre,*[e] to see if all things were as they had left them: and not long after, they were followed by Joanna, and the rest who were to meet them there, who came at the appointed time, *bringing the spices* with them, *which* (as was said before) *they had prepared* to embalm the body of Jesus, and which indeed were a considerable weight; *and some* [*others*] of their female friends went also *with them* to assist on this occasion.[f]

3 *And* as they were advancing towards the sepulchre, they were not under any apprehension from the soldiers that were set to guard it, who had been stationed there, without their knowledge, on the sabbath day, (sect. cxciii. p. 399.) but remembering the stone that was placed at the mouth of it, *they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone for us from the door of the sepulchre,* which all of us together have not strength to remove?

4 *For* they had seen Nicodemus and Joseph stop up the entrance with it; and *it was* indeed *very large* and heavy.

MARK xvi. 1.

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and [the other Mary] *the mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. [Matt. xxviii. 1.]

2 And very early in the morning, [John, when it was yet dark,] [as it began to dawn towards the first *day* of the week,] [Luke, they came] [to see the sepulchre,] [Luke, bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain *others* with them.] [Matt. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.]

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 For it was very great.

MATT. XVIII. 2

But this perplexity of theirs was altogether needless; for God had provided a very extraordinary way to remove that obstruction. *And, behold* with due regard and admiration, it was this: *There was,* but a little before they arrived there, *a great earthquake,* (which

Matt. xxviii. 2. And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel

a *When the sabbath was over.*] This, which Mark expresses by διαγενομενου του σαββατου, Matthew expresses by another phrase, οψε σαββατων, *in the end of the sabbath,* or *when the sabbath* (and consequently the preceding week, of which the sabbath was the last day) *was over;* as in Philostratus, οψε μυστηριων is, *when the mysteries were ended.* So that the controversy between Maijus and Wolfburg on this subject, seems needless; as the criticism of the former, who supposes these words in Matthew to belong to the close of the former chapter, and to refer to the time of sealing the sepulchre, is very unnatural; as Wolfius has shown in his learned note on Matt. xxviii. 1.

b *Mary Magdalene, &c.* with Joanna and some other pious women.] In the account the Evangelists have given of the women who first came to the knowledge that Jesus was risen, Mary Magdalene is mentioned by all, the other Mary by the three first, and Salome only by Mark: but I have named Joanna here with the rest, as it appears from Luke xxiv. 10. in the next section, she was among the other women who went to the sepulchre, and was one of those who told these things to the apostles.

c They *bought* more *spices,* &c.] Luke had before observed, (chap. xxiii. 56. p. 397.) that they prepared spices and ointments, and then rested the sabbath day according to the commandment: and Mark here says, that διαγενομενου του σαββατου, *when the sabbath was over,* ηγορασαν, *they bought* [not, *they had bought*] *spices, and* then (ver. 2. *very early in the morning*) *came to anoint him.* This I look upon as a strong intimation, that some time after six in the evening, (on what we call Saturday night,) when the sabbath was over, as it was then lawful to perform any common work, their generous hearts prompted them to purchase a larger quantity of aromatic drugs for this pious purpose.

d Setting out *very early in the morning.*] The learned and ingenious Mr. West (of whose accurate *Observations on the Resurrection of Christ* I have given an extract at the end of the preface to the third volume of this work) supposes Mary Magdalene, with the other Mary and Salome, to have set out to view the sepulchre before the time they had agreed to meet Joanna and the other women there, who were to bring the spices, and to come about sunrising to embalm the body: and as the word πρωι, made use of in this place both by Mark and John, (which we have rendered *early,*) sometimes signifies *over-early,* or *before the appointed time,* he naturally conjectures it has this signification here, and concludes that the women came to the sepulchre at different times; the first setting out before the time agreed on, just as the day began to break, whereas the others came not thither till the sun was risen. (See West's *Observ.* p. 45, 46.) The difference between this and the scheme here given, chiefly consists in Mr. West's supposing the women to have made two different visits to the sepulchre, and in consequence of that, two distinct reports to the disciples, whereas I have united them: though I do not suppose them to have all come together to the sepulchre, but only to have met there. Yet such advantages attend the scheme this author has proposed, that if it had been published to the world before I had composed this Harmony, I should have chosen to have formed it in a nearer agreement to it, but have now left it to appear with no material alteration in its order.

e *They went to take a view of the sepulchre.*] I have here rendered the word ηλθον, *went,* (and have likewise explained the word ελθουσαι in the same manner in the first verse of this section,) which agrees better with the order of the story, and is frequently the sense in which our translators have rendered it elsewhere. See Matt. xii. 9; xiii. 36; xiv. 12; Mark iii. 19; Luke ii. 44, xiv. 1; John iv. 45, vi. 17; Acts iv. 23, xxviii. 14. The true import of the word θεωρησαι is to *take a view;* and thus implies their going to see if all things were in the same condition as before, when they had seen the body laid in the sepulchre. (Luke xxiii. 55. p. 396.) I think Maijus and Elsner justly observe that the xxiiid chapter of Luke should not have ended at the place it does; for here, as in several other places, a sentence is divided—[Το μεν σαββατον ησυχασαν—την δε μιαν των σαββατων—ηλθον, &c.] Such divisions are great instances of negligence in the person by whom they were first made; but in a work like this Harmony, they are less material, and hardly in some cases avoidable.

f *Some others* of their female friends went also *with them.*] It was indeed a circumstance of decency, considering the office they were intending to perform, that the men and the women should perform their respective parts in it by themselves; which accordingly the Evangelists plainly intimate they did. Their setting out alone was a remarkable instance of their zeal and courage: perhaps some appointment might be made with Peter and John, (who were early up, as it should seem, on this occasion,) either to meet them or come after them, to assist in removing the stone, though not in embalming the body.

of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

John xx. 1. And Mary Magdalene seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Luke xxiv. 2. And [when they *also* looked,] they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. [Matt. xvi. 4.]

John xx. 2. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Luke xxiv. 12. Then arose Peter [*and* went forth,

would naturally awaken the guards, if any one of them had fallen asleep,) and very awful and astonishing were the circumstances that attended it; *for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven, had approached* in sight of the guards, *and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat down upon it.* And at the very same time, Jesus, like a sleeping conqueror awaking on a sudden, burst asunder the bands of death, and sprung up to a new and immortal life. But none of the guards saw him rise, being struck into the utmost consternation at the sight of the angel, who appeared to remove the stone: *and* well indeed they might be so; for *his countenance was like* the brightness of *lightning, and his* long flowing *garment* was as *white as snow*, glittering with extraordinary lustre beyond what their eyes could bear. *And the guards*, though Romans and soldiers, *trembled for fear* at the sight *of him, and became like* so many *dead men*, falling down on their faces in a most helpless condition. But quickly after, presuming to lift up their eyes, and finding he had disappeared, and had left the sepulchre open, they fled to some distant place, to consult their own safety in so surprising an occurrence.[g]

SECT. 194. MATT. XXVIII. 3 4

At this time the women, who had set out as it began to dawn, were near the place; *and Mary Magdalene*, transported with the distinguishing ardour of her affection, advanced a little before the rest; and, it being now light enough to discern objects, she looked forward, and *saw*, to her great surprise, *that the stone was* already *taken away from the sepulchre*,[h] and that the tomb was open. *And* she was greatly astonished and alarmed at the sight, and presently concluded that the body was removed. She therefore stepped back and informed her companions of this circumstance; upon which *they* [*also*] *looked, and* plainly *found* that it was as she represented, and that *the stone* was indeed *rolled away from* the entrance of *the sepulchre.*

JOHN XX. 1 LUKE XXIV. 2

And, not reflecting on the assurance Jesus had given them of his rising again from the dead, they knew not how to account for the removal of the stone; but Mary Magdalene and her companions having consulted a little together as well as the confusion they were in would admit, it was thought best that some of the disciples should be immediately acquainted with it: *she therefore runs* back to the city with all possible despatch,[i] *and* knowing where they lodged, she *comes to Simon Peter and to* John, *that other disciple whom Jesus* peculiarly *loved*, (by whom this part of the story is most exactly and circumstantially recorded,) *and* finding them already up, and full of solicitude about the event of this important day, she *says to them*, O my friends, the sepulchre is broke open, and some or other must have been there, who have removed the stone; nor is there any room to doubt but *they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him*:[k] so that I and my companions, whom I have left behind me, cannot find any method of performing that last office of respect and affection which you know we intended.

JOHN XX. 2

And upon hearing this, without so much as staying to make any reply, *Peter*, whose heart was struck with such a circumstance, *arose* in a transport of various passions,[l] *and*

LUKE XXIV. 12

g They fled to some distant place, &c.] As nothing is said of any interview between them and the friends of Christ, there is great reason to believe that this was the case, as indeed it is on other accounts probable it should be.

h *Mary Magdalene saw that the stone was taken away, &c.*]—Every attentive reader may have observed how difficult it is to form the Evangelists into one coherent story here, and to reconcile some seeming contrarieties in their accounts: nevertheless I hope, on a careful examination of this and the following sections, it will be found not impracticable. I shall not mention the very different schemes other critics have taken, nor the particular objections against them; but would only add a word or two concerning that of Dr. Guyse, which is both new and ingenious, yet not to me satisfactory. He supposes (in his note on John xx. 2.) that there were two appearances of the angels to the women; and that Mark and Luke speak only of the first, and Matthew and John of the second; that is, in other words, (as I understand it,) That as soon as it was light, these good women came to the sepulchre, and saw an angel, who told them, "He *knew they sought Jesus*, but that *he was* "*risen*;" and inviting them "to come and *see the place where he* "*was laid*," charged them "to *go and tell his disciples that he would* "*go before them into Galilee*." Upon this they go immediately and tell the disciples, (without saying any thing, that we find, of the vision,) "that some unknown person had *taken away the Lord, and* "*laid him they knew not where*:" and then returning again to the sepulchre in less than an hour, they see another, or the same angel as before, who, as if it were perfectly unknown by any former declaration, tells them just in the same words, "He *knew they sought* "*Jesus*, but *he was risen*;" and, inviting them again "to *come and* "*see the place where he had lain*," charges them again "to *go and tell* "*his disciples that he went before them into Galilee*." This is such a similarity of words and actions immediately succeeding each other, as I believe can no where be paralleled. The scheme I offer here (which is that which twice, at the distance of several years, presented itself to me on a view of the Evangelists alone) is encumbered with no such difficulty, nor indeed with any worth naming, except what arises from the transposition of Mark xvi. 2. and Luke xxiv. 12. on which see note l, in this section, and note a, in the next.

i *She therefore runs* back to the city, &c.] It is not expressly said, whether the women with whom she came thither staid any where near the sepulchre, or whether they returned to the city with her; but considering that John, who was an eye-witness, has mentioned only Mary Magdalene as running with the news, her companions in the mean while might stay at some distance till Peter and John came, and had viewed the sepulchre; and might be joined there by the other women who were to bring the spices, upon whose coming they might go into the sepulchre. (Compare Mark xvi. 2; and Luke xxiv. 3. in the beginning of the next section.)—John hints nothing at all of Mary's having looked into the sepulchre before she ran back to him; and his narration being the last and most circumstantial, must guide us in adjusting what is ambiguous in the rest.

k *They have taken away the Lord, &c.*] It is difficult to suppose, with Dr. Clarke, Dr. Guyse, and many other critics, that she would have spoken thus, if the angels had before this expressly assured her of Christ's resurrection, and sent her away with such a message as they did to the disciples. Compare note p, on ver. 13.

l *And Peter arose.*] These words in Luke come in after the account given by the women to the eleven, and all the rest of the disciples, (Luke xxiv. 9.) of the angels' appearing to them, &c. and so make the chief objection against the scheme here offered to the reader: but the word *then*, with which this verse is introduced by our translators, does not well answer to δε in the original; and, as we have often showed before that Luke is not always so exact in his order as not to admit of some transposition, so it will run us into greater difficulties not to allow it in the present case, in which it is apparently reasonable to follow John's order, who was an eye-witness, and who gives the last and largest account. And indeed, if no transposition may be allowed, it is absolutely impossible in many passages of the gospel history to make any consistent Harmony of the Evangelists at all; as every attentive reader must have often observed. This was the view in which I formerly considered the account that Luke has given (ver. 12.) of Peter's visit to the sepulchre, which I have incorporated here with that of John, who at large relates their going there together, as soon as they received the first report from Mary Magdalene of the sepulchre being open, and the body gone: and, as Luke does not mention Peter's visit till after the report the women who had seen the angels made to the disciples, it could not any way agree with that of John, without allowing the necessity of a transposition. But, on considering the observations made by Mr. West, I am now satisfied that Luke refers, not to the visit which Peter made with John, but to a second visit which he made afterwards upon the women's coming with the report that they had seen two angels who had assured them Jesus

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that other disciple whom we mentioned before, [*and*] *went* directly *out*, *and* never stopped till they *came to the sepulchre*. *And*, not contented with the swiftest pace with which they could walk, *they both ran together; and* as *that other disciple* was the younger man, he *out-ran Peter*, who had the start of him at the beginning, *and came first to the sepulchre: And stooping down* [*to look into it,*] *he saw the linen clothes*, or rollers, in
5 which the corpse had been wrapped up, *lying* there by themselves; *but he did not* at first
6 *enter in* to the sepulchre. *Then came Simon Peter* very quickly *following him, and having stooped down* to look into the sepulchre, as John had done before, he was not satisfied with this; but, that he might examine this important affair with such exactness as it deserved, *he went into the sepulchre, and* found the body was gone, but *saw the linen clothes*, with which it had been covered, *laid by themselves*, as John had observed from
7 without. *And* he discovered another material circumstance which had not been remarked before, namely, that *the napkin which was about his head* was *not laid with the linen clothes, but* was *folded up in a place by itself*,[m] in such an orderly manner as plainly showed that the body was not hastily hurried away, either by friend or enemy; but made the sepulchre appear rather like a bed-chamber, which a person on his awaking in the morn-
8 ing had leisurely quitted. *Then that other disciple who came first to the sepulchre*, and, being less adventurous than Peter, stood hitherto without, *went in also* to view it; *and* when *he saw* the several parts of the funeral dress in this situation, he was immediately convinced, *and believed* it now to be at least very probable that his dear Master was indeed
9 revived.[n] *For hitherto they did not know the* full meaning of those various intimations of *scripture*, to which Jesus had so often referred to convince them *that he must* certainly *rise from the dead*, (compare Matt. xvi. 21. p. 180, 181; and Luke xviii. 31—34. p. 280.) which if they had considered, they would cheerfully have expected the sure accomplishment of them, and would not have been so much surprised at the news which Mary brought them.

10 *Then* both *the disciples went away again to their companions* in the city,[o] [*Peter*] not being so thoroughly satisfied as John was, yet greatly *wondering in himself at what had happened*, and very much concerned as to the event of so surprising a beginning.

11 *But Mary*, who was now returned, *stood near the sepulchre* after Peter and John were gone from it, not indeed going into it as they had done, but *weeping without*, in great perplexity at her not knowing what was become of Jesus: *and as she wept, she* also *stooped*
12 *down*, [*and looked*] very wishfully *into the sepulchre; And* there she *saw* with great surprise *two angels* in the form of men, clothed *in white* habits, *sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet*, of that niche in the sepulchre *where the body of Jesus had been*
13 *laid*. *And they said to her*, with a tender regard, *Woman, why dost thou weep* thus? And *she said to them*, Alas, I have reason enough to weep; it is *because they have taken away* the body of Jesus *my* dear *Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*, or how the sacred corpse may be neglected or abused.[p]

14 *And* just *as she had said this*, hearing a sudden noise behind her, *she turned back*, before the angels could give her any answer; *and* she *saw Jesus* himself *standing* near her: *and she knew not* at first *that it was Jesus*, his habit being changed, her eyes also overflowing with tears, and her mind being so far from any expectation of his appearance, and so much distressed, that she did not so much as look up to the face of the person who appeared.

15 Then *Jesus said to her*, with a gentle voice, *Woman, why dost thou weep* thus? and *whom dost thou seek?* And *she, supposing him to be the gardener,*[q] *said to him, Sir, if*

and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.] [John xx. 3.]

John xx. 4. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he, stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and [stooping down, he] went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes [laid by themselves:] [Luke xxiv. 12.]

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home, [*Peter* wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.] [Luke xxiv. 12.]

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre:

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him,

was risen. These women Mr. West supposes to have been Joanna and the other women who came with the spices; upon whose coming to the disciples before the arrival of the two Marys and Salome, and telling them that they had seen two angels at the sepulchre, who had informed them Jesus was alive, Peter, willing to see if the angels were there, immediately arose and ran again to the sepulchre, and, without entering in, (as he had done before,) but only stooping down and looking into it, as he could see no angels there, but *only the linen clothes lying*, (for so it is that the words τα οθονια κειμενα μονα should be rendered,) came back again in great astonishment. (See West's *Observ.* p. 52. *et seq.*) This I now think to be the best solution of this difficulty, and there is thus no need of any transposition; of which I could not but inform the reader, as it is the principal circumstance in which the scheme that Mr. West has given differs from mine, though I have left the harmony to stand as before, that it may still be seen what I had offered, as it will either way be found sufficient to acquit the Evangelists from any charge of absurdity or contradiction.

m *But folded up in a place by itself.*] Perhaps our Lord himself folded up the napkin; and this remarkable circumstance might be intended to signify the perfect calmness and composure with which he arose, transported with no rapture or surprise at his awaking out of this long sleep. It would be very impertinent to inquire whence he had his clothes; the angels no doubt furnished him with them; and perhaps the diversity of their colour or form, might prevent his being known by his friends at first sight.

n *He saw, and believed.*] Many interpreters explain this only of his believing that the body was not there: but that he must have believed before, on looking into the sepulchre. I rather understand it as a modest intimation that he, first indeed of all others, *believed the truth of Christ's resurrection*, inferring it, as he reasonably might, from the order in which he found the sepulchre. These words have a force and a grace, on this interpretation, which I think no other can give them. Much of the beauty of John's manner of writing consists in such hints as these, which show the temper of that excellent man; and, were he to be considered merely as a human historian, add great weight to his testimony. See note d, on John xxi. 20. § 201.

o *Went away again to their companions.*] So προς εαυτους seems evidently to signify: (compare Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 348.) Accordingly soon after this the women found the eleven and the rest together. (Luke xxiv. 9.)—Απελθειν προς εαυτον, never, that I know of, signifies *to come to one's self*, or to the exercise or possession of one's own mind, as some have strangely interpreted these words. Luke's expression in that case is different, Luke xv. 17. where he says of the prodigal, εις εαυτον ελθων, *when he came to himself.*—It was very prudent in Peter and John to retire immediately, lest they should have been questioned by the rulers if found near the sepulchre.

p *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*] This expression may very easily be accounted for, in our manner of ranging this story; but it is very harsh to suppose she should speak in this manner, if one of the angels had a few minutes before told her that Jesus was risen. She perhaps thought they came to do a kind of homage to the place where he had lain, if she apprehended them to be angels; which whether she did or did not, we do not certainly know.

q *Supposing him to be the gardener.*] It is very probable that Jesus might speak low, or in a different way from what he usually did; and her taking him for the gardener, seems to intimate there was nothing very splendid in his dress: accordingly, when he appeared to the two disciples in their way to Emmaus, they seem to

Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father. but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and *to* my God and your God.

thou hast for any unknown reason *borne him* away from *hence*, where the master of the sepulchre saw fit so honourably to lay him but a few hours ago,[r] I earnestly beg thou wouldst immediately *tell me where thou hast put him, and I will remove him*, and take effectual care that his corpse shall be decently interred elsewhere, without giving any farther trouble here. SECT. 194. JOHN XX.

Jesus, on this, *said to her*, with a loud and distinct voice, in his usual affectionate way, *Mary*, dost thou not know me? [*And*] Mary thereupon *turning* directly towards him, and eagerly fixing her eyes upon him, immediately discovered who it was; and, transported with a mixture of unutterable passions, *she said to him, Rabboni; that is to say*, [*My great*] *Master* and Teacher! and so much was her heart affected, that she could say no more, but immediately prostrated herself at his feet to embrace them. 16

But *Jesus said to her, Do not* stay here to *embrace me* [*now*,] either to pay thine homage to me, or to confirm thy faith; both which thou wilt have other opportunities of doing: *for I am not yet* withdrawn from your world, and *ascended to* the heavenly court of *my Father*, as you may imagine I should presently do;[s] but I shall yet continue for a little while upon earth, and give you further opportunities of seeing me again: let nothing therefore now detain thee any longer, *but go* immediately *to my* dear *brethren*, for whom I have still the same affectionate regard as ever, *and say unto them, I* am risen from the dead, and after I have paid some visits to you, am shortly indeed to *ascend* into heaven, from whence I came: yet grieve not at that separation, but remember, that as I am going *to* him who is in a very peculiar sense *my Father*, so I shall still be mindful of your interest, *and* am also going to *your Father, and* [*to*] *my God and your God;* for such he is now become, through that covenant which he has established with you in me:[t] on the whole, therefore, you have infinitely greater reason to rejoice than to mourn. 17

And upon saying this he immediately disappeared for the present; and the other women advancing to the sepulchre, where the angels continued, received the news of his resurrection from them, and were directed, as Mary Magdalene also was, to report it to the disciples, with a variety of additional circumstances which will be mentioned in the following section.

IMPROVEMENT.

How fit is it that we should sing unto the Lord a new song! and with what thankful hearts should we join, on his own day, and on every day, to congratulate the triumph of his rising from the dead, and to rejoice in this birth-day of our hopes! Now is the justice of God amply satisfied, or the prisoner had never been released. Now is the reproach of the cross ceased, and turned into proportionable glory. That reproach was rolled away at once by the descending angel, who appeared, not to awaken Christ from his sleep, or to bring him a new life, for he had himself a power, whenever he pleased, to resume that which he had voluntarily resigned; (John x. 18.) but he came to add a solemn pomp to his revival, and to strike the guards with such a terror as would effectually prevent any mad attempt on this glorious Conqueror when he was bursting the bonds in which he had for a while been held. MATT. XXVIII. 1—4

O Lord, we acknowledge the truth of thy promise, *Thou didst not leave his soul in hell, neither didst thou suffer* the flesh of *thine Holy One to see corruption:* (Psal. xvi. 10.) *Now is Christ* indeed *risen from the*

have taken him for a person of a rank not much superior to their own. Her eyes might also be withheld at first from knowing Jesus by some supernatural restraint, as theirs were. Luke xxiv. 16.

r *Sir, if thou hast borne him hence.*] It is observable that she accosts this stranger in respectful language, even when she took him for a servant, (for κηπουρος cannot, I think, signify *the owner of the garden,*) prudently reflecting, that an error on that hand would be more excusable than on the other, supposing he should have proved one of superior rank in a plain dress: and also, that she does not name Jesus, but speaks in indefinite terms, *if thou hast borne him hence;* intimating that he was the one person of whom her own thoughts and heart were so full, that she took it for granted every one must know who she meant. Such language in such a circumstance was perfectly natural.—If there was any hedge or arbour near the sepulchre, so that while she spake to Jesus she was not visible to her companions; or if this avenue was such, that while they came up to it, the sepulchre was between her and them; or if they were now waiting at some distance, or coming up with a slower pace, being charged with the weight of the materials for embalming, (any one of which might very possibly be the case,) a difficulty with respect to the time of their coming to the sepulchre, which may offer itself to the sagacious reader in the disposition of the following section, when compared with this, will disappear at once.

s *Do not embrace me now, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.*] Mr. Chandler, in his *Answer to the Considerations on the Trial of the Witnesses*, has given such convincing reasons in the present case for rendering the word απτου, *embrace*, (which I before apprehended to be the sense of it,) that I think myself warranted in changing the version. We find indeed in the next section, that presently after this, when Jesus appeared to the women who were fleeing from the sepulchre, they were permitted to embrace him: (compare Matt. xxviii. 8, 9. and Mark xvi. 8.) But this is well accounted for by Mr. West, as graciously designed to calm their minds, and to remove the terror they were under; while Mary, who was under no such terror, had her grief dispersed at once, and was immediately convinced that it was Christ, upon his calling her by her name. And, to induce her not to wait for any thing more at present, it was a very proper consideration that our Lord subjoins, *For I am not yet ascended to my Father;* in which he at once assured her that he was not yet quitting this world, and plainly intimated his intention of seeing her and his disciples again, and paying frequent visits to them before his final departure, when what he had lately said to his disciples of his going to the Father, (John xvi. 28.) should be fulfilled by his ascension into heaven. (See West's *Observ.* p. 167. *et seq.*)—The sense is obvious and easy in this view, and Dr. Whitby, (in his note on this place,) Mr. Fleming, (*Christol.* Vol. III. p. 502.) Mr. Cradock, and others, interpret these words as I have done in the paraphrase; and it is strange that Mr. Whiston should think this text inexplicable, unless we suppose "that Christ was *immediately to ascend to his* "*Father*, before he could at all converse with any of them, or "receive the expressions of their homage to him." (See the *Appendix to his Sermons at Boyle's Lect.* p. 298—300.) If there had been any necessity for his ascending immediately, he surely would not first have appeared to Mary, and then to the other women on their way to the city. The interpretation here given suits the words as well, and other scriptures much better. She probably thought, that if he was risen, he was also returned back to his heavenly Father to keep up his stated abode with him again, as he quickly after did: to assure her therefore of the contrary, was exceeding proper, and the best reason that could be given to persuade her to wave any farther discourse now, with which to be sure she must otherwise have been earnestly desirous to detain her dear Lord.—To suppose, with Messrs. L'Enfant and Beausobre, that she meant this adoration as homage to a temporal prince, and that our Lord's answer was chiefly intended as a declaration that he must *ascend to his Father before he received his kingdom*, appears to me very unnatural.

t *Go to my brethren*, &c.] By calling the disciples his brethren, and God their Father and their God, he intimates in the strongest manner the full forgiveness of their fault in leaving him, even without ever mentioning it; just as the father of the prodigal (Luke xv. 22. *et seq.*) intimated his forgiveness of his undutiful behaviour, by calling for the best robe, &c. without any direct reply to what his penitent child had said of his unworthiness to be called his son.—These exquisite touches, which every where abound in the evangelical writings, give inexpressible delight to a well-turned heart, and show how perfectly Christ knew our frame

SECT. 194. *dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept;* (1 Cor. xv. 20.) may we, in conformity to his holy example, be dead to sin and to the world; *that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also* may *walk in newness of life!* (Rom. vi. 4.) Then will *he that raised up Christ from the dead,*

JOHN XX. ere long *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.* (Rom. viii. 11.)

13 Let the faith of what has been done with regard to our glorified Head, and shall at length be accomplished with respect to all his members, daily gladden our hearts. When our eyes are weeping, and our souls sinking within us,

17 let us raise our thoughts to Jesus, our risen and now ascended Redeemer; who says to all his brethren these gracious words, (which may justly be received with transports of astonishment, and fill our hearts, at the same time, with joy unspeakable and full of glory,) "*I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*"

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is now, through the death and resurrection of his dear Son, (whom, by raising him from the dead, he has so solemnly owned under that relation,) become our Father and our God. As such let us honour him, love him, and rejoice in him; and when we must leave this world, which Christ has long since left, let it delight our souls to think that we shall likewise ascend after him, and dwell with him in this propitious divine presence. In the mean time, *if we are risen with Christ*, let us *seek those things which are above, where Christ* now *sitteth at the right hand of God;* (Col. iii. 1.) and let us be willing, in whatever sense God shall appoint, to be *made conformable to his death*, that we may also be *partakers of his resurrection* and glory. (Phil. iii. 10, 11.)

SECTION CXCV.

Christ having appeared to Mary, the other women come to the sepulchre, and are informed of his resurrection by the angels. He appears to the women as they return to the city: but neither their testimony nor that of Mary is received by the disciples. Matt. xxviii. 5—10. Mark xvi. 2, 5—11. Luke xxiv. 3—11. John xx. 18.

MARK xvi. 9.

SECT. 195. WE have just *now* seen in the preceding section, that *when* [*Jesus*] *was risen* from the dead, very *early on the first day of the week*, (which day was afterwards observed by his followers in commemoration of this important fact,) *he made his first appearance to Mary*

MARK XVI. *Magdalene, out of whom* (as was formerly said) *he had* some time before *ejected* no less than *seven demons*, who by an awful providence, were permitted to join together in

9 afflicting her. (Compare Luke viii. 2. p. 121.)

2 *But* it is now time to return to the women her companions, from whom she had parted when she went to inform Peter and John that the sepulchre was open: (John xx. 2. p. 401.) These were now joined by [*the other women*] who had brought the spices, and, while Mary was engaged in this interview with Christ, *came* up together *to the sepulchre:*

LUKE XXIV. and it was now *about* the time of *the rising of the sun.*[a] *And having* found the passage open without any obstruction in the way, and observed, as they stood at a distance, that

3 Peter and John had done the like, they *entered into the sepulchre* themselves; but, as they had before suspected on seeing it open, *they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

4 *And it came to pass*, that *as they were in great perplexity on this account*, and knew not what to think was become of the body, *behold*, to their inexpressible astonishment, *they saw* the *two* angels whom Mary had seen but a little before, (who had disappeared upon their coming to the sepulchre, but now rendered themselves visible at once,) in the form of *men* arrayed *in splendid habits*, [*who*] came and *stood by them*, the women being unable to discover how they came in: and [*one of them*] appeared like *a young man*, with a beautiful and cheerful aspect, *clothed in a long white robe*, glittering with lustre like the purest snow: and this was the angel who appeared at first to the guards, and [*who had been*] afterwards seen by Mary *sitting on the right side* of the entrance into the

5 sepulchre. *And they were* greatly *terrified* at this extraordinary and surprising sight; *and* stepping back to the very door,[b] they *bowed their faces to the ground*, and fixed their eyes upon it, in token of the profoundest respect.[c]

MATT. XXVIII. *But the angel*, in a most mild and condescending manner, *answered and said unto the women*,[d] *Do not be terrified* at what you see; *for* we appear to comfort rather than

5 afflict you, and have the best tidings to bring you that ever you heard: *I know, that* in the strength of your affection *you* are come to *seek* that holy and excellent Person, *Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified* the other day, and buried here: but *why seek ye the living*

LUKE XXIV. *among the dead?* and why are ye come hither with materials for embalming one who is possessed of an immortal life? *He is not here, but is risen* this morning, *as he said*

6 that he should: *behold* the tomb *where they laid him;* the body is not here: *come* in,

MARK xvi. 9.

NOW when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

2—And they [*i. e. the other women*] came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Luke xxiv. 3. And they entered [into the sepulchre,] and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. [Mark xvi. 5.]

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold [they saw] two men [*who*] stood by them in shining garments; [*one of them* a young man, *who had been* sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment.] [Mark xvi. 5.]

5 And [they were affrighted,] and bowed down *their* faces to the earth. [Mark xvi. 5.]

Matt. xxviii. 5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, [Be not affrighted:] for I know that ye seek Jesus [of Nazareth,] which was crucified: [Luke, Why seek ye the living among the dead?] [Mark xvi. 6. Luke xxiv. 5.]

Luke xxiv. 6. He is not here, but is risen, [as he said;] [Mark, behold where they laid him;] [come see

a *About the rising of the sun.*] We have seen before, that Mary Magdalene, with the other Mary and Salome, set out while it was yet dark, and came within sight of the sepulchre for the first time, just as it grew light enough to discern that it was opened; (compare Matt. xxviii. 1; and John xxi. 1. p. 400.) but by that time Mary had called Peter and John, and they had viewed the sepulchre, and Joanna was come, with the other women who were to bring the spices, which might all pass in less than an hour, the sun was up. These circumstances well agree with each other, and are presumptions in favour of the order which we have laid down.

b Stepping back to the very door.] This it was natural for them to do; and from the angel's afterwards inviting them to come in and view the sepulchre, we may infer that they were now precisely in this attitude.

c *They bowed their faces to the ground*, and fixed their eyes upon it, &c.] The words κλινουσων το προσωπον εις την γην, do not intimate their *prostrating themselves* before the *angels*, but a respectful and reverential *declining their heads*, and looking downward, that they might not appear to gaze; which is well known to have been forbidden to the Jews upon the sight of a celestial vision: (see Exod. xix. 21; and compare Judg. xiii. 20.) And it was also considered as dangerous by the heathen, when their deities, or any celestial messengers from them, were supposed to make themselves visible; as Elsner has finely shown in his learned and entertaining note here. Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 284.

d *But the angel answered, &c.*] I entirely agree with Mr. West, that the particle δε should here be rendered *But*. See West's *Observ.* p. 23.

the place where the Lord lay:] remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, [Matt. xxviii. 6. Mark xvi. 6.]

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words.

Matt. xxviii. 7. [But] go [your way] quickly, and tell his disciples [and Peter] that he is risen from the dead: and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, [as he said unto you:] Lo, I have told you. [Mark xvi. 7.]

Mark xvi. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid; [and with fear and great joy did run to bring his disciples word.]

[Matt. xxviii. 8.]

Matt. xxviii. 9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

and satisfy yourselves by the strictest inquiry; and *view*, with all the mixture of holy affections which are suitable to such a circumstance, *the place where the Lord* of life and glory, the Prince of angels and men, *lay* for a while a breathless corpse: but he has now triumphed over the grave; and you have no reason to be surprised to hear it: for it not only was most probable in itself that this would be the case, but he also often foretold it. *Remember* particularly *how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee* with you, where I know with what kindness you attended and ministered to him:[e] Recollect that remarkable *saying* of his which was so often repeated, *The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and the third day* he shall *rise again;* (see Matt. xvi. 21. p. 180, 181; xvii. 22, 23. p. 188; and xx. 18, 19. p. 280.) now this, as you well know, is the third day; and what he said is most exactly verified. *And*, while the angel spake thus, *they* called to mind what they had heard from Jesus, and perfectly *remembered his words. But go quickly*, added he, and communicate to your friends the joy which you now feel; yea, go *and tell his* mourning *disciples, and* particularly tell *Peter*, who is so overwhelmed with his peculiar sorrows, *that he is risen from the dead; and* acquaint them also, in further confirmation of the truth of it, *Behold, he is* shortly *going before you into Galilee*;[f] for I am commissioned to assure you that *there ye shall* all *see him, as he said to you* that he would meet you there; (compare Matt. xxvi. 32; and Mark xiv. 28. p. 364.) *Lo, I*, who am one of the angels that stand in the presence of God, *have told you* this, and my associate is here ready to attest it; and therefore, important and wonderful as the message is, you need not at all scruple to report it.

SECT. 195.

LUKE XXIV. 7

8

MATT. XXVIII. 7

And upon this, instead of making any farther scrutiny, *they went out quickly*,[g] *and fled from the sepulchre* as fast as possible; *for they trembled, and were amazed* at this angelic vision; *and*, whoever they met by the way, *they said nothing to any one* of them, *for they were* very much *affrighted;* [*but*,] *with* hearts full of *fear* at what they had seen, *and* with a mixture also of *great joy* at this happy news which they had received in so awful a manner,[h] *they ran* with all the speed they could *to bring his disciples word.*

MARK XVI. 8

And as they were going on their way *to tell his disciples*,[i] *behold Jesus* himself *met them*,[k] *saying*, in the usual form of congratulatory salutations, *Hail*, my friends! I give you joy of the day. *And* upon this, beginning to recover from their fear, as they saw it was Jesus, *they drew near* in the most respectful manner, *and*, prostrating themselves before him, *took hold of his feet* and embraced them, *and paid their homage to him* on this joyful occasion.

MATT. XXVIII. 9

Then Jesus, as he saw that they were still in a great deal of confusion, did not long permit them to continue in that posture, but comforted and dismissed them, (as he had done before with respect to Mary;) and *said to them, Be not* any more *afraid*, for you have indeed no reason for it; [*but*,] as you have the fullest proof that I am actually risen from the dead, *go* ye therefore and *tell my* dear *brethren*, whoever of them you may meet here in the city,[l] *that they go away into Galilee*, to the place I formerly appointed; (see note b, on Matt. xxvi. 32. p. 364.) *and* when a proper number of them is met *there*,

10

c *Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee.*] This familiar manner in which the angel speaks of what passed between Jesus and them in Galilee, seems to intimate, that he had then been present, though invisible, and heard what Jesus said. The hint suggests many agreeable reflections, which the pious reader will dwell upon at leisure.—The mention which he afterwards makes of Peter, whether it were or were not by a particular charge from Christ, is also observable in the same view.

f *He is going before you into Galilee.*]- When we consider this expression of the angel to the women, as Mark has related it, [ειπατε —οτι προαγει υμας, &c.] the construction shews, as the learned Bos observes, (*Exercit.* p. 23.) that these words are the message which the angel puts into the mouth of these women, to be delivered by them to the apostles. But what is added, [*there shall ye see him,*] may, consistent with this criticism, be understood as in the paraphrase, which makes the sense more complete, by adding a very material, and, to them who so tenderly loved Jesus, a very delightful circumstance, namely, that they should *see him themselves*, and not merely receive the most credible assurances of his resurrection from others.

g *They went out quickly.*] This is the exact import of the word εξελθουσαι, which is the same in both the Evangelists, but is improperly rendered here in Matthew, *they departed.* (See West's *Observ.* p. 36.)

h *With fear and joy.*] It was so natural for such a mixture of passions to arise on this grand occasion, that I think very little stress is to be laid on Mark's mentioning their fear alone, and Matthew's mentioning their joy with it, to prove they relate different stories.—I have since the pleasure to find, that this is represented in the same light by Mr. West, who has clearly shewn that both these sacred writers speak of the same fact. (See West's *Observ.* p. 37—40.]

i *And as they were going* on their way *to tell his disciples.*] Admitting what is here supposed, that there was but one vision of angels, (besides that to Mary Magdalene,) and one message sent by them, this will, I think, establish the order in which we have ranged this story. For if (as Dr. Clarke and many other critics strangely suppose) Mary's interview with the apostles (John xx. 2.) had happened between the angelic vision and this appearance of Christ to the women, such a connexion as this would have been very unnatural. Matthew would, on that hypothesis, rather have said, *And when they had told his disciples, [and they believed them not,] Jesus met them, &c.*—But Mr. West, who apprehends that there were several distinct appearances of angels, and two distinct appearances of Christ to the women, (the first to Mary Magdalene, and the second to the other Mary and Salome, when the other women were not present,) concludes that these several facts were reported to the apostles at different times, and by different women; and that Joanna and the other women, who had only seen the angels after the two Marys and Salome were gone from the sepulchre, made their report to the apostles before the arrival of the two Marys and Salome; and by thus representing the story in a different order, he obviates the difficulty arising from the account which the two disciples that were going to Emmaus give of the report they had heard from the women. Luke xxiv. 22—24. (See West's *Observ.* p. 77, 86. *et seq.*)

k *Jesus* himself *met them.*] I cannot think, with Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) that this relates to his interview with Mary Magdalene described before; for though an enallage or exchange of numbers be sometimes used, (see note h, on Luke xxiii. 39. p. 390.) yet it is not to be admitted without necessity. Now, it is certain Mary was alone when Christ appeared to her; and that appearance was at the sepulchre, this between that and the city, and probably after they despatched some considerable part of the way in their flight. The words [*as they went to tell his disciples*] are indeed wanting in many ancient versions and manuscripts, as Dr. Mill has shewn in his note on this place; but Dr. Whitby, with considerable reason, contends that they are genuine; (see his *Examen Milli*, p. 91.) and the sense of them seems implied in the close of the preceding verse.

l *My brethren.*] The reader will observe our Lord speaks the same language here which he had used John xx. 17. (See note t, on that text, p. 403.) No doubt, these affectionate friends of Christ were exact in reporting this circumstance, that their injured Lord called them *his brethren* still. And both Matthew and John, to whom the glad tidings were immediately brought, felt it strike so powerfully on their hearts, that they could not but record it.

SECT. 195. *they shall see me* appear publicly among them, to remove all the remaining doubts which any of them may entertain as to the certainty of my resurrection.

LUKE XXIV. Now after Jesus had spoken these words, he immediately disappeared; and the women ran on to carry the news: *and when they were returned from the sepulchre* to Jerusa-
9 lem, *they told all these things to the eleven* apostles, *and to all the rest* of the disciples whom they met with then or on the following days,[m] having it much at heart to deliver this important message in the most punctual and effectual manner.

10 *And they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary* [*the mother*] *of James,* and Joses, and Salome, *and the other women* that had gone *with them* to the sepulchre, as above, with an intent to embalm Christ's body, (p. 400.) *who* were the persons that were thus honoured with this message from the angels, and from Christ himself; and who accordingly came and *told these things to the apostles*, who had none of them as yet seen any thing more themselves than that the sepulchre was empty, and the linen clothes laid in order. *And Mary Magdalene* in particular *went* with the other women, *and told*
MARK XVI. *the disciples that had been* so constantly *with him, as they were mourning and weeping*
10 for the loss of their dear Master, *that she* also *had seen the Lord; and that* indeed *he* had appeared to her the first of all the company, and *had spoken these* gracious *things unto her* as well as to them, relating to his resurrection from the dead, and had expressly ordered her to acquaint them with his purpose of ascending ere long to his Father and their Father, and to his God and their God. (Compare John xx. 17. p. 403.)

11 But such were the prevailing prejudices that had possessed the minds of the disciples, and so entirely were their spirits dejected and their hopes blasted by the death of their Lord, that though they could not think this was related with a design to impose upon them, yet they were ready to impute it to the power of imagination; *and* even *when they heard that he was* actually *alive, and had been seen by her,* and by the other women who also testified the same, *they did not* in general *believe* it; *but their words seemed to* most of *them as an idle tale,* and they determined to suspend their belief of so important a fact, till they were satisfied of it by the testimony of their own senses; which, through the great condescension of their Lord, several of them were before the end of that day, as we shall quickly relate.

Luke xxiv. 9. And [they] returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Mark xvi. 10. *And* [Mary Magdalene] went and told [the disciples] that had been with him, as they mourned and wept, [that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.] [John xx. 18.]

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not: [and their words seemed to them as idle tales.] [Luke xxiv. 11.]

IMPROVEMENT.

MATT. XXVIII. We are now again called, as by the angel's voice, to come and see the place where the Lord lay, and to take an affectionate survey of that sepulchre which our rising Saviour had left, and where he had laid aside the dress
6 of death, as a token that he should return to it no more. How wonderful that he should ever have lain there! that the Lord of life should have dwelt among the dead, and from the glory of the throne of God, should have sunk down to the abasement of the grave!—But he has burst its prison doors, and has abolished death, and him who had the power of it; abolished it for himself and us. How are all its terrors now disarmed! *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!* (1 Cor. xv. 55.)

7, 8 With what pleasure did the angels deliver this gracious message of their Lord, as well as ours! and with what transport did the pious women receive it! Behold the tender care of Christ over his people! Angels have it imme-
10 diately in charge to send the glad tidings to his disciples; and Jesus repeats and confirms them. *Go tell my brethren, I am risen from the dead.* Lord, is this thy language concerning those who but a few hours before had forsaken thee! and one of them, with such dreadful imprecations, denied thee! Yet even that disciple is not
MARK XVI. 7. excluded; nay, to him is it peculiarly addressed: *Go tell thy brethren*, and in particular tell Peter, that he, poor mourner, may especially be comforted. Compassionate Redeemer! thou hast brought up from the tomb with thee that tenderness and goodness which laid thee there!

9 Such is the freedom and glory of thy grace, that thou sometimes dost first manifest thyself to those who were once in the most miserable bondage to Satan. Whenever this is the case, may the peculiar obligation
10 be remembered! May every remainder of unbelief be subdued in our souls! and may we joyfully communicate to all around us the tidings of a risen Saviour, and the merciful discoveries of his presence to us.

SECTION CXCVI.

The guards, returning to Jerusalem, make their report to the chief priests; and are bribed to say, that the disciples stole the body of Christ while they slept. Christ appears to Peter, and then to two other disciples. Matt. xxviii. 11—15. Mark xvi. 12, 13.

MATT. xxviii. 11.

SECT. 196. NOW *while* these extraordinary things were transacting, and [*the women*] *were going* to tell the disciples what they had heard and seen, *behold, some of the guards*, who had fled from the sepulchre in great consternation, began a little to recollect themselves as to the
MATT. XXVIII. excuse they should make for its being broke open, and the body being gone, as it would soon be known that it was: they *came* therefore *into the city, and told the chief priests,*
11 from whom they had received their immediate charge, *all that had happened:* and urged how impossible it was for them to make any opposition in the presence of the angel, who shook the very earth with the terror of his appearance, and therefore might be easily

MATT. xxviii. 11. NOW when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

[m] *And to all the rest.*] This, I think, refers not only to one report, but to the repetition of the testimony to any of their pious friends who believed in Jesus: and if that be admitted, it will be an additional proof that what is said in ver. 12. should be transposed in such a manner as is necessary for reconciling it with the scheme we have proposed in the preceding section. Compare note l, on Luke xxiv. 12. p. 401, 402.

supposed to take away all power of resistance from them. And thus these ignorant and stupid heathens became in effect the first preachers of Christ's resurrection, and were witnesses of the truth of it to the most inveterate of his enemies.[a] LUCE. 196.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers.

This report could not but strike the chief priests into some amazement and confusion; and therefore they immediately convened the sanhedrim: *and having met together with the elders* of the people, they deliberated upon it, *and consulted* among themselves what they should do in so perplexing an emergency; and particularly, whether they should dismiss the guards, with a charge to conceal the story they had told them, or should accuse them to the governor, and attempt to punish them for neglecting their duty: but, considering the manner in which the governor had appeared affected towards Jesus, and the many prodigies which had attended his death, by which Pilate's conscience must have been in some degree awakened; and also knowing they had no positive proof of any negligence or treachery in the soldiers, they resolved to commence no prosecution against them, and to pass it over without any complaint: but, apprehending that the most effectual method they could take would be to endeavour to pervert their evidence, *they gave* [*a*] *large* [*sum of*] *money to the soldiers*,[b] *Saying*, Since this strange thing has happened, whether there really was any sorcery in it, or whether it was merely your dream,[c] it must for the public safety be concealed, or the whole nation will be deluded and undone: we must therefore insist upon it, that neither you nor your companions say any thing of what you imagine you saw; but if any should question you about it, and pretend that this Jesus is risen, *say ye* only in the general, We were weary with so long a watch, and dropped asleep; and we conclude *that his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept*.[d] *And* you have no need to be afraid of being punished for your negligence; for *if this should* come to *be heard by the governor*, and he should blame you for sleeping on your guard, *we will persuade him* to make no farther inquiry about it, *and* by our interest with him will *make you* easy and *secure*. MATT. XXVIII 12

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

And they took the money that was offered them, *and did as they were taught*; and, according to their instructions, they concealed what they had seen, and pretended that some of the disciples must have taken the advantage of their weariness and neglect, and so have carried off the body while they were fallen asleep. *And* such are the prejudices of that unhappy people, that *this story*, wild and senseless as it was, *is commonly reported among the Jews even to this day*:[e] and they still chuse, in opposition to the most certain evidence, to believe this extravagant suggestion, rather than yield to the truth of Christ's resurrection, though solemnly attested to them by many who saw and conversed familiarly with him after he was risen from the dead; of which number "Peter was one, who was "early distinguished by the favour of seeing him, and to whom indeed he appeared first of "all the apostles."[f] (See 1 Cor. xv. 5.)

Mark xvi. 12. After that,

Now this account that Jesus was risen, was brought to the disciples by the women soon after his resurrection on the first day of the week; *and after this*, on the same day, *he* MARK XVI. 12

a These ignorant and stupid heathens became in effect the first preachers, &c.] Such news, coming from such persons, must undoubtedly throw the priests into inexpressible confusion; but it is remarkable, that neither the soldiers nor the priests were converted, by what the one saw, or the other heard. Perhaps the soldiers might think that Jesus was, like some of their fabulous heroes, the son of some deity, who brought him to life again; but, instead of imagining themselves concerned in the purposes of his resurrection, they might perhaps abuse their knowledge of it to confirm their belief of some superstitious tales of their own priests, which bore some little resemblance to it; as those of Alcestes, Hippolytus, Hercules, and many others did. See Valer. Max. *lib.* i. *cap.* viii. § 12; and Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* vii. *cap.* 52.

b *They gave a large sum of money to the soldiers.*] Mr. Ditton very well observes, (in his unanswerable *Demonstration of Christ's Resurrection*, p. 296.) that had they not been afraid to put them to death, as they were Romans, it is very probable that Caiaphas's maxim, (John xi. 50.) That *it was better one man should die than all the people perish*, would have cost some of them their lives: at least the commanding officer, had he been fully in their power, would have been in imminent danger. Could they have proved any neglect, no doubt these soldiers would have been prosecuted to the utmost: (as Peter's guards were afterwards, Acts xii. 19.) But as they were destitute of all proof, it was prudence not to prosecute them at all; for, had Pilate acquitted them, it would have been in effect a public declaration that he was convinced Jesus was indeed risen.

c Whether there really was any sorcery in it, &c.] They must, to be sure, be puzzled to account for this strange event; and, laying it down as a first principle, "that Jesus must be an impostor," they would, of course, incline to impute his resurrection, as they had ascribed his miracles, to some diabolical operation. It is however probable, that such artful men might speak of it in such loose terms as the paraphrase represents, though they could not seriously endeavour to persuade the guards they were in a dream.

d *And stole him away while we slept.*] It was ridiculous to pretend to say with any certainty what passed *while they were asleep*; so that this was in effect only hiring them to say that they knew nothing of the matter, and did not observe any thing more than ordinary had passed that night. How absurd this pretence was, a thousand circumstances concur to show; as most writers in defence of christianity have demonstrated, and perhaps none, in few words, better than Bishop Burnet, *On the Articles*, p. 64.

e *Reported among the Jews even to this day.*] This seems to intimate that Matthew wrote his gospel several years after our Lord's resurrection. As to the industry of the Jews in propagating this report, it is very observable that Justin Martyr (*Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 368. Edit. Thirlb.) expressly asserts, "that the Jews sent chosen "men of considerable rank over all the world, not only in the general to represent christianity as an impious sect, but to assert "that the body of Jesus was stolen out of his tomb by night, and "that the persons who thus fraudulently conveyed him away, took "occasion from thence to report that he rose from the dead, and "ascended into heaven." And this message is spoken of as having been sent before the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare note a, on Acts xxviii. 22. § 60.

f Peter was one,——to whom he appeared first of all the apostles.] Though the Evangelists have not recorded the particular circumstances of our Lord's appearance to Peter, yet it is evident that he appeared first to Peter before he was seen by the rest of the apostles. (Compare 1 Cor. xv. 5; and Luke xxiv. 34.) Dr. Lightfoot therefore supposes that Peter was one of the two disciples to whom Christ appeared as they were going to Emmaus; and imagines he was so earnestly desirous to obtain a sight of Christ, that upon hearing from the women (Matt. xxviii. 7, 8.) that he would *go before them into Galilee, where they should see him*, he presently set out with Cleopas for Galilee; but having seen him in their way to Emmaus, they hastened back to Jerusalem to acquaint the disciples with it; upon which the rest of the eleven, as they knew of Peter's journey, when they saw him return so suddenly and unexpectedly, cried out, *Certainly the Lord has appeared to Simon, else he would never have come back so soon.* (See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* on Mark xvi. 13; and Luke xxiv. 34.) But, had Peter been one of these two disciples, it is no way probable that, in the large account which Luke has given of this matter, (chap. xxiv. 13. *et seq.*) his name would not have been mentioned as well as that of Cleopas; or that a person of his forwardness would have continued silent, and have left Cleopas to carry on the conversation as the chief speaker: nor does it suit with the circumstances of the story, that after Peter's going to the sepulchre had been related just before, it should be only spoken of in this conversation (verse 24.) as what was done, not by one of themselves, but by certain of them that were with them; or that it should be said, when they returned to Jerusalem, (verse 33.) that they found the eleven gathered together, if one of those that returned belonged to that number, and was one of these eleven. (Compare note b, on Luke xxiv. 31. § 198.

SECT. 196. MARK XVI. 13

appeared to two of them, though *in another form*, or in a different habit from what he ordinarily wore,[g] *as they were walking* on the way, *and going into the country* to Emmaus, a neighbouring village.[h] *And they went* back directly, *and told it to the rest* of their companions; *yet they did not* all immediately *believe them*, till at length he appeared to all his apostles together once and again, and gave them such convincing evidence as they could not withstand. But these facts are of so great importance, that we shall give a particular narration of each, and first of that which happened on the way to Emmaus, in the next section.

he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY there is nothing in the whole sacred story which does in a more affecting manner illustrate the deplorable hardness of the human heart in this degenerate state, than the portion of it which is now before us. What but the testimony of an apostle could have been sufficient to persuade us, that men who had been but a few hours before the witnesses of such an awful scene, who had beheld the angel descending, had felt the earth trembling, had seen the sepulchre bursting open by a divine power, and had fallen down in helpless astonishment and confusion, perhaps expecting every moment to be themselves destroyed, should, that very day, yea that very morning, suffer themselves to be hired by a sum of money to do their utmost to asperse the character of Christ, and to invalidate the evidence of his resurrection, of which they were in effect eye-witnesses? MATT. XXVIII. 11—15

12 Nay, how astonishing is it that the chief priests themselves, the public ministers of the Lord of hosts, could act such a part as this! They hear this full evidence that he, that Jesus whom they had murdered, was risen from the dead; and they well knew and remembered that he had himself put the proof of his mission on this very fact; a fact to which the prodigies at his death, which they themselves had seen and felt, added an inexpressible weight of probability. Who would not have expected that they should have been alarmed, convinced, and humbled? that they should have turned the remaining days of the passover into a public fast, and have solicitously sought out him who was so powerfully declared to be the Son of God, to cast themselves at his feet, and entreat his pardon and grace? But instead of this, with invincible and growing malice they set themselves to oppose him, and bribe the 13 soldiers to testify a lie, the most to his dishonour of any that hell could invent. And surely, had not Christ been kept out of their sight and power, they would, notwithstanding all this, have endeavoured to bring him down to the tomb again, on the very same principles on which they would have slain Lazarus after his resurrection. (John xii. 10.) So true does it appear, in this renewed and unequalled instance, that *if men hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* (Luke xvi. 31.)

No question but these very men, when pressed with the evidences of Christ's resurrection, answered, as succeeding infidels have presumptuously done, "that he should have *appeared to them*, if he expected they should believe "*he was risen*." But what assurance can we have, that the same prejudices which overbore the testimony of the soldiers, might not also have resisted even the appearance of Christ himself? Or rather, that the obstinacy which led them to overbear conscience in one instance, might not have done it in the other? Justly therefore did God deny what wantonness, and not reason, might lead them to demand: justly did he give them up to dishonour their own 15 understandings, as well as their moral character, by this mean and ridiculous tale, which brought men to testify what was done while they were asleep.

The most that common sense could make of their report, had they deserved the character of honest men, would have been, that they knew nothing of the matter. And we have a thousand times more reason to admire the condescension of God in sending his apostles to these wicked rulers, with such additional proofs and messages, than to censure his providence in preventing Christ's public appearance. May he deliver us from the treachery and corruption of our own hearts! May he give us a holy tenderness and integrity of soul, that we may see truth whereso-ever it is, and may follow it whithersoever it leads us; lest God should chuse our delusions, and give us up, in his righteous judgment, to believe a lie, and to think ourselves wise in that credulous infidelity which is destroying its ten thousands amongst us.

SECTION CXCVII.

Christ appears to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and having opened the scriptures to them, makes himself known in breaking of bread. Luke xxiv. 13—33.

LUKE xxiv. 13.

SECT. 197. LUKE XXIV. 13 14 15

WE are now to give some farther account of that fact which was hinted at in the close of the preceding section, of our Lord's appearing to two of his disciples on a journey: *and* the case was this: *Behold*, (for it is a very observable story,) *two of them were travelling that very day* on which Jesus rose from the dead, *to a village called Emmaus, which was about sixty furlongs*, or somewhat more than seven miles, *from Jerusalem*. *And* as they walked along, *they discoursed together of all these* wonderful and important *things which had* lately *happened*, and which could not but lie with great weight on their spirits. *And it came to pass, that as they talked* about the sufferings and death of their beloved

LUKE xxiv. 13.

AND behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed

g *He appeared to two of them*, &c.] The only reason which Masius has for suspecting (*Supplem. Critic.* Vol. II. p. 1788.) that this appearance was different from that which Luke describes as made to the two disciples that were on their journey to Emmaus, (chap. xxiv. 13. *et seq.*) is this: The companions of these two disciples are represented here by Mark as not believing the resurrection of Christ when attested by them; whereas when the two disciples from Emmaus came to make this report, the rest, before they could tell their story, saluted them with that joyful declaration, *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.* (Luke xxiv. 34.) But I apprehend these seemingly different accounts may be reconciled by observing, that various persons in the same company were variously impressed: and that some of those to whom the travellers from Emmaus came, had, even after their story was told, some remaining doubts, appears from Luke himself. See Luke xxiv. 37, 41. § 198; and note a, on Matt. xxviii. 17. § 202.

h *Into the country* to Emmaus, &c.] Emmaus was a village about sixty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, as we are told by Luke; (chap. xxiv. 13.) and Josephus gives the same account of its situation, *Bell. Jud. lib.* 7. *cap.* 6. [al. 26.] § 6. And therefore, though they have been frequently confounded, this must have been a different place from that which was afterwards called Nicopolis, which lay near the lake of Gennesareth, at a much greater distance from Jerusalem. See Reland, *Palestine, lib.* ii. *cap.* vi. p. 427. *et seq.*

together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Lord, and the report which had been spread that morning of his resurrection, *and argued* the point *together* with visible marks of the greatest concern,[a] *Jesus also himself drew near*, as one come from Jerusalem who was going the same way, *and travelled on with them.*

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

But, that they might not presently discover who he was, and be prevented by this means from expressing their own thoughts with freedom, he appeared to them in something of a different form and habit from what he usually wore; (compare Mark xvi. 12. p. 407.) and besides what there might be of an uncommon vigour and majesty in his countenance, *their eyes were* so affected and *restrained* by a secret but powerful influence on them, *that* they did not look upon him with that attention and recollection which might have been expected; so that, on the whole, though they were some considerable time in his company, yet *they did not know him.*[b] 16

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And he joined himself to them as it were by accident, and, after the usual salutation, *said to them*, May I enquire *what are these matters which you are conferring upon between yourselves as you walk*, and about which you seem to be so much concerned? for I perceive you to be very earnest in discourse, *and* see that you *appear with a sorrowful countenance.* 17

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And one [*of the two,*] *whose name was Cleopas,*[c] *answered and said to him*, You seem to be come from Jerusalem; and though you may perhaps be no more than a stranger there, yet is it possible that you should be at any loss to know what is the subject of our conversation, and what it is that gives us such concern? *Are you the only person that sojourns in Jerusalem, and is unacquainted with the* extraordinary *things*[d] *which have been done there in* so public a manner within *these* few *days*, that they engross the conversation of the whole city? 18

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people:

And he said to them, What are those *things* that you refer to? *And they said to him, Those that relate to Jesus*, who was called *the Nazarene: a man who was a prophet* of the most illustrious character, and greatly *powerful* both *in actions and in words*; for he wrought the most astonishing miracles, and taught the most instructive and excellent doctrine, which raised him to the highest honour *before God and all the people* of Israel, among whom he publicly appeared for several months and years. 19

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

And have you not then heard *how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up* to the Roman governor, and compelled him by their importunity *to* pass *a sentence of death* upon him, *and* so *crucified him* between two robbers? 20

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

And this must needs be an unspeakable affliction to us, who are two of his disciples: for we not only thought him a Messenger from God, as the old prophets were, *but we* verily *hoped that he had been* the Messiah himself, even *the* very *person who should have delivered Israel* from the power of their enemies, and have established the long-expected kingdom of God among us: but now we are ready to give up all our hopes; for we have seen him on a cross instead of a throne: *and besides all these* melancholy [*occurrences,*] though he had given us intimations of his rising again on the third day, yet *this is now the third day since these things were done*, or since he was condemned and crucified, and we have not yet received any convincing evidence of his being risen from the dead. 21

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre:

It is true *indeed, some women* among us, *of our society, have greatly surprised us* with an account they brought this morning; *who* tell us they *were* very *early at the sepulchre* in which he was laid, with an intent to embalm him; 22

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

And, not *having found his body* there, they *came* away in haste to acquaint us with it; *and* besides this, they *say that they saw also a vision* or apparition *of angels,*[e] *who affirmed him to be alive* again, with some other strange and extraordinary circumstances. Nay, 23

a *Argued* the point *together.*] The word συζητειν (as Mr. West observes) signifies to *discuss, examine*, or *inquire together*; and it appears from the connexion, that as they were discoursing on the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Jesus, the scope of their inquiry was, how to reconcile these events with what had been foretold concerning the Messiah, which, by the message that the women had but just before brought from the angels, they were particularly called to remember. (Compare Luke xxiv. 6, 7. p. 405; and xviii. 31—33. p. 280.) Accordingly, when Jesus had inquired, ver. 17. *What arguments are these that ye are debating one with another?* (for so Mr. West would render it,) this is the point he took occasion to illustrate and explain, (ver. 26, 27.) by showing them it was necessary, in accomplishment of what was foretold, that the Messiah should suffer these things, and so should enter into his glory: and with this view *he expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.* (See West's *Observ.* p. 69—73.)

b *They did not know him.*] A different habit, and their having no expectation of seeing him, might in part prevent their knowing him: yet as it is said, *their eyes were restrained from knowing him*, I am ready to think there was something more than this, even some particular agency of God to divert their eyes from looking stedfastly upon him, or so to affect their memories as to render them incapable of recollecting who he was. Compare Gen. xxi. 19; Numb. xxii. 31; and 2 Kings vi. 17, 18.

c *One of the two, whose name was Cleopas.*] It has already been observed, that Cleopas was the same with Alpheus, the father of James the less and Judas, who were two of the apostles. (Luke vi. 15, 16.) See note e, on John xiv. 22. p. 350. and note b, on John xix. 25. p. 391. Some suppose that the other was Luke, but Dr. Lightfoot endeavours to prove it was Peter: (See note f, on Matt. xxviii. 15. p. 407.) It seems more probable that he was not one of the apostles, but might possibly be one of the number of the seventy whose name is uncertain.

d *Are you the only person that sojourns in Jerusalem, and is unacquainted, &c.*] This is the emphatical import of the original, συ μονος παροικεις—και ουκ εγνως, &c.

e *And say that they also saw a vision of angels.*] According to the order in which the story is digested in the preceding section, the women did not come to the disciples with the report of what they had seen between the appearance of the angels and that of Christ to them; but had first seen both, and therefore must undoubtedly have mentioned both: it may however be concluded, that (as Luke says, on their relating what they had seen, ver. 11. *their words seemed to them as an idle tale, and they believed them not*,) these travellers might apprehend that what the women took for an appearance of Christ, was at most but a vision of angels; (as some imagined with respect to Peter, Acts xii. 15.) and what is added in the next verse, with relation to the men there spoken of, [*but him they did not see,*] may perhaps imply that the women pretended also to have seen Jesus himself.—But I am now inclined to acquiesce in Mr. West's solution of this difficulty, who supposes it was Joanna, and the other women with her, who only saw the angels and did not see Jesus, that came with this report to the disciples; who, though the appearance of the angels to them at the sepulchre was after the two Marys and Salome were gone from thence, yet brought the news of it to the disciples, before Mary Magdalene and those to whom Jesus appeared, arrived with the account that they had seen the Lord. For, notwithstanding it is certain that Mary Magdalene, on Christ's appearing to her, went and acquainted the disciples with it, (Mark xvi. 10; and John xx. 18.) yet, as they might be now assembled together by Peter and John at a different place from that where she met with Peter before, it is no way improbable, that by Mary's

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and some men, too, *who were with us*, of our own company, *went* themselves *to the sepulchre, and found* [*it*] to be *even so as the women had said*, that is, that the body was gone, and saw the funeral linen laid in order there; *but him they did not see:* though we are informed that, since we left the company, some women have come to them, who affirm that he has actually appeared to them himself, and declared that he was risen, and would show himself to his disciples: but still we have received no certain proof of it ourselves, so that as yet we know not what to think of it, and cannot but be under great concern about it.

24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said; but him they saw not.

25 *And* upon this our Lord, without discovering who *he* was, *said to them* with some warmth, *O* ye *thoughtless* [*creatures,*] *and slow of heart to believe all* the things *that the prophets have* so frequently and clearly *spoken;*[f] which, if you had attentively considered and believed them, would have prevented this surprise! *Was it not necessary*, in order to accomplish those sacred oracles, "which testify before-hand the sufferings of Christ, "and the glory that should follow," (1 Pet. i. 11.) *that the Messiah should suffer* all *these things* at which you are so much stumbled, *and* [*so,*] by his rising from the dead, *should enter into his glory?*

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 *And* hereupon, *beginning from* the writings of *Moses, and* supporting his discourse with the authority of *all the prophets,*[g] *he interpreted to them*, in a much clearer light than they had ever seen them in before, *the* principal *things* which either had been typified or were foretold *concerning him in all the scriptures.*

27 And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

28 *And* by this time *they drew near to the village whither they were travelling; and* when they came to the house where they designed to tarry, Jesus, like one that was a stranger, began to take his leave; and making no offer to turn in with them, *he seemed as if he were going farther*, intending indeed to do it, if he were not prevented by their request.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone farther.

29 *But they* even *compelled him* by their friendly importunity to go in with them,[h] *saying*, Let us prevail upon you to *continue* this night *with us*, where we assure you of a most hearty welcome: and as indeed we are so greatly delighted and edified with your company, that we cannot part with you, it may also be inconvenient for you to travel much farther; *for it is* now *towards evening, and the day declines* apace. *And he* complied with their request, and *went in to continue with them.*

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 *And it came to pass, as he sat down to table with them, he took* a cake of *bread;* and though he only appeared as a guest there, he assumed the office of the head of the family, *and* looking up to heaven *blessed* or gave thanks over it, *and* then *brake* it *and gave* [*it*] *to them*, just in the manner he had formerly been used to.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

31 *And* they were so surprised at this circumstance, that they now looked upon him more intently than they had done before; and *their eyes were* then *opened,*[i] *and*, to their unutterable astonishment and joy, *they knew him*, and plainly saw that it was Jesus their dear Master! *and* as they were preparing to acknowledge him as such, *he* suddenly became invisible, and *withdrew himself from before them* in a moment.[k]

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight.

32 *And they said one to another*, How strange is it that we should discover him no sooner! Sure we might easily have known him even by that inimitable spirit and energy in his discourses so peculiar to himself; for, *did not our* very *hearts* glow and *burn within us*[l] *while he was talking to us by the way, and while he was opening the scriptures to us?*

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

going to Peter's lodgings, who was now gone to meet the disciples elsewhere, or by some other accident unknown to us, Joanna and those with her might get thither first with the report of their having seen a vision of angels, who had declared that Jesus was alive. Immediately on hearing which, some men (of whom it is probable Peter might be the first) went away to the sepulchre, and found things in the same order as the women said, but had no sight of Jesus. On whose return, these two disciples that were going to Emmaus left the company; and though, as they were setting out, some might inform them that a report was brought by Mary Magdalene and some other women that they had seen the Lord, they might be as backward to believe it, and as ready to impute it to the power of imagination, as those in whose presence the report was made.—I am obliged to Mr. West for this view of the matter, which represents it in a clearer light than any other scheme proposed before. (See West's *Observ.* p. 106, 107.)

f *O thoughtless creatures, &c.*] The word ανοητοι is by no means of so bad a sound as that of *fools*, by which we translate it: (see note m, on Matt. v. 22. p. 76.) Yet, as Dr. Bullock justly observes, (in his *Vindication of Christ's Resurrection*, p. 174.) if the prophecies of the Old Testament had been (as Mr. Collins pretends) only allegorical, there could not have been room for such a heavy charge of stupidity against these disciples for not understanding them. It is, by the way, very weak in Mr. Collins, and some other deists, to urge the *slowness of Christ's friends to believe his resurrection*, as an argument that the proofs of it were defective On the contrary, as Bishop Chandler well replies, (in his *Vindication of Christianity*, p. 45, 46.) their believing afterwards carries the greater weight; for it removes all suspicion of a collusion between Christ and them in his lifetime; and also implies an impartial examination of the fact, and the strength of those proofs that vanquished this incredulity.

g *Beginning from Moses, and all the prophets.*] It is no way necessary (with Mr. Mede, in his ingenious discourse on these words) to suppose that Christ's sufferings, resurrection, and exaltation, are each of them distinctly foretold in each of those parts of the sacred writings which are mentioned here. It is enough if Moses give some intimations concerning him, which succeeding prophets carry on: and if, when all their testimonies are taken together, all these events are expressed by some one or other of them. It was very unbecoming the character of an honest writer, to represent our Lord as here attempting to prove his resurrection from scripture; which Mr. Collins pretends to have been the case. The precise point in view plainly was, to convince them that there was no reason to be scandalized at the death of one whom they took to be the Messiah; nor in general to look on the report of his resurrection as a monstrous and incredible tale. But that he was actually risen, was to be proved another way, which accordingly our Lord immediately used, by discovering himself to them.

h *They compelled him, &c.*] It might be rendered, *they pressed him:* (see note g, on Luke xiv. 23. p. 238, 239.) Every body easily sees how little room there was for any proper compulsion in such a case as this. Probably one of them dwelt at Emmaus, or they were going to an inn, or to some friend's house, where they could use the freedom to introduce this unknown stranger, for whom they had so high a veneration.

i *Their eyes were opened.*] I see no reason to conclude (with Cradock and Brennius) that his undertaking this office of breaking bread, or (with others) that some peculiar action or gesture in performing it, was the thing that made the discovery. (See note b, on ver. 16.) The Evangelist strongly intimates that the miraculous influence, which before prevented their knowing him, was removed, though the other circumstances mentioned might awaken them to more attentive observation.

k Became invisible, and *withdrew himself from before them.*] Erasmus justly observes, that the word *vanished* leads the mind to think of the person vanishing as a mere spectre; he would therefore render αφαντος εγενετο as we have done. Beza also observes, that απ' αυτων is more expressive than αυτοις, and signifies our Lord's being *separated from them* by a swift and sudden motion.

l *Did not our hearts burn within us?*] This reading is far more expressive, as well as far more authentic, than that of some copies, which, instead of καιομενη here, have κεκαλυμμενη, *Was not our heart veiled? &c.*—Compare Psal. xxxix. 3; and Jer. xx. 9.

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.—

And they were not able to conceal such good news, or to defer the publication of that which would give their brethren such a holy transport as they felt in their own breasts; and therefore, late as it was, *they* presently *rose up* from their unfinished meal *that very hour, and* with cheerful speed *returned to Jerusalem*, and told it to the rest of their companions; (compare Mark xvi. 13. p. 408.) among whom they had soon after the pleasure of seeing their Lord again, in the manner related in the next section. 33

SECT. 197. LUKE XXIV.

IMPROVEMENT.

How delightful the close of so melancholy a day to these pious travellers! A day surely long to be remembered by them and by us! They were on a journey; but they did not amuse themselves on it with any trifling subject of discourse. Their hearts were set upon Christ, and therefore their tongues were employed in speaking of him. And behold, Christ himself, the dear theme of their discourse, makes one among them; he enlightens their eyes and warms their hearts, and at length *makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread.* Ver. 13 14 15 30, 31

So may we often be speaking of Christ, from the fulness of our hearts, when we go out, and when we come in! So may he still, in some degree, join himself with us in spirit, guiding our souls into divine knowledge, and animating them with holy love!

They bear an honourable and a just testimony to that great Prophet whom God had raised up for them, as mighty before him both in word and deed. But they knew not how to see through so dark a cloud: their hopes were almost extinguished, and they could only say, *We trusted this had been he that should have redeemed Israel.* Pitiable weakness! Yet too just an emblem of the temper which often prevails in the pious mind, when the christian is ready to give up all, if deliverance does not proceed just in the method he expected. Yet was Christ even then delivering Israel in the most glorious and effectual manner, by those very sufferings which gave them such distress. *Verily* thou art *the God of Israel*, and *the Saviour*, when *thou art a God that hidest thyself from us.* (Isa. xlv. 15.) 19 21

In faithful friendship, and with a plainness well becoming his office, the compassionate Redeemer upbraids them with their slowness of heart to believe these things, when they had received *line upon line, precept upon precept*, concerning them. How justly do we fall under such a rebuke in many instances! Let us then humbly say, *Lord, increase our faith!* (Luke xvii. 5.) 25

We should reasonably have thought ourselves happy in an opportunity of hearing or reading this discourse of Jesus, in which he threw such lustre on the prophecies of the Old Testament, and proved that, according to the tenor of them, it was necessary that the Messiah should thus suffer, and so enter into his glory. As Providence has denied us this satisfaction, let us, however, improve this general and very important hint, that Moses and all the prophets speak of these things. Let us delight to trace the heavenly beam from its earliest dawn, and to observe how it grew *brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.* May the blessed Spirit, by whom those mysterious predictions were inspired, so direct our inquiries, that every veil may be taken off from our eyes, that we may see Jesus in the Old Testament as well as in the New; and see him in both with that lively fervour of holy affection which may cause our hearts to burn within us! And oh that we may especially find that, when we surround his table, he *makes himself known to us in the breaking of bread*, in such a manner as to *fill* our souls *with all joy* as well as *peace in believing!* (Rom. xv. 13.) 26, 27 30, 31 30, 31

SECTION CXCVIII.

The two disciples return to make their report to the apostles; and while they are together, Jesus appears to them the evening after his resurrection. Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 33—43. John xx. 19—23.

LUKE xxiv. 33.

AND [they] found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

LUKE xxiv. 33.

IT was observed before, concerning Cleopas and the other disciple to whom Jesus discovered himself at Emmaus, that they immediately arose and returned to Jerusalem, to communicate the joyful news to their brethren there. *And* now when they came thither, *they found the eleven* apostles *assembled*,[a] *and others with them*, who, before these two could begin their story, were eager on their part to inform the travellers of the satisfaction they had received since they went out: So that, as soon as they appeared, they heard several of the company *saying*, as with one voice, O brethren, here are good tidings, which will make your hearts leap within you! for *the Lord is risen indeed, and has* himself *appeared to Simon* Peter, who is here present to testify the truth of it.[b] SECT. 198. LUKE XXIV. 34

34 Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

And the two travellers declared how easily *they* could believe it, and *recounted the things* [*which had happened,*] to them *in the way* to Emmaus; *and how*, after many wise and affectionate discourses, *he was* at last *known by them in the breaking of bread*, as they were sitting down to supper. But notwithstanding these repeated testimonies of the resurrection of Christ, yet there were some in the company whose prejudices were so strong, and their faith so weak, that they did not believe either Peter or them,[c] (compare 35

a *They found the eleven* apostles *assembled.*] As Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5.) calls the company of the apostles *the twelve*, though Judas, the twelfth person, was dead; so Luke here calls them *the eleven*, though Thomas, the eleventh person, was absent, as evidently appears from John xx. 24. in the next section.

b *And has appeared to Simon* Peter.] None of the Evangelists mention any thing of the circumstances of this appearance to Peter; but it has been observed before, (note f, § 196. p. 407.) that the apostle Paul expressly refers to it, 1 Cor. xv. 5.—The same apostle likewise mentions an appearance of Christ to James; (*ibid.* ver. 7. Yet, as nothing is said of his having seen him that day, it much diminishes the credit of the story which Jerome gives us from the gospel of the Nazarenes, that James had vowed to eat nothing after the paschal supper, till Jesus arose; on which account our Lord appeared first to him. None of the apostles seem to have had such a firm expectation of Christ's resurrection as must have been the foundation of such a vow; and the order in which Paul mentions his appearance to James, does very ill suit with this story.—Probably Peter was the first man, as Mary Magdalene was the first woman, that was favoured with the view of our risen Saviour.

c Some—did not believe, &c.] Mark expresses it in a general way, (chap. xvi. 13.) that *they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them:* but we are undoubtedly to understand these words with such a limitation as in the paraphrase. See note g, on Mark xvi. 12. p. 408; and note a, on Matt. xxviii. 17. § 202.

SECT. 198. Mark xvi. 13. p. 408.) though most of them were convinced (as they had just declared) that the Lord was risen indeed.

MARK XVI. 14 *And* quickly *afterwards, as they were speaking of these things* among themselves *while they were sitting at supper,* [*Jesus*] himself *appeared to the eleven,* who were then all together except one of them. And this appearance was attended with some remarkable circumstances, which shall be now related.

Mark xvi. 14. [And] afterwards, [as they thus spake,] he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat. [Luke xxiv. 36.]

JOHN XX. 19 It was *then on the evening of the same day* on which he rose from the dead, [*which was,*] as we have before observed, *the first* [*day*] *of the week, even when the doors* of the room *where the disciples were gathered together, were shut,* and fastened on the inside, *for fear of the Jews;* as they did not know but some officers of the high-priest might come to apprehend them on the scandalous pretence that they had stolen away the body, which was now publicly laid to their charge: it was, I say, at this time and place, that *Jesus himself* on a sudden *came* in, opening the locks or bolts by a miraculous power;[d] *and* he *stood in the midst of them* in his usual form, *and said to them,* with a mild voice and a gracious aspect, All *peace* and happiness *be unto you!* thereby graciously intimating that he forgave their former cowardice, and would still continue to treat them as his friends, though they knew in their own consciences they had of late behaved themselves in a manner unworthy of that character and relation.

John xx. 19. Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus [himself,] and stood in the midst [of them,] and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. [Luke xxiv. 36.]

LUKE XXIV. 37 *But they were* greatly *amazed and terrified* at this sudden, unexpected appearance; *and* as they knew the doors of the room were shut, and in the present hurry of their thoughts did not immediately reflect upon the proofs he had so often given of his divine power, or on the evidences they had but just before received of his resurrection, some of them *suspected that* what *they saw* was only *a spirit,* or a mere airy phantom, and not a real body.

Luke xxiv. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 *And he said to them, Why are you* thus perplexed and *troubled* at the sight of me, *and why do* these doubtful and unreasonable *suspicions arise in your hearts,* as if it only 39 were the appearance of a spirit that you have here before you? *Behold my hands and my feet,* which for your satisfaction still retain the scars of those wounds which I received on the cross, to convince you *that it is I myself,* and no other: *handle me,* if you please, *and see* whether this be not really a solid and substantial body: *for* you know that *a* mere *spirit* or phantom *hath not flesh and bones as you see me have,* but is only an empty form presenting itself to the eye, yet eluding the grasp of any hand.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 *And saying this, he shewed them his hands and his feet, and* even the mark which the spear had left in *his side,* which appeared like a large wound, newly, though perfectly healed:[e] and several of them, and among the rest John the beloved apostle, who records this circumstance, had the curiosity particularly to examine it. (Compare 1 John i. 1.)

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet, [and his side.] [John xx. 20.]

JOHN XX. 20 And *the disciples therefore were* exceeding *glad,* as it might reasonably be expected they should be, *when they* thus *saw the Lord,* and learnt by such infallible tokens that he was really alive.

John xx. 20. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

LUKE XXIV. 41 *And* for their further satisfaction, *when* [*some of them*] were so transported that they *as yet believed not* their own eyes *for joy, and were* so *astonished* that they hardly knew where they were, *he said to them, Have you any food here* left, that I may eat 42 with you? *And they gave him* such as they had, even *part of a broiled fish, and of* 43 *an honey-comb,* on which they had been supping just before. *And taking* [*it,*] *he ate before them,* that thus they might be fully satisfied that he was actually alive, and had a true and real body. (Compare Acts x. 41.)

Luke xxiv. 41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took *it,* and did eat before them.

MARK XVI. 14 *And* when *he* had for a while gently *upbraided* and reproved *them for their unbelief, and* for *the hardness of their hearts, that they had not believed* the repeated testimony of *those who had* already *seen him since he was risen* from the dead, and that, even after his own appearance to them, they should be capable of entertaining any further doubts:

Mark xvi. 14. And [he] upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

JOHN XX. 21 *Then,* that they might be satisfied that he had graciously forgiven them, *Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you:* may all prosperity and happiness attend you! *As* [*my*] *Father sent me,* and gave me authority to act in his name, *so also I send you* to act as my apostles, under the important character of my ambassadors to the children of men.

John xx. 21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 *And saying this, he* in a solemn manner *breathed upon* [*them,*] *and said to them* as one that had divine authority, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit,* and take this as an earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence: for thus will I shortly breathe out the miraculous influences of my Spirit upon you, in a greater abundance than you have 23 ever yet received them, to qualify and furnish you for this important office; In consequence of which, *whose soever sins you* shall *remit,* or shall declare to be forgiven, *they are remitted* and forgiven *to them;* [*and*] *whose soever* [*sins*] *you* shall *retain,* or shall pronounce

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them,* and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

d *Jesus himself came* in, opening the locks or bolts by a miraculous power.] Dr. Wallis (*On the Sabbath,* p. 25.) thinks the expression of *the doors being shut,* intends no more than that what follows happened *in the evening, when the doors are used to be shut up.* But as the doors are said to have been shut for fear of the Jews, it strongly implies they were fastened within; and all that was herein miraculous, was the causing them, as of themselves, to fly open, and shut again very suddenly.—Elsner has shewn, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 351.) that this is sometimes spoken of by some of the pagan writers, especially those who may be suspected of copying from the Evangelists, as the effect of a supernatural power attending the appearance of their deities, or other extraordinary persons, among them.—The argument which the Papists bring from hence, to prove that two bodies may be in the same place at the same time, and consequently one in different places, is so evidently built upon an absurd interpretation of the clause under consideration, as not to deserve any farther notice.

e *He shewed them his hands and his feet, &c.*] Probably these marks were retained in his body when raised from the dead, on purpose to give the greater satisfaction to the disciples of the truth of his resurrection; though indeed, without that additional circumstance, the evidence might have been very satisfactory.

to be unpardoned, *they are* assuredly *retained*, and their guilt lies upon them: for you shall have a power, not only of declaring what is lawful or unlawful under the gospel-dispensation, but also of sending or removing miraculous punishments, and of discerning the spirits of men in such perfection as to be able with certainty to declare to particular persons in question, whether they be, or be not, in a state of pardon and acceptance with God. (See note h, on Matt. xvi. 19. p. 180.) SECT. 198. JOHN XX. 23.

And after this discourse with his disciples at his first appearance to them, Jesus departed from them for that time, and left them to spend the rest of the evening in those delightful exercises of devotion which this great occasion had so natural a tendency to inspire.

IMPROVEMENT.

With pleasure let us echo back the words of the apostles, and join in that glad anthem which so well suits a resurrection-day, *The Lord is risen*, he is risen *indeed*. We owe our daily praises to God for the abundant demonstration he has given us of so important a fact, for every appearance of Christ to his disciples, and for all the infallible tokens by which *he showed himself* to be *alive after his passion*. (Acts i. 3.) LUKE XXIV. 34

He came with peace and blessings in his mouth; he came to disperse their fears, and to assure them of his forgiving love. How strong were those prejudices which so hardly yielded to such convincing proofs! And how rich was that grace which condescended to overcome them. 36—41

Christ breathed on the apostles, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. May he also breathe on our souls, and fill us with that glorious and divine gift, which, if it qualified the apostles for their extraordinary office, may much more furnish us for the common duties of life! May we try our state by the characters which they have laid down in their inspired writings; in which sense, among others, we may assure ourselves, that if they have declared our sins to be remitted, they are remitted: and if indeed they are so, we need not be much concerned by whom they are retained. Vain and arrogant men may claim a despotic power which God never gave, and which these words are far from implying. But whatsoever be the sentence they may pass, *they whom God blesseth are blessed indeed.* (1 Chron. xvii. 27.) May we always esteem it *a very small thing* to be *judged of man's judgment*, (1 Cor. iv. 3.) pitying rather than resenting the rashness of those, who claim any such discretionary sacerdotal power as can give the real penitent any alarm, or the impenitent any encouragement to continue in sin! JOHN XX. 22 23

Mark 6. 18.

SECTION CXCIX.

Christ appears to the eleven a second time, a week after the former; particularly offering to Thomas, who had before been absent, the most sensible proofs of his resurrection. John xx. 24—29.

JOHN XX. 24.

BUT Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

JOHN XX. 24.

WE mentioned in the last section Christ's appearing to his disciples on the evening of that day on which he arose: *but* it is farther to be observed, that *Thomas, one of the twelve*, who was also *called Didymus*, or the twin-brother, *was not with them* at that time *when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore*, as soon as they met with him, *told him*, in a transport of joy, *We have seen the Lord* with our own eyes, and consequently can have no further doubt of the truth of his resurrection; for he has condescended to show us the very marks of those wounds he received on the cross. *But he said to them*, This is a matter of too great importance for me to believe on any report, even on yours; and more is necessary to convince me of the truth of it, than merely a transient sight of mine own eyes; for, *unless I shall* evidently *see in his hands*, as you say you have done, *the mark of the nails, and*, more than that, *shall put my finger upon the* very individual *mark of the nails*,[a] *and put my hand upon* the very scar made by the spear in *his side*,[b] *I will not* by any means, or on any testimony whatsoever, *believe* his resurrection. SECT. 199. JOHN XX. 25

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And, as there was a great degree of faulty obstinacy in such a resolution, our Lord left him a whole week under the perplexity which it must necessarily give him: but *after eight days*, or on that day seven-night from our Lord's rising, *his disciples were again within* doors as before, *and Thomas* was *with them*; [*and*] *Jesus came* to them again, *the doors being shut* and fastened as in the former instance; *and* suddenly throwing them open, and in a moment shutting them again, he *stood in the midst* of them, *and said*, as in his former gracious salutation, *Peace* [*be*] *unto you!* 26

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

And *then*, to let them see that he was not unacquainted with what had lately passed among them in his absence, as well as to convince the over-scrupulous disciple, *he said to Thomas, Reach* forth *thy finger hither, and behold* and examine *my hands; and reach thine hand* hither, *and put it on my side*;[c] *and be not incredulous* any longer, *but believe* on this evidence at least, which addresses itself at once to so many of thy senses. 27

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas, overwhelmed at once with such abundant demonstration and such humble condescension, fell under the conviction in a moment; and, instead of entering on any 28

28 And Thomas answered

a *And shall put my finger upon the mark of the nails.*] I am sensible it might seem more elegant, with the Prussian translators, to wave the repetition, and to render it, *and put my finger into it*: but, on farther reflection, there seems to be a beauty in this repetition, which admirably represents the language of a positive man, declaring again and again what he insisted upon; which I have therefore endeavoured to express in the paraphrase, in terms which such persons often use.

b *And put my hand upon his side.*] So I would chuse to render it, rather than *into his side*, agreeable to Dr. Stevenson's just criticism, that εις signifies *upon*; as εις την γην (John viii. 6.) is *upon the ground*; and εις την χειρα αυτου (Luke xv. 22.) *upon his hand*. See Dr Stevenson against Woolston, *On Christ's Miracles*, p. 324.

c *Reach* forth *thy finger hither, &c.*] It is observable that Spinoza himself could find out no more plausible objection against this evidence of the resurrection of Christ, than to say that the disciples were deceived in what they imagined they saw, heard, and felt; (*Vie de Spin.* p. 32.) which, if granted, would be in effect to allow that no men could be competent judges of any fact whatsoever relating to their own sensations, and consequently would overthrow all human testimony in courts of judicature and elsewhere

SECT. 199. JOHN XX.

farther scrutiny,[d] *answered and said to him,* in the utmost transport of astonishment and joy, *My Lord and my God!* as if he should have said, I do not only now acknowledge thee to be Jesus my Lord, infallibly risen from the dead, but I confess thy divine knowledge and power, and prostrate myself before thee as the great incarnate Deity, the glorious Emmanuel.[e]

and said unto him My Lord and my God!

29 *Jesus says to him, Thomas, thou hast believed because thou hast seen me,* and hast received these sensible demonstrations of my resurrection; and it is well: but still more *happy are they who have not seen* me themselves, *and* [*yet*] *have believed* on the credible testimony of others; for they have shown a greater degree of candour and humility, which renders the faith it produces so much the more acceptable.[f]

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 25 WE most evidently see in this instance of Thomas, as well as in many circumstances of the story mentioned above, how far the apostles were from being rashly credulous in the important fact of Christ's resurrection. It is apparent they erred in the contrary extreme; yet our gracious Lord condescended to satisfy scruples which were 26 carried to an extravagance. He renewed his visit, and at the same time renewed his salutation too. *Peace be unto you,* was still his language; nor did he only speak, but act, as one who wished it, and was determined to give it.

27 What peace must it administer to the mind of this good man when his Lord said, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thine hand, and put it on my side: and be not faithless, but believing!* Evidently did he hereby show, not only that he was risen from the dead, but that he circumstantially knew those events which had passed in his bodily absence, and needed not human information. Let us then ever behave ourselves as in the presence of Christ. Let us act, and speak, and think, in such a manner as may bear his inspection; and, struck with these united demonstrations of wisdom, power, and grace, let us prostrate ourselves before him, and 28 say, *Our Lord and our God!* thus *honouring the Son as we honour the Father,* (John v. 23.) and adoring the indwelling deity through this veil of flesh in which it has been pleased to inshrine itself, and kindly to attemper, though not entirely to conceal its rays.

Though we have not those sensible manifestations which were granted to Thomas, let it suffice us that the apostles were the appointed witnesses of all these things; and *what they saw with their eyes, and their hands handled of the word of life, that have they declared unto us:* (1 John i. 1, 3.) Let us thankfully receive so convincing a testimony. Let us show an upright and candid mind in accepting such evidence as the wisdom of God has seen fit 29 to give us; remembering, that a truly rational faith is the more acceptable to God, in proportion to the difficulties which it is able to surmount; and that there are peculiar blessings in store for them *who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

SECTION CC.

Christ discovers himself to Peter and several other disciples at the sea of Tiberias, while they were fishing there. John xxi. 1—14.

JOHN xxi. 1.

SECT. 200. JOHN XXI.

SOME time *after these things,*[a] between the last interview he had with the apostles at Jerusalem, and the public appearance which he afterwards made to the whole body of his disciples, *Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias,* near that mountain in Galilee where he had appointed to meet them: (Matt xxviii. 16. sect. ccii.) *And* the manner in which *he* now *manifested* [*himself*] to them was *thus:*

JOHN XXI. 1.

AFTER these things, Jesus showed himself again to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise showed he *himself:*

2 *Simon Peter, and Thomas,* who was *called Didymus, and Nathanael,* who was an inhabitant *of Cana,* a town *in Galilee,* often mentioned in the foregoing history,[b] *and* also *the* [*two sons*] *of Zebedee,* James and John, *and two other of his disciples* with them,[c] *were* one day *together* in Galilee, whither they were returned by Christ's direction, to wait for the accomplishment of what he had promised, that they should see him on a certain mountain in those parts, and where they expected in a few days to meet with most of their

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

d Instead of entering on any further scrutiny.] It is not said that he actually *touched the wounds;* and our Lord afterwards says (ver. 29.) that his belief was built on sight; which seems to intimate that this condescension of our Lord, together with the additional evidence arising from the knowledge which he plainly had of that unreasonable demand which Thomas had made in his absence, quite overcame him: a turn of mind exceeding natural to so frank a temper as that of Thomas appears to have been.

e *My Lord and my God!*] The irrefragable argument arising from these words in proof of the deity of our blessed Lord, (which so many good writers have stated at large,) cannot be evaded by saying that these words are only an exclamation of surprise, as if he had said, *Good God, is it indeed thus!* For it is expressly declared he spoke these words to him: and, no doubt, Christ would severely have reproved him if there had not been just reason to address him thus.

f *Happy are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*] If it be queried, Why *a greater blessedness* is pronounced on those who believe on more slender evidence, it may be answered, that our Lord by no means intended to assert that every one who *believes without seeing,* is *happier* than any one *believing on sight:* for then the meanest christian now would be more happy than the greatest of the apostles; but only, that where the effects of that faith were equal, it argued greater simplicity, candour, and wisdom, to yield to reasonable evidence without seeing, than could be argued merely from having believed on sight after sufficient evidence of another kind had been proposed. It was therefore, in effect, telling Thomas, "It would have been more acceptable to him, if he had not stood "out so long:" and it was doing it in such a manner as would be most calculated for the comfort and encouragement of believers in future ages, to whom, in many of his speeches to the apostles themselves, our Lord expresses a most obliging and affectionate regard.

a Some time *after these things.*] Grotius thinks this whole chapter was written by some elders of the church of Ephesus, and added to the rest of the book by the approbation of that society, as agreeable to the relations which they had heard from the mouth of St. John; and Le Clerc follows him in this conjecture: but Dr. Mill has taken pains to invalidate it; (*Prolegom.* p. 249.) and the beginning of ver. 24. destroys the force of Grotius's argument from the latter part of it. See note f, on that verse, at the close of the next section.

b *Nathanael of Cana in Galilee.*] There is no doubt but this Nathanael is the person mentioned before, John i. 45. Dr. Lightfoot, (*Hor. Heb.* on Matt. x. 3.) Mr. Fleming, (*Christol.* Vol. II. p. 176.) and some others, take him to have been *Bartholomew the apostle:* but I think they give no convincing reason for that opinion.

c *Two other of his disciples.*] It is indeed uncertain who these two disciples were, though Dr. Lightfoot conjectures they were Andrew and Philip; (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) which is not improbable, as they were both inhabitants of Bethsaida, near the sea of Tiberias. (John i. 44.) Is is, however, a strange argument against it, to say, "that John must be one, though he is not here mentioned," when he is so well known to have been one of the sons of Zebedee, who are numbered here among those that were present.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

brethren. (Compare Matt. xxviii. ver. 7, 10. sect. cxcv. and ver. 16. sect. cclii.) And while they were thus waiting, *Simon Peter*, that their time might not lie on their hands, and that he might make some provision for his own support, and for the entertainment of his friends, *says to them, I will go a-fishing:*[d] and *they say to him, We also* will *go* along *with thee*, and give thee what assistance we can. *They went out* therefore, *and immediately took ship, and* spent not only *that* evening, but all the following *night*, in throwing their nets; but though it was the properest time for fishing, yet *they caught nothing* worth the mentioning.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

And when the morning was now come, Jesus appeared and *stood upon the shore: nevertheless the disciples*, who had no expectation of seeing him there, being at some distance from him, and it not being yet perfectly light, *knew not that it was Jesus. Then*, as they approached within call, *Jesus said to them, Have you any thing to eat, my lads?* or have you taken fish enough to furnish out a meal? *They answered him, No;* we have been toiling here all night in vain. *And he said to them*, Let me then advise you to *throw the net on the right side of the ship, and you will* undoubtedly *find* [*some.*] And willing to try at least whether this stranger conjectured right, *they threw* the net *therefore* as he had directed them; *and now they were not able to draw it* up into the ship again, *on account of the multitude of fishes* which they had inclosed in it.[e]

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Then John, *that disciple whom Jesus* peculiarly *loved*, when he saw such astonishing success after all their fruitless toil and disappointment before, *says unto Peter, It is* undoubtedly *the Lord*, who has on this occasion renewed that miracle which he wrought in thy ship some years ago, when he first called us to attend him. (See Luke v. 4—10. sect. xxxiv.) *Simon Peter therefore hearing* him say, with the appearance of such good reason, that *it was the Lord*, was so transported, that he immediately *girded on his coat, (for he was* in a manner *naked*, having nothing on but his inner garment,[f]) *and threw himself* directly *into the sea*, and swam to shore, that he might pay his earliest duty to his dear Lord, and testify his joy in the condescending visit he was making them. *And the other disciples*, making the best of their way, *came* to him as fast as they could *with the boat, drawing the net* [*full*] *of fishes* after them; *for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits*, or one hundred yards.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they came ashore, they saw a fire of burning coals laid ready there, *and fish laid upon it, and* a sufficient quantity of *bread* at hand; which Jesus had miraculously prepared, that they might see how easily he could make provision for them, even when they were destitute of the ordinary means of supply. And, that due notice also might be taken of the miraculous draught they had now made, *Jesus said to them, Bring* hither [*some*] *of the fish which you have now taken.* And *Simon Peter went aboard, and*, with the help of his brethren, *drew the net to land;* and it was *full of great fishes*, which, upon taking the number of them, they found to be no less than *an hundred and fifty-three; and though they were so many* and so great, yet *the net was not broke.*

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Then *Jesus said to them, Come* [*and*] *refresh yourselves*,[g] after the fatigue you have had for so many hours. *And none of the disciples presumed to ask him, Who art thou?* or took upon them to enquire how he came thither, or whence he procured the provision he then offered them? well *knowing that it was the Lord*, though he conversed with them in something of a distant manner; but left him to proceed in his own way, as judging it most respectful to leave it to him to direct the discourse to more intimate and particular subjects, in such a manner and by such degrees as he should think fit; which he presently after did.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus therefore came and took bread, as the master of the feast, *and* having blessed it, as he used to do, *gave* [*it*] to each of *them; and likewise* gave them some of the broiled *fish*.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise.

And *this was now the third time that Jesus showed himself to* such a number of *his disciples* at once,[h] *after he was risen from the dead;* and it was attended with some very

14 This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

d *I will go a-fishing.*] It appears from this story, that several of the apostles were now returned to Galilee, where Christ had appointed to meet them; which shows that the discourse (Luke xxiv. 49. § 202.) in which our Lord commanded them to *continue at Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost fell upon them*, must come in after this chapter, and not before it, as it is placed in many Harmonies.

e *They were not able to draw it* up into the ship again, &c.] This was not merely a demonstration of the power of our Lord, but a kind providential supply for them and their families, which might be of service to them when they waited afterwards in Jerusalem according to his order: and it was likewise a sort of emblematical representation of the great success which should attend their attempts to catch men in the net of the gospel. Compare Luke v. 9, 10. p. 68.

f In a manner *naked*, having nothing on but his inner garment.] It is of great importance, in order to vindicate several stories in scripture which the ignorance or malice of some modern writers has charged with indecency, to observe, that among the Jews, (as Grotius and many others have shown,) they were said to be *naked* who had only an under garment on. Compare 1 Sam. xix. 24; 2 Sam. vi. 20; Isa. xx. 2, 3; and Acts xix. 16.

g *Come and refresh yourselves.*] So I chuse to render the word αριστησατε, rather than *dine*; as Homer sometimes uses αριστον, to signify *a morning's meal.*

h *The third time Jesus showed himself to* such a number, &c.] Grotius explains this of the *third day* of his appearance; for he had first appeared to several on the day of his resurrection: then, after eight days, he came to his disciples, when Thomas was present, and now again he showed himself at the sea of Tiberias. And it is plainly necessary that the words should be understood with some such limitation, to make them consistent with the accounts given by the other Evangelists and St. Paul; which, when laid together, will prove that this was indeed at least the seventh appearance that Jesus had made since his resurrection. For he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, (Mark xvi. 9.) and then to the women as they returned from the sepulchre, (Matt. xxviii. 9.) after this he was seen of Peter, (1 Cor. xv. 5.) and then the same day by the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, (Luke xxiv. 13—31.) and again the same evening he appeared to the disciples when Thomas was absent; (John xx. 19.) on that day seven-night he appeared to the eleven when Thomas was with them. (John xx. 26.) and now after these things he showed himself a seventh time to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, (John xxi. 1.)—But, as John had particularly mentioned before the two appearances which Jesus made to his disciples when they were together, (John xx. 19, 26.) it seems most reasonable to conclude that he reckons this the third as referring to these.

SECT. 200. remarkable and instructive circumstances, which will be particularly mentioned in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

JOHN XXI. 1—3 CHRIST first called these disciples when they were employed in the duties of their proper profession in life, and he now manifests himself to them while they were so engaged; perhaps particularly intending thereby to encourage an honest industry, in which indeed we are far more likely to enjoy his presence, and to converse with him, than when we throw away our time in idleness and inactivity.

3—6 A while he leaves them to labour in vain, that when the plentiful draught of fishes came, it might be more remarkable. Sometimes he may deal thus with his ministers, in their endeavours to catch men; that we may be convinced thereby to whose power we owe our success, and may not *sacrifice* to our own *net, or burn incense to* our own *drag*. (Hab. i. 16.)

7 All the disciples rejoiced at his appearance; but Peter was the foremost to cast himself at his feet. Conscious that so *much had been forgiven him*, he is solicitous to show that he *loves much*. (Luke vii. 47.) So may the remembrance of our miscarriages work upon us, to make us more vigorous in Christ's service, and to inspire us with such zeal and affection as *many waters may not be able to quench, nor the floods to drown!* (Cant. viii. 7.)

11—13 Let us not imagine this miracle was merely intended for a demonstration of Christ's divine power over all that *passeth through the paths of the sea;* (Psal. viii. 8.) it was also the work of wisdom and bounty. By the sale of so many large and fine fishes, a seasonable provision was made for the subsistence of his disciples at Jerusalem, while they were there *waiting for the descent of the Spirit*. (Luke xxiv. 49.) Let every circumstance of this kind encourage us to trust him as the Lord of nature and of grace, who will withhold from us no necessary supply of either, while we are making it our humble and faithful care to promote his glory.

SECTION CCI.

Christ discourses with Peter at the sea of Tiberias, and gives a remarkable prophecy concerning the death of that apostle. John xxi. 15—24.

JOHN xxi. 15.

JOHN XXI. 15

SECT. 201. *WHEN therefore they had made a* plentiful *meal* on this kind provision which Jesus had supplied them with, there happened some circumstances in his succeeding discourse with his disciples which may be worthy of more distinct notice; and particularly this: *Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon,* [*son*] *of Jonas, dost thou love me more than these* do?[a] Or wilt thou now maintain that thou hast such a zealous regard for me above any of thy brethren as thou once didst profess when thou saidst, that though all should forsake me, thou wouldst not do it? (Matt. xxvi. 33. p. 364.) *He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee* sincerely, though I presume not to say more than any of my brethren. [*Jesus*] *said to him,* If so, *feed my lambs*;[b] and as I shall favour thee so far as to commit my church, in part, to thy apostolic care, remember that the most acceptable way of expressing thy love to me, will be by taking care even of the weakest and feeblest of my flock.

JOHN XXI. 15. SO when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 And, to impress this with the greater force upon his mind, *he says to him again the second time, Simon,* [*son*] *of Jonas, dost thou* indeed *love me? He answers him* as he had done before, *Yea, Lord,* I appeal to thee for the sincerity of that regard which I have to thee: *thou knowest that I* truly *love thee*. [*Jesus*] *says to him* again, *Feed* then *my* sheep with tenderness and care, and thereby demonstrate the truth of thine affection to me.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 And, that it might never be forgot by him or any that were present, *he says to him the third time, Simon,* [*son*] *of Jonas,* wilt thou abide by what thou hast said? *Dost thou* truly *love me,* and will that love of thine bear the severest trial? *Peter was* exceedingly *grieved that he said to him the third time, Dost thou love me? And he said to him* with great earnestness, My dear *Lord, thou knowest all things;* thou seest the very hearts of men, and, seeing mine, *thou knowest that I* do indeed *love thee;* though my late lamentable fall might justly bring it into question, and my repeated denial of thee renders me worthy of such a rebuke as this repeated enquiry implies. *Jesus says to him,* Well, Peter, I acknowledge thou dost indeed love me, and know how to distinguish between

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

a *Dost thou love me more than these* do?] The original words, πλειον τουτων, are ambiguous; and, besides the sense I have given them, they might signify, *Dost thou love me more than* thou lovest *these* nets and other instruments of thy trade, so as to prefer my service to any worldly advantages? In this sense Dr. Whitby explains them, and argues for it from this consideration, that otherwise Peter could not have appealed to Christ that he did thus love him, since it was impossible for him exactly to judge of the proportion between *his own love to Christ* and *that of his brethren.* But that learned commentator did not observe how modestly the reply is adjusted on that head. Peter only answers, *Yea, Lord,* (or, *assuredly, Lord,*) *thou knowest that I love thee;* but does not add, *more than these.* And this beautiful circumstance in the answer shows how much he was humbled and improved by the remembrance of his fall.

b *Feed my lambs.*] The paraphrase shows how fair a sense may be given to these words, without supposing they invest Peter with any such distinguished authority in the church, as, contrary to the most convincing arguments, the Papists suppose, and make this supposition the corner-stone of their Babel. Bellarmine's distinction between lambs and sheep, as signifying the laity and clergy, is very trifling, nor can any example of the like distinction be produced. It is much more natural to suppose in general, that lambs here (as in Isa. xl. 11. and many other places) may signify the weakest of the flock, which, by the way, it is by no means to be taken for granted that the laity always are. So that, on the whole, this argument for the Pope's supremacy seems almost as contemptible as that which some writers of that communion have drawn from these words, to prove that heretics, though princes, are to be put to death by authority derived from Peter; because feeding the flock implies a power of killing wolves. (See Boyle's *Philos. Comment.* Vol. I. p. 82.)—I shall only add, that some have observed that αρνια, being the diminutive of αρνα, signifies, *the least of my lambs;* and, if we interpret this as an intimation of the care which Peter, as a minister of Christ, was to take of little children, it seems perfectly congruous to the wisdom and tenderness of the great Shepherd of the sheep, to give so particular an injunction concerning it; as I have shown at large in my *Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ.* Serm. vii. p. 176. *et seq.* 2d edit.

frailty and treachery; and therefore I not only own thee as a disciple, but confirm thee in thine apostolic office, again requiring thee to *feed my sheep:* and be assured that I consider thy zeal for the edification and comfort of my church as the most acceptable token thou canst possibly give of thy love to me. SECT. 201. JOHN XXI.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldst not.

And indeed thou shalt approve that love, not only by labours, but by sufferings too; for *verily, verily, I say unto thee,* and would have thee to remember it as what shall surely come to pass, that *when thou wast* a *young* man, *thou didst gird thyself, and walk about* without control, *whithersoever thou wouldst; but when thou art grown old,*[c] *thou shalt stretch out thine hands, and another shall gird thee* as a helpless prisoner, *and* at length shall *carry* [*thee*] *whither thou wouldst not* naturally incline to go, even to those sufferings to which flesh and blood have the strongest aversion: yet I know that, notwithstanding thy late miscarriage, thy love to me will bear thee through all. 18

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

And *this he said, signifying* and intimating *by what kind of death he should glorify God;* namely, that he should suffer martyrdom, and die with his hands stretched out on the cross. *And having said this,* yet farther to illustrate and explain it, *he says to him, Follow me* then, as I now walk along, and show that thou art willing to conform to my example, and to follow me even to the death of the cross. 19

20 Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?*

And Peter did so with great alacrity; but *turning about,* he *saw that* other *disciple whom Jesus loved,* silently *following him,* in humble token of his readiness likewise to suffer the greatest extremities in the service of so dear a Master.[d] Now, by the way, it may be recollected that this was the apostle John, for whom our Lord had a peculiar kindness, *who also at* the paschal *supper lay in his bosom, and said* to him, *Lord, who is he that will betray thee?* (See John xiii. 25. p. 341.) *Peter* therefore observing this disciple, and *seeing him* follow Jesus in the same manner as he did himself, though he was not called to it, *says unto Jesus, Lord, what* [*shall*] *this man* [*do,*] and what is to become of him? Must he, who is now following with me, partake of the like sufferings, and in like manner testify his love by dying for thee? 20, 21

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? Follow thou me.

Jesus says to him, Is that any immediate concern of thine, Peter? *If I will that he tarry,* or continue alive, *till I come* in power and great glory to execute the judgment I have threatened on mine enemies, *what* [*is that*] *to thee,* or to any one else? *Follow thou me:* mind thou thine own duty, and endeavour to prepare for thine own sufferings; and pry not with a vain curiosity into secret events which may befal him, or any other of thy brethren. 22

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

Now as this answer was not rightly understood, *this saying therefore went abroad among the brethren,* or the other followers of Christ, *that this disciple should not die;*[e] and the advanced age to which he lived gave some farther colour for it: *but* it was entirely built upon a mistake; for *Jesus did not say to him,* or of him, *that he should not die: but* only, as it was expressed before, *If I will that he tarry,* or continue alive, *till I come, what* [*is that*] *to thee?* 23

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

And *this is the disciple who testifies concerning these things, and hath written them* as above: *and* since he was an eye-witness to them, and has not failed, in a proper manner, to produce in the churches the credentials necessary to prove the veracity and exactness of his writings, *we* certainly *know that his testimony is true,* and doubt not but every candid reader will receive it accordingly.[f] 24

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT if our Lord Jesus Christ should put the same question to us that he did to Peter in this remarkable passage, and should thus repeat it again and again? Are there none of us who should be at a loss for an answer? None of us to whom he might say, *I know that you have not the love of Christ in you?*—Or are there none of us who apprehend that, if we had ourselves been thus pressed, we could, at the very best, only have said, *Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I cannot tell whether I love thee or not?*—Blush, and be confounded, O my soul, if thou must reply with such uncertainty to a question of so great importance, and in a case where all the ardour of the heart might be so justly expected! Ver. 15—17

But are there not still some of us who through divine grace could reply with pleasure, *Lord, thou knowest all*

c *When thou art grown old.*] Peter's crucifixion is said to have happened about forty years after this; but the time is not exactly and certainly known.

d Silently *following him,* in humble token of his readiness, &c.] There is a spirit and tenderness in this plain passage, which I can never read without the most sensible emotion. Christ orders Peter to follow him, in token of his readiness to be crucified in his cause: John stays not for the call: he rises, and follows too; but he says not one word of his love and his zeal. He chose that the action only should speak that; and when he records this circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant; but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart that, like his own, glows with love to Christ, sees and emulates it, be it so; but he is not solicitous men should admire it. It was addressed to his Master; and it was enough that he understood it.—And can any one be himself base enough to imagine that such a man could spend his life in promoting a pernicious falsehood, (for such, in the second edition of the *ninth* of my *Ten Sermons,* I largely prove the apostolic testimony to be, if it were a falsehood,) and at last, in his old age, when his relish for every thing but goodness and immortality was gone, would so solemnly attest it as he does in the conclusion of his gospel? May God deliver every one that reads this from a head so fatally beclouded by the corruptions of the heart!

e *This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren,* &c.] That there was such a notion and tradition among the ancients, Fabricius has particularly shewn, *Cod. Apoc. Nov. Test.* Vol. II. p. 533.

f *We know that his testimony is true.*] Grotius would argue, from the plural number in these words, (*Annot.* in John xx. 30.) that this last chapter was not written by John himself, but was added to his gospel by some other hands. (See note a, on John xxi. I. p. 414.) But it is plainly said in the beginning of this verse, that it was he *who testified and wrote these things;* and, besides that we have frequent instances of the like change of numbers, (see Rom. vii. 14; and 1 Thess. ii. 18.) it is evident from the words, *I suppose,* in the next verse, that only one person speaks. So that no more appears to be intended here than if he had said, "We universally allow "that what is testified by a credible eye-witness, and asserted by "him under his hand, must be admitted as a valid testimony, and "pass for unexceptionable evidence: this is the case here; and "therefore regard it accordingly."

SECT. 201. JOHN XXI.

things, thou knowest that, notwithstanding all the unallowed and lamented infirmities of our lives, *we* do indeed *love thee?*—And, if we are thus really conscious to ourselves of such an unfeigned affection, let it be our daily joy, that he who implanted this divine principle in our hearts, discerns and sees it there; and, *knowing all things*, he perfectly knows this, however we may be suspected, however we may be censured.

Let us learn also by what method we are to express our love, according to our ability and opportunity; even
16 by feeding his sheep, and promoting the interest and edification of his church. Let ministers especially do it;
15 and let them not forget those dear creatures, the lambs of the flock. Jesus the compassionate Shepherd, as we see, did not forget them; but taught his servants with the greatest tenderness, both by his precepts and by his example, to *gather them in* their *arms, and carry them in* their *bosom*. (Isa. xl. 11.)

¶ Happy are those ministers who, instead of indulging a vain curiosity in things wherein they are not at all, or but very little, concerned, are spending their lives in such faithful services: *feeding the flock of God, and taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they may receive an unfading crown of glory:* (1 Pet. v. 2, 4.) A crown which will infinitely more than repay not only their labours, but their sufferings too.

18 Happy Peter, who, having worn out his better years in the service of Christ, courageously stretched out his aged
19—23 arms to be bound, and, being borne away to tortures and death, shed the last slow ebb of his blood as a martyr *for him who had loved him and given himself for him.*—And not less happy the beloved disciple, so willing to hazard his life in the same cause; though he was not in fact called to lay it down as a martyr! Our gracious Lord, who sees every purpose and every affection as it rises in the heart, favourably accepts of the willing mind, and will, through the riches of his grace, entitle them to the reward of equal suffering who have waited with a like readiness, though they have not been called out to the severity of the like trial. March 9, 1856.

SECTION CCII.

Christ appears to the whole body of the disciples at the appointed mountain in Galilee; and afterwards meets the apostles several times at Jerusalem, and discourses with them concerning the affairs of his kingdom. Matt. xxviii. 16, *to the end.* Mark xvi. 15—18. Luke xxiv. 44—49. Acts i. 2, 3.

MATT. xxviii. 16.

MATT. xxviii. 16. THEN the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

SECT. 202. MATT. XXVIII.

NOW, quickly after the late interview which Jesus had with his disciples at Jerusalem, *the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to a* certain *mountain* not far from the sea of Tiberias, *where Jesus had appointed* to meet *them.* "And he appeared to them and
17 "above five hundred brethren at once, who came together from all parts of the country "on that important occasion." *And having seen him, they* bowed down and *worshipped him;* and *though some* of the company *had doubted* at first, yet they were afterwards fully convinced.[a] "And the greater part of them continued alive, as witnesses of "the truth of his resurrection, for several years after;[b] though others of them died in a "short time, and went to their glorified and triumphant Lord in heaven." See 1 Cor. xv. 6. Thus did he manifest himself in Galilee to a considerable number of his disciples at once; "and after that, he appeared to James,[c] and then (as we shall see hereafter) to all "the apostles." See 1 Cor. xv. 7.

But though he shewed himself thus openly to his disciples, "he did not publicly appear "at any time to all the people; nor indeed did he show himself, in any other instance, to "so large an assembly even of his own disciples: but in the several appearances he made, "he chiefly conversed with the apostles, and confined his visits to those witnesses that "were chosen before by God to attest the truth of his resurrection; who had frequent "opportunities of a free conversation with him, and, as we have seen before, (Luke xxiv. "30, 42, 43; and John xxi. 12, 13.) did eat and drink with him after he rose from the "dead." See Acts x. 41.

ACTS i.

And at these times of his conversing with them,[d] he more particularly opened to them what was the nature and design of their office; [*and*] *through the Holy Spirit*, which
2 was given not by measure to himself, and which he had lately breathed into them, *he gave commandments* and instructions *to the apostles whom he had chosen*, how they were to
3 act: *To whom also he* gave abundant evidences of the truth of his resurrection, and *showed himself* to be *alive after he had suffered* death, *by many infallible* proofs

Acts i. 2. [*And*] through the Holy Ghost, [he gave] commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen;

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his

a *Though some* of the company *had doubted* at first, &c.] There is no room to think that this refers to some of the apostles, when Christ had so lately satisfied the most incredulous among them; but we are certainly to understand it (as Mr. West has fully shewn) of some that were in company with them, though Matthew has not mentioned them. (See West's *Observ.* p. 25, 29.) Yet still it is not easy to imagine how any of the rest of this company could continue to doubt of the truth of Christ's resurrection, when they actually saw him, and that in the presence of so many others; a circumstance incomparably more convincing to each, than if he had appeared to any one alone. I therefore chuse to render and paraphrase the words οι δε εδιστασαν, as above. Those learned critics, Albert, (*Observ.* p. 163, 164.) and Bos, (*Exercit.* p. 23.) have produced many instances in which οι is put for *nives*. And all the difficulty is removed, if we allow a small change in the tense, and take the rendering of the Prussian Testament, *Even they who had before doubted*; or, which is much the same, *though some had doubted*.

b Several years after.] It is generally granted that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at least twenty years after Christ's resurrection; and Paul there tells us, that the greater part of these five hundred then continued alive. And by the way, it was a wise and gracious dispensation of Divine Providence, to continue their lives so long, as each of them, wherever Providence led them, would be an authentic witness of that important fact, the resurrection of our Lord, the great fundamental of the christian faith.

c After that he appeared to James.] It is probable this was James the son of Alpheus, who was still living when the apostle Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, whereas the other James, the son of Zebedee, had suffered martyrdom some years before. (Acts xii. 2.) But the circumstances of this appearance are nowhere recorded, nor have we any credible account where or when it happened; only we learn, from the order in which it is placed by the apostle Paul, that it was after Christ's appearance to the five hundred brethren. See note b, on Luke xxiv. 34, p. 411.

d And at these times of his conversing with them.] As I have inserted in the first paragraph of this section what is said in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, of our Lord's appearance to the five hundred brethren, and to James, so I have thought it proper to introduce in this and the next section what relates to this story in the beginning of the Acts, (chap. i. 2—12.) which renders the narration more complete, and finishes the account which the sacred writers give us of the history of our Lord to the time of his ascension.

passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Luke xxiv. 44. And [Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,] These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the Psalms, concerning me. [Matt. xxviii. 18.]

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Matt. xxviii. 18. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Luke xxiv. 48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Mark xvi 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved:

and *tokens; being seen of them* at various times *for* the space of *forty days* after his resurrection, *and speaking* to them *of the things which related to the kingdom of God.* SECT. 202.

And these his last interviews with them were chiefly at Jerusalem, to which they returned soon after his appearance to them on the mountain in Galilee; *and Jesus* also *came* thither, *and* made them repeated visits: and on one of these occasions he *spake unto them, saying,*[e] *These* [*are*] *the words which I spake to you,* and these the intimations that I often gave you *while I was yet* dwelling *among you, that all the things must be* exactly *fulfilled which are written* in the scriptures *concerning me,* both *in* the Pentateuch, that is called *the law of Moses, and in the* books of the succeeding *prophets, and in the Psalms,* and other poetical books of the Old Testament. LUKE XXIV.

And *at the same time he* not only in words expounded to them the sense of the sacred writers, but also, by a secret operation on their intellectual faculties, *opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures* in their reference to him. And in a most convincing manner he enlarged upon the important subject, *and said to them,* When you consider all these things, you must certainly perceive *that thus it was written, and thus it was necessary,* in conformity to the council of God, and for the manifestation of his glory, *that the Messiah should suffer, and should rise again from the dead,* as I have done, *on the third day; And that,* in consequence of this, and on this great foundation, the important doctrines of *repentance and forgiveness of sins* through faith in him *should be preached in his name,* and by his authority, *to all* the *nations* of the earth, *beginning* first *at Jerusalem* itself, though polluted with the blood of the Prince of life.[f] 45 46 47

You know indeed (added he) how cruelly the Jews have treated me, and how ungratefully they have rejected me; but their outrageous malice has now done its utmost, and my heavenly Father has not only rescued me from their hands, but is exalting me to all that height of dignity and glory which the sacred oracles have so pathetically described: for *all authority is* now *given unto me* both *in heaven and on earth;* and, in accomplishment of what was promised to the Messiah, I am raised to a kingdom which comprehends both the upper and lower worlds, and entitles me to the homage of angels as well as of men. *And* yet, though I could so easily command the ministry of those more glorious creatures, it suits best with the scheme of my gospel to make use of *you,* who *shall* accordingly *be witnesses of* all *these things,* by publishing the certain knowledge that you have of the important truths of my death and resurrection;[g] and who are therefore to look upon it as the great business of your lives to spread the notices and evidences of these facts. *And,* that you may be fully qualified for so high an office, *behold, I* am shortly to *send upon you the* great *promise of my Father* relating to the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon you. (Compare Joel ii. 28; and Acts ii. 16, 17.) And as the divine wisdom sees fit to honour this place, sinful as it is, with the first view of this surprising appearance, I charge you not to go from hence before you have received those gifts and graces you shall be furnished with for the discharge of your ministry; *but do you continue* here *in the city of Jerusalem till you are invested with* this *power from on high;*[h] whereby you will be enabled to bear your testimony in so advantageous and convincing a manner, that no falsehood or sophistry will be able finally to stand before you. MATT. XXVIII. 18 LUKE XXIV. 48 49

And further, *he said to them,* When you shall thus be furnished with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, *go forth into all* parts of *the world, and preach the gospel to every* human *creature* under heaven to whom Providence may lead you, whether Jew or Gentile: And take care that you deliver it with becoming seriousness, and let them see to it that they receive it with proportionable regard; for it is a matter of infinite importance. And accordingly I now solemnly declare, That *he who* sincerely *believes* your testimony, *and,* in token of that cordial faith, *is baptized* in my name, and continues to maintain a temper and conduct suitable to that engagement, *shall* certainly *be saved* with a complete and everlasting salvation; *but he who believeth not* this my gospel, when opened with such MARK XVI. 15 16

e *On one of these occasions he spake, &c.*] I use this indeterminate form of expression, because I see no mark by which we can particularly ascertain the time when the following discourse was delivered; only, I think it very plain it must be after their return to Jerusalem, (see Luke xxiv. 49.) and consequently a very few days before our Lord's ascension. I have thrown all that the three Evangelists say of these discourses into one continued discourse, though perhaps some of them might be delivered at different times.

f *Beginning at Jerusalem.*] As for the grammatical construction of the Greek word ἀρξάμενον, it would be foreign from the design of these notes to enter into it farther than to refer the learned reader to Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 288.) and Raphelius, (*Annot ex Herod.* p. 276, 277.) and to the original of Luke xxiii. 5; xxiv. 27; and Acts x. 37. It was both graciously and wisely appointed by our Lord, that the gospel should begin to be preached at Jerusalem; graciously, as it encouraged the repentance of the greatest sinners, when they saw that even the murderers of Christ were not exempted from the offers of gospel-mercy; and wisely, as hereby christianity was more abundantly attested, the facts being published just on the spot where they happened; and as the vast concourse of people of various nations, present there at the feast of pentecost, would contribute greatly to its more speedy spread.

g *You shall be witnesses of these things.*] That this was the grand business of the apostles, is evident; and the ingenious author of *Miscellanea Sacra,* (Essay iii. p. 17—23.) has taken great pains to show how the title of witnesses and the office of testifying is in the sacred writings appropriated to the apostles. But after all, though it was indeed essential to the apostolic office that they who bore it should be able to testify the facts as of their own personal knowledge, yet it is certain that a great many others who were not apostles, were able to testify the same: and it was their duty, and no doubt their care, to do it, as Providence gave them an opportunity: and the apostles had many other duties incumbent upon them for the edification of the church, and, in order to the performance of them, were furnished with extraordinary gifts and powers, for which they would have had little occasion had it been their only business to testify these facts.

h *Continue in the city of Jerusalem till you are invested, &c.*] This passage utterly overthrows Mr. Whiston's assertion, that all this discourse was delivered on the night Christ rose from the dead; and that the ascension related by Luke in the conclusion of this chapter, is not that at the end of forty days, when he quitted this earth to return to it no more, but a previous ascension which was made on the resurrection day. For nothing can be more certain than that the apostles did quit Jerusalem between Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Spirit, and went into Galilee by Christ's appointment, which was signified to them by the angel and by himself too.

SECT. 202.

convincing evidence,[i] and finally persists in wilful impenitence and unbelief, as he rejects the most gracious counsel of God for his recovery, *shall be condemned* by his righteous judgment to future and everlasting punishment,[k] and shall, to his dreadful experience, find that gospel which he has despised to be a savour of death to him.

but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

MARK XVI. MATT. XXVIII. 19

Observe then the extent of your commission, and *go forth therefore*, not only into Judea, but into all the rest of the world, *and proselyte all the nations* of the earth to the faith and obedience of my gospel,[l] *baptizing them in the* awful and venerable *name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*;[m] that by this solemn initiatory ordinance they may profess their subjection to each of these divine persons, and maintain-

Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 ing suitable regards to each, may receive from each correspondent blessings. And see that you instruct the converts whom you so baptize, *teaching them to* keep and *observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*; as remembering that I am their Lord, and you only the messengers of my will. *And*, while you act in pursuance of these directions, though numberless difficulties will appear in your way, yet be not discouraged at them; for *behold, I am always with you*, to support and comfort you, and in some measure at least to succeed your labours; and I will to such purposes as these be with all my faithful ministers who shall succeed you in the work, *even to the end of the world*.[n] *Amen!* O blessed Jesus, so may it indeed be! And may this important promise be fulfilled to us, and to our successors to the remotest ages, in its full extent![o]

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

MARK XVI. 17

And he yet farther added, So far as it is necessary and expedient for the confirmation of my gospel, and the establishment of my cause and interest in the world, a miraculous power shall attend you, and others who shall join with you or succeed you in the first plantation of my church: and in particular, *these signs*, and others no less wonderful, *shall follow them that believe*, and be performed by those who in a lively manner exercise their faith in God, when he is inwardly exciting them to such operations:[p] *in my name shall they cast out* the most obstinate and mischievous *demons* who may have possessed the bodies of men; *they shall*, by an extraordinary and hitherto unknown effusion of my Spirit, be enabled with the greatest fluency and propriety to *speak in* various *new lan-*

Mark xvi. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues;

18 *guages* which they have never learnt: *They shall take up serpents* without being bitten or endangered by them;[q] *and if*, by some secret or open attempt made to destroy them, *they drink any deadly* and malignant *poison, it shall not hurt them*;[r] [*and*] when *they shall lay* [*their*] *hands on the sick* and infirm, it shall be attended with a healing virtue, *and they shall* immediately *recover* without the use of any farther means. So that, in consequence of this extraordinary confirmation, my gospel shall meet with a very general

18 They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

i When opened with such convincing evidence.] This is by no means a proper place to inquire into the proportion between the evidence which was peculiar to the days of the apostles, and that which is common to our own. But I hope it will be considered, on the one hand, how improbable it is that a divine revelation, introduced as the gospel was, should ever be left so destitute of proofs in after ages, that an honest man, after impartial consideration, might reject it; and on the other, how fit it was that the danger of neglecting it should be strongly declared, lest it should seem itself to have left men at liberty to trifle with it.

k *Shall be condemned*, &c.] As for the objection which has been urged against the truth of christianity, from the damnatory sentence which it here and elsewhere pronounces on those that reject it, I have considered it at large since the former publication of this volume, and attempted to show that it is so far from being conclusive, that it would rather have been a great difficulty in the scheme of christianity if it had contained no such sentence. See my *Second Letter* to the Author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 28—47. And I must earnestly entreat any reader who fancies there is any force in what the deists urge on this head, attentively to consider what is there offered, before he presume on the contrary sentiment, which may perhaps be an error as fatal as it is absurd.

l *Proselyte all the nations* of the earth.] The whole tenor of the succeeding books of the New Testament shows that Christ designed by this commission that the gospel should be preached to all mankind without exception, not only to the Jews, but to all the idolatrous Gentiles: but the prejudices of the apostles led them at first to mistake the sense, and to imagine that it referred only to their going to preach the gospel to the Jews among all nations, or to those who should be willing to become Jews. I render the word μαθητευσατε *proselyte*, that it may be duly distinguished from διδασκοντες, *teaching*, (in the next verse,) with which our version confounds it. The former seems to import instruction in the essentials of religion, which it was necessary adult persons should know and submit to, before they could regularly be admitted to baptism; the latter may relate to those more particular admonitions in regard to christian faith and practice, which were to be built upon that foundation. It is certain that no argument can be drawn from hence to the prejudice of infant baptism: for had Christ sent out these missionaries to propagate Judaism in the world, he might have used the same language: "Go and proselyte all nations, circumcising "them in the name of the God of Israel, and teaching them to ob-"serve all that Moses commanded."

m *Baptizing them in the name of the Father*, &c.] Though I dare not assert that the use of these very words is essential to Christian baptism, yet surely the expression must intimate the necessity of some distinct regard to each of the sacred three, which is always to be maintained in the administration of this ordinance; and consequently it must imply that more was said to those of whose baptism we read in the Acts, than is there recorded, before they were admitted to it. The christian church in succeeding ages has acted a wise and safe part in retaining these words; and they contain so strong an intimation that each of these persons is properly God, and that worship is to be paid and glory ascribed to each, that I cannot but hope they will be a means of maintaining the belief of the one, and the practice of the other, among the generality of christians to the end of the world.

n *I am always with you, even to the end of the world.*] As Christ's presence with his surviving apostles and other ministers was as necessary after the destruction of Jerusalem as before it, nothing seems more unreasonable than to limit these words, by such an interpretation, as to refer them only to that period: nor does it indeed appear that the end of the world is ever used in any other than the most extensive sense.

o *Amen!*—so may it indeed be!] Though the word Amen, with which each of the gospels ends, seems chiefly to have been intended as an intimation of the conclusion of the book, and as an asseveration of the certain truth of the things contained in it, yet I think the turn here given to it in Matthew very natural, considering its connexion with that promise, which was undoubtedly the greatest strength and joy of that good man's heart. St. John uses the like turn in more express language in the last verse but one of the Revelation. *Surely I come quickly. Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus!*

p *These signs shall follow them that believe*, &c.] It is exceeding evident that the word *believe*, in this place, must signify something different from that faith which had, in the preceding verse of Mark, been required as indispensably necessary to salvation; and can have no other rational interpretation than what is here given.

q *They shall take up serpents.*] Jamblicus (*Vit. Pythag. cap.* 28.) says that Pythagoras could do this; and very credible writers have asserted that in the Eastern nations there is an art of charming snakes and serpents by the force of music, so as for a while to suspend their disposition to hurt. (See Bochart. *Hierozoic.* part 2. *lib.* iii. *cap.* 6; and compare Psalm lviii. 4, 5; and Eccles. x. 11.) But this power was undoubtedly exerted without any such artifice, and included (as in the case of Paul, Acts xxviii. 3—5.) an ability to heal the most dangerous wounds given by the bite of the most noxious animals.

r *If*, by some secret or open attempt made to destroy them, *they drink*, &c.] I add this clause, that none may imagine God ever intended that these miraculous powers should be used merely for ostentation, or to gratify the curiosity of spectators. Considering to what degrees of cursed refinement the art of poisoning was by this time brought, as well as how frequently execution was done by giving poison to condemned persons in the age and country in which the apostles lived, such a promise as this will appear more important than the reader might at first apprehend.

reception, and my heavenly Father, according to his promise, "shall give me the heathen "for mine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession." (See Psal. ii. 8.) SECT. 202.

Such was the purport of our Lord's discourse: and in this manner he conversed with his disciples till his ascension; with the account of which illustrious fact we shall conclude this important history of his life. MARK XVI.

IMPROVEMENT.

With how ill a grace could the Jews complain of any deficiency in the evidence of our Lord's resurrection, when he appeared alive to so great a number as five hundred at once! How glad must these disciples be when they saw the Lord! and with what pleasure must they hear him speaking of those things which concerned the kingdom of God! MATT. XXVIII. 16

We have surely perpetual reason for thankfulness, when we think of that commission which Christ gave to his disciples: nor is it a circumstance of little importance, that they had it in charge, when they published this message of grace, to begin at Jerusalem; though the religious opportunities that were abused by that ungrateful city had already been so great, and their provocations so many. Amazing condescension of the Prince of Peace, that he sent his ambassadors of peace to them when they had hardly laid aside the weapons with which they had slain him, and were scarce rested after the cruel fatigue which their officious malice had given them in abetting his murder! Behold, he offers them all the invaluable blessings purchased by his blood, while it was yet, as we may say, warm upon Mount Calvary! and, on the same principles, even unto this day, *where sin hath abounded*, there *is grace abounding much more.* (Rom. v. 20.) ACTS I. 3

The commission he gave his apostles, though it began at Jerusalem, did not end there; nor was it confined within the narrow limits of Judea, but they were appointed to *go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* We to this day, in our remote land, enjoy the benefit of it. Let us remember the important consequences that will one way or another attend the gospel thus brought us: *If we believe it, we shall be saved; but if we believe* it *not, we shall be damned.* Life or death, O my soul, is the certain issue of it, with regard to thee in particular. *Be surety to thy servant, O Lord, for good,* (Psal. cxix. 122.) and *let my life be precious in thy sight!* MARK XVI. 15, 16

Christ opened the understanding of the apostles to apprehend the sense of scripture. Let us study that sacred book with an humble dependence upon the aid of that blessed Spirit by whom it was dictated: And let these apostles, who were thus divinely taught, be reverently regarded as our surest guides when we are studying the oracles of the Old Testament; considering the extraordinary commission with which Christ sent them forth, the power from on high with which he invested them, and the ample credentials which he thereby gave them. LUKE XXIV. 45 49

These miraculous donations are now ceased, but that valuable promise still continues in force, That *he will be with* his ministers *always, even unto the end of the world.* In the strength of that gracious assurance, O thou faithful and true Witness, would thine humble ambassadors still go forth to all the labours and difficulties before them: *remember thy word unto thy servants,* (Psal. cxix. 49.) and *may it be unto us according to it!* Amen. MATT. XXVIII. 20

SECTION CCIII.

Christ, after his last discourse with his disciples, ascends to heaven in their sight, from the mount of Olives in the neighbourhood of Bethany; and they joyfully return to Jerusalem, waiting for the Spirit. Mark xvi. 19, *to the end.* Luke xxiv. 50, *to the end;* John xx. 30, *to the end;* xxi. *ult.* Acts i. 4—12.

Acts i. 4.

And being assembled together with them, [he] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he,* ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

Luke xxiv. 50. And he led them out as far as to Bethany.

Acts i. 4.

SUCH was the conversation Jesus had with his disciples at Jerusalem, and such the commission he gave them: *and* now at length, *having gathered them together* on the fortieth day after his resurrection, *he charged them* again, as he had done before, (Luke xxiv. 49. p. 419.) *not to depart from Jerusalem,* to employ themselves in any secular cares at home, *but* rather *to* spend some succeeding days in extraordinary devotion in the temple, or in their secret retirements; that they might, with the most becoming temper, *wait for the* accomplishment of that *promise of the Father which,* [*said he,*] *you have* again and again *heard from me,* both before and since my resurrection. (Compare John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; and Luke xxiv. 49.) *For John indeed baptized with water,* when he was sent to call men to repentance; *but* you well know that he declared at the same time, "there was one coming after him, who should baptize in a more glorious manner with the "Holy Spirit:" (see Matt. iii. 11. p. 34.) And in accomplishment of this prediction, as you are now to be sent forth to preach the gospel, and to bear witness of me as the true Messiah, that whosoever shall believe in me may obtain remission of sins, *you* shall be plentifully furnished from above with all those graces that may enable you to fulfil your ministry, and by my means *shall be baptized with* an extraordinary effusion of *the Holy Spirit;* and this shall be done *not many days hence.* SECT. 203. ACTS I. 4 5

And he then took them with him out of the city; and passing over the brook Kedron again, in a very different manner from that in which he had lately crossed it, (John xviii. 1. p. 363.) *he led them out* to the Mount of Olives, and brought them through that ridge of hills, *as far as to* the boundaries of *Bethany.*[a] LUKE XXIV. 50

[a] *As far as to* the boundaries of *Bethany.*] This at least must be the import of the word ὡς; but what is said elsewhere, will not allow us to extend it to the town itself: for the town of Bethany was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, (John xi. 18.) whereas the place from which our Lord ascended, on Mount Olivet, was but a sabbath-day's journey, or about half that distance from Jerusalem, (Acts i. 12.) So that, to reconcile what Luke here tells us in his gospel, with the account he gives of our Lord's ascension in the Acts, we must conclude that he conducted his disciples only to the boundaries of Bethany, which came much nearer to Jerusalem, and took in part of the mount of Olives. (See note a, on Matt. xxi. 1. p. 289.)—It is indeed possible that our Lord might

SECT. 203.

When therefore they were come together with such peculiar solemnity, and Jesus had thus assembled them in a body, (as they apprehended, on some extraordinary occasion,) *they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time,* when they have just been guilty of such aggravated wickedness, *restore the kingdom to Israel?* And wilt thou now in such a manner show thy favour to a nation which so well deserves to be destroyed, that Israel shall at this time be raised from its servitude, to that extensive empire which ancient prophecies have led us to expect under the government of the Messiah?

Acts i. 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

But, as Jesus was not willing to enter on a subject concerning which the Spirit would soon rectify their notions, *he* chose to check their curiosity, and *said to them,* Whatever the schemes of Providence may be, *it is not for you to know,* and therefore is not proper for you to enquire, what are *those times or seasons which the Father has placed under his own authority:* the Messiah's kingdom shall indeed be triumphant, and the Israel of God shall reign with him; but where, or when, or how this shall be, it is not your present business to enquire. And therefore now let not these secret things engage and take up your attention; *but* let me rather exhort you to mind your present duty, and to leave the event of things to God: and, to prepare you for the important service you are called to, *you shall* indeed, as I before have told you, *receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you; and* by this means you *shall be* qualified to be *my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth:* and you shall gather in subjects to my kingdom in the remotest regions, and subdue multitudes to the obedience of faith.

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

LUKE XXIV. 50

And then *lifting up his hands* in a most solemn and devout manner, *he blessed them,* as one that had authority, not only to desire, but to command, a blessing on them; and recommended them to the guardianship and care of his heavenly Father, to whom, after so long an abode on earth, he was now returning.

Luke xxiv. 50. And he lift up his hands, and blessed them.

51 *And it came to pass, after the Lord had spoken these things unto them,* and had with great affection and solemnity discoursed with his disciples of the work they were to do, and of the power they should have to qualify them for it, even *while he was blessing them, he was* miraculously *separated from them. And while they* stedfastly *beheld* him, and fixed their eyes upon him with the strictest observation, *he was taken up* from the ground on which he stood, *and* gradually *carried up into heaven,*[b] as it seemed by the ministry of attending angels, (though he could certainly have ascended merely by his own power:) *and* while he hovered in the air at some distance from them, *a* bright *cloud* appeared, as a kind of triumphant chariot which God had prepared on this great occasion, and *received him out of their sight: and,* passing through clouds of adoring angels, *he* ascended to a throne highly exalted above all theirs, and *sat* down, even *at the right hand of God,* on a seat of the highest dignity and authority, there to reign, in the glories of his mediatorial kingdom, till all things shall be put under his feet. (See 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27.)

51 And it came to pass, [after the Lord had spoken [Acts, these things] unto them,] while he blessed them, he was parted from them. [Mark xvi. 19. Acts i. 9.]

ACTS I. 9

Acts i. 9. And while they beheld, he was taken up, [Luke, and carried up into heaven,] and a cloud received him out of their sight, [and *he* sat on the right hand of God.] [Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51.]

10 *And as they were stedfastly looking up to heaven, while he went on* in his amazing and triumphant progress, *behold, two* angels, in the form of *men, in white* and shining *raiment,* being of the number of those whose ministration God was pleased to make use of in this illustrious event, came and *stood near them; Who also* spake to them, and *said, Ye men of Galilee, why do ye stand gazing up to heaven* with such great astonishment? Is it not what your Lord himself has often told you, that he was soon to return to the glory from which he came? And we are now sent hither to assure you that *this Jesus, who is* thus *taken up from you into heaven, shall so come* again *in the* very *same manner as you have* now *beheld him go into heaven:* for the great day shall surely come, when he will visibly descend from heaven in a cloud of glory, attended as now with a guard of angels, to dispense their final judgment to all the inhabitants of the world; but in the mean time, the heavens must receive him, and you must no more expect his company on earth.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

LUKE XXIV. 52

And his disciples were so fully satisfied of his divine power and glory, that *they worshipped him* with the humblest reverence, though he was now become invisible to them; *and then* (as he had ordered them) *returned to Jerusalem with great joy, from the mount called Olivet,* where he was parted from them; *which is* but *a sabbath-day's journey,* or about a mile distant *from Jerusalem*:[c] and it exceedingly rejoiced their hearts to think that Jesus their Lord was in this singular manner honoured by his hea-

Luke xxiv. 52. And they worshipped him, and [then] returned to Jerusalem with great joy [from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey:] [Acts i. 12.]

make his last visit on earth to Lazarus and his pious sisters; but it is manifest he did not ascend from the town of Bethany, where many others must have seen him, but from the mount of Olives, where none beheld him but his own disciples; nor is there any intimation in the words of the Evangelist, that he came from Bethany to the mount of Olives on the day of his ascension, but rather that he went directly from Jerusalem thither.

b *While they beheld, he was taken up,* &c.] It will, I hope, be remembered, that it was for majesty, and not of necessity, that our Lord used the ministration of angels in carrying himself to heaven. —Dr. Jennings has observed, with his usual sagacity and propriety, (*Serm. at Berry-street,* Vol. I. p. 373.) that it was much more proper our Lord should ascend to heaven in the sight of his apostles, than that he should rise from the dead in their sight: for his resurrection was proved when they saw him alive after his passion; but they could not see him in heaven while they continued upon earth.

c *Which is a sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem.*] A sabbath-day's journey is generally reckoned by the Jews to be two thousand cubits, which was the distance between the ark and the camp, when they marched; (Josh. iii. 4.) and probably the same proportion was observed when they rested. This is usually computed at about eight furlongs, or a mile. But as the camp took in a large extent of ground, and this was only the distance of those that encamped nearest to the ark, so it is evident, that as all the people were to repair on the sabbath-day to the place of God's public worship, a sabbath-day's journey was more than two thousand cubits to those whose station in the camp was more remote from the ark: yet when they were afterwards settled in towns, they allowed no more than two thousand cubits for a sabbath-day's journey. (See Selden, *De Jur. Nat. et Gent. lib.* iii. *cap.* 9. and Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* on Luke xxiv. 50; and Acts i. 12.) Compare note a, in this section, on Luke xxiv. 50.

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Mark xvi. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

John xxi. 25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did; [and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:] the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. [John xx. 30.]

John xx. 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name. [Amen.] [John xxi. 25.]

venly Father, and received up into a state of everlasting felicity and glory, in which he would be able to protect all his followers, and to provide in the most effectual manner for their present and eternal happiness. *And they were always in the temple*, that is, they constantly attended there at proper times, and were daily present at the hours of prayer,[d] *praising and blessing God*, both in his house and in their own retirements. *Amen!* May God always be praised by us, and by all who receive his gospel, for the discoveries and attestations of it given to these his servants, and by them to us! LUKE XXIV. 53

And in a few days after this, (as will be shewn more largely in the following history,) their ascended Lord, in remembrance of his promise to them, sent down as a royal donative the extraordinary influences of his Spirit upon them, fully to qualify them for that important office to which they were designed. *And going forth* with this furniture, *they preached* the gospel *every where* throughout the whole Roman empire, and even among the barbarous nations, with amazing success, *the Lord*, according to his promise, *working with them, and confirming the word* of his grace *by the signs* and miracles *which followed* it; which were at once the most solid, as well as the most obvious and popular, demonstrations of those divine truths which they delivered. *Amen!* So may the presence of the Lord be always with his faithful ministers! and may his gospel be attended every where with efficacy and success, as well as with convincing evidences of its divine authority! MARK XVI. 20

And thus we have given a summary account of the most remarkable passages of the life of Christ during the time of his abode on earth: but after all, it must be considered only as a specimen, rather than a full narration: for *there are also many other things that Jesus* said and *did, and indeed many other signs* and miracles that *Jesus wrought*, both before and after his resurrection, *in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book* of the four Evangelists, which is here completed; and *which* indeed are so numerous, that *if every one* [*of them*] *should be recorded* in all its circumstances, *I am persuaded* the work would amount to so vast a bulk, that *the world itself would not* be able to *receive the books that should be written*, but the very size of the volumes would necessarily prevent the generality of mankind from procuring or reading them.[e] *But these* most necessary and important *things are written* in this plain way, and in this portable volume, not merely that the reader may be amused by so curious a story, but that the faith, the hope, and the piety of christians may be confirmed; and especially *that you may* more firmly and assuredly *believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God*, partaking of the same divine glory with the Father, and the sure object of his people's confidence; *and that, believing* it, *you may* be so influenced by his instructive discourses, his complete example, and his dying love, that you may *have* eternal *life through his name*. And may God grant that, as it is all most certainly and circumstantially true, so it may have that happy effect upon all those by whom this history is perused from age to age! *Amen.* JOHN XXI. 25 JOHN XX. 31

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS did our victorious Saviour *ascend on high, and lead captivity captive: the chariots of God* which attended him were *twenty thousand, even thousands of angels!* (Psal. lxviii. 17, 18.) and being gone into heaven, he is there seated *on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him.* (1 Pet. iii. 22.) Let us his humble followers look after him with holy joy and pleasing expectation; congratulating his triumphs, and trusting, through his grace, to share them. LUKE XXIV. 51 ACTS I. 9, 10

Like the apostles, let us bow down and worship him; and while we continue here below, let us make it our daily labour and care to *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God:* (Col. iii. 1.) And instead of amusing ourselves with the vain dreams of temporal grandeur and felicity, or with curious inquiries after those *times and seasons which the Father hath reserved in his own power*, let us apply with vigour and zeal to that business which he has assigned us, labouring to the utmost to promote his gospel, and, by a diligent improvement of our time and opportunities, to prepare for his final appearance, when the *Lord himself shall descend from heaven* with more public splendour than he returned thither, and *shall come in the glory of his Father*, and his own glory, with a majestic pomp which every eye shall see, and with the sound of a trumpet, which even all the nations of the dead shall hear. LUKE XXIV. 52 ACTS I. 7 11 MARK XVI. 20

In the mean time, let us thankfully own his gracious presence with his disciples, whom he left behind

d *And they were always in the temple.*] Some have imagined (by comparing this with Acts i. 13, 14.) that the apostles dwelt for some time afterwards in an upper chamber of the temple; but they had no such interest with the priests as to allow us to suppose they would permit them to lodge in an apartment of the temple. It is sufficient that they were always there at the proper seasons; for it is well known, that by night the temple was shut up (Compare Luke ii. 22. p. 24. and John xviii. 20. p. 374.) They probably joined their voices with the chorus of the Levites, as no doubt other pious Israelites did; and must surely, from what they had already seen and known, have learnt to use many of the psalms sung by them in a much sublimer sense than the generality of the people could.

e *The world itself would not* be able to *receive the books*, &c.] There would be no great inconvenience in allowing an hyperbole here, as most Expositors do, of which we meet with other instances in scripture: (see Gen. xi. 4; Numb. xiii. 33; and compare John xii. 19.) But I think the sense given in the paraphrase easier, and more suited to the remarkable plainness of St. John's style. Elsner explains this passage as if the Evangelist had said, "If they were "all to be particularly written, the unbelieving world would not "admit them, so as to be moved by them to faith and obedience." And he produces instances in which [illegible] has such a signification. But, as John knew the unbelieving world would reject even what he had writ, this could be no reason for his writing no more.—Perhaps it may be a most delightful part of the entertainment of the heavenly world, to learn from our blessed Lord himself, or from those who conversed with him on earth, a multitude of such particulars of his life as will be well worthy our everlasting admiration. In the mean time, the pious and attentive study of what is here recorded, may most happily prepare us for such discoveries, and add an unutterable relish to them. *Amen!* So may it be to the author of this Exposition, and to all those who do or may peruse it!

SECT. 203. him; and with admiring gratitude reflect upon the happy consequences of that presence in the establishment of the gospel in the world, and the transmission of it even unto us, in so remote an age and country.

Let us especially praise him for these sacred records, which contain such an authentic and exact account of JOHN XIX. those important facts in which we are all so nearly concerned; records incomparably more valuable than the writings of our private estates, or the charters of our public liberties. Let us earnestly pray that their great 25 design may be answered in us; and make it our importunate request to Him who is the Giver of all grace, that, through the operations of that Holy Spirit, without the influence of which, even scripture itself, with all our advantages for understanding and improving it, will be but a sealed book, or a dead letter, our faith may be JOHN XX. nourished and confirmed by every portion of it which we read; and that our hearts may be so delivered into the mould of his word, that believing on Christ, under all the characters he bears, we *may have life through* 31 *his name:* and may at length receive the end of our faith, in the complete salvation of our souls through him: to whom, with the Father and the eternal Spirit, be undivided honours and everlasting praises. *Amen*, and *Amen.*

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE ACTS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES,

WRITTEN BY ST. LUKE.

SECTION I.

ST. LUKE CONNECTS THIS HISTORY WITH HIS GOSPEL, BY A MORE PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST THAN HE HAD THERE GIVEN. ACTS i. 1—12.

ACTS. i. VER. 1.

THE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled

ACTS i. VER. 1.

SECT. 1.

ACTS I.

THE former treatise which *I* lately *composed*,[a] and inscribed to thee, *O Theophilus*, contained a faithful narrative, as far as might be necessary for the confirmation of a christian convert, *concerning all* the most considerable *things which Jesus began both to do and to teach*,[b] and gave an account of the manner in which Christ opened the gospel, and in which he confirmed it, from his first appearance on earth to the last period of his abode upon it; *Even to the* very *day in which he was taken up* into heaven again, *after he had, by* the influence and assistance of *the Holy Spirit*,[c] with which he himself was so abundantly anointed, *given a* proper *charge to the apostles, whom he had chosen* to be the prime ministers of his kingdom, and the great instruments of extending it in the world: *To whom also*, in order to fit them more completely for the discharge of their important office, *he presented himself alive after his suffering, with many* most *evident testimonials* of the truth of his resurrection; while, though he declined appearing publicly among the Jews, he often showed himself to his disciples, *being seen by them* at various times *for* no less than *forty days, and speaking* to them *of the things concerning the kingdom of God*, which was then shortly to be erected by their means.

And, on the fortieth day after his resurrection, *having assembled them together* with

a *The former treatise I composed.*] This former treatise is undoubtedly the Gospel which was written by St. Luke, and dedicated by him to Theophilus: and, as this history of the Acts was written by the same person, it is allowed by all antiquity, the author of it was St. Luke, whom the apostle Paul styles the beloved physician, (Col. iv. 14.) and speaks of as his fellow-labourer, (Philem. ver. 24.) who was with him at Rome when he wrote his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, and again afterwards when he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy; (2 Tim. iv. 11.) and so continued an associate and companion to the apostle Paul; as it is evident, from his manner of expression, the penman of the Acts had been, in several of his travels, and in his dangerous voyage when he went first to Rome. This book is generally thought to have been written about the year of our Lord 63, at which time the history ends, which, it is reasonable to suppose, would have proceeded further, if it had been written later; and probably, as Mr. L'Enfant and others have observed, it made, as it were, a second part of St. Luke's Gospel, which in all copies has the author's name prefixed, while this is left without a title in the oldest manuscripts; though in the Syriac Version it is expressly ascribed to Luke, whom the translator seems to call his master. Not to mention the supposed allusions to this book in Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, it is certain that Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius, bear the most express testimonies to the genuineness of it, in a multitude of passages which I need not here insert, as they are produced at large by Dr. Benson, in the first part of the *Appendix* to his *History of the Plantation of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 295—310; and since the publication of that by Mr. Biscoe, in his learned *Discourses at Boyle's Lectures*, chap. xiv. xv. where he has shown, in a most convincing manner, how capable these ancient writers were of judging in this matter, and how universally it was owned by the christians of the first ages as a sacred book. How incontestably it demonstrates the truth of christianity, is shown at large in both these useful treatises, and every attentive reader must needs observe it for himself.

b *Began both to do and to teach.*] To begin to do a thing, as Heinsius and many other critics have observed, is a common Greek idiom for *doing* or *undertaking a thing*. Compare Matt. xii. 1. with Luke vi. 1; and Mark vi. 2. with Matt. xiii. 54. See also Gen. ii. 3. *Septuag.* Num. xxv. 1; Judg. xiii. 5; xx. 31; Luke iii. 8; xxi. 28; and Acts ii. 4. Yet in most of these places it refers to some of the first actions or events of the kind. Accordingly I apprehend, with Chrysostom, that the phrase here refers to the account which Luke had given of Christ's ministry, from the beginning and first rise of it, (as he speaks, Luke i. 2, 3) to the ascension, with which he concludes his Gospel.

c *By the Holy Spirit.*] It is certainly much more agreeable to the order and construction of the words in the original, to connect and explain them as above, than to refer them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic Versions do, to his *choosing the apostles by the Spirit*, or with Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 353.) to his *being taken up by it*. It is no wonder, considering how short a history we have of what passed between Christ's resurrection and ascension, that this should be the only place which speaks of his acting by the Spirit after he rose from the dead: nor can I, with a late learned and ingenious writer, think that a sufficient reason for adhering to the versions mentioned above. (See Benson's *Plantation of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 14, 15.) His breathing on the apostles, and saying, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit*, (John xx. 22.) seems also to agree very well with this interpretation. To render it, *the orders they were to execute by the Holy Spirit*, (as in the translation of 1727,) is altogether arbitrary, and is substituting a quite different truth instead of what was written by Luke. I have before inserted the remaining verses of this section in § 102, 103. to complete the History of our Lord to the time of his ascension. (See note d. § 202.) But, notwithstanding this, it will be easily excused that I have not omitted them here in their proper

SECT. 1. ACTS 1.

peculiar solemnity,[4] *he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem* directly,[e] though he was now to stay no longer with them, and they knew of no immediate business which they had there; *but* ordered them to *wait* there *for the* accomplishment of that *promise of the Father* to send the Spirit, *which*, [*said he*,[f]] *you have* so often and so lately *heard from me*. (See John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; and Luke xxiv. 49.) *For John indeed* 5 *baptized with water* only, when he was sent to call men to repentance; *but*, as he then declared, (Matt. iii. 11.) there is a nobler baptism you may expect from me; and to prepare and furnish you for the great work to which I have commissioned you, of preaching repentance and remission of sins in my name, *you shall be baptized with* an abundant effusion of *the Holy Spirit*, far beyond what you have ever yet received: And this, I assure you, shall be done *within these few days*; which proved by the event to be but ten.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

6 But now, as the appointed time was come for his returning to the Father, Jesus withdrew with his apostles from the city, and led them out, as was observed before, unto the mount of Olives, as far as to the boundaries of Bethany. (See Luke xxiv. 50. note a, p. 421.) *They therefore being come together*, full of expectation that he had brought them thither with a view to some remarkable transaction, *asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time* break the Roman yoke from our necks, and after all this confusion *restore the kingdom to* the ungrateful people of *Israel*,[g] who have been thus shamefully abusing and crucifying thee? Is the empire of the Messiah immediately to be erected? and wilt thou begin it from Jerusalem, a place that, of all upon the face of the earth, seems to be the least worthy of such a distinguished honour?

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 *But he*, waving a direct answer to this curious question, and leaving it to the Spirit, which was shortly to be given, to rectify the mistaken notions on which they proceeded in it, only *said to them*, Cease your inquiries at present on this head; since *it is not* convenient *for you* now *to know those times or seasons* in *which* many remarkable prophecies concerning my kingdom shall be fulfilled: For *the Father hath reserved* them *in his own power*, under his own direction and disposal, and hath not expressly determined them in those predictions which certify the events themselves. And he hath taken this precaution on purpose that the minds of his people might be kept in an humble, dependent, resigned frame. It will therefore be your wisdom always to cultivate such a temper, applying yourselves diligently to the duties of your office, and leaving all events to be determined by his 8 infinite wisdom and goodness. *But* for the present let it suffice you to be told, that ere long, though I say not exactly when, *you shall receive* an extraordinary *power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you; and*, in consequence of that, *shall* be abundantly qualified to *be my witnesses both in* the city of *Jerusalem, and in all* the land of *Judea; and* not only so, but *in Samaria* too, though you have never yet addressed yourselves to the Samaritans in any former mission, (see Matt. x. 5. and compare Acts viii. 5, 14, 25.) *and even to the remotest parts of the earth;* the barbarous nations of which you shall visit with a success which shall gloriously illustrate my Father's promise, of "giving me the heathen "for mine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession." (See Psal. ii. 8.)

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 *And having said these things*, he lifted up his hands and blessed them; (Luke xxiv. 50.) and *while they beheld* him with great earnestness, and high expectation of some extraordinary event consequent on this solemn preparation, *he was lifted up* from the ground in a miraculous manner, *and* rose gradually higher and higher, till at length *a* bright *cloud*, conducted by the ministry of angels, who joyfully attended their returning Lord, *received him out of their sight*, and they saw him no more.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 This marvellous event was so astonishing to the apostles, that they continued with their eyes fixed the way that he was gone: *And while they were stedfastly looking up to heaven* after him *as he went on* in his triumphant ascent, *behold, two* angels in the form 11 of *men, in white* and shining *raiment*, came and *stood near them: Who also* spake to them, and *said, Ye men of Galilee, why do ye stand* thus *gazing up to heaven* with so much surprise and amazement? *This Jesus, who is* now *taken up from you into heaven*, is gone to that world from whence he came, and in which he is to make his final abode: Nevertheless there will be a time when he *shall* visit your earth once more, and *so come*

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like

place, that the whole History of the Acts might stand together, and the work be kept entire.

d *Having assembled them together.*] Though some considerable ancient as well as modern critics, and particularly Chrysostom and Theophylact, understand the word συνκαλ̃ομενος as expressive of Christ's *eating with the apostles* during the *forty days* spoken of above; the notes of Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 355.) and Raphelius, (*ex Xen.* p. 146. *et Herod.* p. 320. *et seq.*) seem abundantly sufficient to justify the version here given.

e *Not to depart from Jerusalem.*] This seems a plain intimation that, after our Lord had met his disciples in Galilee, he appointed the apostles to meet him at Jerusalem, or perhaps accompanied them thither, and spent his last days on earth there; doing this last honour to the place where God had chosen to dwell, and where the most solemn ordinances of his worship were administered.

f *Said he.*] These words, though omitted in the original, are plainly implied. Raphelius (*ex Xen.* p. 146, 147.) has produced many examples of such a change in the person speaking in the best Greek writers. Many others occur in the sacred authors. Compare Luke v. 14; Acts xvii. 3; xxiii. 22; Gen. xxvi. 7; Deut. ii. 13. See also Psal. ii. 3, 6; and xci. 14. And I the rather mention it, as it may account for many prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament, where he is introduced as speaking on a sudden, in an abrupt manner; which is not so usual, especially in modern and Western writers.

g *Restore the kingdom to Israel.*] They seem to have expected, that when the Spirit was in so extraordinary a manner poured out, and the world, according to Christ's prediction, (John xvi. 1.) *convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, the whole nation of the Jews would own him for the Messiah, and so not only shake off its subjection to the Romans, but itself rise to very extensive and perhaps universal dominion. The word αποκαθιστανεις intimates *the shattered* and *weakened state* in which Israel now was. And I cannot but think our Lord's answer may intimate it should at length be restored, though not immediately, or with all the circumstances they imagined; which concession seems the most satisfactory answer to Rabbi Isaac's objection against christianity, from his mistaken sense of these words. *Chissuk Emunah*, Part II. p. 59.

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

in a visible form, riding on a cloud as his triumphant chariot, and attended by angelic guards, *in the same manner as you have* now *beheld him going into heaven.* Depart therefore in peace, and pursue the interest of his kingdom, with a firm assurance that his cause shall prosper amidst all opposition, and that while you are engaged in the service of this ascended, triumphant Lord, you can never be losers by your fidelity and your zeal.

SECT. 1.

ACTS I.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.

Then were the hearts of the apostles filled with joy by what they had seen and heard; and having worshipped their ascended Lord, (Luke xxiv. 52.) *they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet; which is* but *a sabbath-day's journey*, or about a mile distant *from Jerusalem.*[h] And there they employed themselves in a daily course of public and private devotion, rejoicing in what they had seen, and firmly believing some extraordinary event was at hand, whereby they should be more fully qualified for the great work assigned them; which, whatever the hazard of it might be, they were firmly determined to undertake and prosecute. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

If we have ever seriously considered the contents of this excellent history on which we are now entering, we must surely see abundant reason to adore that gracious Providence which hath transmitted it to us, to confirm our faith, and animate our hope in the gospel. The account of our Lord's ascension, with which it begins, relates to a fact of so great importance, that we may well bear the repetition of what we have read concerning it in the former history. Ver. 1 2, 9

We see the apostles still dreaming of a temporal kingdom to be restored to Israel. So hard is it for the best of men to be entirely *crucified to the world*, even *by the cross of Christ!* (Gal. vi. 24.) Our Lord does not set himself at large to combat that error; nor is it necessary that we should be eagerly solicitous on the like occasions, where mistakes do not affect men's characters or their eternal state. Prudently does he direct them to wave the indulgence of their curiosity. Let us learn to moderate ours, and refer times and seasons to him who hath reserved them in his own power. Let a sense of the perfect wisdom and goodness of the Divine Being silence and compose us amidst all the darkness which veils our prospects of futurity. 6 7

With the apostles, let us look up after an ascending Saviour, and send our wishes and our souls to heaven, where he now is, and where he must remain till that important day in which he shall descend to the final judgment. *Behold, he* then *cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see him!* (Rev. i. 7.) May we view him to our joy and not to our terror! and *lift up our heads* with a serenity and cheerfulness becoming those who see *the approach* of their complete *redemption!* (Luke xxi. 28.) In the mean time, may his cause and service be ever dear to us! and while he is attending to our concerns in the world above, may we, with grateful and joyful alacrity, pursue that which he graciously condescends to own as his interest here upon earth! 10 11 12

SECTION II.

The apostles being returned to Jerusalem, and assembled with the rest of the disciples, Matthias is chosen to succeed Judas in the apostolic office. Acts i. 13, *to the end.*

ACTS i. 13.

ACTS i. 13.

AND when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

NOW the apostles being returned from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem, immediately after the ascension of Christ, (as was observed in the conclusion of the former section,) *when they were entered* [*into the city,*] *they* presently retired for devotion, and *went up into an upper room*[a] where they usually held their assemblies. And as this was the place *where* the apostles commonly *abode*, all the eleven were there, *both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James* [*the son*] *of Alpheus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas*, or Jude, [*the brother*] *of James.*[b] But Judas the traitor was now dead, as was observed towards the close of the preceding history; (sect. cxciii.) and the vacancy occasioned by his death gave rise to that important business to which they quickly proceeded. 13

SECT. 2.

ACTS I.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

These all unanimously persevered in prayer and supplication, with great intenseness and ardour of soul, together *with the* pious *women* who were formerly mentioned as attending the cross of their Lord, *and* particularly *Mary*, so celebrated as *the mother of Jesus; and* also *with his brethren* and near kinsmen after the flesh, of whom there were some others besides the apostles, whose prejudices, though once strong, were now happily worn off. Compare John vii. 5. 14

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names toge-

And in these days, while they were waiting for the promise of the Spirit, *Peter, rising up in the midst* of a full assembly *of the disciples, spake* as follows. *Now the number of persons*[c] that were met *together* in that place *was about an hundred and twenty;* 15

h *A sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem.*] For the extent of a sabbath-day's journey, see Luke xxiv. 52. note c. The easiest manner of reconciling this text with Luke xxiv. 50; and John xi. 18. may be seen in the note on the former of those passages, § 203. note a. And it is with pleasure that I see it confirmed and illustrated by the learned Mr. Biscoe, in his *Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, p. 391—394. An elaborate and valuable work; by referring to which I shall have an opportunity of saving myself and the reader a great deal of trouble in these notes; for which, therefore, I gladly take this opportunity of making my acknowledgment to the worthy author.

a *Into an upper room.*] I can see no sufficient room for saying, as many have done, that this was in the temple (Compare note d, on Luke xxiv. 53.) Epiphanius says it was on Mount Sion, and that a christian church was afterwards erected on the spot of ground on which it stood (See Hammond, *in loc.*) Perhaps they might the rather chuse it, as giving some advantage for looking to the temple. But it is plain from many other passages, that upper rooms were often large, and fit for containing a considerable number of persons. (Compare Mark xiv. 15; and Acts xx. 8.) See Bos, *Exercit.* p. 64. *et seq.*

b *The brother of James.*] The expression in the original is ambiguous, and may signify either *son* or *brother*. But Jude himself expressly determines it that he was *his brother*, in ver. 1. of his Epistle.

c *Number of persons.*] It is literally *the number of names;* but it is well known that ὀνόματα often signifies *persons:* (See Rev. iii.

SECT. 2. ACTS I.

the greater part of the five hundred to whom Christ had appeared (1 Cor. xv. 6.) continuing in Galilee during this interval between the feast of the passover and that of Pentecost. And he said,

O ye *men* that hear me this day, [*and*] whom I regard as my *brethren* in the bonds of religion as well as of friendship! *it was necessary*, in the righteous judgment of God,
16 that *this* awful passage of *scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake*, long *before* the event, *by the mouth of David*,[d] and which God intended *with* a particular *regard to Judas, who* was so wicked a wretch that, in contempt of all the most solemn and endearing obligations to distinguishing duty and fidelity to his divine Master, he *became the guide of those that seized* on the blessed *Jesus*, and marked him out to
17 them by a traitorous kiss. (Matt. xxvi. 47, 48.) And indeed he well deserved to be made a monument of vengeance to succeeding ages, considering the near relation in which he stood to Christ and to us; *for he was* once *numbered with us* his apostles, *and* for a while *had obtained part of this ministry*, with which our Lord was pleased to
18 honour us as the principal officers in his kingdom. The calamitous end of *this* unhappy *man* is *therefore* fresh in your memories; and it is known to all of you, that instead of enriching himself by his crimes, and securing those worldly advantages he so eagerly pursued, he only *purchased* (that is, was the occasion of purchasing) *a field*[e] *with* that money which was *the reward of* his *iniquity:* For his conscience would not suffer him to keep it; but he threw it down, as you know, in the temple, and then going away, he hanged himself. (Mat. xxvii. 5.) But that which should have supported the weight of his body breaking, he could not fully execute his horrid design; *and falling down on his face, he burst asunder in the middle*,[f] *and all his bowels were* in a miserable manner *poured out* upon the ground; so that he expired in the utmost agonies both of body and mind, to the horror of all that beheld him.

19 (*And* by the way, this was a fact so public and notorious that *it was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem*,[g] who could not but take notice of such an extraordinary circumstance; *so that that field* which was so purchased *is* to this day *called in their language*, which is the Syriac dialect, *Aceldama, that is, The field of blood*, as being bought with money which was in more senses than one the price of blood; having been the cursed hire for which Judas sold the blood of his Master, and in effect his own.)

20 Now, said Peter to the disciples, I observed to you that the scripture speaks something of this remarkable event; *for it is written in the book of Psalms*, (Psal. lxix. 25.) "*Let* "*his habitation be desolate, and let no man inhabit it*;" *and* again, (Psal. cix. 8.) "*Let* "*another take* (that is, another shall take and discharge) *his office*." The former of these clauses is already awfully verified, as he is become such a spectacle of horror, that men will detest the very place where he lived: and the other must now be accomplished.
21 *It is necessary therefore, that of the men who have conversed* intimately *with us*, and have attended *during all the time in which the Lord Jesus was going in and coming*
22 *out among us*, and so can testify of all he did and said, *Beginning from the baptism of John*, when he first entered on his ministry, *even to the day in which he was taken up from us* into heaven, *one of these should* be chosen to the apostolic office, to *be made a witness with us*[h] *of* that great and fundamental fact, *his resurrection* from the dead, upon which the proof of his being the Messiah so evidently rests.

ther were about an hundred and twenty,)

16 Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His bishopric let another take.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained, to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

4; xi. 13. and Raphel. *Ex Polyb.* p. 297.) And it best suits the English language to render it so.

d *This scripture should be fulfilled, &c.*] Two prophecies are afterwards quoted for this purpose (ver. 20.) from Psal. lxix. 25; and cix. 8. and it has been matter of much debate whether they do in their original sense refer to Judas, or to the enemies of David. Mr. Jeffery (in his *Review*, p. 179. *et seq.*) maintains the former, and Dr. Sykes (*On the Truth of Christianity*, p. 271, 272.) the latter. It is certain the sixty-ninth Psalm is not to be confined to Judas; for St. Paul (Rom. xi. 9, 10.) has quoted the 22d and 23d verses of it as applicable to the unbelieving Jews in general. There are so many passages in both the Psalms in question more applicable to David than to Christ, that I was very inclinable to render the words before us, *The scripture which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David, must necessarily have been fulfilled concerning Judas, &c.* and to have explained them as if the apostle had said, "That vengeance which David foretold, as to be executed on his enemies, "must much more fall on Judas, whose perfidious and cruel attack "on Christ himself rendered him so much more criminal." But it is certain the order of the Greek words will not so naturally admit this; nor do I remember to have seen the phrase πληρωθηναι περι τινος, the particle επι, or εν, with the *dative case*, being much more proper in that connexion. (Compare Matt. xiii. 14; and Luke xxii. 37.) I therefore conclude, that while David prophesied of the calamities which should befal his persecutors, it was revealed to him by the *Holy Spirit*, that the *enemies* and *murderers* of the Messiah should inherit *those curses* in all their terror, and be yet *more miserable* than the persons on whom they were more immediately to fall. This fact (in itself exceeding probable) I take to be asserted in these words as what was revealed by the same Spirit to the apostle Peter. And I hope the reader will excuse the length of a note which may serve as a key to many other passages of the New Testament.

e *Purchased a field.*] It is worth observing, that an action is sometimes said in scripture to be done by a person who was the occasion of doing it. (Compare Gen. xlii. 38; Exod. xxiii. 8; 1 Kings xiv. 16; Isa. vi. 10; Jer. xxxviii. 23; Rom. xiv. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 16; and 1 Tim. iv. 16.) But some would render εκτησατο, *he possessed the field*, supposing Judas was *buried there*. (See Bren. and Heins. *in loc.*) Dr. Lightfoot thinks he was strangled in the air by the Devil, and thrown down headlong in this field, and so might be said to possess it, and occasioned its being called, *The field of blood*. (*Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. xxvii. 5. and *in loc.*)

f *Falling down on his face, he burst asunder, &c.*] Thus Matthew's account is reconciled with Luke's above. (See note b, on Matt. xxvii. 5.) I find the learned Casaubon has taken the same method: nor can I see any reason to recede from this interpretation, on the most attentive review of the various solutions proposed by Mr. Biscoe. (*Boyle's Lect.* p. 637—644.) But were I to change it, I should prefer to any other that of Limborch,—that some Jew who would have concealed the suicide, cut Judas down and threw him into some pit or valley, where he was afterwards found lying on his face, with his bowels gushed out.—That πρηνης γενομενος should be rendered, not *falling headlong*, but *falling down on his face*, see proved by Raphelius, (*Ex Polyb.* p. 103. *et seq.* and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 358, 359.)

g *It was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*] Aringhius (in his *Rom. Subterran.* p. 436.) mentions a funeral inscription dug up in the *Via Nomentana*, by which it appears that the fate of Judas became a proverbial form of cursing.——The reader will perceive, that with many of the best critics I take this verse to be a parenthesis, to be considered, not as the words of Peter, but of the historian; which effectually answers the objection from the fact having happened but a few days before the speech was delivered. This also accounts for his calling the Syriac, which was spoken by the Jews at that time, their language; for חקל דמא is the Syriac dialect.

h *One of these should be made a witness with us.*] They might reasonably and modestly conclude, that it was fit the number of apostles

SECT. 2. ACTS I.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias

21 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The apostle had no sooner spoke but immediately the whole assembly assented to the reasonableness of this proposal; *and* accordingly *they set up two men*, the one, *Joseph called Barsabas*,[i] *who was* also *surnamed Justus*, on account of the remarkable openness and integrity of his temper; *and* the other, a person of no less eminent note for his piety, who was called *Matthias*.

And they prayed with great solemnity, answerable to the importance of the occasion, 24
saying, *Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all*, and perfectly discernest every secret sentiment of the soul, and all the future circumstances of life! we humbly entreat thee to *show which of these two*, whom we esteem thy faithful servants, *thou hast chosen* to be advanced to this distinguished honour: *That he may take part of this ministry, and* 25
share with thine other servants in the *apostleship, from which Judas has fallen by* [*his*] *transgression*, to his eternal ruin; *that he might go to his own place*,[k] to that miserable world which, in thy righteous judgment, is appointed for the reception of such heinous offenders, and the due punishment of such enormous crimes.

And after this prayer *they gave out their lots* for each;[l] *and the lot fell upon Mat-* 26
thias, on which they concluded that he was the person whom God had appointed: *And* the rest of the apostles accordingly gave him the right hand of fellowship, so that for the future *he was numbered with the eleven apostles*,[m] and made the twelfth of that venerable society of men.

IMPROVEMENT.

It was wisely and well determined by the apostles, to spend this interval of time in devotion and in christian converse; for never have we more reason to expect the communication of the Holy Spirit of God to us, than when we are sharing our time between the one and the other, so far as Providence affords us leisure from our secular affairs. With their devotions they properly joined a care for the future edification of the church, and therefore chose another apostle to complete the number which our Lord had appointed. Ver. 13 14 15

It is dreadful to think how the vacancy happened, and by what a horrible transgression it was that one of this sacred society fell from his office. The hand of God's righteous vengeance was heavy upon him, and brought him in a few hours to public infamy and irrecoverable destruction. So that his example, dreadful as it is, shows us at once that no dignity of office can secure men from sin, and that when they break through the solemn bonds of a remarkably high and eminent profession, they must expect a punishment proportionably signal. 25 17—19

Riches profit not in the day of wrath: (Prov. xi. 4.) The time is swiftly approaching when ill-gotten gain will prove a burthen and a terror, and the wages of unrighteousness will appear as the price of an Aceldama, a field of blood; even in that dreadful day when impenitent sinners go to their own place, to those abodes of misery which are so properly prepared for them, and so justly assigned to them; assigned especially to those whose business (like that of Judas) it was to preach repentance unto others, to show them their transgression, and to warn them of their danger, and who were more especially obliged to have enforced their admonitions and their precepts by the peculiar lustre of their own examples. 18 25

But the badness of the man who in some instances may be advanced to bear the most sacred office, is not to be interpreted to the disgrace of that office itself. The apostles were careful to keep up the honour of theirs by seeking out a more proper person, who might do his part towards taking away the reproach which Judas had brought upon it, and might approve himself a worthy witness of the resurrection of Jesus, on the knowledge of which depended the salvation of millions. After all they refer the matter to the determination of Providence, to which they make a very instructive appeal. Let us always remember the universal and intimate inspection of the Divine Being: *Thou, Lord, knowest the hearts of all!* All their treachery and all their integrity is manifest in thy sight: And, in persons of equal sincerity thou discernest what renders one more fit than another for this or that situation and service. Let it be our desire to follow Providence ourselves; and let us pray that God will set over all his churches *pastors after his own heart, who may feed them with knowledge and understanding.* (Jer. iii. 15.) 21, 22 22 24

The lot is cast into the lap; but, casual as the determination may seem, *the whole disposal thereof is from the Lord.* (Prov. xvi. 33.) Let us own his hand in the determination of every circumstance which befals us, and especially in those by which any solemn and important trust may be committed to us: And may the consideration of it be an additional engagement upon us to discharge it with becoming diligence and entire fidelity! 26

which Christ first chose should be kept up, perhaps in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel. But it is impossible, as well as quite unnecessary, that we should at this distance of time be able to assign a reason why the two that are afterwards mentioned, and no more, were proposed as candidates. Perhaps a longer and more intimate acquaintance with our Lord might entitle them to a preference on this occasion.

i *Joseph called Barsabas.*] The Cambridge Manuscript reads Barnabas; but Dr. Benson seems to have assigned solid reasons for concluding this was not Barnabas the Cyprian, (Acts iv. 36.) of whom we read so often in this history, whose name was also Joses or Joseph, (which are both the same;) but rather the Joseph mentioned Matt. xxvii. 56; and Mark vi. 3; the son of Cleopas or Alpheus, and brother to at least two of the apostles, James the less, and Jude.

k *To his own place.*] Œcumenius, Hammond, and La Cene, seem to interpret this phrase very unnaturally, when they explain it of *a successor going into the place of Judas.* That ιδιον τοπον signifies, *a place proper* and *suitable* for such a wretch, and therefore by God's righteous judgment *appointed for him*, many writers have shown, and particularly Dr. Benson, in his *History of the first Planting of Christianity*, page 23. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 24; John vi. 70, 71; and xvii. 12.)

l *They gave out their lots.*] This was, no doubt, most impartially adjusted, though we know not in what particular method. The honour God has conferred on inquiries by lot, (Josh. vii. 14, 15: 1 Sam. x. 20, 21.) and the custom of fixing the officers of the priests in the temple, while in waiting there, by lot, (1 Chron. xxiv. 5, 7; and Luke i. 9.) might lead them to this turn of thought. Grotius has shown in his note here, that such a designation to sacred offices prevailed also among some pagan nations.

m *Matthias——was numbered with the eleven apostles.*] Though Nathanael and Matthias both signify *the gift of God*, I cannot think that this will prove them (as some have supposed) *the same person.* Nor can I see that the question of the right of chusing church-officers can receive much light from so singular a story, in which so peculiar an act of God was expected.

SECTION III.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, with the former part of the speech which Peter made to the multitude on that great occasion. Acts ii. 1—21.

Acts ii. 1.

SECT. 3. ACTS II.

THE disciples of Jesus, after the choice of Matthias, employed their time in devotion, and continued the same course of religious exercise as before, for several succeeding days.

1 *And when the day of Pentecost*[a] *was completely arrived*,[b] that is, when the morning of the fiftieth day after the passover was come, it being then the first day of the week, the apostles, with the rest of the hundred and twenty disciples, were together; and *they were all* assembled *with* the most *unanimous affection in the same place*, in the upper room which

2 was mentioned before, where they had used to meet. *And on a sudden there was a* very extraordinary and surprising *sound from heaven, as of a rushing violent wind*, which shook the very place, *and* came with such a mighty force, that *it filled all the house where*

3 *they were sitting. And there appeared to them* at the same time a number of *divided tongues*, made *as* it were *of fire*,[c] i. e. bright flames in a pyramidical form, which were so parted as to terminate in several points, and thereby to afford a proper emblem of the marvellous effect attending the appearance, by which they were endowed with a miraculous diversity of languages: *and it* was ordered so, that one of these tongues *rested upon each*

4 *of them*,[d] who were then present in the room. *And* as soon as ever these lambent flames appeared to touch them, *they were all* in a most sensible and extraordinary manner *filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues* than they had ever used or understood before, with light and fervour, and a most ready flow of language, according *as the Spirit gave them a power* and facility *of expressing themselves.*

5 *Now* as this happened at one of the three grand yearly feasts, and at that in which the days were longest, *there were sojourning in Jerusalem* at that time a great number of *pious men* [*that were*,] by their descent or by profession, *Jews;* who were come thither out of all parts of the known world, *from every nation under heaven*,[e] where any of that people dwelt, or any that were proselytes to the Jewish religion.

6 *And when this* strange *report came* to be noised *abroad*,[f] as it presently did, *the multitude* soon *gathered together, and were* quite *confounded* and amazed: *For every one* of this various assembly *heard* one or another of *them*, as they addressed themselves by turns

7 to people of a different language, *speaking* to each of them *in his own* proper *dialect. And they were all astonished* at it beyond measure, *and wondered* at this marvellous event, *saying one to another, Behold*, how unaccountable is this! *Are not all these that speak*

Acts ii. 1.

AND when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them:

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans?

a *The day of Pentecost.*] It has often been observed, that as our Lord was crucified at one of the great Jewish feasts, it was fit that he should be glorified at another. And this of Pentecost was chosen with peculiar propriety, as next succeeding that of the passover at which Christ suffered: and also, as it was celebrated in commemoration of the *giving the law* from Mount Sinai on that day, (Exod. xix. 1, 11.) and as *the first-fruits* were then *offered* and anointed. (Exod. xxiii. 16; and Lev. xxiii. 17.) To these answered the fuller discovery of the gospel on this occasion, and the anointing the first-fruits of the christian church by the effusion of the Spirit, as Brennius has well observed. (See also *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay I. p. 113—115.)——The solemnity of the feast, the general expectation of the Messiah that prevailed among them, and the length of the days, as it was about the middle of summer, would, no doubt, bring great numbers to Jerusalem at that time; who, when they returned home and reported this great event, would naturally make way for greater regard to the apostles when they came to the places where these people dwelt.

b *Was completely arrived.*] The first day of unleavened bread, that is, the fifteenth of Nisan, began this year on Friday evening; and this was the day on which they were to offer the wave-sheaf; and from the morrow after that day, that is, from the Saturday evening, they were to count seven weeks, or forty-nine days, which would bring the fiftieth, that is, the day of Pentecost, then to begin on Saturday evening; so that on the Lord's-day morning it might properly be said to be fully come. See Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. The word συμπληροῦσθαι cannot signify, that the day *was ended*, but that it was *fully come*. Compare Luke i. 57; ii. 21. and see Beza, *in loc.*

c *Divided tongues as of fire.*] This wonderful appearance in the form of fire might be intended to signify the *quickening* and *purifying influences* of the *Spirit*, as well as to illustrate John the Baptist's prediction, that Christ should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. (Matt. iii. 11; and Luke iii. 16.) But I will not venture to affirm, with Mr. Fleming (*Christol.* Vol. I. p. 324.) and Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 364.) that it was to signify that the Shekinah (which appeared in a glorious flame surrounded with a cloud) was now passed from the Jews to the disciples of Jesus. The Jews (as Wolfius tells us) have a tale among them relating to the appearance of some flashes of fire which fell on an assembly of their doctors while they were studying the law; which probably was invented to slur or imitate this important history.—— Bos (*Exercit.* p. 67.) thinks each tongue appeared complete, and that they are said to be divided on account of the distribution that was made of one to each person. But it seems that the division of each might aptly represent the variety of languages with which each person was endowed; and some have thought that the form of the mitres worn by bishops (according to the Roman ritual) bears some allusion to the supposed form of these cloven tongues. ——It is observed by Dr. Lightfoot and others, that as the division of tongues at Babel once introduced confusion, and was the means of casting off the Gentiles from the knowledge of the true God, so now there was a remedy provided by the *gift of tongues* at Zion, to bring the *Gentiles out of darkness into light*, and to *destroy the veil which had been spread over all nations*. (Isa. xxv. 7.) See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* and Grotius, *in loc.*

d *Upon each of them.*] I agree with the learned Dr. Benson, (*Plant. of Christianity.* p. 28, 29.) who thinks (as Jerome and Chrysostom did) that it is probable each of the hundred and twenty shared in this miraculous donation. (See also *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay I. p. 101, 102.) The hundred and twenty mentioned chap. i. 15. are plainly referred to, ver. 1. as the persons here assembled. And as this would best illustrate the pouring forth of the Spirit on the handmaids as well as on the servants of God, (ver. 18.) so it is certain that the manuscripts which would confine this effusion to the apostles are of very small authority. Nor do Beza's arguments on the other side of the question appear to me by any means conclusive. Compare Acts x. 44—46; and xi. 15—17.

e *From every nation under heaven.*] Should this be taken for an hyperbole, we have other instances in scripture of the like way of speaking; as where we read of *cities walled up to heaven*, (Deut. i. 28; ix. 1.) and of the dread of the Jews falling *upon every nation under the whole heaven*. (Deut. ii. 25.) See also Gen. xi. 4; Judg. xx. 16; and Psal. cvii. 26.——But, not to insist upon it that the Jews were then so numerous as to have spread through every country, so that, as Agrippa in Josephus says, "There was not a "people upon earth who had not Jews inhabiting among them:" (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 16. § 4. p. 191. Havercamp.) the expression here can signify no more than that there were some at Jerusalem at that time from all the several nations among whom the Jews were dispersed. (See Lightfoot and Whitby, *in loc.*) It would be very absurd to argue from hence that there must be natives of Britain and America at Jerusalem when this great event happened. And many arguments, drawn from such universal phrases elsewhere, seem as weak as this would be.

f *When this report came abroad.*] De Dieu concludes this must signify thunder; which, he too confidently says, is always the import of βὴ and φωνὴ in the Hellenistic language, and argues from hence that the *rushing wind* (ver. 2.) was attended with thunder. But the following clause, which refers the assembly to the different languages spoken by those on whom the Holy Spirit fell, plainly shows that it was not thunder which brought them together; which, indeed, could hardly occasion their assembling in one place.

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this;

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show won-

by birth and country *Galileans?* *And how* then *do we every one* of us *hear* them, as they direct their speech to so many different people, who are here come together out of so many nations, speaking to each of us *in his own native language?* For while there are among us *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites* or Persians, *and those that inhabit Mesopotamia,*[g] *and* those that dwell too in *Judea,* where the dialect is so different from that of Galilee; *and* likewise the natives of *Cappadocia* and *Pontus, and* of the country more properly called the proconsular *Asia,* as well as the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of *Phrygia and Pamphylia,* of *Egypt and the parts of Africa which are about Cyrene, and the* many *sojourners* in this city [*who are*] *Romans,* some of us native *Jews, and* others of us *proselytes* to the Mosaic religion;[h] Together with *those* of both these sorts who use the language *of Crete, and* those who are *Arabians; we* do every one of us *hear them speaking in our own* native *tongues*[i] *the wonderful works of God,* in the surprising testimonies he has given to the mission of Jesus who was lately crucified, not only by the miracles he wrought, but by his resurrection and ascension. And while they are discoursing of these marvellous events, they run through such a great variety of languages, which no one can suspect they have ever been taught, with so much readiness and propriety, as among the most learned of mankind is perfectly unequalled.

And they were all in a mixture of *amazement and perplexity, and said one to another, What can this* unaccountable appearance possibly *mean?* or what can it be designed to effect? *But others* of them, and particularly those who were native Jews, and understood none of these foreign languages, hearing the sound of their words as a kind of barbarous jargon, derided them, and in a *mocking* and contemptuous manner *said, Surely these men* have begun the festival betimes, and *are* undoubtedly *filled with sweet* intoxicating *wine,*[k] and therefore make this unintelligible noise.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, who were then in company with him, and who had each of them before been speaking in different languages, *raised his voice* so loud that those who had been reproaching them might hear it, *and said to them,* in the tongue that was commonly used among them, *O ye men of Judea, and* especially *all you that inhabit Jerusalem,* whom I would be solicitous in the first place to inform and convince, *let this be known unto you* as to the cause of this extraordinary appearance, *and listen to my words* with an attention becoming the importance of the occasion on which I speak: *For these men are not drunk, as you,* who do not understand them, rashly *suppose;* and it is indeed very uncharitable *for* you to imagine it, considering that *it is* now *but the third hour of the day,*[l] that is, about nine o'clock in the morning, the hour of morning sacrifice; before which, you know, none who have any regard for their character will allow themselves so much as to taste wine, and much less to drink any large quantity of it, whereby they would be rendered incapable of attending the service of the temple on such a solemn festival as this. *But this* which has occasioned so much admiration, and which you know not how to account for, *is that* great event *which was spoken of by the prophet Joel,*[m] chap. ii. 28—32. where it is written, "*And it shall come to pass in the last* "*days,*[n] or in the times of the Messiah, *saith* the ever-blessed *God, I will pour out* an ex- "traordinary effusion *of my Spirit upon all flesh,* that is, upon some of all ranks and "orders, of all ages and nations of men: *And* as the wonderful effect of it, *your sons and* "*your daughters shall prophesy,*[o] *and your young men shall see* prophetic *visions,* "*and your old men shall dream* significant and divinely inspired *dreams. Yea, in those* "*days I will* in a most extraordinary manner *pour out* the gifts *of my Spirit upon my* "*servants, and* even *upon my handmaids; and they shall* also *prophesy,* and shall not "only publish and proclaim the riches of my grace, but shall foretell the judgments that "are coming upon those who shall continue hardened in their sins. *And* this effusion of

g *Elamites, and those that inhabit Mesopotamia.*] Bishop Cumberland takes these to be the remainder of the Jews who had been carried captive into Assyria, first by Tiglath-pileser, (2 Kings xv. 29.) and afterwards by Shalmaneser, and placed in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings xvii. 6.) See Cumb. *Orig. Gent.* p. 225.

h *Romans, Jews, and proselytes.*] It appears from Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, the Roman satirists, and other writers of this age, in a variety of passages well known to the learned, that great numbers of Jews dwelt at Rome about this time, and made many proselytes to their religion. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lecture,* p. 85.

i *We hear them speaking in our own tongues.*] Cyprian and Erasmus, and some later critics, have thought (particularly from ver. 8.) that the miracle was not in the speakers, but the hearers; so that, while the apostle spake his own native Syriac, it would appear Latin to one, and Greek to another, &c. But this must be a mistake; for we read of *their speaking with tongues,* ver. 4. before any foreigners came in upon them. (Compare chap. x. 46; and 1 Cor. xiv. 2.) Nor could what they said, on this supposition, have appeared a jargon to any; which yet we find to have been the case, ver. 13. See Castalio, on ver. 4.

k *Filled with sweet wine.*] There was no *new wine,* or *must,* at the feast of Pentecost, as Beza and many others observe; but γλεῦκος properly signifies *sweet wine.* We are informed by Plutarch, that the ancients had ways of preserving their wine sweet a great while; and such wines are known to be very intoxicating.

l *The third hour of the day.*] Josephus tells us, that on feast-days the Jews seldom eat or drink till noon; (*De Vitâ Sua,* § 54. p. 26. Havere.) which, if it were fact, would (as Grotius observes) render this calumny the more incredible.—As to the computation of the Jewish hours, see § 6. note b, on Acts iii. 1.

m *By the prophet Joel.*] Some have explained this prophecy as referring, in its original sense, to the pouring forth the Spirit on the Jews at their last general conversion; and think Peter's argument is as if he had said, "You need not wonder at such an event "as this, since so much more is at length to be expected." (See Jeffery's *True Grounds,* p. 120.) But, from attending to the context, I am led to conclude, for reasons too long to be here stated, that the prophecy is here applied in its most direct sense, and that the event of this great day, and the destruction of the Jews for rejecting a gospel so confirmed, were originally referred to in it.

n *In the last days.*] Every one knows that *the last days* was a phrase commonly used to denote *the times of the Messiah,* when the gospel should be published, which is the last dispensation of divine grace; but here it seems to have a more particular view to the days immediately preceding the destruction of the Jewish nation, or *the last days of that people,* when the extraordinary means which were in vain employed for their conviction, would fully justify God in the severest vengeance he should execute upon that hardened people.

o *Your sons and daughters shall prophesy.*] Compare Acts xxi. 9. If this miracle had not been foretold, the argument for the truth of christianity from it would, no doubt, have been conclusive: but as it was referred to in the Old Testament, it might dispose the minds of the Jews still more readily to regard it, as it was indeed the more remarkable.

SECT. 3. ACTS II.

" my Spirit shall be followed with a most awful revolution; for *I will give* you to see
" *prodigies in heaven above, and signs upon the earth beneath:*[p] And such destructive
" wars shall arise, as a punishment for the wickedness of those who reject the mercy I offer,
" that there shall be *blood* shed in abundance, *and fire* scattered abroad to consume your
" cities *and* villages, so that *a cloud of smoke* shall ascend from the ruins of them. Yea,
20 " there shall be such confusion and misery, and all regular government both in church and
" state shall be so entirely dissolved, that *the sun shall* as it were *be turned into darkness,*
" *and the moon into blood, before that great and illustrious day of the Lord* shall fully
21 " *come,* in which he will take ample vengeance on every unbeliever. *And it shall come to*
" *pass that whoever shall,* with humble submission to my method of saving grace in my
" Son, *invoke the name of the Lord, shall be saved*[q] from this terrible destruction, and
" brought into a state of security and happiness."

ders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

These premises the apostle Peter afterwards applied to the conviction of those who had rejected and slain our Lord; and the argument wrought most powerfully upon them. But the prosecution and success of this address must be referred to the following sections.

IMPROVEMENT.

With how much attention and delight should we read the history of this glorious event, so frequently referred to in the predictions of our Lord, and of so great importance to the christian cause,—the miraculous descent of the
Ver. 2 Holy Spirit! He came down as a mighty rushing wind, to signify the powerful energy of his operations, whereby
8 the whole world was to be shaken. He fell upon them in tongues of fire, cloven or divided into several parts, to denote the most celebrated effect to be immediately produced, in causing them to speak, with the utmost readiness
4 and propriety, languages they had never learnt. An astonishing miracle! which was intended, not for pomp and
8—11 ostentation, but to render them capable of propagating the gospel to the most distant nations, to which the grace of God had determined to send it.

1 It is observable that this divine gift fell upon them while they were unanimously gathered together; perhaps to intimate, that the influences of the Spirit are most to be expected where there is the greatest unanimity and the greatest devotion. Thus did the blessed Jesus accomplish what had been foretold concerning him, (Matt. iii. 11.) that he should *baptize* his disciples *with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* And surely the sacred flame did not only illuminate their minds with celestial brightness, but did also cause their whole hearts to glow with love to God and zeal for his gospel. To this purpose may he still be imparted to us, whether we hold public or private stations in the church; and may our regards to him be ever most dutifully maintained! Especially may he be poured out upon
11 the ministers of it, to direct them how they should speak the wonderful things of God, and may their hearers, under his gracious energy, gladly receive the word!

Let us not wonder if the more common operations of the Spirit on men's minds be derided by profane ignorance and folly, when there were some, even on this glorious day, who were stupid or malicious enough to ascribe the
13 amazing event we have been surveying, to the supposed intoxication of the apostles, and to say they were full of
14, 15 sweet wine. But let us observe how well Peter vindicated himself and his brethren with words, not of satire and reproach, but of meekness and sobriety, as well as of truth; showing at once the most perfect command both of his
16—18 reason and of his temper. Justly did he apply on this occasion that celebrated prophecy of Joel, in which this grand event is so exactly described. Let us adore the divine goodness, which has poured forth the Spirit like a refreshing dew upon his church. Let us pray that we may all receive it in such degrees as may suit the present state of things: and let us deprecate those judgments which the contempt of the Spirit has too evident a tendency to produce.

9, 20 Justly might God have made our land gloomy and horrible with blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke: Justly might he have turned our sun into darkness and our moon into blood. Let us adore his patience that these national judgments, which are so well deserved, have been thus long withheld. But let us also remember that the great and notable day is approaching, in which *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not* a *gospel* so gloriously attested. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) Then shall these figurative expressions be literally fulfilled: Then shall the heavenly luminaries be quenched in their orbs; *the elements shall melt with fervent heat,* and *the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up:*
21 (2 Pet. 3, 10.) But even then, all those that have believed in Christ, and with obedient love have called upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. May that be through grace our happy portion; and may its prospects be daily brightening upon us, till it shall open in its full lustre, and shine beautiful and glorious amidst the flames of a dissolving world!

p *Prodigies in heaven above, and signs upon the earth beneath.*]—This doubtless refers to the prodigies and signs which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem: (such as, the flaming sword hanging over the city, and the fiery comet pointing down upon it for a year; the light that shone upon the temple and the altar in the night, as if it had been noon-day; the opening of the great and heavy gate of the temple without hands; the voice heard from the most holy place, *Let us depart from hence:* the admonition of Jesus the son of Ananus, crying for seven years together, *Woe, woe, woe!* the vision of contending armies in the air, and of intrenchments thrown up against a city there represented; the terrible thunderings and lightnings, and the dreadful earthquakes, which every one considered as portending some approaching evil:) All which, by the singular providence of God, are recorded by Josephus, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 5. [al. vii. 12.] § 3. *et lib.* iv. *cap.* 4. [al. 7.] § 5.) in that history of his, the truth of which the Emperor Titus attested under his own hand. (See Joseph. *Vit.* § 65. p. 33. Haverc.) And accordingly the greatest part of these circumstances are inserted in Tacitus, (*Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 13.) and happily preserved, though most of his account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem be lost.

q *Whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord, &c.*] This context being quoted thus, was a strong intimation that nothing but their acceptance of the gospel could secure them from impendent ruin. Brennius has proved by an ample collection of texts, (in his note on this place,) that *calling on the name of the Lord* is often put for *the whole of religion:* And if it do not here directly signify invoking Christ, which is sometimes used to express the whole christian character, (compare Acts ix. 14, 21; xxii 16; Rom. x. 12, 13; and 1 Cor. i. 2.) it must imply, that it is impossible for any who reject him to pray in an acceptable manner. How awful a reflection!

SECTION IV.

Peter continues his discourse to the people just after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and shows that Jesus, whom they crucified, was risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah. Acts ii. 22—36.

Acts ii. 22.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you

Acts ii. 22.

SECT. 4. ACTS II.

WHEN Peter had quoted the passage in Joel mentioned above, as referring to the days of the Messiah, he added, *Ye men of Israel*, let me charge it upon you that ye *hear these words* with an attention proportionable to the importance of them: You cannot but remember that there hath lately appeared amongst you a celebrated person, called *Jesus the Nazarene; a man* who was approved and *recommended to you*[a] *by God* himself, *by* those *powerful operations, and wonders, and signs, which God wrought by him in the midst of you*, in your most public places and assemblies; *as ye yourselves* have seen, and cannot take upon you to deny but that ye *also know:* Yet you were so far from paying *him* any becoming regard, that *you* entered into an impious and ungrateful conspiracy against his life; and *have*, in prosecution thereof, *seized* him, even this illustrious prophet, *being given up* into your hands *by the determinate counsel and prescience of God*,[b] who well knew what treatment he would meet from you, *and* for wise and good reasons permitted it to be: Him, I say, *by the hands of* Gentile *sinners*,[c] with public ignominy you *have fastened* [*to the cross*] *and slain*, as if he had been the meanest and vilest of malefactors. But be it known unto you, that God hath abundantly vindicated the honour of this his dear Son, whom you had thus infamously abused, and hath borne a most glorious testimony to his innocence, truth, and dignity; for it is he *whom God hath raised up* from the dead by a miraculous effort of his divine power, *having loosed* the bonds in which he lay, when *the pains of death* had done their work upon him:[d] *as* indeed *it was impossible*, all things considered, *that he should* finally *be held under* the power of *it*.

22 23 24

For David saith concerning him,[e] when he is speaking in the person of the Messiah, (Psal. xvi. 8. et seq.) "*I have regarded the Lord as always before me*,[f] with an assurance that in the greatest trials I am called to, he will continually be ready to appear in my behalf; *because* I know that *he is at my right hand* in the whole series of my labours and sufferings, *that I might not be moved* by any of them. And *for this reason*, upon account of the firm confidence I have in him, *my heart is glad, and my tongue exulteth* in the most cheerful manner; yea, and *moreover too*, even *my* mortal *flesh*, while it lodges in the sepulchre, *shall rest in* a joyful and assured *hope:* Because I am fully satisfied *that thou wilt not leave my soul*, while separated from it, *in the unseen world*;[g] *neither wilt thou permit* even the body of *thine Holy One*, thy peculiar favourite, whom thou hast set apart to such honourable and important services, so much as *to see corruption* in the grave, or to lie so long there as, in the course of nature, to be in danger of putrefaction. *Thou hast made me to know the ways of life*, to which thou wilt assuredly conduct me; and after all my sufferings here, *thou wilt fill me with joy* in those upper and more glorious regions to which thou wilt raise me, making me glad *with* the light of *thy countenance*, and taking me to dwell in thine immediate presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand, where there are everlasting and uninterrupted pleasures."

25 26 27 28

And now, continued Peter, when he had recited these words at large, ye *men* of Israel, whom I respect [*and*] love as my *brethren, permit me to speak freely to you concern-*

29

a *Recommended to you.*] Αποδεδειγμενον εις υμας, *pointed out to you* as the object of your most respectful regards.

b *Prescience of God.*] Grotius, as well as Beza, observes, that προγνωσις must here signify *decree;* and Elsner has shewn it has that signification in approved Greek writers. And it is certain εκδοτος signifies one *given up* into the hands of the enemy. See Elsner and Raphel. *in loc.*

c *By the hands of* Gentile *sinners.*] That is, by the hands of the wicked and idolatrous Romans, who were the immediate agents in the crucifixion of Christ, yet were only the instruments of the Jewish rage and cruelty in what they did. Some copies read it, δια χειρος ανομων, *by the hand of the ungodly.*

d *The pains of death.*] Beza conjectures, (I think with great probability,) that as the Hebrew word חבלי, with the variation only of one little point, may indifferently signify *pains* or *bonds*, the former is here used for the latter, which to be sure agrees best with the connexion. Else it must necessarily signify the state of confinement to which the pains of death had brought him, by an Hebraism which sometimes occurs. Compare Matt. xxiv. 15; and Rev. xvii. 1.

e *David saith concerning him.*] It is plain that εις αυτον here signifies, *of* or *concerning him.* The particle εις has the same import, Eph. v. 32. and προς is likewise used in the same sense, Heb. i. 7. as the prefix ל, and the particle לה, is sometimes in Hebrew put for לו. Compare Gen. xx. 13; xxvi. 7; Esth. iii. 2; Psal. iii. 3; xxxv. 19, 24; xci. 11, and Job xlii. 8. (See Elsner, *in loc.* and Gataker, *On the Title to Antoninus.*) Mr. Jeffery (in his *True Grounds*, p. 121.) observes from this text, and lays great stress upon it every where, that the apostle does not make David to speak these things first of himself, and then of the Messiah only in a secondary sense, but quotes them as referring to Christ alone.

f *I have regarded the Lord as always before me.*] The sixteenth Psalm, from whence this quotation is taken, cannot without great difficulty be wholly explained as spoken in the person of the Messiah; and yet it is very hard to say, on that supposition, where he is first introduced as speaking. We might have imagined the sense of the tenth verse to have been, "I am persuaded *thou wilt* "*not leave my soul in hell*, because *thou wilt not suffer Christ thine* "*Holy One to see corruption* in the grave; and, by what thou "wilt do *for him* in raising him up, thou will give me a security "of my own resurrection." This, I say, might have seemed an easy solution, did not the apostle, in the 31st verse, refer both the clauses to Christ. I therefore suppose the transition to be made immediately after the 7th verse of the Psalm, and to express the instruction which David received from God, in a revelation concerning the Messiah made to him in the night-season; when, perhaps, he had some vision in which he heard him speak the following words.——The passage is here quoted in the words of the Greek translation, something different from the Hebrew; but the sense is much the same.

g *Thou will not leave my soul in the unseen world.*] Beza (to guard against the Popish doctrine of Christ's descent into hell) would render the words as they stand in the Hebrew, לנפשי תעזב, *my corpse in the grave:* And it is certain that *nephesh* and *sheol* have sometimes these significations; (see Whitby and Beza, *in loc.*) and the phrase of *bringing a person's life down to the grave*, or *up from it*, often occurs. (Compare Psal. xxx. 3; xlix. 15; lxxxvi. 13; lxxxviii. 3; lxxxix. 48.)—But as ψυχη, which is the word here used, can hardly be thought to signify *a dead body*, and αδης is generally put for *the state of separate spirits*, (see note f, on Matt. xvi. 18.) the version here given seemed preferable to any other; nor can any just inference be drawn from it in favour of Christ's descent into the hell of the damned.

SECT. 4. ACTS II.

ing the patriarch David who wrote this, and to open a hint which, if pursued, will lead you into the true sense of many other scriptures which you and your teachers are far from understanding. As for the royal Psalmist, you well know *that he is* long since *both dead and buried, and* that *his sepulchre*, in which his dust remains, *is* here *among us* in Jerusalem even *unto this day.*[h] He *therefore* could not say this of himself: but
30 *being a* divinely inspired *prophet, and knowing that God had*, in a special revelation from heaven, solemnly *sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins*, or out of his descendents, *he would, according to the flesh*,[i] when he should send his Son into the world in the human nature, *raise up the* promised *Messiah, to sit on his throne*, and
31 to inherit universal empire. (Psal. cxxxii. 11.) *He*, with a firm reliance on the faithfulness of God, *foreseeing* [*this*] great event, by divine inspiration *spake* the words which I have now been repeating; not meaning them *of* himself, or intending they should be taken in any lower sense, but referring them to *the resurrection of the Messiah;* thereby plainly signifying *that his soul should not be left in the unseen world, nor his flesh* be suffered to *see corruption.*

of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:

31 He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 *This* very *Jesus* then, whom we assert to be the true Messiah, *God hath* now *raised up* according to the tenor of this promise; *of which* resurrection, astonishing as it may seem, *all we* his apostles *are witnesses* on our own personal and certain knowledge; having seen him with our eyes, and examined into the truth of the matter with all possi-
33 ble care. And more than this, we solemnly assure you that, mean and contemptible as this Jesus once appeared among you, he is invested now with sovereign dominion; and *being exalted therefore to* supreme majesty and glory at *the right hand of God, and having*, as the great anointed of the Lord, *received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he hath*, agreeably to the notices he gave us before his ascension, which happened but ten days ago, *shed forth this* miraculous effusion of it, *which* has produced the wonderful effects that *you now see and hear*, and which is given us as an holy unction from above, by which he constitutes us ministers in his church below.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses:

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34 And indeed it appears from other passages of his writings, that the great patriarch whom I mentioned before, had some views to this kingdom of the Messiah; *for David*, who has never yet been raised from the dead, *is not* himself *ascended into heaven* in the body, to be advanced there to the highest dignity and power; *but* plainly intimates that this belonged to one superior to himself, when *he says*, (Psal. cx. 1.) "*The Lord* Jehovah *said* "*unto my Lord*, that is, God the Father said unto the Messiah, (whom, though in one "sense he is to be my son, I honour as my Lord,) *Sit thou* exalted on a throne *at my*
35 "*right hand, Until I make* all that are so presumptuous as to go on to be *thine enemies* "*thy footstool*,[k] and lay them prostrate at thy feet, so that thou mayst trample upon "them at pleasure, as entirely subdued."

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 *Therefore* upon the whole, from this concurrent evidence both of prophecy and miracle, and from the testimony God has given to that Jesus whom we preach, not only by his resurrection from the dead, but by the effusion of the Holy Spirit on his followers, *let all the house of Israel assuredly know*, how contrary soever it may be to their former apprehensions and rooted prejudices, *that God hath made this Jesus whom you* rejected and *crucified*, that *Lord and* that *Messiah* whose kingdom you profess so eagerly to desire, and who will surely come to execute his wrath upon you, if you are still so obstinate as to continue in your sins.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Thus Peter concluded his discourse: and God blessed it as the means of awakening and converting thousands, as we shall see in the following section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 23 LET us firmly believe the wisdom of the divine counsels, and humbly adore the depth of them; according to which, without the least violation of that human freedom on which the morality of our actions depends, those events happen which the wickedness of men as really effects as if Providence were wholly unconcerned in them.

24 Let us thankfully own the riches of that grace which gave our Lord Jesus Christ to be a sacrifice for us, and then raised him triumphant from the grave, to reign *at the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all principality, and power, and might.* (Heb. i. 3. and Eph. i. 21.) In him the prophecies are accomplished:
31 *His soul was not left in hell*, nor did he so much as *see corruption in the grave.* And we may consider his resurrection as a pledge given us for our assurance that God will not abandon us in that ruinous state to which his
28 righteous sentence for a while brings our bodies. He will at length *redeem them from the power of the grave:*

h *His sepulchre is among us unto this day.*] Jerome mentions the remains of David's sepulchre as extant in his time; (Hier. *Epist.* xvi. *ad Marcell.*) and a large account of other testimonies concerning it may be seen in Fabricius. (*Cod. Apoc. Vet. Test.* p. 1063—1070.) It is strange that this sepulchre should have survived so much barbarous rage as we know Jerusalem was often subjected to; but perhaps it was rebuilt in later days. As for the treasures which Josephus so often mentions as found in this sepulchre by Hyrcanus and Herod, (*Antiq. lib.* vii. *cap.* 15. [al. 12.] § 3;—*lib.* xiii. *cap.* 8. [al. 16.] § 4;—*lib.* xvi. *cap.* 7. [al. 11.] § 1;—*et Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 2. § 5. Haverc.) I think, with Beza, the stories have an air of fable.

i *According to the flesh.*] This is expressed in the original in such a manner, with an article prefixed, (το κατα σαρκα αναστησειν τον Χριστον,) as seems to refer these words, not to the loins of David, but to Christ; and so may be an intimation, that it was only with respect to his human nature that the Messiah should descend from David, while there was still a higher nature in which he was superior to him, and was indeed to be regarded as the Son of God. (Compare Rom. i. 3, 4.) It was with a view to this, that Clarius and some others suppose these words to be inserted here by the apostle: and I have therefore so disposed them in the version as to leave no room for any ambiguity.

k *Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*] This text is quoted on this occasion with the happiest address, as suggesting, in the words of David, their great prophetic monarch, how certain their own ruin must be, if they went on to oppose Christ.——Elsner has a fine collection of ancient passages, referring to the custom of trampling upon the vanquished dead or alive.

(Hosea. xiii. 14.) He will show us also the path of life which our Redeemer hath trodden, and, by treading, has marked out for us; and will conduct us to his right hand, where Jesus reigns, and with him everlasting pleasure. In him therefore let our heart be glad, and in him let our tongue rejoice; and when it is thus employed, it will indeed be the glory of our frame. (Psal. xvi. 9.) In this hope let our flesh rest; nor let our faith *stagger at the promise of God*, as if any thing could be hard to Omnipotence. (Rom. iv. 20, 21.) SECT. 4. ACTS II.

In the mean time, beholding this wonderful effusion of the Spirit as the blessed consequence of the ascension and exaltation of Christ, let us, with that affection which becomes his disciples, take our part in his glory and joy. Let us triumph in the thought that God hath now said unto him, *Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.* And while we rejoice in the security which we have as his friends, let us pray that the blessed time may come when every opposing power shall be brought down, and when we shall see that sight for which our eyes so long have been waiting, even *all things put under his feet.* (1 Cor. xv. 25, 27.) Hasten, O Lord, that glorious day; and whatever our station or furniture is, may we be honoured as the happy instruments of doing something, whether by life or by death, in subserviency to this great design! 33 34, 35

SECTION V.

Great numbers are converted by Peter's discourse, and being immediately baptized, signalize themselves by their piety and mutual affection, which produces a farther increase in the church. Acts ii. 37, *to the end.*

Acts ii. 37.

NOW when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Acts ii. 37.

THUS Peter addressed himself to the Jews on the day of Pentecost: arguing from the miraculous communication of the Spirit, that Jesus, being risen from the dead, was declared by God to be the promised Messiah, and charging them, on this incontestable evidence, with the aggravated guilt of being his betrayers and murderers. *Now when they heard* [*these things,*] *they were pierced to the heart* with deep and lively sorrow, and felt such a conviction of their enormous guilt, in the injuries and indignities which they had offered to this glorious, this divine Person, that with the utmost eagerness and solicitude they cried out, *and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men* [*and*] *brethren, what shall we do* to free ourselves from that guilt and danger which our own folly and wickedness have brought upon us? SECT. 5. ACTS II. 37

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And Peter said unto them, Through the divine goodness still continued to you, your case is not yet desperate: *Repent* therefore of this aggravated crime, *and*, in token of your desire to be washed from the guilt of that blood which you have so rashly imprecated upon yourselves and your children, (Matt. xxvii. 25.) *be each of you baptized*[a] *in the name of* the Lord *Jesus Christ*,[b] *in order to the forgiveness of* that and all [*your*] other *sins; and you* not only shall obtain the free and full remission of them all, but also *shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*, by which he will own the work of his grace upon your hearts, and qualify you for serving that Lord whom you have crucified. 38

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

For the promise of the Spirit *is* made, as you see in the forecited passage from Joel, (ver. 17, 18.) *to you, and to your children*,[c] whom God is ready to admit to the same privilege with you: *and* not only so, but it extends to the remotest nations, *to all that are afar off*,[d] as well as to them that are near, even to *as many as the Lord our God shall call* by the preaching of his gospel; which shall be propagated to the ends of the earth, and receive glorious attestations every where, by the effusion of the like miraculous gifts as we have received, on many, and by the communication of the inward graces of the Spirit unto all who shall become obedient to the faith. 39

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Thus Peter addressed himself to the multitude, *and with many other words he bore his testimony* to these important truths, *and* earnestly *exhorted* them to an immediate consideration of the danger of persisting in their infidelity; *saying*, in the conclusion of all, See that you lay these things to heart, receiving them with such regard as the importance of the case requires; renounce that obstinate unbelief, in which you joined with those who crucified Christ, and *be ye saved from* that ruin which will quickly come upon *this perverse* and depraved *generation.* 40

41 Then they that gladly received his words were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto*

And the exhortation was not in vain; for many were awakened and wrought upon by it.

They therefore who received his word with readiness, were baptized: thereby taking upon them the public profession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah: *And there were added* 41

a *Repent, and be each of you baptized.*] They are not only called here to repent, but a submission also to the ordinance of baptism is required of them, in order to the forgiveness of their sins: for though, on their repenting and believing, they were, according to the tenor of the gospel-covenant, entitled to the remission of their sins; yet as Christ had for wise reasons appointed this solemn rite as a token of their taking up the christian profession in a public manner, there could have been no sufficient evidence of the truth of their repentance and faith, if this precept had not been obeyed.

b *In the name of Jesus Christ.*] The learned Vitringa has taken a great deal of pains to show that the phrases, βαπτιζεσθαι εις Χριστον, εις ονομα Χριστου, εν ονοματι Χριστου, and επι ονοματι Χριστου, have different significations; and labours to prove that the last phrase (which is here used) signifies, not only (as Le Clerc understands it) *being numbered among those who are called by his name*, but *professing to devote themselves to the glory of it.* See Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* iii. *cap.* 22.

c *The promise is to you, and to your children.*] Considering that the gift of the Spirit had been mentioned just before, it seems most natural to interpret this as a reference to that passage in Joel which had been so largely recited above, (ver. 17. *et seq.*) where God promises *the effusion of the Spirit on their sons and their daughters:* And accordingly I have paraphrased the latter clause of this verse as referring to its extraordinary gifts; and the rather, as the sanctifying influences of the Spirit must already have been received, to prepare them for entering into the church by baptism. But if the promise be interpreted as referring to a remoter clause, the forgiveness of their sins, this whole verse must be taken in a greater latitude, as referring to the encouragement which all future converts and their children had to expect the benefits of the gospel. In which view, I think, it would much favour infant baptism, as many writers on the subject have largely shown.

d *To all that are afar off.*] Since Peter knew nothing as yet of the intended calling of the Gentiles, he could only mean by this, that the gospel should be preached to all the dispersed of Israel in distant nations: But the Spirit of God might have a farther view.

SECT. 5. ACTS II.

to the number of [*the disciples*] *that very day about three thousand souls.*[e] Nor was this only a transport of sudden passion, with which they were affected only for the present, with an impression that quickly wore off; but, on the contrary, it produced the most solid and lasting effects. *And*, notwithstanding all the apparent danger to which they were exposed, *they continued stedfast in* their attendance on the word which *the apostles* 42 preached, and resolutely adhered to their *doctrine*.[f] And though many of them that believed were such as had come thither out of foreign countries, who would otherwise have returned home immediately after the feast, they staid a considerable time longer at Jerusalem, to be more thoroughly instructed in the christian faith; *and* they all lived in the most endearing *fellowship* and intimate friendship with each other, *and* particularly expressed their mutual affection *in breaking of bread* together,[g] *and* joining *in* the exercise of social 43 *prayer*. *And* many others who were not converted, when they took notice of this wonderful effect of the apostles' preaching, were mightily struck and impressed with the thought of it; so that a reverential *fear* and inward dread *fell upon every soul*, and spread itself over the whole city and neighbourhood, at the sight of so unexampled an event, which they apprehended might be the forerunner of some public calamity on those who had slain that Jesus, of whom it was declared by his disciples that it was all effected by his power: *And* the consternation was farther increased, as *many miracles and signs*, which plainly showed an extraordinary divine interposition, *were wrought by the apostles* in his name. 44 *And all that believed were* together, meeting as frequently as possible *in the same place*:[h] *and* such was their mutual affection and love to each other, that *they had all* 45 *things in common*.[i] *And* this generous principle went so far, that *they* who had estates or any other valuable substance, *sold their possessions and effects, and* readily *divided* the price of *them to all* their brethren, *as every one had* particular *necessity*. (Compare chap. 46 iv. 34, 35.) *And they continued* resolutely and *unanimously in the temple* at the appointed hours of public worship *every day: And* at other times they associated as frequently as they could, *breaking bread from house to house*, each family making entertainments for their brethren, especially for those who were sojourners in Jerusalem. And *they partook of their* common *refreshment with* the greatest *joy* on the side of those that made the entertainments, *and* with disinterested *simplicity of heart* in those who received them, 47 and on all sides, with the sincerest sentiments of devotion and friendship. Such was the effect the gospel had upon them: and in this manner they went on, *praising God* for the riches of his grace to them, *and having* in the general that *favour* and respect *among all the people* which so amiable and benevolent a conduct would naturally secure. *And the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whom they had given up their names, *added daily to the church* considerable numbers of *those* happy souls *who* by this means *were saved* from the general destruction which was approaching, and from the future punishment to which they would otherwise have been transmitted by it.

them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart;

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

IMPROVEMENT.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; and far more *beautiful* than *a jewel of gold, or an ornament of fine gold*, is *a wise reprover on an obedient ear.* (Prov. xxvii. 6; xxv. 12.) Happy are they who feel such an holy Ver. 37 compunction of soul as these penitents did! *Salvation is come to their house*, and though they *sow in tears*, they

e *There were added—that very day about three thousand souls.*] It is commonly said that all these were *converted by one sermon.* But it is probable, that while Peter was preaching in the Syriac language, the other apostles were preaching at some small distance, much to the same purpose, in other languages; and it is not surely to be imagined that none of them but Peter should be blessed as the means of converting any soul; not to insist upon it that he himself might deliver several discourses this day to different auditories, when the concourse of people was so great, and their languages so various.—It will not be improper to add, that προστεθησαν emphatically signifies, *to pass over to a body of men*, as Bos, Raphelius, and Elsner have shown; and that Elsner has shown at large, in a very curious note on this clause, not only (as Gataker, Raphelius, and many others have,) that *souls* often signifies *persons* in the Greek and Latin classics, but also that Jamblicus, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, has exactly imitated this passage, in the account he gives of that philosopher's success in Italy, as proselyting two thousand by one discourse, engaging them to continue with him, frequently worshipping in the temples, and sharing their goods in common, as these primitive christians did: Facts of which we have no manner of convincing evidence, and which were probably intended to slur christianity by an invidious comparison. (Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 375, 376.) Compare § 90. note c.

f *They continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine.*] This may intimate, on the one hand, that many efforts were made to shake their resolution; and on the other, that upon fuller inquiry, they found all things as the apostles had represented.

g *In breaking of bread.*] Though we have great reason to believe that the Eucharist was often celebrated among these primitive converts, perhaps much oftener than every Lord's day, yet I cannot see reason to conclude, with Suicer, (*Thesaur. Eccles.* Vol. II. p. 105.) Lightfoot, Pearson, and many others, that this phrase must here refer to it, since it may undoubtedly signify common meals, as Casaubon, Grotius, Wolfius, and several others have shown; and in this sense the phrase is used, Luke xxiv. 35. where it is plain the Eucharist could not be intended.

h *In the same place.*] Dr. Whitby pleads that, as they were at least three thousand one hundred and twenty, they could not be in the same place, and therefore would understand it of communion in the same action. He would rather render it, (as our translation does,) they were together; and produces several places from the Septuagint to this purpose, as Ezra iv. 3; Psal. xlix. 2; Isa. lxvi. 17; Jer. vi. 12. &c. But, as it generally signifies, *an assembly in the same place*, and many larger assemblies than of three or four thousand people are held, it seemed best to render it thus, only qualifying it as in the paraphrase, especially as επι το αυτο has plainly this sense, ver. 1.

i *Had all things in common.*] Peculiar reasons made this community of goods eligible at this time: not only as so many sojourners, who had come from other parts, would justly be desirous to continue at Jerusalem much longer than they intended when they came up to the feast, that they might get a thorough knowledge of the gospel, but as the prospect likewise of the Roman conquests, which, according to Christ's known prediction, were soon to swallow up all Jewish property, would of course dispose many more readily to sell their lands. But the New Testament abounds with passages which plainly show this was never intended for a general practice.——None can reasonably imagine that the number of christian converts, even then at Jerusalem, is to be accounted for by a desire to share in these divided goods: For it is evident, that as the portion each could have would be very small, so the hardships to be endured for a christian profession would soon counterbalance such advantages: and accordingly we find the converts at Jerusalem were soon reduced to such necessitous circumstances, as to need relief by the contributions of their Gentile brethren. Candour would rather lead men to argue the incontestable evidence of the gospel, from its prevailing on the professors of it to part with their estates to relieve persons who, excepting the community of their faith, had no particular claim to their regards. If such instances were numerous, this argument is strengthened in proportion; and if they be supposed few, the objection is proportionably weakened.

shall reap in joy. (Psal. cxxvi. 5.) What reason have we for thankfulness, that when we are crying out, What shall we do? the gospel gives us so ready an answer, and directs us to faith and repentance as the sure way by which we may obtain the remission of our sins, and at length rise to an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Let us rejoice that the promise is to us and to our seed, and that the important blessings of it will run down from generation to generation. And let all the ardour of our souls be awakened to secure those blessings, and to be saved from that ruin in which we shall otherwise be involved with the crooked and perverse generation among which we live. SECT. 5. ACTS II. 40

Glorious effect of this convincing and excellent discourse, when three thousand were in one day added to the church! three thousand, who not only expressed some present good impressions and resolutions, but continued stedfast in the religion they had embraced, and sacrificed all their worldly interests to it. How glorious an earnest of the future success of the gospel! How great an encouragement to the apostles in all the difficulties they were to encounter; and how convincing a proof to all ages of its truth! since all these proselytes were made upon the spot, where, if it had been false, it is impossible it should have been believed by any one rational enquirer, how mean soever his capacity, or how low soever his rank in life had been. 41 42

Let us reflect with pleasure on the happy change produced in the character and state of these converts:—Bitter as the first pangs of their convictions were, anguish soon yielded to delight: Pardon of sin, and the hope of glory, added a relish, before unknown, to the supports of nature, the accommodations of life, and the endearments of friendship. Whilst their hearts were opened in sentiments of gratitude to God, who had provided a laver for their crimson sins, which rendered them like wool and like snow; and to that Redeemer who had saved them by that blood which they had cruelly and impiously shed,—they were also dilated in liberality and bounty; and they undoubtedly found a rich equivalent for all the worldly possessions which they resigned, in that holy joy which sprang up in their souls when the treasures of the gospel were opened to them, and dealt out with so generous a hand. 46 47 44 45

So may the kingdom of Christ spread and flourish in the souls of men! So may that blessed time come when, through the operation of the same Spirit, (for that Spirit is for ever the same,) nations shall be born in a day! Let us not despair: *the morning* was *glorious*, and *in the even-tide it shall be light.* (Zech. xiv. 7.) In the mean time, let us thankfully own whatever progress christianity may be making amongst us or others, though by slow degrees; and acknowledge that it is the great Lord of the church who, by his secret but powerful influence, adds unto its respective societies such as shall be saved. May the additions every where be numerous, and may the great Author of all good be more thankfully owned in them all! 47

SECTION VI.

Peter and John, quickly after the feast of Pentecost, cure a man who had been lame from his birth, at the temple gate, which occasions a great concourse of admiring spectators. Acts iii. 1—11.

ACTS iii. 1.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

ACTS iii. 1.

NOW while the church was in the flourishing state described above, an extraordinary circumstance happened which tended still more to increase its numbers and reputation: For on a certain day *about that time*,[a] *Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer*, [*being*] *the ninth hour*, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon;[b] which was the usual time of day when great numbers attended the evening sacrifice, and joined their prayers with those of the priest who was burning incense before the Lord. (Compare Luke i. 10. SECT. 6. ACTS III. 1

2 And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple:

And a certain man, well known among them that frequented the place, *who had been lame from his mother's womb*, by a weakness in his ankles, which rendered him incapable of walking, *was carried* thither by the help of others; *whom they daily* brought and *laid* down *at the* eastern *gate of the temple*, *which is called* the *Beautiful* gate,[c] being made of Corinthian brass, and richly adorned with the most curious workmanship: and here he lay, *to ask alms of those that entered into the temple* to pay their devotion there, as such charitable actions seemed peculiarly suitable when men were going to make their supplications to the God of mercy; and the relief that he obtained there was the only means he had for his subsistence. Such was the case of this poor cripple, *who, seeing Peter and John about* 2

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

to go into the temple, applied himself to them among the rest, and *begged to receive an alms* of them. *But Peter*, being then (as was observed before) *with John* the beloved disciple, felt at that time a strong emotion of soul, which intimated to him that the divine energy was then to be displayed in an illustrious miracle to be wrought by his means: and turning therefore to the poor man, and *looking stedfastly upon him*, he *said*, *Look upon us. And* accordingly *he fixed his eyes upon them*, as *expecting to receive something* 3 4 5

4 And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

a *About that time.*] Thus I would chuse, with Grotius, to render the words επι το αυτο, at the beginning of this chapter, as it does not seem to suit so well with the original, to take them to imply no more than that Peter and John went up together to the temple. I see no reason to suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, that this happened the same day on which the Spirit was miraculously poured out, or to conclude, with others, that it was not till the next year, or at least several months after. The time is no where determined, but it appears most probable that it was soon after the feast of Pentecost. Compare note c, on Acts iv. 4. § 8.

b *At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*] It may suffice once for all to observe, that the Jews divided the time, from the rising to the setting of the sun, into twelve hours, which were consequently, at different times of the year, of unequal length, as the days were longer or shorter. When we say, therefore, (as we often do in this work,) that the third hour was about nine in the morning, the ninth about three in the afternoon, &c. we are not to be understood to speak with the utmost exactness. The third hour was the middle space between sun-rising and noon, which, if the sun rose at five, was half an hour after eight, if at seven, was half an hour after nine, &c.——The chief hours of prayer were the third and the ninth; at which seasons the morning and evening sacrifices were offered, and incense, as a kind of emblem representing prayer, burnt on the golden altar. See Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 4. [al 8.] § 3.

c *Called* the *Beautiful* gate.] This gate, which was added by Herod to the court of the Gentiles, was thirty cubits high, and fifteen broad, and made of Corinthian brass, more pompous in its workmanship and splendour than those that were covered with silver and gold. (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 3.) Josephus, as our present copies stand, says it was the outer gate, but Lud. Capellus thinks this reading is wrong, and that it was the inner gate between the court of the Gentiles and that of Israel; and Grotius allows of his reasoning. See Grotius, *in loc.*

SECT. 6. ACTS III.

from them for the relief of his necessities. ***But Peter***, under the divine impulse, intended him a far more important favour; and therefore *said*, As for *silver and gold, I have none* of either to impart to thee,[d] were I ever so free to do it; *but what I have* in my power *I* willingly *give thee*, and thou shalt find it not less valuable: I say unto thee, therefore, *in the* great and prevailing *name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, and as a proof that he is indeed the Messiah, *rise up and walk. And* Peter *taking him by the right hand*, encouraged him to do as *he* had said, and *raised him up: And immediately* on his speaking this, and touching him, *his feet and* his *ankle bones*, which had before been disabled, *were* in an extraordinary manner *strengthened*, and reduced to their proper situation. *And leaping up* from the place where he lay, *he* first *stood* in an erect posture, which he had never before been able to do, *and* then *walked about* with strength and steadiness, *and entered with them into* the court of *the temple*, there to offer his first-fruits of thanksgiving; sometimes *walking*, *and* sometimes *leaping* for joy, *and*, in a rapture of astonishment and thankfulness, *praising God* for so singular a mercy manifested to him. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 6.)

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lift *him* up; and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength.

8 And he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 *And all the people* who were there present, *saw him* thus *walking* in the court of the temple, and the cloister adjacent to it, *and* heard him *praising God* with this uncommon ecstasy of delight: *And they knew him* perfectly well, *that this was he who had sat* so long *at the Beautiful gate of the temple*, to beg *for alms* of those that entered in and came out: *And they were filled with* awful *astonishment*, *and* felt in themselves likewise a kind of joyful *ecstasy*, something resembling his, *at that* miraculous event *which had befallen him.*

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 *And* upon this, *while the lame man who was* thus wonderfully *healed*, full of the tenderest sentiments of gratitude, still *kept his hold of Peter and John*,[e] and walked on between them, sometimes taking them by the hand, and sometimes embracing them as his great benefactors, and the means of his deliverance,—*all the people* in the neighbouring parts, alarmed with so strange a story, *ran together to them in* great *amazement*, *to the* spacious and celebrated *portico* of the temple, which (for reasons elsewhere assigned) was *called Solomon's* portico.[f] And Peter observing the great concourse of people, and finding that they were exceedingly affected with the miracle which had been wrought, took that opportunity of making a very instructive discourse to them, which will be recorded in the ensuing section.

11 And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 HAPPY are those souls who are so formed for devotion, that the proper returning seasons of it, whether public or private, are always welcome! Doubly delightful that friendship which, like this of Peter and John, is endeared not only by *taking sweet counsel together*, but by *going to the house of God in company!* (Psal. lv. 14.)

If we desire this devotion should be acceptable, let us endeavour not only to lay aside all the malignant passions, and to *lift up holy hands without wrath;* (1 Tim. ii. 8.) but let us stretch out our hands in works of benevolence 3, 4 and kindness. To our piety let us add the most diffusive charity which our circumstances will permit; and there 6 are none whose circumstances will forbid every exercise of it. As for those that have neither silver nor gold, such as they have let them give.

These holy apostles, we see, had not enriched themselves by being intrusted with the distribution of those goods which were laid at their feet; but had approved themselves faithful stewards: The members of Christ were far dearer to them than any temporal interest of their own; and fatally, sure, would the church in all ages have been 6 mistaken, if it had measured the worth of its pastors by their wealth. They bestowed nevertheless a much more valuable bounty: And if it be more desirable to heal men's bodies than to enrich them, how much more advantageous is it to be the instrument of healing their souls! which, if it be ever accomplished, must surely be in the same name, even that of Jesus of Nazareth. May he strengthen the feeble powers of fallen nature, while we are attempting 7, 9 to raise men up; and may spiritual health and vigour, when restored, be improved, like the cure wrought on this 8 lame man, in the service of God, and a thankful acknowledgment of his goodness!

We are not to wonder, that as the name of Jesus, their great Deliverer, is incomparably precious to all that truly believe, such have also some peculiarly tender friendships for the persons by whose means he has wrought this good 11 work upon them. May many such friendships be formed now, and be perfected in glory; and, in the mean time, may the ministers of Christ be watching every opportunity of doing good, and especially when they see men under any lively impressions which tend towards religion! May they have that holy mixture of zeal and prudence which taught the apostles now to speak a word in season; a word which proved so remarkably good, and was owned by God in so singular a manner for the conversion and salvation of multitudes that heard it!

d *Silver and gold I have none.*] This was after the estates were sold, (chap. ii. 45.) and plainly shows how far the apostles were from enriching themselves by the treasures which passed through their hands, as Mr. Reynolds well observes in his *Letters to a Deist*, No. iii. p. 242. By his mentioning gold as well as silver, (which a beggar like this could not expect to receive,) he probably meant to speak of himself as continuing still a poor man, and not merely to say that he had no gold about him.

e *Kept his hold of Peter and John.*] Perhaps fearing his lameness should return if he lost sight of them, as Beza and others have observed.

f *The portico called Solomon's.*] The reason why it was so called, and what a sort of building it was, may be seen in note b, on John x. 23. p. 263. To which we may add, that this is said to have been the only part of the temple which was not destroyed by the Chaldeans.

SECTION VII.

Peter makes a most affectionate discourse to the people assembled in the temple, on occasion of the cure of the lame man. Acts iii. 12, *to the end.*

Acts iii. 12.

AND when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people,—

Acts iii 12.

THE miraculous cure of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, was presently reported in the city, and occasioned (as we have seen before) a vast concourse of people, who ran together to the temple, and gathered in crowds about Peter and John, astonished at so marvellous a cure, and eager to behold the persons who had wrought it. *And Peter seeing* [*this,*] was ready to improve it as a proper opportunity of renewing his address to them upon that important errand with which, as an apostle of Jesus, he was charged; accordingly he *answered* those of *the people* who were there assembled, and were earnestly inquiring into the circumstances of the fact, in the following manner: SECT. 7. ACTS III. 12

—Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

Ye men of Israel, why do ye wonder so *at this* which has now happened, when so much greater miracles have lately been performed among you? *or why do ye fix your eyes* so earnestly *on us*, with that astonishment which your looks express, *as if* it were *by our own power, or* by any peculiar *piety* and holiness of ours, that *we had made this* poor *man* able *to walk?* We would by no means take the honour of this miracle to ourselves, but would direct your views unto the great Original of all, even *the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob*, whom we adore and reverence as *the God of our fathers*;[a] and would have you to consider what has now happened as a signal proof that he *hath glorified his Son Jesus*, and given all power into his hands, even that Jesus *whom you*, kind as his design and exemplary as his life was, ungratefully *delivered up* to the Roman power as a criminal, *and* treated with such vile contempt as that you openly *renounced* and refused to accept of *him in the presence of Pilate, when he* was satisfied of his innocence, and *determined to release him.* *But you*, I say, *renounced the Holy and Righteous One*, declaring that you would not own him as your king, nor even be contented to admit of his discharge, when it was offered by the Roman governor, and pressed upon you; *and* were so set against him, that with outrageous clamour you *desired* rather that Barabbas, one of the most infamous of mankind, a robber and *a murderer, might be granted* and released *unto you.* *And* while you asked for the deliverance of so vile a wretch, you inhumanly and insolently *killed* him who is *the* great Author and *Prince of life*, the only person who had power to conduct you to it;[b] *whom* nevertheless *God has* amply vindicated, having *raised* him up *from the dead; of which we* his apostles *are witnesses*, upon a repeated testimony of our own senses, in circumstances in which it was impossible that they should be deceived. *And* God is still continuing to heap new honours upon him, whom you have treated with so much infamy; for be it known unto you, it is *by faith in his name* that *he hath strengthened this* poor *man*,[c] *whom you see* here before you, *and* whom you *know* to have been unable from his birth to walk: [*Yea,*] I repeat it again, as what highly concerns you all to know and regard, It is *his name, and the faith which is* centred *in him*, and which derives its efficacy from his power, that *has given him this perfect* strength and *soundness* which he now manifests *before you all.*

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you:

5 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

And now, brethren, while I am urging this for your conviction, that I may lead you to repent of your great wickedness in crucifying so excellent and so divine a Person, I would not aggravate the crime you have been guilty of beyond due bounds, so as to drive you to despair; as *I know that* it was *through ignorance* of his true character that *you did* [*it,*] *as* [*did*] *also your rulers*,[d] by whom you were led on and prompted to it: For surely if the dignity and greatness of his person, and his divine authority and mission, had been known, both you and they must have treated him in a very different manner. (Compare 1 Cor. ii. 8.) *But God* permitted this that you have done, and overruled it for wise and gracious purposes; and *hath thus fulfilled those things which he* so plainly had *foretold by the mouth of all his prophets* in the various ages of the world: even *that Christ should suffer* as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of his people. (Compare Acts xiii. 27.)

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

See to it *therefore* that it be your immediate care to secure an interest in the benefits purchased by his death: And to this purpose let us exhort you to *repent* of your iniquities, *and*, with a sense of what you have done amiss, to *turn* to God in the way of sincere and universal obedience, *that so your sins may be blotted out*, and you may be delivered from the heavy burden of your guilt; *that seasons of* sacred *refreshment* and delight *may come* upon you *from the presence of the Lord*:[e] *And that*, in consequence of your complying

19 Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

20 And he shall send Je-

a *The God of our Fathers.*] This was wisely introduced here in the beginning of his discourse, that it might appear they taught no new religion inconsistent with the Mosaic, and were far from having the least design to divert their regards from the God of Israel.—For the force of the word ηρνησασθε, which we have rendered, *renounced*, see Heins. *Exercit. Sacr.* p. 254, 255.

b *Killed the Prince of life.*] Even him to whom the Father had given to have life in himself, (John v. 26.) and whom he had appointed to conduct his followers to life and glory. The contrast between their killing such a person, and interceding for the pardon of a murderer, a destroyer of life, has a peculiar energy.

c *And by faith in his name he hath strengthened, &c.*] The construction of the original, as it is commonly pointed, is so exceedingly perplexed, that Heinsius's manner of pointing seems greatly to be preferred. He places a period after στηριξεν, referring that verb to ο Θεος, in the preceding verse, and Το ονομα to εδωκεν, in the latter clause of this.

d *Through ignorance you did it, &c.*] Probably, if it had not been so, they would have been immediately destroyed, or reserved to vengeance without any offer of pardon. Yet it is plain their ignorance, being in itself highly criminal amidst such means of information, did not excuse them from great guilt.

e *That seasons of refreshment may come, &c.*] So it is that Tertullian, Luther, Heinsius, Lightfoot, De Dieu, and Raphelius, (*Ex. Herod.* p. 320.) I think very reasonably, render the words οπως αν ελθωσιν, &c. as the same phrase is used Luke ii. 35. οπως αν αποκα-

SECT. 7. ——— ACTS III.

with this important counsel, you may not only be received to all the joys of a state of pardon and divine acceptance, but *he may* at length *send unto you* this *Jesus Christ, who was* so long *before appointed*[f] by God to this blessed purpose, and represented and proclaimed under such a variety of symbols as the great Saviour of lost sinners; that having triumphed over all his enemies, and accomplished all the prophecies as to the prosperity and glory of his church on earth, he may finally receive you and all his faithful servants to complete and eternal happiness above. Submit yourselves this day, then, to this glorious Redeemer, *whom* you must not *indeed* expect as immediately to appear in person among you; for *heaven must* continue to *receive* and retain him *till the* long-expected and happy *times of the regulation of all things*,[g] that is, till the great appointed day when God will rectify all the seeming irregularities of his present dispensations, and make the cause of righteousness and truth for ever triumphant and glorious: *Concerning which* [*great events*,] (that is, that such a Saviour should be raised up, and should at length be fixed in universal dominion, and the like,) *God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets from the beginning of time*.[h]

sus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.

For Moses, the first of these prophets whose writings are come down to us, has in the plainest terms described him, when he *said to the fathers* in his early days,[i] (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.) "*Surely a prophet shall the Lord your God* in after-times *raise up unto* "*you*, out of the families *of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear* and hearken "to *in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass*, [*that*] "*every soul who will not hearken to that prophet*, and be obedient to him, *shall be cut* "*off from among the people* without mercy,[k] and be made an example of the severest "punishment due to such aggravated and ungrateful rebellion." *Yea, and* those that succeeded Moses, even *all the prophets from Samuel,*[l] *and those that follow after, as many as spoke* any thing largely concerning the future purposes and schemes of Divine Providence, *have also foretold these* important *days*, which, by the singular favour of God to you, ye are now so happy as to see.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Let us now, therefore, solemnly entreat you to regard and improve these declarations in a becoming manner: for you have peculiar obligations to do it, as *you are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God constituted* of old *with our fathers, saying to Abraham* again and again, (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.) "*And in thy seed* "*shall all the families of the earth be blessed*." And accordingly this Messiah, who was promised as so extensive and universal a blessing, has sprung from him; and *to you first*,[m] *God having raised up his child Jesus* from the loins of this pious patriarch, *has sent him* with ample demonstrations of his divine mission, lately in his own person, and now by our ministry and the effusion of his Spirit, to offer pardon and salvation to you, and *to bless you, every one of you turning from your iniquities*;[n] in which, though by profession you are God's people, you have been so long indulging yourselves; nor are the vilest and most aggravated sinners among you excepted from the grace of such an invitation. Let it therefore be your most solicitous care that this gracious message may not be addressed to you in vain.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

λυφθωσιν, &c. *that the thoughts may be revealed;* and Matt. vi. 5. οπως αν φανωσι, *that they may be seen.* (See also Acts xv. 17; and Rom. iii. 4.) Erasmus and Piscator render it, *Seeing times of refreshment are come;* and Beza, *After that*, or, *when they shall come:* But the authorities produced in favour of this version seem not sufficient to justify it; nor was the blotting out the sins of penitents deferred to any distant time. Divine refreshment would no doubt immediately mingle itself with a sense of pardon, and eternal happiness would certainly at length succeed; but the following clause seems to intimate that Peter apprehended the conversion of the Jews, as a people, would be attended with some extraordinary scene of prosperity and joy, and open a speedy way to Christ's descent from heaven, in order to the restitution of all things.——I have the pleasure, since I wrote this, to find that the learned Vitringa agrees with me in this interpretation. Vitring. *Observ. Sacr. lib.* v. *cap.* 6. § 14.

f *Before appointed.*] Instead of προκεκηρυγμενον, *before preached*, I here follow Beza in reading προκεχειρισμενον, as Tertullian and several of the fathers quote it, and the Alexandrian and several other valuable manuscripts, and ancient versions likewise, have it: and then υμιν must (as in this version) be referred to αποστειλη, *shall send to you, &c.*

g *The regulation of all things.*] This' αποκαταστασις may so well be explained of regulating the present disorders in the moral world, and the seeming inequalities of providential dispensations, that it is surprising to find Dr. Thomas Burnet, Mr. Whiston, and other learned writers, urging it for such a restoration of the paradisaical state of the earth as they on their different hypotheses have ventured to assert, without any clear warrant from Scripture, and amidst a thousand difficulties which clog our conceptions of it. (Compare note k, on Matt. xvii. 11. p. 184.)

h *From the beginning of time.*] Se note b, on Luke i. 70.

i *Moses said to the fathers.*] This quotation from Deut. xviii. 15. *et seq.* does in its primary sense refer to the Messiah, as Dr. Bullock and Mr. Jeffery have excellently shown; he being, like Moses, not only a prophet, but a Saviour and a Lawgiver too. On this scripture does Limborch chiefly build, in that noble controversy of his with Orobio, most justly called *Amica Collatio cum erudito Judæo*, which not only contains a variety of beautiful, and some of them very uncommon, arguments, but is also on both sides so fine a model of a genteel and amicable manner of debating the most momentous question, as it would have been much for the credit of their religion and of themselves, if all other advocates for christianity had followed. Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* is written with much of the same decent spirit, though by no means with equal compass and solidity of thought.

k *Shall be cut off from among the people.*] One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of Moses, their favourite prophet, out of a pretended zeal for whom they were ready to reject christianity, and to attempt its destruction. See above, § 4. note k.

l *All the prophets from Samuel.*] As Samuel is the earliest prophet next to Moses, whose writings are come down to us, and as the books which go under his name, and were probably begun by his pen, speak very expressly of the Messiah, (1 Sam. ii. 10; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3—5.) nothing can be more unnecessary, and hardly any thing more unnatural, than to draw an argument from this passage to support the notion of Samuel's being the author of the Pentateuch, which many texts in the Old and New Testament seem most directly to contradict. (See Lord Barrington's *Essay on Var. Dispensat.* Appendix, No. ii.) It would be trifling to argue from this expression of *all the prophets*, that every one of them, and particularly Jonah and Obadiah, must have said somewhat of the Messiah. It is abundantly sufficient that it is true of the prophets in general.

m *To you first.*] Accordingly the gospel was (by the astonishing grace of our blessed Redeemer) every where offered first to the Jews. Had it been otherwise, humanly speaking, many who were converted in this method might have been exasperated and lost.

n *Every one of you turning from your iniquities.*] That is, All those of you that turn from sin shall be entitled to his blessing. This, which is just equivalent to Beza's, seems a natural version of the words εν το αποστρεφειν εκαστον, &c. And I chuse it, because it is plain (as Orobio, with his usual sagacity, objects to Limborch) that Christ did not in fact turn every one of them from their iniquities, though it must be allowed that he took such steps as were very proper for that purpose: and the version seems farther preferable, as the apostle knew that the Jews would in fact reject the gospel, and bring destruction on themselves as a nation by that means.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY the minister whose heart is thus intent upon all opportunities of doing good, as these holy apostles were! Happy that faithful servant who, like them, arrogates nothing to himself, but centres the praise of all in him who is the great Source from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds! Happy the man who is himself willing to be forgotten and overlooked, that God may be remembered and owned! He, like this wise master-builder, will lay this foundation deep in a sense of sin, and will charge it with all its aggravations on the sinner, that he may thereby render the tidings of a Saviour welcome; which they can never be till this burden has been felt. Yet will he, like Peter, conduct the charge with tenderness and respect, and be cautious not to overload even the greatest offender. SECT. 7. ACTS III. Ver. 17

We see the absolute necessity of repentance, which therefore is to be solemnly charged upon the consciences of all who desire that their sins may be blotted out of the book of God's remembrance, and that they may share in that refreshment which nothing but the sense of his pardoning love can afford. Blessed souls are they who have experienced it! for they may look upon all their present comforts as the dawning of eternal glory; and having seen Christ with an eye of faith, and received that important cure which nothing but his powerful and gracious name can effect, may be assured that God will send him again to complete the work he has so graciously begun, and to reduce the seeming irregularities of the present state into everlasting harmony, order, and beauty. 19 20, 21

In the mean time, let us adore the wisdom of his providence and the fidelity of his grace, which has overruled the folly and wickedness of men to subserve his own holy purposes, and has accomplished the promises so long since made, of a prophet to be raised up to Israel like Moses, and indeed gloriously superior to him, both in the dignity of his character and office, and in the great salvation he was sent to procure.—This salvation was first offered to Israel, which had rendered itself so peculiarly unworthy by killing the Prince of life. Let us rejoice that it is now published to us, and that God has condescended to send his Son to bless us sinners of the Gentiles, in turning us from our iniquities. Let us view this salvation in its true light, and remember that if we are not willing to turn from iniquity, from all iniquity, from those iniquities that have been peculiarly our own, it is impossible we should have any share in it. 18 22 26 15

SECTION VIII.

The two apostles being seized by order of the Sanhedrim, and examined by them, courageously declare their resolution of going on to preach in the name of Jesus, notwithstanding their severest threatenings. Acts iv. 1—22.

ACTS iv. 1.

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

ACTS iv. 1.

THUS it was that Peter and John improved the opportunity of addressing themselves to the multitude who had assembled in the temple (as we have seen before) upon occasion of the miraculous cure of the lame man; *and while they were* thus *speaking to the people,* a considerable number of *the priests came upon them; and* with the priests there came *the captain of the temple,* that is, the person who commanded the guard of Levites then in waiting;[a] *and the Sadducees* also joined with them: For this sect of men were greatly exasperated against the apostles, *being* peculiarly *grieved that they taught the people* in the name of that Jesus whom they had so lately put to death, *and* especially that they *preached* the doctrine of *the resurrection from the dead,* as exemplified and demonstrated *in [the person of] Jesus;* whose recovered life had so direct a tendency to overthrow the whole system of the Sadducean tenets, which denied every thing of that kind, yea, even the existence of the soul after death, and any future account of the actions of life. (Compare Acts xxiii. 8.) *And* therefore, that they might prevent their preaching any more, *they laid* violent *hands upon* Peter and John, and seized *them* as seditious persons, who were labouring to incense the populace against the conduct of their governors: *And* they *committed them into custody until the next day,* that when the Sanhedrim met at the usual hour, they might consult what it was proper to do with them; *for it was now* late in the *evening,*[b] and was no fit season to have them examined. SECT. 8. ACTS IV. 2 3

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day; for it was now even-tide.

But in the mean time, the disciples had the satisfaction to see that the apostles had not laboured in vain; for *many of those who had heard the word* preached by them, *believed; and the number of the men became about five thousand,* including those who had been converted before, and still attended on the instructions of the apostles.[c] 4

4 Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

And the next day there was a general assembly of *their rulers, and elders, and scribes,* which constituted the Sanhedrim, who *gathered together,* and formed a court *at Jerusalem: And* there was with them *Annas,* who had formerly been *the high-priest, and Caiaphas* also, who then bore that office,[d] *and John, and Alex-* 5 6

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and

a *The captain of the temple.*] See note o, on Luke xxii, 52. p. 369.

b *It was now* late in the *evening.*] As Peter and John went up to the temple at three in the afternoon, this expression makes it probable some hours might be spent in preaching to the people, and consequently, that what we have in the former chapter is only an abstract or specimen of the discourses they held on this occasion; which I suppose is generally the case as to the speeches recorded by the sacred historians, as well as others.

c *The number—became about five thousand,* &c.] Dr. Benson concludes that five thousand were converted on this occasion, besides the three thousand mentioned before, (chap. ii. 41.) Had it been said, as there, that so many were added to the church, it had determined the sense to be as he and others understand it: (See Lightfoot and Whitby, *in loc.*) But I think the use of the word εγενηθη here, (whereas ην is used, chap. i. 15.) favours the interpretation I have preferred. It is hardly to be thought (unless it were expressly asserted) that another day should be so much more remarkable for its number of converts than that on which the Spirit descended. And as for any argument drawn from the probability of more than five thousand being converted in a year's time, I must observe, that I see no proof at all that this event was a year, or even a month, after the descent of the Spirit; nay, I rather think it highly improbable the Sanhedrim should suffer the apostles to go on so long unquestioned in their public work; and to suppose they did not teach publicly, would be most absurd.

d *Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas.*] As it seems evident that Caiaphas was the high-priest at this time, it may appear strange that the title should be given to another, merely to signify that he, that is, the Annas spoken of, was that Annas who had once borne that office with great honour, and had now most of the authority, though his son-in-law Caiaphas had the name.——I would submit it to examination whether, placing a *comma* after

SECT. 8. ACTS IV.

ander,[e] *and as many as were of the high-priest's kindred,*[f] who came and joined the council upon this occasion.

as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

And having ordered the apostles to be brought before them, and *set them in the midst* of the assembly, (the place where criminals used to stand to be tried by their court,) *they enquired* of them, saying, Declare to us truly, and without reserve, what is the bottom of
7 this affair? *By what power, or in* the authority of *what name, have you done this* strange work which has been wrought on the cripple now healed? Is it by the art of medicine, or by magic? Or do you pretend to any prophetic mission, in attestation of which this is done?

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 *Then Peter, full of the Holy Spirit,* according to the promise of his now glorified Master, which was upon this occasion remarkably verified, (compare Matt. x. 19, 20; and Mark xiii. 11.) spake with the utmost freedom, and *said unto them, O ye rulers of the*
9 *people, and elders of Israel,* before whom we are now brought as malefactors! We are not conscious to ourselves that we have done any thing to deserve censure or punishment; but *if we are this day examined* and called to an account as criminals *about the benefit conferred upon the impotent man,* and you would have us to declare *by what means he is* saved from his calamitous state, and *healed* in the manner which you now see, we are
10 most free to tell you what we before have testified on this occasion: (chap. iii. 16.) *Be it known* therefore *to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that* it is *by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you* a few weeks ago *crucified* with all the marks of detestation and contempt, as a criminal worthy of the most infamous death, but *whom God* hath owned, in that he *hath raised* him *from the dead,*[g] and received him into glory: [*Yea,*] I declare it again, and will abide by it, whatever be the consequence, that it is *by him,* even by that illustrious name of his, that *this* poor *man,* whom you well know to have been a cripple from his mother's womb, now *stands before you* perfectly *sound* and well. And give me leave, Sirs, to tell you, that this Jesus is a person with whom you are all
11 intimately concerned; for, as David expresses it, (Psal. cxviii. 22. "*This is the stone* "*which was* contemptuously refused and *set at nought by you,* who by your office should "have been *builders* in the church of God, *that is* indeed *become the* very *head of the*
12 "*corner,* to which the whole building owes its strength, its union, and its beauty." *And there is* really *salvation* and healing *in no other* but in him; *neither is there any other name under heaven given* out by God *among* the children of *men,* whether of patriarch or prophet, or priest or king, *in which we must be saved* and recovered:[h] For though we are not thus disabled and afflicted in body, yet there are other maladies of a much more threatening nature, for the cure of which you and I, and all that hear me this day, must, as we value the very lives of our souls, apply to Jesus, and only to him.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole:

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 *Now when they* of the council *saw the boldness of Peter and John,* and observed the freedom of speech with which they pleaded their Master's cause, and the high degree to which they extolled him in the presence of those magistrates who had so lately condemned him to the most shameful death; *and understood* at the same time *that they were illiterate men, and in private stations of life,*[i] *they were* greatly *astonished. And* upon farther recollection too *they knew them,* and remembered of these two disciples *that they had been with Jesus,* particularly the night that he was taken, and had attended him to the house of Caiaphas, where several now in court had been present at his examination.[k] (Compare John

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Ανναν, the following words might not be joined, τον αρχιερεα και Καιαφαν, and rendered, *the high-priest also,* that is, *Caiaphas;* though I confess the insertion of copulatives between each name in the following clauses does not favour such a version: and therefore I rather incline to acquiesce in the former solution; for the illustration of which, see Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* p. 648—659.

e *John, and Alexander.*] It is very evident these were persons of great note among the Jews at that time; and it is not improbable that (as Dr. Lightfoot and others suppose) the former might be the celebrated Rabbin Jochanan Ben Zaccai, mentioned in the Talmud, the scholar of Hillel, and that the latter might be the Alabarch, or governor of the Jews at Alexandria, brother to the famous Philo-Judæus, and in great favour with Claudius Cæsar. Josephus mentions him often, and tells us, among other things, that he adorned nine gates of the temple with plates of gold and silver. Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 3.

f *As many as were of the high-priest's kindred.*] Or, as others render it, *of the pontifical family.* Dr. Hammond explains this of the twenty-four members of the Aaronic family who presided over the twenty-four courses: others refer it to those who were nearly related to Annas and Caiaphas: but Grotius thinks that it includes the kindred of those who had lately been in the office of high-priest, which (he says) made them members of the Sanhedrim. Who were properly members of that council, it is extremely difficult to say; but I cannot think, with a late learned writer, (Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* p. 79.) that the presence of Alexander (though statedly resident in Egypt) will prove that this was not properly the Sanhedrim, but an extraordinary council occasionally called, consisting of some who were, and others who were not, of that court. It is very evident they act with authority as a court of judicature here, and the council, expressly called Συνεδριον again and again in the 5th chapter, (ver. 21, 27, 34, 41.) refer to the acts of this assembly as their own: (Compare chap. v. ver. 27, 28.) And the same word is likewise used here in this chapter, ver. 15.

g *Whom God hath raised from the dead.*] They knew in their own consciences that it was so; and, though they had hired the soldiers to tell a most senseless and incredible tale to the contrary, (Matt. xxviii. 12—15.) yet it is observable they did not (so far as we can learn) dare to plead it before Peter and John.

h *In which we must be saved.*] Dr. Whitby and some later writers have taken a great deal of pains to prove that σωθηναι here signifies *healing,* and have argued for it from the connexion, and from many texts, especially in the Evangelists, where it plainly has that sense, as it has likewise, Acts xiv. 9. where it is translated, *to be healed.* (See Matt. ix. 21, 22; Mark v. 23; vi. 56; x. 52; Luke xvii. 19; and compare note d, on Mark v. 28. p. 145.) But it is strange that any should not have seen, that if the most determinate word for *healing* had been here used, (as θεραπευθηναι, or ιαθηναι,) it must have signified *spiritual* and *eternal salvation,* since it is plain, that when Peter says, εν ω δει σωθηναι ημας, he takes it for granted that *all who heard him* needed to apply to Christ for this *healing.* Now there is no reason to believe they were all afflicted with bodily maladies, nor could he have any imaginable warrant to promise them all supernatural recovery in that case.—Raphelius, in a remarkable note on this text, (*Ex Herod.* p. 329—332.) endeavours, among others things, to prove that ονομα, or *the name of a person,* was a manner of speaking used in reference to one regarded as God, and the Author of salvation.

i *Illiterate men, and in private stations of life.*] The original words, αγραμματοι και ιδιωται, have literally this signification, that they were *not scholars,* nor in any *public rank of life,* as the priests and magistrates were; but they import no want of natural good sense, or any ignorance of what was then the subject of debate; so that our translation seems very unhappy here.

k *They knew them that they had been with Jesus,* particularly the night that he was taken, &c.] See note g, on Luke xxii. 57. p. 372.——Grotius justly observes also, that the rulers were often present when Christ taught publicly, and so might have seen Peter and John near him at other times, as well as on the occasion mentioned in the paraphrase.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

xviii. 15, 16.) *And* they would gladly have done their utmost to confound a testimony which bore so hard upon themselves. But *seeing the man that was cured*, whom they knew to have been so long lame, now *standing with them* perfectly recovered, *they had nothing to say against* the fact, though they were most unwilling to own a doctrine which [*it*] tended so strongly to prove.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

But as they did not chuse the apostles should perceive they knew not what to say, 15
having ordered them to withdraw for a while *out of* the room where *the council* was sitting, *they* privately *conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do with* 16
these men? It would be neither reasonable nor safe to punish them now; *for that indeed a* very surprising and *signal miracle hath been wrought by them, is* clearly *manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we* ourselves *cannot* possibly *deny* [*it*.]
Nevertheless,[l] on the other hand, it is equally plain that both our credit and our interest 17
require us to suppress the rumour of it as much as we can; and therefore, *that it may not any farther spread among the people*, and be a means of raising discontent, and perhaps of occasioning some dangerous insurrection among them, which may throw the city and nation into confusion, *let us severely threaten them* with the most rigorous punishment, in case they persist in such bold discourses as those we have now been hearing, *that* so *they* may not dare to preach as they have done, and from henceforth may *speak no more to any man in this* obnoxious *name*.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

And the whole council, *having* agreed to this as the most proper method they could 18
at present take with the apostles, they *called them* in again; and telling them how much they were offended at the liberty they took, *they charged them* in a very strict and severe manner, *that*, upon pain of their highest displeasure, and as they regarded their own safety, and even their lives, *they should not* presume on any account whatever to *speak any more, or* to *teach* the people *in the name of Jesus*;[m] if they would not be looked upon as seditious persons, and be dealt with as incendiaries and rebels, as their Master had been; whom they still asserted to have deserved the punishment that he had suffered.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

But Peter and John felt themselves animated in this arduous circumstance with a 19
courageous zeal which would not permit them to be silent, lest that silence should be interpreted as a promise to quit their ministry; and therefore, *answering them* with an undaunted freedom, they *said* before them all, *Whether it be* a fit or a *righteous* thing *in the sight of God*, to whom we are all accountable, *to obey you rather than God, judge ye*.[n] You cannot but know in your own consciences on which side the superior
obligation lies; and you must therefore expect, that we shall act accordingly. *For* 20
though we respect you as our civil rulers, and are heartily willing to yield all subjection to you so far as we lawfully can, yet since God hath charged us with the publication of this important message, on which, as we have already testified, the eternal salvation of men depends, *we* dare not to be silent in a case of such importance, and are free to tell you that we *cannot but speak the things which we have* so often *seen and heard*, and which God hath so miraculously empowered us to declare, not only in this city, but throughout all the earth.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

And though the apostles spake with such great freedom, the council were so confounded 21
by the force of truth, that they did not think fit to proceed to any farther extremities at that time; but *having threatened them again* in severer terms than before, *they dismissed them; finding nothing* done by them *for which they might* with any show of reason *punish them*, and not daring to proceed in so arbitrary a manner as they would otherwise have done, *because of the people*, whose resentment they feared: *for* such was the impression that was made upon the people by the cure of the lame man, that *they* had all an high esteem and mighty veneration for the apostles, who were publicly known to be the instruments of working it, and *all glorified God* in raptures of astonishment *for that which was done*. And indeed they well might be affected with it, *for the man on whom* 22
this miracle of healing was wrought, was more than forty years old: so that hardly any thing could have appeared to human judgment to be a more desperate case than so inveterate and confirmed a lameness: and yet he was (as we have already related) in one moment completely cured by the word of the apostles, and the power of their Divine Master operating with it.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see, in the instance before us, the natural but detestable effects of a proud, bigoted, overbearing temper, even where it seems least excusable. The Sadducees themselves, though they believed no future state of retribu- Ver. 1—3

l *Nevertheless.*] Instances in which αλλα signifies *nevertheless*, are numerous in the New Testament; and it is often rendered so by our translators. See Mark xiv. 36; John xi. 15; Rom. v. 14; 2 Cor. xii. 16; Gal. iv. 30; 2 Tim. i. 12. And many instances from profane writers are brought by Elsner in his note here.

m *They charged them that they should not speak any more——in the name of Jesus.*] The very thing that men conscious of the truth of the apostles' testimony, and self-condemned, would do; attempting by violence to stop their mouths, as they knew they could not answer them any other way.

n *Whether it be righteous——to obey you rather than God, judge ye.*] As they professed to believe the being and infinite perfections of God, they must, on their own principles, easily see the absurdity of expecting obedience to their commands from good men who believed themselves divinely commissioned. There is a passage which bears some resemblance to this, in the apology of Socrates as recorded by Plato, [*Oper.* p. 23.] which appears to me among the finest of antiquity. When they were condemning him to death for teaching the people, he said, "O ye Athenians, I embrace and love you; but *I will obey God rather than you*; [πειθομαι δε τω Θεω μαλλον η υμιν.] and if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I should cease to teach my fellow-citizens,

SECT. 8. ACTS IV.

tion, yet persecuted the apostles as eagerly as if they, like some other Jews, had expected to merit heaven by their severity to them. (Compare John xvi. 2.)

On the other side, it is delightful to observe the zeal and courage with which Peter and John defended the cause of their crucified Redeemer, even in the presence of those by whom he had so lately been condemned. Thus can God *give power to the feeble, and increase the strength of them that have no might.* (Isa. xl. 29.)

Ver. 12 The testimony they bore is well worth our regarding. *There is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Oh that the ends of the earth might hear and reverence that name! Oh that thousands to whom it is yet unknown, may learn to build all their hopes of salvation upon it! and may we never be ashamed to own it, never afraid to adhere to it! May we speak of it 13 with such a savour, may we defend it with such a zeal, that they who are round about us may *take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus,* and trace the genuine effects of our intimate acquaintance with him!

16—18 Never was there an instance of a more memorable combat between the force of evidence and of prejudice; never a more impudent attempt to bear down the cause of unquestionable truth by brutal violence. But *great is the truth and it will prevail.* May the ministers of the gospel never want that courage in the defence of it 19 which these holy men expressed; always judging it infinitely more reasonable, more safe, and more necessary, to obey God than man! Never may we be ashamed to profess our reverence and love to him who is our supreme Ruler and our most bountiful Friend; and may he give us such an inward and heart-influencing sense of the worth and sweetness of his gospel, as may effectually prevent our betraying or neglecting it!

SECTION IX.

Peter and John return to their company; and having told them what had passed, they all unite in an inspired prayer, which is attended with a renewed effusion of the Spirit, in consequence of which they all preach the gospel with new vigour and wonderful success. The number of converts, and the sales of estates, are greatly increased. Acts iv. 23—35.

Acts iv. 23.

SECT. 9. ACTS IV.

PETER *and* John *being dismissed* from their examination by the Sanhedrim, with a strict charge that they should preach no more in the name of Jesus, no sooner were at liberty but *they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests and elders had said to them,* and how severely they had threatened them.

And when they heard [*it,*] a divine inspiration came upon all that were present in an 24 extraordinary manner, so that *they* immediately *lifted up their voice with one accord to God*[a] in the following prayer, which upon this occasion was suggested by the Holy Spirit to every one in the assembly; *and* they *said,* O thou supreme *Lord* of universal nature, we humbly acknowledge *thou art the God who didst make heaven and earth,* 25 *and the sea, and all things that are in them: Who didst* by thine Holy Spirit *say by the mouth of thy servant David,* (Psal. ii. 1, 2.) "*Why did the heathen* nations *rage,* "*and the people imagine vain things,* forming projects which must certainly end in 26 "their own disappointment and ruin? Why did *the kings of the earth* enter into a "confederacy to *set themselves* as it were in hostile array, *and* why were *the rulers* "of it, forgetting their mutual differences, *combined together* in one association *against* "*the Lord, and against his Messiah,* whom he hath anointed to be the great Ruler of 27 "all?" We, O God, have now seen the literal accomplishment of these words; *for of a truth* here has been a most audacious conspiracy in this city of Jerusalem, where we now are, *against* thee, and against *thine Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast* so visibly *anointed* with the Holy Ghost, and with power to accomplish the glorious work of erecting thy kingdom among men; and *both Herod* the tetrarch, *and Pontius Pilate* the Roman governor, *with the heathen and the people of Israel, have combined* in the 28 impious attempt. But it is our unspeakable comfort to think, that by their utmost rage they cannot break in upon thy schemes, or prevent the efficacy of any of thy purposes; for we know that, in the midst of all this impious fury they have shown against thy Son, they have only been able *to do what thine hand* had pointed out before, *and* what *thy* unerring *counsel,* to which all future events are obvious, *had before determined* that, for 29 wise reasons, thou wouldst permit *to be done.*[b] *And* as to what *now* remains to accom-

Acts iv. 23.

AND being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard *that,* they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things.

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, be-

"I would rather die a thousand times than accept the proposal." What are ten thousand subtilties of the ancient philosophers, when compared with a sentiment like this!

a *When they heard* [*it,*] *they* immediately *lifted up their voice, &c.*] It is strange any should have imagined this was a pre-composed form, since, besides all the other absurdities of such a supposition, it so expressly refers to the threatenings of the Sanhedrim, (ver. 29.) of which they had been but just then informed: and the words, ακουσαντες ομοθυμαδον ηραν φωνην, will not allow us to imagine any interval between the report of Peter and John, and this prayer. I conclude it therefore probable, that all their voices might join by immediate inspiration; which seems a circumstance graciously adapted for the encouragement of them all to suffer the greatest extremities in this cause, and answers the phrase here used much better than if we were to suppose one only to have spoken, and the rest to have put their cordial Amen to it; which yet would be a much more tolerable account of the matter than that which I first mentioned.

b *Have combined to do, &c.*] Limborch (*Theolog. lib.* ii. *cap.* 30. § 17.) contends strongly for a transposition of the words thus: *They have combined against thine Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed to do what thine hand and thy counsel had determined, &c.* But this transposition is arbitrary; and it is so expressly said elsewhere by Luke, when he was entering on his sufferings, that the Son of man went as it was determined concerning him, (Luke xxii. 22.) and it so plainly appears in fact that these circumstances were expressly determined or marked out in the prophecies of the Old Testament, that I see not what end the admission of such a transposition would answer. It is much more rational (as we observed in note i, on that text in Luke, p. 342.) to explain this determination in such a manner as to make it consistent with the free agency of the persons concerned. When God's hand and his counsel are said to have determined these things, it may signify God's having pointed out this great event so wisely concerted in his eternal counsels, and marked before-hand as it were all the boundaries of it, (as the word προωρισε may well signify,) in the prophetic writings. This seems more natural than to suppose (as Bishop Pearson and Dr. Hammond do) that it alludes to the designation of the Lord's goat on the day of expiation, which was by lifting up the lot on high, and then laying it on the head of the animal to be sacrificed. See Pearson, *On the Creed,* p. 185. and Hammond, *in loc.*

hold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy Holy Child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

plish this important scheme of raising thy church on the sure foundation of his cross, we beseech thee, O *Lord*, to *regard* these *their* haughty *threatenings*, with which they are endeavouring to discourage the chosen witnesses of his resurrection; *and* to *give unto* these *thy servants*, and to all others that are to join their testimony, *to speak thy word with all freedom* and resolution,[c] in the midst of the most violent opposition that can arise: Especially *whilst thou art* animating them by the performance of such works of power and 30 mercy, and art *stretching out thine* own almighty *hand for healing* the most incurable distempers; *and* while such astonishing *signs and wonders* as these *are done by the name of thine Holy Child Jesus;* which we hope thou wilt still continue to perform, however the rage of the enemy may be excited by them.

And while they were thus *praying*, God was pleased miraculously to declare his gra- 31 cious acceptance of their petitions; for *the place in which they were assembled was shaken* as the upper room had been on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 2.) *and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit;*[d] *and*, being animated by that strong impulse which through his operation they felt upon their hearts, *they spake the word of God* wherever they came *with* all courageous *freedom*, and renewed their public testimony without any appearance of fear, on the very day on which they had been so solemnly forbidden by the Sanhedrim to preach any more in the name of Jesus.

And that sacred Agent wrought upon their souls not only as the Spirit of zeal and cou- 32 rage, but of love, so that *the* very *heart and soul of the* whole *multitude of believers*, numerous as they were, *was* all *one; Nor did any* [*of them*] *call any of his possessions his own; but all things were common amongst them*,[e] and each was as welcome to participate of them as the original proprietor could be, being in these new bonds of christian fellowship as dear to him as himself. *And with great power*, that is, with a divine force 33 of eloquence and of miracles, *did the apostles give forth their* important *testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all*,[f] so that the energy and sweetness of the gospel was felt by the inward experience both of speakers and hearers, beyond what it was possible for words to express.

Neither was there any one indigent person among them, though many of them were 34 far from their habitations, and many others in low circumstances of life: *for as many as were proprietors of lands or houses, sold them* as fast as they could find any to purchase them, *and brought the price of the things they* had *sold*, whether it were more or less, *And laid* [*it*] *down at the feet of the apostles*, to be disposed of as they 35 should direct; who discharged their trust with the strictest fidelity, *and* took care that *distribution was made to every one according as any had need* for his present relief: (Compare chap. ii. 45.) The apostles esteeming themselves sufficiently happy while living in the same plain manner with their brethren, in the opportunity which the divine goodness gave them of being so helpful to others both in temporals and spirituals.

IMPROVEMENT.

THIS was indeed the golden age of the church: and it is impossible to trace the memoirs of it, if we love Sion, without a secret complacency and exultation of mind. How amiable and how venerable do the apostles and primi- Ver. 31 tive converts appear in this native simplicity of the christian character! and what a glory did the grace and Spirit of God put upon them, far beyond all that human establishments, splendid dignities, or ample revenues, could ever give to those that have succeeded them! While the multitude of them had one heart and one soul, and each was 32 ready to impart to his brethren whatever he himself possessed, how high a relish of pleasure did they receive, and how were their joys multiplied by each of their number!

Thus does divine grace, when it powerfully enters into the heart, open it in sentiments of generosity and love. 33—35 Thus does it conquer that selfish temper which reigns so frequently in the minds of sinful men, and makes them like wild beasts rather than like brethren to each other. Providence does not indeed call us entirely to give up our possessions, or to introduce a community of goods among christians, in circumstances so different from those which we have now been surveying: Yet surely it is always our duty, and will be our highest interest, to remember that we are not original proprietors of what we possess, but stewards, who are to manage what is intrusted to our care for the honour of our great Master, and the good of his family here on earth; continually ready to resign any part, or even the whole of it, whenever these important ends shall require such a resignation.

In the mean time, let us frequently lift up our hearts to the great and ever-blessed God who hath made heaven, 24 and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, that he would support and extend the progress of that gospel in the world which he hath so graciously begun to plant. Kings may still set themselves, and rulers take counsel, against 25, 26 it; but he knows how to turn their counsels into foolishness, and their rage into shame. He hath anointed Jesus his Holy Child with the oil of gladness, and placed him on his throne in heaven; and all the united malice and fury of his enemies can do no more than what shall make part of his wise and gracious scheme for the government of his 29 people. Let us pray that he would give freedom of speech to all employed in pleading his cause; and that he will plentifully anoint them with the effusion of his Spirit: And let the signs and wonders which were done by the

c *Give unto thy servants to speak thy word with all freedom.*]—Elsner has shown here, by some very happy quotations, that several of the heathens acknowledged the [παῤῥησία] *freedom of speech*, on great and pressing occasions, to be a divine gift. Compare Prov. xvi. 1.

d *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*] I will not assert that cloven tongues fell upon them again; but I think it probable, with Dr. Benson, that some visible symbol of the Spirit's descent might now be given.

e *All things were common amongst them.*] See note i, on chap. ii. 44. p. 436.—*To have one heart and soul* is a proverbial expression for the most intimate and endearing friendship, as Elsner and others have shown.

f *Great grace was upon them all.*] Casaubon, Grotius, and some others, understand this of the favour they had among the people on account of their charity and good conduct: But this is by no means the natural import of this phrase, which is very different from that used, Acts ii. 47.

SECT. 9. name of Jesus in former ages, encourage us to hope that he will never totally desert a scheme which he once so illustriously interposed to establish; and consequently let them animate us to exert ourselves in its service, whatever labours, threatenings, or dangers may meet us in our way.

SECTION X.

The sale of estates proceeding, Ananias and Sapphira attempt fraudulently to impose upon the apostles, and are immediately struck dead. That event, together with many other extraordinary miracles wrought about the same time, promotes the increase of the church still more and more. Acts iv. 36, *to the end;* v. 1—16.

Acts iv. 36.

SECT. 10. AMONG the rest of those primitive converts who so generously contributed of their substance for the relief *and* subsistence of the poor believers in so extraordinary a circumstance, there was one *Joses, who,* on account of his great benevolence and usefulness, was much

ACTS IV. 36 respected in the church, and *by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which, being interpreted* from the Syriac language, *signifies, A son of consolation.*[a] He was *a Levite,* who was so far from being prejudiced against this new religion, as it might seem to oppose his temporal interest, that he gladly devoted himself to its service: [*and*] was a native of

37 another country, being *by birth a Cyprian:* And *having an estate,* which was capable of being alienated without any transgression of the law,[b] he *sold it, and brought the money,* as others had done, *and laid it down at the feet of the apostles,*[c] desiring they would dispose of it in such a manner as might be most serviceable to the necessities of the saints. And the addition which it made to the public stock was so considerable, that it seemed to deserve this particular mention.

ACTS V. *But* it is in a very different point of light, and on a very melancholy occasion, that we are obliged to mention another person before we leave this story. There was also among

1 these early professors of the gospel, *a certain man named Ananias,* who, *with* the concurrence of *Sapphira his wife, sold an estate; And* fraudulently *secreted part of the price,*

2 *his wife also being conscious* [*of it:*] *and bringing* only *a certain part* of it, *he laid it down at the feet of the apostles,* as the rest did, pretending that it was the whole of the purchase-money; and consequently intimating, that, having deposited his all in their hands, he should hope for the future to be taken care of among the rest of the brethren.

3 *But* upon this, the Holy Spirit, under whose direction the apostle *Peter* acted, immediately suggested to him the fraud, and the awful manner in which the Divine Wisdom saw fit to animadvert upon it. In consequence of which inward suggestion, looking sternly upon him, he *said,* O *Ananias, why hath Satan,* through thine own wickedness in yielding to his temptations, *filled thine heart* with such a degree of covetousness, falsehood, folly, and presumption, [*that thou shouldst* audaciously *attempt*] *to impose on the Holy Spirit* himself,[d] under whose special direction we are; *and to secrete part of the price of*

4 *the land* thou hast sold, when thou pretendest to have brought the whole? *While it remained* unsold, *did it not continue thine,* notwithstanding thy profession of faith in Jesus? *And when it was sold, was it not* still *in thine own power*[e] to have given or not given the whole, or any part of it, into the treasury of the church, as thou shouldst think proper? *Why* then *hast thou admitted this thing into thine heart,* so meanly and so profanely to dissemble on this solemn occasion? *Thou hast not lied to men* alone, to us, or to the church, whose treasurers we are; *but* hast lied *to* the blessed *God* himself, who, residing in us by his Divine Spirit, is determined to make thee a terrible example of his displeasure, for an affront so directly levelled at himself, in the midst of this astonishing train of his extraordinary operations.

5 *And Ananias, hearing these words,* while the sound of them was yet in his ears, *fell down and expired;*[f] that by his sad example all might learn how dangerous it was to

Acts iv. 36.

AND Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold *it,* and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts v. 1. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it,* and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost: and

a *Joses—surnamed Barnabas—a son of consolation.*] Considering how common the names of Joses and Joseph were, there seems no just reason to conclude, as some have done, that this was the Joseph mentioned, chap. i. 23. as a candidate for the office of an apostle. (Compare note i, on that text, p. 429.)——Nor can I see any reason to conclude, with Apb. Wake, (*Apost. Fathers, Introd.* p. 62.) that this Joses was called, *son of consolation,* to express the great consolation the brethren received from the sale of his estate. The name seems rather to refer to his extraordinary abilities for the ministerial work, and to those gifts of the Spirit whereby he was enabled both to comfort and to exhort, as the word also signifies.—Mr. Fleming makes it a most honourable title indeed, as signifying, a *son of the operation of the Paraclete,* that is, *of the Holy Ghost.*

b *An estate,* which was capable of being alienated, &c.] He could not have sold that which was his paternal inheritance as a Levite; but this might perhaps be some legacy or purchase of land in Judea, to which he might have a title till the next jubilee, or perhaps some land in Cyprus; and we may suppose it mentioned, either as the first foreign estate sold, or as of some extraordinary value.

c *Laid it down at the feet of the apostles.*] Orobio insinuates, *Apud Limborch, Collat.* p. 134. (and it is one of the weakest and meanest things I remember in his writings,) that it was no small advantage to poor fishermen to be treasurers of so considerable a bank. But nothing can be more unjust and unnatural, than to suspect that men who were so ready to sacrifice their lives to the cause of truth and the happiness of mankind, should be capable of falsifying such a trust as this for the sake of a little money. Their miraculous powers were joined with a thousand marks of probity in their daily conduct to warrant such a confidence, which was but a natural token of due respect. We see in chap. vi. 2, 3, 4. how ready they were soon to transfer the management of this affair to other hands; and the following story furnishes us with an additional answer to this cavil, which is beyond all exception.

d *Filled thine heart——to impose on the Holy Spirit.*] The Hebrews express a person's being *emboldened to a thing,* by the phrase of *his heart being filled:* (Compare Esth. vii. 5; and Eccles. viii. 11.) And Bos has abundantly shown that ψευτασθαι τινα signifies to *lie to a person,* or to *impose upon him,* (Bos. *Exercit.* p. 73, 74. but I cannot recollect that it ever signifies to *belie a person,* as Dr. Benson would here render it. *Hist. of Christianity,* Vol. I. p. 103.

e *When it was sold, was it not in thine own power?*] It evidently appears from hence that no christian converts were obliged to sell their estates. An answer to the Popish argument from hence, in favour of works of supererogation, may be collected from our paraphrase on Matt. xix. 12. p. 267.

f *Ananias—fell down and expired.*] This severity was not only righteous, considering that complication of vain-glory and covetousness, of fraud and impiety, which, as Limborch and Mr. Biscoe (p. 659—661.) have well proved, the action contained; but also, on the whole, was wise and gracious, both as it served to vindicate the honour of the blessed Spirit, so notoriously affronted by this attempt to impose on those who had been so lately and eminently anointed by his extraordinary effusion, and farther, as it tended

great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed

affront that Divine Spirit under whose influence the apostles acted. *And* it answered its end, for *great fear came* not only on the immediate spectators, but *on all that heard* the report of *these things*. *Then* some of *the young* and able-bodied *men* in the assembly *arose, and* perceiving there was no room to hope for the recovery of one who was struck dead by such an immediate act of the divine power, they *bound him up* in his mantle, without any further circumstance of mourning or delay, *and carrying* [*him*] *out they buried* [*him.*]

SECT. 10. ACTS V. 6

And after the interval of about three hours, his wife Sapphira *also*, who was absent when this happened, *not knowing what was done, came in* to the place in which they were assembled. *And Peter*, upon this occasion, *said to her* before them all, *Tell me* freely, Sapphira, with that uprightness which becomes a disciple of Jesus, *whether you* indeed *sold the land* only *for so much* money as you know your husband brought hither, naming the sum. *And she said, Yes*, it was sold exactly *for so much*. *Then Peter*, by an immediate impulse of the same Spirit which had before so awfully interposed, *said unto her* again, *How is it that you have* thus wickedly *conspired together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord*, as if you had really suspected whether he were capable of discerning the affair or not, and were resolved to bring it to a trial? Alas, unhappy woman! it will appear to be a fatal experiment to you both; for *behold, the feet of those who have* just *been burying thy husband*, whom divine vengeance has already struck dead on this occasion, *are* even now *at the door* upon their return, *and they shall* forthwith *carry thee out*, and lay thee by him in the grave. 7 8 9

And immediately upon this, *she* also *fell down at his feet and expired*:[g] *And the young men*, who were just then *coming in, found her* quite *dead* in a moment; *and* accordingly they *carried her out, and buried her by* Ananias *her husband*. *And great fear came upon all the assembly*, who were eye-witnesses of what had passed, *and upon all* others *that heard* the report, which was soon spread abroad, of *these things*; who could not but acknowledge that it was the immediate hand of God by which they both died, and that he was just in this awful dispensation. 10 11

And many other stupendous *signs and wonders were done among the people* in the most public manner, *by the hands of the apostles: And they* continued in the strictest fellowship and union with the whole company of believers, and *were* frequently *all unanimously* together *in* that spacious building which we have already mentioned by the name of *Solomon's portico*, conversing together with the most affectionate expressions of mutual endearment. *And none of the rest*, who were not really converted to christianity, *presumed to join himself to them*,[h] as some mean-spirited creatures might possibly otherwise have done for a while, in a low view of some transient advantage by a share in the distributions that were made. *But* all *the people* had a mighty veneration for the apostles, and *magnified them*, with the highest expressions of reverence and respect, as persons who were owned by God in the most signal manner. *And* though the death of these two unhappy offenders terrified any from hypocritically joining their company, yet the success of the gospel was promoted rather than hindered by it, so that great *multitudes both of men and women, believing* their testimony, *were* so much *the more* [*willingly*] *added* in a solemn manner *to* the church of *the Lord*, and made an open profession of their faith; wisely inferring from what had happened, how dangerous it would be to oppose or suppress the inward convictions of their minds in a matter of so great importance. 12 13 14

And they were farther animated to boldness in their profession by the many gracious miracles which succeeded to this work of terror; *insomuch that*, all *along the* most public *streets, they brought out the sick, and laid* [*them*] at their doors *on beds and couches*, when they were not able to walk; *that at least the shadow of Peter*, as he was *coming by, might overshadow some* or other *of them*. And this extraordinary faith was rewarded by the healing of many in that circumstance. 15

And as the fame of these wonderful works spread abroad, *multitudes also* [*out*] *of the cities round about came together to Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those that were* 16

most effectually to deter any dishonest persons from joining the christians merely for the sake of a present alms, to which, by a fraud like this, many might, on easy terms, have purchased a pretence, who would also, no doubt, have proved a great scandal to a profession taken up on such infamous motives. (Compare ver. 13.) This likewise was a very convincing attestation of the apostles' most upright conduct in the management of the sums with which they were entrusted, and indeed, in general, of their divine mission; for none can imagine that Peter would have had the assurance to pronounce, and much less the power to execute, such a sentence as this, if he had been at the same time guilty of a much baser fraud of the like kind, or had been belying the Holy Ghost in the whole of his pretensions to be under his miraculous influence and direction. See Cradock's *Apost. Hist.* p. 27. and Reynolds' *Letter to a Deist*, p. 245.

g *She* also *fell down—and expired.*] To what is said before in vindication of this seeming severity in note f, we may add, that such exemplary punishment of so heinous a crime was the more expedient, as christianity was now in its first rise. So, just at the opening of the Mosaic institution, Nadab and Abihu were struck dead with lightning for a fault (as it seems) of much less aggravated guilt: (Lev. x. 1, 2.) and the wisest human governments generally act on the like principle.

h *None of the rest presumed to join himself to them.*] Dr. Lightfoot explains this of the rest of the hundred and twenty, that they durst not join to the twelve, or equal themselves to the apostles in office or dignity: (Lightf. *Comment. in loc.*) But as there is no mention of that number in this chapter, so (as Dr. Whitby observes) they never joined themselves before to the apostles in this sense; nor is this any where the meaning of the word κολλασθαι, which signifies, to *associate* or *unite with*, to *adhere* or *cleave to any*. (Compare Acts ix. 26; x. 28; xvii. 34.)——Beza would have it, that κολλασθαι signifies here, to *attack* or *touch*, and that λοιπων, *the rest*, refers to their powerful enemies, as distinguished from the people: But that signification of κολλασθαι is, as he acknowledges, very unusual, and is here quite unnecessary. L'Enfant thinks the meaning is, that persons of distinction had not the resolution to join them, whatever inward conviction they might have as to the truth of their doctrine. But after all, it is most natural to understand it as if it had been said, "*The people* held "them in distant admiration, and *presumed not* on any false pre- "tence *to join them*, if not truly converted to their religion;" which yet (as it appears by the next verse) many were who readily came into a full and solemn profession of it, as indeed the late miracle was a glorious, though dreadful, demonstration of its truth.

SECT. 10. ACTS V.

troubled with unclean spirits; who, by the divine power of Jesus working in his humble disciples, *were all healed;* as persons in the like circumstances had often been by Christ himself in the days of his flesh. So that the alarm which this gave to the enemies of the gospel, grew continually more and more painful to them, and occasioned some remarkable proceedings against the apostles, which will be related in the following section.

with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5, 11 Let us behold, with humble reverence, this awful instance of the divine severity, so well calculated to impress the minds of these new converts, and to prevent any of those frauds which the charity of those who were most zealous in their profession might have occasioned in some others. Let us learn how hateful falsehood is to the God 4 of truth, and make it our care to avoid it; and not only shun a direct lie, but the taking undue advantage from 5, 10 any ambiguities of expression, and, in a word, all recourse to the arts of equivocation. God only knows how soon such treacherous lips may be sealed up in eternal silence.

3 How does Satan delude the heart which he fills! And how peculiarly fatal is the delusion, when he leads men to sins which especially affront the Holy Spirit of God: That Spirit rested on the apostles, and taught them to discover 9 the hidden things of darkness, so that they who tempted it fell in the attempt, and became a sign. May *integrity and uprightness* ever *preserve us!* (Psal. xxv. 21.) And, while we avoid all the kinds and arts of dissimulation, let us peculiarly detest those which would offer a double insult to the God of heaven, by taking their dress from the religion which his own Son has planted.

13 The church is never happier than when the sons of falsehood are deterred from intruding into it. If its members are less numerous, it is a sufficient balance, that it is more pure. We see what singular miracles were done by the 15, 16 apostles; miracles equal, and in some respects, as it seems by these instances, superior to those which Christ performed in the days of his ministration here below. When will the happy time come in which men shall express as great a concern for their souls as they here did for their bodies? When shall the streets and assemblies be filled with those who, from a sense of their spiritual maladies, shall apply to the ministers of Christ for healing? Let it always be remembered, that whatever they do for this happy purpose, it is indeed their Master that does it by them; and that all their most assiduous applications, separate from his blessing, can effect no more than the shadow of Peter could have done, if the power of Christ had not wrought on those over whom it passed.

SECTION XI.

The apostles continuing to preach to the people, are apprehended and imprisoned, and, after a miraculous deliverance, are brought before the Sanhedrim the next day, and scourged; Gamaliel's advice prevailing to prevent any further extremities. Acts v. 17, *to the end.*

Acts v. 17.

SECT. 11. ACTS V.

IT was observed in the preceding section what extraordinary miracles were done by the apostles in the name of Jesus, whom still, notwithstanding all the menaces of their rulers, they continued faithfully to preach, and to assure the people of his resurrection from the dead, and of eternal life to be obtained through him. *But* this, as it might reasonably be 17 expected, drew another storm upon them: For *the high-priest arising*, as it were, with awakened and renewed fury, *and all they that were with him, which was the sect of the Sadducees*,[a] who were especially devoted to his interest, and most offended at the doctrine of the resurrection, *were filled with zeal* and indignation against these men, who, as their enemies affected to represent it, made so dangerous an attack both on their religious 18 and political establishment. *And*, in support of these unjust charges, they were determined to bring them to another trial before the Sanhedrim, and for that purpose *laid their hands on the apostles, and put them into the common prison*, where the vilest of malefactors were lodged.[b]

Acts v. 17.

THEN the high-priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation;

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 *But*, that God might evidently show how impotent all their rage was against those whom he determined to support, and that they might be emboldened with a becoming confidence to bear their testimony in the midst of oppositions and dangers, *an angel of the Lord* was sent to them, who appearing in the midst of them *by night, opened the doors of the prison, and*, without giving any alarm to the keepers, or any of the other prisoners, *bringing them out* of that place of confinement, *said*, As God hath thus miraculously interposed for your 20 deliverance, neither flee nor fear; but *go*, as soon as the gates are opened, *and, presenting yourselves* boldly *in the temple*, as you did before you were seized, (however disagreeable the doctrine that you preach may be to those who believe nothing of a future state,) *speak to the people* assembled there at the hour of morning sacrifice, *all the words of this* glorious gospel with which you are charged, on which the eternal *life* of men so evidently depends, and by which alone their final happiness can be secured.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.

21 *And* the apostles *hearing* [*this*] divine command, made no scruple immediately to obey it, and were so far from being discouraged by the fear of persecution, that, with an earnest zeal to carry on the work they were engaged in, *they went very early into the temple,*

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.—

a *The sect of the Sadducees.*] There is no sufficient reason from this text to conclude, with Grotius, that the high-priest and his kindred were Sadducees, though it is probable they might be so, as Josephus affirms that some of the high-priests were of this sect, and particularly Ananus, one of the sons of that Annas who was father-in-law to Caiaphas. (See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. v. § 4. p. 110, 111.) The Sadducees however would be most ready to exert themselves in persecuting the apostles, as they were most exasperated by their doctrine, which was directly opposite to the notions they maintained. See the paraphrase on Acts iv. 2. § 8. p. 441.

b *Into the common prison.*] That this was, as the paraphrase expresses it, the place where the vilest malefactors were lodged, cannot be doubted: But it is not certain the apostles were actually thrust among them; and I think ver. 23. makes it rather more probable they were in an apartment by themselves.

and taught the people with the same freedom as before, who assembled there to pay their morning adorations unto God.

—But the high-priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

But in the mean time, *the high-priest being come, and they that were with him,* into the room where the council was usually held, *they called together* all the members of *the Sanhedrim, even* (as we have hinted several times before, that the name signifies) *the whole senate of the children of Israel,* being solicitous that there might be as full a house as possible on so important an occasion. *And* when they were convened, they *sent* proper officers *to the* common *prison* to take charge of the apostles, and *to have them brought* into their presence, that the court might proceed to their examination and punishment. *But when the officers came* thither, to their great surprise *they found them not in the prison:* and yet could not discover what way they had taken to make their escape, considering the circumstances that appeared on inquiry. *Returning therefore* to the council, *they made their report, Saying, We found indeed the prison shut with all* possible *safety, and the keepers standing without* as sentinels *before the doors; but having opened* [*them,*] and gone into the place in which the prisoners had been put, and where we did not doubt but we should find them, to our great astonishment *we found no one within* of those whom we sought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

Now when the [*high-priest,*] *and the captain of the temple, and the* other *chief priests* who were gathered together, *heard these words, they doubted concerning them,* and knew not *what* to think of it how *this could be;* that is, whether they had procured their liberty by corrupting the keepers, or whether there might not be something miraculous in the deliverance of persons whom such extraordinary circumstances had attended. *But one* who knew their disappointment and the uneasiness it gave them, *came* into the court, *and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put* yesterday *in prison, are* now *standing in the temple,* however they came thither, *and* are *teaching the people* assembled there with as much freedom and confidence as ever; which indeed does not look like a clandestine escape, which could only have been made with a view of flight and concealment.

24 Now when the high-priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests, heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison, are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

Then the captain of the temple *went with the officers* by the direction of the Sanhedrim, *and* having found the apostles in the temple, *brought them* away, but *not by violence, for they feared the people, lest,* if they had offered any violence in their presence, it might have so provoked them that *they should be stoned:*[c] For the people were so fully persuaded of a divine power engaged with the apostles, that they held their persons sacred, and would not have borne any open attack upon them. The apostles, on the other hand, were ready cheerfully to obey the summons, that they might repeat their testimony to their Divine Master. *And* accordingly the captain and those that attended him, *when they had brought them* to the place where the council was sitting, made a report of what *they* had done, and *set them before the Sanhedrim. And* as soon as they appeared, *the high-priest,* singling out Peter and John, who had so lately been examined before them, *asked them, Saying, Did we not strictly charge you* two in particular but a very little while ago, and so in effect all the rest of your company, *that you should not,* on pain of our highest displeasure and the utmost rigour of the law, *teach* any more *in this name* of Jesus of Nazareth? *And behold,* instead of regarding our admonition, or showing any sense of the great lenity with which the court then treated you, you have been more busy and more daring than before in your seditious practices, so that *you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; and* it all centres in this, that you *would bring* the odium of *this man's blood upon us,* and would incense the populace against us, as if he were an innocent person whom we had murdered: So that it is no thanks to you, if we are not stoned or torn in pieces by them, for that act of necessary justice, for such it was, which we were obliged to do upon him.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.)

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: And the high-priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we strictly command you, that you should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

But Peter and [*the rest of*] *the apostles,* who were now all before them, *answered and said,* O ye senate of Israel, you cannot but in your own consciences know, as we plainly declared before this assembly when we received the charge now referred to, (chap. iv. 19.) that *it is* absolutely fit and *necessary to obey* the almighty and ever-blessed *God rather than men,* be they ever so great and powerful. We assuredly know, and we testify it to you as we have been testifying to the people, that *the God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus* his Son, *whom ye slew* in the most infamous manner that ye could invent, *hanging him* crucified *on a tree,* as if he had been the meanest of slaves and the vilest of malefactors. But this very Person, notwithstanding all the outrage with which you treated *him, hath God exalted at his* own *right hand,* [*to be*] *a Prince and Saviour* to his people, *to give repentance,* or to send terms of peace and reconciliation by him, even *unto Israel,*[d] by whom he hath been so ungratefully insulted and abused, *and* to bestow on those that shall repent, the free and full *remission of* all their aggravated *sins. And*

29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand, *to be* a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his wit-

c *They feared the people, lest they should be stoned.*] This may seem a surprising change in the people, considering the eagerness with which they demanded that Christ should be crucified. But it is exceeding probable, that seeing the mighty power which wrought in the apostles, they might entertain some hope of obtaining temporal deliverance by their means, (compare Acts i. 6.) of which they were so exceeding fond, and a disappointment in their hope of which had turned their Hosannas into the cry, Crucify him, crucify him! See Dr. Lardner's *Credibility,* Vol. I. p. 179.

d *To give repentance unto Israel.*] As repentance was not actually wrought in Israel by the efficacious grace of Christ, I think it evident that δουναι μετανοιαν here signifies *to give place* or *room for repentance,* just as the same phrase does in Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6.] § 7.) where he says, that the Jews rising up at Cæsarea in a tumultuous manner, the wiser people among them went to intercede with the governor, δουναι μετανοιαν επι τοις πεπραγμενοις, *i. e.* to publish a pardon to those who should lay down their arms; agreeable to the turn given to the expression in the paraphrase.

SECT. 11. ACTS II.

we are appointed *his witnesses of these things*, how incredible soever they may appear to you; *and* so is *the Holy Spirit also, whom God hath given* not only to us the apostles, but also to many others of *them who submit* themselves *to his government*,[e] most evidently attesting the same, and proving how absolutely necessary it is for every one, great and small, to lay aside prejudice and opposition, and with humble penitence to believe in Jesus.

nesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 *And* the high-priest and the Sadducees, *when they heard* [*this*] courageous testimony and faithful remonstrance, were enraged beyond all measure of patience and of decency, so that *they* even *grinded their teeth at them*, like savage beasts that could gladly have devoured them; *and* with hearts full of rancour they immediately *consulted how they might put them* all *to death*, either under pretence of blasphemy, or for sedition and rebellion against the supreme council of the state.

33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them.

34 *But a certain* celebrated *Pharisee* then *in the Sanhedrim, whose name was Gamaliel*,[f] *a doctor of the law*, who trained up a great number of young students in the most exact knowledge of it, and was *in great esteem among all the people* on account of his learning, wisdom, and piety, *rose up; and* as he purposed to speak his mind with great freedom on a very tender point, he *commanded the apostles to be taken out for a little* 35 *while. And* then addressing himself to his brethren, the other members of the court, *he said unto them, Ye men of Israel*, to whom Divine Providence has committed the guardianship of this people, and the great care of their public affairs! I think it my duty on this important occasion, seriously to advise you to *take heed to yourselves* as to *what you* 36 *are about to do to these men: For* you cannot but know that several remarkable occurrences have lately happened which have awakened a great degree of public expectation and regard; and it may not be improper to recollect some of them at this crisis. You particularly remember, that *some time ago* one *Theudas arose*,[g] *pretending himself to be some extraordinary person, to whom a number of men*, amounting to *about four hundred, adhered; who*, notwithstanding this, *was* himself quickly *slain* by the Roman forces, *and all who hearkened to him were scattered, and*, after all the boasting promises 37 of their leader, *came to nothing. After him*[h] *Judas the Galilean arose*,[i] *in the days of the* late *enrolment, and* endeavouring, on the principles of sacred liberty, to dissuade the Jews from owning the authority of the Romans in that instance, he *drew a multitude of people after him; and* the consequence was, that *he* also himself *was* quickly *destroyed, and* 38 *all who had hearkened to him were dispersed*.[k] *And* therefore, *with regard to the present affair, I say unto you*, and give it as my most serious and deliberate advice now in the present crisis, *Refrain from these men, and let them alone* to go on as they can, neither siding with them nor violently opposing them; *for if this counsel* which they are taking, *or this work* which they have performed, *be of men*, if it be merely a human contrivance and deceit, which we are not capable of proving that it is, *it* will soon sink and

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space,

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do, as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

e *The Holy Spirit also, whom God hath given to them who submit*, &c.] The testimony arising from this miraculous communication of the Spirit to christians at that time, entirely removes the objection from Christ's not appearing in public after his resurrection: for, had there been any imposture, it had been easier of the two to have persuaded people at a distance that he had so appeared to the Jewish rulers, or even to the multitude, and yet had been rejected, than that he had given his servants such extraordinary powers; since, had this assertion been false, every one might have been a witness to the falsehood of such a pretence, without the trouble and expense of a journey to Jerusalem, or any other distant place.

f *Gamaliel.*] This was the elder of that name, a man in so great honour among them, that Onkelos, the author of the Targum, is said to have burnt seventy pound weight of perfumes at his funeral: Nay, it is said the honour of the law failed with him. If he were really, as he is reported to have been, the author of those prayers against christians so long used in the Jewish synagogues, he must have lost that moderation of temper which he manifested here; perhaps exasperated at the growth of the new sect, and the testimony so boldly borne by the apostles. He was Paul's master, (Acts xxii. 3.) and no doubt he informed that headstrong youth (for such he then was) of what now passed, and of many other things which rendered his sin in persecuting the christians so much the more aggravated. See Wits. *Meletem. cap.* I. § 13. p. 12, 13. and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 9. p. 77, 78.

g *One Theudas arose.*] As the Theudas mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5. [al. 2.] § 1.) under the character of a false prophet, (who drew a great number of people after him, with a promise of dividing Jordan before them, but was defeated and beheaded, most of his followers being also slain or imprisoned,) appeared when Fadus was procurator of Judea, that is, according to Capellus, seven, or according to Dr. Whitby, at least ten years after this was spoken, there can be no reference to him here. I am therefore ready to conclude, with Dr. Lightfoot and Basnage, (whose opinion Dr. Lardner has so learnedly defended,) that among the many leaders who, as Josephus assures us, (*Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 10. [al. 11.] § 4—8.) took up arms in defence of the public liberties, when the grand enrolment and taxation were made by Cyrenius in the days of Archelaus, (see note b, on Luke ii. 2. p. 18.) there was one called Theudas, which (as Grotius observes) was a very common name among the Jews:—He seems to have been supported by smaller numbers than the second of the name, and (as the second afterwards did) perished in the attempt: but, as his followers were dispersed and not slaughtered like those of the second Theudas, survivors might talk much of him, and Gamaliel might have been particularly informed of his history, though Josephus only mentions it in general. Dr. Lardner, in his judicious remarks on this subject, has shewn that there were many persons of the same name whose histories greatly resembled each other. See Lardner's *Credib. of Gosp. Hist.* Part. I. Book. ii. chap. 7.

h *After him.*] Bos has taken great pains, in his note on this text, (*Exerc. Sacr.* p. 75—78.) to shew that μετα τουτον may signify *besides him*, and even *before him*, in this connexion with προ τουτων ημερων, which he would render, *of late days*. (Compare Acts xxi. 38.) This he observes in favour of his interpretation of ver. 36. which he supposes to refer to the Theudas of Josephus, whose insurrection he thinks must have happened before this speech of Gamaliel.—But as Beza and many others have abundantly proved that this would quite overturn the chronology either of St. Luke or of Josephus, I conclude that the very indeterminate expression, προ τουτων ημερων, in the preceding verse, is most safely rendered, *some time ago*, which, especially in an assembly of aged men, (as no doubt many of this council were,) might well be used in reference to an affair which, though it happened more than 20 years before, must be fresh in most of their memories. (See Dr. Lardner's *Credibility*, Part. I. Book ii. chap. 7.) And as Judas might arise after Theudas, though the same enrolment might (as is supposed in the preceding note) occasion the insurrection of both, I see no need of departing from the usual rendering of the preposition μετα in this construction, which every body knows is generally used to signify *after*.—To connect μετα τουτον with the preceding verse, (as some propose,) is quite unnatural in grammar, as well as disagreeable to fact.

i *Judas the Galilean arose.*] Josephus's account of this Judas Gaulonites, as he is generally called, may be seen in the beginning of the xviiith Book of his *Antiquities*.

k *All who had hearkened to him were dispersed.*] Dr. Lardner justly observes this does not imply they were destroyed, and imagines, that though Gamaliel would not directly assert it, yet he insinuates, (agreeably to his principles as a Pharisee,) that perhaps Judas the Galilean, as well as the apostles, might be actuated by some divine impulse, and that in one instance as well as the other, the doctrine might survive when the teachers were taken off. (See Lardner's *Credibility*, Part I. Book ii. chap. 1. § 3.) But the argument will be good on the common interpretation; and, as the word here used, διεσκορπισθησαν, especially in this connexion, most naturally implies *a calamitous and disappointing dispersion*, I apprehend that, had it been intended in the sense my learned and much esteemed friend supposes, the present tense would rather have been used.

come to nothing of itself; some incident will arise to discredit it, and the whole interest of this Jesus *will moulder away*, as that of Theudas and of Judas did, which seemed to be much more strongly supported by human force. *But*, on the other hand, *if it be* really the cause of God, which does not appear to me impossible, *you cannot* with all your power and policy *dissolve it;* but, even though these particular instruments should be taken off, he will undoubtedly raise up others: And it will certainly become you, in regard to your own safety, to be particularly cautious, [*and take heed*] *lest you* not only lose the benefit of any deliverance which may be intended for Israel, but also *be* yourselves *found even fighters against* the power and providence of Almighty *God;* an undertaking which must prove infinitely fatal to all who are so rash and unhappy as to attempt it.

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

And as the council were unable to elude the force of what Gamaliel said, *they yielded to him*, acknowledging that his advice was safe and wise: *And having called in the apostles, and* ordered them to be *scourged* and beaten with rods in their presence, that in some measure they might vent their indignation, and might expose *them* to disgrace and shame, *they* strictly *charged them*, as they had done before, (chap. iv. 18.) *not to speak* any more *in the name of Jesus*, if they would not incur yet severer punishment; *and*, having threatened them with what they must expect if ever they were brought before them for the same crime again, they *dismissed them* for that time.

40 And to him they agreed: And when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Thus were the apostles sent away: *and*, far from being terrified by all the cruel usage they had met with, or by the threatenings of their adversaries, *they departed from the presence of the sanhedrim, rejoicing that they were* so honoured in the course of Divine Providence as to be *counted worthy* to suffer for Christ, and *to be exposed to infamy for the sake of his* venerable and sacred *name;* rightly judging that a punishment of this kind, though generally shameful, became a glory to them, when borne in so excellent a cause, and for the sake of him who, though so divinely great and so perfectly happy, had submitted not only to stripes, but to death for them. Instead therefore of obeying the order of the rulers, they grew so much the more courageous and diligent in spreading the gospel: *And every day*, from morning to night, *they ceased not* to pursue this great work, but took all opportunities to preach *in the temple*, though within sight of the sanhedrim, and among many of its chief members, who being obliged by their office often to resort thither, must frequently see and hear them; *and* at other times, between the seasons of public worship, they were engaged privately *from house to house;* and on the whole, one way or another, it was their constant business *to teach and to preach Jesus* as *the Messiah*, and to proclaim with unspeakable pleasure the good news of life and salvation given to sinners by him: The sanhedrim, in the mean time, by the special providence of God, suffering them to go on, and affecting to overlook them as beneath their notice, though still with a secret rancour, which at length broke out into the extremest violence.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Which shall we survey with the greater surprise, the continued courage of the apostles, or the continued malice of their persecutors? Again they seize them, again they imprison them; but how vainly do these feeble worms, amidst all the pride of dignity and power, oppose the counsels of Omnipotence! Ver. 17, 18

The angel of the Lord opens the door of their prison, and leads forth his faithful servants to renewed liberty: An office which this celestial spirit could not but perform with delight; and it was, no doubt, with unutterable pleasure that he gave them their errand, to go and publish with undaunted freedom and zeal the words of this life, of this gospel, which enlivens dead souls, and points out the road to an happy immortality. Oh that the folly of those who have heard it, had never converted it into a savour of death! 19, 20

Yet behold, the council renewed the attack! The same madness which instigated the Jews to seize Jesus when they had been struck to the ground by his miraculous power, (John xviii. 6.) animated these wretches to contrive the destruction of persons whom God himself had just before rescued from their hands; as they had formerly plotted that of Lazarus, (John xii. 10.) who had, by a yet more astonishing wonder, been recalled from the grave. To what fatal extravagances will not prejudice hurry the mind! Against what convincing evidence will it not harden it! 21—26

Ye shall, says our Lord, *be brought before* councils *for my sake;* and it shall be *for a testimony against them.* (Matt. x. 18.) And such was this repeated admonition which these holy prisoners then at the bar gave to the judges of Israel: Still they urge the divine authority of their mission, still they proclaim him as head of the church and world, whom these very men had so lately crucified in so outrageous and contemptuous a manner. They point to him whom these priests and rulers had insulted on the cross, as now exalted at the right hand of God, and urge them to seek repentance and remission of sin from him to whom they had denied the common justice due to the meanest of men, the common humanity due to the vilest of criminals in their dying moments, giving him in the thirst of his last agonies vinegar mingled with gall. (Matt. xxvii. 34.) 29, 30, 31

Thousands of the people had fallen under this charge, and Jesus the Prince had taken them under his protection, Jesus the Saviour had washed them in his blood. But, by what is too frequently the fatal prerogative of greatness, these princes of Israel had hearts too high for the discipline of wisdom, and were enraged against these humble ministers of the Son of God; who nevertheless addressed them with all the respect which fidelity would allow, and could gladly have poured forth their blood for the salvation of those who so cruelly thirsted for it. They gnashed on these faithful ambassadors with their teeth, as if they would have devoured them alive; and justly will gnashing of teeth be the eternal portion of those who thus outrageously reject the counsel of God against themselves. (Luke vii. 30.) 33

But God raised up a guardian for the apostles where perhaps they least expected it, and the prudence of Gamaliel for a while checked the fury of his brethren: So does God sometimes use the natural good sense and temper of those 34

SECT. 11. ACTS V.

who do not themselves receive the gospel, for the protection of those who are faithfully devoted to its service. Gamaliel had attentively observed former events; which is indeed the way to learn the surest lessons of wisdom, which are to be learnt any where but from the word of God. He had seen some ruined by their seditious zeal; and let those who call themselves christians, take heed how they rashly rise up against legal authority, lest, taking the sword, they perish by it. (Matt. xxvi. 52.) Judiciously does he admonish the council to *take heed lest they be* 39 *found fighters against God.* May divine grace ever guard us from that fatal error into which all who oppose the gospel, whatever they may imagine, assuredly fall! They cannot indeed dissolve it, but they dash themselves in pieces against it. *Be wise therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth!* (Psal. ii. 10.)

40 For reasons of state the apostles were to be scourged, though their judges were inwardly convinced that it was at least possible their message might be divine. Deliver us, O Lord, from that policy which shall lead us to imagine any evil so great as that which may offend thee! The punishment which these excellent men suffered was infamous, but the cause in which they endured it rendered it glorious: nor could those stripes be half so painful to their flesh, as an opportunity of thus approving their fidelity to their Lord was delightful to their pious souls: Well might they triumph in bearing the scourge for him who bore the cross, and died on it for them. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind, if in a severer sense than this we should be called for his sake to resist unto blood.

SECTION XII.

The choice of the seven deacons. Stephen preaches Christ, and, after disputing with some of the Jewish Societies, is brought before the Sanhedrim. Acts vi. 1—12.

Acts vi. 1.

SECT. 12. ACTS VI.

NOW in those days of which we have been speaking, and some time after the fact last recorded had fallen out, *the number of the disciples being multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the* Hellenists or *Grecians*, that is, of those converts to the gospel who, being foreign Jews, and coming from the western countries, used the Greek language in their synagogues and in their conversation,[a] *against the Hebrews*, who were natives of Judea, and 1 used the Hebrew or the Syriac tongue; *because*, as they were strangers at Jerusalem, and had not so much interest as the natives, some of *their* necessitous *widows were* in some degree at least *neglected*[b] *in the daily ministration* of the charities that were distributed to the poor members of the church. And as the apostles were concerned, though not alone, in that distribution, (the money raised as above by the sale of estates having been brought to them,) they were solicitous to obviate all those reflections which might fall upon them on this occasion, as they might otherwise in some measure have affected their usefulness.

Acts vi. 1.

AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 *And the twelve* apostles *having called the multitude of the disciples together*,[c] communicated to them, and *said*, *It is by no means* proper or *agreeable that we*, who have an office to discharge of so much greater weight and consequence, *should leave* the important care of dispensing *the word of God, to attend* the *tables* of the poor, and see who are served there; and yet this we must do in order to prevent these complaints, unless some 3 further measures be taken by common consent. *Therefore, brethren*, as you easily see how inconvenient it would be to suffer this care to lie upon us, and how inevitably it would render us incapable of attending to the proper duties of our office, it is our united request to you, that you *look out from among yourselves seven men*[d] *of an attested character, full of the Holy Spirit and of* approved *wisdom, whom we may* by common consent and approbation *set over this affair*,[e] and who may make it their particular busi- 4 ness to attend to the management of it. *And we*, in the mean time, being freed from this great incumbrance, *will constantly attend to prayer and to the ministry of the word*, which is our grand business, and which we could be glad to prosecute without interruption.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

a *Grecians*, that is,——foreign Jews, &c.] This, for reasons which may be seen at large in Dr. Benson's *History*, appears to me by far the most probable of the seven opinions mentioned by Fabricius, (in his *Biblioth. Græc. lib.* iv. *cap.* 5. note q. Vol. III. p. 226.) as well as that which is generally allowed by all the best commentators. (See *Critic. Magn. in loc.*) That of Mons. Fourmont, *Hist. Acad. Roy.* Vol. III. p. 105.) that they were Syrians, depends on uncertain and improbable conjectures, either that the Acts were written in Syriac, or ελληνισται read for ελησται, persons belonging to Helena, Queen of the Adiabeni. (See Wolf. *in loc.*) As there were so many Jews who used the Greek translation of the Bible, who might therefore very properly be denoted by this word, it is extremely probable their united interest should be in question on such an occasion, and not merely that of those who came from Syria.——Beza interprets the word as denoting only *circumcised proselytes;* but I think without any reason. See Drus. *in loc.*

b *Their widows were neglected.*] The apostles undoubtedly acted a very faithful part in the distribution of money raised by the sale of lands: (See note c, on chap. iv. 37. § 10. p. 446. (But, as Lord Barrington well observes, (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract.* p. 11.) they could not do all things. Perhaps they intrusted some who had been proprietors of the estates sold, who would naturally have some peculiar regard to the necessity of their neighbours as being best acquainted with them; and, if any suspicions arose as to the sincerity of their character, and the reasonableness of their pretensions, these strangers would (*cæteris paribus*) be least capable of giving satisfaction.

c *Having called the multitude of the disciples together.*] Dr. Whitby has solidly proved on this head, that by these we are to understand, not (as Dr. Lightfoot imagined) the rest of the hundred and twenty, but the whole body of christian converts, they being the persons to whom satisfaction was then due.

d *Seven men.*] Mr. Mede thinks this an allusion to the seven archangels, whom he supposes the great courtiers of heaven; and many other texts produced in support of that rabbinical opinion, seem almost as little to the purpose as this.

e *Whom we may set over this affair.*] I apprehend the apostles speak here of what was to be the joint act of themselves and the whole church, as, to be sure, after they had exercised the trust for a while, it would have been most indecent to have devolved it on any but such as they should have approved.—It is a maxim with me in this work, to meddle as little as possible with controversies about church-order and government, or any other circumstantial points that have unhappily divided the Protestant world. Yet I hope I shall give no offence by observing, that no just argument can be drawn from the actions of the apostles, with their extraordinary powers and credentials, to the rights of succeeding ministers destitute of such powers and credentials. It would however have been happy for the church in every age, had its ordinary ministers taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge, and to pay all due deference to their natural rights, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their commission and office was, did on this and other occasions.——The three grand canons, that all things should be done *decently, in charity*, and *to edification*, duly attended to, would supersede the necessity of ten thousand which have been made since, and perhaps, if rightly weighed, would be found absolutely to *vacate* a great part of them.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

And the speech the apostles made *was pleasing to all the multitude* who were called together upon this occasion; *and* having deliberated a little upon the choice that was to be made, *they elected* seven to be set apart to the office of deacons, whose names were as follows: There was *Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,*[f] of whose heroic character and glorious end we shall presently have occasion to speak; *and Philip,* who long continued an ornament and blessing to the church, being at length raised to a yet higher character; *and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas,* who was not a Jew born, but *a proselyte of Antioch,*[g] whom they were more willing to fix in this office, as his peculiar relation to the Grecians would make him especially careful to remedy any neglect of them which might insensibly have prevailed. These were the persons in *whom* they chose to repose this confidence; and accordingly *they presented* them *before the apostles. And they having prayed* that a divine blessing might attend all their ministrations and care, *laid* [*their*] *hands upon them,* that so they might not only express their solemn designation to the office, but might confer upon them such extraordinary gifts as would qualify them yet more abundantly for the full discharge of it.

SECT. 12. ACTS VI. 5 6

And the consequence was, that the matter of complaint being thus removed, and the apostles more entirely at leisure to attend to the great and peculiar duties of their office, *the word of God grew, and the number of disciples in* and about *Jerusalem was greatly multiplied; and* in particular, what might seem very surprising, *a great multitude of priests became obedient to the faith,*[h] notwithstanding all those prejudices which they had imbibed against this new doctrine, from the scorn with which the great and the noble generally treated it, and the loss of those temporal advantages which they might be called to resign out of regard to it. 7

And Stephen, having for some time discharged the office of a deacon with great honour and fidelity, was raised by Divine Providence and grace to the superior honours of an Evangelist and a martyr,[i] and was enabled in a very extraordinary manner to confirm the doctrine he taught; for, *being full of grace and of power,*[k] and eminently qualified for the performance of wonderful things, he *wrought* many extraordinary *miracles and great signs among the people.* 8

But, notwithstanding all the miracles that were done by him, *there arose some of the synagogue which is called* [*that*] *of the Libertines,* as having been the children of freedmen, that is, of emancipated captives or slaves,[l] *and* [*some*] *of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them* who were natives *of Cilicia and Asia,* who endeavoured to prevent the success of his preaching, by *disputing with Stephen,*[m] and arguing with him concerning his doctrine. *And* though they had an high opinion of their own sufficiency to manage the dispute, yet such was the force of his reasoning, that *they were not able to stand against the wisdom and spirit with which he spake,* the Divine Spirit itself guiding his thoughts and animating his expressions, which raised him far above the strength of his 9 10

f *Stephen, a man full of faith, &c.*] Mr. Fleming (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 166.) endeavours to prove that Stephen was one of the Seventy, but it seems quite a precarious conjecture. The termination of most of these names makes it probable they were Hellenists; a supposition which also agrees very well with the occasion of their election.

g *Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.*] Some ancient writers tell us that he fell into error in the decline of life, and became the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitans, mentioned, Rev. ii. 6, 15. (See Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 29; and Iren. *lib.* i. *cap.* 26.) But it seems much more probable that the founder of this sect, considering how common the name was, might be some other person so called, or else (as M. L'Enfant conjectures) that some of his words or actions, being misinterpreted, might be the occasion of seduction under the authority of so venerable a name as his. ——We may observe by the way, that it is evident the word *proselyte* here signifies one who by circumcision had entered himself into the body of the Jewish people; for none imagine Nicolas to have been what is commonly called a proselyte of the gate, no uncircumcised persons being yet admitted into the christian church.

h *A great multitude of priests, &c.*] We learn from Ezra, chap. iii. 36—39. that four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine priests returned from the captivity, the number of which was now probably much increased.——I see no foundation in the authority of any ancient copies, for reading, with Casaubon, και των ιερεων, and explaining it as if it were, και τινες των ιερεων, *and some of the priests.* It is indeed wonderful that a great multitude of them should embrace the gospel, considering what peculiar resentments they must expect from their unbelieving brethren, and the great losses to which they must be exposed in consequence of being cast out of their office: (as it is not to be imagined, that when christians were cast out of the synagogues, they would be retained as temple-ministers:) But the grace of God was able to animate and support them against all. And it is very probable, the miracle of rending the veil of the temple, and the testimony of the guards to the truth of the resurrection, (which some of the chief of that order heard, and might perhaps be whispered to some others,) might contribute considerably toward their conversion, in concurrence with the miraculous gifts and powers of the apostles, the most convincing proofs of which they saw before their eyes in their own temple.——Some would render πολυς οχλος, *a numerous body,* as if it intimated, that, after mutual conferences with each other, they agreed to *come over in a body;* which might be the case: but as the original does not determine that positively, I have kept to what seemed a more literal version: For which reason also I cannot, with Heinsius, render οχλος ιερεων, *many priests of the lower rank.*

i The superior honours of an Evangelist, &c.] It plainly appears from the foregoing history of the institution of the office, that it was not as a deacon that he preached; but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit he received, eminently qualified him for that work: And no doubt, many christians not statedly devoted to the ministry, and whose furniture was far inferior to his, would be capable of declaring Christ and his gospel to strangers in an edifying and useful manner, and would not fail accordingly to do it, as Providence gave them a call and opportunity.

k *Full of grace and of power.*] So many valuable copies read χαριτος instead of πιστεως, that I thought myself obliged to follow them. See Dr. Mill, *in loc.*

l *Libertines,* as having been the children of freedmen, &c.] Grotius, Salmatius, Basnage, Vitringa, and many other illustrious writers, generally agree in the interpretation given in the paraphrase; for the illustration of which, most of them remind us that great numbers of Jews taken captive by Pompey, and carried into Italy, were (as Philo tells us, *Oper.* p. 1014.) set at liberty, and obtained their freedom from their masters. Their children, therefore, would be *libertini,* in the proper sense of that word: agreeably to this, the Jews banished from Rome by Tiberius (who are mentioned both by Josephus, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 3. [al. 5.] § 5. and Suetonius, *Tiber. cap.* 36.) are spoken of by Tacitus, *Annal. lib.* ii. *cap.* 85. as of the libertine race, who might easily constitute one of the 480 synagogues said to have been at Jerusalem. (See Dr. Lardner's *Credibility,* Part I. Book i. chap. 3. § 4.)——When so natural a solution offers, it is hardly worth while to inquire after Altingius's Nethinim, or Cademan's לעטרקין, that is, persons speaking Hebrew, or the Libertinus, whom Maius (agreeably indeed to the Syriac) supposes to have built this synagogue. But the curious reader may, if he pleases, see a farther account of their opinions, and that of some others, in Wolfius's notes on this verse. —Dr. Hammond and Mr. Biscoe (chap. iv. § 4. p. 103.) take them to have been such Jews as were free citizens of Rome: but I do not remember to have seen the word *libertini* used in that sense.

m *Disputing with Stephen.*] As the most considerable synagogues in Jerusalem had each a kind of academy or college of young students belonging to it, instructed under some celebrated rabbi, it is no wonder such nurseries should afford disputants like those spoken of here.

SECT. natural genius, and made him indeed a wonder to all that heard him. (Compare Matt. x. 12. 20; and Luke xxi. 15.)

ACTS VI. 11 *Then*, as they found they were incapable of defending themselves by fair argument, they had recourse to a most mean and dishonest fraud; for *they suborned men to* depose and *say, We heard him*, even this very Stephen, *speak blasphemous words against Moses, and* [*against*] *God* himself,[n] the great Author of that religion which Moses taught us by command from him.

11 Then they suborned men which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

12 *And* as the law required that a blasphemer should be stoned, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) *they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes*, especially those who were in stations of authority, against him; *and setting upon* [*him*,] *they* violently seized and *dragged him away with them, and brought* [*him*] *to the sanhedrim*, which was then sitting; and there, in presence of their highest court of judicature, they prosecuted the affair to an issue which will be described in the following sections.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1—4 We see how difficult it is, even for the wisest and best of men, to manage a great multitude of affairs without inconvenience and without reflection. It will therefore be our prudence not to engross too much business into our own hands, but to be willing to divide it with our brethren, with our inferiors, allotting to each their proper province, that the whole may proceed with harmony and order.

1 Let us be solicitous that nothing may be done through partiality; especially let those avoid it who are entrusted with the distribution of charities. It is a solemn trust, for which their characters at least are to answer to the world now, and they themselves must ere long account for it to God. Let them therefore be willing to be informed of the truth of particular cases, willing to compare a variety of them, and then select such as in their consciences they are persuaded it is the will of God they should in present circumstances regard, and in such or such proportion prefer to the rest.

3 In religious societies it may be highly proper that, after the example here given in the apostolic age, deacons, or persons to perform this office, should be elected by the society, in concurrence with their ministers. It is their business to serve tables. Happy those societies who make choice of men of an attested character, and of those who appear, by the virtues and graces of the christian temper, to be in that sense full of the Holy Spirit.

4 While these good men are dealing forth their liberal contributions, (by which, while Christ has any poor members remaining, we are still to testify our love to him,) let ministers devote themselves with all attention to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Let those who would administer the word with comfort and success, remember of how great importance it is that it be watered with prayer, falling upon it as the former and as the latter rain; and especially see to it, that, by the constant exercise of lively devotion in secret, in their families, and on other proper social occasions, they keep their graces vigorous and active; that, living continually in such a state of nearness to God, they may be qualified to speak in his name with that dignity, tenderness, and authority which nothing but true and elevated devotion can naturally express, or can long retain.

7 Let us adore that efficacy of divine grace whereby a multitude of the Jewish priests were made obedient to the faith! and let us heartily pray, that if there are any who claim a sacred character, and yet, out of regard to worldly honour or interest, oppose the power and purity of the gospel, they may be convinced by the influence of the blessed Spirit, that they can have no interest in contradiction to the truth, and that they are happy in purchasing, at the highest price, that gospel which may enrich them for ever.

9 In whatsoever station we are fixed, whether in the world or the church, let us always remember our obligation to plead the cause of the gospel, and to render a reason for the hope that is in us. If this engage us in disputation with men of corrupt minds, we must still *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, knowing that *he is faithful that has promised.* (Heb. x. 23.)

11 The vilest charge may, as in this instance, be fixed upon the most worthy men; piety may be defamed as blasphemy, and that which is the true love of our country, as treason against it: But there is one Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, who will not fail, sooner or later, to plead the cause of injured innocence. And when we read of this vile attack that was made by perjury on the character and life of Stephen, we may take occasion to adore that wise and powerful Providence which so remarkably exerts itself to defend our reputation and our lives from those false and venomous tongues which, were it not for that secret, invisible restraint, might, like a two-edged sword, so quickly destroy both.

SECTION XIII.

Stephen, being accused before the sanhedrim of blasphemy, begins his vindication of himself from that charge. Acts vi. 13, *to the end;* vii. 1—14.

Acts vi. 13.

SECT. 13. IT was observed in the last section, that those Jews who had been confounded by the force and spirit of Stephen's argument and address, had brought him before the sanhedrim; *and* while he stood before them as a prisoner, *they set up* certain *false witnesses who said, This*

ACTS VI. detestable *man is incessantly speaking blasphemous words against this holy place* in which we now are, that is, against Jerusalem and the temple, *and* likewise against *the*

14 divinely-inspired *law*, as one that has no reverence at all for its authority. *For we* ourselves *have heard him saying, that this* same *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom he celebrates so much upon every occasion as the long-expected and desired Messiah, having been rejected and crucified by your authority, in concurrence with that of the whole Jewish people, *shall* nevertheless *destroy this* city and this holy *place; and*, in consequence of that, *shall*

Acts vi. 13.

AND set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law.

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

n *Blasphemous words against Moses and against God.*] See note a, on chap. vi. 11. in the next page.

entirely *change the* rites and *customs which Moses delivered to us*,[a] and put an end to the whole authority of his law.

16 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

And, at the very instant that this heinous charge was advanced against Stephen, *all that were sitting in the sanhedrim* as his judges, *fixing their eyes upon him, saw* a surprising radiancy upon *his countenance*, so that it appeared *like the countenance of an angel*;[b] God being pleased to crown the natural benignity, sweetness, and composure of his aspect, with a refulgent lustre, like what those celestial spirits have sometimes worn when they have appeared as messengers to men.

Acts vii. 1. Then said the high-priest, Are these things so?

Nevertheless, the council proceeded against him, *and the high-priest*, without any particular notice of it, *said* with an affected calmness, as to a common criminal on his trial, *Are these things indeed thus* as these witnesses have deposed? Thou art permitted to make thy defence, and this is thy time to speak; if therefore thou hast any thing to offer in thine own vindication from this charge of blasphemy, which the witnesses have so expressly advanced against thee, plead it, and the court will patiently attend to what thou hast to say, before it proceeds to sentence.

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

And upon this Stephen began a large discourse,[c] in which, in the softest and most inoffensive manner, he solemnly declared his firm persuasion of the divine authority of that law which he was charged with blaspheming; and proved to them from their own scriptures, that God's gracious regards to his people were not limited within the boundaries of that land, nor appropriated to those who were subjected to the Mosaic ritual; at the same time reminding them of some instances in which they had ungratefully rejected those whom God had appointed for their deliverers, that they might be cautioned against repeating the fault in this instance to their final ruin, *he* therefore traced the matter to its original, and *said*, *Men, brethren, and fathers*, I beseech you all, whether old or young, whether of greater or lower rank, to *hearken* to me while I offer these things, which may not only serve for my own vindication from this unjust charge, but may likewise remind you of some important particulars which it is your highest interest in present circumstances seriously to consider. It is well known to all of you, that long before our law was given, or the place in which we stand had any peculiar sanctity, *the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham*, by some resplendent and majestic symbol of his presence, *while he was* yet with his idolatrous ancestors *in Mesopotamia*, (Gen. xi. 31.) *before he dwelt in Charran*, which for a while he did, after he had removed his abode from Ur of the Chaldeans, which was the land of his nativity. In this idolatrous land it was that God appeared *and said to him*, *Depart from* this *thy* native *country, and from thy kindred*, who are now alienated from my worship, *and come* away from this land, which for so long a time has been the seat of thy family, *into a* pleasant and excellent *land which I will show thee*, and to which, by my extraordinary interposition, I will guide thee, though thou at present dost not know either its situation or its product. *Then* Abraham, strange as this command might seem, with all submission readily obeyed it; and *departing from* Ur in *the land of the Chaldeans, he dwelt* for several years *in Charran*, having been led by divine conduct hither, and not immediately receiving a signal to proceed any farther: But, by another call from God, he was directed to depart from Charran; *and* accordingly *from thence, after his father died*,[d] *he*, (that is, God,)

2

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

3

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell.

4

a *Shall change the customs which Moses delivered to us.*] I see no reason to believe that Stephen knew the mystery of the abolition of the Mosaic law, which the apostles do not seem immediately to have understood; and it is much less probable that he openly taught what Paul himself many years after insinuated with so much caution. (Compare Gal. ii. 2.) This therefore seems to have been the inference they drew from what he taught of the destruction he denounced on the Jews if they continued in their unbelief. But it was a very precarious inference, as the city and temple had been destroyed before without any repeal of the law, and therefore they were false witnesses.

b *Like the countenance of an angel.*] Grotius, Brennius, L'Enfant, and some others, interpret this as a proverbial expression of the majesty and beauty of his countenance, arising from a transport of inward joy, in the consciousness of innocence and expectation of glory, though he had so cruel a sentence and execution in view: (Compare Gen. xxxiii. 10; 1 Sam. xxix. 9; Eccles. viii. 1; and Esth. [Apoc.] xv. 13.) And upon this the translation of 1727 takes the strange liberty of rendering it, *They saw an air of majesty in his aspect.* But, with Dr. Hammond and Benson, I rather think there was a supernatural splendour, as on the countenance of Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 29.——It was indeed a most astonishing instance of the incorrigible hardness and wickedness of their hearts, that they could murder a man on whom God put such a visible glory, similar to that of their great legislator: but perhaps they might ascribe it to magic; and we know how little they made of other miracles, the truth of which they were compelled to acknowledge. Compare Acts iv. 16.

c Stephen began a large discourse.] Le Clerc, with a mixture of rashness and weakness, into which he frequently falls in his reflections on scripture, not understanding the true scope of this excellent discourse, presumes to censure it as containing many things not to the purpose, as well as many slips of memory, though it is expressly said, (ver. 55.) that *Stephen* was *full of the Holy Spirit* when he delivered it. I am persuaded that it will be admired by all that well understand it, and hope the hints I have given in the paraphrase will lead the reader into the true design of it, and shew the propriety of the circumstances introduced. Dr. Benson has illustrated it in a large and very judicious manner, in his *History*, Vol. I. p. 123—135. which I shall leave the curious reader to consult. I only add, that had not Stephen been interrupted by their fury, it is probable he would have added some other articles, and have summed up the discourse in such a manner as to shew that the main design of it was to humble that haughtiness of spirit which occasioned their rejecting Jesus and his gospel.

d *After his father died.*] Many passages in Stephen's speech have been objected to, as contradictory to the account given of the same facts in the Old Testament. I can by no means acquiesce in the answer which some have given, that Luke's inspiration only secured to us an exact account of what Stephen said: for it seems very unreasonable to suppose, that on so extraordinary an occasion the Spirit so expressly promised in such circumstances, (even to the Seventy as well as to the apostles,) should leave him to frequent and palpable slips of memory, into which it is not probable any intelligent christian minister would now fall in a like circumstance. It seems therefore much more honourable to Christianity to suppose, that if there are any passages here which cannot be reconciled with the passages of the Old Testament to which they refer, (which most that have been objected to certainly may,) it is owing to some error of transcribers, from which, as it is plain from various readings, even the copies of the sacred books have not always been secure, as without a continued miracle it is impossible they should. ——But as for what is here urged, as if it were inconsistent with Gen. xi. 26, 32; xii. 4. from whence it is argued, that as Terah was but 70 years old when Abraham was born, and Abraham but 75 when he departed from Haran, these make no more than 145 years; but Terah lived to be 205, and so must have lived 60 years after Abraham left Haran: whereas Stephen affirms that Abraham went not from thence till *after his father died*: In answer to this, it is well observed by Mr. Biscoe, (chap. xviii. p. 595—600.) that this objection is built upon an unproved supposition that Abraham was Terah's eldest son, or that he was born in his 70th year; not to insist on the solution which is offered to this difficulty by Le Clerc, Knatchbull, Capellus, and others, that, according to the Samaritan

SECT. 13. ACTS VII.

by the singular interposition of his providence, *caused him to remove his habitation into this land in which you now dwell. And* yet upon his coming into Canaan, *he gave him no* present *inheritance in it, not so much as the dimension of his foot,* or a piece of land which he might cover with the sole of it; for the little portion of it that he could call his own, he held by purchase, and not as by any claim of divine donation: *Nevertheless* 5 *he promised to give it for a* lasting *possession to him, even to his seed after him,*[e] *when* [*as yet,*] by the way, *he had no child,* and, humanly speaking, it was not likely he ever should have one: but the faith of our pious ancestor triumphed over all these seeming difficulties, and joyfully embraced the divine revelation and promise.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

6 *And* when God had brought Abraham into this country, he did not keep him and his posterity here till the time they were to enter upon the possession of it in consequence of this divine grant, but, on the contrary, *God spake* [*to him*] *thus* in a vision, (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) "*That his seed should sojourn* and be strangers *in a foreign land, and they* "among whom they sojourn *shall enslave and abuse them;* and these events, with the "circumstances preparatory to them, shall extend themselves to the full period of *four* 7 "*hundred years.*[f] *And the nation to which they shall be enslaved,*" *said God* in the same oracle, "*I will* assuredly *judge,* and punish with a righteous and tremendous seve- "rity: *And afterwards they shall come out* of that land, *and serve me in this place,* "inhabiting this land in which thou now dwellest, and erecting a temple for the perform- 8 "ance of my worship here." This was God's promise to him while he was yet uncircumcised; *and* in confirmation of it *he gave him,* as you well know, *the covenant of circumcision,* a sacred rite, which, far from blaspheming, I revere as the solemn seal of this contract between God and Abraham: *And so* being circumcised himself as soon as God required it, (Gen. xvii. 23, 24.) *he* quickly after *begat Isaac, and circumcised him* also *on the eighth day,* according to the divine appointment; *and Isaac* [*begat*] *Jacob, and Jacob* [*begat*] *the twelve patriarchs,* who were the respective heads of our twelve tribes of Israel.

6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: and Isaac *begat* Jacob, and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

9 *And* in those days the providence of God began to work for the accomplishment of that surprising prediction which I mentioned but now: For the rest of *the patriarchs,* though their relation to such holy ancestors might have taught them a much better lesson, *being moved with envy*[g] at the superior regard which Jacob showed to his favourite son, most inhumanly *sold Joseph* their brother *into Egypt,* where he became a slave, and went through a great variety of calamities: *Nevertheless God was with him* there, though no longer in the promised land, and made that country a scene of very glorious providence 10 towards him. *And* he there *delivered him out of all his afflictions* which his integrity and piety had brought upon him, *and gave him favour and* high veneration, on account of that distinguished *wisdom* which appeared to be in him, *in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he constituted him ruler over* the land of *Egypt, and* in particular over *all his* royal *house,* committing all things in the palace, as well as elsewhere, to his direction and management, even to the management of this despised Joseph, whom his brethren (then the whole house of Israel) had most outrageously insulted and abused, and even sold for a slave.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house.

11 *And,* according to the predictions of Joseph, which had awakened so great an attention, when seven years of plenty were past, *a famine came upon all the land of Egypt, and* extended itself over *Canaan* too; *and* this calamity reduced them to such *great affliction* and distress, that they knew not how to subsist, *and* even in this fruitful land *our fathers* 12 *did not find* sufficient *sustenance* to support themselves and their families. *But Jacob, hearing that there was corn in Egypt,* ordered his sons to go and fetch them a supply from thence, and *sent our fathers,* the ten patriarchs, thither *first,* keeping Benjamin 13 with him at home. *And the second time* that they went, when, sorely against his good father's will, Benjamin accompanied them, *Joseph was made known to his brethren; and* as the matter was immediately made public, *the family* and descent *of Joseph was discovered to Pharaoh,* of which he had not been particularly informed before.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first:

13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren, and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 *And* upon this, with the full consent of that generous prince, *Joseph sent and invited*

14 Then sent Joseph,

copy, Terah lived but 145 years.——Cladenius's solution, built on the distinction between κατοικειν, *sojourning,* and μετοικειν, *fixing his abode there* by the purchase of *a sepulchre,* seems too mean a subterfuge to be particularly discussed.

e *Even to his seed.*] The particle και so often signifies *even,* that I think it much more natural to render it thus, and to consider this clause as explaining the former, in order to avoid that express contradiction which seems to arise from translating it as we do.

f *Four hundred years.*] Many good critics suppose that this is mentioned here, as well as in the text from which it is quoted, (Gen. xv. 13.) as a round sum, without taking notice of the broken number, the exact time being four hundred and thirty years, as Moses determines it, Exod. xii. 40. with whom the apostle Paul agrees, Gal. iii. 17. For Abraham was 75 years old when he came into Canaan, (Gen. xii. 4.) which being considered as the beginning of the period, from thence to the birth of Isaac was 25 years; and Isaac was sixty years old when he begat Jacob, who went to Egypt at 130; which numbers added together make 215 years: and from thence to the time of Israel's departure from Egypt was 215 years more. (See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15. [al. 6.] § 2.)—— But Moses, in the text quoted from Exodus, refers to the whole period of the sojourning of Abraham and his family in Canaan and Egypt, as strangers in those lands; whereas this promise being made but a little before Isaac's birth, and the prediction taking place from that event, must include only 405 years, which might in a round sum be yet more easily and properly called four hundred. See Bishop Patrick on Gen. xv. 13. and Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

g *Being moved with envy.*] From what Stephen mentions of the story of Joseph, it was obvious to infer, (as many good writers have observed,) that the greatest favourites of heaven might suffer by the envy of those who were called the Israel of God, and might be exalted by him after having been rejected by them: A thought worthy of their consideration with respect to Jesus; but it would not have been proper directly to insert such a reference in the paraphrase, as prudence would not allow Stephen, in the beginning of this finely-adjusted defence, to say expressly what they could not have borne to hear, as appears by the manner in which they resented his application of these premises when he was drawing towards a conclusion.

and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

his aged *father Jacob, and all his kindred, to him*, into Egypt; who accordingly went down thither in a company, *amounting*, in the whole, together with their wives, *to seventy-five souls*,[h] without reckoning Jacob himself, and Joseph's family already there. And thus their sojourning in that land began, during which they were still under the care of Divine Providence, till the time of their return to Canaan approached, of which I shall presently speak. SECT. 13. ACTS VII.

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS loud may the clamour of malice and falsehood rise against innocence and truth. Incessant blasphemy is charged on one of the most pious of men; and we wonder at it the less, since it was charged upon Jesus himself; and, *if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household!* (Matt. x. 25.) His disciple learns of him not to render evil for evil, but answers in the language of calm reason, and of meek though powerful conviction. ACTS VI. 13, 14 VII. 2

While Stephen leads back our contemplation to so many remarkable facts of the Old Testament, let us reflect upon them with those devout affections which become the Israel of God. Let us adore the God of glory that appeared to Abraham, and called him forth to be so bright an example of faith and piety, in leaving his country and kindred, to follow the leadings of Providence, when he knew not in what settlement they should end. Let us, in imitation of him, whose children, if true believers, we also are, sit loose to every thing in this world, that we may be ready to leave it when God shall, by one providence or another, give the signal for our remove. If the next step of duty lies plain before us, let us trust our Leader to mark out all that follow, in such an order and to such an end as he shall think fit; secure of this, that while we follow Infinite Wisdom, we cannot wander out of the way to true happiness, and that all the divine promises shall certainly be accomplished, whatever cross event may seem to interpose and obstruct. Ver. 2—5

When God appointed that the seed of Abraham should sojourn and suffer in a strange land, the pious patriarch acquiesced in it: nor let us be over-anxious about the difficulties into which our posterity may be led. Let us adore the divine goodness, that he has established his covenant with us, and with our seed after us; and while we, in imitation of Abraham, bring our infant offspring to receive the same solemn seal of that covenant, let us remember our engagements to instruct them, as they grow up, in the tenor of it, and labour to the utmost to engage their own personal consent to it; and then they will be truly rich and free, though in the penury of a famished land, or under the rod of an Egyptian tyrant. 6, 7 8 11, 12

The mysterious conduct of Divine Providence with regard to the pious Joseph, who became a slave that he might be made a prince, and who was trained up for the golden chain in the discipline of iron fetters, may surely be sufficient to teach us to judge nothing before the time, and to wait the end of the Lord, before we arraign the seeming severity of a part of his conduct towards those whom we might imagine the most proper objects of his regard. And surely it will appear none of the least considerable of those rewards which Providence bestowed on the approved and distinguished virtue of Joseph, that he had an opportunity of nourishing his pious father in his declining days, of spreading a mild and pleasant ray over the evening of a life which had been so often beclouded with storms, and of sheltering (as it were) under his princely robe, that hoary head which had once been turned into a fountain of tears over the bloody fragments of the many-coloured coat. 9, 10 13, 14

SECTION XIV.

Stephen proceeds, in his discourse before the Sanhedrim, to enumerate several other facts in the Jewish history, all tending to the purpose of his own vindication and their conviction. Acts vii. 15—36.

ACTS vii. 15.

SO Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers:

ACTS vii. 15.

STEPHEN, while he stood before the council with the radiancy of countenance taken notice of above, proceeded in his discourse, and said, I have observed to you, brethren *and* fathers, how *Jacob went down into Egypt; and* you well know, that having been supported about seventeen years by the filial gratitude and tenderness of Joseph, *he died* there: *and our fathers* also, the patriarchs his children, ended their lives in the same country. *And* yet, by the way, they were solicitous not to be buried there; but as Jacob was immediately brought up, with solemn funeral pomp and procession, to be buried in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham and Isaac, (Gen. l. 13.) so the patriarchs also, having been embalmed and put into coffins in Egypt, (Gen. l. 26.) *were*, at the return of Israel from thence, *carried over to Sychem, and were laid in the sepulchre which* was made in that field which Jacob bequeathed to Joseph as a peculiar legacy; he having first, as *Abraham* had done in a like case, *purchased* it *for a sum of money*,[a] that is, for an hun- SECT. 14. ACTS VII. 16

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

h *Amounting to seventy-five souls.*] Of the various solutions which learned men have given of the seeming inconsistency between this account and that given by Moses, (Gen. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 5; and Deut. x. 22.) which makes them but seventy, (with which also Josephus agrees, *Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 7. [al. 4.] sect. 4.) the most probable seems to be this: Moses expressly leaves out all the wives, (Gen. xlvi. 26.) whom he had said before the sons of Israel carried with them, (ver. 5.) and only speaks of those that came out of Jacob's loins, inserting, in the catalogue that he gives of his children, two grand-children of Judah, (to supply the place of Er and Onan, who had died in Canaan,) Hezron and Hamul, though it is probable they were not born till after Jacob's arrival in Egypt; and, having first computed them at sixty-six, he then adds Joseph and his two sons that were before in Egypt, and, reckoning Jacob with them, makes the whole number to amount to seventy. But Stephen speaks of all that went down with him, and so excludes Jacob himself, and the two afterwards born, and Joseph and his children, which reduces the number thus: The eleven brethren, with Dinah their sister, and fifty-two that had descended from them, amount to sixty-four; to which adding eleven wives, (some of the patriarchs having probably buried theirs, and but few of their children being yet married,) they amount in all to seventy-five. See Pool's *Synopsis*, and Whitby, *in loc.* and Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. xviii. p. 602—606.——Could the reading of πεντε or πεντως instead of πενηε, (which Beza mentions as a conjecture,) be supported by proper authorities, so that it might be rendered, *all amounting to seventy souls*, it would make the whole matter quite easy. Grotius also supposes that the original reading here was seventy, and that the Septuagint copy was altered to its present form, to suit with the mistaken reading of seventy-five; for in the two first texts referred to in the beginning of this note, the Septuagint read seventy-five, while, in Deut. x. 22. they agree with the Hebrew, and read seventy, which is somewhat strange.

a *Which Abraham purchased, &c.*] It is so evident from Gen.

SECT. 14. ACTS VII.

dred pieces of silver, *of the sons of Emmor* [*the father*] *of Sychem*, from whom in particular, the place was named: and the Amorites having afterwards seized it, Jacob had by force recovered it out of their hands. (Compare Josh. xxiv. 32. with Gen. xlviii. 22.) And it was by their own direction the heads of our tribes were kept to be interred here, that they might testify thereby to their posterity, as long as their embalmed bodies continued unburied in Egypt, that they died in the faith of Israel's being led forth from thence and settled in the land of promise, which accordingly happened.

17 *And*, to make way for the accomplishment of this event, *as the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham*, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) *the people* of Israel, though they had such a small beginning, *grew* very numerous, *and multiplied* exceedingly
18 *in Egypt;* And they continued there for many years in very comfortable circumstances, *till another king arose*, of a different race and family from the former, *who knew not*
19 *Joseph*, and had no regard to his memory. (Exod. i. 8.) *He* therefore used them in a barbarous way; and *forming crafty* and treacherous *designs against our kindred*, lest they in time should grow to be too powerful, *treated our fathers* most *injuriously*, and cruelly contrived to cut them off from being a people, *by causing* all *their* male *infants*, in obedience to a most inhuman order that he published, *to be exposed* or cast into the river Nile, *that* in a little time *their race might perish*, and be quite extinct. (Exod. i. 22.)
20 Such was the miserable state to which our fathers were reduced: *in which* afflictive, persecuting *time* it was that the celebrated *Moses was born; and* he *was* so *exceeding beautiful*,[b] that his parents were struck with a peculiar desire of preserving him; *and*, that they might, if possible, secure him from the execution of the barbarous edicts I have just now mentioned, *he was bred up* with all the privacy that could be, *for three months in his father's house:* But as they were unable to conceal him any longer, he was committed by them to the care of Providence, and having put him in an ark of bulrushes, they laid him
21 in the flags upon the brink of the river Nile. (Exod. ii. 2, 3.) *And being* thus *exposed*, the providence of God so ordered it that he was found by *the daughter of Pharaoh*, who at the sight of him was moved with pity, and *took him up*,[c] *and nourished him*, with a
22 purpose of adopting him *for her own son. And Moses* by this means *was educated in all the* whole circle of arts and learning which came within the system of the celebrated *wisdom* and philosophy *of the Egyptians:*[d] *And* such was his remarkable proficiency, that *he was mighty in* the solidity of his *discourses*,[e] *and in* the prudence of his *actions*;[f] so that

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

xxxiii. 19; and Josh xxiv. 32. that the field at Sychem or Shechem, in which the bones of Joseph (and, as it should seem from this passage, and from what is asserted by Jerome, *Epitaph. Paulæ*, those of the other patriarchs) were buried, was purchased, not by Abraham, but by Jacob, and also that Abraham's sepulchre was purchased, not of Emmor or Hamor, the former proprietor of Jacob's ground, but of Ephron the Hittite, (Gen. xxiii. 10. *et seq.*) that it seems demonstrable that this passage has suffered something by the addition or omission of transcribers: for to suppose that Stephen or Luke designedly used the name of Abraham for Jacob, is, I think, one of the grossest affronts that can be offered to the character of either. A real slip of memory would be a trifle, when compared with such a designed prevarication. But, without supposing either, I apprehend, with Beza, in his admirable note on this text, that Luke probably wrote only, *which he* (that is, as the connexion fixes it, Jacob) *bought, &c.* which was the exact truth; and some officious transcriber, who fancied the verb wanted a nominative case, and thought he remembered the purchase of Abraham, (which it is plain he did not exactly distinguish,) put in his name. This solution, which is advanced by the learned Bochart, (*Hierozoic.* Part I. *lib.* ii. *cap.* 43.) Dr. Benson, and others, is so natural, that I will not trouble the reader with the mention of several others which may be seen in Dr. Whitby, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and Brennius; but shall only observe, that if this be not allowed, (which has indeed no copy to support it,) the easiest sense seems to be that which M. L'Enfant has given in his note, That Jacob died, he and our fathers, and they [that is, our fathers,] were carried over to Sychem, and buried; he [that is, Jacob,] in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money, and they [that is, the other patriarchs,] in that which was bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.—That Εμμορ του Συχεμ is very justly rendered *Emmor the father of Sychem*, (as he is declared to be in the Old Testament,) though the relation be not here expressed in the original, sufficiently appears from other passages, in which not only the relation of a son, of which we have frequent instances, but other relations too are left to be supplied. So Μαριαμ Ιακωβου is *Mary the mother of James;* (Luke xxiv. 10. compared with Mark xv. 40.) and Ιουδας Ιακωβου is *Judas the brother of James:* (Acts i. 13. compared with Jude, ver. 1.) Nor was this only usual with the Jews, but (as Bochart has shown in the place cited before) we have many instances of the like way of speaking in the most approved Greek writers. (See Dr. Whitby's note on Luke xxiv. 1)—The other objections which Rabbi Isaac has made against this passage, (*Chiss. Emun.* Part. II. *cap.* 63.) are so trifling, that I content myself with referring to Mr. Biscoe's full account and learned solution of them, *Boyle's Lect.* chap. xviii. p. 607—609.

b *Exceeding beautiful.*] This our translators render in the margin, *fair to God*, which is the literal sense of the original, αστειος τω Θεω. Grotius and others have observed it is a common Hebraism, being no more than an emphatical expression to denote his extraordinary beauty, which might perhaps be not unfitly rendered *divinely beautiful*, the name of God being often introduced to express such things as were extraordinary in their kind. So in the Hebrew, what we translate *great wrestlings*, is *wrestlings of God;* (Gen. xxx. 8.) *goodly cedars* are *cedars of God;* (Psal. lxxx. 10.) *great mountains* are *mountains of God;* (Psal. xxxvi. 6.) and *an exceeding great city* is *a great city of God;* (John iii. 3.) πολις μεγαλη τω Θεω, *Septuag.* And in like manner, in the New Testament, (2 Cor. x. 4.) *weapons mighty through God*, οπλα δυνατα τω Θεω, might not improperly be rendered *very strong weapons.* This then agrees with what is said of Moses, (Exod. ii. 2.) that he was *a goodly child;* and, in the account Josephus gives of him, he says, "That when he "was but three years old, his extraordinary beauty was such that "it struck every one that saw him; and as they carried him about, "persons would leave their work to look at him." (*Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9. [al. 5.] § 6.) The fame of it had also spread among the heathen; for Justin, in his *History*, relates from Trogus, *lib.* xxxvi. *cap.* 2. that besides the inheritance of his father's knowledge, (whom he takes to have been Joseph,) his beautiful appearance greatly recommended him. See Grotius and Whitby, *in loc.*

c *The daughter of Pharaoh took him up.*] All these extraordinary circumstances relating to the birth, preservation, education, genius, and character of Moses, serve to aggravate the crime of Israel in rejecting him when he offered himself to them as a deliverer under so many advantages, and when Providence had so wonderfully interested itself in his favour.

d *Educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*] Geography, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, natural history, physic, and hieroglyphics, are all mentioned by ancient writers as branches of Egyptian literature. As for magic, in the bad sense of the word, it is not to be imagined that so good a man would have any thing to do with it. Several ancient testimonies to the extraordinary learning of Moses may be seen in the following passages: Phil. *De Vit. Mos. lib.* i. p. 470; Justin Mart. *Quæst. ad Orthod.* xxv.; Orig. *Contra Cels. lib.* iii. p. 139; Clem. Alex. *Strom. lib.* i. p. 343.——I only add, it must have been a self-denial which none but a lover of learning, and one who has made some progress in it, can understand, for a person of such a genius and education, in the prime of life, to leave the polite court of Egypt, and live as a retired shepherd in the Arabian desert.

e *Mighty in discourses.*] It may seem difficult to reconcile this with what Moses himself says of his own want of eloquence. (Exod. iv. 10.) Some have attempted to do it by explaining this expression as importing the wisdom of the laws he gave, as they explain the next clause, *mighty in actions*, of the miracles he wrought. But Stephen seems rather to refer to what he was in the court of Pharaoh than to what he afterwards proved. I conclude, therefore, that it expresses such a weight and solidity in his counsels and speeches, as may be very consistent with the want of a flowing elocution: and the remarkable calmness of his natural temper would render him more entirely master of himself on great occasions, rather than others of readier speech with warmer passions.

f *And in actions.*] Archbishop Tillotson (in his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 23.) and many others, think that this refers to a story mentioned

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ACTS VII

he made a very conspicuous figure, both in the counsels that he gave and the commands he executed, in that polite and justly-renowned nation.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

But when he was arrived at the full age of forty years, he was conducted to a very different scene of life; for having been instructed in the knowledge of his real descent, and in the principles of the Jewish religion, *it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel;* and his spirit was so impressed with it, that all the pleasure and grandeur at the court of Egypt could not make him easy, without going in person to take a survey of their state. *And* there *beholding one* [*of them*] *injured* by an oppressive Egyptian task-master, who had subdued and got him down, and seemed about to take away his life, his generous spirit was not able to brook it; but *he defended* [*him,*] *and smiting the Egyptian* with a mortal wound, *he* at once rescued and *avenged him that was oppressed.* (Exod. ii. 11, 12.) *And* as he did this action by a special impression from God on his mind, intimating the important work for which he was intended, so *he supposed that his brethren*, observing the remarkable circumstances of the fact, by which he substantially declared his readiness to venture not only his fortune but his life in their service, *would have understood* that the action was expressive of what they might hope to obtain by his means, and intimated *that God would give them salvation* and deliverance *by his hand.*[g] *But they* were so exceeding stupid that they *did not understand it.* *And the next day he showed himself* again *to* two of *them as they were quarrelling* together, *and would have* interposed between them, and have *persuaded them to* live in *peace* and friendship, *saying*, *Men*, my friends, consider *you are brethren*, descended from Jacob, our common ancestor, and now too joined in affliction as well as in religion, which ought doubly to cement your affections to each other: *why* then *do ye injure one another?* *But he that injured his neighbour*, unable to bear with his plain and faithful reproof, insolently *thrust him away*,[h] *saying*, What hast thou to do with this controversy? *Who has made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as* I know *thou didst yesterday slay the Egyptian?* His blood may cost thee dear enough without adding mine to the account. (Exod. ii. 13, 14.) *Then Moses*, as he found the matter was discovered, and was apprehensive that in consequence of it the Egyptian power would be soon armed against him, while the Israelites were not inclined to use any efforts for his protection, nor to put themselves under his guidance, presently *fled* from Egypt *at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where*, nevertheless, Providence furnished him with a comfortable settlement, though in circumstances of great retirement; for he became the chief shepherd to Jethro, the prince of the country, and marrying Zipporah, his daughter, *he begat two sons*, Gershom and Eliezer.

24 And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not.

26 And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

And when forty years more *were fulfilled*, in which Israel had continued under this bondage, and Moses had been trained up in that humble and retired life for the great work for which God had intended him, *the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in* the midst of *a bush*, while he was feeding the flock of Jethro his father-in-law *in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*, even of that Mount Sinai which (as you know) lay in the confines of the Midianite country, not far from the Red sea. (Exod. iii. 1, 2.) *And Moses seeing* [*it,*] *admired the vision*, for the bush burned with fire, and yet was not consumed; *and as he drew near to behold* and survey [*it*] more particularly, *the voice of the Lord came unto him* out of the bush, [*Saying,*] "*I* [*am*] *the God of thy fathers, the God of* "*Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, who led them safely through "all the difficulties of life, and still manifest a friendship to them; in consequence of which, "I am not even now ashamed to own that title." *And Moses* upon this, perceiving that it was God himself who was there present and spake to him, *trembled* at this appearance of his Majesty, *and did not dare to behold* it, as he intended, with a curious regard. *And the Lord said unto him*, "*Loose thy shoes from thy feet*;[i] *for the place in which* "*thou standest is* now *holy ground*, while I thus visibly appear upon it; and it becomes "thee (by that usual token of respect before princes) to express thy reverence for my royal "presence. *I have surely seen the evil* and oppressive *treatment of my people which* "*are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning; and*, moved with pity and compas-"sion at their sufferings, *I am come down to deliver them* by thine hand: *And now* "therefore *come* and lay aside immediately thy cares of a shepherd for others of much

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 *Saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them: and

by Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 10. [al. 5.]) that when Moses dwelt in Pharaoh's court, the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, and Moses, being made general in the war against them, gave them a total defeat, and drove back the small remainder of their forces in confusion to their own country.

g *He supposed that his brethren would have understood*, &c.] They might have known that the time drew near which God had prefixed in his promise to Abraham, in a prediction which might probably be delivered down by tradition, and which would be more like to be remembered under their oppression, as the patriarchs had, in dependence upon it, directed that their bones should continue unburied in Egypt: And when they saw a person of so much dignity, authority, and influence, whom God had so wonderfully preserved, interposing in this generous and heroic manner, which plainly showed that he, in good earnest, intended at all hazards to do his utmost for their deliverance, it would have been highly reasonable for them to have taken occasion from this action of his, to enter into some treaty with him relating to it.

h *He that injured his neighbour thrust him away.*] It is plain the speech of this single person is represented, ver. 35. as expressing the sentiments of the whole body of the people, as their slowness afterwards to believe the mission of Moses, when attested by miracles, (Exod. v. 20, 21.) seems evidently to show that it was.

i *Loose thy shoes from thy feet.*] It was formerly in the eastern nations, and is now in the southern, esteemed a ceremony of respect to put off the shoes when approaching a superior, lest any of the dirt or dust cleaving to the shoes should be brought near him, and that the person approaching barefoot might tread more cautiously. This, which was perhaps introduced at first in court-apartments where rich carpets might be used, the King of kings requires to be done in a desert, as a token of the infinitely greater reverence due to him. (Compare Josh. v. 15; and Eccles. v. 1.) On the same principle, it seems, the priests ministered thus in the tabernacle and temple, no direction being given for shoes or sandals as a part of their dress, though all the rest of it was so particularly prescribed.

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" greater importance, and *I will send thee into Egypt*, to demand their dismission from " that proud tyrant who so injuriously detains and oppresses them." (Exod. iii. 5—10.)

And thus you see, what in present circumstances it will be proper for you to reflect upon, that *this Moses, whom they renounced,*[k] *saying*, with disdain, *Who has constituted thee a ruler and a judge?* even *this very person did God, by the hand of the angel who* 36 *appeared to him in the bush, send* [*to be*] *a ruler and a redeemer.* And though *he* hesitated for a while, he afterwards complied; and at length *led them forth* in triumph, a willing people listed under his banner, *doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and* afterwards *in the Red Sea*, where Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed; *and* working many other miracles, *in the wilderness for* the space of *forty years*, where indeed they were every day miraculously fed by manna from heaven, and conducted by the pillar of fire and cloud.

now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17 He is indeed faithful that hath promised; *he remembereth his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded*, even *to a thousand generations.* (Psal. cv. 8.) He multiplied his people in Egypt, that Canaan might not want inhabitants when the sinners against their own souls that then held it should be cut off: And when he 18, 19 had determined so to multiply the holy seed, vain were all the attempts of the ungrateful Egyptians to destroy the kindred of him by whom, as they had formerly confessed, *their lives had been saved:* (Gen. xlvii. 25.) Yet was the rod of the wicked permitted for a while to rest upon their back, that the remembrance of the bondage, and the cruelties they had there endured, might, throughout all generations, be a source of joyful and grateful obedience to that God who delivered them from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage, and an engagement to serve him who had so illustriously triumphed over idolatry, as it were, in its head-quarters. The church has often had its winter season, yet Providence has overruled the severity of that to conduce to the verdure and beauty of its spring, and to the fruitfulness of its summer and its autumn.

20, 21 Moses was born in the midst of this persecuting time, and, when exposed, was the care of Divine Providence: the compassion which God put into the heart of this Egyptian princess was to draw after it a train of most important consequences. Moses was fitted for the great part he was to act in the close of life by very different means; the 22 learning, the magnificence and politeness of the court of Egypt, were to do their part, that he might be able to appear with honour in that court as an ambassador, and to conduct himself with becoming dignity as a prince; but they could not do the whole. They were to illustrate his generosity in seeking, in the midst of such various 23, 24 pleasures, and at the expense of such high prospects, to vindicate his oppressed brethren, whose sorrow touched his heart, and whose groans pierced (if I may so express it) through all the music of the court, through all the martial noise of the camp, in which he might sometimes reside and command. Glorious triumph of faith, that when he was come to such full age, he *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, and chose rather to meet with affliction in the cause of Christ *than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin!* (Heb. xi. 24, 25.)

29 But forty years of retirement in the desert of Midian, spent in the meditations and devotions for which the life of a shepherd gave so great advantage, must ripen him to feed God's people Israel; while they, in the mean 25 time, justly groaned under the continuance of that bondage from which they were so backward to accept of a proffered deliverer.

30, 31 At length light breaks in upon them in the midst of their darkness: Let us turn aside and behold with proper affection this great sight, the bush burning but not consumed; and therein an emblem of the preservation of the church even amidst the fiercest flames. Let us hear with pleasure that voice which proclaims to all that hear it 32 so compassionate and faithful a God, which opens so glorious and lasting a hope,—*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* " Thou art not, O Lord, *the God of the dead, but of the living;* " (Matt. xxii. 32.) these pious patriarchs therefore live with thee, and their believing seed shall partake of that " life and joy in the city, which because thou hast *prepared for them*, thou art *not ashamed to be called their* " *God.*" (Heb. xi. 16.)

34 How does God manifest the heart of a parent towards these his oppressed children! *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of Israel.* Thus, O Lord, dost thou see all our afflictions! Let thy church, and each of thy people, trust thee to come down for their deliverance in thine own time and way: let us with pleasure behold this 35, 36 Moses whom they rejected, and from whom a worthless offender could not bear a reproof, made a leader and a redeemer: So is our blessed Jesus, though once rejected and despised, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. It is not in vain that *we have trusted it is he that should redeem Israel.* (Luke xxiv. 21.) He has conquered the tyrant of hell, he has broken our chains, he has brought us forth into a wilderness, but a wilderness in which God nourishes and guides us; and he shall ere long have what Moses had not, the honour and delight of leading all his people into the land of promise, and dividing to them a joyful and everlasting inheritance there.

SECTION XV.

Stephen proceeds in his discourse, till his audience are so enraged that they rush upon him and stone him. Acts vii. 37, *to the end;* viii. 1.

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Acts vii. 37.

STEPHEN went on, in his discourse before the sanhedrim, to mention several other circumstances concerning Moses, which he judged important to his present purpose; and having taken notice of the commission he received from God to be a ruler and deliverer,

Acts vii. 37.

THIS is that Moses which said unto the children of

k *This Moses whom they renounced.*] As the terms of high respect in which Stephen, through the whole of this discourse, speaks of Moses, tended to show how improbable it was that he should have spoken contemptibly of him, as the witnesses pretended; so this circumstance of the Israelites having rejected him whom God had appointed to be a ruler and redeemer, intimated how possible it was that Jesus, whom they had lately rejected, might nevertheless be constituted a Saviour by the divine determination.

Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me: him shall ye hear.

38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us.

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts, and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

and of the wonders that he wrought in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, he added, *This is that Moses who* expressly *said to the children of Israel*, (Deut. xviii. 15.) "*A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your bre-*
"*thren like unto me—him shall ye hear.*"[a] Thereby pointing out that Jesus of Nazareth, who is to be regarded as the great Prophet and Lawgiver of Israel, by whom God has sent you, as he did by Moses, a new system of precepts, and new ample discoveries of his will.

This Moses *is he who was* the chief *in the assembly* convened *in the wilderness*,[b] who had the honour of conversing *with the angel that spake to him* there *on Mount Sinai, and* of transacting all things *with our fathers*, whom he then entered into covenant with God: (Exod. xix. 3, 17; xxiv. 7, 8.) And it was he *who received the lively oracles* of God *to give* them *unto us*, even those oracles of the living Jehovah which are so full of divine life and energy, which were delivered in so awakening and impressing a manner, and which instruct us in the way to life and happiness. Yet notwithstanding this, you cannot but remember that this is the illustrious prophet *to whom our fathers*, even after all the proofs of his miraculous power in Egypt and the Red Sea, *would not be obedient*;[c] *but* acted a part yet more stupid and ungrateful than that which I mentioned before, (ver. 27, 35.) when they (as it were) *thrust him from them* a second time, as in contempt of all these wonderful appearances of God by him, *and returned back again to Egypt in their hearts; Saying to Aaron*, at the very foot of that mountain upon which God had visibly manifested himself to them, while the sound of his voice was (as it were) yet in their ears, and though they but a few days before had seen their great leader ascending up to him by an intimacy of approach allowed to no other mortal, "*Make us gods who*
"*may march before us*, and conduct us in the way; *for* [*as for*] *this Moses, who*
"indeed *brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him*,
"and cannot have patience to wait for him any longer." *And they* stupidly *made a calf*, in imitation of the Egyptian Apis, *in those* very *days* while they continued encamped in that remarkable situation, *and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands*, as if, instead of a reproach and abomination, it had been an ornament and defence to them. (Exod. xxxii. 1, 6.) *But* upon this, *God* was most righteously provoked, so that he *turned*, as it were, away from them, *and*, as in many other instances, punished one sin by letting them fall into another; yea, at length he *gave them up* in succeeding ages to the most abandoned, public, and general idolatry, even *to worship* all *the host of heaven* with as little reserve, and as little shame, as the most stupid of the heathen nations; *as it is written in the book of the prophets*, and particularly in that part of the volume of which Amos was the penman, (Amos v. 25—27.) "*O ye house of Israel, did ye offer victims and sacrifices to me* alone, even *for*
"*forty years in the wilderness?* You know that even then you began to revolt and
"provoke me to jealousy with your abominations: *And* you have ever since been renew-
"ing and aggravating your rebellions and treasons against me; for *you have* openly
"*taken up the tabernacle*[d] *of Moloch*, instead of confining yourselves to mine, *and* have
"carried in public procession *the star of your god* Chiun or *Remphan*,[e] paying a reli-
"gious veneration to *the* emblematical *figures* and representations *which you have made*

38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us.

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts, and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

a *A prophet shall the Lord your God, &c.*] As to the justice with which this prophecy is applied to Christ in its original literal sense, see Dr. Bullock's *Sermon* on Deut. xviii. 18. and Mr. Jeffery's *True Grounds*, p. 128—135. whom I mentioned before, in note i, on Acts iii. 22. p. 440. to which add Bishop Sherlock, *On Prophecy*, p. 187. *et seq.*

b *This is he who was in the assembly in the wilderness.*] When this clause is quoted, as it has been by some very great men, to prove that Christ was the person who brought Israel out of Egypt, gave them the law, conducted them through the wilderness, &c. the argument from thence is certainly inconclusive; for ουτος here evidently answers to ουτος, ver. 36. and to ουτος ὁ Μωυτης, ver. 37: and the following clause, which expresses his being *with the angel*, plainly proves *the angel* to be *a different person*. But I think the doctrine itself, "that Christ was *the God of Israel*, or *the angel* who "appeared to Moses," a great and certain truth, capable of being evinced from many passages of the Old and New Testament, and from this paragraph in particular, though not from this clause; and I hope in due time to shew that the arguments which Mr. Pierce has urged against it from Heb. xiii. 2; and ii. 2—4. are quite inconclusive.——I follow Beza, Heinsius, and the Prussian translators, in rendering εκκλησιαι, *assembly*, as our translators do, Acts xix. *ult.* because I am persuaded it refers, not in the general to their being incorporated into one church, in the appropriate sense of that word, but to their being assembled round the mountain on the solemn day when the law was given; Exod. xix. 17. *et seq.*

c *To whom our fathers would not be obedient.*] This is observed by Stephen once and again; and he insists upon it largely, that they might see it was no new thing for Israel to rebel against God, by rejecting deliverers sent from him.

d *You have* openly *taken up, &c.*] The learned De Dieu has a most curious and amusing, but to me very unsatisfactory, note on this verse. He saw, and I wonder so many great commentators should not have seen, the absurdity of imagining that Moses would have suffered idolatrous processions in the wilderness. Therefore he maintains, that Amos here refers to a mental idolatry, by which, considering the tabernacle as a model of the visible heavens, (a fancy, to be sure, as old as Philo and Josephus,) they referred it, and the worship there paid, to Moloch, so as to make it in their hearts, in effect, his shrine, and there also to pay homage to Saturn, whom he would prove to be the same with Chiun or Remphan, who (as this critic thinks) might be called their star, because some later rabbies, out of their great regard to the Sabbath, which was among the heathens Saturn's day, have said many extravagant and ridiculous things in honour of that planet. Lud. Capellus hints at this interpretation too. But the words of the prophet, and of Stephen, so plainly express the making of images, and the pomp of their superstitious processions, (see Young, *On Idolatry*, Vol. I. p. 128—131.) that I think, if external idolatry is not referred to here, it will be difficult to prove it was ever practised. I conclude therefore, considering what was urged in the beginning of this note, that God here refers to the idolatries to which in succeeding ages they were gradually given up, after having begun to revolt in the wilderness by the sin of the golden calf; which certainly appears (as Grotius has justly observed) from its being assigned as the cause of their captivity; which it can hardly be conceived the sin of their fathers in the wilderness, almost seven or eight hundred years before, could possibly be, though, in conjunction with their own wickedness in following ages, God might, (as he threatened, Exod. xxxii. 34.) remember that. Compare 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3; xxiii. 5.

e *Moloch and—Remphan.*] Probably the sun was represented by Moloch, and some star (whether Saturn, Venus, or the Moon, I cannot determine) by Remphan, which plainly is intended to answer to Chiun (if that were the original reading) in the Old Testament; but neither the etymology of the name, or the particular planet to which it referred, seems to me sufficiently evident. The learned reader will find a curious dissertation on this subject in Vitringa, *Observ. Sacr.* Vol. I. *lib.* ii. *cap.* I. with which he may compare Wits. *Miscell. lib.* ii. *diss.* v. § 2—17. Beza reads Rephan for Remphan, and interprets it of some gigantic statue of Hercules, called Chiun from his strength; and Lud. Capellus and Dr. Hammond interpret it of an Egyptian king called Remphis: But I can pronounce nothing certain concerning so obscure a point.

SECT. 15. ACTS VII.

" whereby *to worship them; and* therefore *I will* pour out on this generation the wrath " that you and your fathers have been so long treasuring up, and will *carry you away* " into captivity *beyond Babylon*, into countries more distant than those inhabited by the " captives who were carried from Damascus."[f]

Nor can you be insensible that their crime was far more aggravated than the idolatry of
44 the heathen whom they imitated, considering the exact model of religious and divine worship which God had given them: for *the tabernacle of witness*,[g] in which the tables of testimony were lodged as a constant witness of the relation between God and Israel, *was with our fathers in the wilderness;* a tabernacle which was made in all respects *as he had appointed, who spake unto Moses*, commanding him *to make it* exactly *accord-*
45 *ing to the model which he had seen* in the mount: (Exod. xxv. 40.) *Which also our fathers* who succeeded them in the next generation, *receiving* from their hands, *brought in with Joshua*, when he led them over Jordan *into the* land which had been formerly in *possession of the heathen, whom God drove out from before the face of our fathers*, and divided the land for an inheritance to them; and this tabernacle continued to be the
46 resort of the pious worshippers of Israel *until the days of David, Who found favour before God, and* was made remarkably successful in the wars he undertook in defence of that kingdom over which God had placed him; upon which he *made it his petition*,[h] that he might have the honour *to find a* more stable and splendid *dwelling for the God of Jacob;* and with this view he consecrated a considerable part of the spoils which he
47 had taken from the enemy towards erecting it. *But* as he was a man of war, and had shed blood, the offer that he made was not accepted, (1 Chron. xxviii. 3,) nor was there any temple for the worship of God, for many years after the settlement of our fathers in Canaan, till *Solomon* at length, by express divine appointment, *built him an house*, which till the reign of that prince he never had commanded or permitted to be done.

48 *Yet*, after all, we are not to imagine that he permitted it even then for his own sake; for, as it was acknowledged at the same time by Solomon himself, (2 Chron. vi. 18.) *the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, be they ever so rich, splendid, and majestic; *as the prophet* Isaiah also *says*, (Isa. lxvi. 1.) where he is speaking in the name
49 of God, " *Heaven is my* royal *throne, and the* whole *earth is* no more than *my foot-* " *stool;* and how then shall my presence be confined to any particular place? *What* " suitable *house will you build for me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my*
50 " stated *rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?* and whatever splendour they " have, did not I form the materials, and endow the workmen that have fashioned them, " with all their art and genius? Do not imagine then that you can confer an obligation upon " me by such structures as these, or by any act of homage which you can render in them; " nor think that you can charm me to continue my abode there, or to be a constant " guard to you, merely because you have such edifices amongst you."

51 And Stephen finding, by a confused murmur in the place, that they understood whither his discourse was leading them, and perceiving by the eagerness of their countenance that they would be like soon to interrupt him, applied himself more closely to his persecutors in these remarkable words, which he boldly addressed to them under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by whose immediate direction he spoke: *O ye stiff-necked*, inflexible, and obstinate sinners, who, though you have received the sign of circumcision, and boast that you belong to God as his peculiar people, yet in reality are alienated from him, *and uncircumcised in heart and ears*, so that you will not hearken to instruction, or be tenderly and seriously affected with it, nothing can be more plain than that *ye always do resist the Holy Spirit*, and set yourselves in opposition to all his gracious efforts for your recovery
52 and salvation; even *as your fathers* [*did*] in former ages, *so do ye* now. *Which of the prophets*, who were actuated by that Spirit, *did not your fathers persecute? yea, they slew those that spake before*, and published the glad tidings *of the coming of that Righteous One*,[k] *of whom you* should have heard with delight, and whom you ought to have received with the most humble reverence and joyful consent; but of whom, instead of protecting and honouring him, you *have now become the* perfidious *betrayers and* the cruel *murderers*;[l] For by you his death was contrived, by you he was condemned, by you the sentence was extorted against him, and execution urged and obtained: Which

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen:

45 Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David:

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what *is* the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted: and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

f *Beyond Babylon*, into countries more distant, &c.] Thus Dr. Prideaux, *Connect.* Vol. I. p. 13. reconciles Stephen's quotation with the original in Amos, where it is said, beyond Damascus; and I find no solution more natural. But Beza, observing these words to be quoted in Justin Martyr according to the Hebrew, thinks the original reading here accidentally changed.

g *The tabernacle of witness.*] As Stephen had been accused of blaspheming the temple, he with great propriety takes occasion to speak of their sacred places with due reverence, as raised by special direction from God, and yet corrects that extravagant regard for them, and confidence in them, which the Jews were ready to entertain.

h *Made it his petition.*] So ητησατο signifies; and from the account the scripture gives of David, it appears how much it lay upon his heart, and how greatly he longed to find out a place for the Lord: (Compare 2 Sam. vii. 2. *et seq.* and Psal. cxxxii. 1—5.) The gold and silver and other costly materials he had prepared for it, amount to so vast a sum, that it is not easy to give an account of it. See 1 Chron. xxii. 14; and xxix. 2—5.

i *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?*] I see no reason to conclude from hence, that many scriptures containing the history of these persecutions are destroyed by the Jews, as Mr Whiston maintains: (*Essay for Restoring, &c.* p. 138.) It is natural to understand this in a limited sense, only as intimating that most of them suffered such unworthy usage; and we know that attempts were sometimes made to cut off all the prophets of Jehovah at once: 1 Kings xix. 10, 14. Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

k *That Righteous One.*] Christ was by way of eminence called so, as being *alone perfectly righteous.* Compare Isa. liii. 11; Zech. ix. 9; Acts iii. 14.

l *The betrayers and murderers.*] It is a fine remark of Grotius, that the sanhedrim was obliged, by virtue of its very constitution, to guard and defend the lives of the prophets with peculiar care, how much more to protect such a divine messenger as Christ was from any injurious assault; instead of which, they had not only basely deserted him, but had themselves become principals in his murder.

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

55 But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God:

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

is the less to be wondered at, as you have already despised so many advantages, and given such amazing proofs of the obstinacy and hardness of your hearts; *who have received the law*, which was delivered from Mount Sinai with such awful pomp, *through ranks of angels*[m] that were marshalled in solemn array on that grand occasion, (compare Deut. xxxiii. 2.) *and* yet have been so hardened that you *have not kept it*: and now you go on to add sin to sin, in rejecting the milder and more gracious dispensation of the gospel. 53

And hearing these things, their hearts were, as it were, *sawn asunder; and* not permitting him to proceed any farther, in a transport of rage *they gnashed their teeth upon him*, as if they would have devoured him alive. 54

But he being full of the Holy Spirit, was by no means terrified with the evil which seemed to be determined against him; but *looking up stedfastly towards heaven*, he *saw*, in a most delightful visionary representation, even while he stood in their court, a bright symbol of *the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*. *And* being unable to contain his joy, *he* cried out in a sacred transport, and *said, Behold*, even now *I see the heavens opened*,[n] *and the Son of man*, that glorious Sovereign whom you condemned and murdered, *stand at the right hand of God*,[o] where he shall ever reign to save his people, and at length to execute full vengeance upon his enemies; as he himself solemnly warned you, when, like me, he was your prisoner. (Matt. xxvi. 64.) 55, 56

And this declaration and reference provoked them to such a degree, that *crying out with a loud voice*, that they might drown that of Stephen, *they stopped their* own *ears*, as if they could not bear to hear such blasphemy as they conceived he had spoken, *and* furiously *rushed upon him with one accord: And casting him out of the city* by a gate which was near the place where the sanhedrim sat, as soon as they had got without the boundaries of that sacred place, which they judged it a profanation to stain with human blood, *they stoned him*;[p] *and the* two *witnesses* whose hands were first upon him to put him to death, (Deut. xvii. 7.) *laid down their* upper *garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul*, who willingly took the charge of them, to show how heartily he concurred with them in the execution. 57, 58

And thus *they stoned Stephen*, who during this furious assault continued with his eyes fixed on that glorious vision, *invoking* his great Lord, *and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!*[q] for, important as the trust is, I joyfully commit it to thy powerful and faithful hand. And having nothing farther relating to himself which could give him any solicitude, all his remaining thoughts were taken up in compassion to these inhuman wretches who were arming themselves for his destruction; so that, after having received many violent blows, rising, as well as he could, into a praying posture, *and bending his knees, he cried out with a loud* though expiring *voice, O Lord, charge not this sin to their account* with strict severity proportionable to the weight of the offence;[r] but graciously forgive them, as I do from my very heart! *And when he had said this*, he calmly resigned his soul into his 59, 60

m *Through ranks of angels.*] It seems evident from Heb. ii. 2; and Gal. iii. 19. that God made use of angels as the instruments of forming the voice heard from Mount Sinai. And, so far as I can judge of the learned Elsner's arguments, in his dissertation against Cocceius on this head, from Wolfius's abstract of them, he seems to have the advantage; but this text is so properly rendered *through ranks of angels*, (εις διαταγας αγγελων,) that I apprehend nothing can be argued from hence but that they graced the solemnity with their presence. Grotius explains it thus, justly observing that it is a military word. Heinsius has taken great pains to prove what Vatablus hints, that the word αγγελων here, as well as in the places quoted above, signifies *messengers*, that is, *prophets*, and that διαταγας is to be traced to a Chaldee etymology from מטענתא, a copy or explication, as if it had been said, "The law has been copied out "and expounded to you by a series of prophets." But had this learned critic seen how easily these expressions, as here translated, may be reconciled with the supposition that Christ, as the great angel of God's presence, presided while troops of angels assisted, (as, independent on these texts in the New Testament, it is certain they did, see Psalm lxviii. 17.) he would not have had recourse to so forced an interpretation.

n *I see the heavens opened.*] Witsius declares it as his opinion, (*Miscell. lib.* i. *cap.* xxi. § 6.) that the heavens were really divided, or rendered transparent, so that the throne of Christ's glory there became visible. But, not to insist on many other improbable circumstances attending this hypothesis, it would then have been a miracle if all that were present had not seen it; for on such a declaration they would naturally look up. It is much more reasonable to suppose he saw a visionary representation, God miraculously operating on his imagination, as on Ezekiel's when he sat in his house at Babylon among the elders of Judah, and saw Jerusalem, and seemed to himself transported thither: (Ezek. viii. 1—4.) I say miraculously operating; for the imagination is not itself capable of performing any such wonders, whatever some very ignorant of human nature, or disingenuous enough knowingly to misrepresent it, may fancy.——I am very ready to conclude, with Mr. Addison, that other martyrs, when called to suffer the last extremities, had extraordinary assistances of some similar kind, or frail mortality could not surely have endured the torments under which they rejoiced, and sometimes preached Christ to the conversion of spectators, and, in some instances, of their guards and tormentors too. See Addison, *Of Christianity*, chap. vii. § 5.

o *Standing at the right hand of God.*] Mr. N. Taylor (in his excellent *Discourse of Deism*, p. 69.) observes, that Christ is generally represented sitting, but now as standing at God's right hand; that is, as risen up from the throne of his glory to afford help to his distressed servant, and ready to receive him.

p *They stoned him.*] This seems (like the stoning Paul at Lystra, chap. xiv. 19.) to have been an act of popular fury, and exceeding the power which the Jews regularly had; which, though it might have extended to passing a capital sentence, (which yet we read nothing of here,) was not sufficient (so far as I can find on the most careful renewed examination of all Mr. Biscoe has urged) for carrying it into execution without the consent of the Romans. The Jews were more than once ready to stone Christ, not only when, by their own confession, they had not power to put any one to death, (John xviii. 31.) but when nothing had passed which had the shadow of a legal trial. (Compare John viii. 59; x. 31. *et seq.*) How far they now might have formed those express notions of what the rabbies call the judgment of zeal, I know not; but it is certain they acted on that principle, and as if they had thought every private Israelite had, like Phinehas, who is pleaded as an example of it, a right to put another to death on the spot, if he found him in a capital breach of the divine law; a notion, by the way, directly contrary to Deut. xvii. 6. which requires at least two witnesses in capital cases where there is a legal process. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Part I. Book i. chap. 2. Vol. I. edit. 3. p. 112—120. Dr. Benson suggests some probable reasons which might induce Pilate (who probably still continued procurator of Judea) to connive at this great irregularity and outrage. *Hist. of Christianity*, p. 137.

q *Invoking and saying, &c.*] This is the literal version of the words επικαλουμενον και λεγοντα, the name of God not being in the original. Nevertheless such a solemn prayer to Christ, in which a departing soul is thus solemnly committed into his hands, is such an act of worship as we cannot believe any good man would have paid to a mere creature.——Bp. Burnet (*On the Articles*, p. 48.) justly observes, that Stephen here worships Christ in the very same manner in which Christ had but a little while before worshipped the Father on the cross.

r *Charge not this sin to their account.*] The words in the original, μη στησης αυτοις την αμαρτιαν ταυτην, seem to have an emphasis which, though I have hinted in the paraphrase, (as well as I could without multiplying words to a degree that in this circumstance would have been very improper,) I could not exactly and naturally express in the version. It is literally, *Weigh not out to them this sin*; that is, a punishment proportionable to it; alluding (as Elsner well observes,) to passages of Scripture where God is represented as weighing men's characters and actions in the dispensations of his

SECT. 15. Saviour's hand, and, with a sacred serenity in the midst of this furious assault, *he* sweetly *fell asleep*, and left the traces of gentle composure rather than of horror, upon his breathless corpse.

ACTS VIII. 1 *And Saul*, the young man mentioned above, at whose feet the witnesses laid down their clothes, was so far from being shocked at this cruel scene, that, on the contrary, he *was well pleased with his slaughter;* being so full of rage and malice against the christian name, that he thought no severities could be too great for those who thus zealously endeavoured to propagate it.

Acts viii. 1.—And Saul was consenting unto his death.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 37 THANKFULLY must we own the divine goodness in having fulfilled this important promise of raising up a prophet like Moses, a prophet indeed far superior to him whom God's Israel is, on the highest penalties, required to hear. May we be all taught by him, and ever own that divine authority which attends all his doctrines and all his 38 commands! By him God has given us lively oracles indeed, that may well penetrate deep into our souls, as being well contrived to animate them, and to secure their eternal life.

But O, how many of those who have heard of him, and been baptized into his name in a more express man- 39 ner than Israel was *baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*, (1 Cor. x. 2.) refuse to hearken to him, and in their hearts turn back into Egypt; being guilty of practices as notoriously opposite to his precepts as 40, 41 the idolatry of the golden calf to those of Moses! Long did the patience of God bear with Israel in succeeding ages, 42, 43 while the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of Remphan diverted their regards from the worship of their living Jehovah: but at length he gave them up to captivity. Well have we deserved, by our apostasy from God, to be made 44 proportionable monuments of his wrath; yet still he continues graciously to dwell among us: and while the Jewish 47 tabernacle, formed so exactly after the divine model in the mount, is no more, and while the more splendid temple 48, 49 which Solomon raised is long since laid in desolation, the Most High God, superior to all temples made with hands, infinitely superior even to heaven itself, continues still to favour us with his presence, and condescends to own us for 52 his people, and to call himself our God. Let us take the most diligent heed that we be not uncircumcised in heart and in ears, and that we do not, after so fatal an example, resist the Holy Spirit, and, by rejecting Christ, incur a 53 guilt greater than that of the Jews, who violated the law received through ranks of attendant angels; for that milder and gentler form, in which this divine Lawgiver has appeared to us, will render the ingratitude and guilt of our rebellion far more aggravated than theirs.

The reproofs of the holy martyr Stephen were indeed plain and faithful, and therefore they were so much the 57 more kind; but instead of attending to so just and so wise a remonstrance, those sinners against their own souls stopped their ears, lift up an outrageous cry, and, like so many savage beasts, rush upon him to destroy him; over- 56 whelming that head with stones which shone like an angel of God: Fatal instance of prejudice and of rage! But how were all the terrors of this murderous crew, when armed with the instruments of immediate death, dispelled by 59 the glorious vision of Christ at the right hand of God! Well might he then remain intrepid, well might he commend his departing spirit into the hands of his Divine Saviour, as *able to keep what he committed to him until that day.* (2 Tim. i. 12.)

Let us with holy pleasure behold this bright image of our Redeemer, this first martyr, who following so closely his recent steps, (as he suffered so near the place that had been the scene of his agonies,) appears to have imbibed so much of the same spirit. Having thus solemnly consigned his soul to Christ, all that remained was, like Christ, to 60 pray for his murderers; full of compassion for their souls while dying by their hands, he only said, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!* and then gently falling asleep, expired in holy composure and serenity of soul, and slept sweetly in the soft bosom of his Saviour.

58 O Saul, couldst thou have believed, if one had told thee while thou wast urging on the cruel multitude, while thou wast glorying over his venerable corpse, that the time should come when thou thyself shouldst be twice stoned in the cause in which he died, and triumph in having committed thy soul likewise to that Jesus whom thou wast now blaspheming! In this instance his dying prayer was illustriously answered: In this instance *the lion lies down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid;* (Isa. xi. 6.) and it is most delightful to think that the martyr Stephen, and Saul, that barbarous persecutor, (afterwards his brother both in faith and in martyrdom,) are now joined in bonds of everlasting friendship, and dwell together in the happy company of *those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* (Rev. vii. 14.) May we at length be joined with them, and in the mean time let us glorify God in both! Sept. 23. 1789

SECTION XVI.

The christian converts, being dispersed by persecution, go into other parts and preach the word. Philip the deacon goes to Samaria, where many embrace the gospel, as Simon the sorcerer also professes to do, and on that profession is baptized. Acts viii. 1—13.

ACTS viii. 1.

SECT. 16. *AND in that* very *day* in which this inhuman murder was committed on Stephen, who led the van in the glorious army of martyrs, *there was a great persecution* excited *against the church in Jerusalem*, which continued to rage for some time; *and* such was the severity with which *they were* pursued by their malicious enemies, that *all* the principal mem- ACTS VIII. bers of the church were *dispersed through the regions of Judea and Samaria*,[a] *except* 1 *the apostles*, who with undaunted resolution were determined to continue at Jerusalem,

ACTS viii. 1.
AND at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

justice and providence. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 3; Job xxxi. 6; Prov. xvi. 2; Isa. xxvi. 7; Dan. v. 27.——See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 395, 396.

[a] *They were all dispersed, &c.*] Perhaps it was then that Ananias went to Damascus, chap. ix. 10. while others, after they had preached the gospel in the neighbouring parts, travelled on to Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, chap. xi. 19.

how extreme soever their danger might prove, that they might there be ready to serve the interest of the church as there should be occasion.

2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

And Stephen was no sooner left for dead, but certain *devout men*[b] had the courage to show themselves openly as the friends of that holy and excellent man, whose blood had been so unrighteously shed; and accordingly gathering round the corpse while it lay exposed to public infamy and abuse, they *carried Stephen forth* [*to his burial*] with solemn funeral procession, *and made great lamentation for him*, mourning that the church had lost so excellent an instrument of usefulness, though he himself was so much a gainer by it as to be the object of congratulation rather than condolence. 2

3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed *them* to prison.

But Saul, whom we mentioned before, like some furious beast of prey, *made havoc of the church* without mercy,[c] not only breaking in upon public assemblies, but *entering into houses, and dragging* from them, without any respect either to age or sex, *men and women*, [*whom*] *he committed to prison* for no pretended crime but that of having embraced the gospel. 3

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.

Nevertheless God overruled all this cruelty and rage to subserve his own wise and gracious purposes: for *they who were dispersed went about* into several parts, *preaching the word*[d] wherever they came; and in many places they were remarkably successful, to which the consideration of their being persecuted for conscience-sake might in some measure help to contribute. 4

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

And we have particularly one instance of it in *Philip* the deacon;[e] who, after the death of his beloved brother and associate Stephen, *came to the city of Samaria*;[f] *and* knowing that all distinction between the people of that country and the Jews was now removed, freely *preached Christ unto them*, and proclaimed him as the promised Messiah. 5

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

And the people who inhabited that city, notwithstanding their natural prejudices against the Jews, *unanimously attended to the things that were spoken by Philip; as they* not only *heard* the rational, convincing, and pathetic words which he spake, but were eye-witnesses of what he wrought in confirmation of his doctrine, *and saw the* astonishing *miracles which he performed.* 6

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

For unclean spirits, which had possessed many, crying with a loud voice, came out of them at Philip's command; *and many* others *who were paralytic and lame*, and laboured under the most obstinate disorders, *were* immediately *healed.* 7

8 And there was great joy in that city.

And there was great joy in that city on account of those benevolent miracles which were performed by Philip in it, and of that excellent doctrine which he preached among them, containing such welcome tidings of pardon and eternal salvation. 8

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before-time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

But at the time in which the gospel was thus brought by Philip to them, *a certain man named Simon, was before in that city*, who had made himself very remarkable by *using* the unlawful arts of *magic*,[g] by means of which he had performed such things as were exceeding marvellous *and astonishing* to *the* whole *nation of Samaria, pretending himself to be some extraordinary person*,[h] possessed of supernatural powers: 9

10 To whom they all

To whom they 10

b *Devout men.*] Dr. Benson thinks, (as Dr. Hammond, *in loc.* and Mr. Baxter, Vol. IV. p. 864. also did,) that these were proselytes, as he also imagines Stephen to have been; but I can find no proof of either. Such a token of respect to one who had been publicly executed as a blasphemer, was an expression of zeal and piety which might justly entitle them to this honourable character. Thus Luke calls Joseph of Arimathea a benevolent and upright man, when he speaks of the generous and courageous regard he showed to the body of Jesus. (Luke xxiii. 50.) It is possible the manner in which these devout men celebrated the funeral of Stephen, might be urged by the enemies of christianity as an excuse for farther severities.

c Like some furious beast of prey, *made havoc of the church.*] Wolfius observes, (*Cur. Philol. in loc.*) that this is the most proper signification of ελωμαινετο, which is often applied to the savages of the desert.

d *Preaching the word.*] There is no room to inquire where these poor refugees had their orders: They were endowed with miraculous gifts; and if they had not been so, the extraordinary call they had to spread the knowledge of Christ, wherever they came, among those who were ignorant of him, would abundantly justify them in what they did.

e *Philip* the deacon.] We are sure it was not Philip the apostle, both as he continued at Jerusalem, and as this Philip had not the power of communicating the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands. (Compare ver. 14, 15, 17.) It must therefore be the deacon, no other of that name beside the apostle having been mentioned in this history. Some think that, for his fidelity and diligence in his inferior office, he was raised to the work of an Evangelist. (Compare chap. xxi. 8; and 1 Tim. iii. 13.) But to infer from hence, that they who are ordained to the office of deacons have, by virtue of that, a right to preach publicly, is not only ungrounded, but seems contrary to the reason assigned by Peter for chusing deacons, chap. vi. 2—4. Besides, Apollos preached before he was baptized; therefore much less can we imagine he was ordained. (See Acts xviii. 24, 25.) And Grotius justly observes, that in circumstances like these, any private person might do it. (Compare chap. xi. 20. and see Owen, *Of Ordination*, p. 63.) As for Dr. Hammond's criticism on the words κηρυσσειν and ευαγγελιζεσθαι, as if the former signified *public preaching*, and the latter *teaching in a way of private converse*, it is sufficiently confuted by comparing ver. 5. and 40; chap. xi. 20; xiii. 32; xiv. 15; and many other passages.

f *Came to the city of Samaria.*] For the origin of the Samaritans, and the differences between them and the Jews, see note g, on John iv. 9. p. 54. It is certain they were better prepared to receive the gospel than most of the Gentile nations, as they worshipped the true GOD, and acknowledged the authority of the *Pentateuch*; and as we do not find that they had either such notions of the Messiah's temporal reign as the Jews, or had received the Sadducean principles, which were both very strong prejudices against the christian scheme. (See Dr. Benson's *History*, Vol. I. p. 153.) It is not improbable that the city here spoken of was Sychem, where Christ himself had preached in the beginning of his ministry, (John iv. 5, 40. *et seq.*) which was for many years the capital of that country. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xi. *cap.* 8. § 6.

g *Using* the unlawful arts of *magic.*] Dr. Benson thinks μαγευων to be entirely of the same signification with Μαγος, and intended to tell us that this Simon was one of the sect of the Magi, for whose principles and history, see Dr. Prideaux, *Connect.* Vol. I. p. 174. *et seq.* It is indeed possible he might profess himself of that sect; but I think the word μαγευων imports much more, and amounts to the same with one who used enchantments, pretending, in consequence of them, to exert some supernatural powers; whereas the word Magus (at least about Christ's time) seems to have signified much the same with our English word *Sage*, and to denote a proficient in learning, and especially in astronomy and other branches of natural philosophy to which the Persian Magi addicted themselves, and so gave name to many who were far from holding the peculiarities of that sect. (Compare note a, on Matt. ii. I. p. 23.) Yet as many natural philosophers pretended also to be magicians in the common sense of the word among us, and might make their natural knowledge subservient to that pretence, when it was mere imposture, it is not improbable that they generally called themselves Magi; and so the verb μαγευων might come to signify *the making use of unlawful arts*, (as it plainly does here,) while the noun from whence it was derived might still retain a more extensive and innocent signification.

h *Some extraordinary person.*] Irenæus tells us, (*lib.* i. *cap.* 20.) that Simon boasted he had appeared to the Samaritans as the Father, to the Jews as the Son, and to the Gentiles as the Holy Spirit; and Justin Martyr, that he asserted all the names of God were to be ascribed to him, and that he was God above all principality, power, and virtue. (See Just. Mart. *Apol.* ii. p. 69. *et Dial.* p. 349.) But if he ever made these pretences, it was probably after this time; for before it he seems to have been entirely a stranger to the first elements of the christian doctrine, to which these blasphemies refer. The version of 1727 renders η δυναμις του Θ ου η

SECT. 16. ACTS VIII.

all paid great *regard, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is* surely *the great power of God*, the long-expected Messiah, and (if we may so speak) Omnipotence itself incarnate, or he could never do such wonderful things. *And they paid* this *regard to him*, not on seeing one or two extraordinary facts, but *because he had for a long time astonished them with* the lying wonders that he wrought by [*his*] *enchantments.*

12 *But when they gave credit to Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and* the important truths connected with *the name of Jesus Christ, they* embraced the gospel in great numbers, and *were baptized both men and women.*

13 *And Simon himself also believed* the truth of that doctrine which this divine messenger taught,[i] though his heart was not savingly transformed by its power; *and being baptized* on a profession of that faith, *he* always *kept near to Philip, beholding with amazement the great and powerful miracles which were wrought* by him,[k] with which he was himself as much transported as the Samaritans had formerly been at the sight of his magical performances.

gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2 It was honourably and well done of these devout men, to pay this last token of respect to the remains of this first martyr in the christian cause, by carrying him to his funeral with solemn pomp and public lamentation, though he died like an infamous criminal. Our ever-living and victorious Lord, no doubt, took it well at their hands, and they will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, when that mangled body which they deposited in the grave shall be transformed into the glorious image of him for whom he gave it up to destruction, and to whose immediate and faithful care he committed the far nobler and more important part.

The wrath of man, O Lord, *shall praise thee!* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) It was particularly made to praise thee in this 1 instance by sending out the gospel-missionaries, who, during the short repose of the church, had been qualifying for their work, and dispersing them through all the neighbouring countries. Had the calm continued longer, while they were so happy in the love and fellowship of each other, they might have been too much inclinable to build their tabernacles at Jerusalem, and to say, *It is good for us to be here:* (Matt. xvii. 4.) such delightful mutual 4 converse might have engaged them to prolong their abode there to future months, and perhaps years. In mercy to the churches therefore, and even to themselves, whose truest happiness was connected with their usefulness, were they, like so many clouds big with the rain of heaven, driven different ways by the wind of persecution, that so they might empty themselves in fruitful showers on the several tracts of land through which they went preaching the gospel.

But the remainder of the wrath of this cruel Saul and the rest of the persecutors, was so restrained in the midst of 1 its career, that the apostles, who of all others seemed the most obnoxious persons, were for the present secure in Jerusalem; the power of Christ wrought secretly for their defence, and, by some unknown operation, either softened or awed the minds of those who (humanly speaking) had it in their power to add their blood to that of Stephen. Thus was our Lord's prediction fulfilled with regard to them in some of the most pressing dangers that could be imagined, that *not a hair of their head should perish;* (Luke xxi. 18.) and thus was their fidelity and courage approved, by their continued residence even in this hazardous situation, till Providence gave a farther signal for their removal. In this, and in that, they were no doubt directed by supernatural influence; and we may admire their dutiful obedience to those commands the particular reasons of which we cannot now fully trace.

3 The continued outrages and cruelties of Saul serve more and more to illustrate the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace in that conversion which we are hereafter to survey; and give us a view of a very delightful contrast between the warmth of those efforts which he made first to destroy, and then with proportionable zeal to save.

5 It is also pleasant to observe how the gospel mutually conquered the prejudices between the Jews and the Samaritans, teaching the Jews to communicate and the Samaritans to receive it with pleasure. It was a wonderful 9, 11 providence which had permitted the enchantments of Simon to be so successful before; but at length Simon also be- 13 lieved and was baptized. We see in this, as in a thousand nearer instances, that there may be speculative faith in the gospel where there is no true piety: and if such persons, on the profession of that faith, where nothing appears contrary to it, be admitted to those ordinances by which christians are distinguished from the rest of mankind, it is an evil in the present state of things unavoidable; and the conduct of christian ministers and societies in admitting such, will be less displeasing to God than a rigorous severity. May God give us wisdom to guide our way, that we may obtain the happy medium between prostituting divine ordinances by a foolish credulity, and defrauding the children of the household of their bread, because they have not reached such a stature, or do not seek it in those forms or gestures which our mistaken caution may sometimes be ready to demand!

SECTION XVII.

Peter going down to Samaria to impart spiritual gifts to the converts there, discovers and censures the hypocrisy of Simon. Acts viii. 14—25.

SECT. 17.

Acts viii. 14.

ACTS VIII. *NOW when the apostles, who,* as we observed before, *were* still *at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God* by the preaching of Philip the Evangelist, as

Acts viii. 14.

NOW when the apostles which were at Jerusalem,

μεγαλη, *the plenipotentiary of God;* but that is far from expressing the emphasis of the phrase.

i *Simon himself also believed.*] Perhaps, as M. L'Enfant and Limborch conjecture, he might think Philip an abler magician than himself, and hope, by pretending to be his disciple, he might have an opportunity of learning his superior arts.

k *Beholding with amazement, &c.*] It seems with particular elegance and propriety, that the same word which had been used to express the manner in which the Samaritans were affected with Simon's enchantments, (ver. 9, 11.) is here used to describe the impression which Philip's miracles made on him, it being there expressed by εξιστων and εξεστακεναι, and here by εξιστατο. It seems therefore quite wrong to translate the former *infatuated*, and the latter *transported*, as the author of the above-mentioned version has done.

heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

was related above, they were desirous that these new converts might be farther settled in their christian profession, by those spiritual gifts which no inferior teacher or officer in the church could bestow; and accordingly *sent to them* two of the most considerable of their own number, namely, *Peter and John*, who had been so remarkable for the miracle they had performed, and the courageous manner in which they had borne their testimony to the gospel, *Who*, though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans,[a] now cheerfully undertook the province; and *going down* thither, *prayed for them that they might receive* the extraordinary gifts of *the Holy Spirit*,[b] and so be openly put on a level with the believing Jews, and be shown to be equally owned by God as his people.

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

For though the supernatural influences of the Spirit were displayed among them in the surprising miracles which Philip had performed, these extraordinary powers were not communicated to them, and *he was not yet fallen on any of them, only they were baptized*, as was said before, *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. But after the apostles had been praying for them, God was *then* pleased, in a visible and extraordinary manner, to answer their request; for *they* had no sooner *laid* [*their*] *hands on* these Samaritan converts, and recommended *them* to the divine favour, but it was followed with a wonderful effect, *and they* immediately *received the Holy Spirit*, and spake with tongues, and performed other extraordinary works.

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Now when Simon the magician, of whom we spake before, *saw* with astonishment *that the Holy Spirit* in his extraordinary operations *was* thus apparently *given by the imposition of the apostles' hands*, as he imagined with himself, that if he could perform the like, it might turn considerably to his own honour and advantage, especially if by this means he could form persons to the knowledge of languages which they had never been at the trouble of learning in a natural way, *he* went to the apostles, and *offered them* a considerable sum of *money; Saying*, Let me prevail with you by this reward to *give me also this power* which I have seen you exercise with so much ease, *that on whomsoever I* shall *lay* my *hands*, *he may receive* this extraordinary communication of *the Holy Spirit*.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money;

But when *Peter* heard so infamous an offer, he was not able to conceal his indignation, and therefore *said to him*, in his own name and that of John, *Let thy money go with thee to* the *destruction*[c] to which thou art thyself hastening, *since thou hast thought* so vilely of *the* free and invaluable *gift of* the blessed *God*, as to imagine it *might be purchased with money*. It is very evident, from such a detestable proposal, that notwithstanding the profession thou hast made, *thou* art indeed an utter stranger to the efficacy of the gospel, and *hast no part nor lot in this matter*, nor any interest in the important spiritual blessings to which all these extraordinary gifts are subservient; *for thine heart is not upright in the sight of God*,[d] otherwise thou wouldst think far more honourably of this Spirit of his, than to form a mercenary scheme to traffic in it in this scandalous manner. *Repent therefore* immediately *of this thy* enormous *wickedness*,[e] *and beg of God* with the deepest humiliation and the most fervent prayer, *if perhaps* his infinite mercy may yet be extended to such a wretch, and *the* blasphemous *thought of thy* corrupt *heart may be forgiven thee: For* though thou wast so lately washed with the water of baptism, *I* plainly *perceive that thou art* still *in the* very *gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity*;[f] plunged in that hateful pollution which must be bitterness and poison in the latter end, and held in the chains of thine own covetousness and carnality, and consequently in a servitude utterly inconsistent with that state of glorious liberty into which the children of God are brought; so that thou art on the borders of dreadful and aggravated destruction, if immediate repentance does not prevent.

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee:

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

a Though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans.] John was one of those who, provoked at their inhospitable treatment of Christ, (perhaps in proportion to the degree in which he honoured and loved his divine Master,) had asked a permission to *bring down fire from heaven to consume them*: (Luke ix. 54.) But he now understood the genius of the gospel much better.——It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that as Peter was sent with John on this errand by the other apostles, they had no notion of his being their head or superior.

b *That they might receive the Holy Spirit.*] We shall not enter into any controversy as to the foundation this has been supposed to lay for the rite of confirmation, as now practised in some christian and Protestant churches. It may be sufficient to observe, that here were extraordinary gifts evidently conferred by extraordinary officers; and how suitably this was done in the present case, is hinted in the paraphrase, and more largely shewn by Dr. Benson. (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 157, 158.)

c *Let thy money go with thee to destruction.*] This is not an imprecation, but a strong way of admonishing Simon of his danger, and of expressing how much rather the apostle would see the greatest sum of money lost and cast away, than receive any part of it on such shameful terms.

d *Thine heart is not upright in the sight of God.*] This is no instance of Peter's miraculously discerning spirits, for every common minister or christian might have made the inference in such circumstances. But, on the other side, this story will by no means prove Peter to have been destitute of this gift. He might (like Christ in the case of Judas) have discerned Simon's hypocrisy long before he thought fit to discover it openly, or he might have the gift really in some instances, though not in this; for there is no more reason to suppose that Christ ever gave any of his servants an universal power of discerning the hearts and characters of all they conversed with, than there is to believe he gave any of them a power of healing all the sick they came near, which we are sure that Paul (though he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles, 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11.) had not, otherwise he would not have suffered the illness of Epaphroditus to have brought him so near to death, Phil. ii. 25—27. nor have left so useful a fellow-labourer as Trophimus sick at Miletum, 2 Tim. iv. 20.

e *Repent therefore*, &c.] Here is so incontestable an evidence of an unconverted sinner being exhorted to repentance and prayer while he was known to be in that state, that it is astonishing it should ever have been disputed; and one would think none could be so wild as to imagine faith in Christ was not included in that repentance and prayer which an apostle preaches to a baptized person as the way of obtaining forgiveness. The dubious manner in which he speaks of his being forgiven, intimates, not that his sincere repentance might possibly fail of acceptance, for that is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, but that, after the commission of a sin so nearly approaching blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, there was little reason to hope he would ever be brought truly to repent.

f *In the gall of bitterness, &c.*] The gall of bitterness is the bitterest gall; and the whole sentence expresses, in Peter's strong manner of speaking, how odious and wretched a creature Simon now appeared to him: how much more odious in the eyes of an holy God must such a sinner be! Compare Deut. xxix. 18; xxxii. 32; and Isa. lviii. 6.—Albertus, *Observ.* p. 236. and De Dieu, would render it, "I see thee as the very gall of bitterness, and a bundle "of iniquity." Compare Matt. xix. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Heb. viii. 10. in which places the former thinks it is used in the same sense as here. See Beza's beautiful illustration of this text.

SECT. 17. ACTS VIII. 24 *And Simon*, as he could not but be very much alarmed by such a solemn admonition, *answered and said* to the apostles, If you indeed conceive my case to be so bad, at least extend your charity so far as to *make your supplications to the Lord on my account*,[g] *that none of these* terrible *things, which ye have* often *spoken* of[h] as the fatal consequence of sin, *may come upon me:* For I am far from disbelieving the truth of the gospel, how improper soever my proposal might be, or however derogatory from the honour of it.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 Thus did the two apostles, Peter and John, perform the errand they were sent upon, and executed their commission: *when therefore they had borne their testimony* to the truth of the gospel,[i] *and had spoken the word of the Lord* Jesus Christ to many who had not received it from the mouth of Philip, *they returned to* the other ten at *Jerusalem: and* as they went along, they *preached the gospel in many* other towns and *villages of the Samaritans* which lay in their way.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14—17 Let us observe this peculiar honour by which the apostles were distinguished, that the Holy Spirit was given by the imposition of their hands. Thus did Christ bear his testimony to them as the authorized teachers of his church; and it evidently appears that we may with great safety and pleasure submit ourselves to their instruction; for these extraordinary gifts were intended in some measure for our benefit; that by an entire resignation to their authority thus attested, we might be made partakers of those graces in comparison of which the tongues of men and of angels would be but *as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.* (1 Cor. xiii. 1.)

18, 19 Who can read without horror the infamous proposal which Simon made, when he thought of purchasing the gift of God with money? With somewhat of the same horror must we look on all those by whom sacred things 20 are either bought or sold; it is an infamous traffic, about which an upright man cannot deliberate a moment, but will reject it at once with an honest scorn and indignation, like that of Peter in the present instance. God grant that none of the ordinances of Christ may ever be prostituted to secular ends, which seems a crime almost equally enormous! In vain is it for men to profess themselves christians, in vain to submit like Simon to baptism, or like 21 him to adhere constantly to the ministers of the gospel, if their heart be not right with God; an hypocritical con- 23 duct like this will proclaim it aloud, *that they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.* Wash us, O God, from this odious and polluting gall, which naturally overspreads us; and loosen these bonds of sin with which Satan may sometimes bind those who have a name and a place in thy church, and in which he conveys them to final and everlasting destruction!

22 Yet let us not utterly despair even of the worst of men, but direct them to that great universal remedy, a deep and serious repentance of their sins, and an earnest address to God by prayer; to him who can wash us from 24 crimson stains, and break in pieces fetters of iron. It is some token for good when sinners seem to fall under reproof, and desire the prayers of those who are more upright than themselves. But if men are animated in such requests and submissions by no more noble and generous a principle than a fear of destruction from God, there is great reason to suspect the sincerity of that repentance which they profess, and to apprehend that, like Simon, they will unsay all their confession, and perhaps, like him, (if we may credit the most authentic uninspired histories of the church,[k]) become open enemies to that gospel which they pretended for a while to believe and reverence.

SECTION XVIII.

Philip, by divine direction, instructs an Ethiopian eunuch in the faith of Christ; and having baptized him, goes and preaches the gospel in the neighbouring coasts of the Mediterranean sea. Acts viii. 26, *to the end.*

Acts viii. 26.

SECT. 18. ACTS VIII. WHEN these important affairs at Samaria were despatched, *and* the church there was in so flourishing and happy a state, *an angel of the Lord spake to Philip* the Evangelist,[a] who had been so successful in his labours amongst them, *saying, Arise and go towards the south, by the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is* through the *desert* or wilderness of Judea;[b] for there in that retired solitude thou shalt meet with a 26 person whom I will mark out to thee, with whom thou art to have a conversation of great moment.

Acts viii. 26. AND the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 *And* without presuming more particularly to inquire into the design of the errand on 27 And he arose and went:

g *Make your supplications to the Lord on my account.*] It is much to be feared this pretence of conviction and humiliation was only to prevent Peter and John from disgracing him among the body of christians: for it is reasonable to suppose this conversation passed in private between them; and perhaps Simon might have some hope that, if the secret were kept, he might reduce the people, when Peter was gone, to their former subjection to him, notwithstanding their conversion to christianity.

h *These things which ye have spoken.*] As the plural number is here used, (if it be not, as I think it sometimes is, put for the dual,) since one cannot imagine, as I hinted above, that the proposal was publicly made, it seems most natural to refer this to the awful things he had heard, in the course of christian preaching, concerning the terrible effects of the divine displeasure against impenitent sinners in the future world.

i *Borne their testimony.*] See note g, on Luke xxiv. 48. p. 419.

k Histories of the church.] See Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 14; Theodoret, *Hæret. Fab. lib.* i. *cap.* 1; and compare note h, § 16. p. 465.

a *An angel of the Lord spake to Philip.*] It gives us a very high idea of the gospel, to see the ministers of it receiving such immediate direction from celestial spirits in the particular discharge of their office.

b *Which is desert.*] The construction of the Greek leaves it dubious whether this clause refers to Gaza, or to the way that led to it. Dr. Benson, with Grotius, Drusius, and other considerable writers, concludes that Gaza, (a city of the Philistines often mentioned in the Old Testament, Judg. xvi. 1, 21; Zeph. ii. 4; Zech. ix. 5.) after having been conquered by Pharaoh, king of Egypt, (Jer. xlvii. 1.) was ruined by Alexander the Great, and afterwards rebuilt with great magnificence, (Arrian. *De Exped. Alex. lib.* iv. *cap.* 2; Strab. *Geograph. lib.* xvi. p. 522; Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xi. *cap.* 8. § 4. *et lib.* xiii. *cap.* 13. [al. 21.] § 3.) the new city was built at some distance from the old, which was left in ruins, and therefore called, Gaza the Desert. But, as this last fact is not sufficiently attested, I rather think, with Beza and Casaubon, that Philip is here directed to take that road to Gaza which lay through the wilderness, which (though perhaps it might not be the shortest) was chosen by the eunuch as the more retired; and I think the Greek idiom favours this interpretation, as it is not η, but αυτη εστιν ερημος.

and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led like a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I

which he was sent, *he arose and took his journey* as the angel had directed him: *And behold, a certain Ethiopian eunuch,*[c] *a grandee* in the court *of Candace the Queen of the Ethiopians,*[d] *who was* the person that presided *over all her treasure*, was travelling that way; *who*, as he was entirely proselyted to the Jewish religion, *had* lately *come to worship at Jerusalem* at one of the great feasts: This man *was* then *returning* home; *and* his mind being deeply impressed with devout and religious sentiments in consequence of those solemnities which had passed in that sacred place, as he pursued his journey, while he *sat in his chariot*, he was *reading the prophet Isaiah*;[e] that he might thus fill up that vacant space of time which his journey allowed him, to some valuable purpose, and so might be better prepared to pass with safety through those busy scenes which would lie before him when he arrived at home. *And the Spirit*, by that secret suggestion which 29 inspired men could certainly distinguish as a divine revelation, *said to Philip, Approach and join thyself to this chariot*, and enter into conversation with the person who sitteth in it, without fear of offending him, or exposing thyself to any inconvenience.

And Philip, running up to the chariot, *heard him reading* the scriptures; for he read 30 aloud, that his own mind might be more deeply impressed with it, and that his servants who were near it might receive some benefit by it. And Philip, being well acquainted with the holy scriptures, easily perceived that it was the book of *the prophet Isaiah*, which was then before him, and that the passage would give him a very proper opportunity for entering into discourse with him concerning Christ, and delivering to him that evangelical message with which he was charged. He therefore took occasion to begin the conversation from this circumstance, *and said* to the eunuch, *Dost thou understand* the true sense of *those* sublime and important *things which thou art reading?*

And the eunuch was so far from being offended at the freedom he took, that *he* mildly 31 and respectfully *said* in reply, *How can* it be that *I* should fully understand such obscure oracles as these, *unless some one* who is better acquainted with the contents of them *should guide me*, and throw that light upon them which I, who am so much a stranger to the Jewish affairs, must necessarily want? *And* concluding from the question he put, besides what he might conjecture from his habit, that he was better acquainted with these things than himself, *he requested Philip that he would come up and sit with him* in the chariot, where there was room conveniently to receive him, that so he might be farther informed in matters of so great importance. *Now the period* or passage *of scripture which he was* 32 *reading* at that time *was this:* (Isa. liii. 7, 8.) "*He was brought to the slaughter as a* "*sheep; and as a lamb before its shearer* [*is*] *dumb, so he opened not his mouth: In* 33 "*his* deep *humiliation his judgment was taken away;*[f] *and who shall declare* or "describe *his generation?*[g] *for*, innocent as he was, *his life is cut off from the* "*earth.*"—A passage expressly referring to the meekness with which the blessed Jesus should endure all his sufferings, while ungrateful sinners, in contempt of all laws both human and divine, persecuted him even to the death.

And the eunuch, answering to Philip, said, I beseech thee to inform me *of whom doth*

c *A certain Ethiopian eunuch.*] It is certain that the Hebrew word סריס, which answers to ευνουχος, an *eunuch*, is sometimes very properly rendered an *officer*: (See Gen. xxxvii. 36; xxxix. 1; 2 Kings viii. 6; 1 Chron. xxviii. 1.) And the learned Heinsius takes pains to establish an etymology of ευνουχος, which should make it an intimation of the *good disposition* of the person to whom it was given. But in what sense it is used here, is an inquiry of no manner of importance; and I think any curious discussion of such kind of questions would by no means suit a Family Expositor.—I only add, with Beza, that it seems quite ridiculous to imagine that αννης was intended to signify any thing more than איש; I have therefore rendered it accordingly.

d *A grandee* in the court of *Candace the Queen of the Ethiopians.*] It appears that Candace was a name common to several of the queens who reigned in Meroe, a part of Ethiopia to the south of Egypt: (Compare Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* vi. *cap.* 29; and Alexand. *Genial. Dier. lib.* i. *cap.* 2.) So that it is very uncertain whether this princess be the person mentioned by Dio Cassius and Strabo, as at war with the Romans in the time of Augustus.—I know not how far we are to regard the authority on which De Dieu tells us that the name of this eunuch was Judith, and that of the Queen, by which she was distinguished from others, Lacasa.

e *Sat in his chariot reading, &c.*] Probably this chariot was something in the form of our chaises with four wheels; for though the eunuch did not guide it himself, there was room for another person to come and sit with him, (ver. 31.) the charioteer therefore seems to have sat on a seat by himself.

f *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.*] The present reading of the Hebrew clause answering to this, is much more agreeable to our translation of Isa. liii. 8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment.* But the Seventy interpreters, whose version is here literally transcribed in the Greek, and exactly rendered in our translation, instead of מעצר וממשפט לקח, appear to have read במעמי מעצר לקח, which seems either to have been the true reading, or in sense equivalent to it: for I cannot think, as Beza and many other commentators do, that it refers to Christ's being taken by his resurrection from his confinement in the grave, and from the judgment or sentence which had been executed upon him; agreeably to which M. L'Enfant renders it, *His condemnation was taken away by his* very *abasement*: that is, his stooping to death gave occasion to his triumph; a sense neither natural in itself, nor favoured by the connexion as it stands in Isaiah. It seems rather to mean, if the Greek version be here admitted, "Jesus appeared in so humble "a form, that though Pilate was convinced of his innocence, he "seemed a person of so little importance, that it would not be worth "while to hazard any thing to preserve him." Le Clerc (in his *Supplement to Dr. Hammond,*) intimates this interpretation, with a small and (so far as I can judge) unnecessary and unwarrantable change in the version, *In his humiliation he was judged, he was taken away.* But our translation is far more literal; and to take away a person's judgment is a known proverb for oppressing him. See Job xxvii. 2.

g *Who shall declare* or describe *his generation?*] This is one of the many passages of the Old-Testament prophecies in which it is not so difficult to find a sense fairly applicable to Christ, as to know which to prefer of several that are so. Many ancient as well as modern writers, have referred it to the mystery of his incarnation; but Calvin and Beza say this was owing to their ignorance of the Hebrew, the word דור not admitting such a sense; and it is certain it very ill suits the connexion with the following clause. Dr. Samuel Harris has a long discourse, which seems only a fine-spun cobweb, to prove that it refers to his not having any witnesses to appear for him and give an account of his life and character, as he takes עצר in the former clause to signify his having no advocate to plead his cause. See his *Second Discourse*, p. 65. *et seq.*; and his *Essay*, p. 143—146. Others, with Calvin and Beza, think it is as if the prophet had said, "Who can declare how long he shall live and reign, "or count the numerous offspring that shall descend from him?" But, not to say that this idea is much more clearly expressed by the prophet in verse 10. which on this interpretation is a tautology, I cannot find that דור and ימי are used as synonymous terms. The former of those words in the Hebrew signifies the same with *a generation of men*, in English, who are contemporaries: Gen. vii. 1; Judg. ii. 10; Psal. xcv. 10; cix. 13; and as γενεα in the *Septuagint* has most frequently this sense, so it evidently has in the writings of Luke. See Luke xi. 30, 50; xvii. 25; Acts ii. 40; xiii. 36. And therefore I suppose, with Dr. Hammond, the sense to be, "Who "can describe the obstinate infidelity and barbarous injustice of "that generation of men among whom he appeared, and from "whom he suffered such things?" But as it did not seem proper to determine this by rendering it, as in the version of 1727, Who can describe the men of his time? (because a translator of Scrip-

SECT. 18. ACTS VIII.

the prophet say this? of himself, or some other person? Was Isaiah thus inhumanly put to death by the Jews? or did he foretell the sufferings of some future and greater person?

pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 *Then Philip*, secretly adoring the Divine Providence in giving him so fair an opportunity, *opened his mouth*[h] with an air of solemnity proportionable to the importance of what he had to say; *and beginning from this* very *scripture*, in which he was so plainly delineated, *preached to him* the glad tidings of that *Jesus*[i] of whom not Isaiah alone, but so many of the other prophets, spoke: And after he had laid before him the predictions recorded in scripture concerning him, he bore witness to the glorious accomplishment of them, and gave him the history of those extraordinary facts which had lately happened in confirmation of that gospel he taught.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 His noble hearer, in the mean time, listened attentively; and though he saw no miracle performed in evidence of the truth of Philip's doctrine, he found such a light breaking in upon his mind from the view of the prophecies, and such an inward conviction wrought in his spirit by the divine influence, that he became a sincere convert to the gospel. *And* having for some time discoursed together of the person and the sufferings of Christ, and of the method of salvation by him, *as they went by the way they came to a certain water*, there being in that place some pool or stream adjoining to the road; *and the eunuch*, having learnt what was the rite of initiation which the great Prophet and Sovereign of the church had appointed, was willing to embrace the first opportunity that Providence offered of making a surrender of himself to Christ, and being received into the number of his people; upon which he *said* unto Philip, *Behold*, [*here is*] *water; what should hinder my being baptized*, and becoming from this hour one of your body?

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 *And Philip said* unto him, *If thou believest with all thine heart* this gospel which I have taught thee, so as cordially to subject thy soul to it, then *it may lawfully* and regularly *be done* without any further delay. *And he answering, said, I* firmly and undoubtedly *believe that Jesus Christ*, whom thou hast now been preaching to me, *is* really *the Son of God*,[k] and own him for the promised Messiah who was sent into the world for the salvation of lost sinners; and I desire with all my heart and soul to give myself up to him, that he may save me in his own way.

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 *And* upon Philip's declaring his satisfaction in this profession of his faith in Christ and subjection to him, and readily consenting to receive him as a fellow-christian, *he ordered the chariot to stop: and they both went down to the water*,[l] *both Philip and the eunuch, and* there *he baptized him.*

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord*, which fell upon the eunuch,[m] immediately *snatched away Philip*[n] in a miraculous manner, *and the eunuch saw him no more; for* as it thus appeared that Providence designed they should be separated, he did not attempt to search for him in the neighbouring parts, or to go any where to follow him, how much soever he esteemed his conversation; but getting up again into his chariot, *he went on his way rejoicing*—with an heart full of thankfulness that he had been favoured with the privilege of so important an interview with him; and that after having received the gospel from his lips, he had seen such a miraculous confirmation of its truth in the sudden manner in which this divinely-commissioned teacher was removed from his sight, to which all his attendants were witnesses.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 *But Philip*, quickly after he was separated from the eunuch, *was found at Azotus*, or Ashdod, a city that was more than thirty miles from Gaza, in the southern part of the country which had been formerly one of the five governments belonging to the Philistines; (1 Sam. vi. 17.) *and going on from thence, he preached the gospel* with great success *in* Joppa, Lydda, Saron, and *all the* other *cities* along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, *till he came to Cæsarea*,[o] where Providence directed him to settle for a considerable time. (See Acts xxi. 8, 9.)

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Cæsarea.

ture should leave ambiguous expressions as he finds them,) so I thought it would be best to insert the paraphrase on both these clauses in the notes, that I might leave room for the eunuch's question in the next verse, which otherwise must have been superseded.

h *Philip opened his mouth.*] See note c, on Matt. v. 2. p. 73.

i *Preached to him Jesus.*] Limborch very largely shows, in his commentary on this passage, how shamefully the Jews pervert the whole 53d of Isaiah, in expounding it of the afflictions of Israel; and I am surprised to find that Dr. Hammond intimates it might be accomplished in some one who lived quickly after Isaiah's time.——See all that Mr. Collins has urged on that head (*Literal Scheme*, chap. v. § 12. p. 208—220.) abundantly confuted by Dr. Bullock, *Vindic.* p. 147—156. Compare Bishop Chandler, *Of Christianity*, p. 174—178.

k *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*] It is surprising to see in how many ancient copies and versions this verse is omitted. (See Dr. Mill, *in loc.* and the version of 1727.) "Nevertheless," says Beza, "God forbid I should think it ought to be expunged, "since it contains such a confession of faith as was in the apostolic "times required of the adult, in order to their being admitted to "baptism." Allowing it to be genuine, it fully proves that Philip had opened to the eunuch the doctrine of Christ's divinity; and indeed, if he had not done it, he must have given him a very imperfect account of the gospel.

l *They both went down to the water.*] Considering how frequently bathing was used in those hot countries, it is not to be wondered that baptism was generally administered by immersion, though I see no proof that it was essential to the institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the water, merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey through so desert a country, a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them. See Dr. Shaw's *Travels, Pref.* p. 4.

m *The Spirit of the Lord*, which fell upon the eunuch.] The Alexandrian manuscript, and several other old copies, read it, Πνευμα αγιον επεπεσεν επι τον ευνουχον, αγγελος δε Κυριου ηρπασε, κ. τ. λ. that is, *The Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch, but an angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.* And therefore, considering also how exceeding probable it is that a person of his rank, going into a country where the gospel was entirely unknown, should be furnished for the great work of preaching it there, by the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, I thought fit to insert it in the paraphrase. (See Dr. Benson's *History*, Vol. I. p. 163.) I may here add, that Eusebius assures us (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 1.) this new convert planted a flourishing church in Ethiopia; and it is a fact in which all the most ancient histories of Ethiopia agree.

n *Snatched away Philip.*] Probably he transported him part of the way through the air, a thing which seems to have happened with respect to some of the prophets. Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16; Ezek. iii. 14. The spacious plain which was probably the scene of this miracle, would make it so much the more conspicuous, and it would no doubt prove a great confirmation of the eunuch's faith.

o *To Cæsarea.*] This was a city on the coast of the Mediterra-

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is great reason to adore the gracious counsels and purposes of God with respect to this Ethiopian eunuch; he was a chosen vessel—and desiring to improve that weak light which he had, God took effectual methods to impart to him more. Thus shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. (Hos. vi. 3.) An angel of the Lord is sent to give directions to an Evangelist to meet him in a desert, and to instruct him there in what he had not learnt in his attendance at Jerusalem: And Philip, in obedience to the divine command, immediately retires from the more public service he had been engaged in at Samaria, to execute whatever God should please to call him to, though he should order him to go into a wilderness, as he could open even there a door of opportunity to make him useful: and while, like Philip, we govern ourselves by the intimations of his will, we shall not *run in vain, nor labour in vain.* (Phil. ii. 16.) SECT 18. ACTS VIII.

It was a prudent and exemplary care, especially in a person engaged in such a variety of public business as the eunuch was, to improve that vacant space of time which a journey allowed him, in reading what might edify and instruct him even as he sat in his chariot! He chose the sacred oracles, and, while perusing them, was in an extraordinary manner taught of God. The question which Philip put to him, we should often put to ourselves,—*Understandest thou what thou readest?* Let us chuse those writings which may be worth our study, and then let us labour to digest them, and not rest in the empty amusement which a few wandering, unconnected, and undistinguished ideas may give us, while they pass through our minds like so many images over a mirror, leaving no impression at all behind them. The Scripture especially will be worthy of our study, that we may understand it; and we should earnestly pray that this study may be successful. For this purpose let us be willing to make use of proper guides, though it must be confessed that none we are like to meet with at present can have a claim to that authority with which Philip taught. It is pleasant, nevertheless, with a becoming humility to offer what assistance we can to our fellow-travellers on such an occasion as this; and God grant that we who do it, especially in that way which is most extensive and lasting, may neither be deceived in Scripture ourselves, nor deceive others by misrepresenting its sense. 28 30

If we enter into the true sense of the ancient prophecies, we must undoubtedly see Christ in them, and particularly in that excellent chapter of Isaiah which the pious eunuch was now reading. Let us often view our Divine Master in that amiable and affecting light in which he is here represented: let us view him, though the Son of God by a generation which none can fully declare, yet *brought to the slaughter as a lamb, and dumb as a sheep before its shearers:* And let us learn patiently to suffer with him, if called to it, in humble hope of reigning with him, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) even though, like his, our judgment also should be taken away, and we be cut off from the land of the living. 32, 33

Let those who firmly believe in him as the Son of God, enter themselves into his church by those distinguishing solemnities which he has appointed for that purpose, to which the greatest should not think themselves above submitting: Let the ministers of Christ readily admit those that make a credible profession of their faith in Jesus, and of their resolution to be subject to him, to such ordinances, not clogging them with any arbitrary impositions or demands. And when men are come to a point thus solemnly to give themselves up to the Lord, and have done it in his appointed method, let them go on their way rejoicing, even though Providence should separate from them those spiritual guides who have been owned as the happy instruments of their conversion and their edification. 36—38 39

The servants of Christ are called to glorify him in different scenes and stations of life; happy if in one state and country or another they may spread the savour of his name, and gather in converts to him, whether from among the sons of Israel or of Ethiopia. 40

SECTION XIX.

Saul setting out for Damascus with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously converted by our Lord's appearance to him on the way. Acts. ix. 1—9.

ACTS ix. 1.

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest,

ACTS ix. 1.

WE have observed in the preceding history, that the persecution against the disciples of Jesus was very violent and severe after the death of Stephen;[a] and particularly, that the youth who was called Saul distinguished himself by his forwardness in it; insomuch that all the principal members of the church were driven away from Jerusalem except the apostles. (Sect. xvi. Acts viii. 1, 3.) *But Saul* was so exceedingly outrageous in his zeal against the gospel, that he could not be satisfied with this; his very heart was set upon extirpating the followers of Jesus, and, like some ravenous and savage beast, he was *still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;*[b] In every word he spoke he menaced their destruction, and, as if all the hardships of exile and imprisonment were too little, with a most cruel eagerness he thirsted for their blood. With this intent he *came to* SECT. 19. ACTS IX

2 And desired of him *the high-priest,*[c] whom he knew to be much exasperated against them, *And petitioned*

nean Sea, which was anciently called Stratonice, or Straton's Tower: See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 11. [al. 19.] § 2; *et Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 3. § 4, 5. It was far distant from Cæsarea Philippi, (of which we read, Matt. xvi. 13.) which was situate to the north, in the tribe of Naphthali, and near the sources of Jordan. See note c, on Mark viii. 27. p. 179.

a After the death of Stephen.] There are many disputes as to the time of Paul's conversion. The learned Spanheim advances several arguments to prove that it happened six or seven years after Christ's death, about the fourth year of Caligula, A. D. 40. I rather think, with Dr. Benson, (agreeably to Bishop Pearson's Chronology,) that it was a pretty deal sooner, but that the exact time cannot be fixed from any circumstances transmitted to us.

b *Breathing out threatenings and slaughter.*] This is an exceeding emphatical expression, as Elsner has well shown in his illustration of it: but it will not prove that he was able to accomplish the death of many of the christians, though he might threaten it with almost every breath. It must increase his rage to hear that those whom he had been instrumental in driving from Jerusalem, were so successful in spreading the religion he was so eager to root out.

c *Came to the high-priest.*] The person now in that office seems to have been Caiaphas the inveterate enemy of Christ, who had so great a hand in his death. He would therefore gladly employ so active and bigoted a zealot as Saul: and it is well known that the sanhedrim, however its capital power might be abridged by the Romans, was the supreme Jewish court, and had great influence and authority among their synagogues abroad.

SECT. 19. ——— ACTS IX.

for letters from him in the name of the whole sanhedrim, (chap. xxii. 5; xxvi. 12.) directed *to the* rulers of the Jewish *synagogues at Damascus*, whither (as he had been informed) some of those distressed refugees had fled, *that if he found any of that way* there, *whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*, to be proceeded against in the severest manner by the sanhedrim.

letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 *And as he was proceeding on his journey, and was* now *come near to Damascus*,[d] it being just about the middle of the day, a wonderful event happened, which threw the whole course of his life into a different channel, and was attended with the most important consequence both to him and the church; for *on a sudden a* great *light from heaven shone around him*,[e] exceeding the lustre of the meridian sun: (chap. xxii. 6; xxvi. 13.)

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

4 *And* such was the effect this wonderful appearance had upon him, that *he fell to the ground*, being struck from the beast on which he rode, as all that travelled with him likewise were, (chap. xxvi. 14.) *and* to his great astonishment he *heard a* loud and distinct *voice, saying unto him* in the Hebrew language, *Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?* *And* as he saw at the same time the bright appearance of some glorious person in a human form, *he* was possessed with awe and reverence, and *said, Who art thou, Lord?* and what is it that I have done against thee? *And the Lord* Jesus (for it was he who had condescended to appear to him on this occasion) *said, I am* that *Jesus* [*the Nazarene*,][f] *whom*, by the opposition thou art making to my gospel, and by thy cruelty to my disciples, *thou* madly *persecutest:* (chap. xxii. 8.) but remember, [*it is*] *hard for thee to kick against the goads*,[g] and all thy fury can only wound thyself, without being able to do me or my cause any real injury.

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: *It is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 *And* when Saul heard and saw that he who had so often been affronted and despised by him, even that Jesus of Nazareth whom he had so blasphemously and virulently opposed, was such a glorious and powerful person, and yet that, instead of destroying him immediately, as he might with ease have done, he had condescended thus compassionately to expostulate with him, his mind was almost overborne with an unutterable mixture of contending passions; so that *trembling* at the thought of what he had done, *and amazed* at the glorious appearance of Jesus, *he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* For instead of carrying my mad opposition any farther, I with all humility resign myself entirely to thy disposal, and humbly wait the intimations of thy sacred pleasure, determined to submit to whatsoever thou shalt order me. *And the Lord said unto him, Arise* and stand upon thy feet, *and go into the city, and* I will take care that *it shall* there *be told thee what thou must do*, and thou shall be instructed in all things which I have appointed concerning thee: (chap. xxii. 10; xxvi. 16.) "*For I have* thus *appeared unto thee for this purpose*, "*to* constitute and *ordain thee a minister* and servant to me in the great work of propagating my gospel, *and* to appoint thee *a witness both of these things which thou hast* "*now seen, and of those things in which I will* hereafter *manifest myself unto thee:* "And in the testimony thou shalt give, I will be with thee to protect thee by my power "and providence, *delivering thee* in the midst of a thousand dangers, *from the* malice of "the Jewish *people, and* of *the Gentiles; to whom*, as the one or the other may come in "thy way, *I now send thee*, That I may make thee instrumental *to open their* blind *eyes*, "*and to turn* [*them*] *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;* "*that they may* thus *receive* the free and full *forgiveness of* all their most aggravated "*sins, and* may have *an inheritance among them that are sanctified by* means of that "*faith which is in me.*"

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

ACTS XXVI.

Acts xxvi. 16. For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

ACTS IX.

And the men who travelled with him, upon their rising from the ground, to which they had been struck upon the first appearance of the light from heaven, *stood* in a fixed posture perfectly *astonished*,[h] and seemed for a while to be turned (as it were) into statues: And

Acts ix. 7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hear-

d *Come near to Damascus.*] Witsius has given us a large and entertaining account of this city in his *Life of Paul, cap.* ii. sect. 2. It was the capital city of Syria, (Isa. vii. 8.) and abounded so much with Jews, that Josephus assures us ten thousand of them were massacred there in one hour, and at another time eighteen thousand, with their wives and children. Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 20. [al. 25.] § 2; *et lib.* vii. *cap.* 8. [al. 28.] § 7.

e *A light from heaven shone around him.*] This was occasioned by the rays of glory which darted from the body of our Lord. Some have thought that Saul, being a learned Jew, would easily know this to be the *shekinah*, or visible token and symbol of the divine presence, and that he therefore cries, *Who art thou, Lord?* though he saw no human form. See Lord Barrington's *Miscell. Sacra, Essay* iii. p. 5. But I think the question implies, he did not know who or what he was, and that it is plain from chap. xxii. 14. and other texts, that he did see, amidst this glory, a human form, which yet he might not at first imagine to be that of Jesus, though Stephen had, probably in his hearing, declared that he saw a vision of this kind, chap. vii. 55, 56. Elsner supposes, with De Dieu, that this was lightning, and the voice thunder, and is large in showing how generally the heathens thought such phenomena to attend the appearance of their deities.

f *I am Jesus the Nazarene.*] So it is that the words are related, (chap. xxii. 8.) and there seems something peculiarly pointed in this expression. A pretended Messiah from Nazareth had, no doubt, often been the subject of his blasphemous derision; our Lord therefore uses that title more effectually to humble and mortify him.

g *It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.*] Dr. Hammond truly observes, that this is a proverbial expression of impotent rage which hurts one's self, and not that against which it was levelled.—It is no great matter whether the latter part of this verse and the beginning of the next (which clause is omitted in many ancient copies and versions) were originally here, or whether (as Dr. Mill supposes) it were not, since it certainly is found in the parallel passages, chap. xxii. 8; xxvi. 14. But I think it most probable it was accidentally omitted in some very old copy, whence the rest were taken, and that the omission was occasioned by the transcriber mistaking the words ὁ κυριος, ver. 6. for the like words in ver 5. a thing which might easily happen in transcribing.—I hope I need make no apology for giving the reader, in the first view of this wonderful and delightful story, a full account of it in a kind of compound text, in which all the circumstances, added by Paul himself elsewhere, are inserted in one continued narration. But I reserve the notes on the passages so brought in, till we come to the chapters to which they belong.

h *Stood* perfectly *astonished.*] To stand astonished does indeed sometimes signify merely to be astonished, without any reference to the particular posture, as Beza, L'Enfant, and others have observed. So in our English phrase, to stand in jeopardy is to be in jeopardy, 1 Cor. xv. 30; and to stand in doubt is to be in doubt, Gal. iv. 20. (Compare Matt. xii. 46; Mark ix. 1; John i. 26; Acts iv. 10; and many other places.) But the expression here may be literally true, and in that interpretation seems to convey the more lively idea.

ing a voice, but seeing no man.

they were so confounded, that they uttered not a word, *hearing indeed the* sound of that *voice* which had spoken to Saul,[i] without distinctly understanding the sense of what was said, (chap. xxii.) *but seeing no one*,[k] nor perceiving who it was that had been speaking to him.

SECT. 19.

ACTS IX.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

But Saul, when he had seen this heavenly vision, *arose from the earth; and though his eyes were open, he* was incapable of discerning objects, and *saw no* one *man* of those who stood near him; for his nerves were so affected with the glory of that light which had shone from the body of Jesus, that he had lost the power of sight: (chap. xxii. 11.) *But they* that were with him *led him by the hand*, as it would not be safe for him to ride in such a condition, *and brought him to Damascus.* 8

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And he was at his lodgings there *three days without sight*,[l] *and* during all that time he *neither ate nor drank*,[m] but lay for a considerable part of it as in a trance, in which he saw some extraordinary visions, particularly of Ananias who was to visit him, (compare ver. 12.) and the remainder of it he employed in such deep humiliation and humble, earnest prayer, as suited his past guilt and his present astonishing circumstances. 9

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us pause a little on this most amazing instance of the power and sovereignty of divine grace in our blessed Redeemer, and adore and rejoice in its illustrious triumph. Who, of all the enemies of Christ, and of his church, seemed ripest for tenfold vengeance? Whose name will be transmitted to posterity as the name of the person who most barbarously ravaged the innocent sheep and lambs of Christ's flock, and, like the ravenous wolf, most insatiably thirsted for their blood? Whose very breath was threatenings and slaughter against them, and the business of his life their calamity and destruction? Who but Saul: the very man for whom, under another name and character, we have contracted (if I may be allowed the expression) that tenderness of holy friendship, that, next to that of his divine Master, his name is written on our very hearts; and whom, though once the chiefest of sinners, we reverence as the greatest of the apostles, and love as the dearest of saints. Ver. 1

Thy thoughts, O Lord, *are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways.* (Isa. lv. 8.) He had Damascus in view, which was to be the scene of new oppressions and cruelties; he was, it may be, that very moment anticipating in thought the havoc he should there make, when, behold, the light of the Lord breaks in upon them, and Jesus the Son of God condescends in person to appear to him, to expostulate with him! And how tender the expostulation! *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Tender to Saul, tender to all his people; for it expresses his union with them, his participation in their interests; so that he looks upon himself as injured by those that injure them, as wounded by those that wound them. 3 4

Who, in this view, does not see at once the guilt and madness and misery of persecutors? They have undertaken a dreadful task indeed, and will find it *hard to kick against the pricks;* they will surely find it so when Jesus appears to them in that vengeance which he here laid aside; when he sits on his awful tribunal to make inquisition for blood, and to visit upon them all their inhumanities and all their impieties. 5

But here our merciful Redeemer chose to display the triumphs of his grace rather than the terrors of his wrath; and, behold, how sudden a transformation it wrought! Behold Saul, who had so insolently assaulted his throne, now prostrate at his feet! surrendering, as it were, at discretion: presenting a blank, that Jesus might write his own terms, and saying, as every one who is indeed the trophy of divine grace will say, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* As ready to employ all his powers for the service of Christ as he had ever before been to arm them for the destruction of his church. 6

What must the attendants of his journey think on such an occasion? If they were also converted, here were farther witnesses added to christianity, and more monuments of divine grace erected; but if they were not converted, what an instance was this of their hardness and obstinacy! and even though their bodily sight was continued, how much was their blindness worse than his! Let us pray that we may all be taught of God; and if we are brought to resign ourselves to God in sincerity and truth, let us acknowledge the internal operations of his grace as that to which the victory is owing, even where external circumstances have been most remarkable. 7 8

The situation in which Saul lay, seems indeed to have been very melancholy, his sight lost, his appetite for food gone, and all his soul wrapt up in deep astonishment, or melted in deep contrition and remorse; but though he might *sow in tears*, he *reaped in joy.* (Psal. cxxvi. 5.) It appears that light and gladness were sown for him. He came refined out of the furnace, and these three dark and dismal days are, no doubt, recollected by him in the heavenly world, as the era from whence he dates the first beamings of that divine light in which he now dwells. Let us never be afraid of the pangs of that godly sorrow, which, working repentance to salvation not to be repented of, will soon be ten thousand times overbalanced by that *exceeding weight of glory*, and those full transports of eternal joy, for which it will prepare the soul. 9

i *Hearing the voice.*] Beza, Vatablus, and Clarius think they heard Saul's voice, but not that of Christ; Dr. Hammond, that they heard the thunder, not the articulate sound which attended it; Dr. Benson, as ακουειν often signifies, to *understand*, supposes those attendants were Hellenist Jews, who did not understand the Hebrew, which was the language in which Christ spake. But I think, with Dr. Whitby, that the most probable way of reconciling this with chap. xxii. 9. is that which is expressed in the paraphrase, and that it is confirmed by John xii. 29. when some present at the voice from heaven which came to Christ, took it for thunder. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* p. 665, 666.

k *But seeing no one.*] So it was with the men who were with Daniel when he saw the vision. (Dan. x. 7.) And the Heathens, however they came by the notion, thought their deities often rendered themselves visible to one only, in a company consisting of many. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 403—405.

l *Without sight.*] Scales grew over his eyes, not only to intimate to him the blindness of the state he had been in, but to impress him also with a deeper sense of the almighty power of Christ, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was rendered less capable of conversing with external objects. This would also be a manifest token to others of what had happened to him in his journey, and ought to have been very convincing and humbling to those bigoted Jews to whom, as the most probable associates in the cruel work he intended, the sanhedrim had directed those letters, which Saul would no doubt destroy as soon as possible.

m *Neither ate nor drank.*] Grotius and some later writers think this was a voluntary fast, in token of his deep humiliation for the guilt he had contracted by opposing the gospel; but it might very possibly be the result of that bodily disorder into which he was thrown by the vision, and of the attachment of his mind to those new and astonishing divine revelations with which during this time he seems to have been favoured.—Whether those discoveries mentioned, 2 Cor. xii. 1. *et seq.* and Gal. i. 11. *et seq.* were made at this time, is matter of some debate, and may be examined in a more proper place.

SECTION XX.

Christ sends Ananias to Saul, to restore his sight: Saul is baptized, and having preached the gospel at Damascus and Jerusalem, to avoid the rage of the Jews, is sent by the disciples to Tarsus. Acts ix. 10—31.

Acts ix. 10.

SECT. 20.

ACTS IX.

NOW while Saul lay blind at Damascus, in those melancholy circumstances which have been just described, it pleased the Lord, on the third day, to provide for his comfort and instruction: for *there was a certain disciple at Damascus whose name was Ananias,*[a] and he was a pious man according to the strictest precepts of the law, and had an honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt in the city, as well as among the disciples of Jesus, to whom he was allied in the strictest bonds: (chap. xxii. 12.) *And the Lord* appeared and *said to him in a vision, Ananias: And he said, Behold, I* [*am here,*] *Lord,* ready to receive and execute thy commands. *And* upon this *the Lord* [*said*] *to him, Arise and go to that which is called the Straight Street, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus whose name is Saul; for behold, he is* now *praying* with great earnestness and affection, and I have compassion upon him, and am determined to send him immediate relief: *And* accordingly *he hath* just now *seen* thee *in a vision,*[b] as *a man whose name* it has been intimated to him *is Ananias;* and this person has been miraculously represented to him as *coming in and laying his hand upon him, that he might recover his sight,* which by a very extraordinary occurrence he has for the present lost.

And Ananias, astonished to hear such a name mentioned in such a connexion, *answered, Lord,* is it possible thou shouldst send me on any message of favour to Saul of Tarsus? *I have heard of many concerning this man,* even at this distance, how violent a persecutor he has been, and *how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem:* *And* I am credibly informed that he is now come hither to Damascus with an intent to persecute thy people *here,* and that *he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name,* and to carry them prisoners to Jerusalem to be tried there.

But the Lord said unto him, Ananias, thou canst not imagine that I am ignorant of any of these things, or that it is for thee to debate my sovereign determinations: *Go thy way,* and execute immediately that message of mercy with which I have charged thee; *for,* how great and aggravated soever his former transgressions may have been, I assure thee that *this* very *man is to me a chosen vessel,*[c] whom I have by my free and sovereign grace ordained *to bear my name* as an apostle, and to preach my gospel, the truth of which he shall maintain with the greatest fidelity and courage *before* the Gentile *nations and* their *kings,*[d] *and* before *the children of Israel,* and shall be made an instrument of eminent service: *For I will* immediately introduce him into a scene of action quite different from what he hath hitherto known, and will *show him how many things he,* who has done so much to oppose and injure my cause, *must* at length *suffer for my name;*[e] and he shall undergo them with such cheerfulness, as shall render him an example to my saints in all the remotest ages of my church.

And upon this *Ananias* presumed not to object any farther, but with all readiness and joy undertook the message: He *went,* therefore, *and entered into the house* to which he had been so particularly directed; and being introduced to the person whom he was sent to visit, *and laying his hands upon him, he said,* My dear *brother Saul,* for I most readily own thee under that relation, *the Lord,* [*even*] *Jesus who appeared to thee on the way as thou camest* hither to Damascus, *hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit,* which shall be poured out upon thee in a miraculous way before I leave this place. " For *the God of our fathers* " *hath,* in his secret and mysterious counsels, *fore-ordained thee to know his will,*

ACTS XXII. 14

ACTS ix 10.

AND there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I *am here,* Lord.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth;

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem;

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Acts xxii. 14. The God of our fathers hath chosen

a *Whose name was Ananias.*] As we read of Ananias only in this story, it is difficult to determine who he was. Dr. Benson thinks him to have been a native of Jerusalem, and one who had carried the gospel from thence to Damascus. (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 168.) Some of the ancients say he was one of the seventy disciples. Others, from his being called a devout man according to the law, (chap. xxii. 12.) have thought he was a proselyte of righteousness, as it is usual now to speak. Perhaps he was a native of Damascus converted at the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended, and honoured with this embassy to Saul as a christian of the oldest standing in that place, and so, very probably, an officer of the church there; which the commission to baptize him may farther intimate.

b *And he hath seen, &c.*] M. L'Enfant and several others think these are the words of the historian, and therefore should be included in a parenthesis, and rendered, *And he,* i. e. *Saul saw a man, &c.* But then I should think his name would have been expressed, Και ο Σαυλος ειδεν, κ. τ. λ.

c *A chosen vessel.*] Beza justly observes, that an instrument of building, agriculture, &c. is often in Greek called σκευος—and the word may very probably have that signification here. One would think none who knew Saul's character before his conversion, could imagine there was so much merit and excellence in it, as that he should on this account be spoken of by Christ as a choice or singularly valuable person: (Compare 1 Tim. i. 13—15.) Yet this has been hinted of late, though the apostle speaks of himself as separated from his mother's womb, Gal. i. 15. which, in concurrence with many other scriptures, shows how much more natural and reasonable it is to acquiesce in the obvious and common interpretation we have given.

d *Before* the Gentile *nations, &c.*] Ananias could not infer from hence that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles while they continued uncircumcised, and so aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, &c. (a mystery which Peter did not yet know;) for Christ might have used these expressions, had Paul been brought before heathen kings for preaching him as the Messiah to the Jews and proselytes.

e *I will show him how many things he must suffer, &c.*] If (as Grotius seems to think) this intimates that Saul should presently have a revelation, and perhaps a visionary representation of all his sufferings among Jews and Gentiles by land and sea, in tumults and imprisonments, of which this book and his Epistles give so large a description, it must appear a most heroic instance of courage and zeal, that with such a view he should offer himself to baptism, and go on so steadily in his ministerial work. Never sure was there, on that supposition, an exacter image of Jesus, who so resolutely persevered in his work, though he knew all things that were to come upon him.

thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

—Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known of Saul; and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.

" *and to see that righteous person* whom our ungrateful nation hath crucified, *and to hear* SECT.
" as thou hast done *the voice from his* own *mouth*, though he be now returned to the celestial 20.
" glory: *For thou shalt be his* faithful and successful *witness*, and shall be employed to
" testify *unto all men* the truth *of those things which thou hast* already *seen and heard*, ACTS
" and of those which he shall hereafter reveal unto thee. *And now, why dost thou delay* XXII.
" a moment longer? *Arise and be baptized, and* thereby express thy desire to *wash* 16
" *away thy sins, invoking the name of the Lord* Jesus Christ, that illustrious and divine
" name which thou hast formerly opposed and blasphemed."

And immediately, as soon as Ananias had entered the place and laid his hands upon ACTS
him, *there fell from his eyes* [*something*] *like scales*;[f] *and he presently recovered his* IX.
sight, and upon this *arose and was baptized*. And presently after this, he received 18
the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit,[g] by which he was much more particularly instructed in the contents of the gospel, and fitted to communicate it with the greatest advantage to others. *And having received food* after a long abstinence, *he was* quickly 19
strengthened, and recovered his former health and vigour, which it was his immediate care to employ in the service of his new Master.

And as things now appeared to *Saul* in quite another light than they had done before, his disposition was entirely changed; and he associated with those whom he had come to persecute, and *was for several days with the disciples at Damascus*. *And immediately* 20
after his conversion, *he preached Christ in the synagogues*[h] with great freedom and zeal, and proved by incontestable arguments *that he is the Son of God*. *And all that heard* 21
him were astonished, and said, Is not this he who in Jerusalem was so exceeding zealous in his opposition to this way, as to *spread desolation among them who called on this* very *name? and* who *came hither* also *to this end, that he might* seize on all the followers of Jesus whom he could find, and *carry them bound to the chief priests?* Whence, then, proceeds such an unaccountable change? *But Saul*, perceiving there was such parti- 22
cular notice taken of the matter, and hoping that his testimony might have so much the more weight in consequence of the knowledge which they had of his former character, *was strengthened* and animated *so much the more* in his zeal and activity, *and confounded the* unbelieving *Jews that dwelt at Damascus*, confirming and *evincing* with the fullest evidence, *that this* Jesus of Nazareth *is* indeed *the Messiah*.

And when many days were fulfilled, in which several events happened which are else- 23
where hinted at; and particularly, after he had made an excursion into Arabia to spread the gospel there, and returned to Damascus again, (Gal. i. 16—18.) *the Jews*, finding it was impossible to answer his arguments or to damp his zeal, resolved to attempt another way to silence him, and, that they might effectually accomplish it, *conspired to kill him*.[i] *But* Providence so ordered it that *their design was* happily discovered and *made known* 24
to Saul, who therefore kept himself concealed, and would not give them any opportunity to execute their purpose; *and* though *they watched* all *the gates* of the city continually,[k] and some assassin or other was waiting at each of them *day and night, to* attack and *murder him* if he should offer to retire from thence, yet they could not compass their cruel design. *But* as his present situation was still judged unsafe, and it was no way proper he 25
should be thus confined, *the* other *disciples* of Jesus, anxious to preserve a life of so much value, *took him by night, and let him down by* the side of *the wall in a basket*, and so dismissed him; heartily committing him to the divine protection, by the assistance of which he escaped the hands of those blood-thirsty Jews that were lurking about the gates. (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)

f *Something like scales.*] Perhaps the outward coat of his eyes might be scorched with the lightning, and what fell from them might have some resemblance to the small scales of fishes.——Grotius thinks this was an emblem of the darkness and prejudice which before veiled his eyes; and their falling off intimated the clearer views of divine things which he should for the future enjoy.

g He received the Holy Spirit.] We are sure from ver. 12. that the laying on of Ananias's hands was introductory to Saul's receiving his sight; and as this is connected with his receiving the Holy Spirit in ver. 17. it is reasonable to conclude that they were both conferred at this time. Yet it seems evident that the recovery of his sight preceded, and the effusion of the Spirit followed, his baptism; so that Ananias must have laid hands on him twice, if that action of his attended the descent of the Spirit on Saul; and it is the more probable it did not, as we do not elsewhere find that any but the apostles had the power of conferring it: See chap. viii. 16, 17. Dr. Benson has illustrated this by a variety of ingenious arguments, and is particular in his conjectures (perhaps too minutely pursued) as to the several gifts which were now communicated.—(*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 171—180.) We are sure he had an ample revelation of the christian scheme, otherwise he could not have been qualified to preach it as he did: (Compare Gal. i. 12; 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3.) And we particularly find he was enlightened in the sense of the Old-Testament prophecies. He had also, no doubt, many other miraculous gifts and powers besides that of speaking with tongues: But whether these were given (so far as they were statedly resident in him) instantaneously or gradually, I think we cannot certainly determine. Some miraculous effects did, beyond all doubt, immediately appear.

h *Immediately he preached Christ, &c.*] Dr. Wells, *Script. Geog.* Vol. III. p. 375. *et in loc.* says, that as soon as Saul had strength to go any where abroad, he retired into the desert of Arabia, where he supposes him to have been favoured with the full revelation of christianity, and to have spent some considerable time in devotion, after which he returned to Damascus, and preached; which he argues from Gal. i. 16, 17. But that seems inconsistent with what is here said of his preaching immediately. I therefore imagine his going into Arabia, (to which Damascus now belonged,) was his making excursions from that city into the neighbouring parts of the country, and perhaps taking a large circuit about it, which might be his employment between the time in which he began to preach in Damascus, and his quitting it after repeated labours there to go to Jerusalem.

i *The Jews conspired to kill him.*] What an amazing instance is this of the malignity of these wretched creatures, that when so great a persecutor was by a voice and appearance from heaven converted to christianity, they should be so far from following his example, that they should attempt to take away his life! In this design they were assisted by the governor of the city under Aretas, king of Arabia, (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.) by whatever revolution it had come into his hands, after having been conquered by the Romans under Pompey. Jos. *Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 2. [al. 4.] § 3. See Dr. Benson's *Hist.* Vol. I. p. 196.

k *They watched* all *the gates* of the city.] This shows there were great numbers engaged in this bloody design; for Damascus was a large city, and had many gates. It seems that the Jews had not now so much power there as they had when Saul was despatched from the sanhedrim, otherwise he might have been seized and carried to Jerusalem, by some such commission as he himself had borne. But they had some interest in Aretas' deputy, and therefore endeavoured to compass his death by this indirect method. See *Miscell. Sacra*, Vol. I. *Abstract*, p. 15.

SECT. 20. ACTS IX.

And when Saul was come from Damascus *to Jerusalem*,[l] *he* immediately *attempted to associate with the disciples; but they all feared him, not believing that he*, who had signalized himself so much by his rage against the church, *was* indeed *a disciple*; but suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice to work himself into their confidence,[m] and by that means to have it in his power to detect and ruin a greater number of persons.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 *But Barnabas*, whose information had been more express and particular, *taking him* by the hand with an endearing friendship,[n] *brought him to the apostles* Peter and James, the rest being then absent from Jerusalem;[o] *and* he *related to them how he had seen the Lord* Jesus Christ *in the way* to Damascus, *and that he had spoken to him* in a manner which had sweetly conquered all his former prejudices against the gospel; *and how*, in consequence of that change which was then made in his views and in his heart, *he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus*, even at the apparent hazard of his life.

27 But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 On this they gladly received him into their number, and into their most intimate friendship, *and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem*, for a little more than a fortnight; (Gal. i. 18.) *and* with the greatest freedom he there bore his testimony to the gospel, *preaching* as *boldly* and as publicly *in the name of the Lord Jesus* as he had done before at Damascus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 *And he spake and disputed*, not only with the natives of Judea, but also *with the Hellenists*, or with those foreign Jews who used the Greek language,[p] and came out of other parts to worship at Jerusalem, as being earnestly desirous that they might carry along with them the knowledge of Christ into their own lands: *But* some of them were so enraged at this unexpected opposition from one on whom they had so great a dependence, that *they* 30 *attempted to kill him. And the brethren being informed* [*of it*,] judged it necessary to consult his safety without any delay; and therefore several of them *conducted him to Cæsarea*[q] with such despatch, that he had not an opportunity of enjoying any interview with the churches in Judea which lay in his way, (Gal. i. 22.) *and* from thence they *sent him away* with proper recommendations *to Tarsus*, the noble capital of Cilicia, and his native place, where they apprehended he might meet with some support from his relations, and pursue the work of God with some considerable advantage; which he accordingly did.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 *Then the* several *churches* that were formed *through all Judea, and* those more lately planted in *Galilee and Samaria, being* greatly *edified*[r] by the seals that were set to the truth of the gospel, and by the confirmation of the news of Saul's conversion, (though they could not enjoy the benefit of his personal labours,) not only advanced in christian knowledge and holiness, but *had* also an happy interval of external *rest*,[s] as several circumstances in the civil state of the Jews at that time concurred either to appease their enemies, or to engage them to attend to what immediately concerned themselves. *And* as the followers of Jesus were not corrupted by this respite, but continued with exemplary devotion and zeal *walking in the fear of the Lord, and* evidently appeared to be in an extraordinary manner supported by the aids, and animated by *the consolation, of the Holy Spirit*,[t] they

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

l *When Saul was come to Jerusalem.*] This is the journey of which he speaks, Gal. i. 18. in which he formed his first acquaintance with Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision: But it is plain, as Mr. Cradock well observes in his excellent *Apost. Hist.* p. 55. he went not to acknowledge his supremacy, but [ιστορησαι] to see and converse with him as a brother and fellow-labourer: and it seems by the expression, επεμεινε προς αυτον, that he lodged with him.

m Suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice, &c.] It may seem strange that so remarkable an event as Saul's conversion should be concealed so long from the christians at Jerusalem: But it is to be considered that there were not then such conveniences of correspondence between one place and another as we now have; and the war now subsisting between Herod Antipas and Aretas, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 3. [al. 7.] § 1.) might have interrupted that between Damascus and Jerusalem: not to urge that the unbelieving Jews, in order to prevent the argument which the christians might draw from Saul's conversion, might very probably affect to give themselves mysterious airs, as if he was only acting a concerted part; sure to find their account in such a pretence, by mortifying the disciples, and bringing Saul into suspicion.

n *Barnabas taking him*, &c.] Some have said, I know not on what evidence, that Barnabas was an old acquaintance of Saul, and had been formerly his fellow-student under Gamaliel. See Reading's *Life of Christ*, p. 565. Perhaps he might have seen Ananias, or some other witness of peculiar credit, on whose testimony he introduced him. It is evident a most faithful and tender friendship was established between them from this time.

o *To the apostles* Peter and James, &c.] Paul himself tells us, that on his going up to Jerusalem he saw no other of the apostles, Gal. i. 19. Beza well observes, we are quite uncertain on what occasion the rest were then absent from Jerusalem. Had they been there, though Saul staid but about a fortnight, he would no doubt have seen them.

p Jews who used the Greek language.] So the Syriac version with great propriety explains the word, Hellenists; of whom see note a, on Acts vi. 1. § 12. p. 452. I know not on what authority Epiphanius, as quoted by Beza on this text, asserts that these Hellenists endeavoured to revenge themselves on Saul, by reporting every where, that his conversion to christianity was the result of a disappointment in his addresses to the daughter of Caiaphas the high-priest as her father would not accept him for a son-in-law. If they told such an idle story, it must however imply that they thought Saul a person of some rank, to have been capable of forming any such pretension.

q *Conducted him to Cæsarea.*] I should have concluded this had been the celebrated city of that name on the Mediterranean Sea, so often mentioned afterwards, and from whence he might so easily have passed by ship to Tarsus, had not Paul himself told us he went through the regions of Syria and Cilicia, (Gal. i. 21.) which intimates that he went by land, and makes it probable that it was Cæsarea Philippi, near the borders of Syria, which is here spoken of. Compare note o, on Acts viii. 40. p. 470, 471.

r *Being edified.*] I follow Beza's construction of this intricate verse, as most agreeable to the Greek idiom, and refer the reader to Dr. Hammond's learned note on the word οικοδομουμενοι, *edified*, for an account of that figurative expression, which is properly a term of architecture.

s *Had rest.*] This is by no means to be ascribed merely or chiefly to Saul's conversion, who, though a great zealot, was but one young man, and whose personal danger proves the persecution, in some measure, to have continued at least three years after it. I conclude, therefore, the period spoken of is that which commenced at or quickly after his setting out for Cilicia, and entirely acquiesce in Dr. Lardner's most judicious observation, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. § 12. Vol. I. p. 203—210.) that this repose of the christians might be occasioned by the general alarm which was given to the Jews, [about A. D. 40.] when Petronius, by the order of Caligula, (incensed by some affront said to have been offered him by the Alexandrian Jews,) attempted to bring the statue of that emperor among them, and to set it up in the holy of holies; a horrid profanation, which the whole people deprecated with the greatest concern, in the most solicitous and affectionate manner. (See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 10. [al. 9.] *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 8. [al. 11.] *Philo de Legat. ad Cai.* p. 1024. and the large account given of the state of the Jews at this time by Dr. Benson. (*Hist.* Vol. I. p. 201—210.) How long this rest continued we do not certainly know, probably till Herod interrupted it, as we shall see hereafter, chap. xii. *init.*

t *The consolation of the Holy Spirit.*] Some think παρακλησις signifies in the general *patronage* and *assistance*, as it well may: and therefore in the paraphrase I have expressed both.——De Dieu takes great pains to prove that πορευομενοι τω φοβω——επληθυνοντο signifies that *they advanced more and more in religion, &c.* But it seems

were considerably *multiplied* by a new accession of members, whereby the damage sustained in the late persecution was abundantly repaired. SECT. 20.

IMPROVEMENT.

ACTS IX.

How admirable was the condescension and care of our blessed Redeemer, in sending good Ananias thus early as a messenger of comfort and peace to Saul in his darkness and distress! We cannot wonder at the objections which were at first ready to rise in his mind, but must surely yield to the great authority by which they were overborne, *Go thy way, he is a chosen vessel.* Thus does it become us to acquiesce in all our Lord appoints in pursuance of the schemes of his electing love; and thus should we, with brotherly affection like that of this holy man, be ready to embrace even the greatest of sinners, when they are brought in humility to a Saviour's feet. 10—12 13, 14 15 17

But when he is thus glorifying his power and his grace, what gratitude and love may he justly expect from those that are happy objects of it! When the scales are fallen from their eyes, when they have given themselves up to him in the solemn seals of his covenant, when they have received the communications of his Holy Spirit, how solicitous should they be to love much, in proportion to the degree in which they had been forgiven! (Luke vii. 47.) And with what zeal and readiness should they immediately apply themselves, from a principle of gratitude to Christ and of compassion to sinners, to declare that way of salvation into which they have been directed! and, so far as they have opportunity, whether under a more public or private character, to lead others unto that Jesus on whom they have themselves believed. 18 19, 20

And now let us with sacred pleasure behold the progress of grace in the heart of Saul: Let us view him rising from his bed of languishing with a soul inflamed with love and zeal, testifying the gospel of Christ, and confounding the Jews that dwelt at Damascus: Let us behold him running the hazard of his life there, while their obstinate hearts refused to receive or endure such a testimony; and then returning to Jerusalem, desiring to join himself to the company of those whom he had once despised and persecuted; and on that most public theatre, under the very eyes of that sanhedrim from which he had received his bloody commission, openly bearing his testimony to that gospel which he had so eagerly attempted to tear up by the roots. Thence let us view him travelling to Tarsus, and visiting his native country, with a most earnest desire to fill Cilicia, as well as Judea and Damascus, with that doctrine which his Divine Master had condescended to teach him, and to be the means of regeneration to the inhabitants of the place from whence he derived his natural birth. 22 23—25 26 28, 29 30

And while we behold with reverence and delight the hand of God with and upon him, let us, as we are told the churches in Judea did while he was by face unknown to them, glorify God in him. (Gal. i. 22, 24.) In all the labours and writings of Paul the glorious apostle, let us keep Saul the persecutor in our eye, still remembering that (according to his own account of the matter) it was for this cause that he, though once *the chief of sinners, obtained mercy, that in him, as the chief, Christ might show forth a pattern of all long-suffering to them that should hereafter believe.* (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.)—Well might the churches be edified by such an additional evidence of the truth and power of the gospel. May the edification be continued to churches in succeeding ages; and while a gracious Providence is giving them rest, may they walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and be daily multiplied, established, and improved! 31

SECTION XXI.

Peter cures Æneas at Lydda, and then raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa. Acts ix. 32, *to the end.*

ACTS ix. 32.

AND it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

ACTS ix. 32.

HAVING despatched this important history of the conversion of Saul, and of the vigour and success with which he set out in the christian ministry, let us now turn to another scene, which happened during that peaceful interval mentioned above. *Now it came to pass* at this favourable juncture, *that* the apostle *Peter*, as he was *making a progress through all the* [*parts*] of the neighbouring country, that he might rectify any disorders that occurred, and instruct and confirm the new converts in the knowledge and faith of the gospel, among the other places that he visited, *came also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda*, a considerable town not far from the coast of the Mediterranean sea. *And he found there a certain man whose name was Æneas, who had* been long disabled by *a palsy, and had kept his bed eight years*, in so deplorable a state as to be quite incapable of rising from it, or to be any way helpful to himself. *And Peter* seeing him, and perceiving in himself a strong intimation that the divine power would be exerted for his recovery, *said to him, Æneas, Jesus, the* true *Messiah*, in whose name I preach and act, now at this instant *healeth thee,*[a] and operates, while I speak, to strengthen and restore thy weakened frame: With a dependence therefore upon his almighty agency, *arise and make thy bed.*[b] *And* upon this the palsy left him, and the disabled man was all at once so strengthened, that *he arose immediately*, and did it. SECT. 21. ACTS IX. 32 33 34

33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: Arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

much more natural to explain it of the accession made to their numbers in consequence of that advancement in piety, &c.

a *Jesus the Messiah* (Ιησους ο Χριστος) *healeth thee.*] It is worth our while to observe the great difference there is between the manner in which this miracle is wrought by Peter, and that in which Christ performed his works of divine power and goodness. The different characters of the servant and the Son, the creature and the God, are every where apparent.—Clarius justly observes here, that no faith on the part of the person to be healed was required; and the like is observable in many other cases, where persons, perhaps ignorant of Christ, were surprised with an unexpected cure. But where persons petitioned themselves for a cure, a declaration of their faith was often required, that none might be encouraged to try experiments out of curiosity, in a manner which would have been very indecent, and have tended to many bad consequences.

b *Make thy bed.*] Beza thinks it is in effect bidding him *take up his bed;* but De Dieu well observes, that στρωσον rather signifies to *smooth it.* As he was now for the present to quit his bed, Dr. Hammond seems to think it refers to a couch on which he was to lie at the table: But perhaps it might mean as if it were said to him, "Whereas you have hitherto for a long time been unable to "help yourself at all, now you shall be so entirely restored as not "only to be able to rise, but to shake up and smooth your own bed "against the next time you have occasion to lie down upon it;" which he might immediately do, as a proof of the degree in which he was strengthened.

SECT. 21. — ACTS IX.

And the miracle appeared so extraordinary to *all the inhabitants of* the learned and celebrated town of *Lydda*,[c] *and* to those of the fruitful vale of *Saron*, part of which lay in the neighbourhood of it, that they no sooner *saw him* and had an opportunity of being informed in the particulars of so unparalleled a fact, but they believed that he in whose name it was done was undoubtedly the Messiah, *and* so *turned to the Lord*, and embraced his gospel.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 *And* the number of converts in these parts was greatly increased by another and yet more astonishing event which happened about the same time. For *there was* then *at Joppa*, a noted sea-port in that neighbourhood,[d] *a certain female disciple, named Tabitha, who, by* the *interpretation* of her name into the Greek language, *is called Dorcas*;[e] [*and*] *she was* universally respected as a person of a very lovely character, for she 37 was *full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did* upon all proper occasions. *And it came to pass in those days*, while Peter was at Lydda, *that she was sick and died. And when they had washed her* corpse, according to the custom of the place, *they laid her in an upper chamber.*

36 Now there was at Joppa, a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38 *And as Lydda was* very *near Joppa*, being but about six miles off, *the disciples* at Joppa *hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating* [*him*] *that he would not* by any means *delay to come to them*,[f] that he might give them his advice and assistance under that great distress which the loss of so dear and useful a friend could not but occasion.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39 *And Peter* presently *arose and went* to Joppa *with them. And when he was come* to Tabitha's house, *they brought him into the upper chamber* where she was laid out; *and all the widows stood by him, weeping* for the loss of such a benefactress, *and showing the coats and mantles which Dorcas made* for charitable purposes *while she was* yet con- 40 tinued *with them. And Peter putting them all out*, as he found in himself a powerful encouragement to hope that the petition he was about to offer was dictated from above, and therefore should certainly be heard, *kneeled down and prayed* with great earnestness; *and* then *turning to the body, he said*, as with a voice of authority in the name and presence of his great Lord, the sovereign of life and death, *Tabitha, arise. And* he had no sooner spoke these words but *she opened her eyes; and seeing Peter, she* immediately *sat up.* 41 *And giving her his hand, he raised her up* on her feet; *and having called the saints and widows*, who were near the chamber, and had impatiently been waiting for the event, *he presented her* to them *alive.*

39 Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and turning *him* to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and lift her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 *And* [*this*] wonderful fact *was* presently *known throughout all* the city of *Joppa; and* 43 *many* more *believed in the Lord* upon the credit of so signal a miracle. *And* as Peter was willing to improve so favourable an opportunity of addressing them while their minds were impressed with so astonishing a miracle, *he continued many days at Joppa, in the house of one Simon a tanner*:[g] from whence he was afterwards sent for to Cæsarea upon an extraordinary occasion, which will be related at large in the next section.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa, with one Simon a tanner.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 32 BLESSED apostle! who was thus enabled to imitate his Divine Master in what he himself has celebrated as the 38 brightest glory of his human character, in *going about doing good;* (Acts x. 38.) and who had always a concern, like him, when he performed the most important offices of kindness to men's bodies, that all might be subservient to the edification and salvation of their souls.

33 Behold, in what has now been read, not only a disease, which a continuance for eight years had rendered in- 40 veterate and hopeless, but death itself yielding to his command, or rather to the infinitely superior power of his Lord, the great conqueror of death for himself, and (adored be his compassionate name) for all his people too. It is most 34 delightful to observe with what solicitous care of pious humility Peter immediately transferred the eye and heart of

c The learned and celebrated town of *Lydda*.] I call it so, because there were several celebrated Jewish schools there, and the great sanhedrim sometimes met near it. (See Lightfoot, *Cent. Chor. Mat. cap.* 16.) It was but one day's journey distant from Jerusalem, and is said by Josephus to have been so large a town as not to have been inferior to a city. (*Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 6. [al. 5.] § 2.) Some have supposed it was the same with Lod, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. (1 Chron. viii. 12; and Neh. xi. 35.) However, as it stood near Joppa, it must have been situate near the borders of the tribe of Ephraim.—Saron, or Sharon, which is here connected with it, was not a town, but a large fertile plain or valley that lay near to Lydda, and extended from Cæsarea to Joppa, in which were many villages, as it was noted for its delightful situation, and the fine pasture it afforded for their flocks. Compare 1 Chron. xxvii. 29; Isa. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2; lxv. 10.

d *Joppa*, a noted sea-port.] This was the nearest maritime town to Jerusalem, and was the only port belonging to it on the Mediterranean Sea, but was more than a day's journey distant from it, though some have said Jerusalem might be seen from thence. (Strabo, *Geogr. lib.* xvi. p. 522.) We find it mentioned in the Old Testament by the name of Japho, as belonging to the tribe of Dan. (Josh. xix. 46.) It was the place to which the materials for building Solomon's temple were brought in floats by sea, and carried from thence by land to Jerusalem. (2 Chron. ii. 16.) Jonah took ship from hence for Tarshish. (Jonah i. 3.) And as it lay between Azotus and Cæsarea, it was probably one of the cities where Philip preached the gospel in his progress. (Acts viii. 40.) There are still some remains of it under the name of Jaffa.

e *Tabitha, who by interpretation is called Dorcas.*] She might, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes, be one of the Hellenist Jews, and be known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name, Tabitha, while the Greeks called her, in their own language, Dorcas. They are both words of the same import, and signify, *a roe* or *fawn*, in which sense the word Δορκας is often used by the Septuagint, Deut. xii. 15, 22; 2 Sam. ii. 18; Cant. ii. 9; iv. 5, &c. And thus the name might probably be given her in her infancy on account of her amiable form, which rendered her peculiarly pleasant in the eyes of her parents.—Others suppose it rather to have signified *a wild goat;* and so the name might be intended to allude to the sprightliness of her temper, or to the quickness of her sight.—For the etymology of the words, see Drusius and Grotius, *in loc.*

f *That he would not delay to come to them.*] We can hardly imagine they urged his coming merely to comfort them under this breach: But if they had any view to what followed, it was an astonishing instance of faith, as it does not appear the apostles had before this raised any one from the dead. Were we to have been judges, perhaps we should have thought it much better that Stephen should have been raised than Dorcas; but we must submit our reasonings on what we think fittest and best, to the infinitely wiser determination of Providence, or we shall be most foolish and miserable creatures.

g *In the house of one Simon a tanner.*] Some render it, *a currier.* His business perhaps is mentioned, that it might appear the apostle was not elevated, by the dignity of the late miracle, above mean persons and things.

Æneas, and of every spectator, from himself to Christ, while he says, *Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee.* He would not leave them any room for a surmise, as if it was by any power of his own that so astonishing a cure was wrought; but leads them to consider it as the act of Christ, and to ascribe the glory of the work to him, whose minister he was, and in whose name he spake. Thus if God favour us as the instruments of healing and animating those souls that were once lying in a hopeless state, not only disabled, but *dead in trespasses and sins*, let us acknowledge that it is *not we, but the grace of God that is with us.* (1 Cor. xv. 10.) SECT. 21. ACTS IX.

Great, no doubt, was the affliction which the disciples sustained when so amiable and useful a person as Dorcas was taken away from them by death; a person whose heart had been so ready to pity the afflicted, and her hand to help them; a person whose prudence and diligence had also been as conspicuous as her charity; for she well knew there were circumstances in which to have given the poor the value of these things in money, would have been a much less certain and suitable benefit than to furnish them with the necessaries and conveniences of life thus manufactured for their immediate use. And surely the garments which she made and distributed, must be the more precious to them in some degree for having passed through so kind a hand. Let us be emulous of such a character in all the expressions of it which suit our circumstances in life, that when we are dead, the memory of our good actions may survive, to the credit of our profession, and to the glory of God. Ver. 37, 38, 39

It was a circumstance which greatly enhanced the value of the intended miracle, that it was to call back from the dead so excellent a person. And with what humility, with what faith was it performed! Again does the servant follow not only the path but the very steps of his Lord, in dismissing all witnesses, that nothing might look like vain-glory, that nothing might interrupt the fervour of that address he was to pour out before God. First he bends his knees in prayer to the Lord of life, and then he directs his voice with a divine efficacy to the dead. So may we, O Lord, learn to address ourselves to those under the power of spiritual death, with that spirit and vigour which we receive by solemn and affectionate intercourse with thee, who hast the life of nature and of grace at thy command! 40

Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas, when thus called back to life again, or of her pious friends, when they saw her alive? For their own sakes, and the sake of the indigent and distressed, there was cause of rejoicing, and much more in the view of such a confirmation given to the gospel, and such a token of Christ's presence with his servants. Yet to herself it was matter of resignation and of submission rather than of exultation, that she was called back to these scenes of vanity, which surely would hardly have been tolerable, had not a veil of oblivion been drawn over those glories which her separate spirit enjoyed. But we please ourselves with a charitable and reasonable hope that the remainder of her days were yet more zealously and vigorously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God, yielding herself to him as in a double sense alive from the dead. Thus would a richer treasure be laid up for her in heaven; and she would afterwards return to a far more exceeding weight of glory than that from which so astonishing a providence had, for a short interval, recalled her. 41

SECTION XXII.

Cornelius, an uncircumcised though pious Gentile, being divinely instructed to do it, sends for Peter, who, taught by a vision not to scruple it, returns with his messengers to Cæsarea. Acts x. 1—23.

ACTS x. 1.

THERE was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*:

ACTS x. 1.

HITHERTO the gospel had been preached to the Jews alone; but God was *now* determined to open a way for the discovery of it to the Gentiles; and, that a proper decorum might be observed in the manner of doing it, he first sent it to one who, though uncircumcised, was nevertheless a worshipper of the true God, whose story we shall here proceed to relate. Let it therefore be observed, that while Peter continued at Joppa, (where the conclusion of the former section left him,) *there was a certain man in* the neighbouring and celebrated city of *Cæsarea, named Cornelius*, who was *a centurion*, or commander of an hundred men, *of that* which is *called the Italian* cohort or *band* of soldiers,[a] which attended the Roman governor, who commonly kept his residence at this city. This Cornelius was *a man of* distinguished *piety, and one that feared* and worshipped the only living and true *God*[b] *with all his house, giving also much alms to the people* of the Jews, though he was himself a Gentile; *and praying to God continually* in secret, domestic, and public devotions, as he esteemed it an important part of his daily business and pleasure to employ himself in such sacred exercises. SECT. 22. ACTS X. 1 2

2 *A* devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Now at a time when he was thus engaged, *he evidently saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day*, (that is, about three in the afternoon, which, being the hour of 3

3 He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel

a *The Italian* cohort or *band* of soldiers.] A Roman cohort was a company of soldiers commanded by a tribune, consisting generally of about a thousand. (See Pitisc. *Lexic. in voce*, COHORS.) Many, with Grotius, have explained this as if the meaning were, that Cornelius was a centurion of one of the cohorts belonging to the Italian; and the editors of the Prussian Testament, with our English follower, have ventured (quite contrary to the original) to translate it so. But I refer the reader to the many learned and judicious things which Mr. Biscoe has said, (*At Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 1. p. 330—335.) to shew that the Italian legion did not exist at this time, and that the version here given is to be retained. I think it exceedingly probable, for the reasons he urges, that this was a cohort different from any of the legionary ones, and consequently that Luke has here expressed himself with his usual accuracy; and that the mistake lies, as it generally does, in those who think they have learning enough to correct him. It is probable this was called the Italian cohort, because most of the soldiers belonging to it were Italians; whereas Josephus mentions Cæsarean cohorts, from whom it might be proper to distinguish this. (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 9. [al. 7.] § 2. *et lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6.] § 7.) It might perhaps be the life-guard of the Roman governor, who generally resided in this splendid and celebrated city.

b *A man of* distinguished *piety, and one that feared God.*] It is a very unwarrantable liberty that is taken in the version of 1727, to translate the latter of these clauses, *a proselyte.* I hope in a proper place to shew that the name of proselyte was never applied by so ancient and correct a writer as Luke, to an uncircumcised person, and that there is no sufficient authority for the distinction, so generally admitted by learned men, between proselytes of righteousness, who by circumcision became debtors to the whole law, and proselytes of the gate, who, worshipping the true God, renouncing idolatry, and submitting themselves to the observation of the seven (supposed) precepts of Noah, were allowed, though uncircumcised, to live among the Jews, and converse familiarly with them. But the question is too complex, and too important, to be handled in these notes. I therefore only desire that I may not be condemned for waving all those interpretations of scripture which depend on this distinction of proselytes, till my reasons for doing it have been examined and answered.

SECT. 22. ACTS X.

evening sacrifice, was chosen by him as a proper season for his devotion,) *an angel of God coming in to him,* in a form and habit of surprising brightness, *and saying to him, Cornelius!* *And having fixed his eyes upon him* with astonishment, *he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord?* Protect me from all danger! and let me know the meaning of this vision![c] *And* presently the angel executed the commission with which *he* was charged, and *said to him, Thy* repeated fervent *prayers, and thine alms* with which they have been attended, *are come up* into the divine presence *as a* grateful *memorial before God,* far more pleasing to him than the most fragrant incense: *And* he is *now* about to give thee a very singular demonstration of his favour, by discovering things to thee which it is of the highest importance that thou shouldst know: *Send* therefore some of thy *men to Joppa, and fetch hither* [*one*] *Simon, whose sirname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon,* by trade *a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side;* and when he is come, as he will be instructed from above in the message he is to bring, *he shall tell thee what thou must do* for the security of thy final happiness.

As soon then as the angel who spake to Cornelius was gone, he was so earnestly desirous to hear what Peter was to say to him, that he immediately obeyed the orders that were given him; and *calling two of his domestics and a pious soldier,* who was one *of them that* always attended his person and *waited upon him, And having related to them all* [*these*] *things* just in the manner they had happened, *he* ordered them to go for Peter, and *sent them* away *to Joppa* that very evening.

And as they set out too late to reach the place that night, *on the next day, while they were on their journey, and drew near the city, Peter went up to the top of the house to pray;*[d] the flat open roof with which the houses in those parts were built, affording a more convenient place of retirement than could at that time be found within doors; and it was now *about* noon, or *the sixth hour* of the day.[e] *And he was very hungry, and would* gladly *have taken a little refreshment:*[f] *but while they were preparing* dinner for the family, *he fell into an ecstasy* or trance,[g] in which a very remarkable and instructive vision presented itself to him. For he had a strong impression made upon his mind, *and* apprehended, while he lay in this state, that *he saw heaven opened, and something* of a large extent *descending to him* from above *like a great sheet* or wrapper,[h] which was *fastened at the four corners, and* so *let down to the earth* by an invisible hand: *In which there were all* [*sorts of*] *things* in great variety, even *four-footed animals of the earth, and wild beasts, and reptiles* or creeping things, *and fowls of the air* of several kinds. *And* while this plenty of provision was before him, *there came a voice* from heaven *to him,* saying, *Rise, Peter,* since thou art hungry, and take thy choice of what thou wilt out of this great variety; *kill* any of these animals which may be most agreeable to thee, *and eat* freely of what is before thee.[i] *But Peter said,* with a kind of pious horror, *By no means, Lord;* I would much rather continue fasting a great while longer than satisfy my hunger on such terms; *for I* see only unclean animals here: and thou knowest, that from a religious regard to the precepts of thy law, I *have never,* from the day of my birth to this hour, *eaten any thing which is common or unclean,* nor took the liberty of tasting what is prohibited in itself, or polluted by any accidental circumstance that has attended it. *And the voice* [*said*] *to him again the second time, Those things which God hath cleansed* by such a declaration of his will in bidding thee to eat of them, *do not thou* any more *call common,* but readily submit thyself to his directions, and leave it in the power of the great Lawgiver to change his precepts as he shall see fit. *And,* that it might impress his mind the more, and he might give the more particular attention to it as to a thing established by God, the vision was

of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius!

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose sirname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually:

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

c *What is it, Lord?*] Dr. Whitby thinks these words are addressed to the angel as if Cornelius had said, "Sir, what would you say "to me?" But it is both more literal and natural to render it as in the paraphrase, and to understand it as a sudden exclamation and prayer to God to preserve him, and let him know what was the design of so astonishing an appearance.

d *Went up to the top of the house to pray.*] It seems a strange fancy of Mr. Reeves, (*Apol.* Vol. II. p. 68.) that this place to which Peter retired was some upper room where the disciples used to assemble, and that he went up to it as a consecrated place, in which his devotions would be more acceptable to God than elsewhere.—— It is not improbable that he might the rather chuse it for the advantage it gave him to look towards the temple at Jerusalem, to which Peter might hitherto have the same regard as the other Jews had, who used to turn their faces towards it when they prayed. (Compare 1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 44; Psal. cxxxviii. 2; Dan. vi. 10; John ii. 4.)

e *About the sixth hour.*] Besides the two stated hours of prayer, at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, (of which we have taken notice before, in note b, on Acts iii. 1. p. 437.) the more devout among the Jews were used to set apart a third, and to retire for prayer at noon. Thus David says, *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray;* (Psal. lv. 17.) and Daniel also *kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed.* (Dan. vi. 10.) Whether Peter was induced by this, or by some other reason, to retire for prayer at this time, it seems at least to have been customary in the first ages of the christian church to offer up their daily prayers at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour. See Clem. Alex. *Strom. lib.* vii. p. 722.

f *Have taken a little refreshment.*] After all that Limborch and several other writers have said, this seems to me the most proper import of the word γευσασθαι and the authorities produced by Raphelius (*Annot. ex Herod.* p. 343, 344.) and Elsner, (Vol. I. p. 407.) to prove that it signifies just the same with making a set meal, confirm me in the contrary opinion.

g *An ecstasy* or trance.] The word εκστασις properly signifies such a rapture of mind as gives the person who falls into it a look of astonishment, and renders him insensible of the external objects round him, while in the mean time his imagination is agitated in an extraordinary manner with some striking scenes which pass before it, and take up all the attention. The reader may see some extraordinary instances of this kind mentioned by Gualtperius, in his large note on this text.

h *Something—like a great sheet* or wrapper.] As we do not in English call *sheets* VESSELS, I thought the general word here used more properly answered to σκευος, which extends to all sorts of household furniture as well as instruments of husbandry, war, &c. and has no word, that I recollect, in our language, exactly answering to it. The other word, οθονη, signifies any large piece of linen in which things are wrapped, and seems to have been an emblem of the gospel as extending to all nations of men.

i *Kill and eat.*] This appears a general intimation that the Jewish christians were by the gospel absolved from the ceremonial law, in which the distinction between clean and unclean meats made so considerable a part.—M. L'Enfant and some other critics have observed, that the Jews looked on unclean animals as an image of the Gentiles; which, if it were the case, renders this emblematical representation peculiarly proper. See Grotius on ver. 15.

not only doubled, but *this was done three times* successively, (compare Gen. xli. 32.) *and* at last *the vessel*, with all that was in it, *was taken up into heaven again.*

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them.* And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

And Providence so ordered it, that at this very juncture, *While Peter was doubting in himself what the vision which he had seen might import*, or what it was designed to point out to him, *behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius*, the pious centurion mentioned above, *having inquired out the house of Simon* the tanner, *stood at the door: And calling* to those that were within, *they asked if* one *Simon, whose sirname was Peter, lodged there:* And being told that he did, they desired immediately to speak with him on an affair which was of the utmost importance. *Now as Peter was reflecting on the vision*, and was attentively revolving it in his own mind, *the Spirit*, by an inward suggestion, *said unto him, Behold, three men are inquiring for thee:* Delay not *therefore*, but *arise and go down* to these men,[k] *and take the journey with them* which they shall propose, *without any scruple* of conversing with them, or the person from whom they come; *for I have sent them:* and when thou comest to compare their message with what thou hast now seen, thou wilt easily know the intent of this vision, and the use thou art to make of it for thine own direction. 17 18 19 20

Then Peter instantly, before any message from the strangers could reach him, *went down* from the house-top *to the men who were sent to him from Cornelius; and* while they still continued at the door, *said* to them, *Behold, I am* [*the man*] *whom ye inquire for: What is the cause for which you are come hither?* 21

And they told their story in a few plain words, and *said, Cornelius the centurion, a righteous man, who feareth God, and hath a character attested by all the Jewish people*, though he be not completely a proselyte to their religion, *has been divinely instructed, by* the ministry of *an holy angel, to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee* upon some important subject, in the purport of which we do not doubt but thou art fully instructed, though it be not particularly known to us: We therefore desire that, in compliance with his request and this divine command, thou wouldst be pleased immediately to go with us to Cæsarea. 22

Having therefore called them in, he entertained [*them*] there that night: *And the next day Peter set out with them; and some of the brethren who were* inhabitants *of Joppa went with him* upon so great an occasion, which could not but excite their diligent attention, and raise an high expectation. 23

IMPROVEMENT.

We are now entering on a series of the story in which we ourselves are intimately concerned: We are going to see the first-fruits of the Gentiles gathered into the church; and let us see it with gratitude and delight. Most amiable and exemplary is the character of Cornelius, who, though exposed to all the temptations of a military life, maintained not only his virtue but his piety too. He feared God, and he wrought righteousness; and daily presented before God prayers and alms, which added a beauty and acceptance to each other: And he was also an example of domestic as well as of personal religion: as if he had been trained up under the discipline of that heroic general and prince who so publicly and so resolutely declared before an assembled nation, even on the supposition of their general apostasy, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* (Josh. xxiv. 15.) Ver. 1, 2

To him God was pleased to send the gospel; and the manner in which he sent it is well worthy of our remark. An angel appeared, not himself to preach it, but to introduce the apostle to whom that work was assigned. With what holy complacency of soul did Cornelius hear by a messenger from heaven, that his prayers and alms were come up for an acceptable memorial before God! They whose prayers and alms are proportionably affectionate and sincere, may consider it as a testimony borne to the gracious manner in which an impartial and immutable God regards and accepts them.—Yet after all that they have done, let them learn, by the conduct of this devout, upright, and charitable man, not so to rest in their own virtues as to neglect inquiring after that way of salvation which God has established by his Son, but always ready to regard it as the one thing needful,—let them maintain an uniformity in their character, by a diligent and candid attention to the declaration of it in the gospel. 3, 5, 6, 4, 7, 8

Peter retires for secret prayer in the middle of the day, as if he had learned of David to say, *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud.* (Psal. lv. 17.) He seeks a convenient retirement, and in that retirement the vision of the Lord meets him; a vision mysterious indeed in its appearances, but gradually opened by Divine Providence, the process of which renders many things plain which at first seemed dark and unaccountable. 9, 10—16, 17—20

This vision declared to him in effect the abolition of the Mosaic ceremonial law, of which the precepts relating to the distinction of meats made so important a part; and we see here with pleasure, that strict as his observation of it had been from his very birth, he was not now disobedient to the heavenly vision, but freely received the uncircumcised, and freely goes to be a guest to one who was so. Thus let us always preserve an openness and impartiality of mind; and, in proportion to the degree in which we appear willing *to know the truth*, we shall find that *the truth will make us free.* (John viii. 32.) 13, 15, 14, 21, 23

Nevertheless, as it was an affair about which some difficulties might arise, (and some censures may, even in the way of duty, be incurred,) he takes some of the brethren with him, that their advice and concurrence in what he did might be a farther justification of his conduct, to those who were not perhaps sufficiently aware of the divine direction under which he was. How agreeable a mixture of prudence and humility! Let it teach us on all proper occasions to express at once a becoming deference to our brethren, and a prudent caution in our own best-intended actions, that even our good may not be evil spoken of, when it lies in our power to prevent it. (Rom. xiv. 16.) 23

k *Therefore arise and go down.*] The learned Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 408.) and Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Herod.* p. 345, 346.) have observed, that αλλα should here be rendered *therefore*, and have produced several instances from approved authors in which it has that signification.

SECTION XXIII.

Peter coming to Cæsarea, preaches the gospel to Cornelius and his friends; and, upon their believing it, and receiving the Holy Spirit by a miraculous effusion, he, without farther scruple, admits them into the church by baptism, though they were uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts x. 24, *to the end.*

Acts x. 24.

SECT. 23. IT was observed in the preceding section, that Peter and some of the brethren set out from Joppa, upon the invitation of Cornelius: *And* we now add, that the *next day they entered into Cæsarea; and* good *Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relations and* most *intimate friends* upon this great and important occasion.

ACTS X.

25 *And as Peter was entering* into his house, *Cornelius met him; and,* to express his reverence to one so remarkably the messenger of heaven, *falling down at his feet, paid* 26 *homage to him.*[a] *But Peter* would by no means permit this; and therefore *raised him up, saying, Arise,* for *I also myself am* nothing more than *a man* as thou art, and pretend to no right to such profound respects as these, but am ready in civil life to pay thee all the regard that is due to thee.

27 This happened just at the entrance of the house; *and* thus *discoursing with him, he went in, and found many* of the friends and acquaintance of Cornelius *gathered together;* 28 so that Peter, at the first sight of them, expressed some surprise. *And he said to them, You* cannot but *know that it is* looked upon among us as *unlawful for a man that is a Jew to join* in friendly conversation *with* a Gentile, *or to come into the house of one of another nation,* who is not at least naturalized by circumcision and a full conformity to our law, which I am well aware that you are not: *Nevertheless God hath* lately *shown me* 29 *that I am* to make no such distinction, and *to call no man common or unclean. Wherefore, when I was sent for* hither by your messengers, *I came* away *without* any contradiction or *debate: I* would *ask therefore,* and desire to know from your own mouth, *on what account you have sent for me.*[b]

30 *And Cornelius,* with all frankness and seriousness, *said,* It is now *four days ago* that *I was fasting till this hour, and* at the usual time of evening prayer, *at the ninth hour, I prayed in my house; and behold,* to my unspeakable surprise, *a man* appeared and *stood* 31 *before me in bright raiment,* whom I perceived to be an angel. *And* as this put me in some fear, he *said,* in a most gentle and engaging manner, *Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are* graciously *remembered before God,* who is about to give thee a most 32 important token of his favourable regard to thee: *Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose sirname is Peter; he lodgeth in the house of* [*one*] *Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he is come, shall speak to thee* of various things now unknown to thee, but on thine acquaintance with which, new scenes of duty and happiness shall be 33 opened upon thee. *Immediately therefore,* that very evening, *I sent unto thee* the messengers whom I now see returned with thee; *and thou hast done* very *well,* and acted like a pious and charitable person *in coming. Now therefore, we are all here present before God,* disposed *to hear,* with a becoming reverence and attention, *all* those *things which God hath given thee in charge.*

34 *Then Peter opening his mouth,* and addressing himself to them with a seriousness and solemnity answerable to so great an occasion, *said, Of a truth, I perceive,* and am now fully satisfied, whatever my former prejudices were as to the difference between the Jews and Gentiles, *that God,* the great Father of the whole human race, *is no Respecter of persons,* and accepts no man merely because he is of such a nation, nor so determines his regards as to confine his favours to the seed of Abraham and the people of the Jews alone: 35 *But* that *in every nation, he that* with a true filial reverence and obedience *feareth him, and* in consequence of this *worketh righteousness,*[c] whatever be the family from which he 36 is descended, though he be none of the posterity of Abraham, *is acceptable to him.* And this I apprehend now to be the meaning of *that message which he sent to the children of Israel,*[d] *proclaiming the glad tidings of* mutual *peace by Jesus Christ,* the great Ambas-

Acts x. 24.

AND the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him.*

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 Therefore came I *unto you,* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house; and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose sirname is Peter: he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no Respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all:)

a *And falling down at his feet, paid homage to him.*] He could not, as some have fancied, imagine Peter to be an angel, considering how the angel had spoken of him. But his reverence for him as a divine messenger, together with the custom which prevailed in the East of expressing the highest respect by prostration, might induce him to fall down at his feet, and offer an homage which Peter wisely and religiously declined.

b *On what account you have sent for me.*] Peter knew it by revelation, and by the messengers who were sent from Cornelius: but he puts him on telling the story, that the company might be informed, and Cornelius himself awakened and impressed by the narration; the repetition of which, even as we here read it, gives a dignity and spirit to Peter's succeeding discourse, beyond what we could otherwise so sensibly perceive.

c *He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness.*] This, for any thing I can see, might be supposed the case of many who were far from being in any degree Jewish proselytes, and had never heard of the Jews and their religion; as it was certainly the case of many before the peculiarities of Judaism existed, and even before the institution of the Abrahamic covenant. I think this text proves that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it. But far from intimating that some such persons may be found among those that reject christianity when offered to them in its full evidence, it determines nothing concerning the existence of such in every nation, though it tells us how God would regard them, supposing them to exist.

d *That message which he sent, &c.*] I was long of opinion, with Erasmus, that the whole of this verse was to be referred to the first words of the next: as if Peter had said, *You know the word which he sent, &c.*—even *the word which was published, &c.* But, upon farther consideration, I have changed my view of it, and preferred that interpretation which Irenæus and Chrysostom anciently proposed, and in which Beza, Grotius, De Dieu, L'Enfant, and most of the moderns, have followed them. And I have acquiesced in it, not only in regard to the great judgment of some of these writers, and their exquisite skill in the Greek idiom, but also because I see not how Peter could reasonably take it for granted that Cornelius and his friends were acquainted with the message of peace and pardon sent to Israel by Jesus Christ, that is, with the

SECT. 23. ACTS X

sador of peace; *who*, after all his abasement, being exalted to his kingdom, *is* become *Lord of all*, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, and under that character will manifest the riches of his mercy unto all that call upon him. (Compare Rom. iii. 29; x. 12.) And since this is the case, far be it from me to maintain any farther reserve with regard to those whom God hath been pleased through him to receive. I shall therefore set myself with pleasure to communicate to you the method of salvation by him.

37 That word (*Isay*) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached:

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly,

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

You cannot but in general *know* something, though it may be only in a confused and imperfect way, of *the report there was* but a few years ago *through all Judea, which began* first and took its rise *from Galilee*, just in your neighbourhood, *after the baptism which John preached*, who went before that extraordinary person to prepare his way: I mean the report [*concerning*] *Jesus of Nazareth*,[e] *how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with* a *power* of performing the most extraordinary miracles in attestation of his divine mission; *who went about*, and passed through the whole country, *doing good* wherever he came, *and* particularly *healing all* those *who were oppressed by* the tyranny of *the devil*, dispossessing those malignant spirits of darkness with a most apparent and irresistible superiority to them; *for God* himself *was with him*, and wrought by him to produce those astonishing effects. *And we* his apostles, of whom I have the honour to be one, *are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the* whole *region of the Jews, and* particularly *in Jerusalem*, their capital city; for we attended him in all the progress which he made, beholding his miracles and hearing his discourses: *Whom* nevertheless this ungrateful people were so far from receiving with a becoming regard, that *they slew* him in a most infamous manner, even *hanging him upon a tree* and crucifying him, as if he had been the vilest of malefactors and slaves. Yet *this very person*, though so injuriously treated by men, *hath* the ever-blessed *God raised up* from the dead *on the third day*, according to repeated predictions; *and*, as a demonstration of the truth of it, *hath given him to become manifest* after his resurrection, and evidently to appear, *Not* indeed *to all the* Jewish *people*,[f] nor to return to those public assemblies of them which he had often visited, *but to* certain *witnesses* who were *before appointed by God* for this purpose; *even to us, who* conversed very intimately with him before his death, and were so far favoured that we *have eaten and drank* together *with him* several times *after he rose from the dead*; so that we can, and do, with the greatest certainty, bear witness to the truth of this important fact. *And he hath given in charge to us to proclaim* the glad tidings of salvation, by him *to the people, and to testify* wherever we come *that it is he*, this very Jesus of Nazareth, *who is* the person *appointed by God* [*to be*] *the* glorious and majestic *Judge* in the great day of future account, both *of the living and the dead*,[g] who shall all be convened before his throne, and receive their final sentence from his lips. And if this were a proper audience wherein to insist upon this subject, I might copiously show, (as in due time I may do,) that *to him all the* Jewish *prophets bear witness*,[h] and that from what they foretold concerning him, it appears *that every one who believeth on him shall receive the forgiveness of* their *sins by his name*, though their crimes be attended with aggravations ever so heinous, for which there was no pardon to be had by means of any other dispensation.

37 38 39 40 41 42 43

While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Spirit, without the imposition of the apostle's hands, *fell* on Cornelius, and *upon all* his friends *that were hearing the word*,[i]

44

gospel, which if they had known, there would have been no necessity of his own embassy to them. It must be allowed indeed, that Christ did not expressly preach this doctrine, and declare the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles into his church; but he had dropped several hints concerning the extent of his kingdom, which Peter, on such a striking occasion as this, might recollect as referring to this great event. (Compare Matt. viii. 11, 12; John x. 16; xii. 32; Mark xvi. 15, 16; and Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) In this view there was a peculiar propriety in mentioning Jesus as Lord of all: But nothing can be more unnatural than Heinsius's gloss and version,—— *The* LOGOS, *who preached peace, &c. is Lord of all.* The LOGOS is never said to do any thing by Jesus Christ.

e *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.*] He was not ashamed to own that the person he preached as the Messiah came out of a place so infamous among the Jews as Nazareth, since all the reproaches of that kind were so abundantly rolled away by the glorious circumstances which he afterwards relates.——The difficulty here in the construction of the original, seems to be the best removed by supplying the word κατα, *concerning*, and so referring it (as Sir Norton Knatchbull and others have done) to the report which they had heard. The sense, however, will be the same, if αυτον be considered as redundant, (in the same manner as we find the like expression used, Matt. xii. 36.) and the clause rendered, as it is in our translation, *How God anointed Jesus, &c.*——It is more natural to admit either of these explications, than to repeat the words [*You know*] from the preceding verse, (as some would do,) and to suppose that Peter said to persons who were strangers to the gospel, You know Jesus of Nazareth.

f *Not to all the people.*] This is not a place for vindicating the wisdom and righteousness of that dispensation of providence which ordered that Christ should not appear publicly after his resurrection. Many valuable writers have done it at large: See Mr. Ditton, *On the Resur.* part iii. § 60—70; Bishop Burnet's *Four Disc.* p. 52—56; Dr. Sykes, *Of Christianity*, chap. x. p. 164. *et seq.*; Mr. Fleming's *Christol.* Vol. III. p. 191—198; Bishop Blackwall, *At Boyle's Lect.* Serm. iv. p. 25, 26; *Sermons de* M. Superville, *tom.* iv. p. 9—12; Bishop Atterbury's *Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 182—190; and *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay ii. p. 77, 78.——I shall only observe, in one word, that as God was by no means obliged to give that perverse people the Jews the highest and most striking degree of evidence that could be imagined, (supposing this would have been such,) so it is certain that the evidence which he gave of this fact, by the miraculous gifts conferred on the chosen witnesses of it, was of a nature capable of being conveyed to the world in general, in a much more convincing manner than Christ's appearance in the temple for several succeeding days could have been.

g *Appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*] This was declaring, in the strongest terms, how entirely their happiness depended upon an humble subjection of soul to him who was to be their final Judge.

h *To him all the prophets bear witness.*] Compare note f. on Luke xxiv. 25. p. 410.——It is observable that, in this discourse to an audience of Gentiles, the apostle Peter first mentions Christ's persons, miracles, and resurrection, and contents himself with telling them in the general, that there were many prophets in former ages who bore witness to him, without entering into a particular enumeration of their predictions. And Limborch recommends this as the best way of beginning the controversy with the Jews themselves, as being liable to least cavil.——It would, however, have been easy to have proved the truth of what the apostle here asserts, from several testimonies of the prophets, had it been proper for that audience,) as will appear by comparing Isa. liii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 34; Dan. ix. 24; Mic. vii. 19; Zech. xiii. 1; Mal. iv. 2.—We may farther observe, that we do not read of Peter's working any miracle on this great occasion, as the preceding testimony of the angel, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in his miraculous gifts while he was speaking to them, were sufficient proofs both of the truth of the gospel, and of Peter's being an authorized interpreter of it.

i *The Holy Spirit fell upon all, &c.*] Thus were they conse-

SECT. 23. in such a visible appearance of cloven tongues as that in which he fell upon the apostles and other disciples at the day of Pentecost. (Compare chap. xi. 15.)

ACTS X.

And all *they of the circumcision who believed, as many as came with Peter* upon this occasion, *were* exceedingly *astonished*[k] to see *that the* miraculous and important *gift of the Holy Spirit*, which they supposed peculiar to the Jewish nation, *was poured out*
45 *upon the Gentiles also;* who, as they imagined, could not have been admitted into the church without receiving circumcision, and so subjecting themselves to the observation of
46 the whole Mosaic law. But now they found it was incontestably evident that even those who were not circumcised might be partakers with them of the highest privileges; *for they heard them* all *speaking in* [*diverse*] *languages* which they had never learned, *and glorifying God* for the rich display of his grace by the gospel, in such exalted sentiments and language as abundantly proved their minds as well as their tongues to be immediately under a divine operation.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 *Then Peter*, yielding to the force of evidence, however contrary to his former prejudices, with great propriety *answered, can any one* reasonably *forbid* that *water* should be brought, or offer to insist upon the common prejudice which has prevailed among us, *that these persons should not be baptized* in the name of our Lord Jesus, and solemnly received into his church,[l] *who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?* It is surely his seal set upon them; and it would be an arrogant affront to him to refuse them admission to the fullest communion with us.

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 *And* as none of the brethren that came with him pretended to object any thing against it, *he* immediately *ordered them to be baptized in the name of the Lord* Jesus; chusing to make use of the ministry of his brethren in performing that rite, rather than to do it with his own hands, that by this means the expression of their consent might be the more explicit. *And* being thus received into the church, *they* had so high a value for the conversation of this divine messenger, and for the joyful tidings which he brought them, and were so earnestly desirous to be farther instructed in that faith into the general profession of which they were baptized, that they *entreated him to continue with them several days*, and omitted nothing in their power to make his abode agreeable as well as useful.

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 24 27 THERE is no room to wonder that a man of Cornelius's benevolent character should be solicitous to bring his kindred and friends into the way of that divine instruction which he hoped himself to receive from the revelation now opening upon him. What nobler or more rational office can friendship perform? and how deficient is every thing that would assume such a name, which doth not extend itself to a care for men's highest and everlasting interests!

25, 26 It must, no doubt, be some prejudice in favour of Peter on the minds of these strangers, to see that he declined that profound homage which good Cornelius, in a rapture of humble devotion, was perhaps something too ready to pay him. The ministers of Christ never appear more truly great than when they arrogate least to themselves, and, without challenging undue respect, with all simplicity of soul, as fellow-creatures and as fellow-sinners, are ready to impart the gospel of Jesus in such a manner as to show that they honour him above all, and have learned of him to honour all men.

33 That humble subjection of soul to the divine authority which Cornelius, in the name of the assembly, expressed, is such as we should always bring along with us to the house of the Lord. And happy is that minister who, when he enters the sanctuary, finds his people all present before God, to hear the things which God shall give him in charge to speak to them, and heartily disposed to acquiesce in whatever he shall say, so far as it shall be supported by those sacred oracles by which doctrines and men are now to be tried.

34, 35 Well might Peter apprehend so natural a truth as that which he here professeth, that God is no Respecter of persons, but every where accepteth those that fear him, and express that reverence by working righteousness. Let us rejoice in this thought; and while we take care to show that this is our own character, let us pay an impartial regard to it wherever we see it in others, still cultivating that *wisdom from above* which is *without partiality* as well as *without hypocrisy*. (James iii. 17.)

36 We also know that important word which God sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, the Lord of all.

43 May we know it to saving purposes, and, believing in him, receive the remission of our sins in his name! May we

38 show ourselves the genuine disciples of this Divine Master, by learning of him, according to our ability, to go about doing good, sowing, as universally as may be, the seeds of virtue and happiness wherever we come! And then,

39, 40 should the treatment which we meet with be such as our Lord found, should we be despised and reproached, should we be persecuted and at length slain, he who raised up Christ from the dead will in due time also raise up us;

42 having *suffered*, we shall *reign with him*, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) and share that triumph in which he shall appear as the appointed Judge both of the quick and dead.

41 Let us not esteem it any objection against his divine mission, that God did not humour the wantonness of men so far as to cause him to appear in person to all the people after his resurrection; it is abundantly enough that he

crated to God as the first-fruits of the Gentiles; and thus did God direct that they should be baptized, giving this glorious evidence of his receiving them into the christian church as well as the Jews.——It is observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that one important effect of this descent of the Holy Spirit upon them probably was, that hereby they were enabled to understand the Hebrew language, and so had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the prophecies of the Old Testament in the original.

k *They of the circumcision——were astonished.*] The Jews had long ago a proverb among them, "That the Holy Spirit never "rests upon an heathen." This astonishment shows that notion prevailed even in these christians, whether the proverb was so old or not.

l *Can any one forbid water*, &c.] Erasmus supposes a trajection or transposition of the words here: as if it had been said "Who can forbid that these should be baptized with water?" But it seems most natural to understand it, (as Dr. Whitby does,) "Who can forbid that water should be brought?" In which view of the clause, one would naturally conclude they were baptized by pouring water upon them, rather than by plunging them in it.

appeared to such a number of chosen witnesses, who were thus enabled to evidence the truth of their testimony by the *demonstration of the Spirit and of power.* (1 Cor. ii. 4.) Of this, what passed with regard to these converts, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they spake with tongues, is an instance worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. Let us rejoice in this anointing of the first-fruits of the Gentiles, by which their adoption into the family of God was so illustriously declared; and let us be ready, after the example of Peter, whatever preconceived prejudices it may oppose, to receive all whom the Lord hath received, from whatever state his grace hath called them, and cordially to own them as brethren whom our heavenly Father himself doth not disdain to number among his children.

SECT. 23. ACTS X. 44—48

SECTION XXIV.

Peter being questioned about his interview with Cornelius, gives a particular and faithful narration of it, for the satisfaction of his brethren, who were under strong Jewish prejudices. Acts xi. 1—18.

ACTS xi. 1.

AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa, praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me.

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to

ACTS xi. 1.

THUS Cornelius and his friends were initiated into the christian religion, as was related above; and Peter abode with them awhile at Cæsarea, to confirm them in the faith they had embraced. *But* in the mean time *the apostles and* other *brethren who were in Judea, heard* in the general *that the* uncircumcised *Gentiles also had received the word of God,* and had been baptized; which very much alarmed them, as they were not informed in all the particular circumstances attending that affair.

SECT. 24. ACTS XI.

And when Peter was come up from Cæsarea *to Jerusalem, they* of the Jewish converts *who were* still fond *of the circumcision* which they had received, and of the other ceremonial injunctions to which they had submitted, warmly expostulated and *contended with him* about what he had done:[a] *Saying,* There is a strange account come to us lately, and we cannot but hear it with great surprise and displeasure, that *thou didst go in* as a guest *to* the house of *men who were uncircumcised, and didst eat* and drink as freely *with them* as if they had been God's peculiar people as well as ourselves; a thing, as thou well knowest, quite unexampled among us. 2 3

And upon this *Peter, beginning* from the vision he had seen, which was evidently designed to dispose him to such condescension, *opened to them* [*the matter*] *in order,*[b] and gave them a full detail of all the particulars with the exactest truth and simplicity: *saying, I was,* just before this extraordinary event happened, which I confess may well surprise you, *praying,* in a proper place of retirement in the house of Simon the tanner *in the city of Joppa: and in a trance I saw a* remarkable *vision,* even *something like a great sheet descending from heaven,* which was *let down by the four corners; and* it was so directed that *it came close to me. And* as I was *looking attentively upon it, I observed and saw* a great variety of *four-footed creatures of the earth, and wild beasts, and reptiles, and fowls of the air:* but I took notice of this circumstance, that they were all of sorts prohibited by our law.[c] *And I heard a voice* from heaven *saying to me, Arise, Peter, kill* any of these animals that are here before thee, *and eat* freely of whatever thou pleasest. *But I said, By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean,* nothing prohibited in itself or polluted by any accident, *hath ever entered into my mouth,* and by thy grace nothing of that kind ever shall. *And the voice answered me the second time from heaven, Those things which God hath cleansed* by bidding thee to eat of them, *do not thou* any more *call common. And this was done three times* exactly with the same circumstances, that it might make the greater impression upon my mind: *and* at length *all the things* which I had seen *were drawn up again into heaven.* 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

And behold, at that instant, as soon as the vision was over, while I was thinking what might be the meaning of it, *three men were come to* the door of *the house in which I was,* who were *sent from Cæsarea to me* by Cornelius the centurion. *And* immediately *the Spirit commanded me to go with them without any scruple* or debate: accordingly I went, *and these six brethren also,* who are here present, and are witnesses of all that happened afterwards, *went along with me; and we* arrived at Cæsarea, and *entered into the man's house. And* when I had enquired what was the reason of his sending for me, *he* presently *told us how he had seen an angel standing* by him *in his house, and saying to him, Send men to Joppa, and fetch hither Simon whose sir-* 11 12 13

a *Contended with him.*] How good an argument soever this may be, as Bishop Burnet and many others urge it, against the supremacy of Peter, it is none against the inspiration of the apostles; for it only proves, that some who did not well understand the principles on which they went, took upon them, without reason, to arraign their conduct, and consequently did not in this respect pay a becoming deference to them. It plainly shews how little regard was had to any uncircumcised persons, whatever profession they might make of worshipping the God of Israel, and is therefore very inconsistent with what has generally been supposed, and so much insisted upon, of the great difference which the Jews made between those who are commonly called proselytes of the gate and the idolatrous Gentiles. Had it been usual to distinguish them so much in their regards, Peter would not have needed to vindicate his conduct by urging the vision, since he knew, from the first mention of Cornelius to him, (chap. x. 12.) that he was φοβουμενος τον Θεον, *one that feared God,* that is, as these critics would explain it, *a proselyte of the gate.*

b *Peter opened to them* [*the matter*] *in order.*] As it is probable that they were only some of the Jewish converts who questioned Peter about what he had done, he might no doubt have overborne them, by urging his apostolical authority, and referring them to the miracles by which it was established: But he chose to treat them in a more gentle and condescending manner, giving therein a most amiable example of humility and condescension, which it will be the glory and happiness of gospel-ministers to follow in circumstances which bear any resemblance to this.

c Were all of sorts prohibited by our law.] There is no sufficient reason to suppose, as most have done, that all manner of living creatures, clean and unclean, were presented to Peter in his vision; for though it be expressed in very general terms, especially in the first account of it, (chap. x. 12.) yet it is manifest there would have been no room for Peter's scrupling to eat, had he seen any creatures there but what he apprehended to be prohibited by the law. And the translation I have given of that verse which perfectly agrees with the original, will not oblige us to suppose that any animals were there but such as were esteemed unclean.

SECT. 24. *name is Peter: Who shall* instruct thee in the way of life, and *speak words to thee by which thou and all thy family shall be saved,* if they are attended to with a proper regard.

Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter:

14 Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

ACTS XI. *And as I began to speak,* before I had made any considerable progress in my discourse, *the Holy Spirit fell upon them* in the visible form of cloven tongues of fire, *even* 15 *as* it did *upon us at the beginning* of our public ministry, after the ascension of our 16 blessed Lord. (Chap. ii. 3, 4.) *And* this was so extraordinary an occurrence, that *I* immediately *remembered,* and could not but seriously reflect upon, *the word of the Lord* Jesus as then remarkably verified, *how he said* but just before his ascension, (chap. i. 5.) *John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit:* for this pouring forth of the Spirit upon them appeared to be a kind of baptism, whereby that 17 prediction was wonderfully accomplished. *Since therefore God* himself, the sovereign Dispenser of his own favours, *gave to them the* very *same gift as* [*he did*] *to us who had* before *believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I should be able to prohibit God,* or should presume to oppose myself against his wise and gracious pleasure? It rather appeared to me, as I persuade myself it must to you, my brethren, matter of congratulation and praise, than of cavil or complaint.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?

18 *And when they heard these things, they acquiesced* in them with pleasure, *and glorified God* for so wonderful a manifestation of his rich grace, *saying, God hath then given to the* poor *Gentiles also repentance unto life,*[d] and has not only made them the overtures of it, but has graciously wrought it in some of their hearts; and we shall rejoice to see it prevailing more and more.

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 WITH what joy ought every one who loved God or man to have heard that the Gentiles had received the word of the gospel! yet we find those of the circumcision disputing with Peter upon the occasion. Their prejudices as Jews were so strong, that they thought the passage to the church must still lie through the synagogue, and so remembered that they were disciples of Moses, as almost to forget they were the disciples of Christ. Let us always guard against that narrowness of mind which would limit even the Holy One of Israel to the bounds which we shall mark out, and exclude others from his favour, that our own honour may appear so much the more signal.

4 *et seq.* But let us with pleasure observe the mildness and prudence of Peter: warm as his temper naturally was, and high as he was raised by the divine favour; though he had been so remarkably turning the key of the kingdom of heaven itself, and opening it by immediate divine direction to the uncircumcised, that they might enter, yet he stands not upon the general honours of his apostolic character, nor insists upon that implicit submission to him which some, with no such credentials, have been ready to arrogate to themselves. But he condescends to the younger brethren, and gives them a plain, distinct, and faithful narration of the whole matter, just as it was. Thus let us learn, in the spirit of gentleness, humility, and love, to vindicate our actions where they have been uncandidly mistaken. And when we have the pleasure to know that they are right, let us enjoy that happy reflection to such a degree as not to suffer ourselves to be disquieted and put out of temper by the rash charges and censures of those who will judge our conduct before they have examined into it; and are disposed, more to their own detriment than it can possibly be to ours, to err on the severe extreme.

Peter, we see, very circumstantially recollected what he had seen and heard. Let it also be our care to treasure up in our memory, and to inscribe on our hearts, whatever God shall be pleased, though in more ordinary methods of instruction, to discover to us; and never let us be disobedient to any intimation of the divine will,

17 but, on the contrary, always most cheerfully acquiesce in it. Who are we, that in any respect we should resist God? and particularly, who are we, that we should in effect do it by laying down rules relating to christian communion, which should exclude any whom he has admitted? Oh that all the churches, whether national or separate, might be led seriously to consider how arrogant an usurpation that is on the authority of the Supreme Lord of the church! Oh that the sin of this resistance to God may not be laid to the charge of those who, perhaps in the main with a good intention, in an over-fondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it!

18 Like these brethren of the circumcision, let us be willing to yield to the force of evidence, even when it leads us into an unexpected path; and let us glorify God when he is pleased to manifest himself to those who seemed to us to have the least room to hope for such a favour. Whether it be to us or to others that God hath granted repentance unto life, may we rejoice in it, and adore his goodness therein! For it is certain that none of the delights of life, which men so fondly pursue, are half so valuable as that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.*

[d] *God hath then given to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.*] In this they acquiesced for the present, till the controversy was renewed by some fiercer zealots, chap. xv. 1, 5. But I beg leave to observe here, that it would have been very improper for them thus to have spoken of the Gentiles in general, if they had only meant such as had already forsaken idolatry, and were worshippers of the true God. They plainly speak of those to whom this repentance was granted, as persons who before, according to their apprehension, were in a state of death,—in which condition it is probable they had thought all uncircumcised persons to be; and without doubt they must mean to include the idolatrous Gentiles among the rest, as those who were most evidently and certainly so.——To render this clause, "God has granted salvation to the Gentiles on the terms of their repentance," is, I think, determining and limiting the sense in an unwarrantable manner.

SECTION XXV.

The gospel is preached at Antioch: Barnabas coming thither, confirms the disciples, who are there called Christians. Agabus visits them, and foretells the famine, which occasions their sending alms to Jerusalem. Acts xi. 19, *to the end.*

ACTS xi. 19.

NOW they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.—

— And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people; and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

ACTS xi. 19.

IT is *now* proper to mention some other circumstances relating to the church elsewhere. SECT. 25.
We observe *therefore*, that during the transactions which have been before related, *they who were dispersed* from Jerusalem *by the distress* and persecution *which arose about Stephen*, after they had gone through Judea and Samaria, (chap. viii. 1.) *travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word* of the gospel *to none but the Jews only;* not being at all apprehensive that the Gentiles were to share in the blessings of it. *But some of them* who bore a part in this work, *were men* that were natives of the island *of Cyprus, and* of the province of *Cyrene* in Africa, *who* having heard the story of Peter's receiving Cornelius, though a Gentile, into the communion of the church, took occasion thence to imitate his example, and *having entered into Antioch*,[a] *spake* freely *to the Greeks*[b] as well as to the Jews; *preaching* the gospel of *the Lord Jesus* to them, and inviting them to accept of his invaluable privileges. *And the hand of the Lord was* remarkably *with them* in this pious labour, *and a great number* of the Gentiles were so effectually convinced and wrought upon by their discourses and miracles, that they *believed and turned unto the Lord* Jesus, consecrating themselves to the service of God through him, with the most humble dependence on his blood and grace. ACTS XI. 19 20 21

And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church that was at Jerusalem, who, as they had lately seen a way was opened for the conversion of the Gentiles, received the tidings of this further progress of the gospel with peculiar pleasure; *and*, desirous to confirm them in the faith into which they had been initiated, *they sent forth Barnabas to go as far as Antioch: Who, when he was come* thither, *and beheld the grace of God* manifested towards them in bringing them to the knowledge of himself in a Redeemer, greatly *rejoiced* in the good work that was begun among them, *and exhorted them all to adhere to the Lord with full determination* and resolution *of heart*, whatever circumstances of difficulty and extremity might arise. And the exhortation, as it came from his mouth, was peculiarly graceful and effectual, *for he was a good man* himself,[c] *and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith;* and speaking from the deep experience of his own heart, and with that full authority which so exemplary a life gave him, as well as with such extraordinary divine assistance, he was the happy means, not only of confirming the faith of those who had already embraced the gospel, but of bringing others to an acquaintance with it: *And* thus *a considerable number* believed and *were added unto the Lord*, and were by baptism received into the church. 22 23 24

Then Barnabas perceiving, after some abode there, that he wanted an assistant in his labours, *went to Tarsus to seek Saul*,[d] whose departure thither we mentioned above in the last particulars which we related concerning him. (Compare Acts ix. 30.) *And finding him* there, he gave him such an account of the state of things, and such a view of the probability of extensive usefulness which seemed to present itself there, that *he* succeeded in his proposal, and *brought him to Antioch*,[e] at his return to that populous and celebrated city. 25 26

And it came to pass that they continued there, and *assembled* at proper times *in the church for a whole year, and taught considerable numbers* of people: *And the disciples were by divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch*:[f] a title that was really

a *Having entered into Antioch.*] This is an account very different from that which ecclesiastical history gives us, which affirms that Peter was the first who preached the gospel at Antioch, which I mentioned to show how little these traditions are to be depended upon as to the first settlement of christian churches in the world, of which I think we know little certain but from the New Testament. It seems more probable that Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, who are mentioned, chap. xiii. 1. might be the first preachers here.——Antioch was then the capital of Syria, and, next to Rome and Alexandria, was the most considerable city of the empire.

b *Spake to the Greeks.*] Instead of Ελληνας, the Alexandrian manuscript, which is favoured by the Syriac and some other ancient versions, reads Ελληνιστας, which common sense would require us to adopt, even if it were not supported by the authority of any manuscript at all; for as the Hellenists were Jews, there would, on the received reading, be no opposition between the conduct of these preachers and those mentioned in the preceding verse. Here undoubtedly we have the first account of preaching the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles; for it is certain there is nothing in the word Ελληνας to limit it to such as were *worshippers of the true God:* nor can I find the least hint in the New Testament of the two different periods that some have supposed, in the first of which it was preached only to those called proselytes of the gate, and in the second to those who were before idolaters; yet the hypothesis seems in itself so improbable, that it stands in need of the strongest proof before it can be admitted, as I may elsewhere show at large. It is well known, that as the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called all the Gentiles by that general name. Compare Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11. See also 2 Mac. iv. 10, 15, 36; vi. 9, xi. 24.

c *A good man.*] The author of *Miscell. Sacra*, thinks the expression signifies that he was a man of a sweet and gentle disposition, not disposed to lay any unnecessary burthens on these new converts, and so the more fit to be employed at Antioch in these circumstances. *Abstract*, p. 18.

d *Went to Tarsus, to seek Saul.*] I have never been able to discover on what foundation the ingenious writer mentioned in the last note asserts, that this was the second time of Saul's being at Tarsus after his conversion, and that he had in the mean time (that is, since his first journey thither, Acts ix. 30.) made the tour of Syria, and preached the gospel there.

e *Finding him, he brought him to Antioch.*] This he might do, as very rightly judging, that since he was by his country a Greek, though by descent an Hebrew of the Hebrews, (that is, descended from two Jewish parents,) he would be peculiarly fit to assist him in his great work, especially considering, on the one hand, his fine accomplishments as a scholar, and on the other, his extraordinary conversion, and eminent piety and zeal.

f *By divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch.*] They were before this called by the Jews Nazarenes, or Galileans, and by each other, disciples, believers, brethren, or saints. But they now assumed the name of their great Leader, as the Platonists, Pythagoreans, Epicureans, &c. with much less reason had done the name of theirs. I think, with Dr. Benson, that the use of the word χρηματισαι implies that it *was done by a divine direction*, and have translated it accordingly: (compare Matt. ii. 12, 22; Luke ii. 26; Acts x. 22; Heb. viii. 5; xi. 7; xii. 25.) and therefore am not solicitous to inquire whether the name were given them, as ecclesiastical history tells us, by Euodius, (who is mentioned by it as their first bishop,) or by Barnabas or Saul, as Bishop Pearson seems to

SECT. 25. an honour to them, and was very well adapted to signify their relation to Christ as their common Lord, and their expectations from him as their Saviour.

ACTS XI. *And in these days*, while Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch, certain *prophets* who were divinely inspired to foretell future events, *came from Jerusalem to Antioch.* *And one of them whose name was Agabus, stood up* in one of their assemblies, *and signified by the* 28 immediate direction of the *Spirit, that there should shortly be a great famine over all the land*;[g] *which* accordingly *came to pass* quickly after *in the days of Claudius Cæsar,* 29 the Roman emperor then reigning. *And*, in consideration of the distress which it might bring along with it, *the disciples* at Antioch *determined that, according to the respective abilities of each,*[h] *they should send* a liberal contribution *to the assistance of the* believing *brethren who dwelt* in such great numbers *in Judea*,[i] and had many poor among 30 them, who would particularly need to be supported in a time of such calamity. *And this* accordingly *they did, sending* [*it*] *to the elders*,[k] to be delivered to the deacons, or to be otherwise distributed as they should think fit; being satisfied that they would make a prudent use of what they sent them upon this occasion *by the hand of Barnabas and Saul*, who took the money they had collected to Jerusalem, and, as the famine lasted for some time, were afterwards employed in prosecuting this generous and necessary work by new collections elsewhere.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea;

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19 LET us with pleasure observe how, in the instance here recorded, the blood of a martyr was the seed of the church; an event afterwards so common, that it became a proverb. Thus they who were scattered abroad on the death of 20 Stephen, every where dispersed the gospel; and let us be thankful that some of them brought it to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Freely did it run, and illustriously was it glorified: But with whatever evidence and advantage they preached it, with whatever spirit and zeal, (in some measure the natural consequence of having been called to 21 suffer so dearly for it,) the success of all is to be traced up to the hand of the Lord that was with him. This engaged men to believe and turn unto the Lord; to stop in their career of sin, to pause upon their conduct, to accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and to consecrate themselves to God through him. Oh that this hand might be with all his ministers! Oh that such success might every where be produced by its powerful operations!

23 Well might Barnabas rejoice when he saw such a scene, and more distant brethren be pleased when they heard of it; for what is the triumph of the gospel but the triumph of human happiness? And who that has cordially received the gospel, does not feel his whole heart most tenderly interested in that? He wisely and properly exhorted them, having once embraced this divine and glorious dispensation, with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord; and there was great need of such an exhortation, as well as a very solid foundation for it. Such difficulties will arise in our christian course, though we should not meet with persecutions like theirs, that we shall need a most steady resolution of mind in order to our adherence to the Lord; but let us arm ourselves with it, and *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, since he is invariably *faithful who hath promised.* (Heb. x. 23.) Such exhortations as these will be most effectual when they come, as in this instance they evidently did, from a 24 good man, whose example will add authority to his words, and so be a means not only to quicken religion in the hearts of those who have already embraced it, but to propagate it to those who are yet strangers to it.

26 With pleasure let us reflect upon this honourable name which the disciples of Jesus first wore at Antioch; they were called Christians, as it seems, by divine appointment: And would to God that no other, no dividing name, had ever prevailed among them! As for such distinguishing titles, though they were taken from Apollos, or Cephas, or Paul, let us endeavour to exclude them out of the church as fast as we can; and while they continue in it, let us

think. (See Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 103.) The learned and candid Witsius thinks it a circumstance of remarkable wisdom that this celebrated name should arise from Antioch, a church consisting of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, rather than from Jerusalem, dignified in so many other respects; and that it was a kind of victory gained over Satan, who from Antioch had some ages before raised so many cruel persecutors of the church of God. Wits. *De Vit. Paul. cap.* iii. § 5.

g *A great famine over all the land.*] As it is certain οικουμενη may have such a limited signification, (see note a, on Luke ii. 1.) I follow this translation as what appears to me safest, and refer my reader to those reasons for doing it, which he may find at large in Dr. Lardner's *Credibility.* (Book I. chap. 11. § 2. Vol. I. p. 539. *et seq.*) The learned Archbishop Usher has endeavoured to prove the famine in the fourth year of Claudius [A. D. 44.] universal. But Mr. Biscoe rather thinks there may be a reference here to what happened in a course of some years, and observes (as Mr. Basnage had done before) that there were famines in various places during the reign of Claudius, not only in Judea, which began the latter end of his fourth, and was continued in his fifth, sixth, and seventh years, (of which Josephus takes notice, *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 2. § 6; *et cap.* 5. [al. 3.] § 3.) but also at Rome in his second; (as mentioned by Dio. *lib.* lx. p. 671.) and that Syria in his fourth, (Oros. *lib.* vii. *cap.* 6.) Greece in his ninth, (Euseb. *Chron.* p. 204.) and Italy in his tenth and eleventh, (Tacit. *Annal. lib.* xii. *cap.* 43; and Sueton. *Claud. cap.* 18.) were visited with the like calamity: He therefore supposes all these to be included in this prophecy. (*Serm. at Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 3. p. 60—66.) But the persons with regard to whom it is here mentioned, were so much more concerned in the first of these, which seems also to have been the most extreme, that I am still of opinion the prediction chiefly refers to that, which was the dearth in which Helena, Queen of Adiabene, so generously relieved the Jews with corn and other provisions from Egypt and Cyprus, which, by the way, proves that the famine was not universal at that time. See Wits. *Meletem. de Vit. Paul. cap.* iii. § 6.

h *According to the respective abilities of each.*] I think this all that is intended by καθως ηυπορειτο τις, though the words might more literally be rendered, *according to the abundance which each had;* for it is hardly to be imagined that every christian at Antioch was in abundant or plentiful circumstances; nor do I think any thing can be inferred concerning the extent of the famine from this circumstance, as it plainly appears not to have been begun when the collection was resolved upon.

i *They should send to the assistance, &c.*] Vitringa has shown at large, that it was common for the Jews who lived in foreign parts to send relief, in times of distress, to their poor brethren at Jerusalem. (Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet. lib.* iii. Part I. *cap.* 13. p. 809—811.) This tender care in these Gentile converts at Antioch would tend powerfully to conciliate the affections of their circumcised brethren, and was some acknowledgment, though not an equivalent, for the voluntary poverty many of the saints in Judea had incurred by the sale of their estates, as well as for the peculiar persecutions which they underwent from their unbelieving countrymen.

k *Sending it to the elders.*] I am much surprised that a person of Dr. Whitby's judgment should think the persons here spoken of were the elders of the Jewish synagogues, considering that these were the men who would of all others have been most ready to injure and defraud the christians. It seems much more rational, with the late Lord Barrington, to conclude from hence that there were now no apostles at Jerusalem, and that the elders having been competently instructed in christianity, were left to take care of the church there, while the apostles took a tour into the neighbouring parts, more fully to instruct and confirm the new converts. (*Miscell. Sacr.* Essay ii. p. 110. *et seq.*) This is the first mention that we have of elders in the christian church; and Dr. Hammond has a large and very remarkable note here, in which he labours to prove that these elders were the same officers with those called επισκοποι, or *bishops*, and thinks there is no certain evidence from Scripture, that the name of elders or presbyters was given so early to another order between them and deacons: but this is not a place to enter accurately into enquiries of this nature.

take great care that they do not make us forget our most ancient and most glorious title. Let us take heed that we do not so remember our difference from each other in smaller matters, as to forget our mutual agreement in embracing the gospel of Christ, and in professing to submit ourselves to him as our common Prince and Saviour. SECT. 25.

The notice of the famine brought to them by Agabus the prophet, awakened the generosity of the christians at Antioch to supply the pressing necessities of the saints in Judea. The possibility, at least, that it might have affected themselves, would have led some to conclude it the part of prudence to keep what they had to themselves: But they argued much more wisely, chusing thus *to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come*, and to secure a title to that peculiar care of Divine Providence which is promised and engaged to those who mind not every one his own things, but each the welfare of others and of all. (Phil. ii. 4.) ACTS XI. 27—30

SECTION XXVI.

Herod having slain James, seizes Peter, and commits him to prison, who is delivered by an angel, in answer to the prayers of the church. Acts xii. 1—19.

ACTS xii. 1.

NOW about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

ACTS xii. 1.

NOW about that time, when Saul and Barnabas were preparing to set out for Jerusalem, to carry thither what had been collected by the christians at Antioch for the relief of the saints in Judea, *Herod* Agrippa,[a] *the king*, abusing the authority with which he was invested by the Roman emperor, *laid hands* in a very injurious manner *on some of the church, to* persecute and *afflict them.* *And* he carried this injustice so far, that *he* even *slew James* the son of Zebedee, *the brother of John*, one of those three apostles whom Jesus honoured with such peculiar intimacy; beheading him *with the sword*,[b] as an enemy to the state, as well as an opposer of the law of Moses. SECT. 26. ACTS XII. 2

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

And as he found that no immediate vengeance overtook him on this account, and likewise *saw that* [*this*] *was acceptable to the Jews*,[c] whose favour he laboured by all possible means to conciliate, *he went on* farther, and presumed *to seize Peter also*, renowned as he was for such a variety of miracles, which were wrought by him at Jerusalem in the name of Jesus: *And it was in the days of unleavened bread*, during the feast of the passover, that Peter was apprehended. *And having seized him* at this public time, when so many Jews were come together from all parts, *he put him in prison, delivering him to the custody of four quaternions of soldiers*, that is, to sixteen, consisting of four in each party, who were to relieve each other by turns, watching him constantly by day and night: This Herod ordered for the greater security of so noted a person, *intending* immediately *after the passover to bring him out to the people*, to be made a spectacle to them in what he should suffer; as Jesus his Master had been on the first day of unleavened bread. 3 4

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

In the mean time, therefore, till the day of execution came, *Peter was* thus *kept in the prison.* *But* as the importance of so useful a life was well known to his christian friends, *earnest and continued prayer was*, with great intenseness and assiduity of mind, *made to God on his account, by the* whole *church* at Jerusalem. *And* the event quickly showed that this their earnest supplication was not in vain; for *when Herod was ready to have brought him out* to execution, [*even*] *that very night* before he had designed to do it, *Peter was* quietly *sleeping between two soldiers* in full calmness and serenity of mind, though *bound with two chains*,[d] which joined each of his hands to one of the soldiers that lay on either side of him, in such a manner that it was (humanly speaking) impossible he should have risen without immediately awaking them: *And the* other two *guards* then on duty stood sentry *before the door*, and *were keeping the prison*, that there might be no attempt of any kind made to rescue him; because he was looked upon as a prisoner of great consequence. 5 6

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

And behold, an astonishing deliverance was wrought out for him in all this extremity of danger; for *an angel of the Lord presented himself* on a sudden, *and a* glorious *light shone in the* whole *house*, dark and gloomy as it was: *And* this heavenly messenger was no sooner come, but *giving Peter a* gentle *blow on the side, he awoke him, saying, Arise* 7

7 And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying,

a *Herod* Agrippa.] So the Syriac expressely renders it; and there is no reason to doubt, especially considering the similarity of circumstances mentioned below, that this Herod was the prince whom Josephus calls Agrippa, which probably was his Roman, as Herod was his Syrian, name. He was not (as Grotius by a slip of memory says) the son, but the grandson, of Herod the Great, by his son Aristobulus; (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 5. [al. 7.] § 4.) nephew to Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; brother to Herodias, whom that incestuous and adulterous tetrarch married; and father to that better Agrippa before whom Paul made his defence. (Acts xxv. 13. *et seq.*) Caius Caligula, with whom he had an early friendship, when he became emperor, released this Agrippa from the confinement under which Tiberius had (on that very account) kept him, and crowned him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, to which he afterwards added the territories of Antipas, whom he banished to Lyons in Gaul. (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 10, 11. *et cap.* 7. [al. 9.] § 2.) In this authority Claudius confirmed him, and made him king of Judea, adding to his former dominions those of Lysanias. (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 5. [al. 4.] § 1.) Mr. Fleming thinks it was high treason against the Messiah for him to assume the title of King of Judea; and that this arrogancy, joined with his cruelty, rendered him more worthy of that terrible death described below. Flem. *Christol.* Vol. III. p. 358.

b *Slew James——with the sword.*] Thus was our Lord's prediction relating to him fulfilled. (Matt. xx. 23.) I know not how far we are to depend upon the tradition which we find cited by Eusebius, (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9.) from a book of Clemens Alexandrinus, now lost, in which he reported, "that the person who had "accused James, observing the courage with which he bore his "testimony to christianity, was converted, and suffered martyr-"dom with him." But I think it is very beautifully observed by Clerius, (who had a great deal of the true spirit of criticism,) that this early execution of one of the apostles after our Lord's death, would illustrate the courage of the rest in going on with their ministry, as it would evidently show, that even all their miraculous powers did not secure them from dying by the sword of their enemies.

c *Saw that this was acceptable to the Jews.*] Josephus tells us, "that this prince was a great zealot for the Mosaic law; that he "dwelt much at Jerusalem, and was fond of all opportunities of "obliging the Jews, as his grandfather Herod had been of pleasing "strangers;" a character well suiting what Luke here says of him. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* vii. § 3.

d *Bound with two chains.*] It is well known that this way of securing prisoners of importance, by chaining each of their hands to a guard, was practised among the Romans; and the reader may find authorities to this purpose produced by Grotius, in his note on Acts xxviii. 16. and by Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. chap. 10. § 9. Vol. I. p. 521, 522.

SECT. 26. ACTS XII.

quickly. *And* at the same moment of time both *his chains fell off from* [*his*] *hands*: Yet the soldiers were, by a miraculous power, kept so fast asleep, that they were not at all alarmed by the noise of their fall. *And the angel said to him, Gird thyself* presently in the clothes thou hast on, tie thine inward garment about thee, *and bind on thy sandals*, that thou mayest walk out; *and* accordingly *he did so*. *And he says to him* farther,
9 *Throw thy mantle round thee, and follow me* out. *And* Peter *going out* of the prison as *he* was guided by the angel, met with no opposition in his way, and *followed him* as he was ordered: *And* he was so astonished, that *he did not know that what was done by the angel was true* and real, *but* only *supposed that he had seen a vision*, as in some other
10 instances he had done. *And passing through the first and second watch*, where the guards were all asleep, *they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which*, though it was a heavy gate, and very strongly fastened, yet was no hinderance in their way, but *opened to them* as *of its own accord*. *And* thus *going out* into the city, *they went* together *through one street; and immediately the angel*, having done all that was requisite for his deliverance, and set him at full liberty, *departed from him* on a sudden, and left him alone to go where he pleased.

11 *And Peter, being come to himself*, and recovered from the first astonishment of such an extraordinary event, *said, Now I know truly that the Lord* Jesus Christ, in whose cause I was going to suffer, *hath* (as he formerly did, chap. v. 19.) *sent his angel*, one of the many heavenly spirits under his command, *and hath delivered me from the hand of Herod*, who intended my death, *and from all the expectation of the Jewish people*; who, after the many beneficial miracles I have wrought among them, were thirsting for my blood, and waited impatiently to see my execution.

12 Such was the grateful sense that Peter had of his deliverance; *and recollecting* where he was,[e] *he* presently concluded whither to go, and *came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was sirnamed Mark, where many* christians *were gathered together*, and were spending the night in *praying* earnestly for his deliverance: And God answered them while they were yet speaking; for he had now discharged the prisoner for whom they were so much concerned, and brought him to the very house in which they were assembled.

13 *And as Peter* stood and *knocked at the door of the outer gate*[f] which entered into the house; that they might guard against the danger of admitting any person whom they did not know, *a maiden whose name was Rose, went* to the door, *to* listen and *enquire who*
14 *was there*.[g] *And* he had no sooner answered, but *knowing Peter's voice*, she was so *transported with joy* and surprise, that *she did not open the gate; but running* to the company that were assembled in the house, *she told* [*them*] *that Peter was* actually *stand-*
15 *ing at the gate*. *And they said to her*, Surely *thou art distracted*, to imagine so incredible and so impossible a thing. *But she* persisted in it, that she was sure she heard his voice; and *confidently affirmed that it was* undoubtedly *so*. *Then*, as they knew not how to account for it, *they said*, in their confusion of thought, *It is* then probably *his angel*, who has assumed his form to bring us some tidings of him; or perhaps he is executed in prison, (as John the Baptist was,) in the night, and his separate spirit has appeared as a token of its being employed, as angels are, in ministering to the church on earth.[h]

16 *But Peter* in the mean time *continued knocking*, upon which they went out several of them together; *and when they had opened* [*the door,*] *they saw him, and* rejoiced to find
17 that he was there, but *were* exceedingly *astonished* at the sight of him. *And* as he found, upon his coming in among them, that his presence threw them into a confused transport, which grew so loud that he could not easily be heard, *he beckoned to them with* [*his*] *hand to be silent, and related to them how the Lord had conducted him out of prison* by the ministry of an angel: *And* having told them the particulars of what had passed, *he said*, Let care be taken to *inform James*,[i] *and the* other *brethren, of these things*, that they may magnify God for this great deliverance, and consider it as an engagement to serve him with great resolution and zeal. *And* presently *departing* from thence, *he went*

Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord: And they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

e *Recollecting* where he was.] This is so natural an interpretation of *συνιδων*, that there seems no need of Dr. Hammond's conjectural emendation, who would read it *σπευδων*, *making haste*, as he also would, chap. xiv. 6.

f *At the door of the outer gate.*] Though De Dieu, chiefly on the authority of Kimchi, in his distinction between שער and פתח, interprets this of a kind of *wicket* in a pair of *great gates*, I apprehend (according to the accurate and useful description which Dr. Shaw has given of the houses in the East) that the word *πυλων* here properly signifies, what we generally call *the gateway* of a large house, by which, if there be an area surrounded with buildings, you pass into it. And it is probable that this was no small house, as many were assembled there.

g *To inquire who was there.*] That this is the most exact signification of the original word *υπακουσαι*, is abundantly demonstrated by Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 159.) and Elsner. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 411.)—I render this maiden's name Rhoda by the English name Rose, as, whenever I meet with Greek names in use among us, I think it most natural to give the English termination; and shall only add, that Grotius has well observed the Jews frequently gave to their female children the name of agreeable flowers or plants: Thus Susannah signifies a lily, Hedessa, a myrtle, Tamar, a palm-tree, &c.

h *It is his angel*, &c.] Though I have followed the more common rendering here, I pretend not certainly to say that Sir Thomas Browne is mistaken (in his *Religio Medici*, p. 19.) when he says (as Clarius, Cameron, and Hammond also do) that the word *αγγελος* here signifies *messenger*, as to be sure it often does. (Compare Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 24, 27; ix. 52; and Jam. ii. 25.) They might perhaps think he had sent somebody, who telling her he came from Peter, she by mistake apprehended it to be him. But I think it much more probable that, as she averred that she knew his voice, they then judged it to be something supernatural. It is by no means certain they imagined this to be his guardian angel; for Philo speaks of it as a received notion among the Jews, that the souls of good men deceased officiated as ministering spirits. See Phil. *De Sacrif. Cain. et Abelis*, p. 131; and *De Gigantibus*, p. 286; and Dr. Waterland's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 90, 91. But whatever their notion was, one way or other, no argument can be drawn from it as to the truth of either of these suppositions.

i *Inform James.*] As James the brother of John was dead, (ver. 2.) the person here referred to must be James the Less, the brother or kinsman of our Lord, and author of the General Epistle which bears his name. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance: Peter therefore particularly directs the message to him, for his encouragement, and to engage the concurrence of his thanksgivings to God on account of this extraordinary deliverance.

to another place,[k] and continued some time in retirement, that he might avoid the search which his persecutors would of course make for him when they should find that he was gone. SECT. 26.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.—

And accordingly, *as soon as it was day, there was no small tumult among the soldiers* on his account, and no search was spared that they might know *what was become of Peter*.[l] For the guards awaking out of their sound sleep, could none of them give any account of what had passed, and were ready to suspect and accuse each other of negligence or treachery in giving the prisoner an opportunity to make his escape. *And* indeed very fatally for them he had escaped; for *Herod searching for him and not finding him, examined the keepers* as strictly as possible; *and* as he could make nothing out by his inquiry but that he was gone while they slept, and thought it by no means prudent to give any intimation that he suspected a miraculous interposition of Providence in favour of a man whom he had devoted to destruction, he *ordered them to be* immediately *led away to execution*[m] for their negligence; and so the affair ended, and shortly after his life too, as we shall find in the following section. ACTS XII. 18 19

IMPROVEMENT.

We have now before us the death of another martyr, and that martyr an apostle, and that apostle no less a person than James the brother of John, who was also one of the chosen favourites and companions of our blessed Lord; and not the less dear because so early dismissed from mortal life and labour, and dismissed by a violent and bloody death. He was slain with the sword; but that blow, which was hardly, if at all, to be felt, in one short moment transported him to his long-loved Lord, and introduced him to that endeared converse with Jesus in his heavenly presence, of which all the most intimate hours spent with him upon earth, not excepting that of the transfiguration itself, (to which he was an eye-witness,) were but an imperfect shadow. Ver. 1, 2

But how strange was it that this should please the Jews! To see the slaughter of one of the most excellent persons that ever adorned their nation, one of the greatest benefactors, his Lord only excepted, that ever had appeared in all the list of the prophetic and inspired race! Yet thus it was that they proceeded to *fill up the measure of their fathers*; (Matt. xxiii. 32.) and such was still the hardness of their hearts, that after having rejected the message, they soon came to hate the messengers, and to thirst for their blood. The surest token of wrath coming upon them to the uttermost! as indeed it was but a few years more and such an execution was done upon them as seemed to be the accumulated vengeance due for all the righteous blood which had been shed from Abel to James. 3

Peter was also imprisoned, and was bound with chains; and no doubt the prayers and tears with which the church was contending for his delivery, would appear exceedingly despicable to his enemies, if known by them; but they found to their confusion that his *Redeemer was strong*. (Jer. l. 34.) The Lord Jesus sent an angel to him, who found him secure in his innocence, and happy in his hope, sleeping between those two guards who perhaps in a few hours were to have been his executioners, and sleeping so sweetly sound, that the brightness of the angel's presence did not immediately awake him. The angel smites him, and his chains fall off; the iron gates are opened, and the prisoner is set at full liberty. So does the angel of death smite, as it were but with a gentle blow, the servants of Christ, and the fetters of mortality fall off; the doors of the dungeon are opened, and they are led into the new Jerusalem, where they find another kind of society, another kind of rest, another kind of joy, than Peter knew even in the first transports of his deliverance. 5, 6 7—10

The prayers of the night were added to those of the day. Pious men and women, the aged and the young, were assembled on this important occasion: And while they were praying, God *answered; while they were yet speaking, he heard*. (Isa. lxv. 24.) Behold, Peter is himself sent among them, to bring them the astonishing news of that real deliverance which at first appeared to him but as a vision of the night. What delight must such a mercy give them! especially when considered as an answer of prayer! What an encouragement must it be to them all to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and in every future exigence *by prayer and supplication to make their requests known unto God!* (Phil. iv. 6.) Peter was solicitous it might be known to the surviving James and the other apostles, that they might glorify God in him, and might take encouragement from it to go on boldly in the prosecution of their work. With such views should we own the goodness of God in any deliverance he grants us, that others may learn to confide in him, and may join their praises with ours. 12—16 9 17

Herod, in his disappointment, turns his rage on the soldiers, and makes those unhappy men the victims of his wrath. Unhappy indeed, if they had not learnt from Peter, whilst they had him in their power, that lesson which his charity would be so glad to teach them, in what he apprehended to be the last moments of his life, to believe in Jesus for life and salvation. But whatever they suffered, a much severer vengeance was reserved for Herod, on whom God quickly began to visit that innocent and pious blood which he had spilt, and that too after which he had thirsted; for in his sight he must have appeared the murderer of Peter as well as of James. 18, 19

k *Went to another place.*] It was convenient he should withdraw from Jerusalem; but it is utterly incredible that he now went to Rome, and made that abode of twenty-five years there which the Popish writers pretend. The absurdity of which pretence has been abundantly demonstrated by many Protestant writers, and by none more pertinently, in a few words, than by Beza on this place.

l *What was become of Peter.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 412.) and Raphelius (*Ex Xen.* p. 160.) have so abundantly proved, that τι αρα ο Πετρος εγενετο, may with great propriety be thus rendered, that I see no reason to imagine, as Erasmus here hints, that it may refer to some notion that Peter had been transformed, perhaps by magic art, into some form or shape different from his own.

m *Ordered them to be led away to execution.*] It is well known that the word απαχθηναι has this signification. See Beza and Heinsius, *in loc.*——He probably punished them with such severity, lest an apprehension of a miraculous deliverance should have prevailed, and so christianity have gained, as it probably did, additional strength. What had so notoriously happened to all the twelve apostles on a circumstance much resembling this, (chap. v. 19. *et seq.*) would no doubt add great weight to such a representation; and it seems that this seasonable interposition of Providence, joined with the death of Herod soon after, put a speedy end to this persecution.

SECTION XXVII.

Herod, on his reconciliation to the people of Tyre and Sidon, makes a public oration, for which he is extravagantly applauded, but for his pride on that applause, is miraculously destroyed. Acts xii. 19—24.

Acts xii. 19.

SECT. 27.

ACTS XII.

WE have just given an account of the miraculous manner in which Peter was delivered from the cruel attempt of Herod, and of the transport of rage in which that tyrannical prince ordered the guards to be put to death, though in reality they had been no way accessary to his escape. *And* now after this disappointment, Herod departed from Jerusalem, and *passing from Judea to* the city of *Cæsarea,*[a] *he abode* [*there,*] till, in the 19 midst of all his pride and glory, the judgment of God overtook him, and Providence avenged the death of James, and the designed murder of Peter, in a most awful manner on this persecuting prince.

20 *And* very observable were the circumstances of his miserable end; as introductory to which it must be observed, that *Herod was highly incensed against the Tyrians and Sidonians* on account of some supposed affront which he had received from them, which provoked him so far, that, having vowed a severe revenge, he was preparing with all speed to make war upon them: *But* as they were a trading people, and were apprehensive of the consequences of the king's displeasure, *they unanimously came* to a resolution to send proper representatives to Cæsarea to appear *before him; and* having found out means of *gaining Blastus, the king's chamberlain, to* espouse *their interest,* and being introduced by him, *they begged for* an accommodation of the difference, and earnestly entreated he would grant them terms of *peace,* which they found it absolutely necessary to sue for, *because their country was nourished* and maintained *by that of the king;* they having little corn of their own growth, and not being able to subsist without a constant supply of provisions from Judea and Galilee. (Compare 1 Kings v. 11; and Ezek. xxvii. 17.)

21 *And* to make the transaction as solemn as possible, *upon a set day* which he thought proper for that purpose, when a grand assembly was held, *Herod* came forth with great magnificence and splendour, *arrayed in a royal habit,*[b] *and being seated* in a public theatre *upon the throne, made an oration to them* with a great deal of state and affectation of eloquence, expressing at large his clemency and condescension in admitting them 22 to favour, when he could so easily have subdued them by force. *And the people,* who flocked in multitudes to this grand spectacle, were so charmed with his appearance and address, that they all *cried out,* as in a rapture, as soon as he had done speaking, Surely [*it is*] *the voice of a god* that we hear, *and not* that *of a* mortal *man:* And the unhappy prince, instead of expressing a just indignation at such base and impious flattery, hearkened to it with a secret complacency.

23 *But immediately* all this haughty parade was disgraced and exposed; for *an angel of the Lord,* by an awful though invisible operation on his vitals, *smote him* with a sore and grievous disease,[c] *because he gave not God the glory* in rejecting these blasphemous applauses. On which he was presently forced to quit the place in extreme torture, *and being* miserably *eaten* and tormented (as his grandfather, Herod the Great, had been) *with* a vast number of small *worms,*[d] which bred in his bowels, and rendered him a most nauseous and horrible spectacle to all about him, *he expired* in equal agony and infamy: sunk as much below the common state of human nature as his flatterers had endeavoured to raise him above it.

24 *And* upon this *the word of God grew* more and more successful, *and* in every place where the seed of the gospel was sown, the number of believers *was* considerably *mul-*

Acts xii. 19.

AND he went down from Judea to Cæsarea, and *there* abode.

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country.*

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost;

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

a *Passing from Judea to Cæsarea.*] This is the same Cæsarea which was formerly called Straton's Tower, and had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. (See note o, on Acts viii. 40. p. 120.) Josephus (who gives us an account of the death of Herod Agrippa, which greatly illustrates this of St. Luke) says, that he went to Cæsarea, in the third year of his reign over the whole country, to celebrate games there in honour of Claudius Cæsar, to whom he had been so much obliged. (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 8. [al. 7.] § 2.) It seems that the oration, afterwards mentioned, was made in a full theatre there.

b *Arrayed in a royal habit.*] Josephus expressly says that his fine robe was richly wrought with silver, which, reflecting the rays of the rising sun with an unusual and almost insupportable splendour, gave his flatterers an occasion of complimenting him with the title of a deity.—Mr. Fleming imagines they therein referred to the glory with which the Shekinah used to appear, and that Herod, being impious enough to assume the honour of it, provoked the divine Majesty beyond any further sufferance, so that he sent a disease upon him, which rendered him equally contemptible and miserable. (Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 300.) Elsner has given several instances of the madness of heathen princes who arrogated divinity to themselves, and some of them came to infamous ends. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 413, 414.) But, to be sure, Herod's knowledge of the true God, and of his jealousy with respect to divine honours, rendered his guilt incomparably more aggravated than theirs.

c *An angel of the Lord smote him.*] Josephus tells us, (in the place cited above,) "That as he did not rebuke this impious flat-" tery, he was immediately seized with exquisite and racking tor-" tures in his bowels, so that he was compelled, before he left the " place, to own his folly in admitting such acclamations, and up-" braided those about him with the wretched condition in which " they then saw their god; and being carried out of the assembly " to his palace, he expired in violent agonies the fifth day after he " was taken, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of " his reign;" (reckoning from the time of his first advancement by Caligula, to the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip;) being the fourth year of the emperor Claudius, A. D. 44.——Some have supposed, when it is said an angel smote him, that this is only a Jewish phrase, to signify he was suddenly seized with this disorder: But I think it expresses the real though invisible agency of a celestial spirit on this occasion. Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xix. 35.

d *Being eaten with worms.*] Beza and Elsner think σκωληκόβρωτος signifies in the general *consumed with vermin,* and may express the disease called *morbus pedicularis,* of which, as the latter of these critics has shewn, (Vol. I. p. 417, 418.) several persecuting and cruel princes have died. (Compare 2 Mac. ix. 9; and Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib.* viii. *cap.* 16.) I think, with Dr. Lardner, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. i. § 6. Vol. I. p. 39, 40.) that Josephus, out of a partial fondness for Herod Agrippa, whom he had so much extolled, has concealed this particular, which was the true cause of those excruciating pains in the bowels of which this Herod, and his grandfather Herod the Great, died. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 5.

tiplied,[e] and their faith greatly established: and after all the opposition of its enemies, who had endeavoured to extirpate it, the progress of christianity was apparently promoted by the concurrence of these extraordinary events, in the deliverance of Peter and the death of Herod, that cruel persecutor, under such evident tokens of divine vengeance. SECT. 27. ACTS XII.

IMPROVEMENT.

The wrath of a king is as the messengers of death; but a wise man (says Solomon) *will pacify it:* (Prov. xvi. 14.) The world generally teaches this wisdom to its votaries, and the ties of interest are felt when those of affection have but little force. Tyre and Sidon were nourished by the king's country, and therefore they sought peace with him: But how much more necessary is it for all countries, and people, and princes, to seek peace with the God of heaven, by whom the earth and all its inhabitants are nourished, who *giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons*, and can by his sovereign word *turn the heavens into brass, and the earth into iron.* (Deut. xxviii. 23.) Ver. 20

How vain and impious was the applause of this servile multitude, when they were so ready to compliment a mortal man in shining apparel, and on a royal throne, with the title of divinity! and how wretched the infatuation of his mind, when he could receive that ascription without horror, yea, even with complacency! Thus do pomp and power, wealth and grandeur, take away the heart of their possessors; but never is a mortal nearer to destruction than when he forgets that he is a mortal. 21, 22

With pleasure, no doubt, did this angel of the Lord come down to execute upon this proud and persecuting prince the vengeance due to the honours of God which he had invaded, and the blood of the saints which he had spilt. Let us adore the triumph of the injured Majesty of heaven: He was smitten with death, with a death equally tormenting and ignominious: vermin devoured this god; nor could all his robes, his guards, or his physicians, preserve his living body from being as easy a prey to them as the carcase of the meanest slave. 23

Thus is the Almighty Sovereign of the universe *known by the judgment which he executeth* upon the haughty kings of the earth. (Psal. ix. 16.) Well might the gospel flourish on occasion of such an event, when this royal corpse was (as it were) given for manure to the roots of that vine which he, in contempt of the King of kings by whom it was planted, had impiously endeavoured to root up. 24

SECTION XXVIII.

Saul and Barnabas, being returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, are sent out from thence to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and, coming to Cyprus, smite Elymas with blindness, and convert Sergius Paulus the Roman governor there. Acts xii. 25. xiii. 1—12.

ACTS xii. 25.

AND Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose sirname was Mark.

Acts xiii. 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

ACTS xii. 25.

WE have formerly taken notice of the message on which the disciples at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, to carry their alms to the brethren there, who were threatened with an approaching famine, which Agabus had foretold: (chap. xi. 29, 30. p. 488.) *And* we shall now observe, that *Barnabas and Saul having fulfilled* [*their*] *ministry*, and faithfully performed the charge committed to them, *returned* back to Antioch *from Jerusalem*,[a] *bringing along with them John, whose sirname was Mark.*[b] SECT. 28. ACTS XII. 25

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers of great note,[c] *particularly Barnabas*, the generous Levite whom we just now mentioned, who had given up the whole of his estate to charitable uses; *and Simeon, who was* also *called Niger*, or the Black, from his swarthy complexion; *and Lucius, the Cyrenian*, a native of Africa; *and Manaen*, a person of considerable rank, *who was educated with Herod the tetrarch* in his father's court,[d] yet thought it no disgrace to appear as a chris- ACTS XIII. 1

e *The word of God grew and was multiplied.*] The expressions here used (ηυξανε και επληθυνετο) relate properly to *vegetables*, and may be intended to signify that the growth of the gospel, that is, its prevalency in the minds and lives of some, was (as it were) the means of sowing that divine seed in the hearts of many more.

a *Having fulfilled their ministry, returned from Jerusalem.*] Mr. Fleming thinks, with several other good critics, that they returned after the death of James, and in the interval between the commitment and deliverance of Peter; and that it was to avoid breaking the thread of the story, that their return was not mentioned sooner. (See Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 230.) But Dr. Lardner argues, from its being inserted here, that the commission was not executed till after the death of Herod, and dates the beginning of the famine accordingly. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. xi. §. 2. Vol. I. p. 541.) Lord Barrington thinks it was during Paul's abode at Jerusalem on this occasion, that he had the vision in the temple mentioned, Acts xxii. 17—21. and that then the Lord Jesus gave him that commission to the Gentiles expressed, Acts xxvi. 17, 18; which words he supposes to have been spoken at this time, and that this extraordinary fact is referred to, Acts xiii. 2. when the Spirit speaks as having already called him and Barnabas to the work to which they were then to be separated; which must suppose that Barnabas had also some correspondent vision, or was mentioned in that of Paul. (See *Miscell. Sacr.* Essay ii. p. 26, 27.) But I shall give my reasons, when I come to the text in question, why I understand them in a different sense and connexion.

b *John, whose sirname was Mark.*] It appears from what Grotius has urged, *Proleg. ad Marc. Evang.* that this was a different person from Mark the Evangelist, who was for several years the intimate companion of the apostle Peter, and seems to have been converted by him, as he calls him his son, (1 Pet. v. 13.) a title which the apostles used to give to those who were the fruit of their ministry. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15; Gal. iv. 19; and Philem. ver. 10. We learn from Scripture, that this person was the son of Mary, at whose house the disciples met to pray for Peter when he was imprisoned, Acts xii. 12; and he is spoken of as sister's son to Barnabas, Col. iv. 10; who appears to have had a great affection for him, not only by his taking him with them to Antioch, and from thence to Pamphylia, Acts xii. 5. *et seq.* where it should seem he was discouraged by the difficulties of the work from going any farther, and returned to Jerusalem, ver. 13. but by his insisting afterwards, when they were setting out upon another progress, that Mark should go with them to visit the churches, which Paul was so averse to, that they parted; and Paul chose Silas to attend him, while Barnabas took Mark, and sailed for Cyprus. (Acts xv. 37—40.) We have no farther account of him in the Acts; but he appears so far to have retrieved his character, that he is recommended afterwards by the apostle Paul to the Colossians; (Col. iv. 10.) and, when he was at Rome, the apostle mentions him among his fellow-labourers, (Philem. ver. 24.) and at last speaks of his desire to see him, as one that was useful to him in the ministry. (2 Tim. iv. 11.)

c *Certain prophets and teachers.*] Who of these might be the stated pastors of the place, and who only occasional residents there, we cannot, I think, with any certainty determine, only that Paul and Barnabas were of the latter.——Mr. Fleming, on the supposition mentioned in note a, concludes that this assembly might be held with some peculiar regard to Peter's danger, and that in it the Spirit directed that both Paul and Barnabas should be received into the now diminished number of the apostles. See Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 230.

d *Manaen, who was educated with Herod the tetrarch.*] He seems by this to have been a person of considerable rank, and having been a courtier, might probably have learnt some peculiar arts of address, yet he had no share in this extraordinary commission granted to Paul and Barnabas: (Compare 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.) Josephus, *Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 10. [al. 13.] §. 5. mentions one Manaem an Essene, who

SECT. 28. ——— ACTS XIII.

tian minister; *and*, to mention no more, *Saul*, that remarkable convert, whose labours in the church were, as we shall farther learn, so eminently useful. *And as they were ministering to the Lord* in public, *and* joined *fasting* to prayer, *the Holy Spirit* by immediate revelation *said, Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the* extraordinary *work* of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, *to which I have* now expressly *called them.*[e]

3 *And having* on this notice appointed a solemn day for this purpose, in which they *fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them*, in token of their designation to that extraordinary office, *they dismissed them* from Antioch with all the most affectionate tokens of christian friendship.

4 *They, therefore, being* thus *sent out by* the immediate direction of *the Holy Spirit*,[f] and animated to a noble elevation of soul in the thought of such an important mission, *departed to Seleucia*, a considerable port in the Mediterranean sea; *and from thence they sailed to* the island of *Cyprus*, so celebrated, or rather so infamous, for the worship of Venus, who was supposed to hold her peculiar residence here, and therefore was commonly
5 called "the Cyprian goddess." *And being arrived at Salamis*, the eastern port of the island, and consequently that which lay nearest to the place from whence they came, *they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews* there; for there were great numbers of that people in Cyprus: *And they had also John for their attendant*, who waited upon them with great respect, not pretending to a character by any means equal to theirs.

And having traversed the whole *island as far as Paphos*, which lay on its western coast, *they found* there *a certain Jew* who was *a magician* [*and*] *false prophet*,[g] *whose*
7 *name was Barjesus*, or the son of one Jesus or Joshua: This was a person *who* was much regarded, and *was* at that time *with the* Roman *proconsul* there, *Sergius Paulus, a prudent man*, of a steady conduct and thoughtful temper, ready to enquire after truth, and capable to judge of its evidence; *who* having received some general intelligence of their character and messages, sent some of those that were about him, and *calling for Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God*, that he might know what was the purport of
8 their preaching, and what regard was due to the doctrine they taught. *But Elymas*, or *the magician, (for that was* the meaning of *his name* Elymas, *when translated* into the Greek language,[h]) as he was sensible that he should be no more regarded if their doctrine was received, set himself all he could to hinder the effect of it, and *withstood them* in their preaching, *endeavouring* in a crafty way, by a variety of false insinuations which he used, *to turn away the proconsul from* embracing *the faith.*[i]

9 *Then Saul, (who is also* [*called*] *Paul*,[k] and will generally be spoken of hereafter by that name, by which the Romans and Greeks would most naturally mention him,) *being filled with* the powerful effusion and impulse of *the Holy Spirit*, turning to Elymas the sorcerer, *and looking stedfastly upon him, said*, with just indignation, O *thou* wretch
10 [*who art*] *full of all deceit and of all wickedness! Thou* notorious *son of the devil*, that great deceiver, the adversary both of God and man! *Thou enemy of all rightcousness! wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord*, and by thy perverse misrepresentations to lay a stumbling-block before those that would embrace the gospel? Thou

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him;

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness! wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

had foretold Herod the Great, while he was yet a boy, that he should be a king, and was afterwards in high favour with him; and some have thought this was his son. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 11. p. 79—81. That Manaen, Simeon, and Lucius, were all apostles, is a strange opinion of Dr. Scott's, (*Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 1099.) which so judicious a man could never have entertained, had it not seemed necessary to solve a difficulty, which I hope we shall presently see is only imaginary.

e *For the work to which I have called them.*] If there be any reference to a past fact in these words, it is probably to some revelation personally made to Paul and Barnabas, to signify that they should take a journey into several countries of Asia Minor to preach the gospel there. But that they were now invested with the apostolic office by these inferior ministers, (though expressly asserted by Clarius and many others,) is a thing neither credible in itself, nor consistent with what Paul himself says, Gal. i. 1. And that they now received a power, before unknown in the church, of preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles, is inconsistent with Acts xi. 20, 21. and, upon many other considerations to be proposed elsewhere, appears to me absolutely incredible.

f *By the Holy Spirit.*] This seems to be added to remind us, that though they were solemnly recommended to God by the prayers of their brethren, their authority was not derived from them, but from the Holy Spirit himself.

g *A magician and false prophet.*] There were many instances of real or pretended sorcery among the Jews in these days, which seems to have been designed by the devil and wicked men to slur the miracles of Christ and his apostles. But, by confounding them in several instances, the christian cause was magnified yet more than it would otherwise have been. Nevertheless it is to be feared they wrought on many who were not wise and candid enough to examine, so as to introduce a general contempt of all pretences to supernatural powers as false or inconclusive; a sad instance of which we have even in Marcus Antonicus, who, though he professes some revelations to have been made to himself in dreams, (*De Rebus Suis, lib.* i. § 17.) yet reckons it among the great advantages he received by conversing with Diogenetus, that he learnt from him to despise all stories of miracles and dispossessions, *Ibid.* § 6.

h *That was his name when translated*, &c.] The most probable etymology I have found of it is that which derives it from the Arabic word *alaim*, which signifies, *one acquainted with hidden secrets*, from the Hebrew עלם, *alam, to hide*, and is used in the Arabic Version of the Old Testament for the Hebrew מכשף, *a magician*. See Beza, *in loc.*

i *The proconsul.*] So the word ανθυπατος properly signifies; and though Beza and Dr. Hammond, as well as Grotius and M. L'Enfant, (who has taken almost all his notes from him,) say that the title was improperly applied to the governor of Cyprus, as they suppose, by way of compliment, while he was only αντιστρατηγος, *a sort of lieutenant*; Dr. Lardner has with great learning vindicated the accuracy with which St. Luke speaks, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. i. § 11. Vol. I. p. 51—54.) and shown from Dio, (*Lib.* liii. p. 504, A. *et lib.* liv. p. 523, B.) that they who presided over the Roman provinces by the appointment of the senate, (and Cyprus was now of that number, though it had once been prætorian,) were called proconsuls, though they had never filled the consular chair; which (as appears by the Fasti Consulares) was the case with the excellent and happy governor of whom we speak. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 1. p. 55, 56.

k *Saul, who is also called Paul.*] Some have thought the apostle had originally two names, and many others that he changed the former for the latter with design, either out of deference to Sergius Paulus or to the Gentiles, among whom he now preached so much as to be called, by way of eminence, (though not in strict appropriation,) their apostle. See Dr. Hammond, *in loc.* But I think Beza's account of the matter most easy and probable—that having conversed hitherto chiefly with Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar, and now coming among Romans and Greeks, they would naturally pronounce his name Paul; as one whose Hebrew name was Jochanan, would be called by the Greeks and Latins Johannes, by the French Jean, by the Dutch Hans, and by the English John. See also Grot. *in loc.* Beza thinks the family of this proconsul might be the first who addressed or spoke of him by the name Paul.

shalt be confounded in this cursed undertaking, and made a signal monument of the divine displeasure. *And behold*, even *now the* almighty *hand of the Lord* Jesus Christ, whose gospel thou opposest, *is upon thee, and thou shalt be* struck *blind* by it, *and* shalt *not* be able to *see* even *the sun* itself at noon-day *for a* certain *time*, that thou mayst be convinced of thy sin and folly, and mayst, if possible, be brought to repentance for it. *And immediately*, while Paul was yet speaking, *a* thick *mist and darkness fell upon him; and going about* in the utmost confusion, *he sought some to lead him by the hand*, not being able so much as to find the door without a guide, and afraid that he might run upon any one who stood in his way. SECT. 28. ACTS XIII. 11

11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul, seeing what was done, yielded to so convincing an evidence, and *believed* the gospel;[1] *being* also *struck with* admiration of the internal evidence which he soon discovered in *the doctrine of the Lord*, and which broke in with increasing lustre on his mind, in proportion to the degree of attention with which he inquired into it. 12

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

We who were once sinners of the Gentiles, and now, by the divine goodness, are brought to the knowledge of the gospel, have abundant reason to be thankful that inspired messengers were sent to teach it, being separated to that purpose by the direct appointment of the Holy Spirit. May they that go out to this sacred work in all nations and in all times, maintain a becoming regard to his influences; and may he make their way prosperous! That he may be engaged to do so, it is certainly convenient, upon the justest principles of reason and piety, to send them forth with solemn prayer; in which ministers and private christians should from time to time concur, with an intenseness and seriousness unswerable to the occasion. Ver. 2, 4, 3

Wherever the messengers of the gospel go, they must not be surprised if Satan raise up his instruments and children to oppose them, especially where they would endeavour to introduce religion into the hearts of princes or other great men. Well does the prince of the power of the air know how dangerous every such blow is to his kingdom. Nevertheless, the King of kings knows how to make way to the hearts of the greatest among the children of men; nor can any of them show a more solid and important prudence than to inquire impartially into the evidences of the gospel, and to give themselves up to be governed by it; an happy resolution, which they will probably be disposed to form in proportion to the degree in which they observe its nature and tendency: For surely every intelligent person that does so must, like Sergius Paulus, be struck with the doctrine of the Lord, as well as with the miracles which were wrought to confirm it. 6, 8, 7, 12

Justly might Paul pronounce that man who endeavoured to obstruct the progress of divine truth in the world, a child of Satan, and an enemy of all righteousness: Justly might God, who knew all his secret wickedness and perverseness of soul, smite him with a blindness which, while it rendered him incapable of seeing the light of the meridian sun, seemed but a doleful emblem of that more fatal darkness which, through the corruption of his heart, had spread itself over his mind, and prevented *the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, from shining upon it.* (1 Cor. iv. 4.) Have we not reason to fear that God may, in his righteous judgment, punish that iniquity of spirit with which many now rise up against the right ways of the Lord, (not ceasing to pervert and disguise them, that they may more plausibly and effectually oppose them,) with an internal blindness in which they may wander on to their destruction? And if others stupidly permit themselves to be guided by them, what can be expected but that *the blind leading the blind, both* leaders and followers should *fall into the pit?* (Matt. xv. 14.) 9, 10, 11

SECTION XXIX.

Paul and Barnabas come to Antioch in Pisidia, where the former delivers a remarkable discourse in the Jewish synagogue. Acts xiii. 13—42.

Acts xiii. 13.

Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

Acts xiii. 13.

The reader was informed, in the last section, of the success with which Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Cyprus, where Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was converted to it; *and* we are now to add that, *loosing from Paphos, they* and their companions, *who were* desirous to spend some longer time *with Paul*, that they might be more fully instructed in the christian faith, *came to Perga*, a town *in Pamphylia*, a province of the Lesser Asia, which lay east of Cilicia, to which it was contiguous, and on the northern coast of the Mediterranean sea. *But John*, sirnamed Mark, perceiving they intended a long tour in those parts, and that they were like to meet with much opposition among the idolatrous Gentiles, to whom they were carrying the gospel, could not, by all the warmest remonstrances of Paul and his own uncle Barnabas, be persuaded to share their labours and dangers in so excellent a cause; but taking the opportunity of a vessel which he found in that part bound for Palestine, he *withdrew himself from them and returned to Jerusalem.* SECT. 29. ACTS XIII. 13

Nevertheless they remained inflexible in their resolution of prosecuting the important work in which they were engaged; and therefore *going on from Perga*, they *came to Antioch*, a considerable city *in* the district of *Pisidia*,[a] which lay north of Pamphylia, and 14

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch, in Pisidia,

1 *The proconsul believed.*] I can see no reason at all to imagine, with Lord Barrington, *Abstract*, p. 21. and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 27. that Sergius Paulus was the first convert to christianity among the idolatrous Gentiles, which, if their own interpretation of Acts xi. 19, 20. (unsatisfactory as it seems) were to be allowed, would appear incredible from this very context; for who can imagine that Paul and Barnabas should, as we are assured they did, traverse the whole island of Cyprus, from Salamis to Paphos, without converting one person from idolatry, though it is here uncontroverted that they bore an unlimited commission, and fully understood its extent?——Limborch justly argues in favour of christian magistracy from hence, as it is neither credible, that if Sergius Paulus abdicated his office, so important a circumstance should be omitted, or that Paul should have acquiesced in his continuing in it, if he knew it contrary to the will of Christ, which he would not fail fully to declare to him. See Limb. *Theolog. lib.* v. *cap.* 73. § 5.

a *Antioch in Pisidia.*] The situation of this place is thus de-

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consequently farther from the sea: *And entering into the* Jewish *synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat down*[b] among those that were worshipping there. *And after the* customary *reading* of the proper section for the day out *of the law, and* another out *of the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue,* knowing in general the public character which the two celebrated strangers sustained, and being curious to hear from their own mouth that
15 new doctrine which had made so much noise in other places, *sent* one of the inferior officers *to them,*[c] *saying, Men* [*and*] *brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to the people,* or any declaration to make which may conduce to the edification of the assembly, *speak* [*it*] freely, as this is the proper season of doing it.

and went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 *Then Paul stood up, and waving his hand,* to render the audience more attentive, *said, Ye men of Israel, and* all *ye that fear God,* and are met together with devout hearts to worship him this day, *hearken,*[d] I beseech you, with patient attention, for I shall mention
17 several facts which well deserve your serious regard. *The God of this* peculiar *people,* for such I well know the seed *of Israel* to be, graciously *chose our* pious and venerable *fathers,* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be the objects of his special favour, and for their sakes was pleased to promise most important blessings to their offspring: Accordingly he took them under his protection from their first beginning, *and raised the people* from that prostrate and dejected state in which they were *while sojourning in the land of Egypt,* under the tyranny of Pharaoh;[e] *and,* to deliver them from that inhospitable and oppressive country, he *led them out of it with an uplifted* and extended *arm,* having displayed his power in a variety of most astonishing miracles, by which he pleaded their injured cause.
18 *And* then *for the space of about forty years he endured their* perverse and ungrateful *behaviour*[f] *in the wilderness,* carrying them (as it were) through a course of education there, to form them, in those retired circumstances, to a habit of observing that admirable
19 system of laws which he there thought fit to give them. At length he put a period to that pilgrimage, in which, nevertheless, they had been sustained by so many miraculous tokens of his care; *and having cast out seven* mighty *nations*[g] who were before settled *in the land of Canaan,* and had erected more than thirty kingdoms there, defended by fortifications of great strength, as well as by numerous forces both of horse and foot, *he distributed their* whole *country to them for an inheritance,* and supported them in it for many generations.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience:

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people, when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 *And,* to omit many remarkable circumstances in this period of their history, *after these transactions,* [*which lasted*] *about four hundred and fifty years,*[h] that is, after the choice of our fathers and the birth of Isaac, in which the promises to Abraham began to be accom-

20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges, about the space of four hundred and

scribed, to intimate how carefully it should be distinguished from Antioch in Syria, so much more frequently mentioned in this history.

b *Entering into the synagogue, they sat down.*] The professed followers of Jesus were excommunicated, at least on conviction, by an act of the sanhedrim made before the crucifixion of our Lord; (compare John ix. 22; and xii. 42.) and it is what he had foretold to his apostles, that they should be so treated. (John xvi. 2.) Yet Paul and Barnabas enter the synagogue without opposition, and meet with a regard which none can imagine the Jews would show to excommunicated persons. Learned men have accounted for this by saying, that elders and doctors among the Jews, (such as Paul and Barnabas are supposed to have been,) though sometimes scourged in the synagogues, were not cast out of them.

c *The rulers of the synagogue sent to them.*] It is, I think, a very fruitless attempt which some learned men have made, to ascertain the conditions on which persons were admitted to teach in the Jewish synagogues, and to settle the forms with which they were entered on that office. It has been supposed that Paul and Barnabas had gone through these forms, and that their sitting down in the seats appropriated to the doctors or teachers led these rulers, though strangers to them, to send them this permission. But it seems evident from Maimonides and the Talmud, that after public worship was over, any one might make a speech to the people in the synagogue, on any subject which he apprehended might be for their advantage. Yet it would be a circumstance of decency which the good sense and breeding of Paul and Barnabas would lead them to regard, that the rulers should be made acquainted with their desire of doing it: probably by some message or interview before the devotions began, to which this permission of theirs might refer. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 2. p. 271, 272.

d *All ye that fear God, hearken.*] This discourse seems chiefly intended to illustrate the divine economy in opening the gospel gradually, and preparing the Jews, by temporal mercies, for others of a yet more important nature. The apostle, in consequence of this, had a very handsome and unaffected opportunity of showing his acquaintance with their Scriptures, which it is well known they esteemed as the highest part of literature and object of science.—— The expression, *ye that fear God,* is ambiguous, and would best suit those that had, by embracing the Jewish religion, entered into covenant with the true God, yet so as not to exclude any others in whom a filial reverence for the Divine Being was a governing principle.

e *Raised the people, while sojourning in the land of Egypt.*] Beza and M. L'Enfant explain this as referring to the honour the Israelites were in during the ministry of Joseph in Egypt; but Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 418, 419.) has shown that the word υψωσεν often signifies *to deliver* or *raise out of a calamitous state.* (Compare Psal. ix. 13; xviii. 48; cxiii. 7. *Septuag.*) And, as Joseph prudently declined any attempt to make his brethren courtiers, and kept them in the country under the character of shepherds, (a profession which the Egyptians held contemptible rather than honourable, Gen. xlvi. 34.) I think it by far more natural to interpret the passage as in the paraphrase.

f *Endured their behaviour.*] This is the proper import of the word ετροποφορησεν, and it was very fit to give this oblique intimation of that perverseness and ingratitude which so early began to prevail among them. The Syriac renders it by a word which signifies, to nourish or educate, so that Beza conjectures they read ετροφοφορησεν: and it suggests so beautiful a view of the conduct of Providence towards them in this respect, that I could not forbear inserting the thought, though I prefer the common and almost universally received reading. Yet I find Dr. Hammond thinks the other was probably authentic, and observes that the expression of nursing them (for so he understands it) is beautifully connected with that of taking them up when they lay like an exposed infant. Compare Deut. i. 31; and Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 8.

g *Cast out seven nations.*] Namely, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. Deut. vii. 1; Josh. iii. 10; xxiv. 11.

h *After these transactions,* [*which lasted*] *about four hundred and fifty years.*] The course of the sacred history will by no means permit us to imagine that the judges in their succession continued 450 years after the settlement of Israel in Canaan; since we learn from 1 Kings vi. 1. that Solomon began to build the temple in the 480th year after they came out of Egypt. It is certain, therefore, that if we make no alteration in the reading here, or in the Old Testament, the words must be so pointed as to justify my inserting in the version those words, [*which lasted,*] in which I follow M. L'Enfant and the translation of 1727. In that case, I think the time must be computed from the birth of Isaac, on the principles which Mr. Lampe has laid down in his excellent *Compendium of Eccles. Hist. lib.* i. *cap.* 5. § 1—7. Yet I own that Dr. Whitby has the authority of many great names, ancient and modern, to justify him in following the chronology of Josephus, who places the building of the temple in the five hundred and ninety-second year after Israel's going out of Egypt, (*Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 3. [al. 2.] § 1.) which would admit of allowing three hundred and thirty-nine years for the administration of the judges, and one hundred and eleven for the years of the several tyrannical oppressions, in all four hundred and fifty years, reserving forty for Samuel and Saul together, forty for David, and four for Solomon, in whose fifth year the temple was begun; and the coincidence of the numbers in the Book of Judges, as illustrated by Dr. Lightfoot (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) and Mr. Biscoe, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. xx. p. 666, 667.) is very remarkable. But I was cautious of paraphrasing this text in a manner which must allow an important error in our Hebrew copies, and affect the whole system of the sacred chronology.

fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

plished, *he gave* [*them*] a series of *judges*, by whose heroic interposition he delivered them from those repeated oppressions and miseries which their frequent revolts to idolatry had brought upon them. And this continued, with some intervals, *till* the time of *Samuel the prophet*, who was the last of these extraordinary leaders and magistrates.

21 And afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

And from that time, too fond of being like their neighbours in that respect, *they desired a king*, (1 Sam. viii. 5.) insensible of the favour which God had done them in assuming the character and relation of a king to them: *And God gave them*, first, *Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin;* and his government, with that of Samuel the prophet, lasted *for the term of forty years.*[1] 21

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

And having in his righteous displeasure rejected Saul, and *removed him* from reigning over Israel, for his rebellion against the divine command in the business of Amalek, and for other crimes of aggravated guilt, (1 Sam. xv. 23. and 1 Chron. x. 13.) *he* afterwards *raised up to them David for a king*, the person so justly celebrated in all succeeding ages; *to whom also he gave* a more glorious *testimony* in his word, (1 Sam. xiii. 14. and Psal. lxxx. 20.) *and said*, "*I have found* my servant *David, the son of Jesse, a man according to mine own heart*, "*who* will not disregard my voice as Saul has done, but *shall do all my will*, and "rule my people with integrity." 22

23 Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

From him it was declared that the Messiah should descend, and by a special covenant he was assured that his throne should be established to all generations. (Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4.) Now therefore, *of this* holy *man's seed, according to the* tenor of that frequently repeated *promise*, (Isa. ix. 6, 7; xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.) *God hath raised up unto Israel Jesus, the* great and illustrious *Saviour*, so long foretold in the sacred oracles, whom I am this day come to preach among you. 23

24 When John had first preached before his coming, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel.

This is the person God had so often promised he would send into the world, and he appeared just in the time and with the circumstances which those divine prophecies had pointed out; *John* the Baptist *having* been sent *before* as his herald, and having *preached*, in a very convincing manner, *to introduce his appearance, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel;*[k] even that baptism which, in token of their repentance, they were commanded by God to receive; thereby to signify, on the one hand, their desire to purify themselves from all their pollutions, and on the other, to testify God's readiness to forgive them, and admit them into his favour. 24

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

And when John was just *fulfilling his course, he said, Whom do you imagine me to be? I am not* [*he,*] nor do I at all pretend to be the promised Messiah:[l] *But behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose*, nor to perform the lowest office of menial service to him. (Compare John i. 20, 27.) 25

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

And let me assure you, *men* [*and*] *brethren*, even all you who are *children of the family of Abraham, and* all *those among you that* truly *fear God* and serve him, of whatever family or nation you may be descended, let me (I say) solemnly assure you that these things are your great and immediate concern: For unto you, though providentially cast at some distance from the time and place in which this message of John was 26

1 *For the term of forty years.*] It is the opinion of Beza, Grotius, Calvin, Brennius, Woltzogenius, Limborch, (*Amic. Collat. cap.* 26.) and several other considerable critics, that the forty years here spoken of do not all belong to the reign of Saul, but include at least a considerable part of Samuel's government. Dr. Benson has also more lately declared himself on the same side of the question, (*Hist. of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 31.) and Messieurs L'Enfant and Beausobre give us the same interpretation: But the learned Mr. Biscoe has advanced so much in favour of the supposition that the reign of Saul continued all these forty years, (*Serm. at Boyle's Lect.* chap. xvii. p. 612—616.) which Mr. Bedford also maintains in his Chronology, that I think it incumbent upon me to give some better reason than merely the authority of the greatest names, for paraphrasing the clause as I have done, especially as most of the authors mentioned above have only given their opinion, and none of them has entered fully into the question. The chief consideration which determined me is this: Samuel is expressly said to have *judged Israel all the days of his life;* (1 Sam. vii. 15.) but we are sure that he lived the greater part (probably by far the greater part) of the forty years preceding Saul's death; for David was but *thirty years old when he began to reign over Judah*, (2 Sam. v. 4.) which was not till after Saul was slain; and Samuel did not only anoint him, (at which time we cannot suppose David to have been less than fifteen years old,) but lived a considerable time after, that is, till about the time of David's going to Paran, (1 Sam. xxv. 1.) which seems to have been but a little before his sojourning in the country of the Philistines, where he dwelt only a year and four months before the battle at Gilboa, in which Saul fell; (1 Sam. xxviii. 7.) a circumstance that greatly favours the opinion which (as Drusius observes) so commonly prevailed among the Jews, that Saul survived Samuel but little more than two years. I am indeed far from thinking that Saul's reign is to be reckoned only from Samuel's death: the contrary is most apparent; and Mr. Biscoe has abundantly proved that the actions assigned to him must have taken up many years. But of the forty in question, it may well suffice to allow twenty to him from his anointing, and the former twenty (computed from the grand action at Mizpeh) to Samuel, who might in that time be past his prime, and so be inclined to associate his sons with him, till on their miscarriages the people took occasion to demand a king, who at first, we are sure from the story, lived privately, and whose authority was never so great as to swallow up that of so illustrious a prophet and judge.——I know the authority of Josephus is urged in defence of the scheme I oppose; for he says, according to our present copies, "that Saul reigned eighteen years during Samuel's "life," which I think very probable, "and two and twenty after his "death." (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* vi. *cap.* 14. [al. 15.] § 9.) But this is utterly incredible; for David then could not be eight years old when Samuel anointed him, which, as was said before, was some considerable time before the prophet died; and it may therefore be assuredly concluded (as Dr. Hudson intimates) that the true reading is that of Epiphanius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Eutychius, which leaves out ϰαὶ εἰϰοσι, *and twenty*, so as to assign him but *two years* after the prophet's death, which agrees very well with our interpretation.——The argument for Mr. Biscoe's scheme, taken from Ishbosheth's being forty years old at the time of his father's death, 2 Sam. ii. 10. would indeed be of great weight, if the sacred historian had any where told us that Saul was very young when anointed by Samuel; but the word בחור, which is used on the first mention of him, 1 Sam ix. 2. though rendered by our translators *a choice young man*, has not necessarily that import. The Seventy have often rendered it δυνατος, ἐϰλεϰτος, πολεμιστης, *strong, choice, war like*, and here σωμαγεθης, *of a stately presence;* and I think it would be easy to show, that in many places where they render it νεανιϰος, (as indeed they frequently do,) it only signifies *a person in the full vigour of his constitution.* It seems by no means probable that God should chuse a stripling for the first king of Israel; and I think what is said of the age of Ishbosheth, compared with the passages mentioned above, plainly shows that Saul was then in his prime, perhaps about thirty-five, and justifies the prudence of Pagnin, Montanus, Munster, and the Vulgate, who render it *electus, a choice person*, without determining any thing concerning his youth, in which they also agree with the Syriac and Arabic Versions.

k *John having before preached*, &c.] He mentions the preaching of John the Baptist in this incidental manner as a thing already known to them, because it gave so universal an alarm to the whole Jewish nation, that it might probably be heard of in foreign countries, at least as remote as Pisidia.

l *Whom do you imagine me to be? I am not he.*] Raphelius has taken pains to prove, from some similar passages in the Greek classics, that both these clauses may be considered as united in an affirmation, and rendered, "I am not the person whom you suppose me to be," that is, the Messiah, *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 251, 252.

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first delivered, and in which Jesus at first appeared, yet *unto you is the word of this* great and important *salvation sent. For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and their rulers, not knowing* this illustrious person, though God bore such a convincing testimony to *him, and* being also ignorant of what was signified by *the sayings of the prophets, which are read every sabbath-day* among them, (as they have this day been among you,) *have* 28 unwittingly *fulfilled* [*them*] *in condemning him. And though they could find no* sufficient *cause of death* [*in him,*] nor indeed any thing in his whole conduct capable of any degree of blame, *yet* nevertheless *they requested Pilate,* with the utmost importunity, 29 *that he might be* condemned and *executed. And when they had* inadvertently *accomplished all things that were written concerning him, in* such a circumstantial detail of particulars as is truly astonishing, *taking him down from the cross,*[m] on which he had expired in the midst of ignominy and torture, *they* permitted his friends to bury him, and 30 *laid him in a tomb.* And there they took the utmost care to guard him; *but God raised him up from the dead* on the third day, according to his own repeated prediction, which they had heard from him before, but were unable to obstruct and hinder its accomplish- 31 ment. *And* after he was risen from the dead, *he appeared for several days to those that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem* a little before his death; *who* most of them continue to this day, and *are his witnesses to the people* of the Jews, among whom they still reside, and where any of you who go up to Jerusalem may hear it from their own mouth.

32 *And we,* who are sent out by him on the same errand, and furnished with all proper credentials for that purpose, do now *bring you* these *good tidings, that the very promise which was made to the fathers,* and which was the hope and joy of their posterity through so many succeeding ages, *God hath* now *accomplished to us their children, in raising up* 33 *Jesus* from the dead. And it is manifest that by his resurrection he has declared him, in the most convincing manner, to be indeed his Son; so that it was, as I may speak, the birth-day of his reign, *as it is also written in* the seventh verse of *the second Psalm,*[n] 34 "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*"[o] *And* agreeable to this, *because he hath raised him from the dead, no more to return to* the grave, the seat of *corruption,*[p] *he hath said thus* by the prophet, (Isa. lv. 3.) "*I will give you the sure mercies of David;*[q] that is, mercies which, by the resurrection of him whom I have now set upon "the throne of David, are made sure to you, and shall prove eternal as his life and reign." 35 *Wherefore also in another,* and that a very remarkable [*place,*] *he saith,* (Psal. xvi. 10.) 36 "*Thou wilt not permit thine Holy One to see corruption.*" *Now* it is evident this must refer, not to the inspired writer himself, but to some other person; for *David,* by whom this psalm was written, *having* faithfully *served his own generation* of men *according to the will of God, fell asleep,* that is, died, *and was gathered to his fathers, and* being laid among the dead of former ages, *saw corruption,* just in the same manner as other human 37 bodies do when the soul is separated from them. *But he* of whom these words were spoken, and *whom,* as I have just been telling you, *God raised up* from the dead, *did not* continue in the grave so long as to *see corruption,* being laid there on the evening before 38 the sabbath, and raised early the morning after it. *Be it known therefore unto you, men* [*and*] *brethren, that by him,* even this glorious and exalted person, *the remission of sins is preached unto you,* even the full and assured pardon of all your offences, be they ever 39 so great and ever so aggravated. *And by him every one who believeth* in him *is,* immediately in consequence of that faith, freely and fully *justified* and acquitted before God, not only from the guilt of smaller miscarriages, but even *from* the guilt of *all* those *things* which are in the highest degree criminal, and *from which ye could not* on any consideration whatever *be justified by the law of Moses,*[r] but which expressly were pronounced

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him.*

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him,* yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm,* Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37 But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

m *Taking him down from the cross.*] The apostle was far from being ashamed to mention the most ignominious parts of his Master's sufferings to those who were strangers to the gospel, knowing how sufficiently he answered all that could be objected from thence, by what he added and testified concerning his resurrection.

n *In the second Psalm.*] A few copies read it (as Jerome and Augustine also did) *the first;* but they are overborne by such superior authority, that I am surprised they should have been followed by any who did not affect to vary from the received readings as much as possible.—It seems evident from hence, that the Psalms were then placed in the same order as now; and it is observable that this is the only quotation of the Old Testament so circumstantially made in the New.——Beza conjectures that neither first nor second was mentioned in the original copy.

o *This day have I begotten thee.*] Bishop Pearson (*On the Creed,* p. 252.) well observes, that it is with peculiar propriety and beauty that God is said to have begotten Christ on the day of his resurrection, as he seemed then to be born out of the earth anew. Compare Rom. i. 4; Heb. i. 6; and Rev. i. 5.—M. L'Enfant says that the anointing-day of kings is sometimes called their birth-day, for which Heinsius has produced some authorities, *Exercit. Sacr. in* Matt. xiv. 6. Compare note i, on Mark vi. 21. p. 157.

p The grave, the seat of *corruption.*] Beza here observes, with his usual accuracy, that as Christ never saw corruption at all, the Greek διαφθορα [*corruption*] must signify *the grave,* as שחת in Hebrew also does: compare Psal. xciv. 13; cvii. 20; and Lam. iv. 20; just as the coffin of a man raised from the dead, as soon as he was put into it, might be called his sarcophagus, though his flesh had not been consumed in it.

q *The sure mercies of David.*] The blessings of the Messiah's reign may be called the sure mercies of David, either as they were promised to that prince, to which sense the translation of 1727 determines it, by rendering it, "*I will faithfully perform the promise made to David,*" or as the name of David is sometimes given to the Messiah himself, as the great heir of David, of whose victories and glories David's were but a faint shadow. Compare Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; xxxviii. 24, 25; Hos. iii. 5. And when Isaiah calls them *sure mercies,* he may probably refer to the last words of David, in which he uses the same expression with regard to them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; and the propriety of the application here is evident, as it was the resurrection of Christ which rendered the blessings he promised sure to his people, who without that could have had no hope from him, as the apostle argues at large, 1 Cor. xv. 14. *et seq.* See Mr. Jeffery's *True Grounds,* p. 139.

r *By the law of Moses.*] That law appointed sin-offerings to expiate smaller offences, so far as that the offender who offered them should be free from all farther prosecution on account of them: But this very view of them shows how absolutely necessary to the being of society it was that they should not be admitted in cases of murder, adultery, &c. These crimes therefore were made capital; nor was the dying criminal, however penitent, allowed to offer them, which would have been quite inconsistent with the temporal pardon connected with them. But the expiatory sacrifice of Christ takes away the guilt of all sin; and though it by no means affects the manner in which offenders would stand in human courts, (which the Mosaic sacrifices did,) it delivers from the condemnation of God in the invisible world, with respect to which the others could have no efficacy at all, as it was a very supposable

by that to be capital offences, for which the criminal was immediately doomed on conviction to die without mercy, so that no room was left for any sacrifice of atonement. SECT. 29.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets,

This is the substance of the message with which I am charged: *See to it therefore*, I beseech you, as ye value your own souls, *that what is spoken in the prophets*, as the fatal consequence of rejecting it, *may not come upon you:* For they speak in very awful language to such; Isaiah, for instance, when he says, (chap. xxviii. 14.) "*Behold, ye* "*despisers*, ye scornful men that look with haughty contempt on that corner-stone which "I lay in Zion, the judgment I will execute upon you is so terrible, that it shall be a vex- "ation only to understand the report:" And in like manner too the prophet Habakkuk, when he says, (chap. i. 5.) "Behold ye, and regard *and wonder* marvellously, turn pale "with terror, *and disappear*[s] as those that shall perish at once, and vanish (as it were) out "of sight, consumed in a moment by the fierceness of my vengeance: *For I perform a* "most amazing *work in your days*, even *a work which ye shall not believe if any one* "*tell it you.*" And the destruction God will bring upon you, if you reject the gospel, would appear far more incredible to you, should it be described in all its terrors, than the desolation that was formerly threatened; which nevertheless, as your unbelieving fathers found to their cost, was circumstantially executed upon them. ACTS XIII.

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. 41

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

This was the substance of Paul's plain and serious address to the Jews[t] in their synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, to which they replied nothing at present; *But while the Jews were going out of the synagogue*,[u] *the Gentiles*, who out of curiosity were many of them assembled there on the fame of the arrival of such celebrated men, earnestly *desired that these words might be spoken to them* again *the following sabbath*,[x] when they promised to attend themselves, and to bring as many of their friends as they could: And thus the assembly broke up for that time. 42

IMPROVEMENT.

THAT the scriptures have been publicly read in Jewish and christian assemblies, from the primitive times, is a noble evidence of their genuine authority, which it will be our undoubted wisdom to transmit to those who are to arise after us: From them succeeding generations will be fully informed of that edifying story which the apostle here briefly recounts—of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their settlement in the land of Canaan, according to the promise of God to their fathers; and will also learn the ungrateful returns which they made to the divine goodness, when they *rejected the Lord from being King over them.* (1 Sam. viii. 7.) Ver. 15 17—19 20, 21

The character of David, as a man after God's own heart, who would fulfil all his pleasure, is surely worthy of being emulated by every christian: In this respect, may *he who is feeble among the Lord's people be like David!* (Zech. xii. 8.) Like him may we all be solicitous to serve our generation according to the will of God; to do all the good we can in the age and station in which Providence has fixed us, though it be in a crooked and perverse generation; gradually striving to mend it as fast as we can, and waiting our summons to fall asleep, as we quickly must, and be gathered to our fathers. Were we the greatest princes upon earth, we, like David, must see corruption in the grave: But let us rejoice to think that Jesus, whom God raised up according to his promise, saw no corruption; and if we are his people, he will ransom and redeem us from it. (Hos. xiii. 14.) 22 36 33—37

He, though so outrageously and infamously treated by the Jews, was nevertheless in the most convincing manner declared to be the Son of God, his only-begotten Son: Such a resurrection proclaimed him to be so; (Rom. i. 4.) and, in consequence of it, the sure mercies of David are now given us by him, and the plenary remission of all the most aggravated transgressions is through him proclaimed. For ever adored be his glorious name! most thankfully accepted be his overflowing grace! which frees us from the guilt of those offences which the law of Moses condemned without mercy, and takes out the dye of scarlet and crimson sins! 28, 29 34 38 39

Let us take heed lest, if we despise so great a salvation, we meet with an astonishing vengeance, the justice of which will be attested and applauded by the messengers of God to the Jewish and the christian church: All the prophets, and John the Baptist, superior to them all who bore witness to Christ, and all the apostles and succeeding ministers in every age, have concurred to admonish us of our danger, and they will another day rise up together in judgment against us, if all these admonitions are given in vain. 40 24—27 41

case that an impenitent sinner might present them in all their exactest forms. Compare Rom. viii. 3; Gal. ii. 16; and Heb. x. 4. See Mr. Hallet, Vol. II. *Disc.* iii. p. 269. *et seq.*

s Turn pale with terror, *and disappear.*] There is an ambiguity in the word αφανισθητε, which may be rendered either of these ways; and as both these senses are consistent, and would probably concur, both are inserted in the paraphrase, though, as I think the latter more expressive, I have marked that as preferable. The attentive reader who understands the original, will see that I have often taken this method.

t Address to the Jews.] How impertinently Mr. Collins urges this as an instance of the apostles' arguing with the Gentiles from allegorical interpretations of prophecies, must be evident to every attentive reader on various accounts; for these scriptures are not allegorically applied, nor are they addressed chiefly to the Gentiles, but to Jews by birth or proselytism. Compare ver. 16. and 46. Several Gentiles were indeed present, who probably came out of curiosity, drawn by the fame of such celebrated preachers; and some of them might drop in while he was speaking: And, as in the series of his discourse they heard of an extraordinary person by whom all that believed in him might obtain pardon and happiness, they were desirous of having that doctrine farther explained to them, and, upon a promise that it should be done, took care to engage a vast auditory against the next sabbath, as we shall presently see.

u *While the Jews were going out of the synagogue.*] To render εξιοντων δε εκ της συναγωγης των Ιουδαιων, *when Paul and Barnabas were gone out of the Jewish synagogue*, is both supposing the inspired historian to have made an unnecessary distinction with relation to a synagogue which appeared before to belong to the Jews, and making him to have expressed himself in an ungrammatical manner; nor, on the other hand, can we well suppose that Paul and the Gentiles staid in the synagogue when all the Jews had quitted it. I therefore render it, *while they were going out.*

x *The following sabbath.*] Some interpret εις το μεταξυ σαββατον of a day *between the two sabbaths*, as there is a tradition among the Jews, mentioned by Dr. Lightfoot and others, that Ezra commanded them to assemble on the second and fifth days of the week, (our Mondays and Thursdays,) for the study of the law, in their synagogues. But I think that verse 44. determines the expression to the sense our version gives it. And Lud. Capellus has shown that it is not an unexampled manner of speaking.

SECTION XXX.

The Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia accept the gospel, which the Jews reject, and raise a persecution against the apostles, who therefore go to Iconium. Acts xiii. 43, *to the end.*

Acts xiii. 43.

SECT. 30. ACTS XIII.

A LARGE account was given in the preceding section of the discourse which Paul had addressed to the Jews, in their synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia; *and* the effect of it was, that *when the synagogue was broke up, many of the Jews, and of the devout proselytes,* who, though not of the stock of Israel, had embraced the Jewish religion, *followed Paul and Barnabas,* professing their belief of the doctrine they taught; *who* gave them farther
43 exhortations to confirm them in the faith, and *speaking to them* with great earnestness, *persuaded them to continue in the grace of God*[a] which they had received, and to retain that gospel which they had now embraced.

Acts xiii. 43.

NOW when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 *And on the following sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God,* in consequence of the report which the Gentiles had spread abroad of what had been delivered before, which awakened in many others an earnest desire of attending to that repetition of their extraordinary message which the apostles had engaged themselves to make.

44 And the next sabbath-day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 *But the Jews,* who continued strongly prejudiced against the message which had been delivered to them, *seeing the* Gentiles assembled in such great *multitudes, were filled with zeal* for the honour of their law and nation, which they foolishly imagined to be hurt by this new sect, and with indignation and envy at the regard which the inhabitants of Antioch showed to it beyond what they had ever done to the Jewish religion; *and* therefore they *opposed the things which were spoken by Paul* and Barnabas; not only *contradicting* them, *and* cavilling at their allegations, but also *blaspheming* and reviling these divine teachers as impostors and seducers.[b]

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 *Then Paul and Barnabas,* perceiving that no good impression could be made upon them, were not concerned about saving appearances, but *with great freedom of speech,* and with a fervent zeal tempered by wisdom, and animated by unfeigned charity, *said, It was necessary,* according to the general instructions of our Divine Master, *that the word of God,* which we are come to deliver, *should first be spoken to you* Jews; for, undeserving as you are of such a favour, he has directed us that wherever we come we should open our ministry with an address to you, inviting you to faith and repentance, that you may, in the first place, partake of the benefits of his kingdom: (Compare Luke xxiv. 47.) *But since you* thus disdainfully *thrust it away from you, and* by that very action do in effect *adjudge* and condemn *yourselves* as *unworthy of* that *eternal life* and glory which, through the riches of his grace, he has so freely offered to you,[c] *behold, we turn* ourselves *to the Gentiles,*[d] and declare to them that they are also invited into the church of the Messiah, and shall, upon their believing in him, be admitted to all the privileges of his people as readily as if they had been descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or had been trained up in the worship of the true God, and were by circumcision entered most
47 expressly into covenant with him. *For so the Lord hath charged us* to do,[e] (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts i. 8.) in consequence of that prediction which was uttered by Isaiah in the name of God, (Isa. xlix. 6.) where he addresses himself to the Messiah, [*saying,*] "*I* "*have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the* "remotest *ends of the earth.*" Thither therefore will we carry his saving name; and we doubt not but they will thankfully accept that gospel which you so ungratefully despise and reject.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying,* I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 *And the Gentiles hearing* [*these things,*] that the way now was open for their admission into covenant with God, and they were welcome to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, *rejoiced* greatly at the happy tidings, *and glorified the word of the Lord,* which had invited them to share in all the blessings of his grace, and brought the knowledge of salvation to them: *And as many* of those who were present *as were,* through the operation of divine grace upon their hearts, in good earnest *determined for eternal life,* and brought to a resolution of courageously facing all opposition in the way to it, *believed,*[f] and openly

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

a *To continue in the grace of God.*] The gospel is often called the grace of God, and the word of his grace, with the utmost propriety, as containing the richest display of his grace in the free pardon of our sins by Christ, and the provision he has made for our sanctification and eternal happiness. Compare Acts xiv. 3; xx. 24; Rom. vi. 14; Gal. v. 4; Col. i. 6; Tit. ii. 11; 1 Pet. v. 12.

b *Blaspheming* and reviling, &c.] The word βλασφημουντες, in this connexion with αντελεγοντες, must signify their giving them abusive language. Probably they charged them to their faces with falsehood and villany, and represented the cause they were carrying on as most contemptible and wicked. It may seem strange this did not prevent the conversion of the Gentiles: But they would easily see it was the regard that Paul and Barnabas expressed for them which had exasperated the Jews: and it is not improbable that some miracles might have been wrought during the preceding week which would set the character of these divine teachers above the danger of being overthrown by the malicious insinuations or confident assertions of these furious opposers.

c *Adjudge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.*] This text most plainly shows that persons are said to be self-condemned who furnish out matter of condemnation from their own words, though they do not actually pass sentence on themselves; for nothing was farther from the thoughts of these Jews, than declaring themselves unworthy of eternal life for not believing the gospel; they rather expected that life by rejecting it.

d *Behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*] The meaning is, not that they intended no more to make an offer to the Jews, for we find they continued to address them first wherever they came; but they openly declared, that while they continued at Antioch, they should lose no more time in fruitless attempts on their ungrateful countrymen, but would employ themselves in doing what they could for the conversion of the Gentiles there.

e *For so the Lord hath charged us.*] They might have argued this from the texts quoted in the paraphrase; but Paul had also received a more express command to this purpose. Compare Acts xxii. 21; xxvi. 17, 18.

f *As many as were determined for eternal life believed.*] I cannot think, with Sir Norton Knatchbull, that we should take τεταγμενοι

embraced the gospel; which others who were remiss and unaffected about their future and everlasting concerns, stupidly neglected, though they could find nothing solid to allege against the evidence by which it was supported. *And* as these new converts joined their most zealous and affectionate labours with those of Paul and Barnabas to propagate it, *the word of the Lord was borne on*, as with a mighty torrent, *throughout all that region*, which by this means was watered as with a river of salvation.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

But the Jews, provoked beyond all patience at such a conduct and at such success, *stirred up* [*some*] *devout women of considerable rank*, who having been proselyted to their religion, were peculiarly zealous for it,[g] *and* also applied themselves to *the magistrates of the city*, representing these new preachers as exciters of sedition and innovators in religion, who might occasion danger to the state; *and* thus they *raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their territories* with violence and infamy. 50

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

But they, when they were going from the boundaries of that place, *shook off the dust of their feet* for a testimony *against them;* as their Lord had commanded his apostles to do, in token of the certain ruin which should befal such despisers of his gospel: (Mark vi. 11.) *And* departing from thence, they *came to* the neighbouring city of *Iconium*,[h] and there renewed the proclamation of those glad tidings which many of the inhabitants of Antioch had so ungratefully rejected. 51

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

But the disciples who were left there *were filled with* great *joy* that so blessed a message had reached their hearts; *and* as Paul and Barnabas had laid their hands upon them, they were furnished *with* an abundant communication of the gifts as well as graces of *the Holy Spirit*,[i] whereby they were not only confirmed in the faith which they had newly embraced, but were also rendered capable of carrying on the interests of christianity in that place, when the first planters of their church could no longer continue to cultivate and water it. 52

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a great comfort to the ministers of the gospel, that amidst that incredulity which too generally prevails, any are found who will credit the gospel; any to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed, in conquering their prejudices against it: With a chosen remnant of these God will support his faithful servants. Oh that the instances of that consolation may be more numerous and more remarkable in our days! Ver. 43

It is matter of some encouragement when numbers crowd to attend upon the preaching of the gospel; for *faith cometh by hearing.* (Rom. x. 17.) They who reject the counsel of God against themselves, will no doubt be provoked at such a circumstance, and the malignity and envy of their hearts will stir up opposition and contention: But God knows how to bring good out of evil; nor should his ministers be discouraged by the contradiction of sinners, but rather turn themselves to those who may be more willing to hear. In the mean time, let those that thrust from them the word of God know that, in the language of scripture, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; and since they will not condescend to accept of it on these terms, the great Author thereof will not condescend to give it on any other. And the day is coming when we shall see, and the whole world shall see, how much reason they have to glory in that height of spirit which they now show. 44 45 46

Let it be the daily joy of our souls, that *the Lord Jesus Christ was given for a light of the Gentiles*, and *for God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Through the tender mercies of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us.* (Luke i. 78.) Let us pray that it may arise and shine upon the remotest nations. And indeed, 47

here to signify the same with συνηγμενοι, and placing the comma after it, render the clause, *As many as were met together*, (that is, all the Gentiles,) *believed to* [or *in*] *eternal life*, which I think neither the import nor order of the words will permit——Much less can I allow of Mr. Jos. Mede's interpretation, that τεταγμενοι εις ζωην αιωνιον is a periphrasis to express proselytes of the gate, (supposing the distinction of such proselytes ever so well founded,) since we never meet with the phrase elsewhere as a description of them, which indeed might much better suit other proselytes, and since there is no reason to believe that they all, and only they, were now converted, or even that the chief number of converts was among them, when almost the whole city was gathered together.——The word τασσω has various significations: It is rendered *ordained* only here and Rom. xiii. 1; (where the margin, I think more properly, renders it *ordered;*) elsewhere it is rendered *determined*, Acts xv. 3; *addicted*, 1 Cor. xvi. 15; and most frequently *appointed*, Matt. xxviii. 16; Acts xxii. 10; xxviii. 23. In the Greek classics, I think it generally, in its passive form, signifies "Men, who having been appointed for "some military expedition, (and set in their proper offices, as we "render it, Luke vii. 8.) are drawn up in battle-array for that pur-"pose." (See Dr. Hammond's learned note here, with Le Clerc's addition to it, and Raphelius, *Ex Herod.* p. 353—362.) So that it expresses or refers at once to the action of their commander in marshalling them according to the plan he has formed in his own mind, and to their own presenting themselves in their proper places, to be led on to the intended expedition. This I take to be precisely its sense here, and have therefore chosen the word *determined*, as having an ambiguity something like that in the original. Perhaps if one word alone were to be used for τασσω in all the places where it is used, it should be *ordered*. The meaning of the sacred penman seems to be, that all who were deeply and seriously concerned about their eternal happiness, (whether that concern began now, or were of longer date,) openly embraced the gospel; for surely none could be said to believe who did not make an open profession of christianity, especially in such circumstances; and wherever this temper was, it was undoubtedly the effect of a divine operation on their hearts, and of God's gracious purpose thus to call them, and list them (as it were) in their proper places in his army, under the great Captain of their salvation.

g *Devout women of considerable rank.*] I am much at a loss to know why so many learned writers interpret this of proselytes of the gate. It is quite unnatural to suppose, either that such should be called devout rather than those that had fully embraced the Mosaic religion, or that they should be more zealous than the others in resenting an imaginary injury done to the whole body of the Jews. But taking them for women of figure newly proselyted to Judaism, and full of an opinion of the sanctity and privileges of the people to whom they now belonged, nothing can be more natural than to suppose that they would instigate their husbands and other relations to the warmest resentment against Paul and Barnabas, whom they would look upon as levellers and apostates.

h *Came to Iconium.*] Raphelius (*Ex Xenoph.* p. 161—164.) has taken great pains to settle the geography of this place, and has fully proved that it lay, not (as it is often placed) in the middle of Lycaonia, which occasions some perplexity in following passages, but on its western borders, and just on the confines of Pisidia, Galatia, and Phrygia, to the latter of which it seems once to have belonged.

i *Were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*] Hence both Lord Barrington (*Miscell. Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 105. *et seq.*) and Dr. Benson (Vol. II. p. 37.) infer that the Holy Spirit descended on these converts without the imposition of hands, and perhaps in flaming tongues. But this appears to me a mere conjecture, and indeed a very improbable one. The phrase of being filled with the Spirit can, to be sure, never prove it. (Compare Acts vi. 3, 5; vii. 55; xi. 24; xiii. 9; Luke i. 15; and especially Eph. v. 18.) And had the analogy which (I think quite without reason) they suppose expedient between the imagined different cases of the first-fruits of the proselytes of the gate and of the idolatrous Gentiles, been really observed, then, according to the principles of these learned writers themselves, such an immediate effusion of the Spirit must have fallen on Sergius Paulus, as it did on Cornelius and his friends, rather than on these Antiochians, whom they (for reasons I am yet to learn) call the harvest of idolatrous Gentiles,

SECT. 30. ACTS XIII.

if we are entirely unconcerned about its propagation in the world, we have great reason to fear that we have ourselves no part in the saving benefits which it confers. May the silver trumpet every where sound, to awaken the nations to list themselves in this holy war under Christ, against all the enemies of salvation; and may many appear determined for eternal life, and, like these converts of Antioch, courageously set themselves in battle-array against every thing which would oppose their progress towards it!

50 Vain then will all the rage of persecution be, by whomsoever it is excited or maintained; though by persons of
51 the highest rank or the most honoured characters. If the messengers of Christ be cast out of one place, they will appear with renewed zeal in another: And they who are proselyted to christianity, though in a great fight of affliction, will have the Spirit of God and of glory resting upon them; and will be enabled to rejoice, not only in the midst of their afflictions, but on account of them. In the mean while, the dust shaken off from the shoes of the rejected ambassadors of the Prince of Peace will be recorded as a witness against those that have despised their message, and will expose them to a final condemnation in the day of judgment, more intolerable than that which was once executed on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or which their wretched inhabitants are then to expect. (Mark vi. 11.)

SECTION XXXI.

Paul and Barnabas, after some stay at Iconium, go to Lystra: The inhabitants of that city, struck by a miracle wrought on a lame man, could hardly be restrained from giving them divine honours. Acts xiv. 1—18.

ACTS xiv. 1.

SECT. 31. ACTS XIV.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that Paul and Barnabas, being driven away from Antioch in Pisidia by the persecution which the Jews raised against them, retired to Iconium, a city of Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia, to the north of Antioch. *And it came to pass*, in a very little time after their arrival *at Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews* there, *and spake* on the great subject of the gospel-salvation *in such a manner that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks*
1 *believed.*[a] *But the unbelieving Jews*, who were greatly provoked at the growing success of the gospel, and studied all they could to put a stop to its progress, *stirred up the minds of the heathen* inhabitants of the place, *and filled them with malignity against the* christian *brethren, and* especially against those celebrated teachers of a religion with re-
2 spect to which they had entertained such unfavourable prejudices. Nevertheless God was pleased to interpose in such a manner as to prevent their rage from running presently to an extreme, and to animate his faithful servants amidst all the opposition and hardships they met with: *for a considerable time, therefore, they continued* their abode there,[b] *speaking freely in [the cause of] the Lord* Jesus Christ,[c] *who bare witness to the word of his grace* which they delivered, *and gave* a variety of miraculous *signs and wonders to be done by their hands*, which were of service to confirm the faith of the new converts, and to prevail with many others to receive the gospel, and might have convinced all the in-
4 habitants, if they had exercised a becoming candour. *But the multitude of the city was divided* into two opposite parties; *and some were* of the same mind *with the* unbelieving *Jews*, whom they joined in desiring that these new preachers might be expelled as disturbers of the established religion, *and others* most cordially fell in *with the apostles*, whom they received as messengers from God, to guide men to true piety and eternal hap-
5 piness. *But*, on the whole, the magistrates favoured the contrary side; and *as a violent attempt was* going to be *made* by those who had conspired against them, *both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, with their* respective *rulers, to injure and* even *to stone them*
6 as blasphemers; When the project was just ripe for execution, Paul and Barnabas *having received intelligence of it,*[d] prevented the attempt by withdrawing from thence, and getting away from Iconium *they fled to Lystra and Derbe*, which were both *cities of Lycaonia, and to the adjacent country* near the borders of Cappadocia and Galatia, which
7 were contiguous provinces. *And there they preached the gospel* in a very successful manner, so that the church was still propagated by the very methods taken to destroy it.

ACTS xiv. 1.

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

who were not called till the gospel had been preached through all Cyprus and Pamphylia, both to Jews and Gentiles.

a *Multitude——of the Greeks believed.*] Dr. Whitby and several other learned writers seem to limit this text more than there is any reason to do, by supposing the Greeks here mentioned to have been, chiefly at least, proselytes of the gate. The argument from their being found in the Jewish synagogues is very inconclusive; for, as was observed before, the fame of such extraordinary teachers as Paul and Barnabas, might naturally draw together great numbers of people who did not usually worship in the synagogues.

b *For a considerable time, therefore, &c.*] Some think the second verse should be included in a parenthesis, and that the particle [*therefore*] refers to the success that Paul and Barnabas had met with at Iconium, (which had been mentioned, ver. 1.) as what induced them to continue preaching there for a long time; while others who would make no break in the connexion, chuse rather that μεν εν should be rendered *for indeed;* and, supposing the rage of the Jews to have been exasperated by their long stay and preaching there, would render the beginning of this verse, *For indeed they had tarried a long time, &c.* (See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*) But the connexion may be well enough preserved though we retain the usual sense of the particle εν, if we consider what is here expressed as an account of the great firmness and undaunted zeal with which these faithful ministers pursued their work; that since the Jews were so intent upon opposing them, and laboured to incense the Gentiles too against them, they therefore thought it needful to continue preaching with the greater boldness, and to make the longer stay there, for the establishment and confirmation of the new converts, and for the vindication of their own character, and of the cause they were engaged in, from the injurious calumnies and false aspersions of their enemies, till they proceeded to such violent methods, that they no longer could remain with any safety there.

c *Speaking freely in [the cause of] the Lord.*] Some would render the words, παῤῥησιαζομενοι επι τω Κυριω, *being inspired with great resolution by the Lord;* but though this was undoubtedly the case, I am not sure the words themselves express it. Beza renders it, *in a dependence on the Lord;* and indeed the original will very naturally bear that sense.

d *Having received intelligence of it.*] They were, as it should seem, informed of it when the mob was actually raised, and coming towards the place where they were. Some have imagined it might be by inspiration; but I see no necessity for having recourse to that.

But there happened one circumstance while they were in these parts which was much taken notice of; *and* as it gave occasion to a remarkable occurrence, it will not be improper to relate it more particularly. *There sat a certain man at Lystra [who was] disabled in his feet,* and thereby rendered incapable of providing a maintenance for himself, *being so lame from his mother's womb that he never had walked* at all. Now it so happened, that in some place of public resort near which he was laid to beg for alms of those that passed by, *this man heard Paul speaking, who fixing his eyes upon him, and seeing,* by the ardour and humility which was expressed in his countenance, *that he had faith* sufficient *to be healed,* and finding also in himself that the power of Christ was to be displayed on this occasion, directed his speech to the poor cripple, And *said with a loud voice,* in the hearing of all that were assembled there, as one that was conscious of the divine authority by which he then acted, Arise, and *stand upright on thy feet: And* the lame man immediately attempted it, in a believing dependence on the power of Christ, which wrought so effectually in him, that *he leaped up* at once from the place where he sat with an astonishing agility, *and* not only stood upright, but *walked* about as firmly and steadily as if he had been accustomed to walk from his infancy.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

And the multitude who were present when this wonderful cure was wrought, *seeing what Paul had done* by only speaking a word, were all in raptures of astonishment, and *lifted up their voices* in loud acclamations, *saying, in the Lycaonian language,*[e] *The gods are descended* from heaven *to us in the* form and *likeness of men.*[f] *And* perceiving *Barnabas* to be a person of the better presence and of the more majestic port, *they called* him *Jupiter: and Paul,* who was a little active man, they called *Mercury,*[g] *because he was the leader of the discourse,* on which account they thought he might more probably be their god of eloquence.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

And the priest of that *Jupiter* who was esteemed the tutelar deity of that place, and [*whose image*] *was* therefore placed in a temple erected to him *before their city,* in the suburbs,[h] not far from the place where the miracle was wrought, immediately *brought oxen* crowned *with garlands,*[i] according to their usual manner, *to the gates* of the place where Paul and Barnabas were; *and would, with the multitude, have offered sacrifice* [*to them,*] to acknowledge the obligation they were under to them for this condescending and beneficent visit, and to take this opportunity of imploring their continued protection in their public and private affairs.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

But as they were leading on the sacrificial procession towards them, *the apostles Barnabas and Paul hearing of* the purpose for which *it* was intended, were struck with a becoming horror at the proposal, and *rent their mantles,* in token of that mixture of indignation and sorrow with which they beheld this strange abuse of a miracle wrought to destroy that idolatry which from thence they took occasion to practise; *and* in this moving and expressive manner they *ran in among the multitude, crying out* with the greatest earnestness, *And saying, O Sirs,* unhappy and misguided men as ye are, *why do ye these things* with regard to us? We are not what you imagine us to be; and far from having any title to divine honours, we assure you that *we also are* mere mortal *men* as others are, *obnoxious to the same* common *infirmities* of human life *with yourselves,*[k] *and are* come hither with a design of *preaching the gospel to you, that you may* be directed to the proper object of religious adoration, and may effectually be taught to *turn from these vanities* which you now worship,[l] *to* Jehovah, *the* one only *living* and true God, *who made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all things which are* contained *in*

14 *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of,* they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

e *In the Lycaonian language.*] This, as some say, was not a dialect of the Greek, but rather approached the Syriac, as that of Cappadocia is said to have done.

f *The gods are descended to us in the likeness of men.*] It appears from numberless passages in the heathen writers, that they suppose this often to have happened. See Homer, *Odyss.* P. ver. 485. *et seq.*; Hesiod, *Op. et Dier.* ver. 249, 254. *et seq.*; Catull. *De Nupt. Pel.* ver. 384. *et seq.* and the notes of Grotius and Elsner on this place, which last great critic has shown that this notion particularly prevailed with respect to Jupiter and Mercury. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 420—422.

g *Barnabas they called Jupiter, and Paul Mercury.*] Chrysostom observes (and after him Mr. Fleming, *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 226.) that the heathens represented Jupiter as an old but vigorous man, of a noble and majestic aspect, and large robust make, which therefore he supposes might be the form of Barnabas; whereas Mercury appeared young, little, and nimble, as Paul might probably do, for he was yet but a young man. Yet the reason given by Luke is different, and more naturally leads to the turn given in the paraphrase.——Jamblicus calls Mercury Θεος ο των λογων ηγεμων, with a remarkable correspondence to the words of the sacred historian, αυτος ην ο ηγουμενος του λογου. See other learned illustrations of this title, cited by Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 8. p. 313, 314.——Mr. Harrington well observes (in his *Works*, p. 330.) that this persuasion might gain the more easily on the minds of the Lycaonians, on account of the well-known fable of Jupiter and Mercury, who were said to have descended from heaven in human shape, and to have been entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians received their name.

h *The priest of Jupiter, [whose image] was before their city.*] Elsner has shown that it was customary to build temples to their deities in the suburbs, and to set up their images before the city at the gates. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 425.) See also Mr. Biscoe, Chap. viii. § 9. p. 314.——It has been argued from hence, that the heathens considered their several images, of Jupiter for instance, as so many distinct Jupiters, that is, as having some spirit sent from the god to whom their worship was ultimately referred, to reside in them; which, as Mr. Warburton well observes, may account for the dispute between two Jupiters, the Tonans, and the Capitolinus, mentioned by Suetonius. *August. cap.* 91. See Warb. *Div. Legat.* Vol. I. p. 279—281. *note.*

i *Oxen* crowned *with garlands.*] It is well known that the heathens used to crown both the images of their deities and the victims they offered to them, with chaplets of flowers, as appears from a multitude of passages both in the Latin and Greek classics. See Raphel. *Not. ex Herod.* p. 364; and Mr. Biscoe, as above, p. 315.

k *Obnoxious to the same* common *infirmities.*] This is also the meaning of the ομοιοπαθης, Jam. v. 17. and nothing could be more absurd or injurious to the character of these holy men, than to imagine that it refers, in either of the places, to any thing of ungoverned passion.

l *From these vanities.*] A bold expression, when considered as addressed to a whole crowd of bigoted idolaters, with their priests at their head. It naturally leads us to reflect how unlike the conduct of the apostles was to that of the heathen philosophers, who, instead of entering a generous protest against the absurdities of the established worship, though it often led to such scandalous immoralities, meanly conformed to it themselves, and taught their disciples to esteem such conformity an essential part of a good citizen's character; which seems to have been the design even of the dying words of Socrates himself, a circumstance hardly to be mentioned without tears. See Mr. Warburton's *Div. Legat.* Vol. I. p. 322.

SECT. 31. ——— ACTS XIV. 17 *them: Who in former generations permitted all the* heathen *nations to walk in their own ways*, and left them under the darkness into which they were gradually fallen, without giving them any revelation of himself, either by a written law, or by prophetic messengers: *Though* even then *he did not leave himself* entirely *without witness*, nor were they altogether destitute of any means of coming to a better knowledge:[m] for he was continually testifying his deity, his presence, and his care, by the substantial fruits of his liberality, *doing good* to his creatures with a bountiful hand, [*and*] *giving us* all, whether Jews or Gentiles, refreshing *showers of rain from heaven*, which none of the idols could grant; *and*, through the concurring influences of the sun, producing *fruitful seasons*, administering thereby not only to the necessities but the delights of life, and *filling our hearts with food and with gladness* too. Since, therefore, to all his other favours he has now added this of sending us with these miraculous powers to instruct you in his nature, and to point out to you the way to happiness, forbear these vain and offensive rites, and set yourselves seriously to attend to the gospel, which it is our great business here to proclaim.

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 *And saying these things*, plain and reasonable as they were, *they hardly restrained the people from* their purpose, and scarcely could prevent their *sacrificing to them.*

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3 HAPPY are the ministers of Christ in the midst of labours and persecution too, if they have the presence of their Master with them; and if the Lord, as in this instance, bear witness to the word of his grace. Almighty Saviour, leave us not destitute of that presence which is our hope and our joy! but bear witness with all thy faithful servants, while they are bearing their testimony to thee!

4—6 Infinite Wisdom governs those revolutions in Providence which seem most mysterious. These repeated oppositions which the apostles met with in their work seemed to threaten their destruction; but they served in effect to render their testimony more credible, when borne in the midst of so many dangers: They served also to exercise the graces of these new converts; to add a growing evidence to christianity throughout the remotest ages; and they were the means of spreading the gospel to a greater variety of places, when the apostles were forced to make such short visits at many, through the inhospitality of those from whom they deserved a quite different reception.

8—10 The cure of this cripple was but one miracle of a thousand which the power of Christ made common in those days; the effect of it one way and another was very remarkable: The multitude, struck with the exertion of an
11—13 energy truly divine, by an error to which human nature is (alas!) too incident, fix their eyes on the instruments, and pay that honour to mortal men which was due only to that God by whom that wonderful work was wrought. Yet a mixture of piety amidst all that superstition cannot but strike the mind with some pleasure, joined with the compassion we must feel to find it so wretchedly misguided and allayed. When they thought the gods were come down in human form, they were desirous immediately to pay honour to them. The Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh: but, alas, in how different a manner was he generally received! received indeed with outrage and infamy, instead of that prostrate adoration to which he had so just a claim.

14 These his servants with an honest indignation reject the homage offered to them, and regard it with horror rather than delight. It was a courageous testimony which they bore to the vanity of these heathen deities, while sur-
15—17 rounded with adorers and their priests. While they confess their own infirmities as weak and mortal men, they, with heroic boldness and sacred truth, proclaim *the one living and true God*, the Creator and Governor of heaven and earth, of the sea, and all that is therein. Let us adore him as the Author of all the blessings of Providence, as giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons; and while our hearts are filled with food and gladness, let our hearts rejoice in him, and to him let us devote that vigour which we derive from his daily bounty. Above all, let us praise him that we have not these witnesses alone of his presence, his power, and his goodness; but that he who once left the nations to go on in their own ways, has now revealed unto us the path of salvation, and given us *that true bread from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever.* (John vi. 58.)

SECTION XXXII.

Paul and Barnabas being driven from Lystra, by a persecution excited by the Jews, return through Derbe, Pisidia, and Pamphylia, to Antioch in Syria, where they make some abode. Acts xiv. 19, *to the end.*

ACTS XIV. 19.

SECT. 32. ——— ACTS XIV. 19 WHEN Paul and Barnabas had put a stop to that undue respect the people would have shown them, and had instructed them to worship none but the true God, they still continued for a little while at Lystra, and endeavoured to improve that advantage which the cure of the lame man had given them for preaching the gospel there. *But* though they were so happy as to make some converts to it, they were soon interrupted in their work; for quickly after this, [*some*] *Jews came thither from* the neighbouring cities of *Antioch and Iconium, and persuaded the multitude* to disbelieve what they taught: and representing them to be deceivers, they prejudiced their minds to such a degree against their persons and their doctrine, that the very people who but just before would have adored them as deities, now rose to put them to death as malefactors: *And* accordingly *having stoned Paul* in a

ACTS XIV. 19.

AND there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

m *He did not leave himself without witness.*] As a friend, in sending us frequent presents, expresses his remembrance of us and affection to us, though he neither speak nor write, so all the gifts of the divine bounty which are scattered abroad on every side, (as a late pious philosopher most justly observes,) are so many witnesses sent to attest the divine care and goodness; and they speak it in very sensible language to the heart, though not to the ear. See *Nature Displayed*, Vol. II. p. 7. Raphelius (*Ex Herod.* p. 365, 366.) has a curious note here, in which he shows that the pagans spoke of rain as given by God, and, which is very remarkable, not as coming from the gods; and this he thinks a remnant of patriarchal piety, in a form of speech older than the first idolatry: So that there is no need, with Dr. Hammond, to have recourse to the Jewish proverb, that *the keys of life, rain, and the resurrection, were always kept in God's own hand.* Compare Jer. xiv. 22.

tumultuous manner in the streets, *they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.*[a] *But as the disciples were gathered about him* with a view of performing the last office of affection to him, in bearing him to his funeral with proper regard, to their unspeakable surprise they found him so restored by the power of Christ, that *he* immediately *rose up* as in perfect health,[b] *and* his bruises were so healed that he *entered into the city* again,[c] *and* was not only able to walk about it, but *the next day* found that *he* was capable of undertaking a journey, and *departed with Barnabas to Derbe*, a city of Lycaonia, on the borders of Cappadocia; as they did not think it convenient to proceed in their progress to Galatia, Phrygia, or any more distant province.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

And having preached the gospel at Derbe, *to* the inhabitants of *that* populous *city, and* 21
made a considerable number of disciples there, *they* trod back the road they had taken, and *returned* first *to Lystra* again, *and* then *to Iconium and Antioch* in Pisidia; *Confirming the souls of the disciples* which they had made in those places in their former jour- 22
ney; *exhorting them to continue in the* christian *faith* with a stedfastness becoming the evidence and importance of it; *and* [*testifying*] *that it is necessary we should enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations*, which, as God has been pleased to order matters, will unavoidably lie in our way, but which it will be abundantly worth our while to encounter in so good a cause, and in the views of so glorious a reward.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch:

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

And when they had with the concurrent suffrage of the people *constituted presbyters* 23
for them in every church,[d] who might take care of them when they were gone away to other parts, *having prayed* to God *with* solemn *fasting*, that a blessing might attend their inspection and labours, *they committed them*, in the infant and distressed state of the church at that time, *to* the guardianship and care of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, *in whom they had believed*, and so quitted them, with a cheerful confidence that he would carry on that good work which, in the midst of so much opposition, he had happily begun amongst them.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

And passing through the province of *Pisidia, they came* again *to Pamphylia*, which 24
was the country where they had landed when they came from Cyprus. (Chap. xiii. 13.)
And having spoken the word of the kingdom *in* the city of *Perga*, where they had been 25
before, *they went down* from thence *to Attalia*, which was a maritime town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. *And* not thinking it proper at that time to travel through 26
Cilicia, though they were then on the borders of it, and some christian churches were already planted there, (compare chap. ix. 30; xv. 41.) *they* took shipping, and *sailed from thence* to the coast of Syria, and went up the river Orontes *to Antioch* in that province; *from whence they had*, by the divine appointment, *been* solemnly *recommended to the grace of God for that work which they had* so vigorously prosecuted, and so hap-

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia.

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled.

a *Having stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, &c.*] Probably they left his body exposed to the open air, intending that he (to whom a few days before they would have sacrificed oxen) should be a prey to wild beasts or birds. There might be something extraordinary in the appearance of his body in this circumstance, which led them to conclude he was dead while he was yet alive; for one can hardly imagine that they would have been contented with any very slight and transient inquiry whether he were dead or not.——It is observable, we read of no such injury offered to Barnabas, who seems to have had no share in the effects of this popular fury; and it is probable that Paul's distinguished zeal marked him out as the object of their distinguished cruelty. But it is surely a strange thought of Woltzogenius, that this was permitted by God as a punishment on Paul for the concern he had in stoning Stephen. However, the apostle might well insert it in the brief history he gives us of his sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 23—27. of which few are particularly mentioned in this book.

b *He rose up* as in perfect health.] That just after he had been stoned, and dragged about the streets, and left for dead, he should rise and walk back into the city, must certainly be the effect of a miraculous cure, approaching, as near as one can conceive, to a resurrection from the dead. This is the more illustrated by his going the next day to Derbe; whereas, in the course of nature, he would then have felt his bruises much more than at first, and probably, after the best care that could have been taken of him, would hardly have been able to turn himself in his bed.

c *Entered into the city.*] Probably by showing himself alive among the new converts at least, if not to others, he hoped, as he reasonably might, to confirm their faith in the gospel, and their courageous adherence to it.——Permit me to add here, that though it was not till the next journey hither that Paul formed his intimate acquaintance with Timothy, (Acts xvi. 1, 2.) yet since he speaks of Timothy as having been a witness of his sufferings here and in the neighbourhood, (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) whereas we read nothing of any remarkable sufferings in that second progress, (Acts xvi. 4.) it seems he began his acquaintance now with that hopeful youth, whose pious mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, (2 Tim. i. 5.) seem now to have been entered into the christian church, though he was not admitted till afterwards.

d *When they had constituted presbyters for them, &c.*] Mr. Harrington (in his *Works*, p. 327.) renders the words χειροτονησαντες αυτοις πρεσβυτερους, *ordained them elders by the votes of the people*, urging the authority of Suidas, who explains χειροτονια by εκλογη παντος χυριου, "the *election* of magistrates, or ratification of laws by "many, signified by holding up or stretching out the hand." (Compare 2 Cor. viii. 19.) Raphelius has confirmed the same interpretation: (*Not. ex Xen.* p. 165.) And the old English Bible translates it, *When they had ordained them elders by election.* The celebrated author first mentioned has endeavoured largely to vindicate this interpretation from the exceptions of Dr. Hammond, Dr. Seaman, and others, who make χειροτονια the same with χειροθεσια, or *the laying on of hands.* See Harrington's *Prerogative of Popular Government*, chap. v.——This is not a place for discussing so nice a question; but as I am in my own judgment convinced he is in the right, I chose to paraphrase the passage agreeable to that notion, though I do not fix it in the translation. I have not rendered it *ordained*, because custom has, among us especially, affixed to that word, in such a connexion, the idea of laying on hands in prayer, to invest a person with, or mark him out for, the ministerial office: and this which I doubt not was here done, seems to be intimated in the following clause.——It seemed to me that the word *constitute* would properly express the apostles' presiding in that previous choice, which probably the people signified by χειροτονια, *the stretching out their hands.* And this interpretation appears most naturally to suit the circumstances of things, as well as the import of the original words made use of; for the people would, no doubt, have a great deference to the judgment of the apostles in the choice of those officers who were in some degree to fill up their places in exercising the christian ministry among them; and on the other hand, whatever extraordinary power their institution to this office by the apostles might have given, and whatever acts of direct authority it might have warranted, yet considering how much the comfort and usefulness (not to say the subsistence) of these ministers, who had no human laws to establish them, would depend upon the free consent of the people, and what a natural authority the express declaration of that consent would give them in the execution of their office, the prudence as well as the known humility of the apostles would lead them to take that consent as expressly as they could; (compare 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15; 2 Cor. xi. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 6; Philem. ver. 8, 9; 1 Pet. v. 3.) which it would be the more natural and expedient to do, as the civil government of these places was in a great measure popular, (as Mr. Harrington has shown, *Ibid.* chap. ii.) and as the apostles also knew how expressly the consent of the Jewish people had been taken in the settlement of their civil and ecclesiastical affairs, which the same writer has also well illustrated, *Ibid.* chap. iii.—Sir Norton Knatchbull has an admirable note here, in which he establishes the version I have given by many incontestable authorities even of ecclesiastical writers: And though it be true that in some cases (as Dr. Hammond has learnedly shown) χειροτονειν signifies to *constitute* or *appoint* to an office where there could be *no voting* at all, I cannot see any evidence that the word is so to be interpreted here.

SECT. 32. ACTS XIV.

pily *accomplished:* (chap. xiii. 2, 3.) They were therefore very desirous both of rendering a particular account of their ministry there, and also of returning their grateful acknowledgments to the divine providence and grace, to which they owed their safety amidst so many extreme dangers, and their success in such difficult labours.

27 *And when they were come thither, and had gathered the church together, they related* to the brethren at Antioch *what* great and wonderful things *God had done with* and by *them*, in the whole of their voyage and journey in all the countries through which they had passed; (compare chap. xv. 12; and xxi. 19.) *and* more especially acquainted them with what extraordinary success he had been pleased to bless their ministry among the heathen, and *how he had opened a door of faith* and hope *to the Gentiles*, who had so long continued in ignorance, idolatry, and misery,[e] making the gospel shine into their hearts, and graciously receiving them into the number of his people.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 *And* Providence permitting them, after their long fatigues, to repose themselves a while in that agreeable situation amidst their dear brethren and friends, *they resided there a considerable time with the disciples*, establishing them in their adherence to the gospel, and in a behaviour suitable to their profession of it.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 19 WHO would value himself upon the applauses of a multitude, when he sees how soon these changeable inhabitants of Lystra were instigated to assault him as a malefactor whom but a few days before they were ready to adore as a god, and how easily they were prevailed upon to exchange the instruments of sacrifice for those of murder! They stone him, and drag him out of the city for dead: And who that had seen this lamentable sight would not have concluded that here the labours of Paul were ended, and that henceforward we should hear no more of him in this glorious history? But God, who amidst all their outrage secretly preserved the flame of life from being utterly
20 extinguished, interposed miraculously to heal his wounds and bruises, and on a sudden restored him to perfect health. Thus could he always have protected his apostles, so that, in a literal sense, *not one hair of their heads should have perished:* but it was more suitable to those wise maxims on which he proceeded in the government of the world, to suffer them at length to fall by their enemies, and to pour out their blood as a seal of their doctrine, and of the sincerity with which they taught it; nor could any death be more glorious, or, when taken in its full connexion, any more happy.

21 With pleasure let us trace these holy men in all the stages of their undaunted and successful course; converting some, confirming others, and, upon the whole, like their Divine Master, scattering blessings wherever they come.
22 Let their exhortation still have its power with us to engage our stedfast continuance in the christian faith through whatever tribulations we are called to pass; be the way ever so rugged and painful, let it be enough for us that it
23 leads to the kingdom of heaven. Thankfully let us own the divine goodness in all the assistances we receive as we pass through it, and particularly in that which all ages derive from the christian ministry, settled in the church, by the wise care of its blessed Founder, to be a perpetual blessing to it. May all the prayers which are offered for those who in succeeding generations are set apart to the work, in those solemn devotions which usually attend their ordination to it, be heard and answered! And may ministers and people flourish in knowledge and piety, under the constant care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls!

26 The success which attended these two apostles in their course, and the pleasure with which they returned to the place from whence they had so affectionately been recommended to the grace of God, may be an encouragement to our prayers and our labours. Whatever we do in the advancement of the gospel, let us, with these holy men,
27 acknowledge that God does it by us; and let us pray that the door of faith may be opened so wide, that all the nations of the earth may enter in and be saved.

SECTION XXXIII.

Some Jewish converts urging it as necessary that the Gentile christians should observe the law of Moses, Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders upon that question: An assembly is called, in which Peter declares on the side of their liberty. Acts xv. 1—11.

ACTS XV. 1.

SECT. 33. ACTS XV. 1

THE conclusion of the last section left Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, where they continued a considerable time. *And* now a circumstance occurred which was the occasion of very considerable consequences in the christian church there and elsewhere; for *some* persons *who came* thither *from Judea, taught the brethren*, in their public and private discourses, insisting with great earnestness, and saying to them in the strongest terms, *That*
1 *except ye be circumcised according to the manner* prescribed in the law *of Moses*, and become obedient to all the whole system of his precepts, *ye cannot* possibly *be saved* by the gospel; which was intended to make all that are converted to it Jews, and that they could not otherwise be true and genuine christians.

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 *There being therefore a contention* upon this account at Antioch, where there were several converts from among the Gentiles, to whom this doctrine could not but be very disagreeable; *and no small debate* arising [*on the part*] *of Paul and Barnabas*, who strenuously opposed these Jewish zealots, and maintained *against them* that christians

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they deter-

e *Opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*] It is certain the gospel was carried by the apostles, in this journey, to many celebrated countries to which it had never before reached; but as, on the one hand, it is certain it had been preached to the Gentiles before, so, on the other, it seems a groundless conjecture of Mr. Cradock, that in this journey Paul went as far as to Illyricum, (a province in Europe, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea,) preaching the gospel, (Rom. xv. 19.) and suffered all the hardships to which he refers, 2 Cor. 21. xi. *et seq.* See Crad. *Apost. Hist.* p. 88.

mined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

converted from other nations were as free from the Mosaic law as if it had never been given at all; the church thought it advisable to get the best satisfaction they could in an affair which affected the liberties and consciences of so many; and for this purpose *they resolved that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of their number, should go up to the apostles*[a] *and elders at Jerusalem,*[b] to know their sentiments *about this* grand *question.* SECT. 33. ACTS XV.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice, and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

They therefore upon this set out from Antioch, and *being brought forward on their journey by* several of *the church,*[c] *went through* the countries of *Phœnicia and Samaria,* which lay in their way, *relating* to all their fellow-christians whom they met with in the several towns through which they passed, *the conversion of the Gentiles,*[d] by the blessing of God on their labours; *and* by this account *they occasioned great joy to all the brethren.* 3

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

And being at length *arrived at Jerusalem, they were received* with all due respect *by the* whole *church, and* particularly *by the apostles and elders* who resided there: *And they related* to them *what* great and wonderful *things God had* graciously *done with* and by *them,* and gave them an account of the success with which he had blessed their ministry among the Gentiles, in their late travels through Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. 4

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

But some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed,[e] who were still zealous for the ceremonial law, *rose up and said, That* though they heartily rejoiced in the conversion of so many of the heathen to the knowledge and faith of the gospel, yet *it was* absolutely *necessary to circumcise them, and to* instruct and *charge them to keep the* whole *law of Moses* in its ceremonial as well as moral precepts. Others in the company opposed this as an innovation of a very unreasonable nature, and as what might be attended with pernicious consequences: And to bring the matter to an issue, it was agreed that at an appointed time it should be debated at large in a full assembly. 5

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

And accordingly when the day came, *the apostles and elders were gathered together,* 6 *to consult upon this affair,* and to consider what was fit to be determined in it. *And* 7 *after much debate,*[f] *Peter rose up* in the assembly, *and said to them, Men* [*and*] *brethren, you* very well *know that some considerable time since* the ever-blessed *God,* who is so remarkably *among us* by many gracious tokens of his presence, *chose*[g] *that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel,*[h] *and believe* in that glorious dispensation. *And* in proof of this, while I was preaching to Cornelius and his family, 8

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which know-

a *They resolved that Paul, &c. should go up to the apostles.*] It is generally allowed that this is the journey to which Paul refers, Gal. ii. 1, 2. when he says that he went up by revelation, which is very consistent with this; for the church in sending them might be directed by a revelation, made either immediately to Paul, or to some other person, relating to this important affair. Important indeed it was, and necessary, that these Jewish impositions should be solemnly opposed in time, because a great number of converts that were zealous for the law would eagerly fall in with such a notion, and be ready to contend for the observance of it.—Many of the christians at Antioch undoubtedly knew that Paul was under an extraordinary divine direction, and therefore would readily have acquiesced in his determination alone; but as others might have prejudices against him on account of his having been so much concerned with the Gentiles, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent sense and judgment of the apostles of the circumcision upon this occasion.

b *And elders at Jerusalem.*] By what authority these have been concluded to be some of the hundred and twenty mentioned, Acts i. 15. I am yet to learn, notwithstanding what is suggested by Dr. Whitby, *in loc.* and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 55. It seems to me, that any officers of the church to whom the stated inspection of it was committed, might properly be called elders, whether they were or were not of that number.

c *Being brought forward on their journey by the church.*] This is plainly the sense of the word προπεμφθεντες, which is constantly used to express the regard which was shown to those who travelled any where to preach the gospel, or to take care of the affairs of the church, whom it was usual to bring forward on their way. Compare Acts xx. 38; xxi. 5; Rom. xv. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11; 2 Cor. i. 16; Tit. iii. 13; and 3 John, ver. 6.

d *Relating* to all their fellow-christians——*the conversion of the Gentiles.*] It is surprising that the author of *Miscell. Sacra,* Essay iv. p. 50. *et seq.* and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 49, 50. should think Paul and Barnabas told their story in so ambiguous a manner as to leave room for those that heard them, both here and at Jerusalem, to conclude that the Gentiles of whom they spake were only proselytes of the gate, and not idolatrous Gentiles. Had the distinction been material, it would no doubt have been inquired into, and though no inquiry had been made, yet it would have been very disingenuous in Paul and Barnabas, when (as these writers allow) their work had chiefly lain among the idolatrous Gentiles, to conceal that circumstance, and leave the assembly in general terms to make a decree relating to christian Gentiles, in which, in fact, but a very small part of them should be concerned. But indeed it is most groundless to imagine that if the distinction had been ever so great between proselytes of the gate and other Gentiles, it should, in any circumstances or at any time, have been an obnoxious thing, or a thing that should need concealment, that the true God had been preached to idolaters. As for the argument from Gal. ii. 2. I may hereafter give my reasons for concluding it refers to Paul's teaching, that even the Jews themselves were by Christ freed from any general obligation in conscience to observe the Mosaic ceremonies.

e *But some of the sect of the Pharisees, &c.*] I cannot but wonder, with Raphelius, (*Ex Herod.* p. 367.) that Beza and some others should think this is a circumstance which Paul adds to his story, when the connexion so evidently shews them to be the words of Luke the historian, informing us that these messengers found some at Jerusalem who held the same unhappy principles which had so much disturbed the peace of the church at Antioch. To support the other interpretation, M. L'Enfant is obliged to make an addition to the text, and render it, *But* [*said they*] *some of the Pharisees, &c.* See Wolf. *Cur. Philol. in loc.*

f *After much debate.*] The debate which arose in this assembly may indeed prove that there were some in the church at Jerusalem who had not a due regard to the authority of the apostles; but it cannot, as many have supposed, afford any just argument against their inspiration; for this dispute does not appear to have been among the apostles themselves; and, if they really had debated the case a while, their decision at last might have been under an unerring direction: And I know not any reason to conclude that their inspiration was always so instantaneous and express as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other.

g *God among us chose.*] There seems, as Heinsius and many others have observed, something harsh in this expression, to take it as if Peter had said, "God chose me from among us all." The words [*among us*] are wanting in the Syriac Version, and some read [*among you;*] but the sense given in the paraphrase seems so easy and pertinent, that I see no reason to wish for any authority to change the received reading.

h *That the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel.*] It is surprising to me that the learned authors I have so often mentioned above should argue, that because the persons to whom Peter first preached the gospel were not idolaters, that is, because Cornelius was a worshipper of the true God, (for what his friends were, none can certainly say,) therefore the question now before this assembly must only be, "Whether proselytes of the gate were "obliged to observe the whole law of Moses?" See *Miscell. Sacr.* Essay iv. and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. chap. 3. § 4, 5, 6. I see not the force of this argument, since it evidently takes it for granted, both that the assembly would know and recollect that they were proselytes of the gate, merely from his calling them Gentiles, and also that circumcision would be judged more necessary for such converts than for those who had before been idolaters; both which suppositions appear to me very unwarrantable. Peter's argument plainly is, "Circumcision cannot be necessary for Gentile converts, because "God by the effusion of his Spirit declared his acceptance of un-"circumcised Gentiles in Cornelius's case:" And this argument will be conclusive, if Gentiles be taken in the most extensive, which we are sure was the most usual, sense of the word; that is, for all who are not, either by birth or complete proselytism, Jews.

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who were uncircumcised, that *God who knoweth the heart, bare witness to them* that they were accepted by him, by *giving them the Holy Spirit* in a miraculous effusion and a visible appearance, *even as* [*he did*] *to us* at the very beginning, on that ever-memorable day of Pentecost, which fulfilled our Lord's gracious promise, and furnished us for our great and successful work. *And* thus it evidently appeared that he *made no*

9 *distinction between us and them, having purified their hearts* as well as ours *by* a sincere *faith*, and thus sanctified them much more effectually than could have been done by any external rite, and made it manifest that he was ready to admit them to the blessings of his gospel.

10 *Now therefore*, my brethren, why do you not acquiesce in such a determination? *Why do you* insist on farther terms as necessary, where the divine will is already sufficiently declared; and go about to *tempt God, by* a proposition of *imposing on the neck of the disciples a* grievous and burthensome *yoke, which neither our fathers nor we have been able* cheerfully and regularly *to bear*, without being exposed to great inconveniences and

11 many transgressions in consequence of it? *But* far from consenting to what some of you propose, *we*, who are sufficiently instructed on this head by our great Master, do fully and assuredly *believe that we* ourselves *are saved*, not by obedience to the works of the law, but *by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the same manner as they* are: And therefore we cannot consent, that while they have that faith upon which salvation depends, we should urge upon them the observation of those ceremonial precepts of the law by which we ourselves know we cannot be justified.

Thus Peter pleaded: and James afterwards seconding his discourse, the council acquiesced in it, (as we shall presently hear,) only enjoining some easy restrictions, to avoid giving unnecessary offence to their circumcised brethren.

eth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us:

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 5, 10 How early did the spirit of bigotry and imposition begin to work in the christian church! that fatal humour of *imposing a yoke on the neck of Christ's disciples*, by making indifferent things necessary! An unmanly and antichristian disposition, which has almost ever since been rending the church to pieces, and clamorously throwing the blame on those who have been desirous, on principles truly evangelical, *to stand fast in the liberty with which* their Divine Master *hath made them free.* (Gal. v. 1.) How foolish and how mischievous the error of making terms of communion which Christ has never made! and how presumptuous the arrogance of invading his throne, to pronounce from thence damnatory sentences on those who will not, who dare not, submit to our uncommissioned and usurped authority!

2 Prudent undoubtedly was the part which these Antiochian christians acted upon this occasion, in sending these messengers to the apostles for their determination: and it will be our prudence, now we can no longer in person consult those ambassadors of Christ, to make their writings the man of our counsel, and the standard both of our faith and worship; appealing to the tribunal of Christ, our Master and our Judge, from those uncharitable censures which we may sometimes incur even from his faithful though mistaken servants, for retaining the simplicity of that religion which these authorized interpreters of his will taught.

3 Great joy was occasioned to churches through which Paul and Barnabas passed, when they recounted the conversion of the heathen. Oh that such joy may be renewed to us, by the success of all who, with a truly apostolic self-denial and zeal, go forth at any time to the vast multitudes of the Gentiles which yet remain on the face of this uncultivated earth of ours, so great a part of which is yet in a spiritual sense a wilderness! Whatever success

4 they may have in one part of our Lord's vineyard, or we in another, let us all remember it is in consequence of

7 what God does by us and by them; and let us adore the riches of divine grace, to which we owe it, that we are chosen to make a part of God's people ourselves, and to carry the knowledge and power of his gospel to others.

8, 9 May our hearts be purified by a vital, and not merely enlightened by a notional, faith! May that God who knoweth all hearts, bear witness to us, by giving us his Holy Spirit to *seal us to the day of redemption!* And being, under the influence of this sacred Agent, animated in the most amiable manner to adorn our profession,

11 when we have done all, may we humbly repose ourselves upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as knowing that it is only by the rich and free display of it that, after all our labour, obedience, and care, we can expect salvation!

SECTION XXXIV.

The speech of James in the assembly of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, with their decree in favour of the liberty of Gentile converts. Acts xv. 12—29.

Acts xv. 12.

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IT was observed in the last section, that a meeting of the apostles and elders was held at Jerusalem, on account of that attempt which the judaizing christians had made at Antioch to bring the believing Gentiles under the yoke of the Mosaic law; and an account was given of that speech in their favour with which Peter had opened it, wherein he recounted

12 the story of Cornelius, and the manner in which he and his friends were admitted into the church without circumcision, yet with most evident tokens of divine approbation. It was then judged convenient that they, who had been in a peculiar manner the apostles of the Gentiles, should proceed with their narration: *And* accordingly *the whole multitude* which was assembled[a] *kept silence, and attended to Barnabas and Paul*, while they

Acts xv. 12.

THEN all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul,

[a] *The whole multitude.*] I suppose this whole multitude is spoken of, ver. 22. as the whole church; for I cannot enter into the force of those reasons on which the learned Beza concludes that all that is mentioned from the sixth to the twenty-first verse, passed in a

declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

were *relating what* great *signs and wonders God had done among the heathen by them*, to reclaim them from their idolatries;[b] and with what miraculous operations he had confirmed their method of admitting them into the christian church, though they never made any effort towards engaging them to be circumcised, and become Jews.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me.

Then after they had done speaking, James the son of Alpheus, one of the apostles, *answered*,[c] *saying, Men* [*and*] *brethren*, I desire you would attentively *hearken unto me*, while I give you my most deliberate thoughts on this important question. Our beloved brother *Simon* Peter *hath been* just *relating how God first looked down on the Gentiles*, in his abundant mercy, *to take from among them a people for* the honour of *his name*, who should with us be accounted to him for a generation; sending his servant to them in an extraordinary manner, and crowning his labours with such tokens of success, and such characters of divine acceptance, as could leave no doubt as to the regularity of his proceedings; to all which the relations made by our brethren Barnabas and Paul, do wonderfully agree. 13 14

14 Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

And though this may seem quite contrary to some of our prejudices in favour of our nation and the law of Moses, yet if we will give ourselves leave impartially to examine and consider, we shall find it by no means incredible; for *the words of the prophets harmonize with this, as it is written*, particularly by Amos, (chap. ix. 11, 12.) 15

16 After this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things.

" *After this I will return* to my people in mercy, *and will* restore the house and *build* " *up the tabernacle of David* my servant, *which is fallen down*;[d] *yea, I will rebuild* " *its ruins, and set it upright again*, with such strength and glory as shall be observed by " all around: *That* not the Jews alone, but all *the remainder of men, may* earnestly *seek* " *the Lord*,[e] *even all the heathen* nations *upon whom my name is called*, who in that " day shall know my name, and be received into the number of my people, *saith the* " *Lord* Jehovah, *who*, by his almighty power, with unfailing faithfulness *doth all these* " *things*." 16 17

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

[*Now*] such a prediction is agreeable to the wise and steady plan of the divine government; for *all his works are from eternity* itself *known unto God*,[f] whom no unexpected event can ever surprise, but who has fixed his schemes on so perfect and exact a foresight of the most contingent events, that he is never under any necessity of changing them in the minutest circumstance. 18

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God;

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Wherefore I cannot but *determine* in my own mind,[g] and I doubt not but you will readily concur with me, that we ought *not to disquiet those who from among the Gentiles are converted* by divine grace *to* the knowledge and worship of the true *God*, and to obedience to the gospel,[h] with such observances as those now in question; *But* only *to write to them, that they abstain* from things grossly scandalous, and such as would give greatest offence to their brethren of the circumcision; particularly, *from the* abominable *pollutions of* things sacrificed unto *idols, and fornication, and* [*from*] eating *that which is strangled, and* [*from*] *blood*.[i] And though the latter of these have no 19 20

synod of ministers only, and was not communicated to the rest of the church till afterwards, when they acquiesced in the letter which contained the result of this meeting; ver. 22. *et seq.* It seems to me most probable that it was in one of their worshipping assemblies that Paul and Barnabas had declared all things that God had done with them; (ver. 4.) and that now at another, yet more numerous, and held on this particular occasion, they told the story more largely, with an account of particular miracles and other occurrences: And this the word [*multitude*] seems farther to imply. Yet I presume not absolutely to determine the question.

b *Done among the heathen by them*, to reclaim them from their idolatries.] For the reasonableness of taking it in this extent, see note h, § 33. p. 507.

c *James answered.*] It is plain from hence that the matter was not determined by virtue of any authority in Peter; and it seems very providential that James should have made such a speech on this occasion, and that he should have used the expression κρινω, *I determine*, (ver. 19.) which, had it been found in Peter's speech, would have been a much more plausible argument in favour of his weakly-boasted supremacy, than the whole scripture now affords. ——It may not be improper also to observe, that if Peter had introduced his discourse, like that of James, with saying, *Hearken unto me*, it would no doubt have been strenuously pleaded in the same view. They who have interpreted this as an instance of the authoritative proceedings of a bishop in his own diocese, have not, to be sure, sufficiently considered the difference between the apostolical and episcopal office, nor how little pretence any supposed episcopal power of James at Jerusalem could give him to dictate to Peter and his other brethren, in deciding a cause in which the whole christian world, and not only his own supposed diocese, was concerned.

d *After this I will return*, &c.] These words are quoted from Amos ix. 11, 12. according to the reading of the Seventy, who might probably follow a corrector copy of the Hebrew than the present; and Bishop Chandler (*Of Christianity*, p. 174.) seems very justly to argue that the Jews understood and admitted the words in the sense that James quotes them, or they would not have submitted to his interpretation, considering how strongly they were prejudiced against the consequence he drew from them.

e *That the remainder of men, &c.*] De Dieu has a learned and curious note here, to account for the variation of this quotation from the original. If the ancient reading were, *That they may possess the remnant of Edom*, (which there is room to question,) we must suppose, with Grotius, Cradock, and others, that as the prophets declared some of the greatest enemies of the church, such as the Edomites were, should submit themselves to it, the apostle had a right to interpret these words as in effect declaring that all the residue of men, that is, the whole heathen world, should be converted.—Dr. Sykes (*Of Christianity*, p. 294.) very justly refers this to the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; nevertheless, as he there well observes, they would in this view afford a very good argument for admitting, in the most candid manner, those of them who were already converted. ——The heathen upon whom the name of God is called, is so proper a description of those that are converted to the true religion, that when any urge that it must refer to those who were, before their conversion to christianity, worshippers of the true God, it only shows how much they are distressed for arguments to support an hypothesis. See below, note h.

f *All his works are from eternity known unto God.*] It is plain the apostle does not (as some have strangely asserted) speak of God's works in the natural world, which had been nothing at all to his present purpose, but of his dispensations towards the children of men. Now he could not know those without knowing the characters and actions of particular persons, on a correspondence to which, the wisdom and goodness of those dispensations is founded. Thus, for instance, he must have known there would be Gentile idolaters, a thing as dependent on the freedom of the human mind as any thing we can imagine, or he could not have known that he would call them into his church. This text, therefore, must remain an unanswerable proof, amongst a thousand more from the word of God, that he *certainly foreknows future contingences.*

g *I* cannot but *determine* in my own mind.] This the word κρινω may naturally express, and be taken to imply *judging in our own mind*, without pretending to impose that judgment on *others.*

h *Those who from among the Gentiles are converted to God.*] It is evident this description much better suits those who were now as it is elsewhere expressed (1 Thess. i. 9.) *turned from idols to serve the living and true God*, than those who, having had the knowledge and fear of God before, were now instructed in what was peculiar to christianity.

i *The pollutions of idols, and fornication, and that which is strangled, and blood.*] It is not for a note in such a work, to enter into all the difficulties and niceties of this text, or the various opinions of commentators upon it. Omitting for the present what may be said of fornication as mentioned here, which I shall refer

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moral and universal evil in them, yet it is necessary to join the prohibition of them to that of the former; *for* we know that *Moses hath from ancient generations* had, and still continues to have, *those who preach him* and his institutions *in every city, being read in* all *the* Jewish *synagogues every sabbath-day:* and these things are so expressly forbidden in his law, that while the Gentile christians indulge themselves in any of them, it
21 will be impossible there should be that communion and harmony between them and the Jewish converts which the honour and edification of the church requires.

22 This advice was very acceptable to the whole assembly, who unanimously declared their approbation of it. *Now then it seemed good to the apostles and elders, and all the church* there met together, *to send to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas,* some *chosen men from among themselves,* to add the greater authority to the report made in a matter of so great importance; and the persons they selected on this occasion were *Judas sirnamed Barsabas,*[k] *and Silas,*[l] who were both *men of principal account among the brethren,* and persons who well deserved the high reputation they possessed.

23 These therefore they despatched to Antioch, *writing by their hand these things* that follow:[m] "*The apostles and elders, and* other *brethren* assembled at Jerusalem,[n] *send* "*greeting to* all *the brethren* converted to the christian faith *from among the Gentiles,* "and particularly to those *in Antioch and* the other parts of *Syria, and* in the province of
24 "*Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have been informed, that some going out from among us,* "with a pretence that we had sent them forth, *to whom* nevertheless *we gave no commis-* "*sion* to make use of our names,[o] *have troubled you with* their *discourses, unsettling* "*your minds,* by confidently *saying that* [*you must*] all *be circumcised and keep* all
25 "the precepts of *the law* of Moses, or otherwise you cannot possibly be saved: *We being* "*unanimously assembled* to debate this matter, *have thought proper to send you chosen*
26 "*men* of our own body, *with our beloved* brethren *Barnabas and Paul;* Whom, by "the way, we highly esteem as *men that have* courageously, in repeated instances, *ex-*
27 "*posed their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[p] With them *we have there-* "*fore sent* two of our brethren, *Judas and Silas,* the bearers hereof, *who will also tell* "[*you*] *by word of mouth the same things* that we now write, together with the circum- "stances of our consultation on this head, which we pass over, as the particular detail of
28 "them would carry us beyond the proper bounds of a letter. *For it hath seemed good* "*to the Holy Spirit,*[q] *and* therefore *to us,* who desire in all things to conform ourselves to "his sacred direction, *to impose no further burden upon you besides these necessary*
29 "*things:*[r] Namely, *that you abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and*

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; *namely,* Judas sirnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul;

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and

to note s, below, I must declare, that on the whole, the most rational interpretation of the passage seems to be this: That though neither things sacrificed to idols, nor the flesh of strangled animals, nor blood, have, or can have, any moral evil in them, which should make the eating of them absolutely and universally unlawful, (compare 1 Cor. viii. 1, 8, 9; Rom. xiv. 14. *et seq.* 1 Tim. iv. 4; Matt. xv. 11.) yet they were here forbidden to the Gentile converts, because the Jews had such an aversion to them, that they could not converse freely with any who used them. This is plainly the reason which James assigns in the very next words, ver. 21. and it is abundantly sufficient. This reason is now ceased, and the obligation to abstain from these things ceases with it. But were we in like circumstances again, christian charity would surely require us to lay ourselves under the same restraints. As for the hypothesis which has been so largely proposed by the author of *Miscell. Sacra,* Essay iv. and defended by Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 58—67.) to which Dr. Hammond's interpretation very nearly approaches, "that *this decree* only related to *such christians* as "had, before they embraced the gospel, been *proselytes of the gate,* "and was never intended to include those converted from among "the *idolatrous Gentiles;*" besides what has been noted on many passages above, to show how unreasonable such an interpretation would be, I desire it may be considered farther, that the Jews must as much scruple to converse with one who had been an idolater, and continued, after becoming a christian, to eat of these supposed unclean things, as with one who had before been a worshipper of the true God, and used them; and consequently, that if this decree were to be interpreted under such a limitation as these authors propose, it would have been quite insufficient for the intended purpose of accommodating affairs between Jewish and Gentile christians, as nothing would have been done with respect to those of the latter who had been idolaters, though they were by far the more numerous of the Gentile converts.—This will more evidently appear, if the opposite opinion in question be compared with the occasion of enacting this decree. The Jewish zealots insisted upon it, that Gentile believers should be circumcised: this council determined that they should only observe these necessary things. Now, as it is certain the demand of circumcision was, and would be, made on all Gentile converts, and not merely on those who had known the true God before they became christians, these injunctions must be as extensive as that demand. ——Grotius has a learned and curious note on this text, which I could wish might be consulted by those that have opportunity.

k *Judas sirnamed Barsabas.*] Some have thought this was the same with Joseph called Barsabas, (Acts i. 23.) candidate with Matthias for the apostleship, the son of Alpheus or Cleopas, and brother to at least two of the apostles, James now present, and Jude; than whom we know not any one person not an apostle of greater note in the church at this time. Others suppose that he was brother to him. See Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 55.

l *Silas.*] This seems to have been the person elsewhere called Sylvanus; (2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 1 Pet. v. 12.) a most intimate friend and beloved companion of Paul; and, as it seems, also a citizen of Rome, Acts xvi. 37.

m *Writing, &c.*] As for the construction of γράψαντες with ἀποστόλοις, and some other supposed solecisms of this kind, I with pleasure refer the learned reader to Raphelius, *Not. ex. Herod.* p. 370—372. and p. 510—513.

n *And other brethren.*] I conclude, with M. L'Enfant, that these brethren, who were neither apostles nor elders, were private christians, whom the apostles in their great condescension joined with them on this occasion, as well knowing that their declared concurrence would strengthen their obligation, not only to acquiesce in this decree, but to support it. And it was the more prudent to do it, as the liberty this gave to the Gentile christians would something affect the secular interests of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

o *To whom we gave no commission.*] This was directly fixing the lie upon them, if they had pretended to use the apostles' names in imposing their tenets; and, as the matter of fact was known, would be a proper means of weakening their credit, and so render them less capable of doing mischief.

p *That have exposed their lives, &c.*] Such a testimony to the reputation of Paul and Barnabas, was far from being a mere compliment, but exceedingly prudent, as it might be the means of removing the prejudices conceived against them by the Jewish converts or teachers, who, as it appears from many passages of the Epistles, endeavoured as much as possible to lessen the character of these apostles. It would also be an useful expression of the harmony between them and those of the circumcision.

q *It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit.*] This may include the decision which the Spirit had given by his descent on Cornelius and his friends, but seems more directly to express the consciousness which this assembly had of being guided by his influences on their minds in their present determination. But it cannot be extended to any ecclesiastical councils, that have not inspired apostles to preside, as they did here. See Bp. Burnet, *On the Articles,* p. 196.

r *These necessary things.*] They were all undoubtedly necessary in order to promote a free converse between the Jewish and Gentile christians, and especially to secure communion at the table of the Lord, where we cannot imagine that Jews would have eaten and drank with persons whom they thought in so polluted a state as those who indulged themselves in the things here prohibited. On the other hand, it seems the Jews on these conditions gave up any farther debate about the rest of forbidden meats, as well as circumcision and many other articles.

from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if you keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

" *from any thing* that is *strangled, and from fornication*:[s] *from which you will do well* " *to keep yourselves* at the greatest distance that may be.[t] And so we bid you heartily " *Farewell;* wishing you, with the sincerest affection, all peace and prosperity in our " common Lord, which, in the observation of these directions, you may expect."

SECT. 34. ACTS XV.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the divine condescension in looking with pity upon the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. We are that people; let it be our concern, that as his name is named upon us, we render it becoming honours, and remember what an obligation it lays upon us to *depart from iniquity!* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) May the fallen tabernacle of David also in due time be raised up, and all its ruins repaired, that when God's ancient people are remembered by him, the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and the fulness of the Gentiles may be brought in! God, who hath a complete view of all his schemes and of all his works from the foundation of the world, will accomplish this also in its season. In the mean time, let us gratefully acknowledge what he has already done. Ver. 14 16, 17 18

Let us be peculiarly thankful that we are freed from the burdens of the Mosaic institution, and called to a law of liberty. Yet let us take due heed that we do not *abuse it to licentiousness.* (Gal. v. 13.) Let us learn from the tenor of this decree, tenderly to regard even the prejudices of our christian brethren, and to be careful that we do not violently overbear them; but rather that, so far as honour and conscience will allow, we become all things to all men, and be willing in some respect to deny ourselves, that we may not give unnecessary offence to others. 19—21

Most prudently did the apostles determine this affair, under the influence of the Divine Spirit: and whatever hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them, let us treat with all becoming regard.—The messengers from Antioch, by whom they returned this decree, were persons of an amiable character indeed: They had hazarded their lives in the service of Christ, and joyfully went on to expose them to new dangers; thinking themselves, no doubt, exceeding happy in the success of this negociation, as also in the society of those pious brethren of the circumcision who accompanied them in their return with this letter.—May the blessed time come when the ministers of Christ of all denominations, laying aside their mutual animosities, shall agree to *study the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another!* (Rom. xiv. 19.) Then will liberty and truth have a more easy and universal triumph, while love melts and cements those souls whom rigorous severity has only served to harden, to disunite, and to alienate. 28 25, 26 27

SECTION XXXV.

The messengers from the assembly at Jerusalem arrive at Antioch, and, after continuing there some time, Paul and Silas, and Barnabas with John sirnamed Mark, set out different ways, to visit the churches they had lately planted. Acts xv. 30, *to the end.*

ACTS xv. 30.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle.

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them.*

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

ACTS xv. 30.

THE reader has been just presented with a copy of that important letter which the apostles and elders, and church at Jerusalem, sent to the Gentile christians by two of their own body, in conjunction with Paul and Barnabas: *They therefore being* thus *dismissed, came to Antioch, and assembling the* whole *multitude* of the church there, they *delivered the epistle* to them: *And when they had read* [*it*,] *they* all *rejoiced for the consolation* [*it brought*,] in assuring them that so venerable an assembly concurred in vindicating their liberty from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies. 30 31

SECT. 35. ACTS XV.

And at the same time *Judas and Silas,* who were the special messengers from Jerusalem thither, *being prophets also themselves,* (persons of great ability in the knowledge of the scriptures, and eminently qualified for the work of the ministry,) did not only deliver the particular message with which they were charged, but, on occasion of such a numerous and solemn auditory, each of them *in a copious discourse exhorted and strengthened the brethren,* most affectionately endeavouring to confirm them in their adherence to that gospel which they had embraced, and pressing them to a conduct answerable to it. 32

And having made some stay there, *they were dismissed with* great respect, and most affectionate desires of prosperity and *peace, from the brethren* at Antioch, to return *to the apostles* from whom they came; whose friendly care of them the church at Antioch most gratefully acknowledged. *But Silas,* having formed a most intimate and endearing friendship with Paul, *thought proper to continue there* a while longer than his companion Judas, who had come with him from Jerusalem. 33 34

s *And from fornication.*] As the infamy of what is commonly called simple fornication was not so great among the Gentiles as the nature of the crime deserved, it has been generally thought that the church at Jerusalem chose to add this prohibition, though it might be a digression from the immediate design of their letter to do it. Others interpret the word of marriage within the degrees of kindred prohibited by the Mosaic law. (Lev. xviii. 6—18.) M. L'Enfant would explain it of victims offered by prostitutes out of their scandalous hire; (Deut. xxiii. 18.) which, he says, makes a beautiful sense, and obviates a very considerable difficulty. Heinsius also vindicates this interpretation at large, and shows that Athanasius uses πορνειαι for πορνικη θυτια. I pretend not absolutely to determine the question; but think it material to observe, that, if it be taken in the worst sense that can be imagined, it cannot prove the universal unlawfulness of eating blood, since not only that, but eating things sacrificed to idols, and strangled, are joined with fornication; and yet we are sure that neither of them were absolutely evil in themselves, or universally forbidden. (Compare 1 Cor. viii. 1, 8, 9; and the other texts cited above in note i, on ver. 20.) It is remarkable that both Irenæus (*Adv. Hær. lib.* iii. *cap.* 12.) and Cyprian, (*Testimon. lib.* iii. *cap.* 119.) in quoting these words, add, "And do not to others what you would not have done unto yourselves." But as no ancient version or valuable manuscript has this addition, and it seems not to suit the connexion in which it stands, I cannot but conclude it the spurious interpolation of some who admired this noble maxim so highly as to attempt, though in an irregular method, to recommend it to the utmost.

t *From which you would do well to keep yourselves.*] That is, you may hope it will end well. This gentle manner of concluding, was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. Too soon did succeeding councils of inferior authority change it for the style of anathemas; forms which have, I doubt not, proved an occasion of consecrating some of the worst passions of the human mind under sacred names, and which, like some ill-adjusted weapons of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown.

SECT. 35. ACTS XV.

Paul also and Barnabas continued with the disciples *at Antioch*,[a] and employed their time there in *teaching and preaching the* good *word of the Lord*, in conjunction *with many others also* that were prophets and teachers, (Acts xiii. 1.) who perceiving the readiness which there was in the people to receive the gospel, were gladly employed in dispensing it.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 *And after* they had continued *some* considerable number of *days* there, *Paul*, whose active spirit was ever forming some new scheme for the advancement of the christian cause, *said to Barnabas*, his beloved associate, *Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities* where we have been, and *in which we have preached the word of the Lord*, [*that we may inquire*] *how they do*, and see what is the state of religion among them.

36 And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again, and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

37 *And Barnabas* was heartily willing to fall in with the proposal; yet, notwithstanding what had happened in their former progress, he was so far influenced by his particular affection to his nephew, that he *advised to take along with them John, sirnamed Mark*,

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose sirname was Mark.

38 who had set out with them before. (Chap. xiii. 5.) *But Paul* accounted him not worthy of that honour, and *did not think* it by any means *proper to take with them that person who*, on some consideration or another which seemed to him not very honourable, *had withdrawn himself from them*, returning back *from Pamphylia*, as was related above, (chap. xiii. 13.) *and went not with them to the* performance of that *work* into the effects of which they were now going to inquire.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 This was an affair not easy to be accommodated, as each insisted on his own scheme and reasons; *there was therefore* on the whole *a sharp fit of anger* between them,[b] *so that they* at last *separated from each other*:[c] *And Barnabas taking Mark along with him, sailed to* his native country of *Cyprus*, where the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus had some time since been converted, and Elymas the sorcerer had been struck with blindness. (Sect. xxviii.)

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 *But Paul made choice of* his faithful friend *Silas* for the companion of his travels, *and departed* from Antioch, *being*, as before, (chap. xiii. 3.) *commended to the grace* and
41 blessing *of God by the brethren* there. *And he went through Syria and Cilicia*, which was his native country, *confirming* and establishing *the churches*[d] which had been planted in those parts, in their adherence to the christian faith; and so proceeded on to Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and other more distant parts, in the manner and with the circumstances which will be related hereafter.

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 30, 31 How happy an office had these good men, to go about from one place to another, comforting and confirming the souls of their brethren wherever they came! They had their present reward in the pleasure of it, and are now also reaping in the heavenly world the fruits of their labour of love. Deliver us, O thou Father of mercies, from lording it over thine heritage, and overbearing the consciences and liberties of our brethren, with whatever secular advantages it might be attended; and give us to taste at least something of the generous pleasure of these faithful messengers, though it should be with all their labour and persecutions.

32 While we endeavour to comfort, may we be also ready to exhort and quicken, one another! May christians animate each other in the work and warfare to which they are called: and may ministers remember how great a part of their work consists in practical addresses, to which, like Judas and Silas in the instance before us, they should chuse to digress, rather than entirely omit them.

36 None can wonder that Paul and Barnabas were desirous to visit the churches they had planted; for it is natural for those who have been spiritual fathers to have a peculiar affection for their offspring, as it also is for the children which God hath given them, to honour and love those who (as the apostle expresses it) *have begotten them in Christ Jesus*. (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Happy is it indeed when the visits of ministers, animated by such a spirit, are im-

a *Continued at Antioch.*] It is generally thought that during this time Peter came to Antioch, and after having for some time conversed freely with the Gentile christians, changed his behaviour towards them on the arrival of some Jewish zealots from Jerusalem, according to the account we have, Gal. ii. 11. *et seq.* which, if the first verse of that chapter refer to the journey to the council described above, seems indeed to have been the case. Nor do I think that visit can be referred to Paul's second journey to Jerusalem after his conversion, Acts xi. 30. though Barnabas also attended him then, because it was not till after that journey that the gospel of the uncircumcision was so solemnly committed to him; (Acts xiii. 2, 3.) which the apostles at Jerusalem acknowledge it to have been at the time spoken of, Gal. ii. 7—9. If it be asked why Paul, in his rebuke to Peter, did not cut short all farther arguments, by referring roundly to the Jerusalem decree, if then made? I answer, he might perhaps do it, though not in that part of his speech which he mentions in the Epistle to the Galatians; yet even there he refers to what Peter himself had laid down as the foundation of that decree: Compare Gal. ii. 16—18. with Acts xv. 11. And it likewise seems to be intimated that Peter had gone farther in his condescensions than the Jerusalem decree extended its decision, not only in receiving the Gentiles to church-communion, or admitting them to converse with him, but living after their manner, as if he had himself been without the law; (as Paul himself in proper circumstances used also to do, 1 Cor. ix. 19—21.) yet afterwards dissembling his conduct, as being solicitous to make a secret of it; whereas Paul, though just at the crisis of the Jerusalem decree he had thought it his duty to keep on the reserve, and wave a declaration of his sentiments on this head, lest unnecessary debates as to the obligation on believing Jews to observe the law should have diverted the council from the business then in hand, and have frustrated the purpose of that journey; (Gal. ii. 2.) yet when that point was carried, and he had quitted Jerusalem, used great freedom in declaring his opinion, which was, "Not that the Mosaic "ceremonies were in conscience to be avoided, but that even to the "Jews themselves they were indifferent, any farther than as the "peace and edification of others were concerned." I hope the reader will excuse my digressing to clear up this great difficulty here, which I have not seen elsewhere stated in what I think the fairest light, especially since it is so uncertain whether I may live to publish the remainder of this Exposition on the Epistles.

b *A sharp fit of anger.*] So the word παροξυσμος properly signifies, being a medical term. Yet if I had rendered it by the English word *paroxysm*, derived from it, I fear it would have been unintelligible to many readers.

c *They separated from each other.*] Yet it appears not only that Paul and Barnabas were afterwards thoroughly reconciled, (compare 1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 9.) but also that John was taken into Paul's favour again, and admitted by him as a companion in his labours. Compare Col. iv. 10; Philem. ver. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11. It is probable the exhortations of Barnabas might concur with these resentments of Paul, to recover him from his former indolent and timorous disposition. See note b, on Acts xii. 25. p. 493.

d *Confirming the churches.*] Mr. Cradock (in his *Apost. Hist.* p. 99.) and many others think, that Paul sailed from Cilicia to Crete at this time, and returning to the Asiatic Continent quickly after, left Titus to perfect the settlement of the church there; (Tit. i. 5.) which if he did, might lead us to suppose his Epistle to Titus one of the first he wrote; but I may elsewhere give my reasons why I cannot be of this opinion.

proved to the blessed purposes of advancing the work which divine grace has already begun, and of addressing cautions as well as encouragements with such affection, wisdom, and zeal, that it may finally appear *they have not run in vain nor laboured in vain.* (Phil. ii. 16.) SECT. 35.

It is with sensible regret that we read of any difference, and much more of a sharp contention, arising between Paul and Barnabas, so dear to each other in the bonds both of human and christian friendship: But we see it arose to some degree of severity, in consequence of a remainder of imperfection in the temper of the one or the other, yea, probably of both; they separated therefore, but it plainly appears that they did not become enemies: They preached the same gospel, though in different companies, each taking his proper circuit; and thus the work of the Lord was performed with greater despatch, and perhaps with greater success, while Mark, who afterwards appears, as well as Barnabas, to have been restored to the intimate friendship of Paul, was, on the one hand, endeavouring to show that Barnabas had not chosen an unworthy associate; and, on the other hand, Silas, the fellow-labourer and fellow-sufferer of Paul, would take care to behave in such a manner that this great apostle might have no reason to repent of the preference which he had given to him. ACTS XV. 39, 40

To conclude: we see that both Barnabas and Paul go to their native country. Some peculiar affection to it, when it is not injurious to the general happiness of mankind, is natural and allowable; and it is certain we cannot show our love to it in any nobler and more important instance, than by endeavouring to promote the progress and success of the gospel in it. 41

SECTION XXXVI.

Paul and Silas passing through several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and having associated Timothy with them as the companion of their labours, pass over into Europe, and arrive at Macedonia, by the special direction of a divine revelation. Acts xvi. 1—12.

ACTS xvi. 1.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed: but his father *was* a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him: and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were or-

ACTS xvi. 1.

WHEN Paul set out with Silas on his journey, it was observed before that he went through the regions of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches; *and* passing on from thence *he came to Derbe and Lystra*, where he had preached the gospel in his former progress. *And* while he was at Lystra, *behold, a certain disciple was there whose name was Timothy, the son of* one Eunice, *a believing Jewess, but of a Grecian father;* and we mention it as a circumstance worthy of note, because he afterwards became a very considerable person in the church, as well as a faithful and useful friend to the apostle. He was an eminently serious and devout young man, who was remarkable for his early piety, having been trained up by his good mother, and his grandmother, whose name was Lois, in an acquaintance with the holy scriptures from his childhood; (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.) and, upon the whole, was one *who had an honourable character given him by* all *the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Him* therefore *Paul*, who had before contracted some intimacy of acquaintance with him, (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) determined he *would have* to attend him in his progress, and *to go forth* to preach the gospel *with him; and* that he might not give an unnecessary offence to the Jews, by appearing so intimate with an uncircumcised person, he *took* him to the place where he dwelt, in order to his more constant attendance upon him, *and circumcised him* with all due solemnity, and before proper witnesses,[a] according to the usage of the Jews in those days; which he did, (as was hinted before,) not that he thought circumcision in itself necessary, or of any avail to salvation, but *on account of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew his father*, and were apprized *that he was a Greek;* They would therefore naturally conclude that his son had not received the rite of initiation into the Jewish religion, and consequently looking upon him as a Gentile, would be offended themselves at Paul's intimacy with him, and propagate that offence to others. After this, Paul laid his hands upon him, and set him apart to the ministerial office, conferring upon him extraordinary gifts, (2 Tim. i. 6.) which were attended with prophecies of his eminent future usefulness. (1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14.) SECT. 36. ACTS XVI. 1 2 3

And as they passed through the several *cities* of those regions, that peace might be secured among the brethren, and no unnecessary burden might be laid upon the Gentile converts, *they delivered to their custody* an exact and attested copy of *the decrees*[b] 4

a *And circumcised him.*] In order to judge rightly of Paul's conduct in this affair, which some have censured (as they do other things in christianity) because they did not understand it, we must recollect that he always openly avowed "that the Gentiles "were free from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, and that the "Jews were not to expect salvation by them;" and he also taught, "that they were not in conscience obliged to observe them at all, "except in cases where the omission of them would give offence." But because his enemies represented him as teaching people to despise the law of Moses, and even as blaspheming it, he therefore took some opportunities of conforming to it publicly himself, to shew how far he was from condemning it as evil; an extravagance into which some christian heretics early ran, and with which the apostle himself has been most unjustly charged of late by a writer too contemptible to be named. This is the true key to his conduct, here and Acts xxi. 21—24. And though, when the Jewish zealots would have imposed it upon him to compel Titus, who was a Greek, to be circumcised, even while he was at Jerusalem, he resolutely refused it; (Gal. ii. 3—5.) yet here he voluntarily persuaded Timothy to submit to that rite, knowing the omission of it in him, who was a Jew by the mother's side, would have given offence: and being the more desirous to obviate any prejudices against this excellent youth, whose early acquaintance with the Scriptures of the Old Testament (2 Tim. iii. 15.) might render him peculiarly capable of preaching in the synagogues with advantage, which, had he been uncircumcised, would not have been permitted.——Grotius observes this was probably the beginning of Luke's acquaintance with Timothy, though Paul knew him long before. See note c, § 32. p. 505.

b *They delivered——the decrees.*] The author of *Miscell. Sacra*, (Essay iv. p. 34.) first taking it for granted that the decree was particularly intended for the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and not for any converts from the idolatrous Gentiles, would have this verse and the next transposed to the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, or the three intermediate verses that begin this chapter inclosed in a parenthesis. But it is plain from the contents of that decree, that it was intended for all Gentile christians living among Jews; and it appears from the preceding story, that great numbers of Jews were to be found in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and the neighbouring places; and therefore, as the transposition would be most unwarrantable, the parenthesis is quite unnecessary, and would pervert the sense.——M. L'Enfant observes that the word παραδοσεις, which is

SECT. 36. ACTS XVI.

which were determined as a rule for their direction, *by the apostles and elders that were* assembled lately in full council *at Jerusalem. The* several *churches, therefore,* where they came, being watered by such faithful labourers, and encouraged with so favourable a decision of the grand point in question, *were* much *confirmed in* their adherence to *the* christian *faith, and increased* more and more *in number daily.*

dained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 *And* with such views and such success *they* cheerfully pursued their journey, and *went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia,* which had never before been visited with the light of the gospel, as the provinces before mentioned had been; and in their travels through Galatia they were received with such peculiar affection, as if an angel from heaven, or Jesus Christ himself, had come among them; and such readiness was shown to hear the word, that they made a considerable number of most zealous converts. (Compare Gal. iv. 14, 15.) [*And*] after this, *being forbidden by the Holy Spirit* (who at that time had other work for them to do) *to preach the word in* that part of the country which is called the proconsular *Asia,*[c] in which Colosse, Laodicea, and some other cities

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 lay; *When they were come to Mysia,* which was the most western province of the Lesser Asia, and lay on the coast of the Ægean Sea, *they attempted* to turn northward and *to go to Bithynia,* that they might visit the flourishing cities of Nice, Nicomedia, and Chalcedon, and so pass into Europe by the straits of the Euxine Sea; *but the Spirit*

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 [*of Jesus*][d] let them know that it *did not permit them* to do it. *And* therefore *passing by* the northern borders of *Mysia,* without visiting many places there, *they went down to Troas,* which lay on the shore of the Ægean Sea, near the ruins of ancient Troy, so celebrated in history and poetry.

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

9 *And* while they were here, undetermined to what coast of Europe they should sail if, according to their intention, they crossed the sea, *a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a certain* man before him, whom he perceived to be a *Macedonian,*[e] *entreating him, and saying* with great earnestness, We beseech you to *come over* the sea *to Macedonia, and help us;* for we stand in great need of your assistance, and shall joyfully receive you.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 *And* this is a circumstance which the author of this book well remembers, for he attended Paul in his journey, and can relate what follows from his own knowledge: *As soon* then *as he had seen this vision* and declared it to us, *we immediately* agreed that it was to be regarded; and accordingly we *endeavoured to go out* from the port of Troas, where we then lay, *to Macedonia;*[f] *assuredly inferring* from this vision, *that the*

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 *Lord* Jesus himself *called us to preach the gospel to them. Setting sail therefore from Troas,* with the advantage of a strong easterly wind, *we ran directly to* the island of *Samothracia,* which lies near the Hellespont; *and* having thus despatched the larger part of our little voyage, we came *the next day to* the celebrated port of *Neapolis,* on the

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis:

12 Thracian shore, near the borders of Macedonia: *And* landing there, we came *from thence to Philippi, which is a city of the first part of Macedonia;*[g] for it is well known that the province is divided into four parts, [*and*] this is *a* Roman *colony.*[h] *And we continued in this city for some days,* and met with several remarkable occurrences which we shall relate in the next section.

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

here used to express *decrees,* always signifies something *temporary* and *ceremonial,* and not laws of perpetual and universal obligation. Compare Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 14.

c *Forbidden to preach in* that——called the proconsular *Asia.*] As all the places mentioned in the former verses lay in Asia Minor, it is evident that the word Asia must be thus explained. It is also apparent that flourishing churches were afterwards planted there, particularly at Colosse, Laodicea, Sardis, Thyatira, and Philadelphia: So that it seems to have been the determination of Providence, that instead of going through this region now by such a leisurely progress as that in which they proceeded in their former journey through Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, &c. they should hasten to Europe directly, and preach the gospel first in Philippi, which was a Roman colony, and then in the neighbouring parts; while in the mean time the Asian provinces now passed over might hear some report of it from their neighbours, and so be prepared to receive with greater advantage the labours of the apostles, when they should return to them, as Paul afterwards did. (Chap. xviii. 23. *et seq.*) By this means the spread of the gospel would in any given time be wider than (other circumstances being equal) it would have been had they taken all the interjacent places in their way.

d *The Spirit* [*of Jesus*].] So many ancient versions, readings, and citations, add the words [*of Jesus,*] that I thought myself not only authorized, but obliged, at least to insert them thus, and perhaps might well have omitted the crotchets. See Beza and Dr. Mill, *in loc.*

e *A certain Macedonian.*] Some think Paul knew his country by his dress or language, or by his naming it, as we find he did. Yet perhaps the word τις, may intimate that it was *some particular person* whom Paul knew; for which reason I render it literally, and wonder that Grotius should explain it as if it were *the guardian angel* of Macedonia that now appeared.

f *We immediately endeavoured, &c.*] This is the first place in which Luke intimates his attending on the apostles; and it is very remarkable that here he does it in an oblique manner; nor does he indeed, throughout the whole history, once mention his own name, or relate any one thing which he said or did for the service of christianity, though Paul speaks of him in most honourable terms, Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; and probably 2 Cor. viii. 18. as the brother whose praise in the gospel went through all the churches. The same remark may be made on the rest of the sacred historians, who every one of them shew the like amiable modesty; nor is the charming story St. John tells of himself (John xxi. 20. *et seq.*) by any means an exception: See note d, on that passage, § 201. p. 417. And when Paul speaks of his own services, it is by no means in an ostentatious way, but in his own necessary vindication, appealing to his enemies for the known truth of them. By which means Providence has so ordered it, that the memory of many important facts which would otherwise have been lost should be preserved, and preserved in such a manner as to carry the strongest evidence along with them. Such instances of divine wisdom occurring in scripture, are worthy our attentive observation and our thankful acknowledgment.

g *A city of the first part of Macedonia.*] As Amphipolis is mentioned by Livy, *lib.* xlv. *cap.* 22. as the chief city of this first region of Macedonia, in which Philippi lay, I chuse, with Mr. Pierce, (*Pref. to his Notes on Phil.*) to follow the Syriac here, as Chrysostom also does, reading πρωτης instead of πρωτη της, though it be true, as Mr. Biscoe well observes, chap. x. sect. 2. p. 367, 368. that Amphipolis was then on the decline. Raphelius (*Ex Herod.* p. 374.) supposes it may signify only, it was the first city they met with in their journey; but the authorities he produces seem by no means satisfactory. Grotius explains it of the first city that was a colony.

h *A colony.*] Luke, by using a word originally Latin, κολωνια, instead of the correspondent Greek word αποικια, plainly intimates it was *a Roman colony,* which ver. 21. certainly proves it to have been; and though the critics were long puzzled to find any mention of it in that view, some coins dug up, I think within the last century, show that a colony was planted there by Julius Cæsar, and afterwards much augmented by Augustus. See Spanheim, *De Usu et Præst. Numism.* Diss. ii. p. 105, 106. and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 36. ACTS XVI. Ver. 3

Let us with pleasure observe the prudent condescension of the apostle Paul, in becoming *all things to all men*, and particularly *to the Jews as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews;* (1 Cor. ix. 20.) for this purpose circumcising his companion Timothy, that he might give them no unnecessary offence: Nor was the condescension and zeal of this pious youth to be less esteemed, who was willing to submit, not only to that painful rite, but to all the yoke of ceremonial observances to which he was obliged by it, in a view to usefulness in the church. Well may it expect eminent service from those ministers of the rising generation that set out with such a spirit; while, on the other hand, when a fierce and haughty sense of liberty is the reigning, darling character, and a determination is formed to submit in nothing, to oblige in nothing, as the first elements of the christian temper seem as yet to be unknown, there is great reason to believe that the doctrines and precepts of the gospel will not, cannot be successfully taught; great reason to fear that such instructors will have their reward in the empty applauses which they give to themselves and each other; while they brand those who are solicitous to become wise that they may win souls, with reproaches which God will remember *in the day in which he shall judge the secrets of all hearts;* and will find many of them far different from what such rash men have presumed to pronounce them.

4, 5, 6, 8, 6, 7

Indefatigable were the journeys and labours of these ambassadors of Christ; they travelled through wide-extended regions, and sowed the seeds of knowledge and of life wherever they came, and God gave the increase. But the economy of Divine Providence was very remarkable, in not permitting them to preach in Bithynia, and forbidding them to do it in Asia: What were the particular reasons of this determination we know not; perhaps the inhabitants of these places were remarkably conceited of their own wisdom; perhaps they had treated the flying reports of the gospel with contempt; or possibly, without any particular displeasure against them, their visitation might be delayed in a view to more general good. But happy was it for Galatia, Phrygia, and the neighbouring parts, that they were not included in the prohibition: And happy is it for this sinful land of ours, that the abused, insulted gospel is not taken away, and that its ministers are not one way or another forbidden to repeat those offers which have so long been rejected and despised.

9, 10

The visit of a Macedonian imploring the help of the apostle, was justly regarded by him and his associates as an intimation of the divine pleasure that they should pass over thither. And surely did those nations of the earth that have not yet received the gospel know in the general how great a blessing it is, instead of opposing those messengers of it who might offer to spread it among them, they would rather in the most pressing manner urge and entreat their presence, and with the greatest joy sit down at their feet. May they who are entrusted with this glorious embassy imitate the pious zeal of these holy men, and be willing, when called by Providence, to cross lands and seas on so pious and so charitable an errand!

11, 12

SECTION XXXVII.

Paul and Silas preach the gospel at Philippi; but some of the inhabitants, provoked at their casting out a spirit of divination from a damsel there, rise tumultuously upon them, scourge them, and cast them into prison. The jailor is awakened by an earthquake, and converted by the preaching of Paul. Acts xvi. 13—34.

Acts xvi. 13.

AND on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither.*

Acts xvi. 13.

SECT. 37. ACTS XVI. 13

It was observed in the close of the preceding section, that Paul and Silas, in company with Timothy and Luke, the penman of this history, arrived at Philippi, and made some stay there. *And* now we go on to relate that *on the sabbath-day we went out of the city to the side of the river* Strymon, *where, according to* the *custom* of the Jews, *there was an oratory* or a place of public prayer;[a] *and sitting down* when the devotions were over, *we spake to the women that were assembled there,* for most of the congregation were of that sex.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us:* whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, who was a native *of the city of Thyatira* in Asia, and *a* devout *worshipper of* the true *God* after the Jewish manner, was present at that time, and *heard* [*the discourse;*] *whose heart the Lord opened,* by the secret and gentle influences of his grace, *to attend* in such a manner *to the things which were spoken by Paul,* as to be effectually wrought upon and converted by them.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us,* saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there.* And she constrained us.

And she was baptized with her family, she earnestly *entreated us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord* Jesus in the profession I have made, and really esteem me a sincere christian, I beg that you would *enter into my house, and continue* to make your abode [*there*] as long as you stay in this city. *And she* was so extremely pressing and importunate, that she even *compelled us* to comply with her proposal.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met

Now while we continued her guests, *it came to pass that as we were* one day *going to the oratory* or praying-place mentioned before, *we were met by a certain girl who* had been for some time under the influence of what the Greeks call *a Pythonic spirit,* that is, a spirit of divination,[b] which they suppose to be an inspiration from Apollo, whom they

a *Where, according to custom, there was an oratory.*] The original words are remarkable, and much controverted, ου ενομιζετο προσευχη ειναι. Bos would prove ενομιζετο a mere expletive, and only renders it, *Where the oratory was:* Bos, *Exercit.* p. 81—83. But I think, with Elsner, that his authorities do not fully answer. Mr. Mede renders it, *Where the law permitted the Jews to have an oratory:* and the translation of 1727, *Where they were allowed to have it.* But as the word generally refers to custom, and as it is certain that the Jews had a custom of building their oratories or proseuchas, or places of public prayer, by the sea-side, or near rivers, for the sake of purifications, (which were practised also by the heathens before solemn devotions; see Isa. lvii. 5, 6.) I have found no reason to recede from the version I have given before, Luke vi. 12. (see note b, on that text, p. 106.) and with pleasure refer my reader to the admirable critic mentioned above for the abundant vindication of it, and for a beautiful explication of the phrase, *jurare per Anchialum,* which he supposes to refer to this Jewish custom. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p 430—434. and Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book I. chap. 3. § 3. Vol. I. p. 235—240. I have chosen the word oratory rather than proseucha, as more familiar to an English ear; and refer my reader to Philo, *Oper.* p. 752, 753. and 760. to Dr. Hammond and Drusius, *in loc.* to Dr. Benson's *History,* Vol. II. p. 85, 86. and especially to Dr. Prideaux's *Connexion,* Vol. I. p. 387—389. for a farther account of these places.

b *A certain girl who had a Pythonic spirit.*] As Plutarch (*De Defect. Orac.* p. 414.) tells us those who were inspired with this

SECT. 37. ACTS XVI.

call Pythius.[c] And though she were but a slave, she was a person well known in the city, and one *who brought her owners much gain by her* pretended *prophesying*. *And following after Paul and us*, when (as was said above) we were going to the worshipping-assembly, *she cried out, saying* with great earnestness of voice and gesture, *These men are the servants of the Most High God, who declare unto you the* only true *way of salvation*. *And this she did for several* succeeding *days; but* at length *Paul, being* wearied with so tedious a circumstance, and *grieved* under an apprehension that this stratagem of Satan might lead the people to imagine that the preachers of the gospel acted in a confederacy with the evil spirit to whom the heathen worship was addressed, *turned* towards the damsel, who was then very near him, *and said to the* evil *spirit* by whose emotion she spake, *I charge thee*, O thou invisible power under whose influence this unhappy creature is, *in the name of Jesus Christ*, whose gospel I preach, *to go out of her* immediately. *And it went out that very hour*, so that she had never such kind of supernatural agitations any more, nor pretended to any gift of prophecy for the future.

us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this she did many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 *But when her owners saw that the hope of their gain was gone* out with the evil spirit, *laying hold of Paul and Silas*, whom they looked upon as much more considerable than Timothy and Luke, the two Evangelists that attended them, *they dragged them* away *to the market-place*, to accuse them *to the magistrates*,[d] who held their court there. *And having brought them* thither *to the officers* intrusted with the government of the city by the Romans, *they* charged them as disturbers of the peace, and introducers of a new religion that was inconsistent with the laws, and *said, these men being Jews, disturb our city* in an insufferable manner, *And* take upon them, in an unwarrantable way, to *teach customs which it is not lawful for us, as we are Romans, to receive and observe*;[e] being such as would lead us to renounce the gods of our country, and to abstain from many things which the laws of Rome require. *And the populace rose up together against them*, and joined the cry, as if they had been guilty of the worst of crimes: *And* upon this *the officers*,[f] without any legal trial, immediately gave orders that they should be punished; and violently *tearing off their garments* in a shameful way,[g] *commanded them to be beaten with rods* by the hands of the lictors or public beadles, to whom that office belonged. (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 2; and 2 Cor. xi. 23, 25.)

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market-place, unto the rulers:

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

23 *And when they had* severely scourged and *laid many stripes upon them*, the officers were so incensed against them that *they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them* as *safely* as possible, lest amongst their numerous friends any rescue should be attempted: *Who having received such a* strict *charge* from persons of so great rank, *threw them into the inner prison, and secured their feet in the stocks*,[h] that they might not be able by any means to escape; and such was the fierceness of his temper, that a command of this kind would be no way disagreeable to him.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 *But at midnight Paul and Silas* being kept awake by the painful circumstances in which they were placed, sought their relief in devotion; and *having prayed*, they also *sung an hymn to God*, praising him for the honour they had of suffering in his cause, and for the support he gave them under those sufferings: *And the* other *prisoners heard them*, with surprise at that serenity and cheerfulness which they discovered in the midst of

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: And the prisoners heard them.

spirit were εγγαστριμυθοι, or spake as seeming to *send the voice from their bellies*, and Galen mentions the same fact, some late writers have supposed the whole pretence to such inspiration to have been founded on the art of throwing out the voice in some extraordinary manner which has been practised by some of late among ourselves, and that all the cure wrought by the apostle was only discovering the cheat, and disabling her from playing this trick any more. See *The Inquiry into the Case of Demoniacs*, p. 54. And M. L'Enfant seems to favour this notion, though he says, in terms of remarkable ambiguity, "it was an imposture which must be the work of a "malignant spirit;" as also Dr. Benson, who calls her "a lunatic "person who was reckoned by the people to be possessed," &c. *Hist.* Vol. III. p. 87. But the manner in which Luke relates the story, plainly implies that he thought it a real possession, and that Paul took it himself in that view. Nor can I apprehend that her behaviour or his, or that of her masters afterwards, can be accounted for without allowing it to have been the case. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 2. p. 294—300; *Essay towards Vind. Lit. Sense of the Demons*, 67—70; *Farther Inquiry*, p. 84—90; *Reply to It*, p. 79—82. It is well known that the Hebrews call the spirit with which such persons were supposed to be agitated, אוב, *Ob*, because the bodies of those who appeared to be possessed by them were violently distended, like leathern bottles full of wine and ready to burst. Compare Job xxxii. 18, 19.

c Apollo, whom they call Pythius.] This title, it is generally said, was given to Apollo on account of his having destroyed a monstrous serpent that was called Python: See Erasmus, Gualtperius, and Le Clerc's *Supplement to Dr. Hammond*, *in loc.* But it seems rather that this story of the Python was a fable grounded on his killing one who for his cruelty was sirnamed Python, that is, serpent or dragon, from whence Apollo had the name of Pythius. See Strab. *Geogr. lib.* ix. p. 291; Bochart, *Hierlz.* Part. II. *lib.* iii. *cap.* 5; and Mr. Biscoe, as above, chap. viii. § 2. p. 294.

d *To the magistrates.*] Though the Syriac and Arabic versions omit these words, the most authentic copies insert them. These magistrates are here called αρχοντες, and afterwards στρατηγοι, the latter of which words the Greeks used to denote *Roman prætors*; and if it were applied to the *duumviri*, who were the *governors of colonies*, it was by way of compliment: But Mr. Biscoe has well proved there are examples of such an application. *Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 3. p. 346.

e *Teach customs which it is not lawful, &c.*] The masters of this girl had not only lost all the gain they might have made by her practice of the arts she professed, but likewise what they might have sold her for in consequence of those extraordinary qualities which were now ceased. Yet as the laws made no provision for an event of this kind, they thought it proper to ground their accusation on an attempt to introduce a new religion, which was indeed forbidden by the Roman law, (Cicero, *De Leg. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8, 10, 14. 27; Liv. *lib.* xxxix. *cap.* 16; Sueton. *August. cap.* 93.) though every one was tolerated in worshipping what deities he pleased at home. (See Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § ii. p. 334; Grotius and Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*) The conquered provinces were left at full liberty in this respect; yea, and the Romans themselves were sometimes severely punished, by their generals or other magistrates, for insulting places or rites, or even animals accounted sacred.

f *And the officers.*] De Dieu supposes indeed, that the αρχοντες or *magistrates* mentioned ver. 19. were *the civil rulers*, and the στρατηγοι spoken of here were *military officers*, to whom the former sent them to execute their sentence. But the contrary is plain from ver. 19. compared with ver. 35. *et seq.* and especially with ver. 37. where Paul insists on their being uncondemned.

g *Tearing off their garments.*] It is well known this was the Roman method of proceeding in such cases. (See Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 4. p. 347; Grotius and Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*) De Dieu shows from *The Mischna*, that it was also practised among the Jews; but that was not regarded in the present case.

h *Secured their feet in the stocks.*] It is generally supposed that these were the cippi, or large pieces of wood, used among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of the prisoners, but sometimes distended them in a very painful manner: (See Grotius, *in loc.*; Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 5. p. 348; and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 439, 440.) So that it is highly probable the situation of Paul and Silas here might be much more painful than that of an offender sitting in the stocks among us, especially if (which is very possible) they lay, with their bare backs so lately scourged, on the hard

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: And immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

so many calamities *And on a sudden*, while they were thus engaged, *there was a great earthquake, so that the* very *foundations of the prison were shaken:* God thereby testifying his gracious regard to them as the faithful ambassadors of his Son, who for his sake were used in so outrageous a manner; *and immediately*, by the force of the earthquake, *all the doors were opened, and the bonds of all* the prisoners *were* at the same moment miraculously *loosened*,[i] yet their spirits were impressed with such astonishment that none of them attempted to flee away. 26

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

And the jailor awaking out of his sleep upon this violent concussion of the earth, *and seeing the doors of the prison opened*, was in such consternation that he *drew his sword, and was going to kill himself;*[k] naturally *supposing that the prisoners*, embracing so favourable an opportunity, *were fled;* and fearing lest their escape should be imputed to his connivance and treachery, and he should be proceeded against with the utmost severity, and be brought out to a painful and ignominious execution. 27

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.

But Paul, being aware of that horrid act which his rashness intended,[l] and anxious to prevent it, *cried out with a loud voice*, and with the utmost earnestness, *saying*, Stay thy desperate hand, and *do thyself no harm; for we are all here*, and none of us shall take the opportunity of escaping, while the hand of God is working thus awfully around us. 28

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas;

And upon this *he called for lights*,[m] *and* eagerly *sprang in* with a violent and impetuous motion; *and being in a* perfect *tremor*, he *fell down* with the humblest reverence *before* the feet of *Paul and Silas*, and lay a few moments in speechless consternation and confusion: *And* then in the most respectful manner *bringing them out* from the inner prison in which they were confined, *he said, O sirs, what must I do that I may be saved;*[n] for I see nothing but danger and misery, both temporal and spiritual, surrounding me? 29

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they said to him, answering together as with one voice, *Believe in the* name of the *Lord Jesus Christ*,[o] whom it is our office to preach as the great and only Saviour, and humbly commit thyself to his almighty protection, *and thou shalt be saved* from every evil, *and thine house* too, if they also believe.[p] 30 31

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And as he discovered a most humble desire to be farther instructed in the faith which they taught, *they* readily embraced the happy opportunity, and *spake to him, and to all that were in his house, the word of the Lord*, declaring the contents and purport of the gospel. 32

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And the word came with such a power, that his rough heart was melted at these gracious tidings, and the tenderness of it immediately flowed forth toward these messengers of them; so that, *taking them that very hour of the night, he washed their stripes*, which still remained unhealed,[q] *and was immediately baptized, himself and all his* domestics with him.[r] 33

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced believ-

And having brought them into his house after this solemn rite had been performed, *he spread the table before them* with the best provisions he had at hand; *and believing in* 34

or dirty ground, which renders their joyful frame expressed by songs of praise so much the more remarkable.——Beza explains it of the numerous, in which both the feet and the neck were fastened in the most uneasy posture that can well be imagined.

i *There was a great earthquake——the doors were opened——and the bonds loosened.*] Elsner has most happily shown, in his notes on this text, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 441—444.) that each of these three things was esteemed, even by the pagans, a token of some divine appearance in favour of the oppressed and afflicted who suffered wrongfully, and were dear to them.

k *Drew his sword, and was going to kill himself.*] Though it is true that some of the philosophers condemned self-murder, yet it was not only justified by many others, (see Grotius, *in loc.* and Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 6. p. 340.) but had in fact prevailed much among the Romans, especially about that time, and had, in the memory of some then living, been (as it were) dignified at Philippi by the example of those great men, Brutus and Cassius, among others who fell on their own swords there.

l *Paul*, being aware of that horrid act, &c.] As they were all at present in the dark, it is not easy to say how Paul knew of the jailor's purpose, unless it were by hearing some desperate words that declared it, or by some immediate suggestion from God, which amidst such a scene of wonders is by no means incredible.

m *He called for lights.*] As φῶτα is in the plural number, it seems to imply, that on this alarm several of his attendants came with torches, and were present at the inquiry which immediately followed; nor did he in the least scruple to throw himself down, before all his domestics, at the feet of these his holy prisoners, who were so evidently honoured by the God of nature.

n *What must I do that I may be saved?*] Grotius thinks, that in this inquiry the jailor went upon the natural principles of the immortality of the soul. Dr. Whitby, with much greater propriety, supposes that he spake thus to them, as referring to the testimony of the Pythoness, (ver. 17.) which had been so often and so publicly repeated, *that these servants of the most High God taught the way of salvation.* I apprehend the sense of what he says to be very extensive, as if he should have asked, "What methods shall "I take for my security?" Probably a vast multitude of ideas rushed into his mind at once. He saw by the earthquake the power and displeasure of God; and together with this, the sweetness and joy of Paul and Silas in their bonds, their willing continuance in prison when they might so easily have escaped, and their generous solicitude for the life of one who had used them so ill, were all circumstances fit to strike powerfully on a mind so passionate as his seems to have been, and might all do their part toward convincing him that these men were indeed divine messengers, and that the divine displeasure was falling on the city, and particularly on himself, for persecuting them. Perhaps some kind and pious words which Paul and Silas, who took all opportunities of doing good, might have uttered while he was fastening their feet in the stocks, might throw farther light on his mind, when recollected amidst such extremity of danger: and, no doubt, the Spirit of God added conviction and energy to all.

o *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.*] To believe in Christ, does undoubtedly in its primary signification imply, trusting in him, or committing ourselves to his protection, as I have here paraphrased it. (See Dr. Watts's *Harmony of all Relig.* chap. viii. p. 65.) In this connexion it would immediately imply, submitting to the farther instructions of these his special ambassadors and authorized messengers: and it always includes a desire to be delivered from the power of sin, and a disposition to comply with his scheme of salvation, which is to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: The full import of which scheme Paul and Silas would not fail to open to this new convert as soon as possible; and accordingly it is presently added, that they spake to him the word of the Lord.

p *Thou shalt be saved, and thine house.*] The meaning cannot be, that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by his faith, but that his believing in Christ would be the best security of his family from present danger, and that, if they also themselves believed, they would be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon.

q *He washed their stripes*, which still remained unhealed.] I mention this circumstance, as it serves to show what I have elsewhere observed, (and it is of great importance to remember it,) that the apostles had not a power of working miraculous cures whenever they pleased; no, not even on their own bodies, or those of their dearest friends. See note d, § 17. p. 467. Had they possessed such a power, it would have been their duty to have used it, unless they had (as Christ with such a power in fact had) a discovery of the divine will, that in such or such instances the use of it should be waved. On the other hand, the continual use of such a power would have frustrated many of those noble purposes in providence which their sufferings answered, and would have introduced many inconveniences which an intelligent reader will easily apprehend from this general hint.

r *And was immediately baptized, himself and all his.*] His being thus baptized with his household, seems to be the only reason which the Greek commentators had to think this jailor's name

SECT. 37. ACTS XVI.

God with all his house, he was even *transported with* unutterable *joy* at the sudden light which had sprung in upon him, and at the happy prospects which were by divine grace presented to his view as a christian.

ing in God, with all his house.

IMPROVEMENT.

We see remarkably in this period by what various methods divine grace operates upon different persons. As for
Ver. 14 Lydia, she was touched by a gentle influence descending upon her like dew from heaven; her heart was melted under the word as snow by the sun; and by the soft, yet powerful hand of our blessed Saviour, was made willing
24 and obedient. But when the Lord came to subdue the stubborn heart of the savage jailor, who seems to have taken a barbarous pleasure in afflicting his pious prisoners, he came *in the whirlwind, the tempest,* and *the fire.* (1 Kings
26, 27 xix. 11, 12.) His soul, as well as his house, was shaken with an earthquake, and the foundations, as it were, laid
28 bare. A sudden transport of astonishment convinces him of his extreme danger. His hand is mercifully stopped in that terrible moment in which he was rushing on to seek a refuge in hell from the seeming dangers of earth; and
29 being taught by a secret grace which he had not as yet been instructed to seek, he falls down before Paul and Silas, honouring them as among the first of mankind, whom he had just before treated, not only as slaves, but as the
30 worst of villains; yet he is now ready to receive the law and the gospel from their mouth, seeking the way of salvation from them, and declaring his readiness to submit to whatsoever they should tell him.

What unutterable delight must it afford to these afflicted servants of Christ, when they saw this astonishing
25 change! Surely it appeared that their prayers and their praises came up in remembrance before God. They had, with a serene conscience and a joyful heart, been singing praises to God in the stocks, and behold, new matter of praise is given them, and in the midst of all their sufferings new songs are put into their mouth, and new occasions
26 for thanksgiving pour in upon them. Those bonds which, however ponderous in themselves, sat so light upon them, are now miraculously loosened; and the far more infamous and dangerous bonds which Satan had fastened
30 upon these sons of persecution and violence, fall off too. The awakened jailor asks the question of all others the most important, and asks it with an earnestness and respect that witnesses its sincerity, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Gracious God, to whose efficacious influence the most obdurate heart must submit, awaken multitudes who, like this once wretched sinner, but now beloved and triumphant saint, are insensible of their danger and misery; that seeing themselves perishing, they may enquire after salvation! And may it please thee to put a faithful word into the
31 mouth of thy ministers, that they may all join in directing such awakened souls to believe in Christ, and trust to him for salvation! When they are brought to this they may well rejoice; and however their hearts may be enlarged
33, 34 towards those who have been the instruments of this blessed change, none of the effects of their tenderness or generosity can afford a pleasure comparable to that which they shall find in the consciousness of having rescued souls from eternal death, and conducted them into the way of salvation.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Paul and Silas are honourably dismissed from their confinement by the magistrates of Philippi, on insisting upon their privilege as Romans; and leave that city, after visiting the new converts there. Acts xvi. 35, *to the end.*

Acts xvi. 35.

SECT. 38. ACTS XVI.

THUS Paul and Silas spent the remainder of the night in the house of the jailor, sharing and increasing that joy which he found on the admission of the gospel into his heart.

Acts xvi. 35.
AND when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

35 *And when it was day, the* prætorian *magistrates* of Philippi, who were terrified by the earthquake,[a] *sent the* lictors or *beadles*[b] by whom they had been scourged the day before, to the keeper of the prison, *saying, Dismiss those men* with the custody of whom thou wast yesterday charged; for this correction and confinement is all the punishment we shall inflict upon them.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

36 *And the keeper of the prison told these things to Paul,* saying, *The* prætors, our chief *magistrates* here, *have sent* orders, *that you may be dismissed,* and I inform you of it with great satisfaction: *Now therefore* you are at full liberty to go *out* whenever you please, *and* may *pursue your journey in peace,* sure of our earnest prayers that all prosperity and happiness may attend you, wherever you carry those good tidings which have been so comfortable to us.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and

37 *But Paul* judged it proper to animadvert on the manner in which they had been used, and therefore called for the beadles, and *said to them,* As for these magistrates from whom you come, *they have beaten us, who are Romans* and free citizens as well as themselves;[c]

was Stephanas, and that he is the person referred to, 1 Cor. i. 16; xvi. 15, 17. But it is much more probable that Stephanas was a Corinthian, from all the places here cited.

a *Were terrified by the earthquake.*] Two ancient manuscripts mention this circumstance; and it is in itself very probable, separate from their authority.

b *The lictors or beadles.*] Perhaps the word ραβδουχοι, which Grotius would have to be retained in its Greek form, might have been rendered *vergers,* most agreeably to its etymology; but as such officers only bear a little wand, or something resembling one, and the Roman lictors had a large bundle of them tied together, I thought the word beadles, as it is also the name of the officers by whom offenders among us are generally whipped, would present to an English reader the most genuine idea.

c *They have beaten us, who are Romans.*] It is well known that the Valerian law forbade that a Roman citizen should be bound, and the Sempronian, that he should be beaten with rods. (See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 3, 4. Vol. I. p. 493—500.) If it be asked, Why Paul and Silas, who had the same immunity, did not plead this privilege before? I must answer with Mr. Biscoe, That the hurry and noise of the execution prevented it; and perhaps, amidst such a tumult, it might be apprehended that the people would have murdered them, if they had not been in some measure appeased by their sufferings; not to say how possible it is that the plea, if made, might not be regarded amidst such a riotous mob. The circumstances of Paul, when he pleaded it, Acts xxii. 25. were much different.——If it be farther asked, Why it was now so soon believed? it may be replied, not only that it was an extremely hazardous thing to make such a claim falsely, (for Claudius punished it with death; Sueton. *Claud. cap.* 25.) but also, that there was a certain dignity in the manner in which Paul made this plea, which added a sensible credibility to it, especially as they had now no further sufferings to apprehend, and as the earthquake, which might perhaps affect

now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

and this they have done *publicly* in the most ignominious manner, as if we had been common slaves, though we had never any legal trial, [*and*] were *uncondemned* of any crime at all; *and* after this they *have cast us into* the common *prison; And do they now* think to *thrust us out* of the city *privately? By no means;* it is not at all fit that magistrates should be encouraged in such oppressive and arbitrary proceedings as these, which may be so injurious to the most innocent and worthy citizens, whenever a popular cry is raised against them: they cannot *but* know that this their illegal proceeding hath given us a great advantage against them, if we were disposed to prosecute them to the utmost, according to the Roman law; if therefore they desire to accommodate the matter, *let them* at least *come themselves and conduct us* respectfully *out* of this place of confinement,[d] into which we have been so unjustly thrown, and thus let them make the best amends they can to our reputation and character, after having irreparably injured us in our persons.

SECT. 38. ACTS XVI. 37

38 And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

And the beadles reported these words to the prætors, who (as we observed above) were *the magistrates* from whom they came. *And when they heard that they were Romans, they were afraid,* well knowing, that even to have torn the garments of a citizen, and much more to have scourged him, especially thus publicly, and without hearing his defence, was a crime which might have exposed them to very high penalties, if the person injured had entered a complaint against them in the legal forms. 38

39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

And they came therefore in their own persons to the prison where Paul and Silas were, *and comforted them*[e] in the best manner they could, acknowledging their innocence, and commending the patience and fortitude with which they had borne the punishment so rashly inflicted upon them. *And conducting them out* with the most respectful treatment, they *requested that they would* excuse what was past, and would with all convenient speed *depart from the city,* to prevent any of those popular tumults which might be the consequence of their longer abode there; where perhaps the rage of their former accusers might occasion farther embarrassment, both to the magistrates and to them. 39

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

And upon this, *coming out of the prison* in the honourable manner we have described, *they* candidly agreed to excuse what had been done in prejudice of their rights; and only *entered into* [*the house of*] *Lydia,* their convert and friend, with whom they had lodged before. *And when they had seen the brethren* whom they were to leave behind them, *they comforted* them with an account of what God had done both for them and by them in the prison, and exhorted *them*[f] to such a stedfast faith and exemplary life as christianity always required, and was peculiarly suitable to their present circumstances; *and* then they *departed* out of Philippi,[g] and directed their journey westward towards Thessalonica, where they met with new difficulties, which will be related in the following section. 40

IMPROVEMENT.

We have seen Paul and Silas suffering, not for doing evil but good; for great good undoubtedly it was, to cast out the demon which possessed the young woman of whom we have been reading, and made her an instrument of mischief, though to her mercenary masters a means of gain. Could she indeed have foretold future events, as perhaps she very falsely pretended, it had been a curse rather than a benefit to mankind to know them; but it is exceedingly probable that this evil spirit, being himself unacquainted with them, did, like many of his brethren, only delude his votaries with ambiguous answers, which proved the occasion of false expectations and numerous inconveniences. At least, it diverted them from all proper regards to the true God, the supreme Disposer of all events, and confirmed them in their unhappy attachment to those which are by nature no gods, to those vain idols by a regard to whom Satan was honoured, and the living Jehovah injured and affronted. Ver. 16—19

Wisely did Paul, in imitation of his Master, refuse applause from so impure a tongue. Yet with what consistency could these heathens persecute him? If this damsel spake under a divine direction, why should she not be credited when she testified that *these were servants of the true God, that taught the way of salvation?* If they were indeed so, how absurd, how impious, and how dangerous must it be, to treat them with outrage instead of reverence! What an affront to God! What defiance to salvation! If Apollo was indeed any thing more than an empty name; if he was judged to have any power and any deity, what regards were owing to that Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared so much superior that Apollo fled at his very name! But the god of this world had 18 17

the whole city, seemed to have so evident a reference to their case. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 7. p. 350. *et seq.*

d *Let them come themselves and conduct us out.*] In all this Paul seems to have had a regard to the honour and interest of christianity in this place, as well as to their own civil rights as men and Romans; for such a token of public respect from the magistrates would undoubtedly encourage the new converts, and remove a stumbling-block out of the way of others who might not have discerned the true lustre of the characters of Paul and Silas, amidst so much infamy as they had before suffered.

e *They came and comforted them.*] So our translators render the word παρεκαλεσαν, in the next verse, as well as in many other places. Compare Acts xx. 12; Rom. i. 12; 2 Cor. i. 4; vii. 6. in all which texts and many others, it can have no other signification, though in several others it must signify *exhorted,* as it is justly rendered, Acts xi. 21; 1 Thess. ii. 11; Heb. iii. 13. and elsewhere. There are other instances in which it signifies to *entreat,* 1 Cor. iv. 13; 1 Tim. v. 1. But I prefer the first sense here, as the latter is expressed in the following clause, and as it gives us an idea of a more respectful treatment, as De Dieu also has hinted.

f *They comforted* and exhorted *them.*] I unite the two senses of the word here, as they would, to be sure, mingle on such an occasion *consolations* and *exhortations.* Such an extraordinary interposition of God for his suffering servants, and such an addition made to their church, had a natural tendency both to cheer their hearts, and to invigorate their pious resolutions. Accordingly it appears from Paul's Epistle to this church, that there were many excellent christians among them who expressed an affection for him, and a zeal for their religion, in some considerable degree correspondent to such encouragements and obligations; Phil. i. 5—7, 29, 30; iv. 10, 14—18.

g *And departed.*] Though many circumstances might now have invited their stay at Philippi, they wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem (as Brennius well observes) to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, and might give no suspicion of any design to stir up the people to any kind of sedition.

SECT. 38. blinded their eyes, and reason and conscience remonstrated in vain, so long as the hopes of gain lay the opposite way. Deliver us, O Lord, from such fatal madness, and teach us how much more valuable salvation is, than any worldly interest which must be sacrificed to it!

ACTS XVI. 22, 23 The ministers of Christ, Paul and Silas, had been injured in their reputations, and abused in their persons; and in this instance, as in many others, were *treated like the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things,* while *the ploughers ploughed upon their back, and made long furrows.* (1 Cor. iv. 13; Psal. cxxix. 3.)

37 The plea of privilege amidst so tumultuous a multitude, might have been in vain, and therefore was for the present prudently waved; but it was justly afterwards urged, and the magistrates challenged for their arbitrary proceedings before they knew who and what they were, and required to attend upon them in person, to acknowledge and atone for their fault. Here was a true magnanimity, proceeding not from pride but from humanity. Their reputation as ministers of Christ was worthy of a guard, and worthy of some reparation, where it had received so notorious an insult. The rashness of the magistrates was also worthy of being rebuked and mortified; which might have proved an occasion of suffering to other innocent persons, had not this instance of it been animadverted upon; yet no revenge was sought, nor were they, as some have been in the like case, laid under a necessity of buying their peace, to avoid a prosecution which might have ended in their ruin. Paul knew how to join the tenderness of the christian with the dignity of the Roman citizen, and contended for his own rights no farther than that very contention might be an act of general goodness. Let us *go and do likewise.*

38, 39 Let us learn, even from the example of these unjust rulers, to be willing to hear reason and truth from those who seem most our inferiors, and openly to retract any ill-concerted steps which we may have taken; especially, let us be willing to make the best reparation in our power to the innocent and the deserving, if, through imprudent heat or weak credulity, we have been engaged in any degree to injure them.

SECTION XXXIX.

Paul preaches at Thessalonica and Berœa, but is soon chased from both these places by the violence of the unbelieving Jews. Acts xvii. 1—15.

ACTS xvii. 1.

SECT. 39. WHEN Paul and Silas had quitted Philippi in that honourable manner which was described in the former section, they went forward in their progress; *and taking their journey* westward *through Amphipolis and Apollonia,* which were likewise considerable

ACTS XVII. cities of Macedonia, (the former of them having been once the capital of the first part of it,) *they came to* the celebrated *Thessalonica,* a city which lay near the coast of the

1 Ægean sea, where the Roman governor held his residence, and *where there was* also *a*

2 *synagogue of the Jews. And, according to Paul's* usual *custom* of applying first to the Jews, *he entered in* to their assembly and made one *among them, and* strongly argued and *discoursed to them, for three* succeeding *sabbaths,*[a] *from* various passages out

3 of *the scriptures,* for which they professed so great a regard; *Opening* [*them*] with great exactness, *and evidently showing* them,[b] by clear and incontestable arguments taken from these sacred oracles, *that the Messiah ought,* according to the whole tenor of the prophecies, *to suffer* the last extremities from the unbelieving generation among whom he was to appear, *and* then *to rise from the dead,* how contrary soever it was to their prejudiced apprehensions; *and that this is the* true expected *Messiah,* [*even*] *Jesus* of Nazareth, *whom,* said he, *I* make it my business to *declare unto you,* and to all to whom I come.

4 This was the substance of what he inculcated upon them in repeated discourses; *and* the success was various: for, notwithstanding all the prejudices of the Jews, such was the evidence of what he said, that *some of them believed and adhered to Paul and Silas; and* also *a considerable number of the devout Greeks,* who had either embraced the Jewish religion, or at least worshipped with those that had, *and not a few of the principal women* of the city.

5 *But,* on the other hand, there were many who rejected the gospel, and that, as it afterwards appeared, with great malignity of heart. For after some time *the unbelieving Jews, filled with* indignation, and in a wild transport of ungovernable *zeal* on the occasion, *gathered together some mean and profligate fellows, and making a mob, threw*

ACTS xvii. 1.

NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures;

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a com-

a *For three* succeeding *sabbaths.*] It has been concluded from hence that Paul continued but three weeks at Thessalonica; but as it evidently appears, that while he was in this city, he not only wrought with his own hands to procure a subsistence, (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.) but also received supplies more than once from Philippi; (compare Phil. iv. 16.) I think it much more probable, (as Dr. Benson well argues, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 94, 95.) that after the Jews appeared so obstinate in their infidelity as most of them did, he desisted from disputing or teaching in their synagogue after the third sabbath, and then preached for some time among the Gentiles, before the assault mentioned ver. 5. which drove him from this city. It appears that during his stay here great numbers of Gentile idolaters received the gospel with remarkable zeal and affection, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. so that a church was founded, in the midst of their persecutions, which became famous in all Macedonia and Achaia: (Ibid. ver. 5—8.) And though the apostle, after having treated these new converts with extraordinary tenderness during his abode with them, was quickly forced to leave them, (chap. ii. 7, 8, 11. *et seq.*) and they, about the same time, lost some christian brethren by death who were dear to them, and might have been remarkably useful; (chap. iv. 13. *et seq.*) yet they continued to behave well, so that Paul received a very comfortable account of them by Timothy, chap. iii. 6, 7. and they afterwards advanced in faith, charity, and courage amidst their growing trials, 2 Thess. i. 3, 4. though some few behaved irregularly, and got into an idle and negligent way of living, which brings much reproach upon a christian profession, and therefore required church-discipline; *Ib.* iii. 6—15. It also appears that when Paul was with them, he took an opportunity of hinting to them the rise of Antichrist, which, as they a little mistook his meaning, gave occasion to that celebrated prophecy, 2 Thess. ii. 1—12. I conclude that these hints from the Epistles, to complete and illustrate the short account given in the Acts, will not, here or elsewhere, be disagreeable to my readers, but that they will rather be pleased to have as complete a view as may be of the scripture-history of the christian church in the apostles' time.

b *Evidently showing* them.] This seems the proper import of the word παρατιθεμενος, which signifies *laying a thing open before the eyes of spectators.* Grotius and Elsner think the last words of the preceding verse should have begun thus: απο των γεγραμμενων διανοιγων, *opening and evincing from the scriptures, &c.*

pany, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

the whole *city into a tumult; and assaulting* with great violence *the house of Jason,*[c] where Paul and his companions lodged, they *endeavoured to bring them out to the people*, with a design to have exposed them to the fury of the mob, whom they had so incensed against them, that they were ready to have torn them to pieces. *But not finding them*, as they expected, in the house, *they dragged* out *Jason, and some* others *of the brethren* who were with him, *to the rulers of the city, crying out* with great fury, *These* turbulent, mischievous *men, that have turned the world upside down*, and thrown every place through which they have passed into the utmost confusion, *are* now *come hither also*, to create the same disturbance among us. *And* this *Jason has privately received* and sheltered *them* under his roof, and so hath made himself responsible for all the mischief they may do here: *And* it is highly necessary that an immediate stop be put to their proceedings, as *all these men* are certainly engaged in some design that may be dangerous to the state, and are in effect guilty of high-treason against the emperor; for they *act* directly *contrary* both *to the decrees* and interest *of Cæsar, saying, That there is another* independent and even superior *king*, [*one*] *Jesus*:[d] whom, though he were crucified at Jerusalem several years ago, they foolishly assert to be raised to universal empire, and demand the obedience of all men to him as their supreme Lord.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, That there is another king, *one* Jesus.

And as the charge was formed in such a manner that their neglecting it might render them obnoxious to the Romans, *they* troubled and *alarmed* both *the multitude and the magistrates of the city when they heard these things*, which seemed to contain something of a formidable nature which they could not fully understand. But they were not willing to proceed to extremities against a neighbour merely for harbouring persons who, whatever might be alleged against them, were in a manner strangers to him; *and* therefore, *having* only *taken security of Jason and the rest* of the brethren who were brought before them, to bind them to their good behaviour, and to appear when they were called to answer to the charge exhibited against them, *they dismissed them* for that time.

8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

But the brethren, perceiving to how great personal danger the apostle and those that attended him would necessarily be exposed by a longer abode there, *immediately*, without any farther delay where such important lives were concerned, *sent away Paul and Silas by night to* the neighbouring city of *Berœa*, where they hoped they might pursue the charitable design of their journey with less opposition; *and* accordingly, *when they came thither, they went into the synagogue of the Jews*, not discouraged by the ill usage they had met with upon their addresses to them elsewhere.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither*, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Here, therefore, as in other places, these messengers of Jesus gave them an account of the general contents of the gospel, and of the commission which they had in charge, always to open it first to the Jews, wherever they came. *And* they had the satisfaction to find that *these* people *were of a* nobler and *more generous disposition than those of* that religion at *Thessalonica*,[e] by whom they had been so ungratefully chased away; *for they received the word with all readiness of mind, daily examining the scriptures,*[f] *whether those things* which Paul and Silas in their repeated discourses asserted, *were* indeed *so*. *Many of them therefore* finding how exact a correspondence there was between the words of these christian preachers and those of their own prophets to which they referred, *believed* the gospel; *and* also several *of the Grecian women of considerable rank, and of the men not a few;* so that there was, on the whole, a fair prospect of founding a flourishing church in this place.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed: also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

But an unhappy opposition soon arose from the malice of their persecutors; for *as some of the Jews of Thessalonica understood that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berœa* with such promising success, not content with what they had done to oppose it at home, *they came thither also, raising* [*a storm among*] *the populace*,[g] and representing Paul and his associates as factious and turbulent people, to whom it was dangerous to give any the least shelter or countenance. *And then immediately the brethren*, equally solicitous with those of Thessalonica in the like case, as to the danger he might incur in conse-

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away

c *Jason.*] As Jason seems by Rom. xvi. 21. to have been a relation of Paul, it is not improbable that he was an Hellenistical Jew; but M. L'Enfant's argument from his name seems not sufficient to prove him to have been so.

d *Another king.*] Though the Roman Emperor did not pretend to be the only king or monarch, yet in all the conquered provinces or dependent states, there could be no king established without his consent: and it is not improbable that the title of Lord, so frequently and so justly given by christians to their great Master, might be used as a handle of accusation on such an occasion as this.

e *Of a* nobler and *more generous disposition, &c.*] There is, as Dr. Whitby has observed, a peculiar spirit and propriety in this expression, as the Jews boasted that they were ελευθεροι και ευγενεις, *free and noble*, by virtue of their descent from Abraham and the other patriarchs. These Bereans, imitating the rational faith of their great progenitor, were ευγενεστεροι, *his more genuine offspring.*

f *Daily examining the scriptures.*] It is very unjust to argue, from the conduct of the apostle with respect to the Jews, and from that of these free and generous inquirers, that christianity cannot be proved otherwise than from the prophecies of the Old Testament. It might be demonstrated from various topics of external and internal evidence to those who never heard of any former revelation. Another very important additional argument does indeed arise from the accomplishment of prophecies; and when it has been asserted (as we know it has) by the authorized teachers of the gospel, not only that Christ is a Divine Messenger, but also that his appearance was foretold to the Jews, then it is impossible to vindicate Christ's mission without showing that it was so. But, in examining the particular texts in question, we are not only to inquire whether the sense given by the apostles be, in itself considered, most easy and natural, which is generally the case; but (especially on account of the obscurity which must of course attend prophecy) we are to consider whether the improbability of the sense they give in any particular instance, or in all instances, be sufficient to balance the other proofs they produced of being under a divine guidance, before we can draw any conclusion to the prejudice of their plenary inspiration; so very far should we be from concluding, without such an overbalance, that christianity is false, which yet has generally been the way of our indolent half-thinkers, and of Mr. Collins in particular, whose reflections on this text gave occasion to this remark.

g *Raising a storm among the populace.*] Mr. Blackwall has rightly observed, (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 230.) that this is the exact import of the word σαλευω, which expresses *a violent agitation of the sea*, and admirably illustrates the rage and fury of a seditious multitude. Compare Psal. xciii. 3, 4; Isa. xvii. 12, 13; Jer. xlvi. 7, 8; See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 446.

SECT. 39. ACTS XVII.

quence of the growing influence of his unjust accusers, and the peculiar malice which they had against him, *sent away Paul, as if he were to go by sea* to some of the southern cities of Greece; and they chose to direct him to the road which led to the sea, that if he had not an opportunity of embarking, or did not think proper to do it, his malicious enemies might at least be discouraged from any farther attempt to pursue him; which they might probably have done, if they had known he would have travelled by land. *But Silas and Timothy*, as their characters were not so public, or their persons so obnoxious, did not go with him from Berœa, but *continued there* a while longer, to settle the new-planted church, and to instruct them more fully in the doctrine of the gospel.

Paul, to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 *And they that conducted Paul, brought him* by land *as far as* the celebrated city of *Athens*, that unequalled seat of learning among the Greeks; *and having received an order* from him *to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him as soon as might be*,[h] to inform him of the state of the new converts he had left behind him at Thessalonica and Berœa, *they went away;* and he continued alone at Athens, with a heart full of solicitude on account of his brethren, and of these infant churches.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WITH how much grace and propriety might the apostle say of bonds and imprisonments, in the most grievous
2 circumstances that could attend them, *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* (Acts xx. 24.) He gave a remarkable proof of this heroic temper, when having (as he himself expresses it) *been shamefully entreated at Philippi, he was bold in his God to preach the gospel of God at Thessalonica too*, though it were *with much contention*, through the perverse opposition of these unbelieving Jews. (1 Thess. ii. 2.)

3 He boldly declared to them, and proved it by unanswerable evidence, that the Messiah whom they so eagerly expected, and of whose temporal kingdom they so fondly dreamt, must, in order to establish his claim from the accomplishment of prophecies, suffer, and rise from the dead: And then he showed, agreeably to these important premises, that Jesus whom he preached to them was that very Person: but instead of receiving his testimony with thankfulness, and the word of God with obedience, what iniquity and obstinacy of heart did these Jews show! Unhappy nation, who, as Paul most justly speaks of them, (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.) having killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, persecuted the apostles also; not pleasing God, and being contrary to all men, forbidding, so far as in them lay, the appointed messengers of this glorious salvation to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved: thereby, alas, filling up the measure of their iniquities, till wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and avenged at once the blood of Christ and that of his ministers whom they had slaughtered, and those immortal souls whom they had laboured to destroy.

5 Their blind and furious zeal for the law, to which, after all, the apostles did a much greater honour than they could possibly do, engaged them to list under their banners the vilest and most infamous of mankind, *certain lewd fellows of the baser sort*, the pitch of whose understandings, as well as the turn of their tempers, rendered them the proper tools upon such occasions: And these profligate wretches themselves, the reproach and the plague of
6 mankind, are the persons into whose mouth that senseless cry against the apostles was to be put, that they turned the world upside down. Competent judges indeed of the interests of society, and worthy guardians of its peace!

Such charges, we see, may be brought against the most innocent, the most benevolent, and the most useful of mankind. Thus was Paul accused by Tertullus, as *a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition throughout the world, and a ringleader* of one of the most pernicious sects that ever appeared in it. (Acts xxiv. 5.) Nor did Jesus, our Divine Master, escape; but was accused, condemned, and executed, as a traitor to Cæsar and to his country. But could these clamorous creatures have thought of proof, where would they have been able to find it? If to testify the truth which God had given them in charge—if to exhort to universal love—if to command men that they should study to be quiet and do their own business, that if it were possible, as much as lay in them, they should live peaceably with all men, doing good to all as they had opportunity—if to enforce these exhortations by the strongest arguments, the warmest exhortations by the most amiable examples—if thus to teach and thus to act were turning the world upside down, the apostles were indeed the subverters of it: But O, who would not pray for the happy time when the world should be thus subverted!

7 Let the claims of Jesus to universal monarchy be rightly understood, and Cæsar shall find nothing contrary to his just decrees, but every thing subservient to his truest interest. The Redeemer's *kingdom is not of this world*, (John xviii. 36.) nor can the just rights both of princes and subjects be ever so effectually established, as by a submission to him. May the kings of the earth be so wise as to know this, and all under their government so happy as seriously to consider it!

9, 10 Security was taken of Paul's friends, and it was prudent in the magistrates to carry it no farther. The apostle himself was obliged immediately to quit them, under the shelter of the night, with a heart full of tender solicitude for these new converts; yet he did not reflect upon his journey to Thessalonica with regret, but, amidst all the difficulties he met with, was (as he afterwards tells them) *incessantly thanking God on their account, because* they *received* the gospel *which they heard of him, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God*, and *became followers of the churches of God* elsewhere. (1 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

11, 12 Providence brought him in safety and liberty to Berœa, and here he met with a more candid reception: The Berœans showed a true nobleness of spirit, for they received the word with readiness, and searched the scriptures daily, that they might judge for themselves whether things were there as Paul represented them. While the ministers

h *An order to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him, &c.*] Perhaps Paul expected some considerable success would attend his labours at Athens, and was therefore desirous to engage the assistance of these pious and excellent persons. Nevertheless God did not see fit to answer these hopes: and though they came to him as he had ordered, or at least one of them, that is, Timothy, he was quickly obliged to send him away, especially as he was so solicitous about his dear friends at Thessalonica. See 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

of Christ are faithful and skilful in the execution of their office, they will not desire that what they say should be received with an implicit subjection; but will be contented, will be solicitous, it should be tried by the standard of scripture. To this touchstone may our doctrines and exhortations be honestly brought, and let them always be received or rejected as they are found agreeable or disagreeable to it. SECT. 39.

SECTION XL.

Paul continues a while at Athens, and being deeply affected with the idolatry of that learned city, makes an excellent discourse to them, but with little success. Acts xvii. 16, *to the end.*

Acts xvii. 16.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him; and some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

Acts xvii. 16.

NOW while Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy, after the message he had sent *them* (as was before observed) to come to him *at Athens*, the notice that he took of their religious state affected him with such concern and indignation, that *his spirit within him was strongly moved*,[a] and had an unusual kind of edge set upon it, *while he beheld the* excessive superstition of that famous *city*, which was esteemed the seat of learning and politeness, and found it in so gross and scandalous a manner *enslaved to idolatry*.[b] *He therefore discoursed* publicly upon the great principles of natural and revealed religion *in the synagogue*, addressing himself *to the Jews, and to the* other *pious persons* [*that worshipped with them*] on their sabbath days;[c] *and* took all opportunities of speaking about matters of religion *every day, in the* great forum or *market-place, to those* Athenians *whom he met with* in the public edifices which were erected there. SECT. 40. ACTS XVII. 17

But some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers opposed themselves to him;[d] the former of which entirely denied a Divine Providence, and held the world to be merely the effect of chance, asserting pleasure to be man's chief good, and limiting his existence to the present state; and the latter maintained the doctrine of an universal necessity, and proudly exalted their wise men as if they were in some respects superior to the Deity himself. The notions of both these were so directly contrary to the doctrine which Paul taught, that it is no wonder they proved violent antagonists; *and* as several were present at these occasional debates, *some* scornfully *said, What will this retailer of scraps say?*[e] this trifling fellow, that has somewhere or another picked up some scattered notions, with which he is vain enough to think he may make a figure here? *And others* said, *He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign deities* or demons: *because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection;* the former of which they, through their negligence in attending, ridiculously took for a deified man, and the other for a goddess.[f] 18

a *His spirit within him was strongly moved.*] The word παρωξυνετο signifies, that *a sharp edge was* as it were *set upon his spirit*, and that he was wrought up to a great *eagerness of zeal*. Yet it is observable, that it did not throw him into any sallies of rage, either in words or actions, but only engaged him courageously to attempt stopping this torrent of popular superstition, by the most serious and affectionate, yet at the same time manly and rational, remonstrances. Oh that christian zeal had always produced such effects!

b *He beheld the city enslaved to idolatry.*] This, which is here expressed in the original by κατειδωλον, appears to have been its proper character. Athens was therefore called by Ælian the altar of Greece; and Xenophon observes, "that it had twice as many "sacred festivals as any other city." (Xen. *De Rep. Athen.* p. 700.) The grave Pausanias tells us, "it had more images than "all the rest of Greece:" (*Attic. cap.* 17, 24.) and one of the satirists humorously says, "It was easier to find a god than a man "there." (Petron. *Satiric. cap.* 17.) Dr. Hammond has a fine note to illustrate this. See also Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § II. p. 317, 321. and *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revel.* p. 238, 239. The author last mentioned tells us, (I wish I could find on what particular authorities,) that a fool had been capitally condemned there for killing one of Æsculapius's sparrows, and that a little child accidentally taking up a piece of gold that fell from Diana's crown, was put to death for sacrilege. (*Ibid.* p. 240.) The prevalence of such a variety of senseless superstitions in this most learned and polite city, which all its neighbours beheld with so much veneration, gives us a most lively and affecting idea of the need we have, in the most improved state of human reason, of being taught by a divine revelation. May the admirers of the Grecian wisdom seriously consider it, and they will find almost every one of their classics an advocate for the gospel!

c *The Jews and pious persons that worshipped with them.*] It appears plainly from this text, and perhaps also from ver. 4. I think beyond any other, that the character of σεβομενοι is at least sometimes given by Luke to persons who used to worship the true God, and yet were not circumcised, which if they had been, I think they would not have been distinguished from Jews. But that the title was appropriated to such, and especially that such could properly be called proselytes of the gate, in the technical sense in which Maimonides, and almost all our modern writers from him, explain the word, will by no means follow.

d *Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.*] The Epicurean notions came so near to those of our gay world, that it may seem less needful to explain them any farther than is done in the paraphrase: and as for those of the Stoics, different writers, according to their fondness for, or their prejudices against, the philosophy of the pagans, and of this sect in particular, have represented their doctrines in a very different view; and indeed the notorious inconsistency between some of their own writers and some of the ancients, in their account of them, has greatly perplexed the matter. But I think Dr. Benson has expressed himself, on the whole, in a very impartial and judicious, as well as comprehensive, manner, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 100.) when he tells us, "They held that matter "was eternal, God corporeal," that is, a fiery substance, "and that "either God was the soul of the world, or the world itself a God. "They" generally "looked upon all things as subject to an irre-"sistible fatality," though some of them at least, seem to me to have exempted the human will from it: "that virtue was its own "sufficient reward, and vice its own sufficient punishment: And "they fluctuated exceedingly as to their belief of future rewards "and punishments, though they had some expectations of a future "state" of existence, "as well as of the conflagration and renova-"tion of the world;" with relation to which, several of them seem to have expected a continual revolution of exactly similar events at equally distant periods of time.—The attentive reader will easily see how opposite the genius of each of these sects was to the pure and humble spirit of christianity, and how happily the apostle levels his incomparable discourse at some of the most distinguishing and important errors of each, while, without expressly attacking either, he seems only intent on giving a plain summary of his own religious principles, in which he appears a most charming model of the true way of teaching and reforming mankind. (See Dr. Bentley, *At Boyle's Lecture*, Sermon ii. at the beginning.) For a larger account of the Epicureans and Stoics, see Le Clerc's *Eccles. Hist. Crol.* § ii. *cap.* 4, 5; Budæus, in his excellent *Hist. of Phil. cap.* iv. § 45—50. *et Ibid.* § 36—40; and above all for the latter, Lips. *Manuduct. ad Phil. Stoicam, præsertim lib.* i. *cap.* 14, 15.

e *Retailer of scraps.*] This was the best phrase I could think of, to express the original, σπερμολογος, which signifies, "a contemp-"tible creature, that picks up scattered seeds in the market, or "elsewhere;" and therefore Mr. Fleming (*Christol.* Vol. II. p. 429.) would render it *grain-gatherer*, or less literally, *holder-forth.* To have rendered it *this mountebank*, as the translation of 1727 does, seemed both ludicrous and inaccurate. The original admirably expresses the contempt they had of an unknown foreigner, that pretended to teach all the several professors of their learned and illustrious body of philosophers.—Witsius (*Meletem.* p. 81—83.) has taken great pains to show, by many authorities, that it comprehends the three ideas of *meanness, garrulity*, and *impiety*, as if it had been said, *This contemptible, prattling, sacrilegious creature;* but as this seems to strain the matter to an extreme, I chose the least malignant sense, especially as that was petulant enough, and gives one but an ill idea of their sense and politeness.

f *Jesus, and the resurrection.*] It seems with great reason that Dr. Hammond follows Chrysostom's interpretation, which is that given in the paraphrase. Stupid as the mistake seems, it is the

SECT. 40. ACTS XVII.

And as the crowd increased to a greater number than could conveniently hear him in the place where they then were, *they took him and conducted him to* that celebrated hill near the citadel which was called *the Areopagus*,[g] being a part of their city dedicated to Mars the god of battle, whom they called Areios, and the seat of that illustrious senate who had the name of Areopagites, from their assembling there. And when he was come thither
19 they applied to him, *saying*, *May we* be allowed to *know* more fully and particularly *what*
20 *this new doctrine* [*is*] *which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest some strange things to our ears*, exceedingly different from what we have ever received from any of those many professors of various learning which this celebrated city has produced: *we would therefore* willingly *know what these things mean;* and chuse to hear them from thine own mouth, rather than by the uncertain report of others, who may not perhaps clearly understand what thou intendest, or accurately relate what thou hast said.

21 Now this was entirely agreeable to the genius of the place; *for all the Athenians, and the* numerous *strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time*, of which many of them have a great deal, *in nothing else but telling or hearing somewhat new*,[h] which may amuse that speculative and curious temper they are exceeding prone to indulge.

22 *Paul therefore standing up in the middle of the Areopagus*, where he might be most conveniently heard by a large number of people, addressed himself to them in a very suitable discourse, and *said*, *Ye men of Athens*, it seems as if I might address you with the greater prospect of success on the occasion which now calls me to speak among you, as *I*
23 *perceive you are exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers:*[i] *For as I passed along* the streets of this elegant and magnificent city, *and beheld the objects* and instruments *of your worship*,[k] *I found an altar on which there was this* remarkable *inscription*, "*To the unknown God*;"[l] so desirous do you seem to be that no deity, whether known or unknown, may be passed by without some regard. Now I should think myself inexpressibly happy, if on this incident I might graft those instructions which might bring you to the true knowledge of religion, and determine the devotions you seem so ready to pay to him who is the only worthy object of them: *Him, therefore, whom* in this instance *ye*
24 *worship without* particularly *knowing*, *him do I* now publicly *declare unto you*. This is the Deity that I am come to preach among you, even *the* one glorious and eternal *God who made the world and all things that are therein;* and it is evident that such must be the excellency of his nature, that being the supreme and uncontrollable *Lord* of all the dominions *of heaven and earth, he dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither*

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is?*

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped

less to be wondered at, since Resurrection might as well be counted a deity as Shame, Famine, and Desire, among the Athenians, (Pausan. *Attic. cap.* 17.) or as the Fever, and some things too scandalous here to name, were among the Romans, as Dr. Hammond, Mr. Reeves, (*Apol.* Vol. II. p. 53.) and many others, have long since remarked. Raphelius's attempt to overthrow this interpretation, by proving that δαιμονων signifies *the person of a demon*, and also *any property or work belonging to him*, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 167—172.) is quite unsuccessful; for none of his authorities prove it expresses both in the same place.

g *They took him and conducted him to the Areopagus.*] For an account of this celebrated place, and the court of judges which sat there to try all the most important causes, civil or criminal, see Archbishop Potter's *Greek Antiq.* Book I. chap. 19. and, for the etymology, Dr. Hammond, and Le Clerc's *Supplement.* As the cognizance of religious causes also lay in these judges, Beza, Dr. Hammond, and some other critics, have thought that Paul was brought to a formal trial before them; but it evidently appears to be a mistake, not only from the title by which Paul addresses them in his discourse, (from which Limborch argues,) but from the whole tenor of the story, and particularly as the persons who brought him hither are represented, not as accusing him of any thing obnoxious, but only as desiring to be informed what that strange thing, his new doctrine, was.

h *The strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time* (ευκαιρουν) *in—somewhat new.*] It is well known that the young nobility and gentry of Italy, and most of the neighbouring countries, generally studied some time at Athens, where there were the most celebrated professors in all the liberal arts and sciences. Several of the critics have shown how remarkable the Athenians were for their love of novelty, and none, that I recollect, better than Raphelius, *Annot ex. Xen.* p. 172, 173.

i *Exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers.*] This English phrase, which is very agreeable to the etymology of δεισιδαιμονεστερους, has, what I think a version of Scripture should always if possible have, the ambiguity of the original, which Dr. Hammond, and especially Revius, *On Valla*, prove to be capable of a good as well as a bad sense; (compare Acts xxv. 19.) whereas neither *superstitious* nor *religious* have that ambiguity.——Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. chap. 8. § 7. Vol. I. p. 427—430. (as Mr. Fleming also had done, *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 431.) has well observed, that giving it the worst signification of which it is capable, does not well suit the decorum which so well-bred a man as Paul was would no doubt maintain before this polite assembly; whereas, on our interpretation, it opens his discourse, not only in an inoffensive, but in a very obliging, manner, which I have endeavoured farther to express in the paraphrase. This accurate critic shows, that strangers at Athens used to begin their public discourses with some compliment to the place and its inhabitants. The medium Paul chuses cannot be sufficiently admired.

k *The objects* and instruments *of your worship.*] This is the proper signification of σεβασματα, which has no English word exactly corresponding to it. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4.

l *To the unknown God.*] The express testimony of Lucian (*Philopat. ad fin.*) sufficiently proves that there was such an inscription at Athens, and shows how unnecessary, as well as unwarrantable, it was in Jerome to suppose that the apostle, to serve his own purpose, gives this turn to an inscription which bore on its front a plurality of deities. Whence this important phenomenon arose, or to what it particularly referred, it is more difficult to say. Witsius, (*Melet.* p. 85.) with Heinsius, (*in loc.*) understands it of Jehovah, whose name not being pronounced by the Jews themselves, might give occasion to this appellation; and to this sense Mr. Biscoe inclines, *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii: sect. 22. p. 322—325. Dr. Welwood (*Pref. to the Banquet of Xenophon*, p. 18, 19.) supposes that Socrates reared this altar, to express his devotion to the *one living and true God*, of whom the Athenians had no notion, and whose incomprehensible being he insinuated, by this inscription, to be far beyond the reach of their understanding or his own: and in this I should joyfully acquiesce, could I find one ancient testimony in confirmation of the fact. As it is, to omit other conjectures, I must give the preference to that which Beza and Dr. Hammond have mentioned, and which Mr. Hallet (*Disc. on Script.* Vol. I. p. 307, 308.) has laboured at large to confirm and illustrate, though I think none of these learned writers has set it in its most natural and advantageous light. Diogenes Laertius, in his *Life of Epimenides*, (see *lib.* i. p. 29. C. with the Notes of J. Casaubon and Menagius,) assures us, that in the time of that philosopher, [about 600 years before Christ,] there was a terrible pestilence at Athens, in order to avert which, when none of the deities to whom they sacrificed appeared able or willing to help them, Epimenides advised them to bring some sheep to the Areopagus, and letting them loose from thence, to follow them till they lay down, and then to sacrifice them (as I suppose the words τω προσηκοντι θεω, signify) *to the god near whose temple or altar they then were.* Now it seems probable, that Athens not being then so full of these monuments of superstition as afterwards, these sheep lay down in places where none of them were near, and so occasioned the rearing what the historian calls anonymous altars, or altars each of which had the inscription, αγνωστω θεω, *to the unknown God*, meaning thereby *the Deity who had sent the plague*, whoever he were; one of which altars at least, however it might have been repaired, remained till Paul's time, and long after. Now, as the God whom Paul preached as Lord of all, was indeed the Deity who sent and removed this pestilence, the apostle might with great propriety tell the Athenians he declared to them him whom, without knowing him, they worshipped, as I think the concluding words of the 23d verse may most decently be rendered.

with men's hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

is he served by human hands lifted up in prayer, or stretched out with the most costly offerings, *as if he stood in need of any thing* which we can give or which we can do:[m] For *he himself* is indeed the great universal Benefactor from whom all our enjoyments and all our powers of action are derived; as he is continually *giving to all* the human race *life, and breath, and all things*, which they can neither consecrate to him or possess themselves.

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation:

And he hath made of one blood, and caused to descend from one original pair, the immediate work of his own almighty power and goodness, *the whole nation* and species *of men*,[n] now, by his providential care, so propagated as *to inhabit* and cover *all the face of the earth, having marked out* in his eternal and unerring counsel, *the times fore-allotted* [*to each*] in their respective order,[o] *and* appointed *the* several *boundaries of their* different *habitations*.

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

All things, in the disposition of his providence, centring in this one great end, *that they might* be excited to *seek after the Lord* their Maker, *if possibly*, amidst all the darkness which their own degeneracy and prejudice have brought upon their minds, *they might feel after him, and* be so happy as to *find him* out, in the knowledge of whom their supreme happiness consists; who indeed, *though he be* so little known and regarded by the generality of mankind, yet is *not far from every one of us: For in him we* perpetually *live, and are moved, and do exist*;[p]

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

the continuance of all our active powers, and even of our being, is ever owing to his steady and uninterrupted agency upon us, according to those stated laws of operation which he hath wisely been pleased to lay down for himself: *as some also of your own poets have* in effect *said*, and particularly Aratus, in those remarkable words, "*For we his offspring are.*"[q]

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device.

We therefore, with all the noble powers and faculties of the rational nature, *being* only *the offspring of God*, and bearing but a feeble ray of those consummate and original glories which shine forth in him, *ought not* surely *to imagine the Deity to be like* any thing inferior even to ourselves, any thing so mean and vile as *gold, or silver, or stone*, (of which last material, base as it is, most of the idols are made,) how curiously soever *wrought by the art and contrivance of man*.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Such are indeed the gross conceptions that have long been entertained by a great part of mankind, but you are now called to correct these irregular ideas, and to govern yourselves by more rational and exalted views of religion: *for though God*, as it were, *overlooked the times of* this *ignorance*, and did not bear any general testimony against these corruptions in worship, nor severely punish the nations who fell into them, so long as they maintained any thing of natural virtue, humanity, and probity;[r] *he now* interposes in a public and solemn manner, and expressly *charges all men* to whom the sound of his gospel comes, *every where to repent* and return to his worship and obedience, as they regard their eternal happiness and salvation.

31 Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by *that* man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

And this he requires with a merciful kind of severity and importunity, as what must immediately be done, *because he hath appointed a* great and awful *day in which he will judge the* whole *world in righteousness*, and pass a final sentence of happiness or misery on each, according to his true character and behaviour; which he will do *by* [*that*] illustrious *Man whom he hath*, by miraculous interpositions, marked out as *ordained* for that important purpose, *of which he hath given* sufficient *assurance to all men, by raising him from the dead* according to his known and public prediction, whereby he has demonstrated how able he is to raise others.

m *Neither is he served by human hands*, &c.] Dr. Bentley, (*At Boyle's Lect.* Serm. II. p. 43.) and many other critics, have well observed, this refers to a foolish notion among the heathens, that the gods fed on the fumes of sacrifice. Their votaries also clothed their images with splendid garments, and waited upon them in other services ill becoming the majesty and purity essential to the divine nature.

n *He hath made of one blood* (ἑνὸς αἵματος) *the whole nation of men.*] By this expression the apostle showed them, in the most unaffected manner, that though he were a Jew, he was not enslaved to any narrow views, but looked on all mankind as his brethren. I see no reason to imagine, as Elsner does, that the apostle has any reference here to a notion of some of the philosophers, mentioned by Julian, "that the whole human race sprung up from some "drops of sacred blood which fell down from Jupiter." (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 447, 448.) It would, I think, have been beneath him to have taken the advantage of such an ambiguity of expression. If it be objected, (as I know it has been,) that no principle of reason could prove that all mankind were descended from one original pair, I answer, That it was not necessary for the apostle separately to prove every article of his doctrine, of which he here gives a summary account. Had they heard him out, he would no doubt have given them proper evidence that he had a commission from God to teach it, and that therefore it was to be received on the authority of the revealer.

o *The times fore-allotted to each* in their respective order.] The expression προτεταγμένους καιρους, signifies the *wisdom* as well as *reality* of this *divine disposition* of events, as fixed by God in his eternal counsels under the conduct of his providence; which therefore I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase. (Compare note f, on chap. xiii. 48. p. 500, 501.) This evidently struck at the root of the whole Epicurean system.

p *In him we live, and* (κινουμεθα) *are moved, and do exist.*] No words can better express that continual and necessary dependence of all derived beings, in their existence and all their operations, on their First and Almighty Cause, which the truest philosophy as well as theology teaches. The thought, in words just like these, is found in an old Greek poet; but Paul does not mention it as a quotation; so that I rather think, with Le Clerc, that the poet borrowed it from hence, though, to be sure, many of the ancients had before expressed themselves much to the same purpose. See Gataker, *Ad Antonin. lib.* iv. sect. 23. *et lib.* v. sect. 27.

q *For we his offspring are.*] These words Του γαρ και γενος εσμεν, (which I chose to put into a poetical order in the version, as best imitating the original,) are well known to be found in Aratus, a poet of Cilicia, Paul's own country, who lived almost 300 years before this time.—I wonder so few writers should have added that they are, with the alteration of one letter only, to be found in the Hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, of the Supreme God, which I willingly mention, as beyond comparison the purest and finest piece of natural religion, of its length, which I know in the whole world of pagan antiquity; and which, so far as I can recollect, contains nothing unworthy of a christian, or, I had almost said, of an inspired pen. It is to be found in Heu. Steph. *Poes-Philosoph.* p. 49. *et seq.* and, with Duport's *Latin Translation*, in Cudworth's *Intellect. System*, Book I. chap. 4. p. 432, 433. and I am sorry I know not where to refer my reader to a good English version of it. The apostle might perhaps refer to Cleanthes, as well as to his countryman Aratus, when he introduces this quotation as what some of their own poets had said.

r *God*, as it were, *overlooked the times of* this *ignorance.*] This υπεριδων expresses, which Mr. Howe paraphrases, "The beams of his "eye did in a manner shoot over them;" (Howe's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 23.) that is, He did not appear to take notice of them by sending express messages to them, as he did to the Jews, and now also to the Gentiles, as it follows, charging all men every where to repent. ——The reader will easily perceive there is a dignity in this latter expression, becoming one who was conscious to himself that he was indeed an ambassador from the King of heaven, who could (to allude to that remarkable story, Livy, *lib* xlv. *cap.* 12.) draw a circle about the greatest monarch, and demand a decisive answer before he stirred out of it. This universal demand of repentance, declared, in the strongest terms, universal guilt, and admirably confronted the pride of the haughtiest Stoic of them all; and at the same time, bore down all the idle plea of fatality; for who could repent of doing what he apprehended he could not but have done?

SECT. 40. ACTS XVII.

And when they heard him making mention, though but incidentally, *of the resurrection of the dead, some* rudely mocked, and, without staying to hear the evidence,[s] *made a jest of it* as a despicable and incredible tale, not worthy to be any longer heard: *And others,* whose curiosity was satisfied in hearing in a few words his scheme and design, would not allow themselves to attend to his proofs of so extraordinary an assertion; but coldly *said,* It is enough for the present: *we will hear thee again upon this subject,* when a more convenient opportunity offers.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

And thus Paul, finding so little disposition in this learned auditory to receive the truth, or so much as to hearken to the evidence of it, *went out of the midst of them,* and left by far the greater part of the assembly, (notwithstanding all the conceit they had of their own learning, knowledge, and wisdom,) in that deplorable state of ignorance, folly, and superstition, in which he found them.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

Nevertheless, though what he said was so generally slighted, *some men adhered to him, and* inquired farther into the evidence of that extraordinary doctrine which he taught concerning Jesus and his resurrection; the consequence of which was, that they *believed* the gospel, and made a public and courageous profession of it: *Among whom was* the celebrated *Dionysius the Areopagite,* a magistrate of great honour and dignity among them,[t] *and a woman* of considerable rank and character in the city, *whose name was Damaris; and* there were also some *others with them* whom we shall not particularly mention.

34 Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 23 ADORED be the depths of divine counsel and grace, that when, *in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by* what they impiously derided as *the foolishness of preaching, to save* 16 *them that believe.* (1 Cor. i. 21.) Whose spirit is not stirred, in some measure, to behold the learned and polite 21 city of Athens, not only abandoned to trifling speculations, but enslaved to idolatry and superstition? And, on the other hand, who can be so insensible of all the charms of reason and true eloquence, as not to be delighted with those prudent and generous attempts which Paul made to recover them from it? When derided and affronted 18 as a vain babbler, as a retailer of scraps, by those who indeed showed themselves to deserve that infamous name, judging a matter before they heard it, and so convicting themselves of shame and folly, (Prov. xviii. 13.) he, in 22 the meekness of wisdom, addresses himself to them with that soft tongue which breaketh the bones. (Prov. xxv. 15.) His *doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew:* (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Pity it was that it produced no more valuable fruits, but rather was abused, by some that heard it, to nourish those poisonous weeds which were, alas, the native growth of this luxuriant soil.

23 We see that while Paul passed through the streets of Athens, his mind was filled with such pious and benevolent affections as became the mind of a christian and an apostle; and beholding this inscription, *To the unknown God,* he applies himself immediately to declare him to them. Adored be the divine goodness, that we are from our infancy happy in the use of such divine instructions as he gave the Athenians and others: and that though we worship a God whose infinite perfections can never be traced out, he is not entirely an unknown deity to us! 24 May he be known, adored, and obeyed, wide as the works of his hands extend! Even he, the Supreme Lord of all, 25 who made heaven and earth, and all that is in them; in consequence of which he is infinitely superior to all our most exalted services, as well as beyond any of those representations of him which the ignorance and folly of men 29 have invented in gold, silver, and stone. His power created all, and by his goodness all are supported. Let us 26, 27 consider ourselves as his offspring, honouring and loving him as the great Father of our spirits; and since we have 28 so necessary and uninterrupted a dependence upon him, since in him we live, and move, and exist continually, let all the affections of our hearts, and all the actions of our lives, be consecrated to his service. And this so much 30 the rather, as it evidently appears, by the revelation of his gospel, that he does not overlook us, but in the most solemn manner calls upon us, and upon all men every where, to repent, and to return to him; setting before us in so 31 clear a view the awful solemnity of that appointed day *in which he will judge the whole world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained* to this glorious purpose, even by Jesus, to whom, as the Son of man, all judgment is wisely and righteously committed. The Lord grant that we may all *find mercy of the Lord in that day!* (2 Tim. i. 18.) In the mean time, may the declaration of it bring multitudes to repentance and faith! 34 and especially, may it work thus on those who, like Dionysius and Damaris, are distinguished by their rank and circumstances in life, that their usefulness in the world may be as extensive as their influence, and their names precious in the church among those that are yet unborn!

SECTION XLI.

Paul settles for a year and an half at Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla; is encouraged by a vision of Christ there, and rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews. Acts xviii. 1—17.

SECT. 41.

ACTS xviii. 1.

ACTS xviii. 1.

AFTER these things, of which an account has been given in the preceding section, *Paul departing from Athens, came to* the polite and flourishing city of *Corinth,* so

AFTER these things, Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth;

[s] Without staying to hear the evidence.] We are by no means to imagine this was all the apostle intended to have said; but the indolence of some of these philosophers, and the petulancy of others of them, cut him short; and so they went down to righteous condemnation, under the guilt of having rejected a gospel, the proof of which they might have learnt in one single day, but would not give themselves the trouble of examining; and this is the condemnation among US.

[t] *Dionysius the Areopagite,* &c.] The members of this court, of which Dionysius was one, are well known to have been persons of great dignity chosen from among the best families and characters in Athens, so that the title grew into a proverb of honour and integrity. See Cic. *Ad Attic. lib.* i. *Epist.* 14; Aul. Gell. *Noct. Att. lib.* xii. *cap.* 7; Wits. *Meletem.* p. 86—88; and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 12. p. 325, 326.

famous for its elegance and magnificence, and equally remarkable for the dissolute manners of its inhabitants.[a] *And finding* there *a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus,* a province of the Lesser Asia, not far from Galatia and Cappadocia, who was *lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife, because* the Emperor *Claudius* Cæsar *had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome;*[b] Paul entered into such an intimacy with them, that *he went to them* to lodge at their house. *And as he* formerly had learnt the business which they followed, and *was* capable *of* exercising *the same trade,*[c] *he continued with them* there, *and wrought* [*at it*] for his subsistence: (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12; and 2 Thess. iii. 8.) *For they were tent-makers by trade,* whose business it was to make tents or pavilions of linen or skins, which were much used, not only by soldiers and travellers, but by others in those hot countries; and Paul (as we have said) had been instructed in that art, as it was usual for those of the Jews who had the most learned education to be brought up to some mechanical employment, for the amusement of their leisure hours, and for their maintenance in life, if any unforeseen revolution should strip them of every thing else which they had to depend upon.

SECT. 41. ACTS XVIII.

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

But while he took up his abode here, *he disputed in the synagogue every sabbath-day,* 4
and earnestly *persuaded* both *the Jews and the Greeks*[d] to embrace christianity as a religion founded in reason and truth, and the great source and security of happiness both in time and eternity: And he had some success, particularly with regard to the families of Stephanas and Epenetus, who were some of the first converts to christianity here. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 15; Rom. xvi. 5; and 1 Cor. i. 14, 16.)

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

And as soon as Silas and Timothy, whom he had expected at Athens, *came from* 5
Macedonia to him at Corinth,[e] *Paul,* farther animated by the presence of his brethren, and the accounts they brought him of the happy consequences of his labours at Thessalonica and elsewhere, *was borne away* by an unusual impulse *in* [*his*] *spirit,*[f] *and* zealously persisting in his work, openly *testified to the Jews,* and by the strongest arguments endeavoured to convince them, *that Jesus was* undoubtedly *the* true *Messiah,* whom they pretended impatiently to expect. *But when,* instead of receiving a testimony so warmly 6
urged, and supported with the most demonstrative proofs, *they* obstinately and perversely *set themselves in opposition* to the doctrine he taught, *and* even *blasphemed* that glorious name on which he was pressing them to fix their dependence; *he shook his garment,* to signify that from that time he was determined he would have no more to do with them or any thing belonging to them; and also to intimate that God would soon shake them off, as unworthy to be numbered among his people: *And* upon this he solemnly *said to them, Let* the guilt of *your blood be upon your own head,* and there let it rest: *I am pure* from it, and declare unto you, that by this wilful impenitence and unbelief you are your own

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

a *Corinth,* &c.] Antiquity abounds with passages relating to this city, which, before it was destroyed by Mummius, was looked upon by the Romans as a rival almost as dangerous as Carthage; and having been restored by Julius Cæsar, with its almost unparalleled advantages of situation, was grown very considerable. The reader may see some entertaining remarks concerning it in Witsius, *Meletem.* p. 90.

b *Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.*] Though Josephus be silent as to this edict, probably as he thought it more prudent to omit the mention of it in a history in which it is plain he studies to recommend himself and his people to the Romans, yet it is well known that the fact is expressly mentioned by Suetonius, (*Claud. cap.* 25.) and that Dio, (*lib.* lx. p. 669. A.) has something to the same purpose; for prohibiting their religious assemblies was in fact banishing them, as Mr. Fleming observes, *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 27.——I pretend not certainly to determine whether that Chrestus whom Suetonius mentions as the occasion of those tumults among the Jews for which they were expelled from Rome, were, as Abp. Usher, *Annal.* p. 669. and Vandale, *De Orac.* p. 604. suppose, a seditious Jew, or whether, as it is generally thought, the name be a corruption of Christus: (See Tertull. *Apol. cap.* 3. and Lactant. *lib.* iv. *cap.* 7.) Yet I think the latter much more probable; and that the spread of christianity, which was looked upon as a sect of Jews, and which we know prevailed at Rome about this time, gave that jealous and wretched emperor an unnecessary alarm, the occasion of which Suetonius, not thoroughly understanding it, has misrepresented. And if this were the case, it might be, as Dr. Lardner well observes, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. II. § 3. Vol. I. p. 556.) an additional reason why Josephus, who is always cautious on this head, has passed it over without notice.

c *Of the same trade.*] It has with great propriety been observed and shown by many learned men here, that it was a point of conscience with the Jews to teach their children some trade, even though they bred them up to the liberal sciences. Hence one of their rabbies is sirnamed the shoemaker, and another the baker, &c. (See Drusius and Grotius, *in loc.* Wits. *Meletem.* p. 11, 12; and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 3. p. 272—274.) And it is a custom, still prevailing among the Easterns. I think Sir Paul Ricaut somewhere observes, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he was ambassador, was taught to make wooden spoons. And this is intended, not only for an amusement, but to remind youth of the highest rank how possible it is that they may fall into circumstances in which it may be necessary for them to support life by such labours as these, which, to be sure, are vastly preferable to begging. It is therefore very ungenerous in Orobio to mention this as any reproach to Paul, or as bringing his character into the least degree of suspicion.——Paul might have peculiar reasons for this at Corinth, not only as being a stranger, and with some prejudices lying against him as a teacher of a new religion, but perhaps also, as Mr. Cradock observes, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 111, 112.) from some prophetic intimation of that false apostle who should arise there, and make a great merit of preaching gratis, while at the same time he domineered over them in a most inconsistent as well as unchristian manner. (See 2 Cor. xi. 7—20.)—Whether Paul and these his companions made common tents or wove tapestry-hangings, is a question of no importance, though I think the former probable, as the latter would require a more exact skill than a person so generally employed in far different work would be like to acquire.

d *Persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*] Some render επαθε, *he tried to gain upon them;* but the word *persuade* is often used to signify the attempt, without determining the success. It is generally taken for granted that these Greeks were a kind of proselytes; but we have before hinted how possible it was that Gentiles might, out of curiosity, attend such extraordinary preachers in Jewish synagogues, though they did not commonly worship there, which would especially take place in this instance, considering the miracles which Paul wrought at Corinth, to which he so often refers in the two Epistles which he afterwards wrote to that church. Compare 1 Cor. i. 6, 7; ii. 4, 5; xii. 4—11; xiv; 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 12, 13.

e *As soon as Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia.*] Silas and Timothy had been left at Berœa when Paul came from thence, and had directions sent them, as soon as he arrived at Athens, quickly to follow him; (chap. xvii. 14, 15.) which Timothy accordingly did, and was sent back again by Paul to Thessalonica, to confirm the faith of his dear converts there, of whom he had brought so good an account: (1 Thess. iii. 2, 5, 6.) And it seems to have been from this journey that Timothy now returned with Silas, having probably joined him before he left Macedonia.—— This account of the matter seems more probable than that of Mr. Cradock and some others, who suppose that both Silas and Timothy came from Berœa to Paul at Athens, and that after Timothy had been sent to Thessalonica, and brought the good tidings referred to, both he and Silas were sent from Athens to Macedonia, and were appointed to meet Paul at Corinth, which seems multiplying journies without proof or necessity.

f *Was borne away* by an unusual impulse *in* [*his*] *spirit.*] Heinsius and some others think that the phrase συνειχετο τω πνευματι means, *he was borne away by* an extraordinary impulse of *the Spirit of God,* the agency of which in this matter I readily acknowledge, but apprehend the phrase here used rather refers to the effect that agency produced. Compare ver. 25; chap. xix. 21; Rom. xii. 11. for the expression; and, for the effect, Jer. xx. 8, 9; Amos iii. 8.

SECT. 41. ACTS XVIII.

murderers. (Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 2—9.) And as God and man can witness that I have done all in my power to prevent so sad an event, I now desist from any farther attempts of this kind; and *from henceforth*, while I continue in this city, *I will go* and preach *to the Gentiles*, who will readily receive that gospel which you so ungratefully reject.

7 *And going out from thence, he went into the house of one* whose name was *called Justus*,[g] who was *a worshipper of* the true *God*, though not a complete Jew by profession, and *whose house was adjoining to the synagogue;* and there he taught.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 *But* though he did not succeed to his wish in what he delivered to the Jews, yet his labours among them were not entirely ineffectual; and it was particularly remarkable that *Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord with all his house:* (Compare 1 Cor. i. 14.) *And many* also *of the Corinthians, hearing* not only the report of his conversion, but the discourse of the apostle, found the conviction which it produced so powerful, that they *believed; and*, in token of their full resolution to adhere to the gospel, whatever extremities might arise, *were baptized*, and thereby entered into the christian church, and settled in it.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 At this time Paul, conscious of many imperfections attending his person and address, was discouraged in a view of the learning, politeness, and grandeur of many Gentile inhabitants of the city to whom he was to speak, so that he was, as he himself expresses it, "among them in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling:" (1 Cor. ii. 3.) and these alarms were much increased by the violent assaults which had lately been made upon him in other places through which he had passed, and the contempt with which he had generally been treated. *But the Lord* Jesus Christ interposed in a very gracious manner, and *said to Paul by a vision in the night, Fear not* to go on with thy work even here, *but speak* my gospel boldly and courageously, *and do not keep silence* under any present discouragement or future apprehension: *For I* myself, by my powerful and gracious presence, *am* continually *with thee, and* will engage for it that *no man shall fall upon thee to injure thee* here; *for I have much people in this city*,[h] and am determined by my grace to make thy ministry successful among many by whom thou art ready to apprehend it will be despised.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 *And* encouraged by this assurance, in the fidelity and security of which *he* firmly confided, Paul did, as it were, pitch his tent at Corinth, and *sat down* [*there*] for *a year and six months*;[i] *teaching the word of God among them* with all freedom, though with deep humility, and maintaining himself by the work of his own hands.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And by the divine blessing on his diligent and pious labours, which he so generously gave them, a most flourishing church was planted at Corinth, "the members of which "were filled with all knowledge and utterance, and came behind in no spiritual gifts, for "the variety of which they were signally remarkable." (Compare 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.) *But* so glorious a progress of the gospel here could not fail of exciting the opposition of its enemies; and accordingly, *when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia*,[k] during the residence that he made at Corinth, *the Jews*, being now resolved to bear no longer, *made an assault upon Paul with one consent, and brought him before the tribunal* of that magistrate,

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat.

13 *Saying*, in the most clamorous and furious manner, *This* turbulent [*fellow*] is the author of insufferable mischiefs here and all over the country; for he *persuades men to worship God* in a manner directly *contrary to* that which *the law* requires and appoints, and would so introduce corruptions in religion, and, to the utmost of his power, would endeavour to subvert it.

13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 *And when Paul would have opened* [*his*] *mouth*, and was about to have spoken in his own defence, *Gallio* would not give him the trouble of making an apology for what he did not look upon to come within his cognizance; but prevented him, and *said to the Jews, If it were an act of injustice, or* any *mischievous licentiousness, O* [*ye*] *Jews*, with which you charged the person you have now brought before me, *it were* but *reasonable*, as it is my office to guard the public peace, not only that *I should bear with you* in this prosecution, though managed indeed with some excess of eagerness, but also that, on proper proof,

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

g *Into the house of one called Justus.*] It has been supposed that Paul was denied the use and liberty of the synagogue by Sosthenes, who, when Crispus was expelled, was made governor of it. (Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 28.) But Paul himself so solemnly broke off all farther treaty with the Jews in a public way, that we need seek no other reason for his chusing some other place for discoursing to the people who might desire his instructions. Accordingly he taught here; but I see no proof at all of his quitting his lodgings with Aquila, and therefore no need of inquiring (as some have done) what was his reason for doing it.

h *I have much people in this city.*] I cannot think, with Limborch and Dr. Benson, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 210. that virtuous and well-disposed heathens, as such, are here called the people of Christ, or have the character elsewhere of his sheep, John x. 16, 26; but rather that the expression takes in all who should according to the gracious purposes of Christ, be converted to christianity, whatever their tempers then were, even not excepting those very vicious, ill-disposed, corrupt persons, whose character in their unregenerate state is described in such strong terms, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. where the apostle speaks of what they were before they were converted.

i *Sat down there a year and six months.*] During this time he wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. iii. 1—6. compared with Acts xviii. 5. which seems to have been the earliest of those which occur in the New Testament; and quickly after it, his Second.—Lord Barrington also thinks, that from hence he wrote his Epistle to the Galatians; which seems probable, as he refers there to his having been but lately among them, Gal. i. 6; iii. 1, 3; iv. 15; and yet hints nothing of his having been there more than once; so that it seems to refer to the journey mentioned, Acts xvi. 6. (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 31.) and to have been before that mentioned in the 23d verse of this chapter.

k *When Gallio was proconsul at Achaia.*] See note i, on chap. xiii. 8. p. 494.——Dr. Lardner justly observes, (*Credib.* Book i. chap. i. § 12. Vol. I. p. 55—57.) that this is another instance of the exact propriety with which St. Luke expresses himself; for though the province of Achaia, which comprehended all the rest of Greece, had a more various fortune than that of Cyprus, and frequently changed its form of government; yet, A. D. 44. (which is generally supposed to have been about eight years before this event,) it was restored to the senate, and so became proconsular. It is generally thought this Gallio was elder brother to the famous L. Annæus Seneca, the moral philosopher, who was preceptor to Nero, of which, as Mr. Biscoe shows, there is great probability. *Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 3. p. 57, 58.

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment-seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat: and Gallio cared for none of those things.

I should exert the power with which I am invested, to punish the offender in proportion to his crime: *But if it be a question concerning* the propriety of *words and names*,[1] as whether the person whom he so highly extols should be called your Messiah or not, *and* whether God is to be worshipped in the way required by *the law which is* received *among you* as divine; or what regard is due to any particular ceremony of it: *see* [*to it*] in your own way, and settle it how you will among *yourselves: for I* know the design of my office too well to interfere on such an occasion, and *will be no judge of these matters*, which are so foreign to it. *And* with this wise and determinate answer, to which he adhered notwithstanding all their clamorous importunity, *he drove them away from the tribunal*, and proceeded to other business. SECT. 41. ACTS XVIII. 15 16 17

And all the crowd of *Greeks* who were present, perceiving how little favour the Jews found from the court in this tumultuous and vexatious suit, in which they plainly saw that Paul was insulted for the regards he had expressed for them, *laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the* Jewish *synagogue*, whom they looked upon as the chief occasion of the prosecution, *and beat him* violently; and this was so near the place where the proconsul was sitting, that it might be said to be *before the* very *tribunal*, and under the judge's eye:[m] *But* though this were certainly an irregular proceeding, *Gallio did not concern himself* to interpose *at all in the affair*: for perceiving no great mischief was like to follow, he was willing, by his connivance, to leave so troublesome a plaintiff as Sosthenes to feel some of the consequences of that confusion which his own bigotry and ill-nature had occasioned. 18

IMPROVEMENT.

Much of the divine wisdom and goodness is seen in providing for those who are employed in the work of the gospel, suitable associates and companions in their labours; and particularly happy are they to whom God hath been pleased to give, as to the pious Aquila, such a companion, in the nearest relation of life, as may help them forward in the way to heaven, and may assist them in the service of religion while they continue on earth. Much were the fatigues of Paul's life softened by the converse of such friends, who no doubt rendered the common business of life more pleasant, as well as the work of the Lord more delightful. Ver. 1 2

We find them, while endeavouring to propagate the gospel, maintaining themselves (for reasons peculiar to that situation) by the labour of their own hands, and even Paul the apostle wrought with them; not because he had not a right to demand support, for he strenuously maintains that right at large, in his address to these very Corinthians, (1 Cor. ix. 1—14.) but to shame his mean-spirited enemies, who accused him of acting on mercenary views; and because he thought in his conscience, on some other accounts, that his fidelity to Christ would be so much the more apparent, and his labours by this means so much the more successful. And what faithful minister, who in his conscience apprehended that to be the case, would not chuse to act as he did? 3

In the mean time, he was engaged as usual every sabbath-day in discoursing to the Jews, and in demonstrating to them the truth of the gospel; and it is pleasant and edifying to observe with what earnestness he applied himself to do it: But their inveterate prejudices prevailed over all the cogency of his demonstration and all the warmth of his address, so that he was forced at length to give them up as incorrigible. Yet let us observe how he gave them up; with what grief, mixed with just indignation at their folly and ingratitude! shaking his garment, and saying, *Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean.*—Thus are impenitent unbelievers their own murderers; they bring upon themselves even the blood of their own souls. Grievous it is that it should rest upon them; but absolutely necessary that we, who are the messengers of God to them, should take heed that, if they must after all bleed by the sword of divine justice, we ourselves may at last be found pure; for terrible beyond expression would it be, if by our treachery or neglect their blood should be required at our hand. 4 6

The apostle's success among the Gentiles raised new opposition, and his infirmities frequently occasioned returning fears: But how graciously did our Lord interpose for his encouragement and support, assuring him of his protection, and promising him yet more abundant success! Blessed Jesus, thy grace was sufficient even for this thy servant, amidst all the labours of the ministerial and apostolical office, amidst all the internal as well as external difficulties he had to encounter in the discharge of it! (2 Cor. xii. 9.) May that grace be imparted to us; and may it appear that thou hast much people, wherever thou fixest the bounds of our habitation, and the sphere of our ministry! 9, 10

The tumultuous rage of the Jews is nothing surprising, for we have been accustomed often to read of it; but the prudence and moderation of Gallio is truly amiable: That wise Roman well knew the extent of his office as a magistrate, and was aware that it gave him no title, no pretence, to dictate in matters of conscience, or to restrain men's religious liberties, so long as they abstained from injustice or mischievous licentiousness, by which the public peace might be disturbed, and the rights of society invaded. May God give to all the magistrates of the earth such a spirit! and the gospel, under the influences of divine grace, will soon become an universal religion, and show the world how little need it has of being supported by civil penalties, to which those are generally most ready to have recourse who, like these Jews, are confounded by fair argument. 12 14, 15

1 *A question concerning words and names.*] This wise and equitable magistrate (for such it appears by the ancient writers that he was, see Grotius, *in loc.* and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 126.) seems to have heard the accusation which the Jews brought, and to have perceived by it that the dispute was whether Christ was to be called the Messiah, and whether the Mosaic law were to be imposed on all who worshipped the true God; and therefore (as the author I mentioned last well observes) he had more honour and generosity than to make Paul answer under the notion of a criminal, when, by the Roman law, the matter did not come within his cognizance, and there was nothing criminal in the charge.

m It might be said to be *before the* very *tribunal.*] One cannot imagine that Gallio so little understood the dignity of his office as to suffer a person uncondemned to be scourged or beaten with rods in his immediate presence. I apprehend therefore, that as neither the word μαστιγων nor ραβδιζω, is used, but τυπτω, whose signification is more general, the real case was, that just as Sosthenes came out of the court, which perhaps might be held in some open place, (see John xviii. 28, 29. p. 377; and John xix. 13. with note k, on that place, p. 384.) the mob laid hold of him in a riotous manner, and beat him, probably with their fists; and though the noise of this tumult, and some flying report of the assault on Sosthenes, might reach Gallio's ear, while he sat on the despatch of some other business, he did not seem to take any notice of it, for the reasons suggested in the paraphrase.

SECTION XLII.

Paul departs from Corinth, and calling at Ephesus by the way, goes to Jerusalem: He afterwards sets out from Antioch on another progress, and visits the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. Apollos preaches at Ephesus, and being farther instructed in the christian doctrine, goes to Achaia. Acts xviii. 18, *to the end.*

Acts xviii. 18.

SECT. 42. ACTS XVIII.

THUS the tumultuous opposition that was raised at Corinth by the Jews against the progress of the gospel was appeased; *and Paul still continued there for a considerable time* after it; *and* [*then*] *taking leave of the brethren*, with whom he had made so long and comfortable an abode, he *sailed* from *thence* in his return *for Syria, and* took along *with him* his two intimate friends *Priscilla and Aquila; having shaved his head at* the 18 port of *Cenchrea*, in the neighbourhood of Corinth, before he began his voyage; *for he had* made *a vow* of doing it, on account of some extraordinary deliverance received;[a] and there he performed it.

19 *And* setting sail from Cenchrea, *he arrived at Ephesus, and there he* parted with Aquila and Priscilla, and *left them* behind him,[b] having made but a very short stay in that place; *but* during that time *he himself entered into the synagogue* on the sabbath which he spent there, *and reasoned with the Jews* upon the great subject of Jesus being the Messiah. 20 *And though they* were desirous of hearing more upon this head, and therefore *entreated* 21 *him to have stayed longer with them*, yet *he did not consent* to do it: *But took his leave of them, saying, It is necessary for me by all means to celebrate the approaching feast* of the passover *at Jerusalem*;[c] *but* when I have despatched my business there, *I will turn my course to you again, God willing*, and make as long an abode amongst you as Providence shall permit. *And* so *he set sail from Ephesus.*

22 *And* after a safe and prosperous voyage, *landing at* the port of *Cæsarea, he went up* immediately to Jerusalem, and there attended at the feast: *And having* with great tenderness *saluted the church* there, and expressed his kindness and affection to it, and delivered the alms which he had brought from the churches of the Gentiles, *he* afterwards *went down* from thence *to Antioch* in Syria, where he had formerly made so long a stay, and where there was so flourishing a christian church.

23 *And having spent some time* [*there,*] *he* again set out upon another progress, and *departed* from Antioch, *going through the country of Galatia and Phrygia in an orderly* and regular *manner*,[d] so as to take in all the places that lay in his way where he had formerly preached the gospel; *confirming all the disciples* that he met with there in their adherence to the gospel, whatever opposition and difficulty might arise: And his presence was most welcome to all their churches, who could not but greatly rejoice to see him amongst them who, as a father, had begotten them in Jesus Christ through the gospel. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15.)

24 *Now* while he was thus employed in those parts, *a certain Jew whose name was Apollos, a native of Alexandria* in Egypt, *an eloquent man*, [*and*] *powerful in the scriptures* of the Old Testament, which he had diligently studied, and had an excellent faculty of expounding, *came to Ephesus. This person was* in some measure already *instructed in*

Acts xviii. 18.

AND Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea; for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not:

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh, in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instruct-

a *Having shaved his head at Cenchrea, for he had a vow.*] Grotius, Heinsius, Dr. Hammond, and Witsius, (*Meletem.* p. 99—101.) think this clause refers to Aquila, who was mentioned immediately before; and some of them suppose that he and his wife Priscilla were left, not at Ephesus, but at Cenchrea; and Chrysostom interpreted the cause thus. But with due deference to such great names, I must say, that though it be not certainly determined by the original, it seems much more probable, from the construction, that κειραμενος and κατηνηχθη must refer to the same person, that is, Paul; nor is there any weight in what some suggested, that Aquila is mentioned here after his wife Priscilla, to show that it was he that shaved his head, since they are mentioned thrice by the apostle Paul in his epistles, Rom. xvi. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19. and where there could be no such reason to induce him to it, he has twice named Priscilla first; and as it appears, from ver. 26. that Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus when Apollos was there, and from ver 18. that they set out with Paul from Corinth to make the intended voyage in his company, it is most likely they went now to Ephesus, and were not left at Cenchrea.——As for this vow, it is justly observed by Salmasius, that it could not be a vow of Nazariteship, for then the hair must have been burnt in the temple under the caldron in which the peace-offerings were boiled; Num. vi. 18. Petit thinks the mention of his vow relates only to Paul's return to Judea, and not at all to his shaving his head, which words he would include in a parenthesis, supposing the Jews at Corinth wore their hair long, directly contrary to 1 Cor. xi. 14. I rather think his vow was an expression of gratitude for the divine goodness in preserving him from such imminent dangers during his long abode here; but whether he now cut off his hair, vowing from this time to let it grow till he came to Jerusalem, or whether some accidental pollution befel him here, which obliged him to do it, that he might begin the day of his purification again, or whether his vow terminated here, I cannot certainly say: Yet the last seems to me most probable; for the expression, *he had a vow*, seems not to agree with the supposition of his beginning it here; nor could he on any accidental pollution have renewed his purification as a Nazarite any where but at the temple, Num. vi. 9, 10. I imagine, therefore, that (unless, as Grotius and Dr. Lardner suppose, the Jews allowed themselves great liberties in this matter, when in foreign countries) Mephibosheth's vow during David's exile, 2 Sam. xix. 24. might more nearly resemble this of Paul. Spencer has shown, in his excellent dissertation on the Nazarite's vow, (*De Leg. Heb. lib.* iii. *cap.* 6. § 1.) that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, had such a custom. Dr. Lardner thinks that Paul's reason for hastening to Jerusalem was that he might accomplish his vow; but I see not how that could be any reason why he should keep the feast there, since the vow might have been accomplished either before or after it. See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book I. chap. 9. § 7. Vol. I. p. 465—472.

b *And there he left them.*] It is observable that the Syriac Version inserts this clause afterwards in ver. 21. which seems its most natural place: "And he left Aquila and Priscilla there, and sailed "from Ephesus."

c *It is necessary for me by all means, &c.*] This was not from any apprehension that he was obliged in conscience to celebrate the Jewish feasts, (compare Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10, 11; Col. ii. 16;) but because he desired to seize that opportunity of meeting a great number of his countrymen at Jerusalem, to whom he might preach the gospel, or whom, if already converted, he might further instruct, or might remove the prejudices that were groundlessly imbibed against him.

d *Going through the country of Galatia and Phrygia, &c.*] Probably he passed through part of Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Lycaonia, which all lay in his way from Antioch. As this would take him up a great deal of time, most commentators, I think very reasonably, allow four years for this journey, including his stay at Ephesus; that is, from the year 54 to 58.—Coming to Galatia, he gave those directions concerning charitable contributions referred to, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. and I shall afterwards mention the reasons which convince me that he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians in this period, that is, probably, during his stay at Ephesus. See note a, on Acts xix. 21. § 44.

ed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ

the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, and earnestly desirous to promote the progress of the truth and the conversion of souls, *he spake and taught the things of the Lord with great accuracy* and exactness to the best of his knowledge, though as yet he had but an imperfect notion of the gospel, *being only acquainted with the baptism of John*;[e] so that he insisted upon the doctrine of repentance, and faith in a Messiah who was quickly to be revealed, for the reception of whom he showed that it was necessary they should have their hearts prepared. *And* to this purpose *he began to speak boldly in the synagogue*, pleading the cause of God and real vital religion, with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, as well as freely reproving the Jews for those evils which were so commonly to be found among them, and battering down those vain hopes which, as the seed of Abraham and disciples of Moses, they were so ready to entertain. *And Aquila and Priscilla* being then at Ephesus, and *hearing him* express so upright and so good a spirit, were desirous to promote his further improvement in knowledge and usefulness; and accordingly they *took him* with them *to* [*their house,*] *and* there *explained to him the way of God in a more* complete and *perfect manner.*

SECT. 42. ——— ACTS XVIII. 25 26

And shortly after, *when he intended to go over to Achaia*, that he might preach the word at Corinth and other places in that province, *the brethren* of Ephesus *wrote to the disciples* there, *exhorting them to receive him* with all affection and respect, as a person whose character well deserved it: *And being arrived there, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace*,[f] and was eminently serviceable in establishing and confirming those who had embraced the gospel. *For he strenuously debated with the Jews*, and that *in* the most *public* manner, and upon all proper occasions; making it evident, and clearly *showing by the scriptures*, not only that a glorious spiritual deliverer was there foretold, but *that Jesus* of Nazareth, though so ungratefully treated by their rulers at Jerusalem, was, and *is* indeed *the* only true *Messiah*, so that the salvation of men depends upon receiving and submitting to him. 27 28

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy was the church in these unwearied labours of Paul! And how happy was Paul in those repeated opportunities, and in that health and spirit which God gave him to undertake and to go through with such labours! Happy in preaching Christ to so many to whom he was before unknown! Happy in beholding the blessed fruits of his labour, and visiting the churches he had formerly planted in one province and another, and which in this intermediate space was grown up to some maturity! Prudent likewise, in such a concern, to water those plants by renewed instruction: So let gospel ministers cherish the divine life in those souls where they have been instrumental to produce it, ever remembering that it is a matter of so great importance as well deserves our repeated care and our renewed labours. Ver. 18—23

Well was it also for the churches, that such a promising and hopeful fellow-labourer as Apollos was raised up to him and to them. To be fervent and courageous in spirit, to be eloquent and mighty in the scriptures, are happy talents for such as are to be devoted to the ministry. May all that enter on this work among us come forth with a zeal and courage like his! and I must add, may they also come forth with an humility like that which, in Apollos, adorned all those bright talents with which he was endowed! What he knew, he zealously taught; what he did not know, he was willing and ready thankfully to learn; and that not only from the mouth of an apostle, but of a fellow-christian in inferior life—from Aquila, yea, and from Priscilla too. Since God had given that wise and pious woman to know the way of the Lord, by longer experience and to greater perfection than he, Apollos, amidst all his popularity and applause, was willing to become her disciple, and to learn from her, in private discourses, those evangelical lessons which decency did not permit her to give, or him to receive, in public assemblies. 24, 25 26

It was prudent in Apollos to take, as well as just in the brethren to grant, proper letters of recommendation, when he was going to the churches of Achaia, where he was a stranger; and well did he answer this recommendation, and make himself known amongst them by valuable services: mighty as he was in the scriptures of the Old Testament, he might well demonstrate from them to the Jews at Corinth, that Jesus was the Messiah; and happy would it have been for the church and the synagogue there, had they known no distinguishing name but his: *Nevertheless, one said, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos.* (1 Cor. iii. 4.) We may reasonably hope that this zealous Evangelist expressed the same displeasure which the holy apostle himself did on such an occasion; and laboured with all his might to impress them with the thought, that neither he that planted 27, 28

e *Being only acquainted with the baptism of John.*] It is generally supposed he had been in Judea when John was baptizing, and having been baptized by him into the faith of a Messiah shortly to appear, on hearing something more of the gospel, he believed in Christ under that character, but had not yet been baptized in the name of Christ, nor received the gifts of the Spirit, which were often miraculously communicated in that ordinance. See Cradock's *Apos. Hist.* p. 127. If this was indeed the case, as John the Baptist was beheaded more than twenty years before this time, Apollos could not now be, as is generally supposed, though I think no where asserted, a young man; and consequently, his condescension in submitting to the instructions of these private christians is the more remarkable, and the more amiable.

f *He greatly helped those who had believed through grace.*] M. L'Enfant and Limborch render it, "He was, through the grace of "God, a great help to those that had received the faith:" But this, though I think it does not greatly affect the sense, seems an unnecessary transposition. The best comment on these words is what we are told elsewhere, (1 Cor. iii. 6.) Paul planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. It is indeed true, both that the Corinthians had believed through grace, and that through grace Apollos helped them; the latter strongly implies the former; and the original words may possibly speak either: But the transposition fixes them, which I think should not be done; and fixes them, if I mistake not, to the less probable sense. It appears from many passages in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, that several of the christians there, charmed with the eloquence of Apollos, were ready to set him up as the head of a party, and to make invidious and foolish comparisons between him and the apostle, who had been their father in Christ, and who, though he might have less volubility of speech, was on the most important accounts far superior to this eloquent and zealous teacher. See 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4—8, 21, 22; iv. 6. Yet this occasioned no breach between Paul and Apollos—the latter of whom plainly appears to have come to Ephesus when Paul returned thither, and to have declined going to Corinth again, even when Paul would have persuaded him to it; probably to avoid any the remotest appearance of desiring to countenance any party that might have been formed in his own favour. 1 Cor. xvi 12.

SECT. 42. nor he that watered was any thing, but God who gave the increase to both. May it be impressed deeper on the hearts both of ministers and people, that all the glory may be rendered to him from whom all our gifts, and graces, and successes proceed!

SECTION XLIII.

Paul in his circuit coming to Ephesus, instructs some of John's disciples whom he found there, performs extraordinary miracles, and preaches the word with great success. Acts xix. 1—20.

Acts xix. 1.

SECT. 43. *Now it came to pass, that while* the eloquent *Apollos*, of whom we have just been speaking, *was at Corinth*, and was entertaining them there with the charms of his oratory as well as the strength of his reasoning, *Paul having passed* (as was observed before, chap. xviii. 23.) *through* Galatia and Phrygia, and visited *the upper parts* of the Lesser Asia, *came to* the celebrated city of *Ephesus*, according to his promise, (chap. xviii. 19, 21.) with a purpose of making some stay in it; *and finding* [*there*] *some disciples* in whom he did not observe any of those extraordinary gifts which he had discovered in, or communicated to, so many others,[a] *He said unto them, Have ye as yet on your believing received the Holy Spirit?* and have the gifts that are bestowed by the effusion of the Spirit been imparted to you? *And they* strangely *replied to him, Nay, we have not so much as heard* of any such peculiar privilege under the present dispensation, and are so far from having been partakers of it, that we know not whether any have been favoured with this extraordinary effusion, or *whether there be any Holy Spirit* given now or no. *And* Paul was so surprised at this, that *he said to them, Into what then were you baptized*, if you have never heard of what is so well known with relation to the Holy Spirit? for christians are appointed, at their first admission into the church, to be baptized in his name, as well as in that of the Father and of the Son, and the great promise of the gospel gives them an assurance of the effusion of the Spirit. *But they said*, We were only baptized *into John's baptism*, having been in Judea about the time of his ministry; and so we were taught to look for a Messiah quickly to be revealed; and hearing what was testified of Jesus with proper credentials, we embraced him and his religion. *And* upon this *Paul said, John indeed administered the baptism of repentance*, and came to prepare the way of the Lord, *telling the people that they should believe in him that was to come after him, that is, in Jesus Christ*, whose servant he professed himself to be, and so much inferior to him as not to be worthy to loose or to bear his shoes! It is highly congruous, therefore, to the intention and design of John's ministry, now to profess your faith with all solemnity in that Jesus to whom he afterwards bore such express and repeated testimonies. *And hearing* [*this,*] their hearts were so impressed with what he said, that *they* joyfully submitted to the direction and advice of the apostle, and *were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*[b] *And* immediately after the administration of this solemn ordinance, *Paul, laying* [*his*] *hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spake with new tongues* which they had never learnt or understood before, *and prophesied* in such a manner to the edification of the church, as plainly shewed they were enriched at once in all utterance and in all knowledge. *And they were in all about twelve men* who had the happiness of being thus miraculously furnished with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS XIX. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 *And* Paul, as *he* was used to do in other places, *went into the synagogue* of the Jews at Ephesus, *and discoursed with* great *boldness* and freedom, *disputing for the space of*

Acts xix. 1.

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three

a *Finding there some disciples*, &c.] Beza has a singular opinion concerning these persons. He thinks they were almost the whole body of christians at Ephesus, and that as Paul found they had none among them who appeared to have received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, (of which gifts, indeed, they had never so much as heard,) he imparted them to twelve of the number, perhaps intending them for stations of some peculiar eminence in the church. But this account of the matter must, I think, appear very improbable, when it is considered that Aquila and Priscilla, who came from the Corinthian church, so eminent for its spiritual gifts, had made some abode at Ephesus, and that Apollos, after he had profited by their instructions, would probably preach in the synagogue there, before he left the place; chap. xviii. 19, 25, 26. which if he did, it can never be imagined he would be silent on this head. I conclude, therefore, these twelve men were pious Jews, who having waited for the kingdom of God, and being many years before baptized by John, or some of his disciples, had, on receiving something of the evidence of christianity, believed in Jesus, but, perhaps coming out of some remote country, had not enjoyed an opportunity before of being instructed in any thing relating to the Holy Spirit, more than might be learned from the Old Testament.

b *And hearing this, they were baptized*, &c.] M. L'Enfant has followed the opinion of many great critics, in rendering this verse as a continuance of Paul's discourse, and not as the words of Luke; as if it had been said, "*John indeed baptized with the baptism of* "*repentance*, &c. *but they who heard him*, and paid a proper regard "to his ministry, *were*, in effect, *baptized into the name of Jesus*, "since he was *the Messiah* whom John spake of as *shortly to ap-* "*pear*;" and the correspondence which is every where else said to be found between the particles μεν and δε, is urged as a demonstration that the 4th and 5th verses must make one continued sentence. The learned Beza expresses himself with an unusual confidence on this head, and concludes, as I think all who follow this interpretation do, that Paul did not baptize these converts anew, but only declared his acquiescence in the sufficiency of the baptism they had already received, by imparting to them the gifts of the Spirit. But I think it evident beyond all dispute, that the baptism of John and of Christ were in their own nature quite different, and that it is plain, in fact, that when persons were converted to christianity, they were baptized of course, without inquiring whether they had or had not received the baptism of John, which we know vast numbers did, (Mat. iii. 5, 6.) who probably afterwards received christian baptism. Compare Acts ii. 38—41; iv. 4; vi. 7. And therefore, if I were assured the construction of these two verses were that which these gentlemen insist upon, I should interpret the 5th verse in a sense quite contrary to theirs; as if it was said, "But they who paid a due "regard to John, when they came more explicitly to understand "who the promised Messiah was, were baptized into the name of "Jesus, as you therefore must be, in order to a regular admittance "into his church:" And then I should suppose Luke, having given this intimation of the baptism of these converts, which must of course follow such a declaration of Paul, left us to collect that for ourselves, and only mentioned the communication of miraculous gifts to them on their being thus baptized. But on the whole,—As the expression is not οι δε ακουσαντες, but ακουσαντες, δε—as αυτους, ver. 6. seems so plainly to refer to the persons just before said to be baptized—and as it is so natural to suppose that Luke should not omit to mention the baptism of these men, I rather conclude that there is an ellipsis in the 4th verse, (though I own it not a very common one,) so that τω λαω λεγων is put for λεγων δε τω λαω, (as if the expression were, *But he said to the people* at the same time, *that they should believe in Jesus*,) and the particle δε might more probably be omitted by Luke, as it is used three times besides in these three verses.

months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

three months,[c] with all that opposed him, *and* strongly *evincing the things which related to the kingdom of God*, erected in the world under Jesus the Messiah. SECT. 43.

But as some of the Jews *were hardened and would not believe*, but still continued in their infidelity and rebellion, *speaking reproachfully of the way* of salvation which the apostle taught, *before the multitude*, and doing their utmost to inspire them with a contempt for it, *he departed from them, and separated the disciples* he had made, *disputing daily*, for the time to come, with all those who debated his doctrine, *in the school of one Tyrannus*.[d] *And this was done* by Paul, and was his daily practice, *for the space of two years*;[e] *so that all the inhabitants of* the neighbouring province of *Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus*, though for some peculiar reason he had been forbidden to preach it there in his former journey. (Chap. xvi. 6.) ACTS XIX. 9 10

And to add the greater efficacy and success to this important doctrine, *God wrought* many *extraordinary* and uncommon *miracles by the hands of Paul: So that*, besides his curing those that were brought to him, *handkerchiefs or aprons*[f] *were carried from his body to those that were sick* at a distance, *and* presently upon their touching them, *the diseases* they were troubled with, however threatening or inveterate they were, *removed from them, and the evil spirits* themselves *came out of them* that were possessed; which soon raised the reputation of the apostle to a very high degree, and added the authority of a divine attestation to what he taught the Ephesians. 11 12

And while he abode there, *some of the vagabond Jews* [*who were*] professed *exorcists*, and pretended to a power of expelling demons,[g] *undertook to name the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits* and were possessed by them, *saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches*, to come out of those whom you now possess. *And* so it was that *there were seven sons of* [*one*] *Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this*, desirous of the honour or profit which they thought would redound from such cures, and imagining there was some secret charm in the name of Jesus to which these infernal agents would submit. *But the evil spirit answering* their adjuration with contempt, boldly *said*,[h] *Jesus I know* to my cost, *and Paul I know* as his appointed servant, whose power I cannot resist; *but who are ye* that pretend thus, without any authority, to command me in that tremendous name? *And the man in whom the evil spirit was sprung upon them, and* quickly *getting master of them* all, *prevailed against them* to such a degree as to tear off their clothes from their backs, and beat them with great violence, *so that they fled out of that house* in which they had attempted the cure, *naked and wounded*, and became public spectacles of scorn and derision, in a city where these things were peculiarly regarded. 13 14 15 16

And this was done in such a public manner that it soon became *known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and* they were so affected with the thought of so remarkable and awful an occurrence, that great *fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And* those who had formerly been professors of unwarrantable arts, which they had diligently studied as the means of helping them to do extraordinary things by the power of magic and the assistance of invisible agents, were now so sensible of their wickedness and folly, that *many of them who believed*, struck with this triumph of the evil spirit over the sons of Sceva, *came* of their own accord, *and* 17 18

c *For the space of three months.*] The late Lord Barrington supposes, (*Misc. Sacra, Abstract*, p. 33.) that after Paul had been some time at Ephesus, he visited the neighbouring towns of Asia, and then returned to Ephesus again.——And it seems not improbable that the foundation of some others of the seven churches in Asia, so particularly favoured with the Epistles of our Lord, might now be laid. Compare ver. 10.

d *In the school of one Tyrannus.*] I cannot think there is any reason to conclude, as Sir Norton Knatchbull does, out of regard to the article τινος, that the word τυραννος expresses *the rank* rather than *the name* of the person, and therefore to render it, "A certain noble-"man or ruler of the city," since it is so evident that in Luke's writings τις is often added to *a proper name*. Compare Acts xxi. 16; xxii. 12; xxiv. 1; xxv. 19.——It seems a groundless conceit that this was the Tyrannus mentioned by Suidas, who wrote on popular seditions, or that it refers (as others think) to one of the descendants of Androclus, mentioned by Strabo, who had an hereditary title in his family. (Strab. *Geogr. lib.* xiv. *init.*) The name might be frequent among them, as King is amongst us; and this Tyrannus might very probably be a converted Jew, and the school referred to a kind of beth-midrasch or divinity-hall, designed for reading theological lectures, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes, *Chron. in loc.*

e *This was done for the space of two years.*] The very learned and ingenious Mr. Boyse argues from chap. xx. 31. that Paul spent three years at Ephesus and in the neighbouring towns of Asia, and therefore concludes that this clause expresses the time between the end of the three months, (ver. 8.) and his sending Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, (ver. 22.) but that as he staid nine months longer in these parts, towards the end of which he returned to Ephesus, they might perhaps both return thither before he quitted it, and consequently, that he might have left Timothy at Ephesus when he was driven from thence, chap. xx. 1. and so have written his First Epistle to him before the meeting at Miletus, chap. xx. 17. See Mr. Boyse, *Of Episcopacy*, p. 335.—I must add here, that to render Ελληνας, (i. e. Greeks,) at the end of this verse, *proselytes*, is an unexampled boldness in a late translator, and quite misrepresents the sense of the passage.

f *Handkerchiefs or aprons: σουδαρια η σιμικινθια.*] These two Latin words, for such they originally are, have been differently rendered; but the etymology of the first plainly determines it to signify *a piece of linen* with which *the sweat* was *wiped* from the face; and though the latter may possibly signify *drawers*, which is the interpretation preferred by Calmet, *Disser.* Vol. II. p. 232. yet as I do not find the ancients wore such a habit, and as it may most literally be rendered, things girt half round the waist, I chuse, with Grotius and our translators, to use the word *aprons*; for though aprons made no part of the ordinary dress of the Greeks, yet they might very probably have been used, both by men and women, to preserve their clothes while engaged in any kind of works that might endanger the spoiling them.—It is justly observed by many writers, that these cures wrought upon absent persons, some of them perhaps at a considerable distance from Ephesus, might conduce greatly to the success of the gospel among those whose faces Paul had not himself seen.

g *Vagabond Jews, who were exorcists.*] Dr. Whitby, Mr. Biscoe, (*At Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 6. p. 281. *et seq.*) and several other critics, have produced many passages from Irenæus, Origen, Epiphanius, and Josephus, to prove that several of the Jews about this age pretended to a power of casting out demons, particularly by some arts and charms derived from Solomon. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* viii. *cap.* 2. § 5.—I do not here use the word, conjurors, as some have done, because, whatever affinity it has with the etymology of exorcists, it expresses, among us, those who act in combination with infernal spirits, rather than such as adjure them by a divine name.

h *The evil spirit answering*, &c.] Not to insist on the demonstration arising from this story, that this demoniac was not merely a lunatic, we may observe, that the evil spirit under whose operation this man was, seems either to have been compelled by a superior power to bear an unwilling testimony to Jesus, or craftily to have intended by it to bring Paul into suspicion, as acting in confederacy with himself; and if the latter of these were the case, God, as in other instances, overruled this artifice of Satan to the destruction of his own cause and kingdom.

SECT. 43. ACTS XIX.

publicly *confessed and made a declaration of their* unlawful *deeds* of this kind. *And a considerable number of those who had practised* magical and *curious arts*,[i] to express their detestation of them, *bringing their books together, burnt them before all* who were present: *And* as it was observed that there were a great many of them which bore a high price in that place, *they computed the value of them, and found* that *it* amounted to *fifty thousand* drachmas, which were the [*pieces*] *of silver* most current in those parts.[k] *So powerfully did the word of the Lord grow and prevail*, and so remarkable was the triumph of the gospel over all considerations of honour or interest that could be opposed to it, on this or on any other occasion.

19 Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 20, 19 THUS may the word of God still grow and prevail wherever it comes, and separate between the sinner and his sins, be they ever so customary, ever so reputable, ever so gainful! And thus may the flame of love and zeal consume every snare which hath detained the soul in a base captivity to it!

2—6 In order to the production of so noble an effect, may those who are so indifferent to his sacred operations as if they had never yet heard that there was an Holy Spirit, be filled with it, and be made obedient to it!

8, 9 And may they to whom the mysteries of the gospel are committed, declare them boldly, whoever may be hardened, whoever may oppose, and how evil soever some who boast of their knowledge of God may speak of this way!

11, 12 We cannot expect that the miracles of Paul's days should be renewed in ours, but we may humbly hope that the noblest effects of his preaching will be renewed; that dead souls will be quickened, the languishing revived, and evil spirits cast out from men's minds, where their possession is more fatal and dangerous than in their bodies.

13, 14 And God grant that none may ever undertake to invoke the name of Jesus upon such occasions, or to appear under the character of his servants, who have not cordially believed in him themselves, and received their com-

15, 16 mission from him! We need not wonder if, in such a case, like these sons of Sceva, they meddle to their own wounding, and prove the means of irritating rather than curing those disorders which the influence of Satan has introduced, and which the Spirit of Christ alone can effectually remove.

SECTION XLIV.

Paul is driven from Ephesus, on occasion of a tumult which Demetrius raises, and the Chancellor prudently appeases. Acts xix. 21, *to the end.*

ACTS xix. 21.

SECT. 44. ACTS XIX.

NOW after the extraordinary cures and conversions at Ephesus which have been mentioned in the preceding section, *when these things were fulfilled*,[a] *Paul*, who was much concerned about the spiritual welfare of his former converts, and very solicitous to promote the progress of the gospel, had thoughts of leaving Ephesus, and *purposed in spirit*,[b]

21 *that* first *passing through Macedonia and Achaia*, where he had planted so many flourishing churches some time ago, at Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and other places, *he would* then *go to Jerusalem; saying, After I have been there, it is necessary for me also to see Rome*, that I may bear my testimony to the gospel in that metropolis of the world: and accordingly Providence brought him thither, though in a

22 manner something different from what he first intended. *And* in this view, *sending two of those that ministered to him*, namely, *Timothy and Erastus*,[c] *into Macedonia*, to

Acts xix 21.

AFTER these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timo-

i *Who had practised curious arts.*] Philostratus, Chrysostom, and a variety of more ancient authors, quoted by many, and especially by Mr. Biscoe, (*At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 1. p. 290—293.) have mentioned the Ephesian letters, meaning by them the charms and other arts of a magical kind which the inhabitants of that city professed; and as these practices were in so much reputation there, it is no wonder that the books that taught them, how contemptible soever they might be in themselves, should bear a considerable price.

k *Fifty thousand pieces of silver.*] If these be taken for Jewish shekels, and valued at three shillings each, (which are the principles of Dr. Benson's computation, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 149.) the sum will amount to £7500 sterling, or, setting it at half-a-crown, to £6250. But as the Attic drachm seems to have been more frequently used among the Greeks, than any coin equal to the Jewish shekel, I think it more natural to compute by that, which, if with Dr. Prideaux we reckon it at 9d. reduces the sum to £1875.

a *When these things were fulfilled.*] Many events referred to in the Epistles happened during the period.—It is probable that Philemon, a convert of Paul, (Philem. ver. 19.) and Epaphras, afterwards a minister of the church at Colosse, were converted about this time: Col. i. 4, 7, 8; ii. 1; iv. 12, 13. The apostle was also visited by several christians from neighbouring parts, during his abode here, particularly by Sosthenes and Apollos from Corinth, and by some of the family of Chloe, a woman, as it seems, of some figure there, (1 Cor. i. 1, 11.) as also by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, all from the same place; (1 Cor. xvi. 17.) and Onesiphorus, who afterwards visited him so affectionately at Rome, was, as Timothy had frequent opportunities of observing, very serviceable to the apostle here: 2 Tim. i. 16—18. And there is great reason to believe he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians from hence, 1 Cor. xvi. 18. and about this time; for it is plain—that Aquila and Priscilla were then with him in Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. as they now were, Acts xviii. 18, 19, 26.—that it was after Apollos had visited Corinth, had watered Paul's plantation there, and was returned to Ephesus again, 1 Cor. iii. 6; xvi. 8, 12.—and that it was when Paul himself, having lately given a charge to the Galatian churches on that head, (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. with Acts xviii. 23.) intended a journey from Asia to the Macedonian and Corinthian churches, and was sending Timothy to prepare his way, 1 Cor. iv. 17, 19; xvi. 5, 10. compared with the verse now before us, and that which follows. Hence it appears that no dependence can be had on the spurious additions at the end of the Epistles, which do not only tell us that he wrote to the Galatians from Rome, contrary to the probability there is that he wrote it from Corinth, (as was hinted before, note i, on Acts xviii. 11.) but also affirm, in spite of his own declaration to the contrary, that he wrote the First to the Corinthians from Philippi.

b *Paul purposed in spirit.*] It is not certain from the original, εθετο εν τω πνευματι, whether this relate to a determination he was moved to by the Holy Spirit, by whom he was directed in his journies, or (as Beza and Grotius suppose) to a purpose he formed in his own mind. But as we find that he delayed the execution of it, and was by several circumstances led to alter his intended course, and to continue longer in his progress than he first designed, it seems more reasonable to refer it to his own spirit; nor is it unusual to insert the article, where it only relates to the human spirit. See Acts xvii. 16; Rom. i. 9; viii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 11; v. 5; vi. 20; Gal. vi. 18; Eph. iv. 23. Gr. Accordingly Beza renders it, *Statuit apud se*, and Stephens, *Induxit in animum.*

c *Sending——Timothy and Erastus.*] Timothy was a person very proper to be employed on this occasion, not only on account of his excellent character, but also as he had formerly been in Macedonia with Paul, and had assisted in planting the churches there: Acts, chap. xvi. and xvii. Erastus, who was joined with him, was chamberlain of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. and they were charged with a commission to promote the collection which Paul was making, both in the European and Asiatic churches, 1 Cor. xvi. 1,

theus and Erastus: *but* he himself staid in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way:
24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen:
25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.
26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded, and turned away much people, saying, That they be no gods which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.
29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.
30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.
31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

prepare his way, and to get their collection ready for the poor christians in Judea, *he himself staid some time* longer *in* that part of *Asia*, waiting for a convenient opportunity of following them. SECT. 44.

And there happened about that time no small tumult concerning that way of worshipping God, and securing a happy immortality, which Paul taught: *For* there was in the city *a man whose name was Demetrius*, by profession *a working silversmith*, and a man of considerable influence; for *making* small *silver shrines*, which were models of the celebrated temple *of Diana* there,[d] he employed a considerable number of men under him, and *procured no small gain to the* several *artificers* by this means: *Whom* therefore *he* one day, upon a general summons, *gathered together* in a great number, *with* all *the* inferior *workmen* who were *employed about this business; and* when they were met, he *said*, My friends, and all you honest *men* that now hear me, *you* very well *know that our maintenance* (which, thanks be to the gods, is a very liberal one) *arises from this manufacture* of making silver shrines: *And* therefore I thought it proper to call you together, that we may unite our counsels for its security against the danger that threatens the whole company, of which I am satisfied you cannot but be sensible: For *you* all *see and hear that this Paul* of Tarsus, who has unhappily resided so long amongst us, *has persuaded great numbers of people, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all* the provinces of *Asia*, as they have occasionally visited us,[e] *and has turned them aside* from the established religion, *saying, That they are not* true *deities*, nor worthy of being at all worshipped or regarded, *which are made with hands*:[f] *So that* if this be suffered any longer, *there is danger, not only that this occupation of ours should be depreciated* and ruined, which must be the necessary consequence of his success, *but also that the* celebrated *temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her grandeur destroyed, whom* now *all Asia and the* whole *world worships*;[g] so that they resort hither from all parts to pay their homage to her, to the vast advantage of our whole city, and carry home with them great numbers of our shrines, to exercise their devotion at home, till they have an opportunity of coming again to worship in her temple. ACTS XIX. 24 25 26 27

And such was the effect of what Demetrius said, that upon *hearing* [*this*] *they were filled with rage: and* mad to think that both their trade and their religion were in danger, they ran about the city, and *cried out* with great violence, *saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians*.[h] *And* this outcry of theirs gave a general alarm, so that *the whole city was filled with confusion; and* with a wild, ungovernable zeal *they rushed with one accord into the theatre*, where their famous games were celebrated to the honour of that deity, *dragging thither Gaius and Aristarchus*,[i] two *men of Macedonia* [*who were*] *Paul's fellow-travellers*. 28 29

And when Paul heard of the distress and danger of his friends, and *would have gone in* to the theatre to address himself *to the people*, that he might either bring them to a better temper, or at least get his friends discharged by surrendering himself, *the disciples* that were with him *would not permit him* so to expose his valuable person. *And some too of* the Asiarchs, (as they were called,) that is, of *the principal officers* chosen by the community *of Asia* to preside over the public games and feasts which they were used to celebrate at certain intervals in honour of their gods, *as they* knew Paul, and *had a friendship for him, sent* out some messengers *to him*,[k] *and* earnestly *desired that he would not venture himself into the theatre*, since the rage of the people was such, that if he came, it would be with the utmost hazard of his life. 30 31

3; Gal. ii. 10. for the poor christians in Judea, which is afterwards so largely urged in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. viii. and ix.

d *A working silversmith, making silver shrines of Diana.*] Dr. Hammond long since gave it as his opinion, that these shrines were little models of this famous temple, probably something like those of the church of the Holy Sepulchre brought from Jerusalem; and Mr. Biscoe has added many learned quotations to illustrate and confirm that opinion. *Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 3. p. 300—302. See also Raphel. *Ex Herod.* p. 380; and *Ex Xen.* p. 175—177. Yet after all, the mention of these models is not so express as absolutely to exclude Beza's conjecture, that the business of Demetrius might possibly be, making a sort of coins or medals, on the reverse of which the temple might be represented. He has given us a cut of one of these, in which the image itself, with its various rows of breasts, is exhibited as seen through the open doors of a temple. It is possible this company of workmen might take in those that wrought in all these sacred commodities, and likewise those that made a kind of pageants, intended for public processions, in which Diana was represented in a kind of moveable chapel resembling her great temple, in a larger proportion than these supposed models, to which some passages of antiquity undoubtedly refer, and which the Romans called *Thensæ*.

e *Great numbers of people, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia.*] Dr. Whitby observes, this is the exact rendering of the words Εφεσου——της Ασιας ικανον οχλον· so that, as the paraphrase explains it, it may refer to what Paul had done among them at Ephesus, which was the whole that could have fallen under the observation of Demetrius and the company.

f *Saying, that they are not deities which are made with hands.*] This plainly shows that the contrary opinion generally prevailed, namely, that there was a kind of divinity in the images of their supposed deities, which Elsner well shows the heathens did think, though some of them, and particularly Maximus Tyrius and Julian, had learnt to speak of them just as the papists now do, who indeed may seem to have borrowed some of their apologies from the heathens. See Elsn. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 455—459.

g *Whom all Asia and the world worships.*] Diana, as many critics have observed, was known under a great variety of titles and characters, as the goddess of hunting, of travelling, of child-birth, of enchantments, &c. under one or another of which views she had undoubtedly a great number of votaries.

h *Great is Diana, &c.*] Elsner has shown here, how frequently this epithet of *great* was given by the heathens to Jupiter, Diana, and others of their deities; to which he adds, that the ascription of it to the true God is in scripture called magnifying him. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 461.

i *Aristarchus.*] This friend and companion of Paul was afterwards his fellow-prisoner at Rome in the cause of the gospel: Col. iv. 10.

k *Some of the principal officers of Asia sent to him.*] It has, from this and the following passage, been concluded by many, that the people at Ephesus were then celebrating the public games in honour of Diana, over which these officers presided; as Grotius, Salmasius, and Dr. Hammond have largely shown;) and as it is not probable that, in such a tumultuous hour, several of them should have sent to him at once with such a message, unless they had been in the theatre together, I cannot but declare myself of the same opinion, though I know that the theatres were places in which the Greeks often met for the despatch of public business, when there were no shows exhibited. (See Raphel. *Ex Xen.* p. 177.) Some would render the word Ασιαρχαι *primates of Asia*, and I think very properly: (see Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 4. p. 302—305.) and as they were persons of great dignity, and some of them priests too, this civil message from them was at once a proof of their candour, and of the moderation with which Paul had behaved,

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Some therefore, as they stood there in the theatre, *were crying one thing, and some another,* according as their passions led them, or as the zeal of others prompted them; *for the assembly was* exceedingly *confused, and the greater part did not know for what they were come together,* having only joined the crowd upon the alarm that had been given by the cry of the greatness of their goddess, without learning what had excited it.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 *And* in the midst of this confusion *they thrust forward Alexander from amongst the multitude,* that he might speak unto the people, *the Jews* also *urging him on,*[l] fearing lest they, who were known to be disaffected to all kinds of idolatry, should suffer in the tumult, without being distinguished from the followers of Paul: *And Alexander* was willing to comply with the design, and therefore *beckoning with his hand* for silence, *would have*

34 *made a defence to the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew,* and consequently an enemy to their image-worship, they would not suffer him to speak; but *one voice arose from them all,* and the whole multitude united as one man, *crying out* in a tumultuous way, *for about the space of two hours* together, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

35 *But the chancellor,*[m] who was a person not only of considerable dignity with regard to his office, but likewise of great discretion, *having pacified the people* so far as to make them tolerably silent, *said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there* in the world that has any intelligence of things at all, *that does not know that the* whole *city of the Ephesians is* with the most humble and careful regard *devoted to* the temple of *the great goddess Diana,*[n] *and to* the worship of *the* miraculous [*image*] *that fell down from Jupiter;* as

36 undisputed tradition assures us the sacred image in our temple did? *Since then these things are* plainly *incontestable,* and this celestial image is no way concerned in any censure of those made with hands, *it is necessary for you to be quiet* and gentle in your proceedings, *and to do nothing in a precipitant manner,* by which you might run yourselves into vast

37 inconveniences and dangers before you are aware. And it is particularly important to attend to it now, because indeed you have taken a very unreasonable and unwarrantable step; *for you have* violently seized and *brought these men* into the theatre, *who are neither* sacrilegious *robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your goddess,*[o] which one would imagine by these exclamations of yours that they were; but who, so far as I can learn, behave themselves in a grave and orderly manner, and occasion no disturbance to the state by their private

38 notions, whatever they be. *If therefore Demetrius, and the artificers that are with him,* have suffered in their property, and *have a charge* of any private injury to offer *against any one, the* civil *courts are held,* in which they may have justice done them; or if they have any crime relating to the state to allege against any, the law directs them how they should proceed, *and there are the* Roman *proconsuls* to whom they may apply, who are the proper judges of such cases:[p] *Let them* then bring their action and *implead*

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly:

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore, if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another.

which made them thus kindly solicitous for his safety. Dr. Benson thinks they recollected the danger to which Paul had been exposed in a combat with wild beasts in this very theatre, to which some have supposed the apostle refers, 1 Cor. xv. 32. a text which we may consider hereafter.

l *They thrust forward Alexander, &c.*] Grotius thinks this was Alexander the coppersmith, once a professed christian, but afterwards an apostate, and an enemy to Paul; (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14.) and he supposes it an artifice of the Jews, who knew themselves obnoxious on account of their aversion to idolatry, to employ one of their body in declaring against Paul on this public occasion. But I question whether the word απολογεισθαι would have been used, had he chiefly intended an accusation against Paul; nor is it evident to me that he had yet renounced christianity or incurred the sentence referred to above, if this were indeed the same person, and not some other Alexander.

m *The chancellor.*] Our translators have rendered the word γραμματευς, *the town-clerk;* it literally signifies the scribe or secretary; but as he seems to have been a person of some authority as well as learning, I thought the word *chancellor,* which Mr. Harrington also uses, (*Works,* p. 338.) was preferable; nor would *recorder* have been much amiss. Mr. Biscoe (*At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 4. p. 305.) endeavours to prove, on the testimony of Dominus and Apuleius, that the office referred, not to the city of Ephesus, but to the games, and that the person who bore it represented Apollo, one of the chief of their deities, and the supposed brother of Diana; which, if it were indeed the case, would give great weight to his interposition. He appears by this speech a person of considerable prudence and great abilities; for he urges in a few words,—that there was no need of such a public declaration that they were votaries of Diana, since every body knew it, ver. 35, 36.—that the persons accused were not guilty of any breach of the laws, or public offence, ver. 37.—that if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, ver. 38, 39.—and that they were themselves liable to prosecution for such a tumultuous proceeding, ver. 40.

n *The city of the Ephesians is devoted, &c.*] Though this was the best way of rendering the word νεωκορος which, on the whole, occurred to me, yet I am sensible how far it is (even with all I have added in the paraphrase) from expressing the sense and spirit of the original: It properly signifies *a priest* or *priestess, devoted to some particular deity,* whose business it is to look after the temple, and see that it be not only kept in good repair, but also neat and clean, and beautified in a proper manner; so that, by the way, the word church-warden among us expresses but a part of the idea.—— It appears by some ancient inscriptions on coins, and other authentic testimonies, (see Mr. Biscoe, p. 306, 307; and Raphel. *Ex Xen.* p. 177, 178.) that there were some particular persons at Ephesus who had this office; but the chancellor, with great strength and beauty of language, to express the unanimity and zeal of the whole city in the service of Diana, speaks of it as one such attendant devotee in her temple: and as νεωκορος is compounded of a word which signifies *to sweep,* it imports the humility with which they were ready to stoop to the lowest office of service there.——As for the tradition of this image's falling down from Jupiter, there was the like legend concerning several other images among the heathens, (as Mr. Biscoe has shown by many learned quotations, p. 307, 308.) as there is likewise concerning some pictures of the Virgin Mary in Popish churches.

o *Neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.*] It is very ungenerous in Orobio (*Apud* Limborch, *Collat. cum Jud.* p. 134.) to insinuate from hence, that the fear of suffering kept Paul from declaring against the established idolatries here; and it is much more so in Lord Shaftesbury (*Charact.* Vol. III. p. 86.) to represent the apostle and his companions as acquiescing in this defence of the chancellor, and sheltering themselves under it, though it maintained that they allowed the divinity of Diana and her image; not to insist on Brennius's remark, that nothing said against gods made with hands could affect an image which was supposed to have fallen down from heaven, nor to urge Paul's absence, though that puts him quite out of the question as to any reply to this speech: it is obvious to answer, that the chancellor's assertion is only this, "That the persons in question had not disturbed the public peace by any riotous attempt to plunder or demolish the temple or altar of Diana, nor did they abuse her by "scurrilous language." This was much to their honour; but in how serious, strenuous, and courageous a manner the apostles bore an open, though always modest and peaceable, testimony against idolatry, the whole series of their history and writings show. Orobio forgets that the Jews were here silent; and both he and the noble (but often inconsistent) writer of the *Characteristics* forget how irregular a step it would have been for any Jew or Christian to have detained an assembly, then so prudently dismissed, and how very ill-timed the best religious discourse would then have been, which indeed might have left the maker of it in a great measure chargeable with all the mischief which should have followed.

p *There are the* Roman *proconsuls.*] I cannot but agree with the learned Mr. Basnage, (*Annal.* Vol. I. p. 674.) that the province of Asia was at this time administered by Celer and Ælius, who were procurators after the death of Silanus, (Tacit. *Annal. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 1.) and having, as such officers sometimes had, the ensigns and or-

39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken he dismissed the assembly.

one another, and traverse their suit in a legal manner in either of these judicatories, till it is brought to a fair determination. *But if* the cause be not properly either civil or criminal, and *you are inquiring any thing concerning other matters* relating to our common utility, or to religion, which may seem of a special nature, there is no room to doubt but *it shall be determined* to the general satisfaction *in a lawful assembly* of the Asiatic states, who will inquire into it impartially, and with a diligence proportionable to its importance. *And* to this it will be highly expedient to refer it; for *indeed*[q] *we are* all *in danger of being called in question* by our superiors *for the insurrection which has happened this day*,[r] *as there is no* sufficient *cause by which we can account for this tumultuous* concourse,[s] which therefore may justly give some alarm to the Roman magistrates.

And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly; and without any farther violence, they returned to their own habitations.

SECT. 44. ACTS XIX. 39 40 41

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY God grant that the zeal of the heathens in the worship of their imaginary deities, may not rise up in judgment against us for the neglect of the living Jehovah! They rent the skies with acclamations of the greatness of their goddess, and spared no cost to adorn her temple, or to purchase the models of it: May a sense of the greatness of our God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, fill our minds continually, and make us ready to spend and be spent in his service! Ver. 28, 34 24

In too many instances, indeed, religion has degenerated into craft, and been made the pretence of promoting men's secular interest. Would to God that all artifices of this kind were to be found amongst heathens! But the spirit of these votaries to Diana has too often invaded the christian church, and perhaps raised not a few tumults against them who have been its best friends.—We see how mad and furious is the rage of an incensed populace: Let us bless God that we are not exposed to it, and be thankful for that kind providence which preserved the precious life of the apostle, when, *after the manner of men, he fought with beasts at Ephesus.* (1 Cor. xv. 32.) 25—27 28, 29 30, 31 32

The prudence of this chancellor is worthy of esteem, who found out a way to quiet this uproar: Happy had it been for him if the good sense he showed upon this occasion had led him to see the vanity of that idle tradition which taught them that an image fell down from their imaginary Jupiter, or that those could be gods, who were made with hands. But the god of this world hath in all ages blinded the minds of multitudes, (2 Cor iv. 4.) and they acted like idiots in religion, when in other instances their sagacity hath commanded a deserved and universal admiration. The prevalence of idolatry through so many polished and learned, as well as savage and ignorant, nations, both ancient and modern, is a sad demonstration of this. Let us pray that they may *consider and shew themselves men;* (Is. xlvi. 8.) and *deliver their own souls*, under a sensibility that they have *a lie in their right hand.* (Isa. xliv. 20.) For this the labours of Paul were employed; and the progress of that gospel he preached appears matter of great joy, when the effects of it are considered in this view. May it, like the morning light, spread from one end of the heavens to the other, while the admired vanities of the heathen are degraded and cast (as the sacred oracles assure us they shall be) to the moles and the bats (Isa. ii. 20.) 35 *et seq.* 26

SECTION XLV.

Paul having made a tour through the country of Macedonia, goes to Achaia; and returning back again through Macedonia, takes ship at Philippi, and so comes to Troas, where he held an assembly in which the night was spent, and Eutychus, killed by a fall, was raised to life; after which Paul proceeds on his voyage. Acts xx. 1—16.

ACTS XX. 1.

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

ACTS XX. 1.

WE have given an account of the insurrection at Ephesus, how it was excited by Demetrius and his workmen, and prudently quieted by the interposition of the chancellor. *Now after the tumult was ceased, Paul calling the disciples to him, and embracing* [*them*] with great affection, *departed* from Ephesus after the long abode he had made there: and having passed through Troas in his way, he crossed the sea from thence *to go into Macedonia*,[a] to visit the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Bereans, to whom (as was observed before) he had sent Timothy and Erastus while he stayed in Asia, (chap. xix. 22.) and from whence Timothy was now returned, and left behind him at Ephesus. SECT. 45. ACTS XX. 1

naments of consular dignity, (Sueton. *Claud. cap.* 24.) might naturally enough be called proconsuls. This seems a more natural interpretation than it would be to say that the proconsuls of neighbouring provinces were present at these games, and so might be referred to here; for, not now to inquire how far their power might extend out of their proper precincts, it is obvious to remark, that this could be no argument to Demetrius, who could not prosecute his action during the games, nor command the stay of these noble visitants after them.——I must not forget to own my obligation to Mr. Biscoe for the clear view he has given me of the sense of this and the following verse, which I first found in him, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 6, 7. p. 308—312.) and then, with a most remarkable similarity of interpretation, in Mr. Harrington's *Works*, p. 339.

q *And indeed.*] Raphelius has remarked (*Annot. ex Xen.* in Acts iv. 27; and xvi. 57.) that γαρ often signifies *indeed;* which seems to me an observation of moment.

r *In danger of being called in question for the insurrection, &c.*] There was a Roman law which made it capital to raise a riot: "*Qui cœtum et concursum fecerit capite puniatur:*" and it has been observed, that the original words στασεως and συσσορης, remarkably answer to those of that law.

s *No cause by which we can account for this concourse.*] Fire, inundation, the sudden invasion of enemies, &c. might have excused and justified a sudden concourse of people rushing together with some violence; but the chancellor with great propriety observes there was no such cause, nor any other adequate one to be assigned.

a *Departed* from Ephesus—*to go into Macedonia.*] It is very natural to conclude (as Dr. Benson and many others do) that Paul now left Timothy at Ephesus, and that he refers to it, 1 Tim. i. 3. he being by this time returned from that embassy mentioned, Acts xix. 22.—As the apostle went through Troas, which lay in his way to Macedonia, he met with a fair opportunity of preaching the gospel there; (2 Cor. ii. 12.) but not receiving those tidings of his friends at Corinth which he expected by Titus, he passed on to Macedonia without further delay, (*Ibid.* ver. 15.) intending to proceed to Corinth from thence, since he could not visit that church first, as he had once intended, 2 Cor. i. 15, 16. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6.

SECT. 45. ACTS XX.

And after Paul was come to Macedonia, as he was *going through those parts*,[b] he zealously pursued the work in which he was engaged; *and having exhorted* the faithful he found there, and comforted *them with much discourse, he came* from thence *into Greece*, that he might visit the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring cities of Achaia. *And when he had continued* [*there*] *three months*,[c] he was now ready to set out from thence with what had been collected for the poor brethren in Judea; but as he understood that *an ambush was laid for him by the Jews when he was about to embark for Syria*, he upon this account *thought it advisable to return by* way of *Macedonia*, so that the churches there had an happy opportunity of receiving a third visit from him.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months; and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

And Sopater the Berœan not only attended him in his Macedonian journey till he took shipping, but crossed the sea with him, and *accompanied him as far as* what is called the Proper *Asia; and* there went also with him some *of the Thessalonians*, namely, *Aristarchus and Secundus, and* also *Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy*, who was now come to him from Ephesus: *And of the Asiatics*, or natives of the Proconsular Asia, there were also, in the number of those who joined their company, *Tychicus and Trophimus*.[d] *These* two last mentioned having information of the time and place where they might expect us, *going before* to Asia, *staid for us* a while *at Troas*, where we were to land.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5 These going before, tarried for us at Troas.

And some days after they had left us, *we set sail from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread* were ended, *and* crossing part of the Ægean sea, *came to them at Troas in five days*,[e] *where we continued seven days*, conversing with the christians there.[f]

6 And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days.

And on the first [*day*] *of the week, when the disciples*, as it was usual with them on that day, *met together to break bread*, that is, to celebrate the eucharist in remembrance of the death of our blessed Redeemer,[g] *Paul being* now to take his leave of them,

7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached

b *Going through those parts.*] In Macedonia, after great anxiety in his mind, he at length met with Titus, who brought him a comfortable account of the state of affairs at Corinth, 2 Cor. vii. 5—7. and in particular, what he said of their liberal disposition gave the apostle reason to glory in them, and to excite the Macedonians to imitate their generosity in assisting the contribution he was now raising for the poor christians in Judea, which was one great part of his business in this journey, 2 Cor. ix. 2; viii. 1—14. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was therefore written from Macedonia at this time, (see the places last quoted,) and was sent by Titus, who, on this occasion, returned to get the collection in still greater forwardness.—This tour through Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berœa, would of course take up several months, and no doubt many circumstances would occur at most of these places, which made Paul's presence with them for a while highly expedient.—It seems probable that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy from hence, expecting to return to Ephesus again, and then designing that Timothy should continue there till he came, (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15; iv. 13.) though Providence ordered the matter otherwise. I shall hereafter, if God permit, mention the reasons which incline me at present to believe that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy now rather than after he was set at liberty from his first imprisonment at Rome, to which time Bp. Pearson (*Annal. Paul. ad An.* 74. p. 22.) and M. Le Clerc (*Eccl. Hist. Cent.* i. *An.* 65. § 2.) refer it. The principal of them are well stated by Dr Benson, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 167—199. than which I remember nothing more satisfactory on the subject. See also Mr. Boyse's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 293, 294.

c *Continued there three months.*] It seems that Paul met with business here and in other places, which detained him longer than he expected. From hence he probably wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Romans; for it plainly appears that Epistle was written before his imprisonment at Rome, and in it he speaks of a collection made by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with which he was hastening to Jerusalem, Romans xv. 25—27. a circumstance which fixes it to this time. It also appears from Romans xvi. 21. that Timothy and Sosipater (or Sopater, one of the noble Berœans) were with him when that Epistle was wrote, which agrees with the fourth verse of this chapter, by which we find they both attended him into Asia; and consequently, if the date of the First Epistle to Timothy be as it is fixed above, Paul found some unexpected reason to send for that Evangelist to come to him from Ephesus, to which place (as we find from what follows) the apostle did not, according to his own intention, return.

d *And of the Asiatics, Tychicus and Trophimus.*] The several persons mentioned in this verse are thought by some to have been joined with Paul as messengers of the churches in carrying their contributions to the poor brethren at Jerusalem, compare 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4; and 2 Cor. viii. 19—23. (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 36, 37.) We know but few particulars of most of them from what is said concerning them in other places.——Sopater, who in some ancient manuscripts is called the son of Pyrrhus, is generally thought to be the same with Sosipater, whom Paul has mentioned as his kinsman, Rom. xvi. 21.—Aristarchus of Thessalonica is mentioned before as a Macedonian, Acts xix. 29. he attended Paul in his voyage to Rome, Acts xxvii. 2. and was his fellow-labourer, Philem. ver. 24. and a fellow-prisoner with him, Col. iv. 10, 11.—Secundus is not mentioned any where but here.—Gaius of Derbe, if he be not a different person of the same name, is elsewhere mentioned as a man of Macedonia, Acts xix. 29. of which, as some suppose, he was a native, but descended of a family that came from Derbe: He was baptized by Paul at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 14. and entertained him as his host while he abode there, Rom. xvi. 23. and afterwards St. John directs his Third Epistle to him.—Timothy was a native of Lystra, Acts xvi. 1. whom Paul particularly honoured with his friendship, and distinguished by his two Epistles to him, as well as by joining his name with his own in the title of several other Epistles: 2 Cor. Philip. Col. 1 & 2 Thess. Philem. He frequently attended the apostle in his travels, and laboured with him in the service of the gospel, in which he was so diligent and zealous, that it is no wonder he was imprisoned for it, Heb. xiii. 23.—Tychicus of Asia was often sent on messages by Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. iii. 12. and more than once was recommended by him to the churches as a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord, whom he employed not only to acquaint them with his own affairs, but for this purpose also, that he might know their state and comfort their hearts, Eph. vi. 21, 22; Col. iv. 7, 8.—Trophimus, who was of Ephesus, appears to have been a Gentile convert, whom we find afterwards with Paul at Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 29. and who attended him in other journies till he left him at Miletum sick, 2 Tim. iv. 20. These two last are said to be Asiatics, and being distinguished here from Gaius and Timothy, who were of Derbe and Lystra, which lay in Asia Minor, it is plain they are so called as being natives of the Proconsular Asia.——I shall add only, that it seems, from the construction of the original, that only Tychicus and Trophimus went before to Troas, to whom I have accordingly restrained it in the paraphrase.

e *Came to them at Troas in five days.*] Paul in his former progress came from Troas to Philippi in two days, Acts xvi. 11, 12. but crossing the sea is very uncertain, and it was easy for the voyage to be lengthened by contrary winds, so that we need not explain it of the time that passed before they joined the company that tarried for them. Paul did not set out from Philippi till after the passover week; and if his voyage was deferred, (as some have thought,) that no offence might be given by his travelling at a season which the Jews accounted so peculiarly holy, the same reason would induce those that went before him not to begin their voyage at that time; so that Paul seems to have tarried some days after them, before he set sail: nor is there any reason to suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, *Chron. in loc.* that these five days were not spent in sailing down the river Strymon from Philippi, and crossing part of the Ægean sea, but that Paul took a longer circuit, and went first to Corinth, before he came to them at Troas.

f *Where we continued seven days.*] This Paul might choose to do so much the rather, as he had declined such great views of service as were opened to him when he passed through it before in his way to Macedonia, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.——Perhaps he might now lodge at the house of Carpus; but it seems to have been in a later journey that he left there the books and other things to which he refers, 2 Tim. iv. 13. It plainly appears, from the manner in which Luke speaks here and all along afterwards, that he attended him in all this journey and voyage, though, by his altering the expression, he does not seem to have been with him since he was at Philippi in his former progress; Acts xvi. 12. *et seq.* Compare note f, on Acts xvi. 10. p. 514.

g *When the disciples met together to break bread*, that is, to celebrate the eucharist.] It is strange that Mr. Barclay, in his *Apology*, p. 475. should argue from ver. 11. that this was only a common meal, and not the Lord's Supper. It is well known the primitive christians administered the eucharist every Lord's day; and as that was the most solemn and appropriate, as well as the concluding, act of their worship, it is no wonder that it should be

unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing *him*, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

and *about to depart on the morrow, preached to them* with great fervency, *and* was so carried out in his work, that he *continued his discourse until midnight. And* by the way, *there were many lamps in the upper room in which they were assembled;* for, whatever the malice of their enemies might insinuate, the christians held not their assemblies in darkness, but took all prudent precautions to avoid every circumstance that might incur censure or even suspicion. But this occasioned them to keep the windows open, to prevent the immoderate heat of the room; *and a certain young man whose name was Eutychus*, who was there *sitting in an open window*,[h] *fell into a profound sleep; and as Paul continued his discourse a long time, he was so overpowered with sleep, that he fell down from the third story* to the ground, *and was taken up dead.* This threw the whole assembly into disorder; *and Paul*, upon this breaking off his discourse, *went down and fell upon him, and taking him in his arms, said, do not make any disturbance, for* I assure you that *his life is in him*,[i] and God will quickly restore him to perfect health. And having thus composed and quieted their minds, Paul returned to his work, *and going up again* into the chamber where the assembly met, *and having broken bread and eaten* with the rest of the disciples, in commemoration of the death of Christ, when this solemnity was over, *he conversed* with them *a considerable time* longer, even *till break of day*;[k] *and so* went out from that house, and *departed* from Troas, to meet the ship which was to take him aboard at Assos. *And* before the assembly broke up, *they brought the youth* into the room *alive* and well, *and were not a little comforted* at so happy an event; and the rather, as they might apprehend that some reproaches would have been occasioned by his death, if he had not been so recovered, because it happened in a christian assembly which had been protracted so long beyond the usual bounds of time, on this extraordinary occasion.

But we that were to go with Paul, *went before into the ship, and sailed* round the neighbouring promontory *to Assos, where we were to take up Paul: for so he had appointed, chusing himself to go afoot* from Troas thither, that he might thus enjoy a little more of the company of his christian brethren, of whom he was then to take a long leave. *And as soon as he joined us at Assos*, according to his own appointment, *we took him up* into the ship, *and came to* the celebrated port of *Mitylene* in the island of Lesbos. *And sailing from thence, we came the next day over against Chios*, the island so famous for producing some of the finest Grecian wines; *and the day following we touched at* the island of *Samos: and* steering from thence towards the Asian shore, *having staid* a while *at Trogyllium, we* put into the mouth of the river Mæander, and *came the day after to Miletus: For Paul*, under whose direction the vessel was, *had determined to sail by Ephesus*, which lay on the other side of the bay, without calling there; and much less would he go up the river to Colosse or Laodicea, *that he might not* be obliged to *spend any* considerable *time in Asia; for he earnestly endeavoured, if it were possible for him* to do it, *to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.*[l] Nevertheless, he sent for the ministers of Ephesus, and made a very remarkable discourse to them, of which we shall give a particular account in the next section.

SECT. 45. — ACTS XX.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what pleasure would Paul, and the christians of Macedonia and Achaia, enjoy these happy interviews with each other! A blessed earnest no doubt it was, of that superior pleasure with which they shall meet *in the day of the Lord*, when (as he had testified to some of them) they shall appear as *his joy and his crown.* (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) Ver. 1 2

We may assure ourselves that his converse with his friends at Troas was peculiarly delightful; and may reasonably hope, that though one of the auditory was overcome by the infirmity of nature, and cast into a deep sleep during so long a discourse as Paul made, yet that many others were all wakeful, and gave a joyful attention. Nor 7—9

mentioned as the end of their assembling; whereas, had nothing more than a common meal been intended, Luke would have hardly thought that worth mentioning, especially when, Paul being with them on a Lord's day, they would so naturally have something far nobler and more important in view, in which accordingly we find them employed; and it is quite unreasonable to suppose they spent their time in feasting, which neither the occasion nor the hour would well admit.——The argument which some over-zealous papists have drawn from this text, for denying the cup in the sacrament to the laity, was so solemnly given up in the council of Trent, (*Paolo Hist. lib.* iii. p. 486.) that it is astonishing any who profess to believe the divine authority of that council, should ever have presumed to plead it again.

h *Sitting in an open window.*] The word θυρις plainly signifies an open window, which had a sort of wooden casement or little door, which was set open that the room might not be over-heated with so much company and so many lamps.——It is well known the ancients had not yet glass in their windows, though the manner of making that elegant and useful commodity was invented long before.

i *His life is in him.*] Some have imagined that, as God immediately intended to raise this young man from the dead, the soul still remained in the body, though not united to it. (Cradock, *Apost. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 120. *note.*) But if we conceive of the soul as purely an immaterial substance, I must own myself at a loss to guess what such kind of expressions mean. It is well known that ψυχη often signifies *life;* and the words only import, that though he was *dead before*, the apostle now perceived some symptoms of *his revival.*——I only add, that επεπεσεν, *he fell upon him*, may signify that Paul threw himself on the body, as Elijah and Elisha did on those they intended to raise, 1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 34. and that συμπεριλαβων may either signify *his embracing him* at the same time, or *his lifting him up in his arms*, with the assistance of some that stood near.

k *Conversed till break of day.*] A remarkable instance of zeal in Paul, when in a journey, and when he had been so long employed in public exercises; perhaps under an apprehension, like that which he expressed soon after to the elders of Ephesus, (ver. 25.) that he should never have an opportunity of seeing these his friends together any more.

l *Endeavoured to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.*] It is observed by Chrysostom, (as was hinted on a former occasion of this kind, note c, on Acts xviii. 21. p. 530.) this was that he might have an opportunity of meeting a greater number of people from Judea and other parts, the days being then longer than at any other feast.——In consequence of this, some journies might perhaps be saved, and many prejudices against his person and ministry obviated; and, which was particularly considerable, the readiest and best opportunity taken of distributing to those Jewish Christians that lived, perhaps, at some distance from Jerusalem, the alms with which he was charged. Yet, by a mysterious providence, this very circumstance of meeting so many strangers at the feast was the occasion of his imprisonment. See Acts xxi. 27. *et seq.*

SECT. 45. can the apostle be censured for imprudence in protracting the divine exercise, in such an extraordinary circumstance, beyond the limits which would commonly be convenient.

ACTS XX. 9—12. Eutychus was unhappily overtaken, and he had like to have paid dear for it: His death would, no doubt, have been peculiarly grievous to his pious friends, not only as sudden and accidental, but as the sad effect of having slept under the word of God, under the preaching of an apostle. Yet even in that view of it, how much the more inexcusable had he been had it been in the broad light of the day, in a congregation where the service would hardly have filled up two hours! Where yet we sometimes see christian worshippers (if they may be called worshippers) slumbering and sleeping; a sight, I believe, never to be seen in a Mahometan mosque, and seldom in a pagan temple. Had those near Eutychus that had observed his slumber, out of a foolish complaisance forborne to awake him, they would have brought perhaps greater guilt upon their own souls than he upon his; and when his eyes and ears had been sealed in death, might perhaps have reflected upon themselves with a painful severity, as having been accessary to his ruin. But the mercy of the Lord joined with and added efficacy to the compassion of Paul his servant; in consequence of which, the life of this youth was restored, and he was delivered well to his friends: Whereas many that have allowed themselves to trifle under sermons, and set themselves to sleep, or who, as it were, have been dreaming awake, have perished for ever with the neglected sound of the gospel in their ears, have slept the sleep of eternal death, and are fallen to rise no more.

16 We see Paul solicitous to be present at Jerusalem at Pentecost, declining a visit to his Ephesian friends, amongst whom he had lately made so long an abode; thereby, no doubt, denying himself a most pleasing entertainment, out of regard to the views of superior usefulness. Thus must we learn to act; and, if we would be of any importance in life, and pass our final account honourably and comfortably, must project schemes of usefulness, and resolutely adhere to them, though it obliges us to abstract or restrain ourselves from the converse of many in whose company we might find some of the most agreeable entertainments we are to expect on our way to heaven. Happy shall we be if, at length meeting them at the end of our journey, we enjoy an everlasting pleasure in that converse which fidelity to our common Master has now obliged us to interrupt.

SECTION XLVI.

Paul's pathetic and important discourse to the elders of the Ephesian church, when he took his leave of them at Miletus. Acts xx. 17, *to the end.*

Acts xx. 17.

SECT. 46. IT was observed in the preceding section, that Paul's concern to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost prevented his going to Ephesus to visit his christian friends there; *but* as he was not far from thence, and was desirous to see them, he took this opportunity of *sending a* message *to Ephesus from* the neighbouring city of *Miletus*, while the ship in which *he* was embarked lay at anchor there, and *called thither the elders of the* Ephesian *church*.[a]

ACTS XX.

18 *And when they were come to him he* made a very affectionate discourse, and *said to them, You* well *know*, my dear brethren, *how I have been conversant among you*, and in what manner I have behaved, *all the time* which has elapsed *from the first day in*
19 *which I entered into Asia*;[b] Not only instructing others in the principles of divine truth, but in the whole tenor of my conduct *serving the Lord* Jesus Christ myself, *with all humility* and lowliness of mind, *and with many tears* of tender affection, *and* in the midst of many *trials which befel me*, especially *by* means of *the ambushes* which the malice *of the Jews* was continually laying for me; by which they endeavoured as much as possible to destroy both my person and my reputation, and to frustrate all the success of my la-
20 bours. Nevertheless you know that nothing discouraged me from endeavouring to discharge my duty, [*and*] can witness for me *how I have suppressed nothing that was advantageous*, or which could be of any service to your edification; *not* [*neglecting*] *to preach to you, and to teach you publicly* in worshipping-assemblies, *and*, as God gave me opportunity, *from house to house;* inculcating in visits and in private meetings, the same great doctrines which I declared in the synagogues and other places of concourse and re-
21 sort: *Testifying* and urging, with the greatest earnestness and affection,[c] *both to the Jews and Greeks*, the great importance and absolute necessity of *repentance towards God, and* of a cordial and living *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, in order to their eternal salvation.

22 *And now, behold, I am going bound*, as it were, *in the Spirit*, under the strong impulse of the Spirit of God upon my mind, which intimates my duty to me in such a manner, that I can neither omit nor delay it; and am firmly resolved to proceed *to Jerusalem; not* particularly *knowing* what I shall suffer in that city, or what *the things*

Acts xx. 17.

AND from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal me there:

a *Called thither the elders of the church.*] It is so plain that these elders are in the 28th verse called bishops, that the most candid writers of our own establishment allow the distinction between bishops and presbyters not to have been of so early a date. Compare Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. which are equally strong to the same purpose. Dr. Hammond would indeed evade the argument by saying, that he called together all the diocesan bishops of all the neighbouring parts of Asia. But it is certain the congregations of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, &c. are spoken of in Paul's writings as distinct churches; and it is difficult to conceive how such a number of diocesans could have been called together on so short a warning, without supposing them less conscientious in point of residence than one would have suspected such primitive ministers should have been; nor can we imagine that Paul would have connived at so gross an irregularity and so dangerous a precedent, had he found it out among them.

b *How I have been conversant among you all the time*, &c.] This can only mean, that during the whole time of his stay among them, he had behaved himself in the manner afterwards described; and consequently, there can be no room to infer from hence, as Dr. Hammond does, that all the Asian bishops were present. As by far the greatest part of the time had been spent at Ephesus, and the ministers there could not but know how he had acted and conversed in the near neighbourhood, it is evident he might use this expression to them alone with great propriety.

c *Testifying* and urging, &c.] The word διαμαρτυρομαι, sometimes signifies, *to prove a thing by testimony*, Acts ii. 40; viii. 25. and sometimes, from a conviction of its truth and importance, *to urge it with great earnestness*, 1 Tim. v. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 14. It is plain that we are to take it in the latter sense in this place; but both are included, ver. 24.

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

may be *that shall befal me in it* when I come thither: *Excepting that the Holy Spirit testifies, in* almost *every city* through which I pass, *saying*, by the mouth of the divinely-inspired prophets whom I find among the christians there, *that bonds and afflictions await me. But I make no account of any of these things, nor do I esteem my* very *life precious to myself* on such an occasion,[d] *so that I may* but faithfully and *joyfully finish my course* as a christian and an apostle, *and* fulfil *the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus,* [*even*] *to testify* the truth and urge the importance of *the* glorious *gospel of the* free and abundant *grace of God,* to which I am myself so highly obliged, beyond all expression, and beyond all the returns that I can ever make, by any labour or suffering I may undergo for its service.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

And now, behold, I know that you all, my dear brethren, *among whom I have* so long *conversed, preaching the kingdom of God,*[e] *shall not see my face any more*;[f] for if I should ever return to these parts of the world again, it is particularly intimated to me that I shall no more come to Ephesus.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Wherefore I sent for you, that I may take my solemn leave of you; and *I testify to you* all *this day, that* if any of you, or of the people under your care, perish, *I* at least *am clear from the blood of all men.*

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

For God is my witness, that *I have* sincerely laboured for the salvation of all that heard me, and have *not declined to declare to you,* with the utmost freedom and integrity, *all the counsel of God*;[g] but, on the contrary, have laid before you the whole system of divine truths relating to our redemption by Christ, and the way to eternal happiness with him, in the most plain and faithful manner, whatever censure, contempt, or opposition I might incur by such a declaration.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Therefore, my brethren, as you desire to live and die with comfort, and to give up your final account well in that day which I have so often mentioned to you, I solemnly charge you that you *take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock*[h] *over which the Holy Spirit has constituted* and appointed *you* inspectors or *bishops:*[i] See then that you act worthy of that important charge, and be careful diligently *to feed the church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own* precious *blood,*[k] graciously becoming incarnate for its salvation, and submitting to the severest sufferings and death, in that human nature which for this purpose he united to the divine.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Wonder not that I give you this charge in so strict a manner; *for,* besides the weighty reasons for it which I hinted above, *I know this, that after my departure* from the churches in these parts, notwithstanding all I have already done to preserve discipline and truth among you, (1 Tim. i. 20.) seducing teachers, like so many *grievous* and mischievous *wolves,*[l] *will enter in among you,* who, with unwarrantable and pernicious views, *having no mercy on the flock,* will fall upon it with voracious eagerness and overbearing violence, and make a terrible havoc, out of a mean and wicked regard to their own private

d *Nor do I esteem my life precious to myself.*] It adds great beauty to this and all the other passages of scripture in which the apostles express their contempt of the world, that they were not uttered by persons like Seneca and Antoninus, in the full affluence of its enjoyments, but by men under the pressure of the greatest calamities, who were every day exposing their lives for the sake of God, and in the expectation of an happy immortality.

e *I know that ye all among whom I have conversed, &c.*] The late learned, moderate, and pious Dr. Edmund Calamy observes, that if the apostles had been used, as some assert, to ordain diocesan bishops in their last visitation, this had been a proper time to do it; or that if Timothy had been already ordained bishop of Ephesus, Paul, instead of calling them all bishops, would surely have given some hint to enforce Timothy's authority among them, especially considering what is added, ver. 29, 30. See Dr. Calamy's *Defence,* Vol. I. p. 78. *et seq.* Ignatius would have talked in a very different style and manner on this head.

f *Shall not see my face any more.*] I cannot think, either that the force of the expression, ουκετι οψεσθε——υμεις παντες, is sufficiently expressed by saying, *Ye shall not ALL see my face any more,* or that such an intimation, which might possibly concern only one or two, should have occasioned such a general lamentation as is expressed, ver. 38. and therefore I conclude that the apostle had received some particular revelation, that if he should ever return to these parts of Asia again, (as from Philem. ver. 22. I think it probable he might,) yet that he should not have an opportunity of calling at Ephesus, or of seeing the ministers whom he now addressed.

g *Not declined to declare to you,* with the utmost freedom and integrity.] My learned and ingenious friend, the Rev. Mr. Brekell, (in his *Christian Warfare,* p. 33. note,) has proved by some very apposite quotations from Demosthenes and Lucian, that the proper import of the word υποστελλω in such a connexion is, *to disguise* any important truth, or at least *to decline* the open publication of it, for fear of displeasing those to whom it ought to be declared.

h *Take heed——to the whole flock.*] A proper concern for the safety and prosperity of the flock would no doubt lead them to guard against the admission of such persons into the ministry as were like to hurt the church, and to do what they could towards forming others to that important office, and admitting them into it with due solemnity. But as the Ephesian church was for the present supplied with ministers, it was not so immediate a care as their preaching, and therefore did not require such express mention.

i *Over which the Holy Spirit has constituted you bishops.*] As it was by the operation of the Holy Spirit that they were qualified for this high office of the christian ministry, so there was reason to believe that the apostles and elders who might concur in setting them apart to it, and the several members of the Ephesian church who chose them to such a relation to that society, were under the guidance and direction of that sacred Agent; and the expression shows, as good Mr. Baxter well observes, (*Works,* Vol. II. p. 284.) how absurd it is for any to reject the ministry in general, under a pretence that they have the Holy Ghost to teach them.

k *The church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own blood.*] How very little reason there is to follow the few copies which read Κυριου instead of Θεου, the Rev. Messrs. Enty and Lavington have so fully shown, in their dispute with Mr. Joseph Hallet on this text, that I think this passage must be allowed as an incontestable proof that the blood of Christ is here called the blood of God, as being the blood of that Man who is also God with us, God manifest in the flesh; and I cannot but apprehend that it was by the special direction of the Holy Spirit that so remarkable an expression was used.——Raphelius has shown that περιποιειν often signifies *to preserve from destruction.* (*Not. ex Herod.* p. 383.)

l *Grievous wolves.*] Some, thinking that the word βαρεις properly signifies *their strength,* would render it *oppressive;* but I see no reason for departing from our English version. Their eager and overbearing temper made them, no doubt, grievous to the christian church, though destitute of secular power. The apostle evidently makes a distinction between the wolves who were to break in upon them from without, and the perverse teachers that were to arise from among themselves. I interpret both of seducers who called themselves christians, (as false prophets are called by Christ, wolves in sheep's clothing, Matt. vii. 15.) for Paul would not have spoken of heathen persecutors as to arise after his departure, considering what extremities from persons of that kind he had himself suffered in Asia. (2 Cor. i. 8—10.) It seems probable therefore, that by the grievous wolves he means judaizing false apostles, who, though they had before this time done a great deal of mischief at Corinth and elsewhere, had not yet got any footing at Ephesus; and by the perverse men arising from among themselves, he may mean such as Phygellas and Hermogenes, and some others who revived the exploded and condemned doctrines of Hymeneus and Alexander; compare 2 Tim. i. 15; and ii. 17,18. with 1 Tim. i. 20. as also those that afterwards introduced the Nicolaitan principles and practices, of which Christ complains as prevailing here, Rev. ii. 6. as well as in the neighbouring city of Pergamos. (*Ibid.* ver. 14, 15.) So that the argument which some have urged from hence, to prove that the First Epistle to Timothy was written after this meeting, is quite inconclusive.

SECT. 46. ACTS XX.

and secular interest: *Yea*, which is yet more lamentable, even *from among your own selves* proud and factious *men shall arise, speaking perverse things*, contrary to sound doctrine, in order *to draw away disciples* from the purity and simplicity of the christian faith as I delivered it to you, that they may follow *after them* till they are destroyed with them.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 *Watch therefore* with all diligence and care, *remembering that for the space of three years*, during which I abode at Ephesus or in the neighbouring parts,[m] *I ceased not to warn every one* to whom I had access, *by night and by day*,[n] *with tears* in mine eyes, which manifested the tenderness and sincerity of my concern for their happiness. Let it then be your care, that a church planted by me with so much labour and solicitude of soul, may not be ravaged and overthrown by the enemy, but that it may long continue to flourish.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 *And now, brethren*, as the providence of God is calling me away, and appointing me other scenes of labour or suffering, *I* most heartily and affectionately *recommend you to God and to the word of his grace*, to his gospel and blessing, to his presence and Spirit; [*even*] *to him that is able to edify* and build *you* up in your holy faith,[o] *and to give you* at length *an inheritance* of eternal life and glory *among all that are sanctified* by divine grace, and so prepared for it.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 As for me, it is a great pleasure to reflect upon it, that I have a testimony in my own conscience, and in yours, that I have not directed my ministry to any mercenary views of pleasing any, how distinguished soever their circumstances might be, nor sought by any methods to enrich myself among you: *I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or*

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 costly *raiment*, but have contented myself with a plain and laborious life: *Yea, you yourselves know, that* far from having any secular or worldly designs in preaching the gospel, *these hands* which I am now stretching out among you, *have ministered* by their labour *to my* own *necessities, and* even have assisted *to* support *those that were with*

34 Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 *me*. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.) In which, as well as in other respects, *I have* set you an example, and, by the conduct I observed among you, as well as by the doctrine that I taught you, have *showed you all things* that relate to your duty, *how that, thus labouring* as I have done, *you ought to assist the* needy and *infirm*, who are not able to maintain themselves;[p] *and* should be careful *to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself*, while he conversed with his disciples, *said*, "*It is much happier to give than to receive.*"[q] See to it, therefore, in that ministerial character which you bear, that you, above all others, be an example to the flock of a generous and compassionate temper; and instead of making yourselves burdensome, be as helpful to them as you possibly can, both in their temporal and spiritual interests.

35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 *And having said these things, he kneeled down and prayed with them all* in the most fervent and affectionate manner, and with the tenderest expressions of the most cor-

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 dial friendship, took his leave of them. *And there was great lamentation* on this occasion *among all* those that were present; *and falling upon Paul's neck, they* embraced

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him:

38 and *kissed him* with great affection, and with many tears; *Especially grieving for that* melancholy *word which he spake*, and which immediately had struck their very hearts, when he told them *that they should see his face no more* in those parts,[r] where they had so long enjoyed the benefit of his ministry, inspection, and converse. *And* thus *they conducted him to the ship*, commending his person to the protection, and his labours to the blessing, of his great Master.

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 25 38 19

THOUGH these elders of Ephesus were to see the face of the apostle no more, which was indeed just matter of lamentation, yet we would hope this excellent discourse of his continued in their minds, and was as a nail fastened in a sure place. May all christians, and especially all ministers, that read it, retain a lively remembrance of it!

May we learn of this great apostle, to serve the Lord with humility and affection! May those who are called to

m *For the space of three years.*] M. L'Enfant and some other critics conclude that these years are to be reckoned from his first arrival at Ephesus, chap. xviii. 19. But it is so plain that he made no stay then, and that it was a considerable time before he returned thither, (compare chap. xix. 1.) that it seems to me much more probable, that though, after his preaching three months in the synagogue, he taught only two years in the school of Tyrannus, chap. xix. 8—10. he spent three years in or about this city. Compare note c, on Acts xix. 8. p. 533. and note e, on Acts xix. 10. *ibid.*

n *By night and by day.*] This may probably intimate that sometimes they had their night-meetings, either about the time of the tumult, to avoid offence; or because many of the christians, being poor, were obliged, as Paul himself was, to spend a considerable part of the day in secular labours. Compare ver. 34.

o *Even to him that is able, &c.*] Though the gospel may be said to be able to edify men, as the scriptures areundoubtedly said to be *able to make them wise unto salvation*, (2 Tim. iii. 15.) yet it seems something harsh to say, that doctrines or writings can give us an inheritance. Some have explained τῳ λογῳ, *the word*, as signifying *Christ*, to whom it is evident these operations may be ascribed; compare Matt. xvi. 18; Col. iii. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 8. but as I do not remember that Christ is ever called the Word of God's grace, I rather suppose that τῳ δυναμενῳ refers to Θεῳ, since God was evidently the last person mentioned before; and as it is certain, that whatever the word does, God does by it, this must be acknowledged to be the sense, whether the construction be or be not admitted. Compare Rom. xvi. 25, 27; and Jude, ver. 24, 25.

p *To assist the infirm.*] The word ασθενουντων has exactly this signification, and, as Raphelius shows at large, *Not. ex Herod.* p. 384. *et seq.* may express either sickness or poverty, as the Hebrew word חלה, also does. (See my *Sermon on Compassion to the Sick*, p. 6, 7.) It must here signify, to be sure, such poor people as are disabled some way or another from maintaining themselves by their own labour. Compare Eph. iv. 28.

q *Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, &c.*] This is a true and precious monument of apostolical tradition, which, by being written in these authentic memoirs, is happily preserved. Dr. Tillotson, Vol. III. p. 387. Monsieur Ablancourt, *Apoph. Anc.* p. 3. Grotius, and some other writers, have quoted passages from Plutarch, Seneca, and others of the ancients, bearing some resemblance to it.

r *That they should see his face no more.*] As this, which is St. Luke's own explication, leaves no room for the ambiguity which might be imagined in the expression used in ver. 25. it seems to me most evidently to prove that the First Epistle to Timothy could not, as Bishop Pearson so earnestly contends, *Op. Posth. Diss.* I. *cap.* ix. § 5. be written after this, and so late as the year 65; and consequently, it appears to overthrow all that he or others have built on that supposition, and greatly to confirm the argument suggested above in note e.

preside in assemblies, and to take the charge of souls, withhold from their people nothing that is profitable for them! and, not contenting themselves with public instructions, may they also teach from house to house, showing the same temper in private converse which they express while ministering in the assemblies; and testifying, as matter of universal and perpetual importance, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! And, O that the divine blessing may attend these remonstrances, that many may every where repent and believe! SECT. 46. ACTS XX.

May all ministers learn the exalted sentiments and language of this truly christian hero; and each of them be able to say, under the greatest difficulties and discouragements, in the view of bonds and afflictions, and even of martyrdom itself, *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and* may fulfil *the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God!* 23, 24

Such resolutions may they form when they enter on their office, and may they act upon them in discharging every part of it; taking heed to themselves, and to the respective flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers: Accordingly may they *take the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;* (1 Pet. v. 2.) coveting no man's silver, or gold, or raiment; nor affecting to enrich or aggrandize themselves or their families, but always ready to relieve the necessitous according to their ability, remembering this precious word of the Lord Jesus, so happily preserved, especially in this connexion, that *it is more blessed to give than to receive.* Thus while they are not shunning to declare, in the course of their public ministry, the whole counsel of God, may they also be examples to the flock of an uniform, steady, and resolute piety! And to quicken them to it, may they often reflect that the church of God committed to their trust, was redeemed by his own blood! May it be impressed deeply on all our hearts, that we are entrusted with the care of those precious souls for whom our Divine Redeemer bled and died! May we therefore see to it, that we are watchful to preserve them from every danger; that we warn them day and night with tears; and, in a word, that we order our whole behaviour so, that when we must take our final leave of them, we may be able to testify as in the sight of God, that we are clear from the blood of all men! 28 33 34, 35 27 28 31 26

Such ministers may God raise up to his church in every future age! such may his grace make all that are already employed in the work! and for this purpose, let every one who wishes well to the common cause of Christ and of souls join in recommending us to God, and to the word of his grace, whence we are to draw our instructions and our supports. This will be a means, under the divine blessing, to keep us from falling in the midst of all dangers and temptations; till at length he give us an inheritance with all the saints among whom we have laboured, that they who sow and reap may rejoice together. Amen. 32

SECTION XLVII.

The apostle proceeds in his voyage from Miletus to Cæsarea, and resolutely pursues his journey to Jerusalem, notwithstanding repeated warnings from inspired persons of the danger he must encounter there.

Acts xxi. 1—16.

Acts xxi. 1.

Acts xxi. 1.

AND it came to pass that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara.

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptole-

IT was with difficulty Paul and his company had departed from the elders of the church of Ephesus; but after the instructions he had given them he was determined to pursue his voyage: *And as soon as we had withdrawn* ourselves *from them, and had set sail* from Miletus, *we came with a direct course to* the island of *Coos, and the next day to* that of *Rhodes, and from thence to* the port of *Patara*, a city which lay on the continent, in the territory of Lycia. *And finding* there *a ship* that was *passing over to Phœnicia*, quitting the vessel which had brought us hither, *we went aboard* this other, *and set sail: And coming within sight of Cyprus*, we pursued our voyage without touching there; *and leaving it on the left hand, we sailed* by the southern coast of that island *to Syria, and landed at* the celebrated city of *Tyre*, the principal port of Phœnicia; *for there the ship was to unload its freight. And we continued there* at Tyre *seven days, finding* a number of persons in that city who were *disciples* of our common Lord; among whom were some *who told Paul, by* the inspiration of *the Spirit*, if he tendered his own liberty and safety, *not to go up to Jerusalem*,[a] since it would certainly expose him to great hazard, and very threatening dangers would await him there. SECT. 47. ACTS XXI 2 3 4

But when we had finished these seven *days, we departed* from thence, *and went our way*, with a full resolution of embarking again to proceed to Jerusalem, notwithstanding all these admonitions; as Paul deliberately judged that all the sufferings he might meet with in the course of his ministry would tend to the furtherance of the gospel, and that it was his duty to fulfil his engagements to the churches in delivering their alms to the brethren there, whatever might happen: *And* though he did not yield to the persuasion of his friends at Tyre, yet *they* omitted no imaginable token of respect, but *all attended us out of the city, with* [*their*] *wives and children; and kneeling down on the sea-shore*, where we were to part, *we* once more *prayed* together, and so took our leave. *And having* affectionately *embraced each other, we* that were going to Jerusalem with Paul *went on board the ship* to proceed on our voyage, *and they* that dwelt at Tyre *returned back to their own houses.* 5 6

And finishing our course by sea, *we came from Tyre to* the port of *Ptolemais*,[b] which 7

a If he tendered his own liberty and safety, *not to go up, &c.*] It is necessary to take it with this limitation; for had the Spirit forbidden his journey to Jerusalem, we may be sure he would have desisted from it.

b *Ptolemais.*] This was a celebrated city on the sea-coast, which fell by lot to the tribe of Asher, who did not drive out the inhabitants. Its ancient name was Accho. (Jud. i. 31.) It was enlarged and beautified by the first of the Egyptian Ptolemies, from whence it took its new appellation. It was the scene of many celebrated actions in that series of mad expeditions which was called the Holy War. The Turks, who are now masters of all this region, call it Acca, or Acra; and notwithstanding all the advantages of its

SECT. 47. lay to the south of the former city, on the same coast of the Mediterranean sea; *and embracing the brethren* there, *we continued with them* no more than *one day.*

And on the morrow, Paul and his company departed from Ptolemais, *and* travelling
ACTS XXI. by land, *came to* the city of *Cæsarea,*[c] which had been rendered remarkable in the church
by the residence of Cornelius the devout centurion, and was celebrated over the whole
8 country, not only for the elegance and splendour of its buildings, but likewise as the place where the Roman governor generally resided and kept his court. *And entering* there *into the house of Philip the Evangelist, who was* [*one*] *of the seven* deacons mentioned in the former part of this history, (chap. vi. 5.) and who had settled at Cæsarea after he had baptized the eunuch, (chap. viii. 40.) *we lodged with him* during our stay in this city.
9 *Now he had four virgin daughters who were* all *prophetesses,* as the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were sometimes communicated to women as well as to men. (Compare Acts ii.
10 17, 18.) *And as we continued* [*there*] *many days, a certain prophet whose name was Agabus,* who had been acquainted with us some years before at Antioch, where he foretold the famine which had since happened in the days of Claudius Cæsar, (chap. xi. 28.) *came*
11 *down from Judea* to Cæsarea. *And coming to us* when we had several of our friends together, he uttered a prediction which greatly affected us all, attending it, as usual, with a significant and prophetic sign; for *he took up Paul's girdle, and binding his own hands and feet, he said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit,* by whose inspiration I now speak and act, *So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose girdle this is, and shall deliver him* a prisoner *into the hands of the Gentiles.*
12 *And when we* who were present *heard these things,* solicitous for the life and safety of so dear a friend, and so eminent a servant of Christ in the gospel, *both we* his companions who came to Cæsarea with him, *and* also *the inhabitants of that place, entreated him* with tears, in the most pressing and endearing terms, *that he would not go up to Jerusalem,* since it appeared that he would be exposed to such imminent dangers in consequence of that journey.
13 *But Paul,* sensibly touched with the concern which we expressed on his account, and yet resolutely bent upon following what he apprehended to be the evident call of duty, whatever sufferings it might expose him to, *answered* at once, with the greatest tenderness and firmness of spirit, *What mean ye,* my dear friends, by *weeping* thus, *and* even *breaking my heart* by these fond solicitations? Cease your tears and your importunity, in an affair where conscience pleads on the opposite side: for I can assure you, as I told my brethren of Ephesus in my last interview with them, (chap. xx. 24.) that *I am ready* with the greatest cheerfulness, *not only to be bound* and cast into prison, *but also to die at Jerusalem,* or wherever else I may be called to it, *for the* honourable and beloved *name of the Lord Jesus;* and shall esteem it a most glorious and happy period of life, to pour out my blood in defence of that blessed gospel which he hath committed to my charge.
14 *And when* we plainly perceived that *he would not be persuaded* by any importunity we could use, *we ceased* to press him any farther, *saying, Let the will of the Lord be done!* May he protect his faithful servant, whithersoever he leads him! and over-rule his confinement and affliction to the advantage of that glorious cause, on which it seems, on the first appearance, to wear so threatening an aspect!
15 *And after these days* had been spent at Cæsarea, Paul would not lose the opportunity of being present at the approaching festival: and therefore *making up our baggage, we*
16 *went up to Jerusalem* as expeditiously as we could. *And* [*some*] *of the disciples also from Cæsarea went along with us, and brought* [*us*] *to* the house of *one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple,*[d] *with whom we should lodge;* which we were the more willing to do, as he was a person of established character and reputation in the church.

mais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, (which was *one* of the seven,) and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart! For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11—13 LET us observe and emulate that excellent and heroic temper which appeared in the blessed apostle St. Paul, in this journey to Jerusalem. When still the Holy Spirit testified in every city, that bonds and afflictions awaited him; when his friends in so fond a manner hung around him, and endeavoured to divert him from his purpose, he was not insensible to their tender regards: Far from that, his heart melted, and was even ready to break under the impression; yet still he continued inflexible. There was a sacred passion warmer in his soul than the love of friends, or liberty, or life; *the love of Christ constrained him,* (2 Cor. v. 14.) and made him willing, joyfully willing, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for his name who had indeed died for him there. Oh that such as this might be the temper, such as these the sentiments, of every minister, of every christian! For surely imprisonment in such a case is better than liberty; and death infinitely preferable to the most prosperous life secured by deserting his service, or flying from any post which the great Captain of our salvation hath assigned us.

On the other hand, let us learn of these wise and pious friends of Paul, to acquiesce in the will of God, when the

situation, on one of the finest bays on that coast, and in the neighbourhood of Mount Carmel, it is now, like many other noble and ancient cities, only a heap of ruins. See Mr. Maundrell's *Journey to Jerusalem,* p. 53.

c *Cæsarea.*] To what I have said in the paraphrase concerning this city, I shall only add, that it lay in the tract of land which fell to the tribe of Manasseh; that it had once been called Straton's Tower, but took its name of Cæsarea from a noble temple which Herod the Great dedicated to Augustus Cæsar, when he rebuilt it almost entirely of marble; so that Josephus, who was well acquainted with it, tells us it was the finest city of Judea. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 9. [al. 13.] § 6. *et Bell. Jud. lib.* iii. *cap.* 9. [al. 14.] § 1.

d *Brought us to one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple.*] Mnason was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, who probably had been converted, either by Christ or the apostles, at the first opening of the gospel there.——I have followed Sir Norton Knatchbull's version of the words, as that which appeared to me best to suit the original: for it seems very unnatural to render ἀγοντες Μνασωνα *bringing Mnason with them.*

determination of it is apparent, how contrary soever it may be to our natural desires, or even to those views which we had formed for the advancement of his cause and interest in the world; where perfect resignation may be difficult in proportion to the degree of our piety and zeal. *Can any teach him knowledge;* (Job xxi. 22.) or pursue the purposes of his glory, by wiser and surer methods than those which he has chosen? In this instance the bonds of Paul, which these good men dreaded as so fatal an obstruction to the gospel, tended, as he himself saw and witnessed while he was yet under them, to the futherance of it; (Phil. i. 12.) and what they apprehended would prevent their seeing him any more, occasioned his returning to Cæsarea, and continuing there for a long time, when, though he was a prisoner, they had free liberty of conversing with him. (Acts xxiii. 33; xxiv. 23, 27.) And even to this day we see the efficacy of his sufferings, in the spirit they have added to those epistles which he wrote while a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and in that weight which such a circumstance also adds to his testimony. Let Jesus therefore lead us and all his other servants whithersoever he pleases, and we will bless his most mysterious conduct; in sure expectation of that day when what is now most astonishing in it, shall appear beautiful and ordered for the best.

SECT. 47. ACTS XXI. 14

It is pleasant to observe the honour paid to Mnason as an old disciple: An honourable title indeed it is; and wherever it is found, may *days speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom!* (Job xxxii. 7.) And may there be a readiness, as in this good old man, to employ all the remaining vigour of nature, be it more or less, in the service of Christ, and in offices of cordial love and generous friendship to those who are engaged in the work of the Lord!

16

SECTION XLVIII.

Paul being arrived at Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the elders of the church there, is assaulted by the Jews while worshipping in the temple, and rescued by Lysias the Roman officer from the extremest danger of being torn in pieces by their fury. Acts xxi. 17—36.

ACTS xxi. 17.

AND when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord; and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, That they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

ACTS xxi. 17.

IN the preceding section we gave an account of our setting out on our journey from Cæsarea; *and* now we are to add, that *when we were arrived at Jerusalem, the brethren* there *received us with great pleasure* and affection.[a] *And the next day Paul* took us with him who had attended him in his journey, and *entered in with us to* the house of *James* the apostle, commonly called James the Less, or the Lord's brother; *and all the elders* of the flourishing church in that city *were present* there, to receive so important a visitant, of whose arrival and errand they had heard. *And* Paul *having embraced them* with great affection, presented us that were of his company to them; and after this *he gave them a particular account of* all *those things which God had done among the Gentiles by his ministry* since he last left Jerusalem; informing them of the success that he had met with in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus; of the churches he had planted in all those places, and of the opportunity he had enjoyed of visiting most of them a second time, as well as of taking a review of those in Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lystra, and other parts of Asia, with the plantation of which they had formerly been made acquainted. (Acts xv. 4.) And he concluded with an account of those alms which he had brought from the Gentile converts for the relief of their brethren of the circumcision at Jerusalem.

SECT. 48. ACTS XXI. 18 19

And when they heard [*it*,] *they glorified the Lord* Jesus Christ for this wonderful demonstration of his presence and grace with his servant; *and* then they *said to him*, Dear and honoured *brother*, we rejoice from our hearts in the triumphs of the gospel among the Gentiles; and as we doubt not but the whole body of the christian church is dear to thee as well as to us, we assure ourselves thou wilt candidly join in all prudent endeavours for removing any prejudices which may have been weakly imbibed, to the injury of that mutual affection which we so earnestly desire to cultivate: In a word, *thou seest* with thine own eyes *how many myriads of believing Jews there are*[b] who are gathered together from all parts to Jerusalem, on occasion of this feast; *and they are*, in the general, persons who are *all zealous for the* observation of the Mosaic *law*, as supposing it of perpetual obligation on all our nation, without excepting those that have embraced christianity. *Now*, so it is that, through the prejudice and falsehood of thine enemies, *they have been* (we doubt not, very falsely) *informed of thee, that* wherever thou comest *thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentile nations to apostatize from* the law of *Moses*;[c] *saying, That they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the*

20

21

a *The brethren received us with great pleasure* and affection.] The alms he brought with him would be one, though far from being the only or the chief, circumstance of endearment; so that the prayers of his christian friends were answered, *that his ministry with respect to Jerusalem* (η εις Ιερουσαλημ) *might be acceptable to the saints*, Rom. xv. 31.

b *How many myriads of believing Jews there are.*] I do not apprehend that it can be certainly argued from hence, that there were more than thirty or even twenty thousand Jewish believers now present at Jerusalem; for the word μυριαδες may only in general denote *a great number;* but it is certain that the greater part of them were not stated inhabitants of Jerusalem, but only visited it on occasion of this great festival; (compare ver. 27.) so that no certain argument can be deduced from hence as to the plurality of congregations supposed to have been now under the care of the bishop of Jerusalem, if there were indeed any christian officer who had that title so early, which it does not appear from scripture that there was. It is surprising, therefore, that the ingenious Mr. Slater should lay so much stress upon this text in his *Original Draught of the Primitive Churches.*

c *Thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentile nations to apostatize from Moses.*] It is a leading observation of that vain and unhappy man, Mr. Toland, in his *Nazarenus*, which he grounds principally on this text and history, that the gospel never designed to set the Jews at liberty from the law of Moses, except with regard to sacrifices, though he allows that the Gentiles were not intended to be subject to it. (See *Nazaren.* p. 35, 36.) But it is evident that he fell into that erroneous opinion, (so directly contrary to many other scriptures, such as, for instance, Rom. xiv. 14; Eph. ii. 14, 15; Col. ii. 14—17; 1 Tim. iv. 4; 2 Cor. iii. 9—11; Heb. viii. 13.) by not attending to a most obvious medium between enforcing it on their consciences as necessary, and condemning it as unlawful. I have strongly expressed this medium in the paraphrase on ver. 23 and 25.

SECT. 48. ACTS XXI.

other rites and *customs* which we have learned from our forefathers as of divine institution. *What is it then* which may not be apprehended on such an occasion? *The multitude*, no doubt, who have been thus informed of thee, *must by all means come together* to observe thy conduct narrowly; *for they will* soon have notice of thy being here, and must needs *hear that thou art come;* and they immediately will form their judgment of the truth or
22 falsehood of the information they have received, by what they discover in thy present be-
23 haviour of regard or disregard to the Mosaic ceremonies: And *therefore*, to show them that, how far soever thou art from imposing them as necessary to salvation, or teaching men to seek justification by them, yet thou dost not think there is any intrinsic evil in them, nor teach it as a matter of duty, that believers in Christ should disuse and reject them; *do this that we say to thee,*[d] and let us counsel thee to take this method, as the best expedient we can think of for immediately taking off any ill impressions which might otherwise be apprehended: *There are with us four men who* are converts to the gospel, and *have* at
24 present *a vow* of Nazariteship *upon them:* Now we would advise thee to *take them* as thy companions and partners, *and purify thyself with them*, according to the Jewish ritual; *and be at* all the necessary *charges with them, that they may shave their heads*, and offer the sacrifices which the law has appointed in that case:[e] *And* then *all* that come up to the temple, and see thee in these circumstances, *will know*, by their own observation, *that there is nothing* of truth and reality *in those things which they have heard of thee; but that* instead of forbidding these observances to others, *thou thyself walkest regularly*,[f]
25 *keeping the law*, and avoiding all occasion of offence. *And as for the believing Gentiles*, thou knowest *we have written* some time ago to them, *determining that they should* think themselves obliged to *observe none of these things, except it be to keep themselves from what is offered to idols, and from blood, and from that which is strangled, and from fornication.* (Chap. xv. 28, 29.) And as we all concurred in this decree, they cannot imagine what thou mayst now do, according to the advice we give thee, at all inconsistent with asserting their liberty in the manner thou so constantly dost: Nor will this be any proof at all that thou thinkest the observation of these ceremonies necessary to the salvation even of believing Jews, though duty, prudence, and charity may, in some particular instances, dictate a conformity to them.

26 Now *then*, as this was the unanimous advice of James and the brethren, *Paul*, on mature deliberation, determined to comply with the proposal; and accordingly he *took the men* who had engaged in the vow, *and the* very *next day being purified with them*, according to the rites of the law, he *entered* with them *into the temple,*[g] *declaring* to the priests who were in waiting there, the purpose he had formed for *the accomplishment of the days of purification, till an offering should be offered for every one of them*, as the Mosaic ritual required, (Num. vi. 13. *et seq.*) that so all proper preparations might be made for that purpose.

27 *But as the seven days* which were to complete this affair *were about to be accomplished,*[h] *the Jews that were* come *from Asia* to celebrate the feast of Pentecost,[i] *seeing him in the temple, threw all the populace into confusion, and laid* violent *hands upon*
28 *him* in a most tumultuous and outrageous manner; *Crying out* to all that were present, *Ye men of Israel, help;* and exert that pious zeal which so provoking and heinous a circumstance must surely excite; for *this is the* wretched and detestable *man that every where teaches all men* a set of principles most directly *contrary to the people* of the Jews, *and*

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know, that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and

d *Do this that we say to thee.*] To interpret this advice given to the great apostle of the Gentiles by the body of these elders, as an authoritative episcopal command, would be apparently absurd; and yet it is the only passage in the whole context that glances at all that way.

e *Be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads.*] Josephus not only tells us in general that it was customary with persons in any sickness or distress to make vows, and to spend at least thirty days in extraordinary devotions, (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15. § 1.) but also says, that when Agrippa came to Jerusalem, he offered sacrifices of thanksgiving, and ordered a good number of Nazarites to be shaved; (*Antiq. lib.* xix. *cap.* 6. [al. 5.] § 1.) a phrase exactly answering to this; from whence Dr. Lardner (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 9. § 7. Vol. I. p. 473, 474.) very naturally argues, that to be at charges with Nazarites was both a common and very popular thing among the Jews. The learned Witsius also has long since produced a most apposite passage from Maimonides, in which he expressly asserts that a person who was not himself a Nazarite, might bind himself by a vow to take part with one in his sacrifice. (Wits. *Meletem. cap.* x. § 3. p. 149.) The charges of these four Nazarites would be the price of eight lambs and four rams, besides oil, flour, &c. Numb. vi. 14, 15.

f *That thou thyself walkest regularly.*] It is indeed very evident from hence, as Mr. Locke well observes, (*On the Epistles.* p. 4.) that whatever might have passed between Paul and James on this head in private, (compare Gal. ii. 2.) James and the brethren thought it most regular and convenient that the Jewish ritual should still be observed by those of the circumcision who believed in Christ; and considering what tribulation the church at Jerusalem must otherwise have been exposed to by the sanhedrim, who no doubt would have prosecuted them to the utmost as apostates, and also how soon Providence intended to render the practice of it impossible, and to break the whole power of the Jews by the destruction of the temple and city and nation, it was certainly the most orderly and prudent conduct to conform to it, though it were looked upon by those that understood the matter fully (which it was not necessary that all should) as antiquated and ready to vanish away. Heb. viii. 13.

g *Paul took the men, and the next day being purified with them*, &c.] If any thing more than has already been said, seem necessary to vindicate the brethren in giving, and Paul in taking, this advice, which I cannot think there does, the reader may consult Calvin's note here, and Wits. *Meletem. cap.* x. § 4—6. p. 150—152.

h *As the seven days were about to be accomplished.*] Beza supposes that by these seven days are meant the seven weeks that introduced the feast of Pentecost, which was usually called the feast of weeks, or that at least we are to understand them of the last week before it; but it is much more natural to refer them to the days of purification which were to be completed before the sacrifices should be offered that were to close the vow. It is, however, inconsistent with what follows, to render the words ἐμέλλον συντελεῖσθαι, that they *were almost ended*, as if the tumult in the temple happened towards the conclusion of these seven days, when Paul declares to Felix, in the defence he made before him eight days after he was seized, that it was then but twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem; chap. xxiv. 11. and it is evident it was not till the third day after his coming thither, that Paul began his purification. The phrase implies no more than that the seven days were about to be accomplished; and by comparing chap. xxi. 18, 26; xxii. 30; xxiii. 12, 32; xxiv. 1, 11. it appears that the time of his seizure must needs have been towards the beginning of them.

i *The Jews that were from Asia.*] Paul had lately spent three years in preaching there, and, notwithstanding the success his labours were attended with, had met with great opposition from these people; compare Acts xix. 9; xx. 3—21; 1 Cor. xvi. 9. so that it is no wonder these should be the leaders in such an assault upon him.

this place: and farther, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him, in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them; and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him!

the divine *law* we have received by Moses, *and to this* sacred and venerable *place*,[k] which hath been erected for the service of God at so vast an expense, and so solemnly devoted to him. *And* on these malignant principles he *hath even brought Greeks into the temple*, within that enclosure which no foreigner may enter,[l] *and* thereby hath *polluted this holy place;* and so has justly forfeited his life to its injured honours. *For* 29
they had before seen Trophimus the Ephesian, who had attended him in his late journey, (chap. xx. 4.) *in the city with him, whom they* rashly *imagined that Paul had brought* with him *into* that part of *the temple* which was appropriated to native Jews, or to such as were proselyted by circumcision to the entire observation of their law.

And the whole city was moved on this occasion, *and there was* presently *a* tumul- 30
tuous *concourse of the people; and laying hold on Paul* in a furious manner, *they dragged him out of the temple*, that it might not be defiled with his blood. *And immediately the gates were shut* by order of the proper officer, to prevent any farther riot or violation of those sacred enclosures, as well as to exclude Paul from seeking any sanctuary at the horns of the altar.

And when the multitude, who had now got him in their cruel hands, were so out- 31
rageous that *they went about to kill him*,[m] *word was brought to* Lysias, the chief officer of the Roman garrison, who was *the tribune of the cohort*, and was called by the Greek title of Chiliarch, from his having (as that word signifies) a thousand men, with their proper centurions, under his command; and as a detachment of his men kept guard in the outer portico of the temple during this public festival, to prevent any tumult,[n] he was soon informed by those upon duty, *that all* the city of *Jerusalem was in confusion*. This 32
presently alarmed the tribune, *who* knowing how much it was his concern to check such turbulent proceedings, *immediately took soldiers and* some of the *centurions* belonging to the cohort with him, *and ran in among them* to suppress the riot: The Jews were therefore stopped before they could accomplish their design; *and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers* come among them, *they ceased from beating Paul*;[o] which they had begun to do in such a manner, that had he not been thus seasonably rescued in this critical moment, his life must soon have fallen a sacrifice to their rage. *Then the* 33
tribune drew near and took him into his custody; *and* supposing him to be some very criminal and obnoxious person, in order to prevent his escape, he *commanded him to be bound with two chains. And* as he found the people so enraged against him, he *inquired* of those that were the forwardest amongst them, *who he was*, that such a general outcry had been raised against him, *and what he had done* to deserve it.

And such was the confusion of this riotous assembly, that *some among the multitude* 34
cried out one thing, and some another; And as the tribune saw it was in vain to think the matter should be cleared at present, and that *he could not know the certainty* of any thing *by reason of the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle* of Antonia, where the Roman garrison was kept, *But when he was upon the stairs* which 35
led up from the nearest gate of the temple to it,[p] *it came to pass that he was borne* up from the ground *by the soldiers* who had him in charge, *because of the violence of the crowd. For the multitude of the people* pressed after and *followed* him as far as they 36
could; and when he was out of their reach, pursued him still with clamorous invectives, eagerly *crying out, Away with him*, away with him! for he deserves the worst of punishments, and should immediately be put to death.

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is delightful to observe how the same principles of humble and benevolent piety wrought in the mind of Paul on the one hand, and on the other in those of James and the brethren of the circumcision, while the one Ver. 19

k *Teaches——contrary to this place.*] Every thing contrary to the law would be justly interpreted as contrary to the temple, which was so evidently supported by a regard to it. But perhaps Paul might have declared that the destruction of the temple was approaching; which declaration, we know, was charged on Stephen as a great crime. Acts vi. 14.

l *Brought Greeks into the temple*, within that enclosure, &c.] It is very evident, and universally acknowledged, that any stranger might worship in that which was called the court of the Gentiles; but these zealots, without any proof but an uncertain conjecture and rumour, imagined Paul had brought some uncircumcised Greeks into the inner part of the court which was appropriated to the people of Israel, as was notified by the Greek and Latin inscriptions on several of the pillars which stood in the wall that separated it: Μη δει αλλοφυλον παρειναι, *No foreigner must enter here.* (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 2; *et lib.* vi. *cap.* 2. [al. vii. 4.] § 4.) But it is to be observed, by the way, that a proselyte who by circumcision had declared his submission to, and acceptance of, the whole Jewish religion, was no longer looked upon as a foreigner, but as one naturalized, and so a fellow-citizen; to which there may be an allusion, Eph. ii. 19.

m *They went about to kill him.*] Philo says, that any uncircumcised person who came within the separating wall mentioned above, might be stoned to death without any farther process, (*Legat. ad Cai.* p. 1022.) which is confirmed by the last passage quoted from Josephus; but had Paul indeed brought such a one thither, that rule (allowing its authority) could not have affected him, since he himself was a Jew. Yet what the Jews called the judgment of zeal would no doubt have been pleaded to justify the murder, had it been perpetrated, according to their wicked intent.

n Kept guard in the outer portico of the temple, &c.] Josephus assures us (*Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 8.) that a detachment of armed soldiers, belonging to the Roman legion which lodged in the adjacent castle of Antonia, kept guard in the porticoes of the temple which surrounded the court of the Gentiles, on feast-days, to prevent disorders; and he has another passage to the same purpose, *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5. [al. 4.] § 3.—It is evident that Lysias was not present when this tumult began. I think it probable, as Dr. Lardner conjectures, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. § 14. Vol. I. p. 221, 222.) that he was the oldest Roman tribune at Jerusalem, and was the commanding officer at the castle above mentioned and of the legion quartered there.

o *They ceased from beating Paul.*] It is said just before, they went about to kill him; which they intended to have done, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, by what the Jews were used to call the beating of the rebels, in which they did not stay for any legal process, but having found that any had profaned the temple, the people rushed immediately upon them, and having dragged them out, beat them with staves and stones in such a cruel manner, that they often died under their hands. (See Dr. Lightfoot, *Chron. in loc.* and *Service of the Temple*, chap. i. § 3.) And thus they would have treated Paul upon a mere pretence, had they not been prevented by the coming of the tribune.

p *When he was upon the stairs.*] These stairs are particularly mentioned in the passage from Josephus which is referred to in the beginning of note n; and it appears by the account he gives, that

SECT. 48. ACTS XXI. recounted and the others rejoiced in what God had done by his ministry among the Gentiles. May ministers always remember, that whatever good is done by their ministry, it is the work of God, and that the praise is to be rendered to him! And oh that, whenever they assemble and meet with each other for religious and friendly conference, they may have cause for mutual thankfulness while they hear and tell what efficacy God is putting into the word as spoken by them, which is never like to be greater than when the ministers of it appear least in their own eyes!

20 *et seq.* A prudent precaution, consistent with the strictest integrity, discovered itself in the advice which James and the Jewish Christians gave to their beloved brother Paul on this occasion, to conform to the customs of the Mosaic worship in an affair in which he very innocently might do it; thereby to show, that as he was not a slave to ceremonial institutions, so neither was he a bigoted zealot against them, nor one that made a point of humour to oppose them in matters of indifference, and to father that opposition on conscience. When will the leaders of our churches agree to teach their followers, by such wise and mild examples, to study the honour, and comfort, and usefulness of each other, *pursuing the things that make for peace and* tend to promote *mutual edification?* (Rom. xiv. 19.)

Yet what prudence or what integrity may not sometimes be mistaken or misrepresented! What good may not be evil spoken of, and abused as a cloak for mischief, when men's hearts are overflowing with malice, and are so

28 wretchedly corrupted as to take pleasure in indulging it under the disguise of religion! What numerous falsehoods attended the charge which these furious Jews brought against Paul, in every article of it! Yet it is believed on the credit of a noisy rabble; and it was owing to the gracious interposition of a very remarkable providence, that this light of Israel was not immediately quenched, and that this holy apostle was not torn in pieces by an outrageous mob, fierce and irrational as so many wild beasts, before he could have any liberty to speak for himself.

31—36 Let not religion be condemned unheard, and then surely it cannot be condemned at all. Let us with pleasure reflect that God can raise up guardians to it from the most unexpected quarter, and animate men, like this Roman officer, from considerations merely secular, to appear most seasonably and effectually in the defence of his faithful servants. Let us adore the wise conduct of Providence in instances like these; and let us always pursue our duty with courage, since God can never be at a loss for expedients to secure us in our adherence to it.

SECTION XLIX.

Paul makes a speech to the people at Jerusalem, in which he gives them a particular account of the means by which he was engaged to embrace and preach the gospel. Acts xxi. 37, *to the end;* xxii. 1—16.

Acts xxi. 37.

SECT. 49. ACTS XXI. IT has been shown how Paul was rescued from the tumult of the Jews, who would have killed him; and with what violence they followed him with their cries, when he was taken from them: *But as Paul was going to be brought into the castle,* to which the Roman soldiers were conducting him, *he said to the tribune* who commanded them,

37 *May I be allowed to speak* a few words *to thee? And* when the tribune heard him speak in the Greek language, *he said,* in some surprise, What, *canst thou speak Greek?*

38 *Art not thou that Egyptian who didst* some time *before these days stir up a sedition, and lead out into the wilderness four thousand murderers,*[a] who committed horrible depredations there on all who were so unhappy as to come within their reach? The public is so exasperated against thee, that it naturally occurred to my mind thou mightest be

39 that most desperate of criminals. *But Paul said* to him, Thou art entirely mistaken both as to my person and character, as I hope fully to convince thee; for *I am* no Egyptian, but am *indeed a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia,* and therefore *a citizen of no inconsiderable city;*[b] *and I entreat thee* thou wouldst favour me so far as to *permit me to speak to the people,* who, by this unreasonable attack upon me, show how little they know of me; and for their sakes as well as my own, I could wish them to be better in-

40 formed. *And on his giving him permission* to say what he pleased, *Paul, standing on the stairs* that led up to the castle, *beckoned with his hand to the people; and when* he found *there was a great silence,* and they were ready to attend to what he said, *he addressed them in* the Syriac tongue, which was then the common language of the Jews, and therefore called *the Hebrew dialect;* and made a discourse to them to the following purpose, *saying,*

ACTS XXII. 1 *Men, brethren, and fathers,* of whatsoever age, rank, or circumstance of life, I beseech

ACTS XXI. 37.
AND as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Acts xxii. 1. Men, bre-

the castle was situated at an angle of the temple, and had a number of stairs descending both to the western and the northern portico.

a *Art not thou that Egyptian, &c.*] Josephus (as almost all the learned commentators on this verse have observed) expressly mentions this Egyptian impostor as coming into Judea while Felix was governor there, which he had been some years before this tumult: Compare Acts xxiv. 10. By his account of him it appears, that, calling himself a prophet, he took many of the common people with him from Jerusalem, and having brought them through the wilderness, and increased the number of his followers to thirty thousand, he led them to Mount Olivet, promising them that at his command the walls of Jerusalem should fall down, that they might enter the city; but the Jews, instead of joining with him, stood on their defence; and Felix marching out against him with the Roman soldiers, he was deserted by his followers, and fled with a few of his chief adherents, most of which were either taken or slain, but the Egyptian himself made his escape. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13. [al. 12.] § 5; *et Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6.] § 6. There is indeed a considerable difference between the sacred historian and Josephus, as to the numbers mentioned by each; for the reconciling of which, I refer my reader to the learned Mr. Ward's solution of this difficulty, as reported by Dr. Lardner; (*Credib.* Book ii. chap. 8. Vol. II. p. 497. *et seq.*) and conclude this note with the just remark of Dr. Lardner as to the great accuracy with which Luke has represented Lysias speaking of this matter. The men were led into the wilderness, the impostor's name was unknown, he being only called an Egyptian; he had escaped alive, and most of his followers had deserted him; so that a tumult of the Jews about him would have been no unnatural circumstance, (as some have objected,) since he had long ceased to be their idol.

b *A citizen of no inconsiderable city.*] The inhabitants of Tarsus, which seems to have taken its name from Tarshish the son of Javan, (Gen. x. 4.) boasted extremely of their antiquity, as Dio Chrysostom observes, *Orat.* 33. *ad Tarsenses;* and Strabo tells us, *Geograph. lib.* xiv. p. 463. that they were so considerable on account of learning, as well as commerce, wealth, and grandeur, that they might dispute the prize with Athens and Alexandria.—Paul, by saying he was a Jew of Tarsus, proved that he had a right to be in the temple.

thren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, *which I make* now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence; and he saith,)

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me:

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the

you that you would compose yourselves patiently and candidly to *hear my apology* [*which I make*] *now to you* for myself and my conduct; and I cannot but hope it will fully convince you how much you have been misinformed concerning me. *(And when they heard that he addressed them in* their vulgar tongue, and spake what was then called *the Hebrew dialect, they* were *the rather* disposed to hearken to him, and, numerous as the assembly was, *kept* a strict *silence; and he* went on with his discourse, and *said,)* It is well known to multitudes that *I am indeed* by birth and religion *a Jew* who was *born at Tarsus*,[c] the chief city *in* the neighbouring province of *Cilicia; but* my parents were so warmly attached to their religion, and so desirous that I might be well instructed in it, that they sent me, at a great expense, to be *educated* here *in this city, at the feet of* that celebrated teacher *Gamaliel*,[d] by whom I was trained up [*and*] *accurately instructed in the law of our fathers; being* from my very youth exceedingly *zealous for* the honour of *God* and his sacred institutions, *as you all are this day.* Nor was there any in those days more violent in his opposition to the religion of Jesus than I was, *who persecuted* the followers of *this* christian *way* and manner of worship even *to the* very *death*;[e] *binding both men and women* who professed it, without any regard to sex, age, or quality, *and delivering them* all *into prisons*,[f] where they were closely and severely confined: *As also the high-priest is my witness, and all the court of the elders*;[g] for he and all the other members of the sanhedrim well know how eager I was to give them all the assistance in my power towards rooting out the gospel, if possible, from the whole face of the earth: *From whom also having* several years since *received letters to the brethren*, empowering me to act against those for whom I have now so great an affection, *I went to Damascus* with a most resolute purpose, according to the tenor of my commission, *to bring those that were there*, where I imagined many might have sought a retreat, *bound to Jerusalem, that they might* take their trial here, and *be punished* according to the utmost rigour of the law. (Compare Acts ix. 1, 2.)

And if you desire, as you probably may, to know how I came so entirely to change my sentiments and measures as to engage in the defence and service of a cause which I so earnestly had laboured to destroy, I will give you a plain and faithful account of the wonderful event which occasioned it. Be pleased therefore to observe, that *it came to pass* on that most memorable day of my whole life, *that as I was on my journey, and was* now *come nigh to Damascus*, where I had as it were my prey in view, *about noon, on a sudden a great light shone about me from heaven: And I fell to the ground* in unutterable astonishment, *and* at that instant *heard a voice* from heaven *saying to me, Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? But I answered* trembling, *Who art thou, Lord?* and how is it that I have persecuted thee? *And he said unto me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest* by the furious rage with which thou art pursuing my disciples, and art endeavouring to destroy my gospel. *And they that were with me saw the light indeed and were terrified; but they* heard only a confused sound, and *did not* distinctly *hear the voice of him that spake to me.*[h] *And I*, finding no farther disposition to oppose that glorious Person who had condescended to appear in so gracious a manner to stop my wretched career, and to expostulate thus mildly with me, when it was evident he could have destroyed me in a moment, immediately surrendered as it were at discretion, and *said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go to Damascus, and there it shall be told thee*, and a particular account shall be given thee *of all things which are appointed for thee to do*, and thou shalt be informed what extraordinary services are allotted to thee, after all thou hast done against my cause and interest. *And as*, when I was risen from the ground, *I could not see by reason of the glory of that light* which had broke in upon me

SECT. 49.

ACTS XXII.

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

c *Born at Tarsus.*] This, as the learned Witsius well observes, (*Meletem. cap.* i. § 3) shows how little credit is to be given to the tradition mentioned by Jerome, (*De Script. Eccles. cap.* v.) that Paul was born at Gischalis in Judea, and driven from thence to Tarsus, when that city was sacked by the Romans, since it is directly contrary to this testimony of his own; and I mention it chiefly to show how soon tradition erred in facts of any considerable standing; nor do I remember any proof of such a devastation at Gischalis about the time of Paul's birth, which was somewhat later than that of our Lord. Compare Acts vii. 58. I honour the testimony of the fathers exceedingly when they speak on their personal knowledge; but when they report facts said to have happened long before they were born, I dare not lay much stress upon them.

d *At the feet of Gamaliel.*] Strabo tells us, in the passage referred to above, that it was customary among the inhabitants of Tarsus, for the young people, when they had gone through a course of education at home, to travel abroad for farther improvement.—Of this celebrated Gamaliel, to whom the care of Paul in his younger years was committed, see note f, on Acts v. 34. p. 450.—The phrase of being brought up at his feet plainly alludes to the posture in which the scholars were usually placed, who sat on the ground, or on low seats, while their teacher was raised on a kind of throne. Compare Luke x 39.

e *Persecuted this way to the death.*] We know he was concerned in the death of Stephen, (chap. viii. 1.) and if he was not so in that of many more, it was not for want of zeal and rage, but merely of power. But there is no reason to think that this sacred history contains a full account of all the outrages committed against christians during the period to which it extends.

f *Into prisons.*] Witsius observes here, that there were two sorts of prisons among the Jews; one only for confinement, the other where they were placed in most uneasy postures, and put to a kind of torture; for the illustration of which he introduces some curious passages from the rabbies. See Wits. *Meletem. cap.* i. § 18.

g *The high-priest is my witness.*] That is, I can appeal to him for the proof of this. It will not follow from hence, that he who was now high-priest, also bore that office when Paul persecuted the christians; he might then perhaps be only an inferior member of the sanhedrim, on which supposition this appeal would be proper, and consequently no light can be gained from hence to fix the date of Paul's conversion.

h *Did not* distinctly *hear the voice, &c.*] To what I have said on chap ix. 7. § 19. note i, p. 473. I shall only add a remark of Mr. Fleming, (*Christol.* Vol. I. p. 103.) that as in the castle of Cleves, and he might have added, in the cathedral of St. Paul and elsewhere,) there is a gallery so contrived, that two persons standing with their backs to each other in opposite parts of it may distinctly hear each other, while a person standing between them in the middle can hear neither; it is easily conceivable that the air might, by the ministry of angels, or the immediate power of Christ, be so disposed as to produce such a phenomenon. But I do not apprehend that, had this been the case, Paul's companions would have heard a confused sound, as I think it is strongly intimated they did.—Elsner has shown in a curious note here, that the heathens thought divine voices as well as visions might affect one person in a company without being perceived by the rest. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 466—468.) I give the story here without any large paraphrase, referring to § 19. p. 472. *et seq.* where it first occurs, for any further explication or illustration it may need.

SECT. 49.

with so bright a lustre as quite to dazzle and blind my eyes, *being led by the hand of those that were with me, I came to Damascus.*

ACTS XXII.

And one Ananias, a pious man according to the law, whose acceptance of the gospel had by no means destroyed his regard to the Mosaic institutions, and *who* on that account *had an honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt* [*at Damascus,*] was sent to visit me:

13 And *coming to me* by a divine appointment, *and standing by me* as I lay blind upon my bed, he *said to me, Brother Saul, look up,* and fix thine eyes upon me. *And in that very hour* and moment I found my sight restored; so that *I looked up upon him,* and saw him distinctly.

14 *And* he then addressed me in words which I shall never forget, and which have since been remarkably illustrated; for *he said,* My dear brother, *the God of our fathers hath fore-ordained thee to know his will* as now manifested in his gospel, *and to see that righteous Person* whom our nation so ungratefully rejected and crucified; *and* hath even granted thee the singular favour *to hear a voice from his* own *mouth,*[i] though he be now ascended

15 to the regions of celestial glory: And this *because* he intends to qualify thee for the most honourable and important service in his church; for *thou shalt be his* authentic *witness to all men* to whom thou mayst come, *of those* wonderful *things which thou hast seen and*

16 *heard* on this extraordinary occasion. *And now,* considering this, *why dost thou delay* in the most solemn manner to declare thy joyful acceptance of these benefits? *Arise* immediately *and be baptized, and* thereby take the method which Christ has appointed to *wash away thy sins;*[k] declaring thy desire of renouncing them, and *invoking the name of the Lord* Jesus, who has so mercifully interposed to deliver thee from them, and made that ordinance a token of remission.

hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there,*

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth:

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 *et seq.*

BY whatever methods God hath been pleased to bring us home to himself, and to introduce into our minds the saving light of his gospel, we shall have long and indeed everlasting reason to recollect it with pleasure; especially when he hath gone in any remarkable manner out of his common way for this gracious purpose. They who have in this respect obtained mercy of the Lord, should undoubtedly make it their care often to recollect the particular circumstances, and should be ready on every proper occasion to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others. (Compare 1 Tim. i. 16.)

3 The learned education which Paul had received at the feet of Gamaliel, was once, no doubt, the matter of his boasting and confidence. Unsanctified learning made his bonds strong, and furnished him with many a specious argument to oppose the gospel: Yet when divine grace changed his heart, and turned these accomplishments into another channel, they made the conquest so much the more glorious, and rendered him the fitter instrument to subserve God's wise and merciful purposes, for the defence and propagation of christianity by his means. Wherever learning is possessed, may it be so directed and improved! and wherever it is perverted and abused, may Christ manifest his victorious power to *cast down imaginations, and every high thing which exalts itself* in rebellion *against him,* till *every thought be brought into* a willing and thankful *subjection* to his authority! (2 Cor. x. 5.)

7, 8, 10 Adored be the condescension of that blessed Redeemer which spared this prostrate enemy, and reduced him by the tender expostulations of mercy rather than the terrors of wrath; exerting that secret, transforming power upon his heart, without which this miracle, astonishing as it was, would have had no thorough and abiding effect. Speak, O Lord, from heaven, to them that ignorantly persecute thee; and make them humbly willing *to receive the law from thy mouth.* (Job. xxii. 22.)

9, 11 If they who saw this tremendous scene and the astonishing consequences of it, were not themselves subdued to the gospel, (as it doth not appear that they were,) it must certainly be a sad illustration of the hardness of the human heart, almost beyond parallel; especially when we consider how eager Paul would undoubtedly be, to make those who had been the associates of his crime, the partners of his faith, service, and hope as a christian. But however

15 these efforts might miscarry with respect to them, there were those who glorified God in him. (Gal. i. 24.) Let us take this renewed opportunity of doing it; and as he is still by his writings a glorious witness to Christ among us, on whom the ends of the world are come, let us, by receiving his testimony with a most cheerful assent, *set to our seal that God is true.* (John iii. 33.)

SECTION L.

Paul proceeding in his defence to the Jews at Jerusalem, is interrupted in his remarkable story by their violence; and when about to be scourged by order of the tribune, is exempted from it on pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen. Acts xxii. 17—29.

ACTS xxii. 17.

SECT. 50.

PAUL went on to give the Jews, to whom he was addressing himself from the stairs of the castle of Antonia in Jerusalem, an account of some farther circumstances relating to the

ACTS XXII. 17

reason he had to engage in the cause of christianity: *And* he proceeded, saying, *It came to pass, that* after I had preached Christ boldly in Damascus and Arabia, *when I was*

ACTS xxii. 17.

AND it came to pass, that when I was come again to

i *To see that righteous Person, and to hear a voice from his mouth.*] I see no reason at all to refer this (as Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson do) to a future vision of Christ, and a future commission to be received from him. It plainly appears from Paul's own narration, that he had already seen him and heard him speak. It is therefore most evidently natural to refer it to the past rather than to a future event, though I own it may include both.

k *Be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*] Baptism in the adult, excepting the very peculiar instance of our Lord, was a token of confession and humiliation for sin, (on which account it is called the baptism of repentance, Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3; Acts xiii. 24; xix. 4.) and of a desire to be cleansed from it, as the body was by water cleansed from its pollution; and being administered to such professed penitents, by divine appointment, as a token of favourable regard to them, it was a seal of pardon: Nor did God ordinarily give any particular person any public and visible token of pardon till he submitted to baptism; and this may explain in what sense baptism might be said to wash away sins, and elsewhere to save. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21. See Acts ii. 38. and the note there, p. 435.

Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue, them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told

returned to Jerusalem,[a] *and was praying* here *in* the court of *the temple* now before your eyes, *I was in a* kind of *trance* or ecstasy:[b] *And I saw him*, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and heard him *saying to me, Make haste* from this dangerous place with all the diligence that may be, *and depart quickly from Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me*, but on the contrary, will rather attempt thy destruction.

And I was so desirous of continuing my labours with my dear countrymen, and so unwilling to give them up as desperate, that I presumed to expostulate with Christ himself on this occasion, and *said, Lord*, I cannot but hope that my addresses to them will be attended with success; for as Jerusalem has been witness to the zeal with which I once opposed thy gospel, *they* to whom I would speak cannot but *know that* with the utmost eagerness and cruelty *I was* but a little while ago *imprisoning, and scourging in the synagogues*,[c] all *them that believed in thee*, whenever I could get them into mine hands: *And* that *when the blood of Stephen, thy* faithful and courageous *martyr, was* unjustly and barbarously *shed*, almost on this very spot of ground, *I also was standing by and consenting to his slaughter, and* was so officious on the occasion, that I even *kept the garments of those that slew him:* (chap. vii. 58.) I may expect therefore, that a testimony from me will be heard with some peculiar regard, when they see that the evidences of thy gospel were strong enough to conquer such inveterate prejudices and such furious rage against it.

But the Lord overruled my plea by a renewal of his charge; *and he said to me*, Reason no farther on this subject, but *go thy way*, immediately, according to my direction; *for* behold, *I will send thee far off to the Gentiles*, and thou shalt preach the gospel, and publish the glad tidings of salvation, with much greater encouragement and success among them.

And they heard him with quietness and attention *to this word, and* [*then*] were so enraged as soon as he began to speak of a mission to the Gentiles, and this too in such a light as if the Jews were in a manner given up and rejected, that they were no longer able to bear it; but *lifted up their voice* in a most outrageous cry, *saying, Away with this* blasphemous *fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live* any longer upon it; since he hath proved himself such a traitor to God and his chosen people, that he would presume, even by his own confession, to prefer the Gentiles to us, as if they were more interested than we in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. And while they said this, they affected to break out into all the forms of lamentation as well as expressions of rage, as if such a degree of impiety had never been heard of before.

And as they were crying out in this furious manner, *and were rending their garments* in token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy, *and casting dust into the air*, that it might fall down on their heads, and so they might appear more completely in the habit of mourners for the dishonour done to God and his people; *The tribune*, not knowing the particulars of what had passed, but perceiving, by the effect, that Paul had exasperated rather than appeased them by the apology he had been permitted to make, *commanded that he should be brought into the castle; and* as no witnesses regularly appeared to give information against him, he *ordered that he should be put to the question by scourging* him in the severest manner;[d] that so he might know from his own confession, since he could learn it no other way, *for what cause they raised such an outcry against him.*

And as they were binding him with thongs for this purpose, *Paul said to the centurion who stood by* to command the guard upon this occasion, *Is it* indeed *lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman* citizen,[e] *and* this too while he is *uncondemned?* Consider, before you do this, how you will answer for the violation of my privilege, of which at a proper time you must expect hereafter to hear. *And the centurion hearing* [*this,*] presently *went and told the tribune, saying, Consider what you are about to*

a *When I was returned to Jerusalem.*] Lord Barrington, (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract.* p. 19; and *Essay* iii. p. 11. *et seq.*) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 6. *et seq.*) suppose this memorable circumstance (which they make Paul's mission to the idolatrous Gentiles) to have happened in the second journey he made to Jerusalem, A. D. 44. (which is mentioned by Luke, Acts xi. 30; xii. 25.) and maintain it was the same ecstasy with that referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 2. as having happened fourteen years before the date of that epistle. I rather think the expression intimates that it was on his first return to Jerusalem that he had this vision in the temple; and what he pleads here (ver. 19, 20.) as to the probability of their receiving his testimony, suits that circumstance of time much better than the other. His dispute with some Hellenist Jews who, toward the close of his first visit to Jerusalem, attempted to kill him, (chap. ix. 29.) engaged the brethren also to hasten his departure; and our Lord's orders to him at this critical season might determine him to yield to their instances, which perhaps his desire and hope of usefulness at Jerusalem might otherwise have opposed. But when he had been forced in that manner to flee for his life, while the memory of his zeal against christianity was comparatively fresh in their memory, it does not seem natural to suppose he would have pleaded the probability of their regarding it after an interval of six years more, which, according to the chronology of these ingenious writers, must have been the case.

b *I was in a* kind of *trance* or ecstasy.] See note g, on chap. x. 10. p. 480. Perhaps he might continue standing all the while with an intenseness of countenance, which, if it were observed by any near him, might be imputed to the fixedness of his devotion, or, if he fell down, it might be looked upon as an epileptic fit. All that he saw and heard was (to be sure) only a miraculous impression on his own nerves, not to be perceived by any other persons.

c *Scourging in the synagogues.*] It is strange that Beza (on Mat. x. 17.) should think this so incredible as to suspect the reading is corrupted, when the same phrase occurs again, Mat. xxiii. 34. as well as in the passage before us; nor is there any need we should suppose that synagogues must signify not places of religion, but civil assemblies, when, besides what Vitringa has alleged in confirmation of the use of such a practice from the Jewish writers, (*Synag. Vet. lib.* iii. part. i. *cap.* 11.) Epiphanius directly mentions a fact of this kind, (*Contra Hæres. tom.* ii. *lib.* I. p. 135.) and it appears, from what Eusebius had cited from a writer against the Montanists, to have been no uncommon case. (*Eccles. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 16. p. 230.) The custom has since been confirmed and illustrated in the celebrated instance of Acosta. (Limborch *Collat. cum Jud.* p. 349, 350.) Compare note e, on Mat. x. 17. p. 152.

d *Be put to the question by scourging.*] That the Romans used this method, is proved by several learned writers, particularly by Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 1, 2. Vol. I. p. 496—498; and Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 8. p. 355, 356.

e *To scourge a man who is a Roman.*] See on this head, note c, on Acts xvi. 37. p. 518, 519.

SECT. 50. ACTS XXII.

do, or you may be entangled in a difficulty of which you seem not to be aware; *for this man* says he *is a Roman*, and consequently protected by the privileges of a free citizen from such usage as is preparing for him. *And* upon this *the tribune*, who was alarmed at this report, *came and said to him, Tell me* truly, as knowing how unsafe it
27 will be to trifle with me by offering a plea of this nature if it cannot be supported, *art thou* indeed *a Roman* citizen, as I am told thou hast asserted? *And he said, Yes*, I most assuredly am; and I am capable of producing proper evidence of it, if it be insisted
28 upon, in due time and place. *And the tribune answered*, I am surprised to hear this, considering the appearance thou now makest: for *I*, who (as thou seest) am a person of high rank in the army, *obtained this freedom with a considerable sum of money*, which I can hardly suppose thou shouldst have been able to pay, unless there has been some extraordinary change in thy circumstances. *And Paul replied, But I* was under no necessity of making any purchase at all of this kind, for I *was* [*free-*]*born*,[f] my father having been entitled to that honour and privilege before me.
29 *They therefore who were about to have put him to the question, immediately departed from him; And the tribune* was glad to compound the matter so; for he *was* much *afraid when he knew that he was* indeed *a Roman, and* was greatly concerned *because he had bound him* in order to his being scourged; which was a breach of privilege for which he might have been accused by Paul to his superiors. He contented himself, therefore, with confining him a little while, till he could bring him before the Jewish council; fearing lest, if he had dismissed him immediately, the Jews would be incensed against him, and he might thus have been in danger of something much worse from Paul's enraged and tumultuous enemies

the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest; for this man is a Roman.
27 Then the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17, 18 We learn from this scripture, as well as from many other passages, that our Lord Jesus Christ, though invisible, is present while the proclamation of his gospel is made, and is ever attentive to the temper with which it is received. Justly therefore doth he resent the injury that is done him when these messages of life and peace are neglected: Justly doth he often, in the course of his providence, remove those ordinances which men have ungratefully slighted, and call away the faithful ministers who have *stretched out their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people.* (Rom. x. 21.)

19, 20 It is not an easy thing for a servant of Christ who is deeply impressed with divine truths himself, to imagine to what a degree men are capable of hardening their hearts against them. They are ready sometimes to think with Paul, Surely it must be impossible for any to resist such arguments and such addresses: But experience makes them wiser, and shows that though they smite the rock again and again, it is in vain till divine grace melt it into streams of water.

21 Blessed be God, when his gospel is removed from one place, it is sent to another; nor shall it ever be totally rooted out of the world, while seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, continue their revolutions. Adored be that grace which sent Paul and the other apostles to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved! The life of
22 our souls was in that commission, and all our eternal hopes take their rise from it. But what cruel malignity did these Jews express, whom all the wonders of this astonishing story could not convince, nor all the eloquence of it persuade! On the contrary, for no crime but that of being made the ambassador of divine mercy, and the instrument of deliverance to thousands of perishing sinners, they raise a cry against the ambassador of God as if he were the most impious of blasphemers, and would have hurried him from the face of the earth as unfit to live upon it: How much less were they fit to continue here! But thus forbidding the apostles to speak to the Gentiles, (as he himself observes,) they filled up the measure of their iniquities: so that, after the abused mercy of God had waited a little longer, his deserved *wrath came upon them to the uttermost.* (1 Thess. ii. 16.)

25—29 Most unrighteous was it in the Roman officer, on this popular clamour, to attempt putting this best of men to the torture: Most reasonable was Paul's plea as a Roman citizen, to decline that suffering. It is a prudence worthy of being imitated by the bravest of men, not to throw themselves into unnecessary difficulties. Nor are we under any obligation as christians, to give up our civil privileges, which we are to esteem as the gifts of God, to every insolent and turbulent invader. In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God and duty to men will oblige us to insist upon them; and a generous concern for those that are to come after us, should engage us to labour and strive that we may transmit them improved, rather than impaired, to posterity as yet unborn.

SECTION LI.

Paul being brought before the sanhedrim, after having been unjustly smitten by the command of the high-priest, occasions a dissension in the council, on which his sentence is delayed; but a conspiracy being formed against his life, he informs the tribune of it. Acts xxii. 30; xxiii. 1—22.

SECT. 51.

Acts xxii. 30.

ACTS XXII. 30

WHEN the Roman officer had rescued Paul from the people in the manner already described, he lodged him in the castle that night; *and on the morrow, desiring to know*

ACTS XXII. 30.

ON the morrow, because he would have known the

f *I was* [*free-*]*born.*] I cannot think, with Mr. Cradock, Tillemont, and some other critics, that this was the consequence of his being a native of Tarsus. Dr. Lardner has, I think, produced unanswerable arguments against admitting that city to have been a colony, or what the Romans called municipium, that is, a place where all the natives were free of Rome by birth. I therefore think it much more probable that Paul's father, or some other of his ancestors, might have been rewarded with the freedom of the city for his fidelity and bravery in some military service as an auxiliary to the Romans, as Josephus says that several Jews were, (*Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 10. [al. 17.] § 13. *et seq.*) See Dr. Lardner, *Credib.* Book I. *cap.* 10. §. 6. Vol. I. p. 502—513. He observes, in the next section, not only that the freedom of the city might be bought, but that some of Claudius's favourites and creatures at last sunk the price scandalously low.

certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

clearly and *certainly of what he was accused by the Jews*, which he could not make out from what had already passed, as he did not understand the Hebrew language, in which Paul had made his apology to them, *he loosed him from* [*his*] *bonds* in which he had laid him a close prisoner, *and commanded the chief priests and all* the other members of *their sanhedrim to come together* and to hold a court: *And bringing Paul down* from the castle, *he set him before them*, that he might be examined and tried according to the laws and usages of his own country; that so the most seditious of the Jews might have no reason to complain of the manner in which they were treated. SECT. 51. ACTS XXII. 30

Acts xxiii. 1. And Paul earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.

And Paul looking attentively on the sanhedrim, as he stood before it, that he might observe whether he could recollect the faces of any whom he had formerly known in that court, *said, Men* [*and*] *brethren*, though I am brought before you as a malefactor, to be examined and judged by you, I have the secret pleasure of being conscious to myself that none can justly advance any charge against me; but whatsoever be objected to me, I appeal unto the Searcher of all hearts that *I have even to this day*, though it is long since I have declared myself a christian, *conversed before God in all good conscience*,[a] and lived in the faithful discharge of my duty to him and to my fellow-creatures. ACTS XXIII. 1

2 And the high-priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him, to smite him on the mouth.

But Ananias the high-priest,[b] who, knowing in his own heart his inveterate enmity to Paul, and the steps he had openly taken for his destruction, thought himself insulted by such a solemn declaration of his innocence, *commanded those that stood by him* at the bar *to smite him on the mouth*, for what he represented as so insolent an assertion; which was accordingly done. 2

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

Then Paul, animated on a sudden by the secret impulse of a prophetic spirit, which bore him, as it were, for that moment beyond himself, *said to him, God is about to smite thee* in a very awful manner, *O thou whited wall!*[c] thou false painted hypocrite! *For sittest thou* on the tribunal of justice, pretending *to judge me according to the law* of God, *and yet in a* presumptuous *violation of the law commandest me to be smitten*,[d] though convicted of no crime, and guilty of no indecent behaviour. The Supreme Judge will not suffer thee finally to escape, but will ere long animadvert upon thee, in righteous vengeance for this violence. 3

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high-priest?

But they that stood by were greatly offended, and *said, Dost thou*, who pretendest to so much religion, presume impiously to *revile the high-priest of God*, the most sacred person in our nation, and consequently in the whole world? 4

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

And upon this *Paul*, unwilling to enter upon a question so difficult to be cleared up as the divine original of that impulse on his mind by which he found himself inclined to utter those remarkable words, only touched upon a circumstance attending it which was of a more ambiguous nature, and *said*, Indeed, *brethren*, in the sudden transport of my mind, *I was not aware that it was the high-priest*,[e] otherwise I should have been cautious how I had taken such a liberty; *for* I know that *it is written* in the word of God, (Exod. xxii. 28.) which I desire at all times, and under the greatest provocations, to make my rule, "*Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*;" and I should be sorry that any should take encouragement, from what I then said, to fail in paying due respect to magistrates, whatever their personal character may be. 5

a *I have even to this day conversed before God in all good conscience.*] Paul could not intend by this to intimate that he thought himself free from guilt while persecuting the christians, since he so expressly declares the contrary elsewhere. See 1 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13. He was only examined with respect to his conduct as a christian, and therefore it would not have been pertinent here to have referred to his conduct while a persecuting Jew, though it were indeed true that he did not then act against his conscience, how criminal soever he was in suffering it to continue misinformed. The plain sense of this passage is, that his conscience when examined as in the sight of God with respect to what they alleged against him, did not charge him with any known and deliberate contradictions to its dictates; and so it was, in fact, a solemn and very pertinent appeal to the Searcher of all hearts that he had not devoted himself to the service of the gospel, in which he was now engaged, from any mean and dishonourable principle, but was fully convinced of the truth of it, and therefore prepared to abide all extremities in its defence. Well might there be in such a case a natural sally of joy arising in an upright heart from a consciousness of its own integrity, amidst such violent calumnies as were now advanced against him.

b *Ananias the high-priest.*] Dr. Benson, (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 221.) Mr. Biscoe, (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. iii. § 8. p. 70—76.) and several others have justly observed from Josephus, *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5. [al. 3.] § 2, 3; *et cap.* 6. [al. 5.] § 2.) that this was Ananias the son of Nebedæus, who by his station was head of the sanhedrim. He had formerly been sent prisoner to Rome, to give an account to Claudius Cæsar of his behaviour, in the quarrel which happened between the Jews and Samaritans during the government of Cumanus in Judea, but was acquitted, probably by the intercession of Agrippa the Younger. The difficulties which have been urged from Josephus against his being high-priest now, are answered by Mr. Biscoe in a very learned and judicious manner.

c *God is about to smite thee, O thou whited wall!*] Alluding to the beautiful outside of some walls which are full of dirt and rubbish within. The account Josephus gives of the character and fate of this wretch abundantly illustrates this speech of Paul. He might well be called a whited wall, not only as he committed this indecency while gravely sitting in a sacred character on the tribunal of justice, but also as, at the same time that he carried it very plausibly towards the citizens, and stood high in their favour, he most impiously and cruelly defrauded the inferior priests of the subsistence which the divine law assigned them, so that some of them even perished for want. (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 2.) And God did remarkably smite him, as after his own house had been reduced to ashes in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged and taken in the royal palace, where having in vain attempted to hide himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain; (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 17. [al. 18.] § 2, 6, 9.) an event which happened about five years after this, in the very beginning of the Jewish war.

d *In violation of the law commandest me to be smitten.*] God in his law forbade all violence in judgment: (Lev. xix. 15.) Yet we find repeated insults of this very kind, indecent as they always are, offered to the prophets: 1 Kings xxii. 24; Jer. xx. 2. and even to Christ himself, John xviii. 22.

e *I was not aware that it was the high-priest.*] This is a natural rendering of the words ουκ ηδειν οτι εστιν αρχιερευς, which cannot fairly be translated, *I do not acknowledge him to be the high-priest;* nor can it be imagined that Paul would enter on so curious and so dangerous a question as the justice of his accession to that office. Some have thought he did not know him personally; but his habit and place in the sanhedrim might distinguish him; or if we were to suppose, with Rivetus, that Paul, hearing the voice while looking another way, did not know from whence it came, the solution is utterly insufficient; for Paul's answer plainly shows he knew the person speaking, whoever he were, to be a judge. It seems therefore much more convenient to follow the explication of this matter given in the paraphrase, which will easily reconcile all that passed with Christ's promise of being with his apostles when appearing before councils: (Matt. x. 19; Mark xiii. 11.) for according to us, Paul by inspiration uttered a true prediction, and then alleged a true fact, to prevent any ill use of the circumstance in which it was spoken; only waving something which he might justly have urged in his own vindication, and from which he had an undoubted right to recede if he thought fit. In the mean time, the candour both of the historian and of the apostle is well worthy our remark.

SECT. 51. ACTS XXIII.

But Paul perceiving, as he looked about him, *that the one part* of the court *were Sadducees*,[f] *and the other Pharisees, cried out in the sanhedrim, Men* [*and*] *brethren, I* was by my education, and still *am* in my judgment, *a Pharisee*, as I was also *the son of a Pharisee;* nor is there any one more zealous for the great fundamental doctrine of that celebrated sect: and I am well satisfied, that if the whole secret of my prosecution were fairly and thoroughly laid open from its first principles, it would be found that it is *for the hope* I have of a future state, *and* the zeal with which I teach the *resurrection of the dead*, that *I am* now *brought into judgment*;[g] nor would some of my greatest enemies have expressed such indignation against me, had not the whole tenor of my public teaching so evidently tended to confirm a doctrine against which they are so violently prejudiced.

And on his speaking this, the council fell to disputing, and *there was* presently *a contention* on this head *between the Pharisees and the Sadducees*, several persons of each sect appearing warm in the debate: *And the multitude was* greatly *divided: For* it is well known that *the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor* separate *spirit; but the Pharisees* not only *confess both*, but contend earnestly for the certainty of the resurrection, and the real existence of angels and other spirits.

And upon this *there was a great clamour* in the assembly; *and the scribes* [*who were*] *on the side of the Pharisees arose, and contended, saying, We find no evil in this man*, and can perceive no reason for his being condemned or detained; *but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him* in the manner he represents, let us acquiesce, and wait the event; and, as Gamaliel formerly expressed it among us, in an argument which then was judged by the sanhedrim worthy of its regard, *let us not fight against God*, which must end in our ruin.[h] (Compare Acts v. 39.)

And as a great disturbance arose, some of them urging that he should be set at liberty, while others eagerly insisted on his condemnation, *the tribune* was informed of their disorderly proceedings; and *fearing lest*, amidst the tumult, *Paul should be torn in pieces by them*, he *commanded* a party of *the* Roman *soldiers to go down and take him by force from the midst of them, and* so *to bring him* up again *into the castle* of Antonia, from whence he had been led.

And after they had lodged him there, it came to pass that *in the following night the Lord* Jesus Christ appeared to Paul in a vision, and *standing by him, said*,[i] *Be of good courage, Paul; for as thou hast testified these things concerning me at Jerusalem*, and all the malice of the Jews has not prevented thee from faithfully discharging thy commission, *so thou must also bear* thy *testimony* to me and my doctrine *at Rome;* and, notwithstanding all the difficulties thou hast now before thee, I will support thee to go through the trial, and turn it abundantly to mine own glory and to thy consolation.

And when it was day, some of the bigoted *Jews*, who were exceedingly provoked that Paul had thus been rescued from the council, resolved that they would be the means of his destruction, and *entering into a conspiracy, bound themselves with a* solemn *curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And* though it was so black and horrid a design, yet *they were more than forty* of them *who had made this* rash and barbarous *agreement.*

And having fixed upon a scheme for putting it in execution, *they came* without reserve *to the chief priests and* to those of *the elders* whom they knew to be his enemies, *and said*, We are so transported with zeal at the outrage that has been done to our sacred law, that *we have* one and all *bound ourselves by a solemn anathema*,[k] *not to taste any thing* of food, *till we have slain* this *Paul*, whom we look upon as so notorious an enemy to God and his country, that if the course of public justice against him be obstructed, it will no doubt be a meritorious action, which you will certainly approve as what must be pleasing to God himself, to take him off by such a method as this: *Now therefore do you, with the* other members of the *sanhedrim, signify* it as your request *to the tribune, that he*

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the solders to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council, signify to the chief captain, that he bring

f *Part were Sadducees.*] Josephus assures us that many of this sect were in places of high dignity among the Jews. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 10. [al. 18.] § 6; *et lib.* xviii. *cap.* i. [al. 2.] §. 4.

g *For the hope and resurrection of the dead*, &c.] Orobio charges this upon Paul as an artful manner of declining persecution, unworthy the character of an upright and generous man. (Limborch, *Collat. cum Jud.* p. 134, 165.) But there is no just reason for the charge, since this was a part, though not the whole, of the truth; as the chief thing which enraged the Sadducees against christianity, was the demonstration which it gave to the doctrine of a resurrection, which they so eagerly opposed. See Acts iv. 2. with the paraphrase, p. 441. and chap. v. 17. p. 448.

h *Let us not fight against God.*] When they mentioned it as a supposable case, that an angel might have spoken to him, they might probably allude to the many visions and revelations which Paul had professed to have received in his late speech to the people, as Dr. Benson observes, *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 224. The reader will perceive here a remarkable resemblance to the speech of Gamaliel, referred to in the paraphrase; but it appears from Dr. Prideaux, (*Connect.* Vol. II. p. 529.) that this happened after the death of that celebrated rabbi.

i *The Lord standing by him, said*, &c.] This plainly shows that our Lord approved the part Paul had acted before the sanhedrim, though some have censured it, without understanding or considering the circumstances of it. The pious as well as learned Professor Witsius well observes, that it must be a greater consolation to so faithful a soldier of Christ as Paul was, having been thus approved and encouraged by his General, to be led on to farther combats, than to be immediately dismissed. And such a temper he expresses, Phil. i. 20—26.

k *We have bound ourselves by a solemn anathema.*] This seems a proper rendering of the very emphatical form in the original, Ἀναθεματισαμεν εαυτους. Such execrable vows as these were not unusual with the Jews, who challenged to themselves a right of punishing those, without any legal process, whom they considered as transgressors of the law, and in some cases thought that they were justified in killing them. Josephus mentions a case not much unlike to this, of some that bound themselves with an oath to kill Herod, in which they gloried as a laudable intention, because he had violated the ancient customs of their nation. (*Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 8. [al. 11.] § 3, 4.) It is no wonder, therefore, that these Jews should make no scruple of acquainting the chief priests and elders with their conspiracy against the life of Paul, who were so far from blaming them for it, that not long after they renewed the same design themselves. (Acts xxv. 2, 3.) See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book i. chap. ix. § 9. Vol. I. p. 474—483; and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. vii. § 5. p. 278—281.——Dr. Lightfoot has shown from the Talmud, (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) that if they were prevented from accomplishing such vows as these, it was an easy matter to obtain an absolution from their rabbies.

him down unto you to-morrow, as though you would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. 22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.

would *bring him down* from the castle *to you to-morrow, as if you would more accurately* examine and *discuss what relates to him; and we are ready* at all adventures, even at the hazard of our lives, *to kill him before he can come near you:* And we will manage the attack in such a manner, that you shall not appear at all concerned in it, nor have any alarm about the matter, till you hear that he is actually dead. SECT. 51. ACTS XXIII.

But how privately soever this matter was conducted, the providence of God so ordered it, for the deliverance of his faithful servant from this inhuman and bloody conspiracy, that *Paul's sister's son hearing of the ambush, came, and entering into the castle* of Antonia, where (as we observed before) he now lay confined, *told Paul* the whole story. *And Paul calling one of the centurions to him*[l] who commanded part of the cohort under the tribune, presented his kinsman to him, and *said*, I desire thou wouldst *conduct this young man to the tribune, for he hath something* of importance *to tell him. He therefore took and led him to the tribune, and* having introduced him, *said, Paul the prisoner calling me to him, desired that I would bring this young man to thee, who has something* of considerable importance *to tell thee*, though what it is I do not at all know. *And the tribune* in a very obliging and condescending manner, *taking him by the hand and leading him into a retired place*, where none might overhear them,[m] *enquired* [*of him*,] saying, *What is it that thou hast to tell me?* speak freely, for I shall give thee an attentive hearing. *And he said* to the tribune, I have received certain intelligence that *the Jews have agreed together to ask thee that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow to the sanhedrim, as if they would enquire something more accurately concerning him: But* if thou hast any regard for the life of so innocent and worthy a man, *do not be prevailed upon by them* to order him to be so brought down; *for there are more than forty of them lie in an ambush for him, who have obliged themselves by a curse neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him; and they are now ready*, with their weapons as it were in their hands, to execute this their murderous purpose, *waiting* only *an order from thee* to bring him by the place where they are posting themselves, in expectation it will prove the signal for his death.

16 17 18 19 20 21

The tribune therefore hearing this, *dismissed the young man with a charge*, saying, [*Be sure thou*] *tell no man that thou hast discovered these things to me*, and depend upon it that I will bear in mind what thou hast told me, and do what is proper upon the occasion. And accordingly he took immediate measures for Paul's security from this intended assassination, of which a particular account will hereafter be given. 22

IMPROVEMENT.

NEXT to the history of the great Captain of our salvation, as recorded by the holy Evangelists, none of the christian heroes of whom we read makes a brighter figure than Paul; nor is there any who seems a spectacle more worthy the view of angels, or of God himself: Nobly supported in the midst of persecutions and indignities, by the testimony of his conscience as to the integrity with which he had walked before God, and therefore assured of the divine aid, he appears superior to all human injuries. Most unrighteously did the high-priest command that mouth to be smitten which had spoken the words of truth and soberness: Most justly did God verify the prediction of his faithful though despised servant, and smite that whited wall with speedy destruction which had stood in such a haughty opposition to his gospel. Ver. 1 2 3

Paul might have urged a great deal in defence of what he had said, and yet he chose prudently to decline that defence; and seems much more solicitous to prevent the abuse of what might appear dubious, than to assert his own cause to the utmost that it would bear. Thus should we sometimes be ready, as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, *to restore what we took not away;* (Psal. lxix. 4.) and for the peace of society, and the edification of others, should be content to wave apologies which we might justly offer. Let us learn particularly to revere that authority with which God hath clothed magistrates, and be very cautious how we speak evil of the rulers of our people: Let the ministers of the gospel especially be cautious of it, lest the ministry be upon that account blamed, and their own character exposed, as if they were trumpeters of sedition rather than ambassadors of the Prince of Peace. 4, 5

Our Lord had given it in charge to his apostles, that they should *be wise as serpents and harmless as doves;* (Matt. x. 16.) both these characters are joined in Paul's behaviour on this important occasion. It was no dishonest artifice to divide the council and to engage the favour of the Pharisees by reminding them of what, if they considered the circumstances of the case, must needs appear to them to be truth; that it was his zeal for the doctrine of the resurrection that brought upon him a great deal of that opposition which he was then encountering, and that the most convincing evidence of that doctrine depended on the facts which, as an apostle of Jesus, he publicly maintained. And it had been most happy for the Pharisees had they always borne in their own minds the caution they now gave the Sadducees, to take heed of fighting against God. May none of us *provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than he!* which we shall certainly do by rejecting the tidings he hath sent us by his apostles, and the life and immortality which he promises in his gospel. 6—8 9

Graciously did Providence provide for the rescue and deliverance of Paul from the tumult then excited, and the conspiracy afterwards formed. Who would not lament to see a design of murder avowed with impunity before the chief magistrates of the Jewish nation, and approved by them under a pretence of religious zeal, while it was consecrated to God by the solemnity of a vow? *The time was* indeed *come, when they that killed the servants of Christ thought they did God* good *service*, (John xvi. 2.) as if no libation or offering could have been so 10, 12 *et seq.* 14, 15

l *Paul calling one of the centurions to him.*] Though Paul had an express promise from Christ for his security, (ver. 11.) yet he did not neglect any proper means of safety. Compare Acts xxvii. 24, 25, 31.

m *Taking him by the hand, &c.*] It is observable that Lysias seems to have conducted this whole affair like a man of great integrity and prudence.

SECT. 51. ACTS XXIII. 16—22

pleasing to him as the blood of his saints: But names alter not the nature of things: God regarded their counsels with righteous abhorrence, and he laughed them to scorn. In vain did they form and approve a conspiracy which heaven had determined to defeat; their lying in wait was, we know not how, discovered to a youth, and by means of that youth, who might perhaps have seemed beneath their notice, God as effectually preserved Paul as if he had sent an angel from heaven to deliver him, and turned the cabals of these bigots that thirsted for his blood into perplexity and shame. So, *Lord*, do thou continue to *carry the counsel of the froward headlong*, (Job v. 13.) and save from the hand of violence and fraud all who commit themselves unto thee in well-doing, and humbly confide in thy wisdom and goodness.

SECTION LII.

Paul, for the preservation of his life from the conspiracy of the Jews, is sent by night from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, where he is presented to Felix, and quickly after is accused by Tertullus in the name of the sanhedrim. Acts xxiii. 23, *to the end*; xxiv. 1—9.

Acts xxiii. 23.

SECT. 52. ACTS XXIII.

IN the last section it was shown how the conspiracy which the Jews had formed against Paul's life had been discovered to the Roman tribune. Now as this officer was a very equitable and worthy person, he was determined to consult the safety of his prisoner, whose innocence he was the more convinced of, from such base methods taken to destroy him; 23 *and* finding it necessary for this purpose to remove him from Jerusalem, *he called to him two of the centurions* in whom he could particularly confide, *and said* to them, *Prepare* immediately the *two hundred soldiers* under your command, that they may be ready *to go* directly *to Cæsarea; and* take with them a further guard of *seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen*, and let them begin their march *by the third hour of the night;* 24 (that is, at nine in the evening:) *And provide beasts to set Paul upon*, if a change should be necessary; *and* see that you *conduct him in safety*, and with all convenient expedition, *to Felix, the governor* of the province.

25 *And he* also *wrote an epistle* to Felix on this occasion, *the contents of which are* 26 expressed *in this copy:* "*Claudius Lysias*, the commander of a body of Roman soldiers "at Jerusalem, *to his Excellency Felix, the governor* of this province, [*sendeth*] *greeting*, 27 "with the sincerest wishes of health and prosperity. This comes to inform you, that *as this* "*man*, who is called Paul, *was seized by* a multitude of *the Jews*, who made a sudden in- "surrection on his account, *and had like to have been slain by them, I came upon them* "*with a party of soldiers, and rescued him* from their furious assault; *and* I am the better "pleased I had an opportunity of doing it, as *I have* since *learnt that he is a Roman* 28 "citizen:[a] *And desiring* so much the more on this account *to know* particularly what "was *the crime of which they accused him, I brought him before the sanhedrim;* "imagining that was the most proper tribunal to discuss a cause of such a nature as, from 29 "general circumstances, I apprehended this must be. *And* after they had examined him, "*I found he was accused* of no great crime, and that a cry was raised against him only "*concerning* some nice *questions of their law; but that nothing was charged upon* "*him*, of which, if there had been sufficient proof to have convicted him, he would have "been *worthy of death, or* even *of bonds:* Nevertheless, I chose to keep him confined for "a few days, that I might not too much exasperate the people by dismissing him immedi- 30 "ately. *But when*, during this time, *it was signified to me that an ambush would be* "*laid by the Jews for the* unfortunate *man*, with an intention to assassinate him; and "with this view a scheme was formed to have him brought down from the castle to the san- "hedrim, on a pretence of farther examination, that they might kill him by the way; *I* "thought it my duty *immediately* to provide for the security of his life, and therefore have "*sent* [*him*] under a guard *to thee, commanding his accusers also*, who by these un- "warrantable measures have rendered themselves much suspected, *to* come and *declare* "*before thee what they have* to allege *against him.* And so, with all due respect, I bid "thee most heartily *farewell.*"

31 *The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, taking up Paul*, and mounting him, according to the kind provision which Lysias had made, *brought him by night-*marches through Nicopolis and Lydda *to Antipatris*,[b] a city within the borders of the

Acts xxiii. 23.

AND he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night:

24 And provide *them* beasts that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, *sendeth* greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

a *And I have* since *learnt that he is a Roman.*] As it appears from the preceding story, that when Lysias first rescued Paul out of the hands of the populace, he did not so much as imagine him to be a Roman, it is plain that μαθων here, as Grotius well observes, is put for και εμαθον, according to the turn given in the paraphrase; and consequently, no shadow of an argument can be drawn from hence to prove that the Jews had then a power of putting those of their countrymen to death who were not Roman citizens, as Dr. Lardner has well argued in his large, and I think very conclusive, examination of this question. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. See especially § 10. Vol. I. p. 144—146.) Beza thinks Lysias represents the fact a little unfairly, and would have made Felix believe that he knew Paul was a Roman before he rescued him: but his conduct appears in the main so honourable, that I rather think he only means in the general to intimate that he had on the whole been more solicitous to provide for Paul's security, out of regard to his being a Roman citizen.

b *Brought him by night to Antipatris.*] Very different accounts are given of the situation of Antipatris, which must however have been north-west of Jerusalem, as it was in the way from thence to Cæsarea. Its ancient name was Capharsalama, (1 Mac. vii 31; and Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xii. *cap.* 10. [al. 17.] § 4.) or Chabarzaba; (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 15. [al. 23.] § 1.) but Herod the Great rebuilt it, and gave it the name of Antipatris, in honour of his father Antipater, (Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 21. [al. 16.] § 9; *et Antiq. lib.* xvi. *cap.* 5. [al. 9.] § 2.) Some have supposed it was but eighteen or twenty miles from Jerusalem; but Mr. Biscoe (whose account is followed in the paraphrase) has shown it was something more than thirty-eight of our miles, which must have been too far for one night's march; he therefore very well observes, it is not necessary to conclude that Paul was carried thither in one night, or that the soldiers returned in one day. It is only said that they travelled by night, which they might do, and rest by the way; nor is it probable they took Paul with them from Jerusalem at night, and reached Cæsarea the next day, when it appears from Josephus, that from Jerusalem to Cæsarea was six hundred furlongs,

tribe of Manasseh, which lay not far from the Mediterranean sea, about thirty-eight miles distant from Jerusalem. *And the next day* after their arrival at that city, as *they* concluded he was now pretty secure from danger, the two companies of foot *returned* with the spearmen *to the castle*, at Jerusalem, *leaving the* seventy *horsemen to go up with him* to the end of his journey; *Who* accordingly guarded him the rest of the way, and *entering* with him *into Cæsarea*, which was about thirty miles from Antipatris, acquitted themselves of their trust; *and delivering the epistle* they had brought from Lysias *to* Felix *the governor*, they *presented Paul also before him*, and so completed the affair with which they had been charged.

SECT. 52.

ACTS XXIII.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

And when the governor had read [*the letter*,] and understood that Paul was sent as one accused of the Jews, that he should try his cause, *he* presently *asked of what province he was: And being informed that he was of Cilicia; I will hear thee, said he*, and thoroughly examine into this matter, *when thine accusers are also come*, which I suppose will be in a few days. *And* in the mean time *he commanded him to be kept* bound *in Herod's prætorium*,[c] where a body of soldiers was quartered, under whose guard prisoners were often detained.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

And, according to the expectation of Felix, it was not long before he had occasion to call for Paul again; for *after* he had been but *five days* at Cæsarea, *the high-priest Ananias*, apprehending the matter to be of the utmost importance, *came down* in person, [*with*] several *of the elders* who were members of the sanhedrim; *and* they brought along with them *a certain orator* [*called*] *Tertullus*, whose business it was to open the cause, and to harangue the governor in the most agreeable manner that he could: *And they all made their appearance* in form *before the governor*, and advanced a general accusation *against Paul*, on which they desired to be more particularly heard. *And he being called* to hear his charge and make his defence, *Tertullus began to accuse him*,[d] *saying*, with more regard to interest than truth,

ACTS XXIV.

Acts xxiv. 1. And after five days, Ananias the high-priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying,

May it please your Excellency, *As we enjoy great peace by your means*,[e] *and* many *illustrious deeds are happily done to this* whole Jewish *nation*,[f] and many disorders rectified, *by* the continual care and vigilance of *your prudent administration; We accept* [*it*] *always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all* imaginable *thankfulness*, and it grieves us to be under this unfortunate necessity of troubling you with our complaints, though we are well assured of your generous disposition to remedy them. *Nevertheless*, it is impossible that the wisest governors should prevent some troubles arising to the state under their care, while so much sedition and wickedness remain in those who ought to behave as orderly subjects; and therefore, *that I may not trouble you further* with any laboured introduction, *I* humbly *beseech you to hear us* what we have to offer *in a few words*, according to your well-known goodness and humanity, *with your* [*usual*] *candour*, and to bear with me while I briefly open the charge against this notorious offender, whom we are obliged to pursue even to this august tribunal.

—Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence;

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words.

For indeed, to speak with that plainness which truth and justice require on such an occasion, *we have found this man a* most *pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world; and*, to give the completest idea of his malignity that a few words can express, he is not only a member, but even *a ringleader of the* detestable *sect of the Nazarenes*, than which none has ever sprung up amongst us more dishonourable to the law of the Jews, or more dangerous to the government of the Romans. It would be easy to allege many gross instances of his impiety, which they who have known his conduct abroad fail not to testify; but it is needless to insist on any other facts against a criminal *who has* been so audacious, that but very lately he *attempted also to profane the temple*,[g] by bringing uncircumcised persons within the sacred boundaries from which they are excluded, even by your authority as well

5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and

or near seventy miles. (*Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 3. § 5; *et Antiq. lib.* xiii. *cap.* 11. [al. 12.] § 2.) See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. 10. p. 388—391.

c *Herod's prætorium.*] This was a palace and court built by Herod the Great, when he rebuilt and beautified Cæsarea; probably some tower belonging to it might be used as a kind of state-prison, as is common in such places.

d *Tertullus began to accuse him.*] Almost every word of this oration is false; the accusation of Paul, the encomium of the government of Felix, and the declaration of a lawful intention in what they had done and attempted.

e *We enjoy great peace by your means.*] He probably refers to what Felix had done to clear the country of robbers and impostors; for all historians agree that he was a man of so bad a character, that his government was a plague to all the provinces over which he presided; and as for Judea, its state under Felix was so far from being what Tertullus here represents, that Josephus (besides what he says of the barbarous and cowardly assassination of Jonathan the high-priest by his means) declares that the Jews accused him before Nero of insufferable oppressions, and had certainly ruined him if his brother Pallas had not interposed in his favour. (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8. [al. 6, 7.] § 5, 7, 9.) See also Tacit. *Histor. lib.* v. § 9; *et Annal. lib.* xii. § 54.

f *Illustrious deeds are happily done, &c.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 472, 473.) proves this to be the exact sense of the words κατορθωμάτων γινομένων, *illustrious undertakings happily accomplished*, and shows the compliment was here the higher, as it was usual, even at this time, among the Romans, at least in public discourses, to refer such events to Divine Providence rather than human efforts, of which he brings many remarkable instances, which shows either the piety or the policy of the great men of antiquity who made use of such language. On the other hand, apparent slights put upon religion by persons in public stations, are proofs of a weak understanding, that cannot fail of making them contemptible, not only among all religious, but all prudent, men.

g *Has attempted also to profane the temple.*] Tertullus artfully mentions this as the most express fact he had to charge upon him, as he knew that the Romans allowed the Jews a power of executing, even without forms of law, any person who should be found in such an act of profanation, and seems to have intended to make a merit of their moderation, that they intended nevertheless fairly to have tried him, and not to have destroyed him on the spot, as Lysias had justly charged them with attempting to do: and it is observable that he no where expressly avows so much as a design to have put Paul to death, though it was undoubtedly intended; so that I cannot but wonder that this story should ever have been urged to prove that the Jewish courts had the power of executing capital punishments without a warrant from the Romans. The phrase which Tertullus afterwards uses, of the accusers being commanded to come to Felix, (ver. 8.) though the high-priest himself was known to be one of them, shows plainly to what subjection they were reduced.

SECT. 52. ACTS XXIV. as by our law, on pain of death. As he is one, therefore, who has rendered himself on such a variety of accounts obnoxious and odious to our whole nation, *and* against *whom* we have so many accusations, *we seized* him a few days ago as a notorious offender, *and would have judged him according to our law*, which, in such a case as this, it is well known we had a right to execute in its fullest extent, and might have done it even on the spot. *But Lysias the tribune*, commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, *coming upon us with a great* and armed *force, took him away out of our hands*, and so interrupted the course of our just and regular proceedings against him: Nor had we troubled you with hearing us on this occasion, had not he sent him hither, *commanding his accusers to come to you*, if they intended to prosecute the affair any farther; *by which means you might yourself, on* a proper *examination, take cognizance of all these things of which we accuse him.* We promise ourselves, therefore, from the known wisdom, equity, and goodness of your Excellency, that as we can all aver the truth of these facts on which we ground our charge, you will please to consider the importance of the case, in which the national honour, safety, and religion are so nearly concerned, and will either punish this notorious criminal as he deserves, or order him back again to Jerusalem, and interpose your authority, which is here supreme, to prevent any farther opposition to the legal proceedings of the sanhedrim against him.

would have judged according to our law.

7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands.

8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee; by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.

9 *And* when Tertullus had concluded his smooth and flattering oration, *the Jews also* who were present *gave their assent* to all that he had urged, *saying* to Felix, *that* it was true that all *these things were so* as he had alleged in his discourse, and that he had truly represented the cause which had now brought them to Cæsarea.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

And on this Felix ordered Paul to offer any thing which he had to urge in his own defence; of which, with the issue of the cause, an account will be given in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2—9 To hear the most amiable goodness injured by false and virulent accusations, is what we have been accustomed to in the perusal of this sacred history, in which we have now advanced so far. The surprise of it therefore is abated. But who would not lament to see the great talent of eloquence, in itself so noble, and capable of such excellent use for the public good, abused to such infamous purposes, on the one hand to varnish over crimes, and on the other, to render innocence suspected, and virtue itself odious! Had that of Tertullus been much greater than it appears by this specimen, it would only have served to perpetuate his own shame to posterity for the mean flattery he addressed to Felix, and the cruel and unjust invectives which he poured out against Paul. But history is juster than panegyric or satire, and has left us the character of the one and the other painted in its true colours: And much more evidently shall every character appear in the justest light before the tribunal of a righteous God, where Paul and Felix, and Tertullus and Ananias, are to meet again. There may we, with the apostle, have honour and praise, whatever eloquence may now arraign, whatever authority may now condemn us!

2, 3, 5 In the mean time, where we enjoy great peace under the magistrates which Providence has set over us, and worthy deeds are done by them for the honour of God and the good of mankind, let us always thankfully accept it, and take care ourselves to be quiet in the land. Should they who call themselves the followers of Jesus, be indeed pestilent fellows and movers of sedition, they would act not only beneath their character as christians, but directly contrary to it, and in a manner which must, by necessary consequence, forfeit it; nor should they affect to be ringleaders in sects and parties. Their Master is the Prince of peace! In his service let them exert themselves, but always in the spirit of love, labouring by the meekness of their tempers and the usefulness of their lives, to silence, and, if possible, to shame, the clamours of their ignorant or malicious enemies.

SECTION LIII.

Paul vindicates himself from the accusation which the Jews by the mouth of Tertullus had advanced against him, in such a manner that Felix only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement at Cæsarea. Acts xxiv. 10—23.

Acts xxiv. 10.

SECT. 53. ACTS XXIV. 10 TERTULLUS, and the Jewish priests and elders who were come from Jerusalem to Cæsarea with him, opened their charge against Paul, in the presence of Felix the Roman governor, in the manner which was represented in the former section. *Then Paul* also, *after the governor had made a signal*, by his nodding *to him*, that it was now his time *to speak, answered* the accusation they had brought against him in terms to this purpose: *Knowing that thou*, O Felix, *hast been for several years a* president and *judge to this nation*,[a] and consequently art not wholly unacquainted with its customs, or with the temper of its rulers and people, *I answer for myself with the more cheerfulness* in thy presence:[b]

ACTS xxiv. 10.

THEN Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered,

—Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself;

a *Hast been for several years a judge to this nation.*] It might be more exact to render πολλων ετων, *many years*; but it seems to be used with some latitude here. Bishop Pearson thinks it could not have been more than five years and a half; but Mr. Biscoe has attempted to prove (I think very successfully) that it might now have been more than seven years since Felix entered on his government here. This was considerably longer than any of his three predecessors, Fadus, Alexander, or Cumanus, had presided in that province. See Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. ii. § 2. p. 44, 45.

b *I answer for myself, &c.*] Mr. Cradock, in his valuable *Apostolical History*, Part. II. p. 288, 289. (which, with his *Harmony*, I cannot but recommend, especially to young students, as among the most useful and judicious expositions of the New Testament I have ever seen,) well observes how exactly Paul's answer corresponds to the three articles of Tertullus's charge, sedition, heresy, and profanation of the temple.——As to the first he suggests that he had not been long enough at Jerusalem to form a party and attempt an insurrection, and challenges them, in fact, to produce any evidence of such practices. Ver. 11—13.—As to the second, he confesses himself to be a christian, but maintains it to be a religion perfectly agreeable to natural right and to the revelation of the prophets, and consequently not deserving to be branded with any infamous or invidious title. Ver. 14—16.—And as for the profanation of the temple, he tells them that, on the contrary, he had entered it with some peculiar rites of religious purification, and had behaved himself there in a most peaceful and regular manner, so that

SECT. 53.

ACTS XXIV.

And after all that has been said by my accusers, I have no cause to fear they should impose upon thy judgment by the charges they have brought against me, *as thou mayst* easily *know*, by evidence which cannot be disputed, *that it is no more than twelve days ago*, the greatest part of which I have been confined, *since I went up to worship at Jerusalem*, and publicly to pay my homage there to God, on my return from a long journey I had taken into distant parts: *And* so far was I from attempting to excite sedition, that I aver it to the face of these mine adversaries, and defy any one to prove the contrary, that *they neither found me* so much as *disputing with any man in the temple, nor making* any where *an insurrection* or any manner of disturbance *among the people, either* there or *in the synagogues, or* in any other place *in the city* of Jerusalem: *Nor can they*, notwithstanding all their positive assertions, *produce any* fair and sufficient *proof* of this or any other *of the things concerning which they now accuse me*, though I am charged with so much confidence as a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition.

But as to what they have alleged against me with regard to the sect of the Nazarenes, *this I confess unto thee*, and am not ashamed publicly to avow it in the presence of the greatest personages upon earth, *that after the way which they call* a sect or *heresy*,[c] *so do I worship the God of my fathers*,[d] even according to the rules and precepts which Christ my great Master has given; which is far from being heresy in any infamous sense of the word, since it is most consistent with firmly *believing all things which are written*, both *in the law and in the prophets*, and is indeed most evidently built on those sacred oracles, when rightly understood and explained. And while I act on this maxim, I rejoice in the midst of all the tribulations which can befal me, *having* a cheerful and assured *hope towards God* [*of that*] great event *which they themselves also* profess to *expect*, even *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust*, when every man's true character shall be laid open, and he shall receive according to what he has done. *And upon this account*, in the firm expectation and the hope I have of this,[e] *I* daily *exercise myself*, and make it the continual care and study of my life, *to have always an inoffensive conscience* both *towards God and towards men:* that so, whatever accusations are brought against me, my own heart may not condemn me as long as I live, but I may always find a support within, amidst all the injuries I may meet with in a mistaken and unkind world.

They have represented me indeed as a profane and lawless person, as if I had thrown contempt upon religion, and done them a great deal of wrong: but so far have I been from doing any thing to injure or expose the Jews, to whom by birth I belong, or from attempting to profane the temple, as these my enemies falsely pretend, that I have given many public and important proofs of my particular regard for the good of my country, and of the veneration that I have for all that is sacred. Accordingly *now, after several years* which I had spent in other parts, *I came* to Jerusalem, *to bring alms to* the poor of *my nation*, which I had been collecting for them in the Gentile provinces where I had any interest; *and* went, as one that had a vow, to have made the *offerings* which the law requires: (Compare chap. xxi. 26.) *Upon which*, at the very time I was thus employed, *some Asiatic Jews*, who raised the first outcry against me, *found me purified in the temple*, which it is manifest I had a right to enter as a Jew, and where I attended *neither with* any *multitude* about me, *nor with* any design of raising a *tumult*, (as they have taken upon them to insinuate,) but behaving myself with that composure and reverence which became the act of solemn devotion in which I was engaged. Those very persons, therefore, *who* began the commotion, and, by their falsely charging me with bringing Greeks into the temple, raised such a flame among the people, that I was in immediate danger of my life, if Lysias had not come and taken me away, *ought* now *to have been present before thee, and* should have come *to accuse* [*me*] face to face, *if they had any thing* material to allege *against me*. But it may justly be concluded, that the prosecutors in their own conscience know my innocence, and therefore they have not thought fit to produce them, nor even to single out any one fact to be legally proved by the deposition of proper witnesses; but would rest the matter on general invectives and uncertain report, as thou must thyself have observed. *Or* if it be otherwise, *let these themselves* who are here present *say*, though they are my most inveterate enemies, *if, when I stood before the sanhedrim, they found any crime in me; Unless it be* their pleasure to accuse me *with relation to this one word which I cried out when I stood among them, That* it is surely *for* the zeal with which I appear in defence of the great

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

15 And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

17 Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult:

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me:

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council:

21 Except it be for this one voice that I cried standing among them,

his innocence had been evident even before the sanhedrim, where the authors of the tumult did not dare to appear against him: (ver. 17—21.)

c *After the way which they call heresy.*] I cannot but think this a place where the word αιρεσις, which I own to be often indifferent, is used in a bad sense; for Paul plainly intimates that christianity did not deserve the name they gave it. Yet while it was not the national religion, but its professors were distinguished from most of their countrymen by their adherence to Christ, as the Leader they chose to follow, they might properly be called a sect or a party of men, unless the very word sect, or party, be taken always in a bad signification, which none well acquainted with the Greek language can imagine.

d *The God of our fathers.*] It has been justly observed that this was a very proper plea before a Roman magistrate, as it proved that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so; whereas, had he introduced the worship of new gods, he had forfeited that protection: And Elsner has shown that a regard to paternal deities was held honourable among the Greeks and Romans. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 473—475.

e *And upon this account*, &c.] I am sensible the phrase εν τουτω, which literally signifies *in this*, is ambiguous, and may refer to what goes before or to what follows; but as, in the latter construction, it seems almost an expletive, and has great weight and spirit in the former, I chuse, with Grotius, to explain it as referring to *his hope of a resurrection*. That εν τουτω sometimes signifies *on this account*, is shewn by Raphelius, *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 185.

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doctrine of *the resurrection of the dead, I am judged by you this day.* (Chap. xxiii. 6.) A word to the truth of which I am persuaded their consciences must bear witness, whatever other cause of persecution or complaint they may artfully pretend.

Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

And when Felix heard these things, and perceived how little they made out of their accusation against Paul, *he put them off* without bringing the matter to a decision, *saying, After I have been more accurately informed concerning* [*this*] *way* or form of religion which Paul teaches,[f] and have inquired more particularly into its principles and tendency, *when Lysias the tribune comes down* to Cæsarea, and gives me an account of what he knows as to the facts in question, *I will take* farther *cognizance of the affair between you,* and will be ready to hear any witnesses, on one hand or the other, which either party may think proper to produce, that I may finally determine it.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

And in the mean time dismissing the assembly, *he commanded the centurion* to whom he had before been committed, *to keep Paul* as a prisoner at large, *and let him have* all the *liberty* consistent with securing him, *and to hinder none of his friends from assisting* [*him*] *or coming to him*:[g] thereby plainly showing that he was convinced it was merely a malicious prosecution, and that he was a person no way dangerous to the public.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10 We here behold the righteous as bold as a lion, under false accusations most confidently advanced by persons of the highest rank and the most sacred, though (by a strange contrast) at the same time the most detestable, character: and the more Felix was exercised in affairs, the more easily might he discern the genuine traces of innocence and integrity in his whole defence, to which, plain as it was, he seems to have paid more regard than to all the complimental and insinuating harangue of Tertullus; so great is the native force of truth, even on minds not entirely free from some corrupt bias!

14 Justly did Paul dare to avow his serving God according to the purity of gospel-institutions, by whomsoever it might be called heresy; nor need any fear that charge who make scripture the standard of their faith, and in the sincerity of their hearts seek inward divine teachings, that they may understand the sense of it; taking care not to
16 run before their guide, and, with this injured servant of Christ, making it their daily exercise to maintain, in the whole of their conversation, *a conscience void of offence towards God and men.* A noble, though in some instances an arduous, exercise; such an exercise, that he who maintains it may look forward with pleasure to the
15 unseen world, and, through the grace of God in a Redeemer, may entertain a cheerful hope of that resurrection which, how terrible soever it may be to the unjust, shall be to all the righteous the consummation of their joys and of their glory.

22 Whatever danger such may incur in consequence of a steady regard to that hope, let them courageously commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously, who knows how to raise them up protectors where they might least expect it, and to make, as in this instance, those that are strangers to religion and virtue themselves, the
23 means of delivering them from unreasonable and wicked persecutors, and not only of guarding their lives from violence, but of securing to them many conveniences and comforts.

SECTION LIV.

Paul, after having been heard by Felix several times, and once with great conviction, is nevertheless left a prisoner by him when Festus his successor arrived at Cæsarea, before whom being again accused by the Jews, he is obliged to appeal to Cæsar. Acts xxiv. 24, *to the end;* xxv. 1—12.

Acts xxiv. 24.

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AND after Paul had been kept *some days* in this gentle confinement at Cæsarea, *Felix,* who had been absent for a short time, *coming* thither again *with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess,*[a] *sent for Paul,* that he might hear from his own mouth what were the principles of his religion, and might gratify her curiosity as well as his own, in obliging that celebrated prisoner to give some account of himself before them; *and* he *heard him*
24 discourse at large *concerning* that *faith in Christ* as the Messiah which he taught as of so

Acts xxiv. 24.

AND after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

f *After I have been more accurately informed concerning this way.*] The words in the original are very ambiguous, and might be rendered, "That Felix, when he had heard these things, *having been more accurately informed concerning this way* of christianity, and knowing it not to be so mischievous a thing as these accusers suggested, *put them off.*" But I rather think, with Beza, Grotius, and others, that they are all the words of Felix, and take the meaning to be, "That he would take an opportunity of being more particularly informed of this sect and of its aspect on the public tranquillity, and when Lysias should come and give him an account of what he had observed concerning it, as well as of the circumstances attending Paul's apprehension, &c. he would determine the affair." Which answer was the more proper, as Paul did not deny that he was indeed a leading person among the christians, which made a part of their accusation; and we soon after find, that Felix sent for Paul to give him an account of his religion, (ver. 24.) and endeavoured, by this as well as other means, to inform himself in it.

g *To hinder none of his friends from assisting him, &c.*] This was a circumstance graciously ordered by Divine Providence, which would make Paul's confinement much lighter than it could otherwise have been, and give him an opportunity of much greater usefulness. Raphelius shows, *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 185, 186. that the word υπηρετειν is sometimes used for *assistance* in general, where personal ministration and attendance are out of the question; and as it is here distinguished from, and prefixed to, *coming to him,* it may probably signify sending him food, books, or other accommodations. Compare Luke viii. 3.

a *Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess.*] Josephus gives us a particular account of this lady, who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and sister of that Agrippa mentioned in the next section. She had been married to Azizus, king of the Emesenes; but Felix being struck with her beauty, which was remarkably great, made use of the agency of one Simon, a wicked Jew, who professed himself a magician, to persuade her to abandon her husband and marry him; which, more to avoid the envy of her sister Berenice than out of love to Felix, she did, though Azizus had but a little before submitted to circumcision, and so embraced Judaism, as the condition of the nuptials. She was afterwards (according to Dr. Hudson's interpretation of a dubious passage of Josephus, supported by the express testimony of Zonaras) consumed with the son she had by Felix in a terrible eruption of Vesuvius. See Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 7. [al. 5.] § 1, 2. That learned editor justly observes, on the testimony of Tacitus, (*Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 9.) that Felix was also married to another Drusilla, (probably before this,) the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. See also Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book I. chap. ii. § 8. p. 41—43.

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great importance. But as Paul knew the character of his hearers, he took occasion to attend what he delivered on this subject with proper remarks concerning the obligations we are naturally under to the moral law, the guilt incurred in various instances by the breach of it, and the account finally to be given to God; all which render the knowledge of a Saviour, and a cordial acceptance of him, so absolutely necessary; *and* adding such illustrations *as* might best suit the characters and circumstances of the persons to whom he was addressing, *he* particularly *reasoned concerning righteousness*, as he knew Felix was an unjust and oppressive governor; *and* concerning *temperance*,[b] as he knew that both he and Drusilla had notoriously violated it, she having left her lawful husband to cohabit with him; *and* to enforce these reasonings, he faithfully admonished all that heard him, of an awful and tremendous *judgment* that was certainly *to come*, at which the highest personages should appear, and stand upon equal terms with others before that righteous tribunal. And while he was copiously and seriously insisting on these important subjects as one who felt the weight of what he said, *Felix* was so deeply impressed, that he could not conceal the inward perturbation of his mind, but *trembling* in a manner that was apparent to Paul and all that were present, *answered* him, *Go thy way for this time*, for I have other engagements before me which require my attendance; *and I will take some future opportunity*[c] *to call for thee*, and hear thee talk more largely on these subjects than the urgency of my affairs will now admit. 25

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

And this he said, as *he hoped also* at the same time *that money would be given him by Paul, that he might set him at liberty*;[d] for he had observed what he hinted in his defence against the Jews, (ver. 17.) that the alms of the christians had been deposited in his hands, upon which account he hoped for some considerable ransom; *and therefore*, in this mean and dishonest view, *he sent the more frequently for him, and discoursed with him, but never appeared under equal impressions any more.* 26

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

Now after Paul had been in custody till *two years were ended, Felix was succeeded* in his government of that province *by Portius Festus: And* as he knew that he had by his oppressive administration furnished the people with abundant matter of accusation against him, *Felix*, being *willing to ingratiate himself with the Jews* at quitting the government, in a vain hope that it might prevent them from pursuing him with their complaints, *left Paul a prisoner*;[e] though he was in his own conscience persuaded not only of the innocence but the worth of his character. 27

27 But after two years, Portius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

ACTS XXV.

When Festus therefore was come into the province of Judea, he had no sooner taken possession of the government, but *after three days he went up from Cæsarea*, which was the usual residence of the Roman governors, *to Jerusalem*, the capital city; both that he might gratify his curiosity in the sight of so celebrated a place, and also that he might there, as at the fountain-head, inform himself of the present state of their public affairs. *And the high-priest, and* several persons of *the chief* rank *among the Jews, appeared before him* with an accusation *against Paul, and* earnestly *entreated him* that he would not, as they pretended Lysias and Felix had done, obstruct the course of public justice against one whom they knew to be so notorious an offender: *Begging* it as the only *favour* they desired *against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem* to be judged there; forming a scheme, at the same time, in their own secret purposes, of *laying an ambush* of desperate wretches for him, who they knew would readily undertake to intercept his journey, and *to kill him by the way*.[f] *But Festus* prudently *answered*, as God inclined his heart,[g] that as he had business of another kind to employ him while he continued at Jerusalem, he 1 2 3 4

Acts xxv. 1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high-priest, and the chief of the Jews, informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered,

b *Concerning righteousness and temperance.*] How suitable this discourse was to the character and circumstances of so unjust and lewd a prince, may appear from the preceding note, and note e, on ver. 2. p. 557.

c *And I will take some future opportunity.*] This the phrase καιρον δε μεταλαβων fully expresses. He thought it did not become the dignity of a judge on the bench to receive even such oblique admonitions and reproofs from a prisoner, and therefore might really intend to give him a fuller audience in private. Paul must no doubt discern those marks of confusion that would be so apparent in his countenance, which would give him some hopes of succeeding in this important attempt for such a conversion, and consequently would give him spirit when he resumed the discourse. This must naturally increase in Felix a conviction of his innocence, and esteem for his virtues; yet, in spite of all, he was so far from reforming his life in general, that he would not do justice to Paul, however the conviction might perhaps prevail so far as to engage him to persist in his resolution of not delivering him to the Jews. How affecting an instance and illustration of the treachery of the human heart!

d *He hoped also that money would be given him, &c.*] He might not only have a view to the money collected by Paul, which he brought to Jerusalem; but perhaps he might also imagine, that Paul being so considerable a person among the christians, his charitable sect, that had sold their possessions to maintain their poor brethren, would contribute largely for his deliverance.

e *Left Paul a prisoner.*] It has already been observed, (note e, on chap. xxiv. 2. p. 557.) that this base artifice did not prevent their clamorous accusations from following him to Rome, which had certainly ruined him, had not the interest of his brother Pallas prevailed to obtain his pardon from Nero. How much more effectually had he consulted the peace of his mind, and on the whole the security of his fortune too, had he reformed his life on Paul's admonition, and cultivated those serious impressions which were once so strongly made upon his conscience!—It was during the two years of Paul's imprisonment here, that those contentions arose between the Jews and Gentiles as to their respective rights in Cæsarea, which, after many tumults and slaughters of the Jews, were inflamed rather than appeased by the hearing at Rome, and did a great deal towards exasperating the Jewish nation to that war which ended in its utter ruin. See Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13. [al. 12.] § 7; *et cap.* 14. [al. 13.] § 4, 5.

f *Laying an ambush to kill him by the way.*] The high-priests about this time were, according to the account Josephus gives of them, such monsters of rapine, tyranny, and cruelty, that it is not to be wondered such a design should have been favoured by him who now bore the office. Josephus mentions a great number of assassins at this time called sicarii, or poignarders, from the weapons they carried, by whom many innocent persons were murdered. Joseph. *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 13. [al. 12.] § 3.

g *Answered*, as God inclined his heart.] It was really strange that Festus, who, as a new governor, could not but incline to make himself popular, should deny this request, when it seemed to be so reasonable, and came from persons of such eminent rank in the Jewish nation. If curiosity had inclined him to hear this cause himself, since it is certain Paul might have been hurried up from Cæsarea within four or five days from the issuing of the order, and Festus staid, on the whole, more than ten at Jerusalem, one would imagine he might have done it: But when we consider how much edification to the churches depended on the continuance of Paul's life, and how evidently, under God, his life depended on this resolution of Festus, it must surely lead us to reflect by what invisible springs the blessed God governs the world, with what silence, and yet at the same time with what wisdom and energy!

SECT. 54. thought it best *Paul should be kept* a while longer *at Cæsarea, and that he himself would shortly set out* [*for that place:*] *Therefore, said he, let those of you who are* best *able* to manage the prosecution, and who can most conveniently undertake the journey, *go* ACTS XXV. *down* along *with* [*me;*] *and if there be any thing* criminal *in this man* for which he should be punished by the Roman laws, *let them accuse him* in my hearing.

that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither:*

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 *And* thus *having continued among them more than ten days, he went down*, as he had said, *to Cæsarea;* and several of the Jews attended him, as being determined to lose no time, but to prosecute the affair in the most strenuous manner they possibly could. *And the next day sitting down on the tribunal, he commanded Paul to be brought* before
7 him. *And when he appeared, the Jews who came down from Jerusalem* presented themselves in a numerous company, and *stood round about* him; *bringing many heavy accusations against Paul*, like those which Tertullus had formerly advanced before Felix, *which*, nevertheless, it was evident that *they were not* by any means *able to prove* by proper witnesses.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove;

8 Paul therefore, *while he answered for himself*, insisted on his innocence, and said, Whatever my accusers take upon them to allege against me, I aver, that *neither against the law of the Jews*, to which I was expressing my regard at the very time I was seized, *nor against the temple*, to which I came with a design to worship there, *nor against Cæsar*, to whom I always have behaved as a peaceable subject, *have I committed any offence at all:* I openly deny their charge in every branch of it, and challenge them to make it out by proper evidence in any instance or in any degree.

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 *But Festus, willing to ingratiate himself with the Jews* by so popular an action at the beginning of his government, *answered Paul and said*, I am a stranger in a great measure to the questions in debate among you, which the Jewish council must no doubt understand much better: *wilt thou*, therefore, *go up to Jerusalem* when I return thither, *and there be judged before me* in their presence *concerning these things*, that so the persons who were eye-witnesses may be more easily produced, and I may have the sanction of the sanhedrim's advice in the sentence I pass, in a cause which has given so great an alarm, and which is apprehended to be of such public importance?

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 *But Paul*, apprehensive of the attempt which might be made upon his life in his journey, or in the city itself, *said, I am standing at Cæsar's tribunal*,[h] *where*, as a Roman citizen, *I ought to be judged:* and I insist upon my privilege of having my cause decided there; *I have done no wrong to the Jews, as thou*, O Festus, *knowest perfectly well*, and must
11 have perceived clearly by what has this day been examined before thee. *For if indeed I have done wrong* to any, *or have committed any thing worthy of death*, I pretend not that there is any thing so sacred in my character as to exempt me from human jurisdiction; and in that case *I refuse not to die*, nor do I expect or desire any favour, *but* what I insist upon is strict and impartial justice equally due to all mankind; and *if*, as I know in my own conscience, and as thou hast from the course of this trial the greatest reason to believe, *there is nothing* but malice and falsehood [*in these things*] *of which these* mine enemies *accuse me, no man can* justly *give me up to them* merely to gratify their prejudice and cruelty.[i] And since it is an affair of so great importance, in which I have reason to believe my life is concerned, *I* must insist upon the privilege which the laws of Rome give me, and *appeal unto* the hearing of *Cæsar* himself,[k] before whom I doubt not but I shall be able to evince the justice of my cause.

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any think worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.

12 *Then Festus, having spoken* for a while in private *with the* chief persons of the Roman army and state about him, who constituted a kind of *council*,[l] called in the prisoner again, and *answered* him, *Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar thou shalt go:* For how desirous soever I am to oblige the people of my province, I will never allow myself, upon any occasion, to violate the privileges of a Roman citizen: I will therefore give proper orders as soon as possible for conveying thee to Rome, that thou mayst there be presented before the emperor himself.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

In the mean time Paul was remanded to his confinement, and his accusers returned to Jerusalem a second time, with the mortification of not having been able to accomplish their purpose against him.

IMPROVEMENT.

ACTS XXIV. 25 In the conduct of Paul towards Felix, we see the character of a gospel-minister illustrated in a most amiable manner. What could argue greater magnanimity than to deal thus plainly with a man in whose power his liberty was? Yet he did not soothe and flatter him, but acted the part of one infinitely more concerned about the salvation

h *I am standing at Cæsar's tribunal.*] Grotius and other writers have abundantly proved that the tribunal of the Roman procurators in the provinces, as it was held in Cæsar's name, and by commission from him, was looked upon as Cæsar's tribunal.

i *No man can give me up to them* merely to gratify, &c.] The paraphrase expresses the force of χαρίσασθαι, which I knew not how to do by any one English phrase. This, as Dr. Lardner observes, will by no means prove that the Jews had the power of life and death in their hands; (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. § 10. Vol. I. p 141, 142.) for Paul might reasonably apprehend, not only that he might be murdered by the way, (as he probably would have been,) but that, had the sanhedrim condemned him, Festus might, for political reasons, have acted the part that Pilate did with respect to our Lord, in permitting and warranting the execution, though in his own conscience convinced of his innocence, and even declaring that conviction. See Matt. xxvii. 24, 26.

k *I appeal unto Cæsar.*] It is well known that the Roman law allowed such an appeal to every citizen before sentence was passed, and made it highly penal for any governor, after that, to proceed to any extremities against the person making it. See Dr. Benson's *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 237. and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 9. p. 358.

l Constituted a kind of *council.*] Dr. Lardner has abundantly shown, by apposite testimonies from Josephus, Philo, and Dio, that it was customary for a considerable number of persons of some distinction to attend the Roman prefects into the provinces, with

of his hearers than his own temporal interest. He chuses faithfully to represent the evil of those vices to which Felix was especially addicted, and displays the terrors of the judgment to come, as enforcing the sacred laws of righteousness and temperance, which Felix had presumed so notoriously to violate. SECT. 54.

Let the haughtiest sinners know, even upon their tribunals and upon their thrones, that the universal Judge and the universal King will show his superior power, and will ere long call them to his bar; and if they are conscious of allowed disobedience and rebellion against that Supreme Lord of all, let them, like Felix, tremble. ACTS XXIV.

Great is the force of truth and of conscience in which the prisoner triumphs while the judge trembles. And O! how happily might this consternation have ended, had he pursued the views which were then opening on his mind! But, like thousands of awakened sinners in our day, he deferred the consideration of these important things to an uncertain hereafter. He talked of a more convenient season for reviewing them; a season which, alas, never came! for though he heard again he trembled no more that we can find, or, if he did, it was a vain terror, while he went on in that injustice which had given him such dreadful apprehensions, of which his leaving Paul bound was a flagrant instance. Let every reader seriously weigh this remarkable but terrible case, and take heed of stifling present convictions, lest they only serve to increase the weight of guilt, and to render the soul for ever more sensible of that greater condemnation to which it will be exposed by wickedly overbearing them. 25 26 27

In the mean time we do not find that Drusilla, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed:[m] She had been used to hear of a future judgment; perhaps too she trusted to her being a daughter of Abraham, or to the expiations of the law, which were never intended to answer such purposes; and so, notwithstanding the natural tenderness of her sex, was proof against those terrors which seized so strongly on her husband, though an heathen. Let it teach us to guard against those false dependences which tend to elude convictions that might otherwise be produced by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let it teach us to stop our ears against those siren songs which would lull us into eternal ruin, even though they should come from the mouths of those who appear like angels of light; for the prince of darkness himself could preach no more pernicious doctrines than those which reconcile the hopes of salvation with a corrupt heart and an immoral life.

In the conduct of Festus as well as of Felix, we see what dangerous snares power and grandeur may prove to a man who is not influenced by resolute and courageous virtue. The liberty of the worthiest of mankind was sacrificed by both to their political views of ingratiating themselves with the Jewish people. Happy that ruler who, approving the equity of his administration to every man's conscience, has no need to court popular favour by mean complainces; and whom the greatest eagerness of men's unjust demands can never turn aside from that steady tenor of justice which a righteous God requires, and which will engage that protection and favour in which alone the most exalted creatures can be happy, in which alone they can be safe. ACTS XXV. 1—9

SECTION LV.

Agrippa and Bernice coming to visit Festus, Paul is, at their request, brought forth to be examined before them, in a large assembly of persons of considerable rank and figure. Acts xxv. 13, *to the end.*

ACTS xxv. 13.

AND after certain days, King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.

ACTS xxv. 13.

THUS Paul continued in confinement, by the order of Festus the governor, till an opportunity could be found of sending him to Rome, that he might there be tried by Cæsar. SECT. 55.

And when some days were passed after his appeal, *King Agrippa,* (the son of Herod Agrippa, and great-grandson of Herod the Great,) who had considerable territories in that neighbourhood,[a] *and Bernice* his sister, with whom he was suspected of living in an incestuous commerce,[b] *came to Cæsarea to pay their respects to Festus,* and to congratulate him on his arrival in the province. ACTS XXV. 13

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

And as they continued there many days, Festus, among other subjects of discourse which occurred, *laid before the king the business of Paul; saying, There is a certain man* whose name is Paul, *left* here *in bonds by Felix,* who has occasioned a great deal of speculation in these parts, and indeed involved me in some difficulties: *Concerning whom,* 14

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me,* desiring *to have* judgment against him:

when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews were very earnest in their applications to me, and *informed* [*me*] of him as a notorious criminal; *desiring judgment against him* for several facts which they laid to his charge, and pretended to be highly illegal: 15

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans, when a crime is charged upon a person, *to give up any man to destruction* (which I plainly perceived they intended to bring on this Paul) *till he that is accused have the accusers* openly produced, to give their evidence against him *face to face,*[c] *and* he have 16

whom they were used to advise, especially in matters of judicature. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 2. § 16. Vol. I. p. 225—227.) See also Mr. Biscoe, (as above,) p. 359.

m *We do not find,* &c.] For this excellent remark I am indebted to Bishop Atterbury, in his unequalled sermon on this subject.

a *King Agrippa.*] The prince here mentioned was the son of Herod Agrippa, spoken of before, chap. xii. 1. (see note a, on that text, p. 489.) and grandson of Aristobulus the son of Herod the Great. As he was but seventeen years of age when his father died, the Emperor Claudius did not think proper to appoint him king of Judea in the room of his father, but made it a Roman province; however, on the death of his uncle Herod, he made him king of Chalcis, which, after he had governed it four years, he exchanged for a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, to which Nero afterwards added part of Galilee, with several towns in Peræa. Josephus speaks largely of him in a multitude of passages, the most material of which are collected by Dr. Lardner. (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 1. § 9. Vol. I. p. 46—50.) and Mr. Biscoe. (*Boyle's Lect.* chap. ii. § 3. p. 49, 50.)

b *And Bernice* his sister, &c.] Of this incestuous commerce Juvenal speaks in a celebrated passage, (*Sat.* vi. *ver.* 155. *et seq.*) as well as Josephus in the passage cited below. It is certain this lady had first been married to her own uncle, Herod, king of Chalcis, after whose death, on the report of her scandalous familiarity with her brother Agrippa, she married Polemon, king of Cilicia, whom she soon forsook, though he had submitted to circumcision to obtain the alliance. (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 7. [al. 5.] § 3.) This was also the person whom Titus Vespasian so passionately loved, and whom he would have made Empress, had not the clamours of the Romans prevented it. See Sueton. *in Tit. cap.* 7. *cum Not.* Pitisc. and Tacit. *Histor. lib.* ii. *cap.* 2. *et.* 81.

c *Have the accusers face to face.*] That, according to the Roman law, accusations were not to be heard in the absence of the accused person, Dr. Lardner has shown, (*Credib.* Book I. chap. 10. § 8. Vol. I. p. 515, 516.—It evidently appears from hence, (as Beza well argues,) that the judgment they demanded against Paul (ver. 15.) was not a trial, but a sentence upon a previous conviction, which they falsely and wickedly pretended; and probably it was the knowledge which Festus had of Paul's being a Roman citizen, that engaged him to determine to try the cause himself.

SECT. 55. ACTS XXV.

also liberty to speak, and *be allowed an opportunity of making his defence as to the crime laid to his charge;* which has so evident a foundation in reason and equity, that one would imagine it should be the common law and custom of all mankind. *When therefore* upon this *they* attended me from Jerusalem, and *were come* with me *hither* to prosecute him here, *I without any delay sat down upon the tribunal, the* very *next day* after my arrival, *and commanded the man to be brought forth* before me: *Against whom, when the accusers stood up* and offered what they had to say, *they brought no charge of such things as I supposed* they would have, from the general clamour they had made against him as a seditious and dangerous person: *But* instead of this, they *had certain* matters of debate, or *questions* of a different nature, which they urged *against him* with great vehemence, *relating to* some niceties of *their own religion;*[d] *and* particularly *about one Jesus* of Nazareth *that was dead, whom Paul* unaccountably *affirmed to be alive,* though at the same time he acknowledged that he had been crucified at Jerusalem, and expired on the cross. Of this he pretended to produce some extraordinary and to me utterly incredible proofs: *But as I was* still *dubious of the question relating to him,* how far it might affect the state of the Jews in general, *I said* to Paul, *that, if he were willing, he should go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things* before me, where I thought I might have an opportunity of hearing the cause, and of examining into several particulars with greater advantage. *But Paul,* apprehensive (as I plainly perceived) of some clandestine attempt upon his life, was so averse to this, that he immediately prevented any further thought of trying him at Jerusalem, by pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, and *appealing to be kept to the hearing of* [*our*] *august Emperor* himself;[e] upon which *I commanded him to be kept* under confinement as before, *till I could send him to Cæsar* by some convenient opportunity.

Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I know this affair has made a great deal of noise in the world, and therefore should be glad of an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity with a more particular and authentic account of it; so that *I also would desire to hear the man myself,*[f] that I may learn from his own mouth what it is that he maintains, and on what principles he proceeds. *And* Festus, who was willing to oblige the king in this respect as soon as possible, promised that *he* would order Paul to be produced, and *said, To-morrow thou shalt hear him* as largely as thou pleasest.

The next day therefore, King *Agrippa and* his sister *Berenice coming with great pomp* and splendour, *and entering into the place of audience, with the tribunes* and other officers of the Roman army, *and* likewise with the *principal men of* note and eminence in *the city* of Cæsarea, *at the command of Festus* the governor, *Paul was brought forth.*

And Festus opened the occasion of their meeting with a short speech, and *said, O King Agrippa, and all ye who are present with us* in this numerous and splendid assembly, *ye see this man,* Paul of Tarsus, *concerning whom all the multitude of the Jews have pleaded with me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out* with the greatest earnestness, *that he* was a man of the most infamous and mischievous character, and *ought not* to be suffered *to live* upon earth *any longer: But* for my own part, after the most diligent and impartial inquiry, *I could not apprehend him to have done any thing worthy of death,* or find that he was guilty of a breach of any of our laws; *yet* when I would have seen whether the Jews had any evidence at home to have supported any material charge against him, *as he himself* declined that trial to which I would have brought him at Jerusalem, and *has appealed to* the judgment of [*our*] *august Emperor, I have determined to send him* to Rome to be heard by him. But the account I have received of him is so confused and inconsistent, that he is one *concerning whom I have nothing to write to his* Imperial *Majesty;*[g] *Wherefore I have* this day *brought him out before you* all, *and especially before thee, O King Agrippa,* who art well acquainted with the Jewish customs, *that after* further *examination taken, I may have something* more intelligible and more considerable *to write,* and may know better how to represent his cause. *For it seems to me* very *absurd,* as I doubt not but it will also appear to you, *to send a prisoner* to be tried before Cæsar, *and not to signify also* at the same time what are *the crimes* or causes of complaint [*alleged*] *against him* on which the Emperor may proceed in giving judgment on his case.

cence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and I commanded the man to be br ught forth:

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed.

19 But had certain questions against him, of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying, that he ought not to live any longer:

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O King Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

d *Relating to their own religion.*] As Agrippa was a Jew, and now came to pay a visit of respect to Festus on his arrival at his province, it is improbable (whatever Beza insinuates to the contrary) that he would use so rude a word as *superstition;* so that this text affords a farther argument that the word Δεισιδαιμονια will admit a milder interpretation, like that given it above, in the version of Acts xvii. 22. See note i, on that text, p. 524. And it is very remarkable, not only that the Jewish religion is spoken of by this word in several edicts (reported by Josephus) that were made in its favour, *Antiq. lib.* xiv. *cap.* 10. [al. 17.] § 13, 14, 16, 18, 19. but that Josephus himself uses it in the same sense too, *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9. [al. 8.] § 3. where he has the phrase το της Δεισιδαιμονιας ακριτον, to signify their invincible attachment to their religion. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 476, 477.

e *Our august Emperor.*] Since Augustus was not properly one of the names of Nero, (as it was of Titus,) I thought the import of Σεβαστος here, which was plainly a complimental form of speaking, might be most justly expressed by this version.

f *I also would desire to hear the man myself.*] No doubt but Agrippa had learnt from his father, by whom, it is to be remembered, James had been put to death and Peter imprisoned, Acts xii. 2, 3. and from many others, something of the history and pretensions of christianity; so that he would naturally have a curiosity to see and discourse with so eminent a christian teacher as Paul was; who, on account of what he had been in his unconverted state, was, to be sure, more regarded and talked of among the Jews than any other of the apostles.

g To his Imperial *Majesty.*] Τω κυριω plainly signifies, *To the great Lord of the empire,* a title by which, it is well known, the Emperor was now often spoken of.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 55.

ACTS XXV.

MYSTERIOUS as that dispensation was which permitted Paul's labours to be interrupted by so long an imprisonment, it is nevertheless very pleasant to trace the manner in which all was graciously over-ruled by a wise and kind Providence. On this occasion he had an opportunity of bearing his testimony, first before rulers and kings in Judea, and then in Rome, and in the palace of Cæsar.

None of the jewels which these princes might wear, none of the revenues which they might possess, were of any value at all, when compared with the advantage which their converse with Paul gave them for learning the way of salvation. But how shamefully was the advantage neglected, even the price which was put into their hands to get this divine wisdom! (Prov. xvii. 16.) Alas! how coldly do they speak of the most important matters, even those relating to the death and resurrection of him by whose knowledge and grace alone hell was to be avoided and heaven secured! There was *a question about one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.* A doubtful question! But, O Festus, why was it doubtful to thee? Surely because thou didst not think it worth thy while seriously to search into the evidence that attended it; else that evidence had opened upon thee till it had grown into full conviction, and this thine illustrious prisoner had led thee into the glorious liberty of God's children; had led thee to a throne far brighter than that of Cæsar, far more stable than the foundations of the earth.

Ver. 13 17 19 20

It is no wonder that Agrippa had a curiosity to hear Paul; it is no wonder that the gospel-story in general should move curiosity; but God forbid that it should be considered merely as an amusement! in that view it is an amusement that will cost men dear. In the mean time the prudence of Festus is to be commended, who was desirous to get farther information in an affair of such a nature as this; and his equity, which bore a testimony to the innocence of the apostle, is worthy of applause; as well as the law which provided that none should be condemned unheard: a law which, as it is common to all nations, (courts of inquisition only excepted,) ought to be the rule of our proceeding in all affairs, not only in public but private life, if we would avoid acting an injurious part in the censures we pass on the character of others, and exposing our own to the just reproach which they seldom escape who take upon them to *judge a matter before they have heard it.* (Prov. xviii. 13.)

22 24, 26 25 16, 27

SECTION LVI.

Paul makes his defence before Agrippa, Festus, and the rest of the audience, in a manner which leads them to conclude he might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Cæsar. Acts xxvi. 1, *to the end.*

ACTS xxvi. 1.

SECT. 56.

ACTS XXVI.

ACTS xxvi. 1.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.—

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, when he stood before him and Festus, and that great assembly of nobility and gentry which was met at his examination, *It is* now *permitted unto thee to speak for thyself;* do it therefore with freedom, and be assured that all due regard shall be paid to what thou hast to offer on this occasion.

—Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself,

Then Paul, stretching forth his hand in a graceful and respectful manner,[a] addressed himself to the splendid audience before which he stood, and *made his defence* in terms like these:

1

2 I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

O King Agrippa, I esteem myself peculiarly *happy,* and look upon it as no small advantage to me and my cause, *that I am this day* called *to make my defence before thee concerning all those things of which I am accused by the Jews: Especially as* know that *thou art* accurately *acquainted with all* things that relate to *the customs* which prevail, *and the questions* which are in debate, *among the Jews;*[b] to some of which my cause and discourse will refer: *wherefore I* humbly *entreat thee that thou wilt hear me with patience* and indulgence, since it is necessary for me to enlarge circumstantially upon some important particulars which cannot be justly represented in a few words.

2 3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

I will therefore begin with observing, that *the manner of my life from my youth,* 4 *which, from the beginning* of that age,[c] *was spent among* those of *my own nation at Jerusalem, is* well *known to all the Jews* there, *Who were acquainted with me from* 5 *the first* of my setting out in the world, and indeed from the very time of my entrance upon a course of liberal education under that celebrated master Gamaliel; and *if they would* candidly *testify* what they know to be true, they would join with me in assuring you *that I lived a Pharisee, according to* the rules observed by that which you well know to be *the strictest sect of our religion,*[d] in every thing relating not only to the

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews,

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

a *Stretching forth his hand.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 478, 479.) shows this to have been esteemed at that time a very decent expression of an earnestness in one that spoke in public, though some of the most illustrious Greek orators in earlier ages, such as Pericles, Themistocles, and Aristides, thought it a point of modesty to avoid it. But this was the effect of a false taste; and it is plain the eloquent Demosthenes often used the same gesture with St. Paul here.

b *Especially as thou art acquainted with all the customs,* &c.] Some manuscripts have added here εἰδώς, or ἐπιτετμένος, which our translators have received into their version; but there is no necessity for this addition, as appears from several instances of the like construction in the most approved Greek authors, which are produced, in their remarks on this place, by De Dieu and Raphelius, *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 187.—It is apparent that Agrippa must have had great advantages for an accurate acquaintance with the Jewish customs, from his education under his father Herod Agrippa, and his long abode at Jerusalem; and agreeably to this, by the permission of the Emperor, he had the direction of the sacred treasure, the government of the temple, and the right of nominating the high-priest, as Dr. Lardner has observed and proved. *Credib.* Book I. chap. I. § 9. Vol. I. p. 49.

c *From the beginning* of that age.] Probably, as Dr. Wells observes, in his just criticism on these words, (*Sacred Geograph.* Vol. III. p. 280.) he had in his childhood been brought up in the schools of Tarsus, and there formed to an acquaintance with the politest of the Greek and Roman authors, till he entered on a kind of academical course under the celebrated Gamaliel about the 15th or 16th year of his age, when he came to Jerusalem, and was there educated from the beginning of his youth.

d *The strictest sect of our religion.*] So Josephus calls the sect of the Pharisees, almost in the very words which the apostle uses, *Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 5 [al. 4.] § 2. and in a variety of other passages collected by Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. iv. § 3. p. 92. And Dr. Whitby has shown (in his learned note on this text) that it was in many respects stricter, both as to doctrine and life, than that of the Essenes. It appears from the gospels that many rigorous severities were used by them. Compare Luke xviii. 11,

SECT. 56. ACTS XXVI.

written law of God, but likewise to the traditions of the fathers. *And now I stand in judgment* in the midst of this assembly, not for any crime that I have committed, but indeed *for the hope of that promise* of a resurrection to eternal life and happiness by means of the Messiah, *which* in time past *was made by God unto our fathers*:[e] *To* the accomplishment of *which* important [*promise,*] all the known remainders of *our twelve* 7 *tribes,* in one part of the world or another, *hope to attain;* and by the expectation which they have of it, are animated in all their labours and sufferings for religion, while they are *worshipping continually, night and day,* in the stated and constant performance of their morning and evening devotions, whether in the temple or in other places in which they present their prayers; *concerning which hope, O King Agrippa,* glorious and reasonable as it is, I may truly say *I am* now most unjustly and inconsistently *accused by the Jews:* For the doctrine I preach contains the fullest assurance and demonstration of a resurrection that ever was given to the world; and I am persuaded it is this that provokes those of my enemies who disbelieve it, to prosecute me with so much ma- 8 lice. But can there indeed be any evil in maintaining this doctrine myself, and endeavouring to convince others of it? Permit me, O my honoured auditors, to appeal to you, and say, *Why should it be judged any incredible thing by* any of *you, that God,* a Being of infinite perfections, and the original Author of the human frame, *should raise the dead,* and continue their existence in a future state?[f] Will not his almighty power enable him to do it? and will not the honour of his moral attributes be hereby illustrated and vindicated? And if it be credible, is it not important enough to deserve the most attentive regard? I am confident, Sirs, you would all have thought it so, had you passed through such extraordinary scenes as occasioned a change in my views and conduct; which, therefore, I will plainly and fully open to this august assembly.

9 *I* once *indeed thought with myself, that I ought* in conscience *to do many things* most *contrary to the name,* and destructive of the interest and religion, *of Jesus the Nazarene,* whom under that title I once impiously derided, esteeming all his pretences to be the Messiah most false and contemptible. I determined therefore to exert all my power 10 against those who owned him under that character; *Which accordingly I did,* particularly *in Jerusalem,* where many now living were witnesses of my wild rage, and cannot but remember how *I shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests* to do it; *and* how, *when* [*some of them*] *were killed, I gave my vote against* [*them,*][g] and did all I could to animate both the rulers and the people to cut 11 them off from the face of the earth. (Compare Acts viii. 1, 3; xxii. 19, 20.) *And frequently punishing them in all the synagogues,* wherever I could meet with them, *I compelled* [*them,*] if I could possibly effect it, *to blaspheme* the name of Jesus Christ, which I now so highly revere,[h] and openly to renounce all dependence upon him: *And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted* [*them*] *even to* those *foreign cities* to which some of them had fled, hunting out the poor refugees, and endeavouring to drive them, not only out of their country, but out of the world.

12 *In this view as I was going to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests* to execute this cruel purpose against all the christians I could find there, 13 (compare Acts ix. 2. *et seq.*) *At mid-day,* [*while I was*] *in the way* thither, and was drawing near the end of my journey, I solemnly declare before thee, *O King* Agrippa, and before this assembly, as in the presence of God, *I saw a* great and most astonishing *light from heaven, exceeding the splendour of the sun, shining about me and those* 14 *who travelled with me. And when we were all fallen down to the earth* as if we had been struck with lightning, *I* very distinctly *heard a voice speaking to me, and saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?* [*It is*] *hard for thee* to attempt an opposition to me, and madly to presume *to kick against* 15 *the goads. And I said* in astonishment, *Who art thou, Lord?* and which way have I persecuted thee? *And* who can judge of my surprise when *he* who appeared to me in this divine lustre and glory, *said, I am Jesus* the Nazarene, *whom thou persecutest* by the 16 opposition thou art making to my cause and interest. *But* though, by engaging in this desperate attempt, thou hast forfeited thy life, I am determined graciously to spare it, and

6 And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them.*

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests;

13 At mid-day, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise and stand

12. Matt. xxiii. 5, 23, 25, 28. And Witsius assures us, (I suppose on the authority of some rabbies,) that they used to sleep on narrow planks, that, falling down from them, they might soon be awakened to prayer, and that others lay on gravel, and placed thorns so near them, that they could not turn without being pricked by them. Wits. *Meletem. cap.* i. § 15.

e *That promise which was made by God unto our fathers.*] See the paraphrase, and notes f, and g, on Luke xx. 37, 38. p. 310.

f *Why should it be judged an incredible thing, &c.*] Beza would place a mark of interrogation after Τι, and read it, *What? is it thought incredible, &c.*——which is indeed suited to the animated manner of Paul's speaking; and a thousand such examples occur in ancient authors, where the persons introduced must be supposed perfectly to understand the rules of decorum.

g *I gave my vote against them.*] Paul had no vote in the sanhedrim, nor do we certainly know that any more than Stephen were put to death for christianity before Paul's conversion, in whose condemnation there was no voting at all. But the meaning plainly is, (as Beza well observes,) that he instigated the people against them as much as he could, in that instance and any other that might occur, whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere, which (as was hinted before, note e, on Acts xxii. 4. p. 549.) might perhaps be more than are recorded: accordingly the Syriac renders it, *I joined with those that condemned them;* and Grotius observes that the Greek phrase κατηνεγκα ψηφον has sometimes this general signification.

h *I compelled them to blaspheme.*] I cannot think, with the learned Witsius, that this refers to his obliging them to use that form of prayer ascribed to Gamaliel, in which the christian religion was mentioned as heresy; and by imposing which, he supposes it was intended to prevent christians from joining in synagogue-worship. (Wits. *Meletem. cap.* i. § 22.) But the frequent instances we have of the apostles' going into the synagogues and joining in their worship, plainly show that prayer not to have been so anciently received. A known passage in Pliny (*Lib.* x. *Epist.* 94.) proves that heathen persecutors obliged christians that fell under the trial, not only to renounce Christ, but also to curse him; and I think it appears from hence, that the Jews imposed the like test upon them.

upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee:

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad,

to use thee hereafter as the instrument of my glory; *arise*, therefore, *and stand upon thy feet; for to this purpose I have* in this extraordinary manner *appeared unto thee*, even *to ordain thee a minister* of my gospel, *and a witness both of the things which thou hast* now *seen, and of those in which I will* hereafter *appear unto thee:* And thou shalt experience my gracious presence with thee, *delivering thee from* the rage and malice of *the* Jewish *people, and* also *from* the dangers thou shalt encounter with among *the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee;*[i] That I may make thee instrumental, by the preaching of my gospel, *to open their eyes*, which are now in a miserable state of blindness, *that they may turn from* that spiritual *darkness* in which they are now involved, *to the light* of divine knowledge and holiness,[k] *and from the power of Satan*, to which they are now in a wretched subjection, *unto* the love and service of *God; that* so *they may receive* the free and full *forgiveness of* all their *sins*, be they ever so many or ever so aggravated, *and* may obtain an *inheritance among them that are sanctified, through* that *faith which is in me*, which terminates in me as its great Object, and consists in devoting the soul to my service, and committing it to my care as the Saviour of men.

From that ever-memorable *time, O king Agrippa*, through the grace of God subduing my heart, *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision* with which he was pleased thus miraculously to favour me: *But* I immediately engaged, with all the united powers of my soul, in the service of that Divine Master against whose interest and kingdom I had hitherto been acting in so strenuous a manner; and accordingly I openly *declared, first to them at Damascus*, where I was going when this vision happened, *and* afterwards to those *at Jerusalem and through all the country of Judea, and* [*then*] *to* all *the Gentiles* wherever I came, in my various and wide-extended travels from one country to another, *that they should repent* of their sins, *and turn to God* with their whole hearts, *performing deeds worthy of* that *repentance* which they profess, and without which the sincerity of it can never be approved in his sight.

Now let any one judge whether for this I should be treated as a criminal worthy of death, or whether indeed I have deserved these bonds: Yet *on account of these things*, and for no other cause, *the Jews*, who have the same inveteracy against the gospel of Jesus that I once had, *seizing me in the temple* some time ago, *attempted* in a tumultuous manner *to have killed me with their own hands;*[l] And since I was rescued at first by Lysias the tribune, they have repeated the attempt again and again, contriving to assassinate me in my way to the council, before which they urged that I might again be brought. I impute it *therefore* to an extraordinary providence that I am yet alive, and publicly declare it with all thankfulness, that it is by *having obtained help from God* that *I continue until this day;*[m] and I endeavour to employ my life to the purposes for which it is prolonged, resolutely and courageously *testifying, both to small and great*, as what is really a matter of the greatest concern both to the meanest and the most exalted of mankind, the way of salvation by Christ Jesus my Lord: Thereby indeed in effect *saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses have declared should be;* That is, in short, *that the Messiah must have suffered, and being the first* of those *who rose from the dead* to an immortal life, *should discover light*, and be the means of revealing knowledge and happiness, both *to the people* of the Jews, *and* also *to the Gentiles;* that by following his instructions and obeying his commands, they also might at length obtain a glorious resurrection, and a life of everlasting felicity in the heavenly world.

And as he was thus making his defence, Festus, astonished to hear him represent this despised gospel of Jesus of Nazareth as a matter of such high and universal concern, and thinking the vision he had related as introductory to that assertion quite an incredible story, *said, with a loud voice* which reached the whole auditory, *Paul, thou art distracted: Much study* of these ancient records, on which thou layest so great a stress,

i *The Gentiles, to whom I now send thee.*] This text entirely overthrows the scheme which Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson have taken so much pains to establish, relating to Paul's receiving his first commission to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles several years after his conversion, viz. in his second journey to Jerusalem. See note a, on Acts xxii. 17. p. 551. To support that hypothesis, (for it is no more,) they are obliged to maintain that these words were not spoken by Christ when he met him on the way to Damascus, but in the vision he had in the temple at the time referred to above. But as the words make a part of the sentence in which Christ bids him rise from the astonishment into which his appearance to him on the way to Damascus had thrown him, and as he afterwards (ver. 19, 20.) speaks of his first preaching Christ at Damascus as the effect of these words, I think every unprejudiced person must see that they belong to the story of his conversion: and this is as reconcileable with Peter's first opening the christian church to the uncircumcised Gentiles, as the general commission which Christ gave to all the apostles before his ascension. Mark xvi. 15; Mat. xxviii. 19. The plain answer to the seeming objection arising from both is, that though these commissions were indeed very extensive, yet they were not at first fully understood by those that received them; and Paul, as well as the twelve, might perhaps imagine, that if any Gentiles were converted, (which, to be sure, the apostles all expected multitudes would be,) they must first be received into the Jewish church by circumcision, and then into the christian by baptism.——Many good manuscripts and ancient versions do indeed leave out νυν, *now;* (see Dr. Mill, *in loc.*) but few of these read αποστελλω, *I will send thee;* and if we admit the reading εις ους σε αποστελλω, *to whom I send thee*, the sense will be much the same as if we retain that which is commonly received.

k *That they may turn, &c.*] This seems to be the sense of the original επιστρεψαι, which (as De Dieu observes) may properly be rendered thus without the need of any supplement; and this will best agree with the construction, and with the sense in which the word is generally used in other places. Compare chap. ix. 35; xi. 21; xv. 19; xxvi. 20; xxviii. 27.

l *To have killed me with their own hands.*] Beza justly observes that this is the exact import of διεχειριζοντο, which was the more properly used here, as there was reason to apprehend that Paul would have been actually *pulled to pieces* [διασπασθεις] in an assembly, as it seems, less numerous and less violent than that which seized him in the temple. Compare chap. xxiii. 10. p. 555.

m *Having obtained help from God, &c.*] This may very probably express the sense he had of the late interposition of Providence in his favour, touched upon in note g, on chap. xxv. 4. p. 561.

SECT. 56.

drives thee to madness;[n] or thou wouldst never talk of such facts as these, or expect to be credited in such wild assertions.[o]

ACTS XXVI.

But this invidious imputation was so far from provoking Paul to any indecency, that with a perfect command of himself *he* calmly and gravely *replied, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but I utter the words of truth and sobriety,*[p] which will bear the test
25 of the severest examination; and I desire nothing more than that they may be brought to
26 it. *For the King* himself *knoweth of these things,* and is no stranger to them, *to whom also I speak with freedom,* emboldened by his permission, and assured of his candour: *For I am persuaded* he has better and more favourable thoughts of what I have been saying, as *none of these things are* entirely *hidden from him: for this is not* [*an affair*] that was *transacted in a corner;* the death of Jesus, the preaching of his gospel, my rage against it, and sudden conversion to it, were all open and notorious facts, of the truth of which thousands had opportunity of being certainly and thoroughly informed; and I am
27 satisfied the King has often heard of them: Nor can he be ignorant of the correspondence of these things to the predictions of the Old Testament: *O King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* Yes, *I know that thou believest* them to have been written by a divine inspiration, and art aware of the weight of those arguments which are derived from the authority of their testimony.

28 *Then Agrippa said unto Paul,* Thou hast given such an account of these matters, and hast delivered what thou hast been saying in so natural and so earnest a manner, that *thou almost persuadest me to become a christian* myself, instead of condemning thee under that character.[q]

29 *And Paul,* powerfully struck with so remarkable an acknowledgment, *said,* with great fervency of spirit, and yet with perfect decency, O King, *I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds:*[r] My afflictions I would bear myself till Providence shall release me from them, but my satisfaction in the truth of the gospel is so entire, and the consolations I experience from it are so solid and noble, that I could wish nothing greater and better to this illustrious audience, than that every one present had an equal faith in it, and equal zeal to promote its interests; which I earnestly pray that God may excite in your hearts.

30 *And as he said this,* that the impression Paul began to make upon the court might reach
31 no farther, *the King arose, and* Festus *the governor, and Berenice, and those who sat with them* upon the bench; for Agrippa was able to hear no more. *And when they had retired* to the governor's apartment, *they spoke one with another, saying,* It is evident, so far as we can judge by this discourse, which hath all imaginable marks of candour and sincerity, that *this man,* whether his reasonings be or be not conclusive, *hath done*
32 *nothing worthy* either *of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said to Festus, This man might* certainly *have been set at liberty* upon this hearing, without any farther debate, *if he had not appealed unto Cæsar:*[s] But as he has judged it necessary to take that step, he has indeed put it out of our power to discharge him, and therefore he must stand by Cæsar's award; to whom it will be convenient to send him as soon as possible.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the King knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the King rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them.

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

n *Much study drives thee to madness.*] This is the exact import of the original, Πολλα σε γραμματα εις μανιαν περιτρεπει. Perhaps he might know that Paul in his present confinement spent a great deal of time in reading; and this was the most decent turn that could be given to such a mad charge. But nothing can be at once more invidious and ridiculous (as those two properties often go together) than the gloss which Mr. Collins gives to these words, *Grounds and Reasons*, p. 172: as if Paul's applying the Old-Testament Scriptures in an allegorical sense had led Festus to make this reflection; whereas it is not certain that Paul quoted any particular scripture in this whole discourse, much less in an allegorical interpretation; nor would it have been possible for Festus (an entire stranger to the Jewish prophecies) to have made any judgment as to the propriety or impropriety with which they were applied: And any person of common candour would easily see, that if such a thing had been in question, (as indeed it was not,) the conviction of Agrippa, so well versed in Jewish affairs, would have been a much stronger argument that the prophecies were applied right, than the censure of Festus could be for the contrary.

o In such wild assertions.] Besides what is hinted in the paraphrase, it would appear quite absurd to Festus, to hear Paul (as he did in the last sentence of his speech) talk of a resurrection from the dead accomplished in Jesus as the first-fruits, or pretend that a person should come from the Jews, whom he looked upon as a barbarous nation, who should enlighten not only his own people, but even the Gentiles too, and, among the rest, the polite and learned Romans and Greeks. This, in conjunction with what Paul had said of the manner in which this was revealed to him, would lead such a half-thinker as Festus appears, to conclude roundly that he was a visionary enthusiast.

p *I am not mad, &c.*] This answer, in this connexion, appears inexpressibly beautiful; and if great and good men who meet with rude and insolent treatment in the defence of the gospel, (which is often the case,) learn to behave with such moderation, it will be a great accession of strength to the christian cause.——Raphelius shows, (as Beza had before observed,) that σωφροσυνη, *sobriety*, is with the strictest exactness opposed to μανια, *madness*; *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 188.

q *Thou almost persuadest me to become a christian.*] To interpret this as an irony, εν ολιγῳ με πειθεις, &c. as if he had said, "This is a "very compendious way of persuading me to become a christian," is supposing Agrippa very unseasonably and absurdly ludicrous; and though there may be some ambiguity in the words if read alone, yet it is certain the manner of his speaking, which must either be very solemn and earnest, or with a most contemptuous sneer, would determine the sense beyond all doubt. Now it plainly appears from Paul's answer, and from the sense in which he there uses εν ολιγῳ, *almost*, in opposition to εν πολλῳ, *altogether*, that he took him to mean seriously that he was almost persuaded, and consequently that he did indeed mean so.——To explain the words as if he had meant, "Thou "persuadest me to be *almost a christian*," or, "to become *an almost* "*christian*," that is, *an hypocritical professor*, is quite foreign to the purpose; nor could Agrippa have any temptation to be so.

r *Except these bonds.*] Some have thought, (as Grotius does,) that he refers to his imprisonment in general, arguing that it would have been indecent to have brought him to plead before Agrippa and Berenice in chains. But it has been justly replied, that such instances are to be found in antiquity. See Tacit. *Annal. lib.* iv. § 28.

s *This man might have been set at liberty*, &c.] Though this declaration of Agrippa would not secure Paul's deliverance, yet it might do him some service that a testimony to his innocence was pronounced by so learned and honourable a person of the Jewish nation and religion. Festus would probably entertain a better opinion of him upon this account, and would give directions to the officer who attended him, to treat him with so much the greater regard. I shall only add, that though it might seem in this view an unhappy circumstance that Paul had made this appeal, yet as it was, at the time that he made it, the properest method he could take for his own security, he would have reason to reflect upon it with satisfaction; and we before observed, that his visiting Rome under the character of a prisoner, was overruled by Providence to answer some important purposes. Compare Phil. i. 12. *et seq.*

IMPROVEMENT.

PERFECTLY does our blessed Redeemer, in this instance, appear to have answered his promise, that when his disciples *were brought before governors and kings for his sake, it should be given them in that hour what they should speak:* (Matt. x. 18, 19.) For indeed it is impossible to imagine what could have been said more suitable, or what more graceful, than this discourse of Paul before Agrippa;[t] in which the seriousness and spirituality of the christian, the boldness of the apostle, and the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy union. SECT. 56. ACTS XXVI.

There was no appearance of flattery in congratulating himself upon an opportunity of speaking before one skilled in the manners and in the records of the Jews; for the more they had been attended to, with the greater advantage would the cause of christianity have appeared. There was no arrogance in his insisting upon the strictness of his former life; since those things which were once gain to him, he had long since *counted loss for Christ.* (Phil. iii. 7.) The excellency of the end that inspired him was proportionable to the manner in which he was impressed with it. Well may they serve God instantly day and night, who have the hope of a happy resurrection before them; nor is the hope presumptuous and vain, since it is founded on a divine promise: Why should it seem incredible with any, that he who gave life should restore it—that God should raise the dead? Ver. 2 4, 5 7 8

It was this expectation that supported the christians while *Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them;* (Acts ix. i.) while mad with a profane and impious rage against Jesus of Nazareth, he *compelled them to blaspheme,* and *persecuted them even to strange cities.* But a conduct like this must occasion to him the keenest remorse when he came to know what he did, and to see how gracious and condescending a Lord he had been persecuting in his members: When he took so gracious a method to reclaim him, it is no wonder that it left an indelible impression on his memory and on his heart. Indeed the story is so pleasant and so instructive, that we may well bear to read it a second and a third time; or rather may rejoice in it, as so many instructive circumstances are added to those which we before endeavoured to illustrate and improve. (Compare Acts ix. 2—16; and xxii. 5—16.) 9, 11 14, 15

What can be more affecting than the view which our Lord here gives us of the state in which the gospel found men, in comparison with that into which it was intended to bring them! A gospel-ministry was to open their eyes before blinded, *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive the remission of their sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.* Enlighten, O Lord, the dark corners of the earth; vindicate the wretched slaves of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and adopt them to that inheritance which thou hast prepared for thy sanctified ones! 18

Wonderful scheme of divine goodness! and happy the men who are employed in promoting it! Let the profane world call their zeal madness, and account for it in a less decent and candid manner than Festus himself did, these would be found the words of truth and sobriety; and the God of truth and of wisdom will approve them as such, when the wisdom of the world shall all appear foolishness and madness. (1 Cor. iii. 19.) 24 25

God grant that none of us may rest in being almost persuaded to be christians! When convictions begin to open, let us follow the celestial ray whithersoever it leads us, and not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Would to God that all who shall read or hear this discourse, might be not only almost but altogether prevailed upon to be christians, and might attain to a temper like that of the blessed Paul, even though his bonds were not to be excepted! For that religious joy which such a disposition must introduce, would render chains, yet heavier than his, light; and they would quickly be transformed into ornaments of glory, which shall deck the soul in the presence of God with a lustre infinitely superior to that which the diadem of Agrippa or the robe of Festus could. 28 19 29

SECTION LVII.

Paul sets out on his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, and having suffered great extremity in a storm, receives assurance of his preservation by a vision, which he communicates to his companions for their encouragement. Acts xxvii. 1—26.

ACTS xxvii. 1.

ACTS xxvii. 1.

AND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

IT was observed in the conclusion of the last section, that Agrippa apprehended Paul might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar; but the appeal, being made, could not be recalled: *And* therefore, *as it was determined that we should sail into Italy,*[a] *they delivered Paul, and some other prisoners* in his circumstances,[b] *to a centurion of the Augustan cohort whose name was Julius. And going on board a ship of Adramyttis,* a city of Mysia not far from Pergamos, *we weighed anchor, intending to sail by the coasts of* the Lesser *Asia; Aristarchus a Macedonian,* a christian brother of the city *of Thessalonica, being with us,*[c] who was glad of the opportunity of attending Paul on an occasion of so great importance to him and to the church. SECT. 57. ACTS XXVII. 2

t This discourse of Paul before Agrippa.] The reply of Paul to Agrippa is so excellently illustrated in *Three Discourses on Irresolution in Religion,* by my much honoured friend the Reverend Dr. Samuel Clarke of St. Alban's, that I cannot but earnestly recommend them to the perusal of all who desire thoroughly to enter into the strength and spirit of this beautiful part of the sacred story.

a *As it was determined that we should sail.*] Some ancient copies and versions read it, that [*he*] *should sail,* which may seem most proper, as those that sent away Paul had no power over Luke or Aristarchus; yet they also determined, though freely, to sail.

b *They delivered Paul and some other prisoners.*] Dr. Lardner proves at large, particularly from several passages of Josephus, that prisoners of importance used frequently to be sent, as from other provinces, so from Judea, to Rome; *Credib.* Book I. chap. 10. § 10. Vol. I. p. 531, 532.

c *Aristarchus a Macedonian,* &c.] This good man, by birth a Thessalonian, had been with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the tumult there, (chap. xix. 29.) where he had been seized by the mob and exposed to great hazard. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia. (Chap. xx. 4.) He now accompanied him to Rome, and was a fellow-prisoner with him there; Col. iv. 10. and is mentioned in Paul's Epistle to Philemon, ver. 24. who was probably their common friend, as a valuable assistant in his ministerial work. It was, to be sure, a great comfort to the apostle to have the company of two such friends as Luke and Aristarchus, as it was also a great instance of their affection to him, that they would follow him when he was going as a prisoner to Rome, not being ashamed of his bonds, and especially that they would attend him at a time when they knew sailing to be dangerous. Compare ver. 9.

SECT. 57. ——— ACTS XXVII.

And steering our course northward from Cæsarea, *the next* [*day*] *we reached Sidon*, a
celebrated city on the Phenician shore; *and Julius* the centurion *treating Paul with great*
humanity, permitted [*him*] *to go to his friends* there, whom he had not been able to visit
in his way to Jerusalem, (chap. xxi. 3, 7.) *and to enjoy the benefit of their* kind *care* to-
wards rendering his voyage as agreeable as they could, as well as affording him some present
3 refreshment.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 *And weighing anchor from thence, we sailed under* the island of *Cyprus*, leaving it
on the left hand, *because the winds* were in the south-west quarter, and so *were contrary*
to us, and consequently prevented our taking the more direct course, which we might other-
5 wise have done by sailing more to the west, and leaving Cyprus to the north. *And sailing*
through the sea that lies *over against Cilicia and Pamphylia*, without an opportunity of
calling on any of our friends at Tarsus, Attalia, Perga, or Antioch in Pisidia; where Paul
had once and again made so delightful a progress, (see Acts xiii. 13, 14; xiv. 25, 26; xv.
40, 41.) *we came to* the port of *Myra*, [*a city*] *of Lycia*, whose celebrated promontory we
6 might descry at a considerable distance. *And there the centurion finding a ship of*
Alexandria that was *bound for Italy*, quitting the other vessel which had brought us to
Myra, *he put us on board it*, and embarked with us.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 *And when we had sailed slowly many days, and* scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone:

7 *And when we had sailed slowly for several days* by Rhodes and several other small
islands which lay near the Carian shore, *and were hardly got over against* the point of
Cnidus, a celebrated port of Caria, *the wind not permitting us* to make greater despatch,
we steered to the south, and *sailed under Crete, over against* the promontory of *Salmone*,
8 on the eastern coast of that island: *And passing it with difficulty*, when we had made the
cape *we came to a certain place called The Fair Havens*, the most considerable p rt in
that part of Crete, *in the neighbourhood of which was the city of Lasea.*[d]

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 *And as much time was spent* in making of this little way, *and* the season of the year
was so far advanced that *sailing was now hazardous, because the fast* of expiation *was*
already over, and consequently winter was coming on apace,[e] *Paul* spake to those who
had the chief direction of the voyage, and prudently *exhorted* [*them*] not to put out to sea:
10 *Saying unto them, Sirs, I perceive that* if *this voyage* be pursued according to the pre-
sent scheme you have in view, it *will be attended with* much *injury and great damage,*
not only to the lading that we have on board, *and* to *the ship* itself, *but also*, in all human
probability, *to our lives;* and therefore I should think it highly conducive to our common
safety, rather to winter here than to attempt to proceed any farther.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them;*

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 *But* Julius *the centurion*, in whose breast the determination of the affair lay, *paid*
greater regard in this instance *to* the opinion of *the pilot and the master of the vessel,*
than to those things which were spoken by Paul; imagining, notwithstanding the esteem
he had for him in other views, that these were more competent judges in the business of
12 navigation. *And as the haven*, notwithstanding its agreeable name, *was not commodious*
to winter in, the greater part of the company *advised to set sail from thence, if they*
might possibly reach to Phenice, to winter there; [*which is*] *a* kind of double *haven* on
the southern coast *of Crete, looking to the south-west and north-west*, where, in conse-
quence of a jutting point of land which defended it, they hoped, on getting into the upper
part of it, to lie secure from almost any wind that could blow.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north-west.

13 *And as* the weather came to be more favourable, and *the south wind blew gently*,
which would prevent their driving out to sea, *supposing they were* now *secure of* [*their*]
purpose, and by the help of a side wind might coast along the island, *they weighed anchor*
14 from the Fair Havens, *and sailed on close to* the shore of *Crete.*[f] *But not long after*
they had put to sea, the ship was in great danger, as on a sudden *there arose against it a*
very *tempestuous* whirling kind of *wind*, *which* by the mariners in this sea *is called*
Euroclydon, or in modern language a Levanter,[g] which often shifts the quarter from
whence it blows, and accordingly in our case was first east and by north, and afterwards
15 several degrees southward of the east. *And as the ship was violently hurried away* by

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after, there arose against it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not

d *The city of Lasea.*] I see no reason, with Beza, to change this reading for Alassa or Elæa, merely because we do not read of Lasea elsewhere. It is very possible a place may be but once mentioned in ancient history, or that this may be the Lasos of Pliny, which he describes as situated in the eastern part of Crete; see Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. x. § 4. p. 379. a circumstance which well suits the explication we have given, though not that of Beza, who takes Salmone to have been the promontory Salmonium, which he places in the western coast, a situation that no way agrees with the rest of the description, nor with the authority of Dionysius, *Perieg.* ver. 110. But this is not a place to adjust geographical controversies: otherwise I think it would be easy to show that this excellent critic has given, in many respects, a very wrong account of this voyage.

e *Sailing was now hazardous, because the fast was already over.*] The fast here spoken of was the day of atonement, which was ordered to be kept on the tenth day of the seventh month, called Tisri by the Jews, and consequently must have been about the 25th of our September. See Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 27; Numb. xxiv. 7. Philo, in several passages quoted by Dr. Whitby in his note here, speaks of this as an ill time to sail, as Aratus also does; and it would naturally be so, not only on account of winter approaching, but also because of the Michaelmas flows, that are still well known in the Mediterranean. See Raphel. *Not. ex Herod.* p. 397; and Veget. *De Re Militari. lib.* iv. *cap.* 39.

f *Close to Crete.*] That κρητην is to be taken as an adverb, and not as the name of a place, Beza has so fully demonstrated, that nothing need be said in proof of it here.

g *A tempestuous wind, which is called Euroclydon.*] The learned Dr. Bentley (in his *Remarks on Freethinking*, Part II. § 69, 70.) has taken a great deal of pains to establish the reading of the Alexandrian Manuscript, admitted also by Grotius and Cluverius, *Sicil. Antiq. lib.* ii. p. 442. which is ευρακυλων, agreeable to the vulgar *euraquilo, the north-east wind*, which was indeed proper to carry the ship from Crete to the African shore, and so might expose them to the danger of the Syrtis. (Ver. 17.) But I think my learned friend Mr. Brckell, in his ingenious introduction to his discourse called *Euroclydon*, has advanced such objections against that interpretation as cannot be answered, and abundantly proved that it could not be a point-wind, but was rather a kind of hurricane, often shifting its quarter, and accordingly not bearing them forward any one way, but tossing them backward and forward in the Adriatic; (ver. 27.) which is very agreeable to the account which the learned and accurate Dr. Shaw gives of the matter in his *Travels*, p. 358—361. where he explains it as one of the furious kind of winds, now called Levanters, which are easterly winds not

bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

the force of it, *and was not able to bear up against the wind*, which was so very boisterous that (as the seamen use to speak) she could not look the storm in the face, *we gave* [*her*] *up* to the wind, *and were driven* before it.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

And running under a certain island called Clauda, a little to the south of the western coast of Crete, the violence of the storm was such, that with the utmost difficulty *we were hardly able to get masters of the boat*, which we were willing to secure from being staved, as what might be of use in any exigence: *Which when* at last *they had hoisted up, they used* all the *helps* they could to make the vessel able to ride out the storm, *undergirding the ship* to keep it from bulging; *and fearing*, as the wind had varied more to the north, and blew them towards Africa, *lest they should fall upon* the greater or the lesser Syrtis, those *quicksands* on the African shore so famous for the destruction of mariners and vessels,[h] *they struck sail*, that so their progress might be slower, and some more favourable weather in the mean time might come for their relief, *and so were driven* before the wind.

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

And as we were exceedingly tossed by the storm, and there was danger of the vessel's foundering, *the next* [*day*] *they lightened the ship*, by heaving overboard the goods that she was laden with, and throwing out the heaviest wares into the sea.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship:

And the third [*day*] the tempest was so great that all the passengers as well as mariners were employed; and *we cast out with our own hands the* very *tackling of the ship*, which in such circumstances we should have been desirous to have preserved, preferably to the most precious wares with which she could have been laden.

19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

Now as we knew not where the wind had driven us, for *neither sun nor stars appeared for several days*, and still the sea ran high, *and no small tempest pressed upon* [*us*,] *all* the little *remainder of hope that we might be* saved and *delivered* from the danger we were in, *was* in a manner *taken away* from us, and the whole company expected nothing but that the ship would certainly be lost, and we should perish with it.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

And when in all this time they had no heart to think of taking any regular refreshment, so that *there was great want of food*, and their distress was such that they were quite dispirited, *then Paul standing in the midst of them said, Sirs*, if it were proper to reflect upon what is past, and now irretrievable, I might tell you that *you ought to have hearkened to me, and not to have loosed from Crete* at so inconvenient a time, *and so to have gained this injury and loss* which you have already suffered,[i] and be exposed to that distress which you are farther to endure.

21 But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

Nevertheless, even now, bad as the situation of affairs may appear, *I exhort you to be of good courage: for* though you are ready to conclude you must inevitably perish, I assure you that *there shall be no loss of any* single *life among you, but only of the ship*, which must indeed be dashed in pieces.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

Nor is it without good authority that I speak in so express and positive a manner with regard to an event which seems to you at best very uncertain, or rather utterly improbable; *for there appeared to me this* very *night an angel of the God whose* servant and property I joyfully confess that *I am, and whom I* humbly and diligently *worship*, though most of you are so unhappy as to be ignorant of him: He is so great a God, that all the heavenly hosts adore him, and are ever ready to execute his commands; and one of them hath come to visit me on this occasion, *saying, Fear not, Paul*, for *thou must be presented before* the tribunal of *Cæsar; and, behold, God hath* not only determined to rescue thee from this imminent danger, but he hath also *given thee* the lives of *all them that sail* in this vessel *with thee*, who shall be preserved for thy sake.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

Wherefore take courage, Sirs, and lay aside your fears; *for I trust in God*, whose word is faithful and his power almighty, *that it shall* certainly *be so, according to the manner in which it hath been spoken to me.*

25 Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

But I know also, that *we must be cast upon a certain island*, and that the vessel will be wrecked upon the coast of it: Nevertheless we shall, if we take care to use the proper means for that purpose, all escape and get safe to land, and from thence shall pursue our voyage to Italy more prosperously in another vessel.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see in this renewed instance the great force of a virtuous character, and of a truly worthy and honourable behaviour, towards engaging the esteem of all around us. Julius the centurion had a reverence and affection for Paul, which, as in the beginning of this voyage it procured for him the satisfaction of conversing with his friends at Sidon, and receiving the fruit of their affection, so it was, in the progress of it, the occasion of saving the great apostle's life, and with it that of the rest of the prisoners. (Ver. 42, 43.) Let us learn thus to soften the fierce and to convince the prejudiced, and humbly trust in that God who, if our ways please him, can turn our enemies into friends, (Prov. xvi. 7.) and can preserve and bless us by means of those who were intended to be only the instruments of affliction. Ver. 3

confined to one single point, but blowing in all directions from the north-east to the south east.——See also Erasmus on this place.

h *Lest they should fall upon the quicksands.*] See a good collection of the descriptions given of the greater and the lesser Syrtis, by approved writers of antiquity, in Gualtperius's note on this verse.

i *To have gained this injury and loss.*] Both these words, ὕβριν καὶ ζημίαν, are used, ver. 10. and I doubt not but they have here a reference to what the apostle had declared before.——The first, ὕβρις, generally signifies some kind of *wrongs*; and accordingly it, and its compounds and derivatives, are almost always used in this sense. (Compare 2 Cor. xii. 10; Matt. xxii. 6; Luke xi. 45; xviii. 32; Rom. i. 30; 1 Tim. i. 13.) But it extends to any *violent assault*, (Acts xiv. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 2.) and is here used for that of waves and winds. I apprehend the English word *injury* exactly corresponds to it, and is used in the same latitude: Thus none would scruple to say a ship had been much *injured* by a storm.—The other word, ζημία, signifies *a loss*, especially *a fine*: (compare note f, on Mark viii. 36. p. 181.) and perhaps it may be used to insinuate that this loss was a kind of fine paid for their own imprudence. *To gain a loss* seems so odd a phrase, that one would think κερδῆσαι was here put for *sustaining*, unless the use of it were intended to intimate, that in such extreme danger they were to look upon it as a circumstance of great advantage to escape with their lives, or (as it is elsewhere expressed with great spirit) *to have life given for a prey.* (Jer. xxi. 9; xxviii. 2; xxxix. 18; xlv. 5.) And it seems to me, that in all the instances collected by Elsner here, though in another view, the word has precisely this sense and force: Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 486.

SECT. 57. From the account which is here given us of the danger and distress which Paul and his companions suffered upon the mighty waters, let us learn to pity those who, being providentially engaged in a seafaring life, are often in such deaths as these. When we hear, as it may be we do, while far from the shores of our island, the stormy winds raging around us, and see the effects of their fury in those stupendous instances which sometimes appear, let us send up, as it were upon their rapid wings, our compassionate cries to that God who holds them all in his fists, (Prov. xxx. 4.) that he would help and save those that are ready to be swallowed up quick in a watery grave, and perhaps many of them, while just on the brink of eternity, in the number of those that are of all others most unprepared for it.

ACTS XXVII. 17—20

22—25 Happy the man, in whatever extremities of danger, that is conscious of a relation to the God of heaven as his God and his Father; that can say, like Paul in this blessed parenthesis, Whose I am and whom I serve! Let us, when we can use the language, take the comfort of it, and commit ourselves to the guardian care of our God with cheerfulness. He knoweth them that are his, and will take care of his own. Let our faith put a reality into all his promises, that it shall certainly be even as he hath spoken unto us. Thus let us *encourage ourselves in the Lord our God*, (1 Sam. xxx. 6.) and the event shall not shame our hopes; but we shall find, by happy experience, that God will not only save us from ruin, but conduct us to joy as well as to safety everlasting. Amen!

SECTION LVIII.

Paul and his companions, after having suffered further extremities in their voyage, are at length shipwrecked on the shore of Malta; but all escape with their lives. Acts xxvii. 27, *to the end.*

Acts xxvii. 27.

SECT. 58. SEVERAL threatening circumstances of the violent storm which Paul and his companions met with in their voyage, were described before; *and* we now proceed to observe, that *when the fourteenth night was come, as we were tossed up and down in the Adriatic Sea,*[a] *the mariners suspected about midnight that they drew near some land: And sounding* the depth of the water, *they found* [*it*] *twenty fathoms; and having gone a little way from thence, and sounding again, they found* [*it*] only *fifteen fathoms*; which decrease of their soundings convinced them that this apprehension was just. *And* therefore, *fearing lest they should fall upon some rocky shore* where there might not be depth of water sufficient to keep the vessel from striking, *they cast four anchors out of the stern, and* heartily *wished that the day would break* and more clearly discover our situation.

ACTS XXVII. 28 29

30 *But when the mariners* perceived the danger so extreme, they *endeavoured to flee out of the ship*, and to provide for their own safety by making to the shore; *and* when, to compass their design, they *had let down the boat into the sea*, and were just going into it, *under a pretence that they were about to carry out anchors from the ship-head*, to make the vessel more secure by dropping them at a distance, *Paul*, who knew that it was the will of God that all proper endeavours should be used for their preservation in a dependence on the promise he had given them, perceiving the design they had in view, *said to* Julius *the centurion, and the soldiers* that were with him, *Unless these* mariners *continue in the ship*, without whose help we know not how to manage her, *ye cannot be saved*;[b] for the promise made of your lives was to be understood as given on condition of your taking the most prudential measures to secure them which present circumstances will admit. *Then the soldiers*, who had learnt from their commander to pay a deference to what Paul said, that the success of this intended fraud might be effectually prevented, *cut off the cords of the boat*, by which it was fastened to the side of the ship, *and let it fall off* into the sea before any of the mariners were got into it.

31 32

33 *And while the day was coming on*, before they had light sufficient to discern what they should do, *Paul* earnestly *exhorted them all to take* [*some*] *food, saying, To-day you are looking for the fourteenth day* since you have been in this distress, *and* all of you *continue fasting, having taken nothing* of a regular meal;[c] the necessary consequence of which is, that you must thus be very faint and weak, and unfit for those fatigues which may farther lie before you; for it will be a narrow escape that we are to expect, and we may find great difficulties in getting on shore. As *therefore* till the morning rises we can attempt nothing by way of approach to land, *I exhort you* to improve this little interval of leisure by making use of it *to take* [*some*] *food, since* it is plain that *this is* proper to be done *for your safety*, as it will make you fitter to act for your own preservation, according as future circumstances may require; and you may allow yourselves this refreshment with the greater cheerfulness, *for* I can renew the assurance I before gave, that whatever risk you run, and whatever labour we pass through, *not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you.*[d]

34

ACTS XXVII. 27.

BUT when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:

28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

29 Then, fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you.

a *In the Adriatic Sea.*] It is well known to those acquainted with ancient geography, that all that part of the Mediterranean which lay south of Italy was called the Adriatic Sea, and that which is now the Gulf of Venice was the Sinus Adriaticus. See Grotius, *in loc.* and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. x. § 4. p. 380, 381.

b *Unless these continue in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*] To what I have said of this in the paraphrase and improvement, I shall only add, that God foretold the deliverance of the ship's company as certain, though suspended on this condition, because he knew it would be complied with, and directed Paul to urge the necessity of that compliance, as what he knew would be the successful means of securing it, though none can deny but these sailors had a natural power of going out of the ship, or the soldiers a natural power of permitting them to do it. The application of this remark to other affairs of greater moment appears to me both easy and important.

c *Continue fasting, having taken nothing.*] Appian speaks of an army which, for twenty days together, took neither food nor sleep; by which he must mean, they never made full meals, nor slept whole nights together. The same interpretation must be given to this phrase, which Mr. Brekell also thinks may intimate that they were now at short allowance, as they were like to have a much longer voyage than was at first intended, and had two hundred and seventy-six souls on board. (*Euroclydon*, p. 26.) But Grotius declares against this last opinion, which is to be sure uncertain, though I think it might possibly be the case, and that ver. 38. is not decisive to the contrary.

d *Not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you.*] Some

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.
36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.
37 And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.
38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.
39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.
40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.
41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.
42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.
43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that they which could swim, should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:
44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship; and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.

And when he had spoken thus, and had taken bread, he begged a blessing on it, and *gave thanks to God before them all,* for that provision which he gave them in their necessities, and for the assurance of life with which he had favoured them by so particular a revelation; *and having broken* [*it*,] *he* set them an example, and he himself *began to eat* heartily. *And being all encouraged* by the cheerful and pious discourse of the apostle, *they also took* [*some*] *food,* as he had done; and on the whole, sad as their circumstances were, they made a comfortable and refreshing meal. *And* by the way, *we* had a great number of persons aboard, and *were in all in the ship* no less than *two hundred and seventy-six souls. And* after they had done their meal, *being satisfied with food,* *they* once more *lightened the ship, and* having been told by Paul that they should run upon some island, they threw away the very stores they had on board, and *cast out* the remainder of *the corn into the sea.*

And when it was day, they had the shore before them, but *did not know the land,* and still were at a loss what course to take; *but they perceived a certain creek, having a* level *shore* convenient for landing, *into which they were minded, if they were able, to have thrust the ship. And* with this view, *when they had weighed their anchors, they committed* [*the ship*] *to the sea,*[e] and tried to stand in for the creek, *at the same time loosing the rudder-bands,* that they might reach the land with the greater safety,[f] *and hoisting up the mainsail to the wind,*[g] which seemed to set right for their purpose, *they made for the shore. But falling on a place* which was a neck of land *where two seas met,* such was the violence of the current, that *they ran the ship aground; and the forepart,* which struck upon the sand, *stuck fast, and remained immovable, while the hinder part was broken* to pieces *by the force of the waves.*

In this critical juncture, as there were several prisoners aboard who were to be conveyed in custody to Rome, there was a most unjust and cruel purpose formed against them, *and the counsel of the soldiers was, that they should kill the prisoners, lest any one should* take this opportunity to *swim away, and* should *escape* out of their hands: of which they did not care to run the hazard, as they well knew how severe the Roman law was in such cases where there was any room to suspect the guards of connivance or negligence. *But the centurion, being desirous to save* so worthy and considerable a person as *Paul,*[h] *hindered them from* executing [*their*] *purpose, and commanded those that could swim to throw* [*themselves*] *out first into the sea, and get away to land; And* as for *the remainder, some* adventured themselves *upon planks,* with which the wreck supplied them, *and others upon some of* [*the things*] which they found means to get out *of the ship; and so,* through the singular care of Divine Providence, *it came to pass,* according to the prediction of Paul, *that they all got safe to land,* and there was not one single life lost.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE section we now have been reading contains a remarkable illustration of the obligations we are under to use the most proper means for security and success, even while we are committing ourselves to the care of Divine Providence, and waiting the accomplishment of God's own promises. For it would be most unreasonable to imagine that he ever intended any promise to encourage rational creatures to act in a wild and irrational manner; or to remain inactive, when he has given them natural capacities of doing something at least for their own benefit. It is in exerting these that we are to expect his powerful aid; and all the grace, beauty, and wisdom of the promise would be lost if we were to take it in any other view: To abuse it in a contrary view, is at best vain and dangerous presumption, if all pretence of relying upon it be not profane hypocrisy. Ver. 31 32

How solicitous are men in danger for the preservation of this mortal and perishing life! They cast out their goods in a storm; they throw away the tackling of the ship to lighten it; and for many succeeding days forget even to eat their bread. O when shall we see a solicitude any thing like this about the concerns of their never-dying souls! Alas, amidst the extremest danger, they are rather like those who, in such a storm as this, should have been sleeping on the top of a mast. (Prov. xxiii. 34.) Let us not wonder if, when awakened on a sudden, and made to see and to feel the extremity of their case, they are for a while taken off from attending as usual to 18, 19 33

think this alludes to a custom among mariners to make vows in times of extremity, and to shave their heads in consequence of them, and so interpret these words as if it were said, "You need "not *vow your hair;* you shall be safe without that expedient." (See Dryden's *Notes on Juvenal*, p. 183.) But it appears to have been a proverbial and general expression of entire safety. Compare 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xii. 7; xxi. 18.

e *When they had weighed the anchors, they committed* [*the ship*] *to the sea.*] Some rather chuse to render this, that *having cut the anchors, they left* them *in the sea;* and the original indeed is dubious, and will admit of either sense: Περιελοντες τας αγκυρας, ειων εις την θαλασσαν. See De Dieu, *in loc.*

f *Loosing the rudder-bands:* ανεντες τας ζευκτηριας των πηδαλιων.] Dr. Benson observes, agreeably to the judgment of Grotius, that their ships in those days had commonly two rudders, one on each side, which were fastened to the ship by bands or chains, and on loosing these bands, the rudders sunk deeper into the sea, and by their weight rendered the ship less subject to be overset by the winds. (*Hist.* Vol. II. p. 256.) But it seems rather that the rudders had been fastened before, when they had let the vessel drive, and were now loosened, when they had need of them to steer her into the creek; and after they had just been throwing out their corn to lighten the ship, it is not easy to suppose they should immediately contrive a method to increase the weight of it.——That they had frequently two rudders to their ships Bochart and Elsner have confirmed by several authorities. See Bochart, *Hieroz.* Part. II. *lib.* 4. *cap.* 1. p. 453; and Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 488, 489.

g *Hoisting up the mainsail to the wind.*] So our translators render the word αρτεμωνα, and I, who am not accurately acquainted with the form either of ancient or of modern ships, shelter myself under their authority; but Grotius (who contends that σκευος, ver. 17. signifies *the mainmast,* and consequently that the mainsail was now gone, ver. 19.) supposes it was a sail near the forepart of the ship, answering either to what we call the foremast, or to the bowsprit; which last seems to agree best with the account which Stephens has collected from the most considerable authorities. See his *Latin Thesaurus,* in the word ARTEMON.

h *Being desirous to save Paul.*] Thus God, for Paul's sake, not only saved all the rest of the ship's company from being lost in the sea, but kept the prisoners from being murdered according to the unjust and barbarous proposal of the soldiers, who could have thought of no worse a scheme had they been all condemned malefactors, and had these guards, instead of conveying them to their trial, been carrying them to the place of execution.

SECT. 58. their secular affairs; nor rashly censure that as madness which may be the first entrance of true wisdom into their minds.

We see how cheerful Paul was amidst the rage of winds and waves, under a sense of the faithful care of his
ACTS XXVII. God; and how the assurance which he gave to the rest that their lives should be preserved, though their possessions in the ship were all lost, animated them to eat their bread with cheerfulness. With how much greater cheer-
34—36 fulness may they sustain all temporal losses, and relish, in the midst of them, all the remaining bounties of Providence, (as some always remain,) whose eternal life is secured by the word of God, and the engagement of a covenant which he has confirmed by an oath!

24 To conclude, It was to Paul that the lives of those that sailed with him were given; and his fellow-prisoners
42, 43 owed to him a double preservation, first from the sword, and then from the sea. Thus may a relation to God's faithful servants, and a community of interests with them, be the means of great temporal advantage even to those that are strangers to the covenant of promise. Surely after so many remarkable circumstances, pointing out the apostle to the company of this ship as a teacher commissioned by God, and favoured with extraordinary intercourses with him, they must be very inexcusable if they did not henceforward commence his attentive hearers and humble disciples. Those of them who did so, would find their deliverance from the fury of the sea but an
44 earnest of another deliverance infinitely greater and better; and are long ere this lodged with him on a far more hospitable shore, and in a more peaceful harbour, than Malta or than earth could afford.

SECTION LIX.

Paul and his companions are hospitably entertained at Malta: he miraculously escapes the fatal effects of a viper's bite, cures Publius's father of a fever, and then pursues his voyage to Rome. Acts xxviii. 1—16.

Acts xxviii. 1.

SECT. 59. THE apostle Paul and all the rest of the ship's company having escaped the danger of the shipwreck, *and being* thus *got safe* [*to land*,] they had no sooner reached the shore but some of the inhabitants came to them, and *they then knew that the island* on which
ACTS XXVIII. they were cast *was called Melita* or Malta.[a] *And the barbarians* of that place (as the Romans, though in many respects more barbarous themselves, proudly accounted those
2 who were its native inhabitants) *treated us with* an *uncommon* degree of *humanity*;[b] *for having kindled a fire, they brought us all to* [*it*,] *because of the present rain* which had followed the storm, *and because of the cold*, with which we were almost ready to perish.

3 *Now as Paul was gathering up a bundle of sticks and laying* [*them*] *upon the fire, a viper* which had lain concealed among the wood, *coming out of the heat* upon feeling
4 the warmth of the fire, *fastened upon his hand* and bit it. *And as soon as the barbarians saw the fierce animal*[c] *hanging on his hand*, as they perceived he was a prisoner, and had some notion of a Divine Providence and its moral government, *they said one to another, This man is certainly a murderer*[d] or some other detestable character, *whom* the divine *vengeance hath not permitted to live, though he be saved from* the danger
5 of *the sea*. *But* as the miraculous power of Christ instantly interposed to heal him, (compare Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19.) *he* without any manner of confusion *shaking off the fierce animal into the fire, suffered no evil*, and took no further notice of what had hap-
6 pened. *However, they expected*, according to what they had known to be usual in such cases, that the venom would soon operate in such a manner *that he should* either *have swollen or suddenly have fallen down dead* upon the spot: *And having waited a considerable time* to observe the effect of it upon him, *and seeing no mischief* at all *befal him*,[e] instead of taking him to be a murderer, *changing their minds they said that he was* surely some deity descended in a human form, as nothing less than the power of *a god* could ward off so extreme a danger.[f]

And in the neighbourhood of that place where our shipwrecked company had met with

Acts xxviii. 1.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters

a *Melita* or Malta.] It is well known that this small island (about twelve miles broad and twenty long, and sixty distant from Sicily to the south) took its name from the abundance of honey found in it. It also yields a great deal of cotton, and though it has but three feet depth of earth above the solid rock, is very fruitful. Paul's shipwreck here engaged a kind of superstitious regard to it, in consequence of which it was given, A. D. 1530, by the Emperor Charles V. to the knights of St. John in Jerusalem, when they had been expelled from Rhodes by the Turks: They are a thousand in number, of whom five hundred always reside, and are called Hospitallers.

b *The barbarians treated us with uncommon humanity.*] The Greeks and Romans reckoned all other nations but their own, Barbarians, as differing from them in their customs or language; and all mankind are therefore comprehended by the apostle Paul under the distinction of Greeks and Barbarians, Rom. i. 14. This island, which had several commodious havens, was peopled by a colony of the Phœnicians, and the inhabitants were noted for their civility to strangers. See Diodor. Sic. *lib.* v. p. 204. Edit. Steph.

c *The fierce animal.*] This is the proper import of the word θηριον, here used. Bos has well shewn (*Exercit.* p. 90, 91.) that the physicians use it to express any poisonous animal, and Lucian in particular applies it, as here, to a viper; (*Philopseud. tom.* ii. p. 333. Edit. Græv.) but to render it *beast* is by no means justifiable. See Bochart, *Hieroz.* Part II. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 2.

d *This man is certainly a murderer.*] Elsner says (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 489—491.) they concluded he was a murderer rather than guilty of any other crime, because they saw the viper hanging on his hand, which therefore they judged to have been the offending part, according to the rule which (as he shows by many curious and entertaining instances) prevailed much among the ancients, that persons were often remarkably punished in that part of the body which had been the immediate instrument of their sin.——Deza justly observes that ουκ εασεν should be rendered, according to its exact form, *hath not permitted*, to signify that they looked upon him as in effect a dead man, after having been bit by that venomous creature.

e *Seeing no mischief befal him.*] Elsner observes that many of the heathens thought there was something divine in the nature of serpents, and that deities, or good genii, who were made use of as the instruments of delivering and honouring those that were the peculiar favourites of the gods, often appeared in that shape. (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 492, 493.) Hence idols were often made with serpents near them; and there have been numerous and indeed astonishing instances of religious worship paid to that kind of animal, absurd as it may seem. See *Revelat. Exam. with Candour*, Vol. I. p. 80, 81; Dr. Jenkins, *On Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 216—248; Bishop Stillingfleet, *Orig. Sacra*, p. 516—518; and Dr. Charles Owen, *On Serpents, Dissert.* IV. p. 216—232.

f *They said that he was a god.*] Grotius, Dr. Whitby, and some others, think they took him for Hercules, Αλεξικακος, who was worshipped in this island, and was, according to Ptolemy, (*Geograph. lib.* iv. *cap* 4.) one of the gods of the Phœnicians.

were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the island, came and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-Forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

so kind a welcome, *there was the estate of the chief* magistrate or governor *of the island,*[g] *whose name was Publius; who* with a generous and friendly disposition *having received us into his house, entertained us* there *in a* very *courteous* and hospitable *manner for three days* together. *And so it was that* at this very time *the father of Publius* was dangerously ill, *being seized with a fever and bloody flux,* by which he *was confined to his bed; to whom Paul going in,* made him a visit in the apartment where he lay, *and having prayed* for his recovery, *laid his hands on him and healed him.*

Now, therefore, when this [*miracle*] *was wrought* on a person so well known and of so great importance, the news of it soon spread abroad; and as they were desirous to obtain the same advantage, all *the rest also who had disorders* of any kind *in the* whole *island,* as many as were able to travel, or could any way be brought, *came* to Paul *and were healed.* And this was followed with the highest testimonies of esteem and gratitude from all the people, *who also* seeing such a divine power exerting itself by means of one in our company, *honoured us with great honours,* as men peculiarly favoured by heaven: *And* such was the respect and kindness they had for us, that *when we departed* thence, *they* brought us plenty of provision, and *put on board such things as were necessary* for our comfortable accommodation; so that, by the good providence of God and the generosity of these hospitable and grateful people, we were well furnished for pursuing our voyage to Rome.

And after we had been ashore *three months, we departed* from thence, having shipped ourselves (as we had done before, chap. xxvii. 6.) *in a ship of Alexandria that had wintered in the island, whose sign was* Gemini or the twins, that is, *Castor and Pollux,*[h] fictitious deities of the heathen who were supposed to have some peculiar power over storms; their figure therefore was placed on the head of the vessel, and to them it was peculiarly dedicated. *And* not long after we had left Melita, we made the island of Sicily; and *being arrived at Syracuse,*[i] the most considerable city of that island, *we continued* [*there*] *three days. From thence we coasted round* the eastern shore of Sicily, *and came over against* the city and promontory of *Rhegium,* in the southernmost part of Italy, from which, as the name of that place implies, it was supposed the island of Sicily was broken off. *And after* lying by *one day,* we had a favourable gale, and *the south wind arising, we* pursued our voyage, and *came in two days to Puteoli,* a noted town for trade, which lay not far from Naples, and was very famous for its hot baths; *Where* we had no sooner landed but *we found* some christian *brethren, and were* earnestly *entreated to stay with them seven days,* that they might have the better opportunity of hearing Paul, and of conversing with him; and the centurion was so good as to consent that we should stay: *And so,* having left the ship, *we went* the rest of the way by land *to Rome.*

And from thence several of *the* christian *brethren* who resided at Rome,[k] *having heard of our affairs,* and particularly that we were on our way thither, (as they were sensible of the great character of Paul, and the important obligations which they were under to him for his excellent Epistle to the Romans, written a few years before this,) *came out to meet us,* and to attend us in our entrance into that illustrious city: And [*some*] of them came *as far as Appii-Forum,* a town adjoining to the famous Appian Way, which was fifty-one miles distant from Rome; *and* [*others*] only *to* a place called Tres Tabernæ, or *the Three Taverns,* which was but about thirty: *Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God* for the encouragement which this circumstance gave him to hope that these christian friends, who were so forward to begin an acquaintance with him, would be a support to him during his confinement there, and a means of promoting the success of any attempts of usefulness which he might be able to make among them; *and* accordingly he *took courage,*[l] and pursued the small remainder of his journey with new spirit and alacrity.

g *The chief of the island.*] Grotius has produced an ancient inscription, by which it appears that the title of πρωτος, or *chief,* was given to the governor of this island, and so it is used here by St. Luke, with his usual propriety of expression.

h *Whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*] It was the custom of the ancients to have images on their ships, both at the head and stern; the first of which was called παρασημον, *the sign,* from which the ship was named, and the other was that of the tutelar deity to whose care the ship was committed; which probably might give occasion to the fable that Europa was carried away by Jupiter in the shape of a bull. There is no doubt but they had sometimes deities at the head; and then it is most likely, if they had any figure at the stern, it was the same, as it is hardly probable the ship should be called by the name of one deity, and be committed to the care of another. (See Bochart. *Chan. lib.* ii. *cap.* 3. *init.* and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. viii. § 12. p. 326, 327.) The figure that was used for Castor and Pollux, as Dr. Lightfoot says, was that of two young men on horseback, with each of them a javelin in his hand, &c. But others have observed that the sign of Castor and Pollux was that of a double cross; and though the Greeks took them for a sign in the zodiac which was called the Twins, and considered as sacred to these fictitious deities, whom they supposed to be the sons of Jupiter by Leda, it was not at first represented by two boys, but by two beasts, as referring to the fruitfulness of goats in producing twin kids about the time the sun was in that constellation. (See Hyde, *Relig. Pers. cap.* 32. and *Nature Displayed.* Vol. I. § 2. p. 263, 264.) The appearance of both these constellations together was (as Dr. Hammond has observed, after Strabo, Pausanias, and other ancient writers) thought favourable to mariners, and therefore, for a good omen, they had them carved or painted on the head of the ship, and gave it a name from thence, which the sacred historian does not scruple to use.

i *Syracuse.*] This capital city of the island of Sicily lay on its eastern coast, and is said to have been twenty-two miles round, and to have equalled Carthage in its riches. (See Strabo, *lib.* vi. p. 186; and Livy, *Hist. lib.* xxv. *cap.* 31.) It was by this time well recovered from the desolation which Marcellus had brought upon it, two hundred and ten years before Christ, when the celebrated Archimedes was slain here.

k *The* christian *brethren* who resided at Rome.] It is very remarkable that we have no certain information by whom christianity was first preached in Rome. Probably, as some inhabitants of that most famous city were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 10.) they being converted themselves, might at their return carry the gospel thither, confirming it by miraculous works, and by the exercise of extraordinary gifts.

l *He thanked God and took courage.*] This expression may perhaps intimate that his courage began in some measure to be shaken. He knew there was a famous church at Rome, which had been long planted, Rom. i. 8. and to which, about three years before this journey, he had written a long Epistle, (compare note c, on Acts xx. 3. p. 538.) in which he had expressed an affectionate desire to see them; Rom. i. 11; xv. 32. in a near view of doing which he now rejoiced, esteeming it as the first-fruits of their friendship, that they had come a day's journey to meet him, no doubt in a

SECT. 59. ——— ACTS XXVIII.

And when we came to Rome, Julius *the centurion*, who ever since we set out from Cæsarea had treated us in so friendly a manner, and whose regard for Paul could not but be greatly increased by what had passed at Melita, *delivered the prisoners*, according to his commission, *to the* prefect or *captain of the* prætorian *band*:[m] *But* as he gave a very kind and honourable account of *Paul*, he *was permitted to dwell apart* from the other prisoners *in an house of his own*,[n] *with a* Roman *soldier that guarded him*,[o] till his cause might be heard; which, by one accident and another, was put off from time to time, so that it was not despatched till above two years after his arrival at Rome.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 Let us again pause, and on this new occasion of doing it, adore the wise conduct of Providence, though *its 2 ways were in the sea, and its path in the great waters.* (Psal. lxvii. 19.) Still did our dear Redeemer take care of his faithful servants and ministers, not only delivering them and their companions from destruction by shipwreck, but providing tenderly for them in their destitute condition, when their wet and probably torn garments seem to have been all they could call their own. The custom of Rome and Greece taught them to call all nations but their own barbarous; but sure the generosity which these uncultivated inhabitants of Malta showed, was far more valuable than all the varnish which the politest education could give, where it taught not humanity and compassion.

4 It is with pleasure that we trace amongst them the force of conscience and the belief of Providence; which some more learned people have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise: But they erred in concluding that calamities must always be interpreted as judgments; and let us guard against the same error, lest, like them, we unwarily censure, not only the innocent, but the excellent of the earth.

5 God wrought a most seasonable miracle for the preservation of Paul from the fury of the viper; and this frank and 6 honest, though ignorant, people, immediately retract their censure: But, as human nature is apt to do, they fall immediately from one extreme to another, and from pronouncing him a murderer, conclude him a god. They after- 10 wards submitted to be better taught, and learnt to regard him as what he really was, a holy man favoured of heaven, and raised up to be an instrument of great good, both to the bodies and souls of his fellow-creatures. Let us also be willing candidly to correct and confess our mistakes, when means of better information offer; and study to adjust our notions of men's characters according to truth; that we may neither calumniate nor deify them, *but judge righteous judgment.* (John vii. 24.)

7—9 Well was Publius, the chief of the island, with the other inhabitants of it, rewarded for their kindness to these distressed strangers, by the cures wrought on the diseased in their respective families; and naturally did their kindness and liberality to them increase with such experience of the miraculous power which wrought by Paul. We cannot but conclude that this holy apostle, whose heart was always so warm with zeal for Christ, especially when it was quickened with such a deliverance, would take this happy opportunity of diffusing the savour of his name here. He would tell them, no doubt, who it was that healed them, and testify to them of that greater salvation and more important cure which they were to seek from him; nor can we imagine that his labour was entirely in vain in the Lord. Happy wreck on the ruins of which the temple of the Lord was raised, and by occasion of which barbarians were transformed into christians! Who can say how many distempered minds were healed, how many sons and 11 daughters were born to God and to glory, in these three months which Paul and Luke spent here! For modest as that beloved physician of souls as well as of bodies is in every thing relating to himself, we cannot imagine that he was inactive or unsuccessful in the pious labour. And how naturally did all this tend to raise the regard of the ship's company for these servants of the Most High God, to whom, as instruments in the hand of his good providence, they first owed their lives, and now their accommodations; to whom also, we hope, some of them owed even their own souls!

16 It is extremely probable that the indulgence showed to Paul in Rome, the remains of liberty which he enjoyed while in bonds there, and the much more valued opportunities of usefulness which that liberty gave him, were, in some degree at least, owing to the experience and report of these extraordinary events. Thus, O Lord, shalt thou lead us into whatever difficulties and dangers thou pleasest, and we will cheerfully wait the happy event which shall at length prove the wisdom and kindness of thy most mysterious conduct.

14, 15 In the mean time, even while travelling in the bonds of affliction, may we see thine hand in all the countenance which we meet with from our christian brethren; and cheered with their converse and their friendly offices, may we, like Paul, thank God and take courage, in an humble assurance that thou wilt stand by us in every future unknown extremity; and wilt either manifest thy power and goodness in raising up human supports, or display thine all-sufficiency in a yet more glorious manner, by bearing us up when they all fail us!

very kind and respectful manner. He might reasonably expect they would contribute much to lighten his bonds, as no doubt they did, though so strange a panic seized them when he appeared before Cæsar to make his apology, 2 Tim. iv. 16.

m *To the* prefect or *captain of the* prætorian *band.*] It was customary for prisoners who were brought to Rome, to be delivered to this officer, who had the charge of the state prisoners, as appears from the instance of Agrippa, who was taken into custody by Macro, the prætorian prefect that succeeded Sejanus, (Joseph. *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 6.) and from Trajan's order to Pliny, when two were in commission. (Plin. *lib.* x. *epist.* 65.) See Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* Book I. chap. x. § 11. Vol. I. p. 532, 533; and Mr. Biscoe, *At Boyle's Lect.* chap. ix. § 9. p. 360.—The person who had now this office, was the noted Burrhus Afranius; but both before and after him, it was held by two; Tacit. *Annal. lib.* xii. § 42. *et lib.* xiv. § 51.

n *Apart* from the other prisoners *in an house of his own.*] Raphelius has shown (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 191.) that the expression κατ' ἑαυτον, may signify either *apart*, (for which see Bos, *Exercit.* p. 91.) or *at his own pleasure.* But it is well known it often signifies *at one's own house*; and so ver. 30. seems to explain it here. By this means he was excused from all the affliction which lying in the common prison, among the wretched creatures who would probably have been his companions there, must have given to a man of his sense, education, and piety.

o *With a soldier that guarded him.*] This soldier was probably chained to him, as the Roman custom was. Who that had met Paul in these bonds, would have guessed at his real character, and have imagined him to have been one of the most upright, benevolent, and generous of mankind! Yet such the apostle undoubtedly was.

SECTION LX.

The history concludes with an account of a solemn audience which Paul had of the Jews at Rome, soon after his arrival there: most of them reject the gospel he published among them, but he continues to preach it during two years of his confinement. Acts xxviii. 17, *to the end.*

Acts xxviii. 17.

AND it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together.—

PAUL'S confinement at Rome was not so strict but he had liberty to send for persons to him; *and* while he waited for his appeal to be determined, he was willing to remove the prejudices of his countrymen, and, notwithstanding the injurious treatment he had met with, would suffer nothing to be wanting on his part to make them sensible of the affectionate regard that he had for them: Accordingly *it came to pass, that after* he had been there *three days, Paul called together those that were the chief of the Jews* who sojourned then at Rome. SECT. 60. ACTS XXVIII. 17

—And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans:

And when, according to his desire, *they were come together* in the private house where he dwelt, *he said unto them, Men* [*and*] *brethren, though I have done nothing contrary to* the interest and honour of *the* Jewish *people, or to* the authority of *our paternal customs* as derived from the holy patriarchs and Moses, *yet was I delivered a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: Who having examined me,* and heard all that my adversaries could suggest against me, *were willing to have set* [*me*] *at liberty, as there was no* offence which they could judge to be a sufficient *cause of* putting me to *death,* or of keeping me under longer confinement, to be discovered *in me.* *But when* some of *the Jews,* who in consequence of gross misrepresentations had entertained strong prejudices against me, contradicted and *opposed* my discharge, and were violently set upon preventing [*it,*] *I* found it necessary to remove my cause to Rome, and *was obliged to appeal to Cæsar:* And this I assure you I have done, *not as having any thing of which to accuse my own nation;* for whatever injury I have received from any particular persons, I heartily forgive them, and wish the whole Jewish people, without excepting even my most inveterate enemies among them, all possible prosperity and happiness; but I was, contrary to my inclination, forced on this appeal purely in my own defence, and to prevent that assassination which I knew some ill-disposed persons were contriving against me. 18 19

18 Who when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it,* I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you to see *you,* and to speak with *you:* because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

For this reason, therefore, as soon as I came hither *I entreated that I might see and speak with you,* my dear brethren, hoping to prevent any prejudice which might be entertained to my disadvantage; *For* indeed I am rather worthy of your compassion and friendship than of your resentment; as [*it is*] *on account of* that which is *the* great common *hope of* all *Israel* that *I am bound with this chain;* my sufferings arising from my regard to that glorious Messiah for whom Israel professes to wait, and to that eternal life which he hath purchased and procured for those that receive him under that character. 20

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

And they said to him, We have neither received any *letters* as yet *from* Jerusalem, or any other part of *Judea, concerning thee; nor has any* one *of the brethren* of our nation *that has come hither, related* to us what is the purport of the charge on which thou art to be tried before Cæsar, *or* so much as *said any evil* at all *concerning thee.* *But we* are willing thou shouldst give us an account of thy doctrine, and *desire to hear from thee what thou thinkest,* what thy particular sentiments are, and what thou hast to say in defence of thy tenets as a disciple and missionary of Jesus of Nazareth; *for as concerning this sect,* which professes so high a regard to him, *it is known to us* in the general, *that it is every where spoken against,*[a] and that bad sentiments are entertained of it both by the Jews and heathens, as teaching a revolt from those ways of worship in which people have been educated, even among us as well as them, and requiring unbounded subjection to a person who seems to have no imaginable claim to it. 21 22

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

And having appointed him a certain *day* which might best suit the convenience of most that were then present, *many* of them *came to him* in the morning *at his lodging; to whom he expounded* various passages of their own scriptures, as well as the chief principles of the christian faith; *testifying* in the most cogent and pathetic manner the erection and establishment of *the kingdom of God* under the Messiah,[b] *and* earnestly *persuading them of the things that relate to* the Lord *Jesus* under that character; which he proved *both from the law of Moses, and from* the writings of *the prophets:* And he was so intent upon this grand affair, that he continued his discourse *from morning till evening.*[c] 23

a *It is every where spoken against.*] Some think this refers to a fact mentioned by Justin Martyr, (*Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 171. *et* 368. Edit. Thirlb.) and afterwards by Origen (*Contra Cels. lib.* vi. p. 293, 294.) and Eusebius, (*Eccl. Hist. lib.* iv. *cap.* 18.) that the Jews at Jerusalem sent chosen men of the most distinguished character all over the world, representing the christians as an atheistical sect, and charging them with the grossest calumnies which the ignorant heathens advanced against them. The fact itself is in all respects very credible; but I apprehend that the exact date of it cannot be ascertained, nor can I any where find (as some have asserted) that it is mentioned by Philo Judæus. See my *Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ, &c.* p. 263, 264. 2d edit.

b *Testifying the kingdom of God.*] Probably, as Mr. Cradock well observes, (*Apost. Hist.* part ii. p. 306.) he insisted on two topics:—That the kingdom of God, which they had so long expected, was of a spiritual and not of a temporal nature;—and that Jesus of Nazareth, in whose name he preached, was the person foretold as the promised Messiah and Lord of that kingdom.

c *From morning till evening.*] The length of this conference shows how zealous a desire Paul had for the conversion of his countrymen. It was undoubtedly a very curious and important discourse, and we should have wished to have been favoured with it, as well as with that of our Lord, of which we have only a general account, Luke xxiv. 27. But as God, for wise reasons no doubt, has seen fit to deny us that pleasure, let us acquiesce in this, that we know enough to confirm our faith in the gospel, if we discover a teachable temper; and if we do not, the narration of other discourses and facts would probably have occasioned new cavils; for there is hardly

SECT. 60. ——— ACTS XXVIII.

And the event of what he said was various; for *some* of them *were* happily *persuaded* to embrace christianity, *by the things which were spoken; and some*, on the other hand, were influenced by such strong prejudices that they *believed not*, but were so hardened as to reject the gospel amidst all the evidence which he advanced to support it. *And so, disagreeing with each other, they broke up the assembly; Paul* only
24 *saying* [*this*] *one word* in the close of all, on occasion of that obstinacy which he
25 observed to prevail in most of them, *Surely well did the Holy Spirit speak by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers* of old, (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) and well does the description it has
26 given of them set forth the hardness of your hearts, and suit you even to this day;[d] *When it says*, in that awful commission the prophet was commanded to discharge, "*Go to* "*this* perverse and obstinate *people*, to whom I have so often sent in vain, *and say*, "*Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and*
27 "*shall not perceive: For the heart of this people is become gross*, and as it were "grown stiff with fatness; *and with their ears they hear heavily*, in a dull, stupid "way; *and they have drawn their eyes together*, as it were on purpose to compose "themselves to sleep, *lest they should see with* [*their*] *eyes, and hear with* [*their*] *ears*, "*and understand with* [*their*] *heart, and should be converted, and I should heal* "*them*." As if he had said, They act in such a manner under the most awakening means as if they had studied artful ways of rendering themselves insensible, and were determined not to receive my message, and the salvation which it proposes to them.
28 *Therefore be it known unto you*, however your proud hearts may resent it, *that the salvation of God* which you despise, and seem to fortify yourselves against, *is sent to the Gentiles; and they will hear* and embrace [*it*,] and so inherit the blessings which you reject: To them therefore will we preach all the words of this life, and I in particular will from this day forward seek, in their faith and obedience, my consolation under that grief which the infidelity of my brethren gives me.
29 *And when he had said these things, the Jews departed* out of the place, not being prevailed upon to receive the gospel, yet *having great debates among themselves*; some thinking there was considerable weight in what Paul had urged to defend it, while others were enraged, and spoke of him and his arguments with great contempt and indignation.
30 *But* nevertheless they who were most his enemies, and most desirous to add affliction to his bonds, were not permitted by Providence to do him any harm; for after this *Paul continued two whole years* at Rome,[e] *in his own hired house*,[f] before he was heard by Cæsar or his deputy, upon his appeal: *And* during this long period of time, he was solicitous to do all he could to promote the gospel of his Divine Master, though he could not act so freely as he desired: in this view, therefore, he *received all that came to*
31 *him* to be instructed in the design and evidence of the gospel; *Preaching* with great ardour and zeal *the kingdom of God* as established in the person of his exalted Son, *and teaching those things which relate to the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the religion he hath instituted in the world, *with all freedom of speech*, [*and*] *without any restraint* from the Roman magistrates. In consequence of this, many converts were made, and this confinement, which seemed to have so discouraging an aspect, was on the whole a means of promoting the gospel: Many of his retired hours were also employed in corresponding with the christian churches, and writing several of those excellent epistles[g] which were to be so great a blessing to the most distant ages.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.
25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him;

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

any argument in favour of truth, from which a prejudiced and captious wit cannot draw an objection and frame a sophistry to maintain error.

d *Well did the Holy Spirit speak to our fathers*, and well does the description suit you, &c.] The apostle here could not refer to them all, because some believed; but it is probable most of them rejected the gospel.——As for the quotation from Isaiah which he applies to them, I would observe that it is quoted oftener than any other text from the Old Testament, that is, six times, in the New; here, and Mat. xiii. 14, 15; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; and Rom. xi. 8. yet in such a variety of expression, as plainly proves the apostles did not confine themselves exactly either to the words of the original or of the Greek version.

e *Paul continued two whole years* at Rome.] As Luke concludes his history with Paul's abode at Rome, before his journey into Spain, we may refer, as Dr. More observes, *Theolog. Works*, p. 220. that he wrote both his Gospel and the Acts while the apostle was still living, of whose actions he was himself an eye-witness, and by whom it is very probable this book was revised, as the ancients also say his Gospel was.

f *In his own hired house.*] Dr. Lardner proves from Ulpian, that the proconsul was to judge whether a person under accusation were to be thrown into prison, or delivered to a soldier to keep, or committed to sureties, or trusted on his parole of honour. *Credib.* Book. I. chap. 10. § 9. Vol. I. p. 524, 525. It appears from hence, that the persecution against christians at Rome was not then begun; and perhaps Paul's friends in Nero's family (Phil. iv. 22.) used their interest with the Emperor to procure him this liberty.

g Many of his retired hours were also employed in corresponding, &c.] It is well known that the Epistle to the Ephesians, (or, as some think, to the Laodiceans, to whom, however, it is certain Paul did write, Col. iv. 16.) to the Colossians and Philippians, as well as that to Philemon, were written from hence during this imprisonment, and that to the Hebrews in or quickly after it; but as for the Second to Timothy, I am ready to think it of a later date.—It seems highly probable, that about the end of the two years here spoken of he was set at liberty. Some have questioned whether he ever returned into the East again, which yet, from Philem. ver. 22; and Heb. xiii. 23. he seems to have expected. Clemens Romanus (*Ad Cor. Epist.* i. *cap.* 5.) expressly tells us that he preached in the West, and that to its utmost bounds, which must at least include Spain, whither he intended to go, Rom. xv. 24, 25. (See *Chrysost.* Vol. VIII. p. 59.) Theodoret adds, that he went to the Islands of the Sea, as elsewhere he numbers Gaul (that is, France) and Britain among the disciples of the tent-maker. (See Bp. Stillingfleet's *Orig. Brit.* p. 39.) But in what order he took these places, or how long he remained in any of them, cannot be determined.—We are told, however, that about the year of Christ 65 or 67, (for chronologers differ, and I think we cannot exactly fix it,) he returned to Rome, where some say he met with Peter, who was thrown into prison with other christians, on a pretence of being concerned in the burning of the city. Chrysostom tells us that he here converted one of Nero's concubines, which so incensed that cruel prince that he put him to death; probably after an imprisonment in which the Second Epistle to Timothy was written.——It is, I think, universally agreed among all ancient writers who mention his death, that he was beheaded at Aquæ Salviæ, three miles from Rome; for being free of that city, he could not be crucified, as Peter was, according to the tradition of the Latin church, on the very same day. It is said, and there is great reason to believe it, that this glorious confessor gave his head to the fatal stroke with the greatest cheerfulness, and also that he was buried on the Via Ostensis, two miles from Rome, where Constantine the Great erected a church to his memory, A. D. 318. which was successively repaired and beautified by Theodosius the Great and the Empress Placidia. (See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 22. Not. Fleury's

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us with pleasure observe that uniform tenor of christian zeal, and compassionate regard to the salvation of men, which prevailed in the mind of Paul, and reigned in it even to the very period of this history, yea, to that of his life. No sooner was he arrived at Rome, but an earnest desire of communicating the blessings of the gospel to his kinsmen according to the flesh, engaged him to send for the Jews, and to confer with them concerning the kingdom of God; generously forgetting his own wrongs, and waving those complaints he might so justly have made against his accusers and persecutors. He found them here, as well as in Judea, under prejudices which he could not conquer with all his strength of reason and eloquence. They called the christian religion a sect, and maintained that it was every where spoken against: But if this were indeed the case, how far was it from being any reason against embracing and obeying the gospel! since all the men upon earth might attempt in vain to make falsehood truth, and truth falsehood, in any single instance; and might as well pull the sun from the firmament, as, by all their malice and rage, dethrone that blessed Redeemer whom God hath established by a decree firmer than the ordinances of heaven. SECT. 60. ACTS XXVII. Ver. 19 22

No scripture of the Old Testament is more frequently referred to in the New than those words of Isaiah, which contain so just a description of what the Jewish nation was in the days of that prophet, and in those of Christ and his apostles. How deplorable a case to be spiritually blind and deaf under the brightest light of the gospel and its loudest proclamations; to harden the heart against the most gracious offers of healing and life, and to arm themselves against their own salvation with weapons of eternal death! Justly were they at last given over by God, and sealed up under incurable obstinacy. May divine pity and help be extended to those who are marching on by large steps towards the same character, and as it seems towards the same end! Adored be divine grace that any are inclined to hear and to obey. To them the ministers of Christ may turn with pleasure, and find, in their believing regards to the gospel, a sufficient recompense for all the labours and hazards they encounter in a faithful concern for its propagation. 26, 27 25 28

To conclude all, Let us adore the gracious conduct of Providence, which secretly interposed to moderate the apostle's confinement, and thereby gave him an opportunity of performing various and extensive services to the church, of which he must otherwise have been incapable. *The wrath of man praises God*, and *the remainder of it he restrains.* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) He hath allotted to each of his servants, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, a due proportion both of labours and sufferings, and neither earth nor hell shall be able so to break in on his schemes, as to obstruct the one or increase the other. The sacred history, which is now closing upon us, affords many illustrations of this remark: Let us be thankful for it; and while we peruse it, let us indulge those reflections which may naturally arise from it, to establish our faith in the gospel, and to quicken our obedience to it. Amen! 30, 31

Eccl. Hist. Vol. I. Book ii. chap. 25; and Dr. Wells's *Geogr. of the New Testament.* Part II. § 19—23.) But his most glorious monument remains in his immortal writings, which if God spare my life to illustrate, I shall esteem the doing it one of the greatest honours which can be conferred upon me, and the most important service my pen can perform for the church of Christ.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS celebrated Epistle was probably written from Corinth when Paul was travelling through Greece, after finishing his tour in Macedonia, about the *year of our Lord* 58, which was the fourth of the Emperor Nero. The chief arguments to prove this have already been stated in a few words, p. 538, note c; and they are drawn from comparing Acts xx. 1—4. with Rom. xv. 25—27; xvi. 21. But I shall exhibit them again in my notes on those texts, as they occur in the Epistle, and shall observe the same method elsewhere on the like occasions.

The design of the Epistle has been much more controverted than its date; and yet it seems so obvious, that hardly any thing has surprised me more than the different and inconsistent plans which ingenious writers have given of it. I should but confound the reader, as well as swell this preface beyond all due bounds, if I should attempt distinctly to propose and examine them here. Instead of this, I shall therefore content myself with exhibiting (not *my own hypothesis*, for truly it has been my care to have *no hypothesis* at all, but) what, upon reading the Epistle, without any view but that of following the apostle whithersoever he should lead me, I find to be assured fact; and I will state these contents in as few and as plain words as I can, and so every reader will easily see what this great author *intended*, by seeing what he has *done*; for no doubt he answered his own design.

Now I think it must be evident to every reader of common discernment and attention, that Paul is labouring, through all this Epistle, "to fix on the mind of the christians to whom he addresses himself, a deep sense of the excellency of "the gospel, and to engage them to act in a manner agreeable to their profession of it." For this purpose, after a general salutation, (chap. i. 1—7.) and profession of his ardent affection for them, (ver. 8—15.) he declares, that he shall not be ashamed openly to maintain the gospel at Rome; for this general reason, that it is the great and powerful instrument of salvation, both to Jews and Gentiles, by means of faith. (Ver. 16, 17.) And then to demonstrate and vindicate its excellency in this view of it, the apostle shows,

I. That the world greatly needed such a dispensation; the Gentiles being fallen into a most abandoned state, (ver. 18, *to the end*,) and the Jews, though condemning others, being themselves no better; (chap. ii. *throughout*;) as, notwithstanding some cavils, which he obviates, (chap. iii. 1—8.) their own scriptures testify: (ver. 9—19.) So that there was an universal necessity of seeking for justification and salvation in this method. (Ver. 20, *to the end.*)

II. That Abraham and David themselves sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends, that is, by faith, (chap. iv. 1—12.) and that a very illustrious act of it entailed everlasting honour on that great patriarch from whom the Jews boasted their descent. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*)

III. That hereby believers are brought into so happy a state, as turns the greatest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. (Chap. v. 1—11.)

IV. That the calamities brought on the seed of the *first Adam* by his ever to be lamented fall, are with glorious advantage repaired to all who by faith become interested in the *second Adam.* (Ver. 12, *to the end.*)

V. That far from dissolving our obligations to *practical holiness*, the gospel greatly increases them by peculiar obligations, (chap. vi. 1—14.) which the apostle strongly urges upon them. (Ver. 15, *to the end.*)

By these general considerations, St. Paul illustrates the *excellency of the gospel* in the six first chapters of this Epistle, and they must be acknowledged considerations of the highest importance.

There were great numbers of Jews at Rome, many of whom had embraced the gospel; to make them therefore more sensible how glorious a dispensation it was, and to take them off from a fond attachment to the *Mosaical law*, now they were married to Christ by a solemn profession of his religion, (chap. vii. 1—6.) the apostle largely represents how comparatively ineffectual the motives of the *law* were to produce those degrees of obedience and holiness, which by a

lively faith in the gospel we obtain. (Chap. vii. 7, *to the end.* Chap. viii. 1, 2.) And here, in all the remainder of this celebrated chapter, the apostle gives a more particular view of those things which rendered the *gospel* so much more efficacious for this great purpose, viz. that of *forming the soul to holiness*, than the *legal economy* had been; (chap. viii. 9.) The discovery it makes of the incarnation and death of Christ, (ver. 3, 4;) the spirituality of temper to which it calls us, (ver. 5—8;) the communication of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit of God, whereby true believers are formed to a filial temper, (ver. 9—17;) the views which it exhibits of a state of glory so great and illustrious, that the whole creation seemed to wait for the manifestation of it, (ver. 18—25;) while in the mean time believers are supported under all their trials by the aids of the Spirit, (ver. 26, 27;) and an assurance that all events should co-operate for their advantage, (ver. 28;) since God has in consequence of his eternally glorious plan already done so much for us, (ver. 29, 30;) which emboldens us to conclude, that no accusation shall prevail against us, and no temptations or extremities separate us from his love. (Ver. 31, *to the end.*)

As the blessings so affectionately displayed above had been spoken of as the peculiar privileges of those who believed in the gospel, this evidently implied, that as all believing Gentiles had a full share in them, so all unbelieving Jews must necessarily be excluded from them. But as the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews was a topic of great importance, the apostle employs the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters in the discussion of it, and so concludes the argumentative part of this Epistle.

He introduces what he had to say on this interesting subject, by declaring that he thought most honourably and affectionately of the Jewish nation, (chap. ix. 1—5;) and then shows,

1st, That the rejection of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac too, was an incontestable fact, which the Jews themselves could not but grant to have happened, that is, with respect to the descendants of Ishmael and of Esau. (Ver. 6—13.)

2ndly, That the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges, to which none had any claim; and the sovereign appointment of some, from among many criminals, to peculiar and exemplary punishment; was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. (Ver. 14—24.)

3rdly, That the taking the Gentiles to be God's peculiar people when Israel should be rejected, had been actually foretold, both by Hosea and Isaiah. (Ver. 25, *to the end.*)

4thly, That God hath graciously offered the gospel-salvation to Jews and Gentiles, on the same equitable and easy terms; though Israel, by a bigoted attachment to their own law, had rejected it. (Chap. x. *throughout.*)

5thly, That, nevertheless, the rejection of Israel, though according to their own prophecies it be general, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet is not total, there still being a number of happy believers among them. (Chap. xi. 1—10.)

6thly, That the rejection of the rest is not final, but that the time shall come when to the unspeakable joy of the whole christian world, the Jews shall in a body be brought into the church of Christ. (Ver. 11—31.)

And *lastly*, That in the mean time their obstinacy and rejection is overruled to such happy purposes, as serve, through the whole various scene, to display, in a glorious manner, the unsearchable wisdom of God. (Ver. 32, *to the end.*)

The remainder of the Epistle is taken up in a variety of practical instructions and exhortations, which hardly admit, and indeed do not need so particular an analysis. The grand design of them all is, "to engage christians to act in a "manner worthy of that gospel, the excellency of which he had been illustrating." He more particularly urges,—an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him, in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their different talents, (chap. xii. 1—11.)—devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peace, and meekness, (ver. 12, *to the end;*) and in the whole thirteenth chapter,—obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, love as the fulfilling of the law, and an universal sanctity of manners, correspondent to the purity of those religious principles which they professed. In the fourteenth, and part of the fifteenth chapters, he dilates more largely on mutual candour, especially between those christians who did, and those who did not, think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and pleads a variety of most pertinent and affecting considerations in this view, (chap. xiv. 1, to chap. xv. 17.) in prosecuting some of which, he is led to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purpose of visiting the Romans; in the mean time, recommending himself to their prayers. (Ver. 18, *to the end.*) And after many salutations, (chap. xvi. 1—16.) and a necessary caution against those that would divide the church, he concludes with a benediction and a doxology suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*)

From the sketch here given, the reader might form some conjecture of the rich entertainment provided for him in this Epistle, were he yet a stranger to its more particular contents; but, blessed be God, they are already familiar to almost all who have any regard for the Bible, and take any delight in perusing any part of it. I shall not therefore detain such from Paul's invaluable periods, any longer than whilst I observe, that whereas the interpretation of several phrases which occur here has very much divided commentators, and laid the foundation for many unhappy contentions, which have been more efficacious to alienate the affections of christians than all the apostle's arguments, powerful as they are, have been to unite them; I am very solicitous to handle this Epistle in as pacific a manner as possible. I shall therefore, as plainly as I can, give that sense of the disputed phrases which appears to me most natural, and briefly suggest, in the Notes, the reasons which induce me to understand them in the sense I have preferred. And I hope my readers will be contented with this; for were I to produce what interpreters of different opinions have alleged, and canvass the reasons by which they have endeavoured to support their explications and criticisms, I must turn my work into a Treatise of Polemical Divinity; and so quite change that original plan, which I hope will be found much more entertaining and useful: nor should I, if the scheme were thus changed, be able to comprehend in this whole volume, what I might easily find to offer on this Epistle alone.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle begins his letter with a general salutation to the christians at Rome, in which he transiently touches on some very important doctrines of that gospel which it was his great design to illustrate and enforce. Rom. i. 1—7.

ROMANS i. VER. 1.

PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

ROMANS i. VER. 1.

SECT. 1.

ROM. I.

MY dear christian brethren, you receive this epistle from *Paul*, who, though once a bitter persecutor, hath now the honour to style himself *a servant of Jesus Christ*, whose property he humbly professes himself to be, and glories in it as his highest happiness to be absolutely at the command and disposal of such a Master. And he is the more sensible of his great obligation to this, as he hath been, in so wonderful a manner, *called*, not only to the fellowship of that holy faith which we all profess, or to the common services of the ministerial office, but even [*to be*] invested with the distinguished character of *an apostle*[a] in the church. He once indeed boasted that he was of the Pharisaic sect, separated from the rest of the Jews by ceremonial observances, in which they place so peculiar a sanctity; but he now rejoiceth much more that he is, by so special an act of condescending grace, *separated to the* glorious and saving *gospel of* the blessed *God*, destined and devoted to its sacred interests; Even to that gospel *which*, *before* it was thus expressly committed to the christian apostles, *was* in a more obscure manner *promised*, and in some measure declared and exhibited, *by his prophets, in the* records of the *holy scriptures*, on which such bright lustre is now thrown by comparing the predictions with the events. I would take every opportunity of promoting in your minds and my own the highest regard to this blessed and evangelical dispensation with which God has favoured us, *relating* chiefly *to his* only-begotten and beloved *Son Jesus Christ, our* great anointed Saviour, our ever-honoured Master and *Lord, who was born* a few years ago, *of the seed* and family *of David according to the flesh*, that is, with respect to his human descent, and so far as flesh was concerned in the constitution of his nature: [*But*] who is also to be regarded by us in a much higher view, as having been *determinately*, and in the most convincing manner, *marked out as the Son of God*,[b] *with* the most astonishing display of divine *power*, *according to* the operation of *the spirit of holiness*,[c] which having originally produced that holy Thing which was born of the Virgin, exerted its energy upon him on so many occasions, and especially *in the* triumphant *resurrection from the dead*,[d] which amply rolled away all the reproach of his cross, and entitled him to the honour of the first-born among many brethren.

2 Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

This is that illustrious person *by whom we have received grace and an apostolical mission*,[e] as I esteem it the greatest of favours to be thus employed and furnished for

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the

a *Called to be an apostle.*] As the judaizing teachers disputed Paul's claim to the apostolical office, it is with great propriety that he asserts it in the very entrance of an Epistle in which their principles were to be entirely overthrown. And the attentive reader will observe with great pleasure what a variety of other most proper and important thoughts are suggested in other clauses of this short introduction: particularly the views which the Jewish prophets had given of the gospel, the descent of Christ from David, the great doctrine of his resurrection and deity, the sending the gospel to the Gentiles, the privileges of christians as the called and beloved of God, and the faith, obedience, and sanctity to which they were obliged in virtue of their profession. Occasion will be given for the like reflections on a thousand other occasions, though the limits of such a work as ours will not allow us so particularly to trace them.

b *Determinately marked out.*] That this is the exact signification of ὁρισθέντος, Elsner has learnedly proved. Compare Acts xvii. 31.

c *The Spirit of holiness.*] It seems to me so little agreeable to the style of scripture in general to call the divine nature of Christ *the Spirit of holiness*, or the Holy Spirit, that highly as I esteem the many learned and accurate commentators who have given it this turn, I rather refer it to the operation of the Spirit of God in the production of Christ's body, by which means the opposition between κατα σαρκα and κατα πνευμα will be preserved; the one referring to the materials acted upon, the other to the divine and miraculous Agent. Compare Luke i. 35.

d *Resurrection from the dead.*] Εξ αναστασεως νεκρων is rendered by some, *resurrection from among the dead, i. e.* leaving many of the dead behind: and Mr. Fleming has taken great pains to show, that wherever the compound word εξαναστασις (for he considers it as one word) is used, it is always in this sense. See Flem. *Of Res.* p. 70. By this resurrection Christ was declared the Son of God; but to say he was constituted the Son of God by it, seems very unscriptural, since he was proclaimed under that title so long before his resurrection.

e *Grace and an apostolical mission.*] Many would render it *the favour of the apostleship*: but that rendering is not the most literal: and it is certain that Paul did receive grace, to subdue his

SECT. 1. ROM. I.

this important work; especially since the plan is so extensive, and it is the glorious design of it, *that out of regard to his name all nations might*, in due time, *be brought to the obedience of* the christian *faith*, and thereby rescued from a state of idolatry and wickedness, formed to the most rational and sublime pleasures in the present life, and fitted for a state of complete and eternal felicity: this is the grand scheme which God is already carrying on in many Gentile nations, *among whom are ye* Romans, illustrious in the world on many accounts, but on none so happy as on this, that ye *also* are now *the called of Jesus Christ*, invited by him into the fellowship of his gospel, and a participation of all its invaluable blessings. And as God hath especially committed this ministration to me, I do therefore, agreeably to the general purport of my office, inscribe this epistle *to all in Rome who are* to such a degree *beloved of God* as to be *called* to the privileges and hopes of christianity, [*and*] numbered among that *holy* people who solemnly profess themselves consecrated to his service. And as, in this view, I must think of you with great respect, so I most unfeignedly wish *grace* and favour *to you*, with all kinds of prosperity *and peace, from* the blessed *God*, the great original of all good, who is now become *our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, who is exalted at his right hand, that he may scatter down all the blessings of providence and grace on his people, and may rule over all things for the good of his church.

faith among all nations for his name:

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints; grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us begin the perusal of this excellent, though in many passages obscure and difficult Epistle, with paying our humble acknowledgments to the divine goodness that we are favoured with so valuable a part of scripture as that contained in the apostolical Epistles. How happy are we who read from the pen of those holy men the sentiments they entertained of christianity under the full illumination of the sacred Spirit,—and so learn what were the leading affections which prevailed in their minds! By these letters they open all their hearts to us amidst their labourings and sufferings, that we also may have fellowship with them in those important things in which their communion was with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Ver. 1 With particular pleasure let us peruse the writings of Paul, who was in so peculiar a manner called to be an apostle, and separated to the gospel of God. He gloried in the name of a servant of Christ, and let us emulate it
5 as the greatest honour. Let us be animated to exert ourselves to the utmost under that character, since God hath been pleased to bring us, though originally sinners of the Gentiles, to the obedience of faith, and to reveal unto us
2 the gospel of his Son, that glorious gospel predicted by the prophets and opened by the apostles, yea, by their Divine Master.

3 May our hearts adore the great Emanuel, who, though he condescended to be made of the seed of David
4 according to his flesh, had a divine nature infinitely superior to it! Let us often reflect on that glorious display of the power of the Holy Ghost in his resurrection from the dead, by which he was marked out as the Son of God; and yielding to the force of such a demonstration, let us confide in him as Jesus our Saviour, and obey him as Christ our Lord.

7 We are called to partake of the privileges of his people; we belong to the society of those who are eminently beloved of God, and who lie under obligations, as they are called an holy nation, a peculiar people, to be indeed saints, to be holy in all manner of conversation, as being entirely devoted to God and the Redeemer. May such grace be imparted to us from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, that we may not dishonour the sacred community to which we belong, that we may not with millions be cast out at last infamous and abhorred, but may enjoy its most important privileges in that state of final and everlasting glory in which the kingdom of the Son of God shall terminate.

SECTION II.

The apostle strongly expresses his affection for his christian friends at Rome: thereby to introduce, with greater advantage, the considerations he had to lay before them in the process of the epistle. Rom. i. 8—15.

ROMANS i. 8.

SECT. 2. ROM. I.

I AM now setting myself to write to you, my dear brethren at Rome; and I must, *in the first place*, declare to you, that *I* unfeignedly *thank* that most glorious and excellent
8 Being who is now become *my* covenant *God* and Father *through Jesus Christ*, by whom we have received the adoption, and bless him *for you all, that your faith* in his invaluable gospel *is* so pure and stedfast, and produces such genuine fruits, that it is declared and *celebrated through the whole world*, and is universally looked upon, by all christians in this extensive empire, as a most happy presage of the general spread of their
9 holy religion. Such a report as this cannot but excite my praises, as being so agreeable to the tenor of my petitions; *for God, whom I* make it the continual business of my life to *serve, with* the greatest integrity and ardour of *my spirit, in the gospel of his Son, is my witness*, and I appeal to him with confidence on so solemn an occasion, as it is he only who can judge of the fact, *how incessantly I make mention of you*, Romans, when
10 I bow my knee before him in solemn seasons of devout retirement; *Always entreating in my prayers* the permission of his gracious providence *to come unto you, if by any means now at length*, after so long a delay, *I may have a prosperous journey* to you, *by the will of God;* on whose blessing I am sensible the prosperity of all our ways de-

ROM. i. 8.

FIRST, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you.

heart to the obedience of Christ and fit him for the ministry of the gospel, before he received his apostolical commission, whenever we suppose that commission to have been dated. I therefore chuse to keep the clauses thus distinct.

pends, and to whose wise determination I desire to submit all my schemes and purposes, even those which are formed with the most affectionate regard to the good of his church. SECT. 2.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established;

Nevertheless, so far as may consist with this due resignation, I am humbly importunate with him on this head; *for I desire greatly to see you*, not from any curiosity which the grandeur and magnificence of your city excites, nor from any prospect of personal advantage that I might receive from the most considerable of you, in the greatest distinction of circumstances, but *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift*, by the laying on of my hands in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ;[a] *that* by the farther experience which you may then have of the operations of the Holy Spirit, as well as the edification to be received from what discourses may pass between us, *you may be established* in your christian faith, and fortified against all temptation either to renounce or dishonour it: *That is*, in other words, [*I desire*] that *while I am among you we may be comforted together*, as I have great reason to believe that we shall *by* the exercise of *the mutual faith both of you and me*, while I am communicating and you receiving these blessings, and those correspondent graces are working on each side, which I doubt not will be for my improvement as well as for yours.[b] ROM. 1. 11 12

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, as among other Gentiles.

14 I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.

And while I thus express my desire of an interview with you, *I would not have you ignorant*, my dear *brethren, that I have often been proposing* and contriving *to come to you, though I have hitherto*, by one means or another, *been hindered*. I have, I say, long meditated and desired the journey, *that I might have some fruit* of my ministerial and apostolical labours *among you also, even as* I have already had from the many churches I have planted and watered *among the rest of the Gentiles*. Which I mention, not by any means as boasting of what I have done; *for* I know that in the circumstances in which Christ has placed me, considering the charge he honoured me with and the mercy he hath extended to me, *I am*, in the strictest justice, *a debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians, both to the learned and the ignorant*:[c] Duty and gratitude bind me to do my best to promote the conversion and salvation of men of every nation and rank, of every genius and character. 13 14

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Therefore, according to my weak *abilities* and the opportunities which God may give me, *I am ready* and desirous[d] *to preach the gospel to you also that are at Rome*, though it be the capital of the world, a place of so much politeness and grandeur, and a place likewise where it might seem peculiarly dangerous to oppose those popular superstitions to which the empire is supposed to owe its greatness and felicity; yet still, at all events, I am willing to come and publish this divine message among you, though it should be at the expense of my reputation, my liberty or life. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY is the church of Christ when its ministers are thus conscious of the excellency of the gospel, and thus earnestly desirous, in the midst of reproach, persecution, and danger, to extend its triumphs; when they can thus appeal to God that it is with their spirit that they serve him in the gospel of his Son. Ver. 15 9

This will give them a largeness of heart well becoming their office. Devotion will then flourish in their secret retirements, as well as be maintained by them in public assemblies; and the concerns of the churches, and sometimes of far distant churches, will have a place in their thoughts and prayers at such solemn seasons. 10

May they ever remember, that as the servants of Christ they are to be the friends of mankind, and that their Master has laid such obligations upon them, that for his sake they are debtors to the whole world in every office of christian friendship, and especially as to any spiritual gift which by their ministration they may be instrumental in imparting. The more they exert themselves in such services, the more will their own faith and comfort, as well as that of their people, be confirmed. 14 11 12

But in whatever station we are, let us be forming schemes for the service of God and good of men, projecting our journies and visits on that plan, yet always with a becoming sense of our dependence on the smiles of heaven for prosperity and success; and, as dutiful children, referring it to the infinitely superior wisdom of our heavenly Father to put a negative, at his sacred pleasure, upon those purposes which lie nearest to our hearts, and in which we most sincerely intend his glory. 10

a *Impart to you some spiritual gift.*] Bos interprets this of preaching the gospel, which was a divine kind of food by which their souls might be strengthened, and which he, as with the richest liberality, was willing to impart and distribute among them. But as spiritual gifts, in the language of St. Paul, have generally another signification, (compare 1 Cor. xii. 1, 4, 9; xiv. 1, 12,) and it was the particular office of the apostles to bestow miraculous gifts by the laying on of their hands, I have taken the passage in that view; and though it is reasonable to suppose the christians now at Rome had some share of these endowments, chap. xii. 5—7. it is highly probable that on Paul's arrival among them they might receive them in much greater abundance. The great temptations which the inhabitants of Rome were under, both to infidelity and immorality, would make such assistances more desirable, and the apostle more solicitous for such an interview.—As for the words εν υμιν, it makes the construction much plainer to read them before στηριχθηναι υμας, as they can by no means, otherwise, have any force at all. They must therefore, as L'Enfant has well noted, be rendered *being among you*

b For my improvement as well as for yours.] This thought, so full of respect to his christian friends at Rome, is suggested with great delicacy and address; and it is very reasonable to suppose that every new instance in which miraculous gifts were communicated by the laying on the hands of any of the apostles, would be a source of new edification and establishment to these holy men; as being so evident a token of the divine presence with them, and a new and solemn seal set to the commission they had received.

c *The learned and the ignorant.*] L'Enfant justly observes that σοφοι often signifies *learned*, (compare 1 Cor. i. 20, &c.) and consequently ανοητοι must signify *ignorant*, or those whose understandings had not been improved by cultivation. And it is well known that the literati or sages of antiquity were anciently called σοφοι. See ver. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 4; iii. 20; and σοφια plainly signifies *learning*, Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; Acts vii. 22.

d *Ready* and desirous.] Raphelius shows that προθυμια expresses not only a *readiness*, but, in some cases, an *eagerness of desire*. *Not. ex Herod.*

SECTION III.

The apostle declares his readiness boldly to preach the gospel at Rome, supported by a sense of its excellency: to illustrate which, he shows that the world greatly needed such a dispensation. And first he introduces a discourse of the abandoned state into which the Gentiles were fallen. Rom. i. 16—32.

Rom. i. 16.

SECT. 3. ROM. I.

I HAVE told you (ver. 15.) that I am ready and desirous to preach the gospel at Rome, though the capital city of the world; and indeed there is nothing that I more earnestly wish than opportunities of bearing the most public testimony to it; *for* with whatever contempt that sacred dispensation, and they who publish it, may be treated on account of the circumstances and death of its Founder, the character of its ministers, and the nature
16 and tendency of its doctrines, ***I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,*** but rather glory in it. And I have great reason to do it; *for* while other methods intended to promote the reformation and happiness of mankind have been all ineffectual, *it* has clearly appeared that this *is the power of God for* complete and eternal *salvation to every one that believeth.* It contains the most glorious display of the divine power, efficaciously exerted for this important purpose, and operating in favour of every one who cordially embraces it. Thus salutary is it *to the Jew,* who is far from being above the need of it, and to whom, by the special command of our Lord, it is to be *first* preached *and* proposed,[a] wherever its ambassadors come; yet not to be limited to him, but proclaimed *also to the Greek* and the Roman, and Gentiles of every nation under heaven, who are all, with
17 equal freedom, invited to partake its important benefits. And it is admirably adapted to secure this great and blessed end; *for in it the righteousness of God*[b] *by faith,* that is, the method which God hath contrived and proposed for our becoming righteous, (Isa. lvi. 1.) by believing his testimony and casting ourselves on his mercy, *is revealed to* our *faith,*[c] and most clearly exhibited as the great object of it: *As it is written* in the prophet Habakkuk, chap. ii. 4. "*The just shall live by faith;*"[d] and as good men were then delivered from the ruin which involved others, by trusting to and acting upon the divine declaration; so now the like principle of faith, receiving and embracing this great discovery which God hath made of his mercy in Christ, secures our life and salvation.
18 And as, in this view, it is well worthy of our regard, so there is an absolute necessity of its being attended to; *for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven*[e] by many singular interpositions of Divine Providence, and especially by the most express declaration of the sacred oracles, which teach us to look on the grand and final revelation of it as nearly approaching. And the terrors of this wrath are apparently levelled *against all impiety and unrighteousness of men, who* wickedly *restrain the truth in unrighteousness,* when that heaven-born captive would exert its energy upon their minds, and urge them to obey its dictates. This is, more or less, the generally prevailing character; and it exposes men to a sentence, the terrors of which, if they were well understood, would soon drive them, with the greatest solicitude, to seek their refuge in that gospel the tidings of which they now so arrogantly despise.
19 The sad character I hinted at above, of restraining and imprisoning the truth in unrighteousness, is more general than mankind are aware. We find it not only among those who have enjoyed the benefit of a revelation from God, but in all the Gentile nations. *For* the main fundamental principles of *what is* by any means *to be known of God,* that is, that he is the great Original of all, *is manifest among them; for God hath showed*
20 *it to them* by a light universal as the sun. *For those things of him which are invisible, are* and have been, *from the* very *creation of the world,* not only intimated, but *being*

Rom. i. 16.
FOR I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clear-

a *To the Jew first,* &c.] There is a noble frankness, as well as very comprehensive sense, in these few words of the apostle; by which, on the one hand, he strongly insinuates to the Jews their absolute need of the gospel in order to salvation; and on the other, while he declares to them that it was also to be preached to the Gentiles, he tells the politest and greatest of those nations to whom he might come as an ambassador of Christ, both that their salvation also depended upon receiving it, and that the first offers of it were every where to be made to the despised Jews.

b *The righteousness of God.*] Δικαιοσυνη Θεου plainly signifies, in several passages of this Epistle, not the *essential righteousness of God's nature,* but the *manner of becoming righteous* which God hath appointed and exhibited in the gospel. Compare chap. iii. 21, 22; x. 3; and also Phil. iii, 9. with Matt. vi. 33. And the phrase may perhaps have the same sense in several passages of the Old Testament. See Isa. xlvi. 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lvi. 1. Mr. Mace generally renders it *the divine justification,* yet cannot always render δικαιοσυνη so.

c *By faith is revealed to faith.*] I would connect εκ πιστεως with δικαιοσυνη, and suppose εις πιστιν to be governed of αποκαλυπτεται, thinking the transposition easier than the interpretation given by many others, as if it implied its being *wholly by faith,* as Mr. Mace renders it, or *going on from one degree of faith to another;* for though it is true that this is the case, I find no example in which the phrase is used in either of these senses, those which Mr. Locke produces to justify the former of these interpretations (viz. chap. vi. 19; and 2 Cor. iii. 18.) being by no means exactly parallel. And it is so plain that εκ πιστεως in the close of this verse signifies *by faith,* that I wonder it should have been rendered so differently in the former clause.

d *As it is written, The just shall live by faith.*] The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the destruction to come upon Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, observes how different the behaviour and states of good and bad men would be. The sinner's heart would be vainly lifted up to his destruction, while trusting to his own wisdom and power; (and accordingly prince and people became the sacrifices of this foolish self-confidence;) whereas the righteous, the truly good man, would preserve his life by believing the divine declarations, and acting according to them; and thus under the gospel, he that believes shall live. Some would render it, The just by faith shall live, or he shall live who is justified by faith; but however this might suit the Greek phrase, it seems less agreeable to the Hebrew, from whence it is taken.

e *For the wrath of God is revealed,* &c.] Commentators differ much in fixing the connexion of these words. Some have considered this verse as another reason why he was not ashamed of the gospel, because it contained so awakening a declaration of the wrath of God against sin, and by that means had a most powerful tendency to awaken men's consciences and save their souls: in which view, some, treating the particle γαρ as an expletive, have rendered it, *there the wrath of God is revealed.* And Mr. Locke brings it nearly to the same, where he explains it as a reason why Paul was so ready to preach the gospel at Rome.—But the connexion hinted in the paraphrase seems most rational and natural. The sentences in Paul's writings often run into each other

ly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

[l]22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools:

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the na-

duly attended to,[f] *clearly seen by the things which are made;* the whole system of which bears such eminent signatures of the great Artificer, as loudly to proclaim his name and attributes, *even his eternal power and divinity;*[g] *so that* if any of the Gentile nations neglect to trace it with reverence, love, and obedience, *they are without excuse,* and would be destitute of every just and plausible apology for themselves if he should enter into judgment with them: *Because knowing God*[h] as the great Former of all, and a Being of supreme and incomparable perfection, *they have not* adored and *glorified* [*him*] *as God* their Maker, *neither were* duly *thankful*[i] to him as their great and constant Benefactor, *but* acted as if they had neither opportunity nor capacity of acquainting themselves with him. This has generally been the character of the Gentiles, without excepting those of the politest ages and most learned nations. Instead of setting themselves to inquire into the will of the Supreme Being, and with becoming gratitude and zeal devoting themselves to his service, *they became vain* and foolish *in their* boasted *reasonings,*[k] entangling themselves with a thousand unprofitable subtilties which only tended to alienate their souls from every sentiment of true religion; *and their unintelligent heart,* instead of being enlightened by these sophistries, *was* more and more *involved in darkness,* and rendered impenetrable to the simplicity of the most important truths. So that *professing themselves to be* wise far beyond the common pitch, assuming and glorying in the title of *sages* or wise men, at least in that of lovers of wisdom,[l] *they became fools* and idiots, degrading, in the lowest and most infamous manner, the reason which they so arrogantly pretended to improve, and almost to engross. *And* as this was evident in a variety of other vices in which the philosphers of heathen nations joined with the vulgar, so particularly in the early and almost universal prevalence of idolatry amongst them, by which *they changed the glory of the* immortal, *incorruptible,* and eternal *God,* even all the majestic splendours in which he shines forth through earth and heaven, *into the representing image of* mortal and *corruptible man;* which, how elegantly soever it might be traced, was a great and insufferable degradation, had their folly proceeded no farther: But not content with this, they set up as emblems of deity and objects of worship, brutes *and* their images, *birds and four-footed animals, and* even such vile *reptiles* as beetles and various kinds of serpents which creep on the dust.[m]

This was such scandalous and pernicious superstition, that it is no wonder that *God* should in righteous judgment withdraw from those who introduced and encouraged it. He *therefore* not only left them to sink lower and lower in these absurd methods of worship, but also *delivered them up to* the vilest *uncleanness in* [*gratifying*] *the* detestable *lusts of their own heart,* which grew more and more outrageous and enormous when the restraint of his common influences was thus withdrawn from their minds. Thus he left them *to dishonour their bodies among themselves,* as much as they had before dishonoured their rational faculties by such senseless idolatries. This was so prevalent an evil, that even many of them *who* knew much better, and had in their own minds sounder apprehensions of things, yet from mere secular motives suppressed that better knowledge, and conformed to popular superstitions and follies, and thereby *changed the truth of God,* the true doctrines of his nature and genuine institutions of his worship, *into a lie,*[n] into abominable idolatries, founded on the falsest representations of God, and often supported by a train of artful forgeries; *and,* upon the whole, they *worshipped and served,* with religious homage and solemn devotion, *the creature, to the neglect of the* great *Creator, who,* however basely and ungratefully overlooked by men, *is* surrounded with the perpetual homage of the heavenly world, and *blessed for ever. Amen!* May he ever be held in the highest veneration by all his creatures in heaven and earth, throughout all succeeding ages!

Therefore, I say, because of this inexcusable neglect of the ever-blessed *God,* he *abandoned them to the most infamous passions; for* even *their women,* from whom the strictest modesty might reasonably have been expected, *changed the natural use* of the

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f *Being duly attended to.*] Νοουμενα seems to have this signification, and to be, as it were, included in a parenthesis; so that τοις ποιημασι is governed of καθορατται.

g *Divinity.*] It is observable that Augustin (*Civ. Dei,* vii. 1.) nicely distinguishes betweeu θειοτης and θειοτητα, the word here used; maintaining that the one signifies *deity,* or *divine nature,* the other *divinity,* or *divine majesty* and *glory:* and if there be that distinction, the latter word is apparently more proper here, as divine glory results from that eternal power which is comprehended in the divine nature.

h *Knowing God.*] Some understand it as if he had said, *Whereas they might have known God;* but I think what Paul charges upon the philosophers is, that though they actually knew there was one Supreme God, they neglected him to conform (for low and base considerations) to the established idolatry; which was really the case, to their aggravated guilt and condemnation; as appears from most of the passages in which the pagan writers bear a testimony to the doctrine of the Unity; a specimen of which may be seen in Dr. Sykes's *Connect.* chap. xiv. p. 364—383; Dr. Ab. Taylor, *Of Faith,* p. 12—17. note; and Cudworth's *Intellect. System,* chap. iv. § 10—31. especially § 19—28.

i *Neither were thankful.*] It is worthy our observation that gratitude to God is here put for the whole of religion; and no principle can be nobler, and none can be stronger or more extensive.

k *Vain in their reasonings:* εματαιωθησαν εν τοις διαλογισμοις αυτων.] Mr. Locke illustrates this by the stupid folly of their idolatry, 2 Kings xvii. 15, 16; Acts xiv. 15. But I rather think the word Διαλογισμοις refers to the perplexing *sophistry of the philosophers.* I have often thought Lucretius one of the most remarkable illustrations of the character here drawn. What vain reasonings, and how dark a heart, in the midst of the most pompous profession of oracular wisdom!

l *Professing themselves.*] Φασκοντες ειναι σοφοι seems just equivalent to Xenophon's φασκοντας φιλοσοφειν, which so evidently refers to the pride they took in the title of *lovers of wisdom.* See Raphel. *in loc.*

m Beetles and serpents.] Of this amazingly stupid, yet prevalent idolatry, the worship of serpents, see Jenk. *Reas. of Christianity,* Vol. ii. p. 246—248. Tennison, *Of Idol.* chap. xiv. p. 352—354; Owen, *On Serp.* chap. iv. and v; Stillingfl. *Orig. Sac.* p. 516. &c.

n *Changed the truth of God into a lie.*] Elsner takes great pains to show that the truth of God here signifies what he really was, and a lie a false representation. See Elsner's *Observ.* Vol. ii. p. 11. It is well known that idols are often called lies. Isa. xliv. 20; Jerem. iii. 23; xiii. 25; xvi. 19.

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other sex *to that which is against nature.*[o] *And likewise their males, leaving the natural use of the female, have been inflamed with* the most scandalous and abominable *desires towards each other, males with males perpetrating that which is most shameful* to mention and detestable to think of, *and receiving in themselves the just recompense of their error,* in that stupidity and degeneracy of mind to which they were
28 evidently left. *And,* thus, upon the whole, *as they were not solicitous*[p] *to retain God in their knowledge,* nor to propagate suitable conceptions of him, or address him by proper acts of rational and pure devotion, *God delivered them over to an undiscerning mind, to do things most inexpedient*[q] and enormous, as he cannot more dreadfully punish one sin,
29 than by giving up the offender to more. And accordingly, universal depravation and corruption seized and possessed them, and the whole series of their discourses and actions showed that they were *full of all* manner of *injustice, lewdness, mischief, covetousness,* and *malignity;* perpetually injuring each other, and drawing damage and misery on themselves; while they were *filled* and intoxicated *with* every imaginable vice, *envy, murder, contention, fraud,* the *inveteracy of* all *evil* and pernicious *habits,*[r] which no sense of
30 decency or regard to reputation or interest could reform. Instead of entertaining those friendly regards to each other which common humanity might have taught them, they were *whispering* something against those that were present, as well as *backbiting* such as were absent: and being *haters of God,* discontented with his government, and disaffected to his rule as a righteous and holy Being who could not but be highly displeased with their abominations, they were *violent* and overbearing[s] in their behaviour to each other, *proud* of what they had, and arrogant *boasters* of what they had not; ingenious *inventors of evil* and vicious *things,* who piqued themselves on making some new discoveries in the arts of sensuality or mischief. And it is no wonder that when there was such an impious disposition to rebel against God, they should also be *disobedient* to earthly *pa-*
31 *rents;* And that they should act in so wild and unaccountable a manner as to seem to be *without* the natural *understanding* of men; *implacable* in their resentments, *without natural affection,*[t] even to their own children in some instances, and to their parents in others. And when a reconciliation was attempted, and mutual engagements entered into with the highest solemnity, they were, on any present appearance of advantage, presently for *breaking* those pacific *treaties,* and *unmerciful* in pursuing their schemes of cruelty
32 and revenge, whenever they got any new opportunity of doing it. This was the character which generally prevailed in the heathen world, *who, though they knew the righteous judgment of God,*[u] and though their consciences, as well as the lessons of their wisest teachers, told them *that they who do such things* as these *are worthy of death,* yet *not only do these things* themselves, *but* also look with complacency upon and *agree together with those that do them;* forming confederacies to countenance and support each other, and impudently out-braving those who should presume to bear testimony against them.

tural use into that which is against nature:
27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.
28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
32 Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death,) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 21 *et seq.*

When we dwell on the representation of that character which this humane and candid apostle gives us of the heathen world with regard to their idolatries, impieties, and other immoralities, what reason have we to bless God for the dispensation of the gospel, which hath wrought so effectually for the reformation of thousands who might otherwise have been as deeply drenched in all these enormities as the vilest of them! For we know that it was not the barbarous nations alone, but some of the politest, who, in neglect of all the opportunities they had of knowing better, and in opposition to that better knowledge which some of them actually obtained, were often distinguished for the superstition of their worship and the scandal of their lives; so that the chief illustrations of this sad subject are to be borrowed from Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

Let us learn not only to guard against the vices for which the heathens are here branded, (knowing that the practice in us will be yet more criminal,) but let us cultivate the opposite virtues of justice and temperance

o *To that which is against nature.*] Many horrible illustrations of this may be seen in Bos, *Exercit. in loc.*

p *Were not solicitous.*] Εδοκιμασαν imports a *concern to bring things to a trial or touchstone,* which this translation expresses much better than ours, which coldly renders it, *they liked not.*

q *Things most inexpedient.*] The original expression is a meiosis to express things most detestable; as αεικεα εργα signifies all the *inhumanities* which Achilles most ungenerously practised on the corpse of Hector. Compare *Wisd.* xiv. 22—27. See Bos, *in loc.*

r *Mischief, malignity, inveteracy.*] According to some acute commentators, πονηρια signifies *doing mischief,* κακια *a malicious temper,* and κακοηθεια *a custom of repeating it frequently.*

s *Violent* and overbearing.] Τερσης is properly opposed to σωφρων, and expresses the character of a man who is resolved to gratify his own appetites and passions, and to pursue what he apprehends his own interests, right or wrong, without at all regarding those inconveniences or sufferings which he may thereby bring upon others.

t *Without natural affection.*] Ασοργη may conclude the absence of both parental and filial affection. The custom of exposing newborn infants which prevailed so generally in the heathen world, and that among polite nations, and persons in other respects not destitute of humanity, is a most striking instance of the truth of this assertion, as that of killing their aged parents also was of the counterpart.

u *Who, though they knew the righteous judgment of God,* &c.] The Clermont copy inserts the words ουκ εγνωσαν after επιγνοντες, agreeable to which reading, Mr. Locke renders it, who, though they acknowledge the rule of right [δικαιωμα] prescribed them by God, and discovered by the light of nature, yet did not understand that they who do these things are worthy of death, and therefore, συνευδοκουσι, live well with those who do them, "that is, converse with "them without any marks of disesteem and censure; whereas the "Jew, who condemns the evils which he practises, is much more in"excusable:" so connecting this verse with the 2d chapter. But I neither think the authority of the Clermont copy by any means sufficient to justify our admitting this reading, nor can imagine it would make good sense; for surely if they knew a rule of right prescribed by God, they could not be ignorant that the violation of it would expose them to punishment; and it is evident, in fact, from numberless passages in heathen moralists, that they were not ignorant of it. The vulgar Latin does indeed partly follow this peculiar reading; but they add, *non solum qui faciunt, sed qui consentiunt facientibus,* "not only they who commit these crimes, but they "who agree with others that commit them:" which I think makes a sense much preferable to Mr. Locke's, though by no means agreeable to the original.—It seems here to be implied, that to look with complacency on the vices of others is one of the last degrees of degeneracy.

benevolence and contentment, peace and charity, sincerity and humility; and let us cherish the natural tender affections. If offences arise, let us always be ready to hearken to terms of reconciliation, and faithfully observe our engagements; taking the greatest heed that, knowing so clearly as we do the judgments of God, we do not, by any means, give countenance to, and seem to join in a confederacy with, sinners. SECT. 3. ROM. I.

Let us bless God for all the capacities and opportunities he hath given to the heathen nations of coming to the knowledge of himself by the things that are made, which declare his eternal power and godhead, and render inexcusable both atheists and idolaters among them. But when we recollect how many either entirely lost the truth or imprisoned it in unrighteousness, let us be most affectionately thankful for so superior a light, for that gospel which is to every believer, without exception, the power of God for salvation, and which declareth the righteousness of God as the object of our faith. May we properly receive it, and so escape the terrors of that divine wrath which is revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness of men! Ver. 19 20 16 18

To this revelation let us give the most attentive heed, and be much upon our guard against those vain and sophistical reasonings to which they who, knowing God, neglect to glorify him as God, are so ready to fly; lest we approve ourselves fools in proportion to the degree in which we profess to be wise, and provoke God to give us up to an injudicious mind, and to leave us to that reciprocal influence which evil principles and evil actions have to render each other more inveterate and incurable. 21 22 28

SECTION IV.

The apostle discourses more particularly of those who knew their duty and yet acted contrary to it, and of the condemnation they must expect from God; that so he might properly introduce the particular charge he had to advance against the Jews, as, above all others, answering that character. Rom. ii. 1—16.

ROM. ii. 1.

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not

ROM. ii. 1.

I HAVE just been speaking of the great and aggravated guilt of those who not only do things which they know to be displeasing to God and evil in themselves, but also agree together to countenance those that do them. And it may be, some who know they are not of that number,[a] but, on one principle or another, bear their testimony against the prevailing immoralities of those about them, may imagine themselves secure and happy. I must *therefore* argue, from the premises just laid down, that *thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest* and pretendest to pass sentence upon others; *for* I know what the character of such generally is, and I know that the very best of them all have their blemishes and faults; and therefore I may say, that *wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou who judgest doest the same things* in many instances,[b] and consequently art convicted out of thine own mouth. *For we know* in general, *that the judgment of God is according to truth* and justice *against* all *those who do such things*, however they may behave towards their fellow-sinners. *And* canst thou then, by the sentence which thou passest upon others, think to evade that which goeth forth against thyself? Or *reasonest thou thus, O man*, whosoever thou art, whether pagan philosopher or Jewish teacher, *who judgest those that do such things, while thou doest them thyself, that thou shouldst escape the judgment of God? Or* is thy heart so obdurate as to make light of those judgments which thou must certainly meet, because they are not immediately executed? and *dost thou* indeed *despise the riches of his gentleness, and forbearance, and long-suffering*,[c] exercised towards thee for such a length of time, so as to think it may be safely trifled with? Surely if thou dost thou art shamefully ignorant indeed, as *not knowing that the* goodness and *gentleness of God leadeth thee to repentance:* He bears with thee, that thou mayst prevent the threatened blow by humbling thyself before him and forsaking thy sins. *But* this day of mercy and grace has its limits; and however thou mayst flatter thyself now, the consequence will soon appear fatal, and thou wilt find, to thine unutterable confusion, that *by this hardness and impenitence of thy heart* thou *art treasuring up to thyself* a more abundant store of *wrath in the day of* final *wrath, and* of that *revelation of the righteous judgment of God* which is now, as it were, under a veil, and so disregarded because unseen; but it shall then be set forth to view in all its lustre and terror. The Divine Being is indeed a most gracious and indulgent Father; but be it known unto thee, that he is also the wise and holy Governor of the universe, *who will recompense every man according to his works* in the final distribution of good and evil, how unequal soever his present dispensations may seem. *To those* generous and elevated souls *that* are not discouraged by present difficulties, nor ensnared by the allurements of the world, but amidst them all, *by a patient* and persevering *course of well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*, he will graciously render the great prize they pursue, even *eternal life: But to the* perverse and ungrateful *children of contention*,[d] *who* quarrel with the merciful SECT. 4. ROM. II. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

a *Some who know they are not of that number.*] There is a greater delicacy in the apostle's transition here than most commentators have imagined. From what he had before said to prove the most abandoned and ignorant of the heathens inexcusable in their wickedness, he justly infers that the crimes of those who had such knowledge of the truth as to condemn the vices of others, were proportionably yet more inexcusable. This was eminently the case with the Jews: but he does not directly speak of them till the 9th verse, but draws the inference at first in such general terms as might also comprehend Gentile philosophers, and all others who contradicted the moral instructions which they themselves gave.

b *Doest the same things.*] Dr. Whitby shows by many very proper quotations, chiefly from Josephus, that the Jews of that age were guilty of many of those crimes which had been enumerated above. See Joseph. *De Bello Judaic. lib.* v. *cap.* 13. [al. 16.] § 6. *et lib.* vii *cap.* 8. [al. 28.] § 1. Edit. Havercamp.

c *Gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.*] Mr. Blackwall (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 306.) enlarges on the great emphasis of these words in the original. He thinks χρηστοτης signifies *benevolence* and *generosity* in the general, ανοχη *mercy* in the proposals of pardon and happiness to fallen creatures, and μακροθυμια *patience* in attending so long on such obstinate wretches. I have given what I take to be the exactest rendering of each; but did not judge it convenient to protract the paraphrase of so lively a passage, by attempting in many words to illustrate it.

d *Children of contention.*] Mr. Locke thinks that patience in the

SECT. 4. ROM. II.

dispensation that should have saved them, and *are* obstinately *disobedient to the* dictates of *truth, but* servilely *obedient to* the usurped and base tyranny of *unrighteousness*, perversely opposing the evidence of true religion because they are averse to its practical design, [*he will render*] a quite different portion: For them is reserved all that can be imagined most dreadful; *indignation* shall be conceived, *and wrath* shall break forth against them; The
9 sharpest *tribulation*, the most hopeless *and* inextricable *anguish* and despair,[e] which shall be poured out in a torrent of unmingled misery, even *upon every soul of man who worketh* that which is *evil*. This shall be rendered *to the Jew* in the *first* place,[f] who, far from escaping by his superior advantages *and* privileges, will, by the abuse of them, be obnoxious *to* distinguished wrath. Nor shall *the Greek* escape, who shall be judged according to the
10 light he hath enjoyed, or the opportunity he had of enjoying more. *But*, as I said before, and repeat it with pleasure, as the more delightful part of the subject, which I love to dwell upon; *glory, honour, and peace* [*shall be*] recompensed *to every one who worketh good; first to the Jew*, who stands fairer (in virtue of the divine revelation he enjoys) for distinguished degrees of it, as well as receives the first messages of this salvation; *and then to the Greek*, who, if he exclude not himself, shall not be exempted from his proper share:
11 *For there is no* partial *acceptance of persons with God*,[g] which should engage him, on account of outward condition or lineal descent, to spare obstinacy and wickedness in a Jew, or to reject the humble faith and obedience of a Gentile. And he will fully display this impartiality of administration in the great day of universal judgment: *for as many as have sinned without the* Mosaic *law*,[h] and have continued impenitent in their crimes, *shall without the law perish;* the light of nature, without the knowledge of revelation, being
12 sufficient to condemn them. *And as many as have sinned under* the instruction and obligation of *the law shall*, with proportionable severity, *be judged by the law*,[i] and meet with a more awful sentence, as their offences have been aggravated by such express dis-
13 coveries of the divine will: *For not the* men who are merely respectful *hearers of the law* of God in the synagogues, or loud and vehement applauders or defenders of it elsewhere, [*are*] *just before God*, nor will he ever accept any encomiums upon it instead of the obedience it demands; *but the doers of the law*, who steadily and universally, in the tenor of their lives, act agreeably to its precepts, they, and they only, *shall be justified* in the day
14 of final audit and account, whether their knowledge of it were more or less express. *For when the Gentiles, who have not the* written revelation of the divine *law, do, by* an instinct of *nature*, and in consequence of the untaught dictates of their own mind, *the* moral *duties required by the* precepts of the *law*,[k] *these having not the* benefit of an express and revealed *law, are* nevertheless *a law unto themselves;* the voice of nature is their rule, and they are inwardly taught, by the constitution of their own minds, to revere it as the
15 law of that God by whom it was formed. And they *who* are in this state do evidently *show the work of the law*, in its most important moral precepts, *written upon their hearts* by the same divine hand that engraved the decalogue upon the tables given to Moses; *their consciences joining to bear witness* to it, *and* [*their*] *mutual reasonings among themselves, accusing* those that break such precepts, *or defending* those who observe them, attest
16 the same thing. As therefore there are sure traces of some natural knowledge of the law, a due regard will be maintained towards them, and on this most equitable principle will the grand process be conducted, *in that* awful *day when God shall judge the secrets of* the hearts of *men by Jesus Christ, according to* the tenor of that glorious dispensation which I may call *my gospel*,[l] as it is committed to my care; in which no doctrine is more important or evident than that of a universal and most impartial judgment.

obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath;

9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another:)

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

former verse, and contention here, refer to the malignant enmity with which the Jews endeavoured to exclude the Gentiles from the church. Compare Gal. i. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. but it seems much better to explain it in a latitude which shall indeed include this as one instance of obstinacy and perverseness, without contracting that extensive and important sense which our interpretation gives. And that the contention of the Gentiles is included here, evidently appears by the conclusion of the sentence.

e *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, &c.] Here seems to be a reference to those expressive words, Psal. lxxviii. 49. where, speaking of the Egyptians, it is said, *he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble.* And it may finely intimate, that the Jews would in the day of vengeance be more severely punished than even their Egyptian enemies were when God made their plagues so wonderful. Στενοχωρια properly signifies *straitness;* and is used by Xenophon to signify a narrow way that cannot be passed. See Raphel. *Not. ex. Xen. in loc.* As for the difference between Θυμος and Οργη, Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 14.) takes some pains to show that the former signifies the first *conception of anger*, the latter a desire and *purpose of punishing.* Some reference to this interpretation will be found in the paraphrase, though expressed as briefly as possible.

f *To the Jew first.*] Here we have the first express mention of Jews in this section; and it is introduced with great energy and weight. Their being trained up in the knowledge of the true religion, and having Christ and his apostles first sent to them, will place them in the foremost rank of the criminals who obey not the truth.

g *Acceptance of persons.*] That is, in passing the final sentence he is determined by their real characters.—This is very consistent with an inequality in distributing advantages and opportunities of improvement, according to the sovereign pleasure of the great Lord of all. This assertion of the apostle's, so often repeated, will appear the more important and seasonable, as the Jews thought that no Israelite should be deprived of future happiness, whatever his faults had been, unless he were guilty of apostasy, idolatry, and a few other very enormous crimes. See Mr. Jortin's *Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 26, 27. and the notes there.

h *Sinned without the* Mosaic *law, &c.*] It is evident that must here be intended; for none can sin without the natural law, under which all are born.

i *Perish—be judged.*] These two phrases are so different, that one would hardly think they were intended to signify the same ideas; yet so many arguments, both from reason and revelation, lie against supposing wicked heathens annihilated, as Mr. Locke seems to insinuate from these words, that I think it most rational to interpret both these expressions as signifying real punishment, but in different degrees.

k *By nature.*] Raphelius (*Not. ex Xen. in loc.*) shows that animals are said to do that by nature which they do by instinct; and Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 16.) that τα του νομου signifies the duties inculcated by the law.

l *According to my gospel.*] Nothing is more contrary to the apostle's meaning, as expressly declared above, than that all men are to be judged by the gospel. He only means that the gospel teaches such a judgment. Therefore some, transposing the last clause, render it very plainly and properly, *In the day when God shall, according to my gospel, judge the secrets of men.* Mr. Mace transposes the whole sixteenth verse to join it with the twelfth; and I think it very evident the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth verses come in as a parenthesis: but the transposition of verses

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us revere the righteous judgment of God, which is here laid before us in so particular and affecting a manner; remembering we are each of us to have our part in that day of final retribution, and that the secrets of our hearts will then be made manifest. Let us often reflect upon the awful result; and consider that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be our portion, if we are contentious and disobedient to the truth, yea, if we do not, by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek the promised glory, honour, and immortality; which if we do, we shall, through the grace of God, secure everlasting life. Vain will our knowledge and our profession otherwise be, and our testimony against the sins of others will only inflame the guilt of our own. SECT. 4. ROM. II. Ver. 1

Let it ever be remembered that the goodness of God, which we have such daily reason to acknowledge and adore, gently takes us, as it were, by the hand, and leadeth to repentance; and while we continually live upon it, let us not act in contempt of it, or abuse it to our own inconceivable detriment. Is the wrath already laid up so small that we should be increasing the treasure? increasing the terrors of the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God? 4 5

It will be a most impartial as well as important day. Nor are we concerned to know how the heathen will fare in it; let it suffice us, that if they are condemned, they will be righteously condemned; not for remaining ignorant of the gospel they never had an opportunity of hearing, but for violating those precepts of the divine law which were inscribed on their consciences. Let us bless God that he has written it there, and reverence the traces of his hand on our own minds; always remembering that the discoveries of revelation were never intended to erase or discredit the dictates of nature, but to illustrate and confirm them. 14, 15

We shall be judged by the dispensation we have enjoyed; and, how devoutly soever we may hear and speak of it, shall be condemned, if we have not acted agreeably thereto. The Lord grant that we may all find that mercy of the Lord which we shall every one of us need in that day; and that we may find it, may we keep that day continually in view, and direct all our actions with regard to its grand decisions! 12 13

SECTION V.

Paul proceeds to fix the charge upon the Jews, that they were sinners as well as the Gentiles, and consequently stood in need of justification by the grace of the gospel as well as they. Rom. ii. 17, *to the end.*

ROM. ii. 17.

BEHOLD, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God;

18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law:

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness;

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit

ROM. ii. 17.

I HAVE hitherto been speaking of the inexcusable guilt of those who have the greatest opportunity of knowing their duty, and in consequence of this acknowledge it, and condemn others for acting contrary to it, while yet they are guilty of the same evils. I will now keep on the reserve no longer; but will boldly declare, that in what I have said concerning such, I meant the conviction not merely of heathen philosophers, but of wicked Jews; and if thou, O reader, art such an one, I apply myself personally to thee. *Behold, thou bearest the name of a Jew,*[a] *and thou reposest thyself on* the knowledge and profession of *the law,* as if that would save thee; *and thou gloriest in* the true *God,* in whom thou believest; as if thy descent and profession, by virtue of the peculiar covenant he made with thy fathers, must necessarily entitle thee to his favour. Thou boastest of it as thine honour *and* happiness that thou *knowest* [*his*] *will,* not merely by uncertain conjecture and reasoning, but by an express revelation, *and* that thou accurately *discernest* and distinguishest upon *things that differ,*[b] which untaught nature may in many respects confound; *being* thyself well *instructed out of the law,* having been from thy infancy catechised and educated in the accurate knowledge of it. *And* in consequence of this, thou *art* very *confident that thou thyself art* fit to teach the whole Gentile world; to be *a guide of the blind,* as thou thinkest them to be; *a light to them that,* for want of the light thou dispersest, *are in darkness: An instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of* these *babes,*[c] as thou esteemest them in comparison with thyself; *having* perhaps not only the sacred oracles in thine hands, but also, in order to render thee more expert and methodical in the use of them, *a* summary, a compendious system and *form of the knowledge and truth which is* contained *in the law.*[d]

Now I deny not that thine advantages are in this respect very great; but I must caution thee that thou art not deceived by any absolute dependence upon them, and must press thee to reflect how far thine own temper and conduct is agreeable to this knowledge and profession. Let me ask *therefore, thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* Dost thou act as if thou hadst forgotten thine own precepts, or didst imagine they did not oblige thee? *Thou that preachest,* for instance, *a man should not steal, dost thou* think thyself tolerated to *steal?*[e] *Thou that forbiddest a man to commit adultery, dost thou*

SECT. 5. ROM. II. 17 18 19 20 21 22

seems a dangerous thing; though I think, in some evident cases, that of a few words may be pardoned, considering the different genius of ancient and modern, eastern and western languages.

a *Bearest the name of a Jew.*] The apostle frequently addresses himself to unconverted Jews in this Epistle, and especially here; for no doubt there were many of them at Rome, who might be curious to know what he, who had been so violent an enemy to christianity, would say to recommend it. And Paul's great love to them engaged him, on the contingency of such an event, to insert such passages; and other passages are calculated for the conviction of other unbelievers, as well as for the edification of christians.

b *Discernest things that differ.*] So Beza renders δοκιμαζεις τα διαφεροντα; and Elsner vindicates it in a manner which seems very satisfactory; though Capellus, Hammond, and Erasmus defend our translation, *approvest things which are more excellent.* See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 17.

c *Blind,—ignorant,—babes.*] These were titles which the proud Jews often gave to the Gentiles.

d *Form.*] Μορφωσις has this signification, 2 Tim. iii. 5. And Bos (*Exercit.* p. 100, 101.) shows that it often signifies *the sketch* or *outlines of a thing;* which suits the interpretation here given better than he seems to apprehend.—L'Enfant renders it, *having in the law the rule of knowledge and truth;* but I know not whether μορφωσις ever signifies *rule;* and if the article has any force, it is in favour of the rendering we have preferred.

e *Dost thou steal?*] Grotius on this text proves from Josephus, that some of the Jewish priests lived by rapine, depriving others of their due share of the tithes, and even suffering them to perish for want; that others were guilty of gross uncleanness; and as for sacrilegiously robbing God and his altar, it had been complained of as early as Malachi's days, Mal. i. 8, 12, 13. So that the instances are given with great propriety and judgment.

SECT. 5. ROM. II.

commit adultery? Thou that dost so *abominate idols*, and speakest of them at all times with such great and just abhorrence, *dost thou commit sacrilege* by robbing the true God of what he so justly claims from thee, whether of outward tribute or inward homage; while thou so strenuously disputest against any other object of worship? In one word, *thou that gloriest in the law* as so excellent, and thinkest it such an honour to be acquainted with it,
23 *dost thou by the transgression of the law dishonour God*, and act as if thou wert studying the declaration of his will only to show him in a more presumptuous and contumacious
24 manner that thou dost not regard it? It is not an improbable supposition that I have now been making; *for* I, who have had an opportunity of knowing by long experience the temper and character of the Jewish people, know it to be such, that I will boldly say to their faces, "*The name of* the *God* of Israel, for which you profess so warm a zeal, *is by* "*your means blasphemed among the Gentiles*, and his holy religion brought into con-"tempt by your notorious and scandalous immoralities; *as it is written* in your own "scriptures, concerning your fathers, whose evil deeds you so generally imitate." (Compare 2 Sam. xii. 14; Isa. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 23.)
25 My duty absolutely requires me to give such cautions and to make such remonstrances as these; *for circumcision is indeed profitable if a man keep the law:*[f] his being a Jew, if he be truly a good man, will give him many advantages for becoming a christian, and, were his obedience perfect, would entitle him to the blessings promised in the law. *But if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is* in effect *become uncircumcision*; thou wilt have no more benefit by it than if thou hadst never received it; as thou well knowest that, according to the tenor of the law itself, circumcision, far from being any excuse for thy offence, will rather expose thee in many respects to a much greater punishment.
26 *And therefore*, by a parity of reason, *if the uncircumcision*, that is, an uncircumcised person, *observe* and obey *the* greatest and most important precepts or *righteous determinations of the law*, though without any acquaintance with the book that contains them; if he faithfully and steadily conform himself to the main branches of virtue and rectitude it requires, *shall not his uncircumcision be imputed* or reckoned *as circumcision?* Shall he not be treated as favourably by God in his final account as if he had been circumcised, when his not being so does not proceed from any contempt of the divine authority, but from his knowing nothing of the rite, or not apprehending it in his particular circumstances
27 to be his duty to practise it? *Yea*, it is certain that *the uncircumcision that is by nature*, a man that continues uncircumcised as he was born, *accomplishing* the great moral purposes of *the law*, in subserviency to which its rituals were appointed, *shall judge* and condemn *thee; who*, while thou actest *by the letter* of its ceremonial precepts, *and* retainest *circumcision* and all its appendages with the greatest exactness, *art* nevertheless, in things far more essential and important, *a transgressor of the law*, to the spiritual meaning and extent of which thou continuest an utter stranger, and which thou encouragest thyself, by these
28 external observances, to neglect. *For* upon the whole, as you would not allow any man to be truly a Jew merely for any outward rites which he might observe, if he continued uncircumcised, how carefully soever he might conceal it; so must I freely declare to you, that *he is not* in the most sublime and important sense *a Jew*, that is, one of God's covenant and beloved people, *who is* merely *so in outward show; neither* indeed [*is that*] the true
29 *circumcision which is apparent in the flesh:* Nothing merely ritual or ceremonial can recommend a man to the divine favour; *but he* [*is*] *a Jew*, that is, one of God's chosen people, *who is one in the hidden part*, as David expresses it, (Psal. li. 6.) or in the secret recesses of the soul; *and* the acceptable *circumcision* [*is that*] *of the heart*, which your own prophets so often inculcate, (see Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Jer. iv. 4.) when they urge the putting away all inward impurity and obstinacy, as that which is most highly offensive in the sight of God. This excellent circumcision is seated *in the spirit*, consisting of a change made there by the operation of the Divine Spirit himself, and *not* merely *in* an external conformity to *the letter* of the law, of which the worst of men may be capable. Now such a person, whatever his outward profession may be, is one *whose praise* [*is*] *not* so much *of men*,[g] who, eager to spread their own sects, applaud those who become their proselytes, or most strenuously retain their peculiar forms; *but* is *of God*, who alone knows the heart, and whose esteem and complacency is infinitely preferable to that of whole nations or worlds.

adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 28 LET our hearts be always attentive to these lessons of inward religion which the sacred oracles fail not continually
29 to inculcate. It is the praise of God that is in question; and who can be so lost to all true greatness of mind, to all generous ambition, as that he should not long and even burn to obtain it? Or who can enjoy or attend to the praise of men, while he has any reason to fear that God condemns?
17 To have the name of a Jew or of a christian, how little will it signify! To boast in an external and temporary
18 relation to God, if we are such as shall finally be disowned by him, will make us the more wretched. To have

f *For circumcision, &c.*] It is most evident that γαρ cannot here signify that the following words are a reason for what was asserted in those immediately preceding; it seems little more than expletive, as the particle *now* among us often is. I shall not therefore in many passages take the pains of endeavouring to find such a connexion as would justify the use of it in its strictest propriety; in attempting which, many have vainly perplexed themselves to no other purpose than to make the writings of St. Paul appear more obscure than they really are.

g *Praise is not of men, &c.*] Perhaps here is a reference to the etymology of the word Jew, it being derived from the word *Judah*, which signifies *praise*. Compare Gen. xxix. 35; and xlix. 8.

known his will, to have distinguished things that differ, and set up for instructors or reprovers of others, will only furnish out matter of condemnation from our own mouths, if, while teaching others, we teach not ourselves. Well may the punishment be aggravated where the guilt is so great; when it brings so peculiar a reproach upon religion, and in effect dictates so many blasphemies against the name of God, at the very time it pretends to exalt it. SECT. 5. ROM. II.

We pity the Gentiles, and we have reason to do it; for they are lamentably blind and dissolute: but let us take heed lest those appearances of virtue which are to be found among some of them condemn us, who, with the letter of the law and the gospel, and with the solemn tokens of a covenant-relation to God, transgress his precepts, and violate our engagements to him; so turning the means of goodness and happiness into the occasion of more aggravated guilt and misery. 26, 27

SECTION VI.

After removing some objections, the sad case both of Jews and Gentiles is farther illustrated, and the representation shown to be agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament. Rom. iii. 1—19.

ROM. iii. 1.

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

ROM. iii. 1.

BUT some may be ready to object, "If it be so that no circumcision but that of the heart "will avail to men's final happiness, *what then* [*is*] *the advantage of the Jew, or what* "*the profit of circumcision*, which yet you seemed to allow when you said but just before, "(chap. ii. 25.) that it in some circumstances profiteth?" Nor do I deny it now: I say that SECT. 6. ROM. III.

2 Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

it profiteth *much every way*, or in a variety of respects; as I shall hereafter more fully show, (compare chap. ix. 4, 5.) and *chiefly in that they* who have received it *have been intrusted with the oracles of God*[a] in the divinely-inspired scriptures, by which they are taught many important lessons, which may direct their lives and dispose them to embrace the gospel, to the security of their final and everlasting salvation. 2

3 For what if some did not believe; shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Of great importance indeed are these divine oracles to this purpose. *And what if some*, and they a considerable number, of those who once possessed these invaluable treasures, *believed* them *not*, or did not duly consider what they speculatively believed, and so rejected the gospel to which they were intended to lead, *shall their unbelief disannul* and enervate *the faith of God?*[b] Shall it destroy his fidelity to his promises, or prevent our receiving them and owning their accomplishment with becoming regard? *God forbid* that we should insinuate any thing of this kind. No: *let* the blessed *God* ever be acknowledged to *be true* and faithful, *though every man be* esteemed *a liar* and unfit to have any confidence reposed in him; *as it is written* (Psal. li. 4.) "*That thou mightest be justified in thy* "*words, and mightest* upon the whole *overcome when thou art called into judgment*;[c] "that they who insolently dare to arraign the equity of thy conduct may soon meet with "the confusion they deserve." 3 4

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

But a Jew may be ready farther to object and say, "*If our unrighteousness recom-* "*mend the righteousness of God*,[d] and illustrate his perfections in that way of becoming "righteous by faith which he now ordains, *what shall we say*, and what are we to expect? "*Is* not *God unrighteous, who inflicteth* that *wrath* which it is well known you assert he "will execute upon the whole Jewish nation for rejecting it?" *I* now *speak as a man* who had a mind to cavil at the gospel might plead, and by no means express my own sentiments, as you may well imagine. 5

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

No: *God forbid* that I should harbour such a thought or allow such a consequence: *For how then should God judge the world?* With Abraham our father, I acknowledge him under the character of the Judge of all the earth, and maintain that he will always "do right." (Gen. xviii. 25.) And as *for* such a caviller, he might as well speak out and say, "*If the truth of God hath abounded to his own glory by means of my lie*,[e] my "falsehood and iniquity of any kind; if he has taken occasion to overrule my offence "to the accomplishment of his word and the honour of his administration; *why am I* "nevertheless *called into judgment as a sinner*, and arraigned for that as a crime which is "attended with such happy consequences?" [*And why may I not say*,] *(as we are calum-* 6 7

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.

niated, and some most injuriously *affirm that we maintain,)* "*Let us do evil* things *that* "*good* consequences *may come* from them?" You may easily see that principles like these would justify the greatest crimes in the world, if they might be so overruled as to prove the occasion of good; and consequently, would so entirely confound the nature of good and evil, that I think it not worth while to argue with such persons, *whose condemnation is* indeed so apparently *just*,[f] that I leave them to be convinced and silenced by 8

a *The oracles of God.*] This is so remarkable and important a testimony to the divine inspiration of the Old Testament in general, that it can leave no doubt concerning the full persuasion of St. Paul upon this head.

b *The faith of God.*] This is an ambiguous expression, and may either signify the fidelity of God, or that faith of ours which God has pointed out as the way of obtaining justification and life. The senses run at last into each other. I have included both; and hinted, in the last words of the paraphrase, at a sort of intermediate sense; as the attentive reader will observe.

c *When thou art called into judgment.*] Elsner and Bos have abundantly shown that κρινεσθαι has this signification, (compare Acts xxv. 25; xxvi. 6.) and that ωκαν, in such a connexion, signifies *to carry the cause.* See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 18, 19; and Bos, *in loc.*

d *The righteousness of God.*] Though the phrase be in itself ambiguous, I think Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved it has here the sense we give it.

e *If the truth of God, &c.*] The Prussian Testament renders this clause, "In the mean time, if my lie conduces to the glory of "God by making the grandeur of his truth shine forth with supe-"rior advantage," &c. This is the clear and genuine sense, but it is not consistent with the rule I generally follow, to deviate so far from the words of the original; and I mention it as a specimen of many liberties in which I have declined following that version, after attentive examination of it.

f *Whose condemnation is just.*] I think this must imply that there are certain rules which God has laid down for us, disobedience to which in any imaginable circumstances is universally a moral evil; even though the quantity of good arising from thence to our

SECT. 6. their own consciences, and only mention such a detestable principle solemnly to warn you against it.

ROM. III. But to return from this long digression—If the question I mentioned before be repeated, and any say, "*What then*, upon the whole, *have we* Jews *the advantage* of the Gen-
" tiles so far, that in consequence of having these oracles of God which we have received,
9 " the promises which he will never fail to observe, and the principles of righteousness
" which he will never himself violate in his conduct, we can claim justification before God
" by virtue of our obedience to his law?" *Not at all: for we have before proved that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin*, and have placed them as convicted criminals at the
10 divine bar; *As it is written*,[g] (Psal. xiv. 1.) in a variety of passages which may be
11 applied to the present occasion, "*There is none righteous, no not one: There is none*
" *that understandeth* his duty and his true interest; *there is none that seeketh after*
12 " *God*,[h] and constantly endeavoureth to secure his favour: *They are all declined* from
" that moral rectitude which is the glory of the rational nature; *they are altogether*
" *become useless* as to the great end for which they were made, so that *there is none*
" *that practiseth good*, there is *not so much as one:* (Psal. xiv. 1—3; liii. 1—3.)
13 " *Their throat* [*is*] noisome and dangerous as *an open sepulchre*, gaping to swallow
" them up or poison them with its infected air; *with their tongues they have used*
" the most mischievous *deceit;* and while they make the fairest profession of friendship,
" *the* mortal *venom of asps* [*is*] hid *under their lips*, which utter the most infectious
14 " and fatal slanders. (Psal. cxl. 3.) They are men *whose mouth* [*is*] *full of cursing*
" *and bitterness;* (Psal. x. 7.) so that the most shocking profaneness mingles itself
" with that malignity of heart towards their fellow-men which breathes in every word.
15 " *Their feet* [*are*] *swift* to run towards the places where they have appointed *to shed*
16 " the *blood* of the innocent. (Prov. i. 16, 18.) *Ruin and misery* [*are,*] on the whole,
" *in* all *their ways;* they bring it upon others, and so, by an inevitable consequence,
17 " upon themselves at last. *And* as for *the way of peace* and happiness, *they have not*
18 " *known* or regarded it. (Isa. lix. 7, 8.) And to sum up all in one word, the great
" cause of all this degeneracy is, that *the fear of God is not before their eyes*, but they
" are utterly destitute of any true principle of religion, of any reverence and love to the
" great and adorable Object of it." (Psal. xxxvi. 1.)

19 This, my brethren, is in general the sad character of mankind in their fallen state; and the representation is the more striking as it is borrowed from the sacred writings. *Now we know that what the law saith* in such passages as these, *it saith to those* that were *under the law*;[i] they do not immediately relate to the heathen, but contain the character of those that were at that time the professing people of God. And as most of these passages are borrowed from the writings of David, Solomon, or Isaiah, it appears that, even in the best days of their state, they had a great deal of enormous wickedness among them. And if Israel, even at such a time, could not justify itself, much less can it be imagined that the idolatrous nations of the Gentiles should be able to do it; *so that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world stand convicted before God*[k] as guilty, and acknowledge itself obnoxious to a dreadful sentence from his tribunal. Now I earnestly desire to bring every reader under a sense of this, as what is of the highest importance in order to receiving the gospel with becoming gratitude and joy.

9 What then? are we better *than they?* No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God:

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one:

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10, 11, 18 WHO can read this melancholy picture of human nature, copied by the hand of an apostle from the lines first drawn by inspired prophets, without deep humility and lamentation? To this was it sunk, that there was none righteous, no not one; none disposed to seek after God or to cultivate his fear. And from this bitter root, the apostasy of our nature from God, what detestable fruit proceeds! The throat which is like an open sepulchre, the 13, 14 deceitful tongue, the envenomed lips, the malicious heart, the murderous hand! And who can wonder that such rebels to their heavenly Father should sometimes prove ruffians to their brethren?

Let us bless God that we have been preserved from falling into such enormities, and from falling by them. His grace has restrained us from sinning against him in such an aggravated manner; his providence has guarded us 15, 16 from those whose feet are swift to shed blood, and in whose paths there is destruction and misery.

Let us remember the view in which these instances were brought, even to evince this deplorable but undeniable

fellow-creatures should be greater than that arising from observing those rules. For if this be not allowed, there can be no shadow of force in the apostle's conclusion.

g *As it is written.*] These scriptures are collected from different parts of the Old Testament; but there are many editions of the Seventy in which they all stand together, in the xivth, or, according to their order, xiiith Psalm; which has given some occasion to think that other alterations may have been made in that Greek version, to render it more agreeable to the New Testament; though many passages might escape the notice of such as made this attempt, if it were really made. But it must have been, as we see in this instance it was, a fruitless one; considering how wide such copies were dispersed, and how different the religious sentiments of the persons with whom they were lodged. It seems much more reasonable to account for the diversity we find between the original and quotations, by supposing the sense rather than words intentionally regarded; and some accidental alterations have happened since in the Hebrew copies, which, in several places, may make the difference greater than it originally was.

h *There is none that seeketh after God,* &c.] It is allowed that this passage only proves directly what was the character of the Jews in David's time; but it plainly shows that the wrath of God was awakened against them as well as others for their sins: it proves also that a general degeneracy might prevail among them, though by profession God's people; and it suggests a strong presumption, that if Israel in David's time, which was one of its best ages, was so bad, Gentile nations were still worse; and in all these views it was much to the apostle's purpose to produce the passage. The like observation is in a great measure applicable to all the following quotations; as the paraphrase on ver. 19. suggests, or rather as the apostle himself there evidently insinuates.

i *What the law saith.*] It appears here that this word *law* doth sometimes signify the Old Testament in general; for not one of the quotations above is taken from the Pentateuch.

k *Stand convicted before God.*] So υποδικος τω Θεω seems exactly to signify. Archbishop Tillotson would render it *liable to divine justice;* which is the same in sense. See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 126.

truth, that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. The purpose of conviction therefore being answered on our hearts, let us humble ourselves before God as those that stand guilty in his presence and obnoxious to his judgment. SECT 6.

Thankfully let us own the inestimable goodness of God in having favoured us with his sacred oracles, and endeavour to improve in the knowledge of them. Thus instructed let us be careful to form the most honourable notion of God, as the worthy and universal Judge who will never fail to do right; and may these views of him produce an abhorrence of every thing evil, which must necessarily be displeasing to him! Nor let us ever allow ourselves to be brought under the influence of those fallacious and pernicious maxims which would persuade us that the goodness of the intention sanctifies the badness of the action, or that the pretended benevolence of the end will justify irregularities in the means. God's judgment and decision is final; and an inspired apostle's authority is an answer to a thousand subtilties which might attempt to turn us from the strictest rules of that immutable rectitude on which it always proceeds. ROM. III. 8

SECTION VII.

From the representation made above of the guilt and misery of mankind, the apostle deduces the necessity of seeking justification by the gospel, and consequently the excellency of that dispensation, as exhibiting the method of it. Rom. iii. 20, *to the end.*

ROM. iii. 20.

THEREFORE by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

ROM. iii. 20.

I HAVE just been proposing to you convincing evidences of the universal degeneracy and corruption of mankind, and showing you that the whole world must stand convicted before God: *therefore* let all my readers be persuaded to admit it as a most certain principle, and at all times to act upon it, that according to the just and humble acknowledgment of the Psalmist, (Psal. cxliii. 2.) *no flesh shall be justified,* or pronounced righteous, *before him,*[a] *by works of* complete obedience to *the law* of God,[b] whether natural or revealed: *For* instead of justifying any man, it only anticipates, in a more obvious and affecting manner, the sense of his condemnation; as *by the law is the knowledge of sin,*[c] it discovers to us how grievous a thing it is, and exhibits the righteous displeasure of God against it. SECT. 7. ROM. III. 20

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

But yet, blessed be God, every door of hope is not shut against the sinner convicted by the law: for *the righteousness of God,* that is, the manner of becoming righteous which God hath ordained and appointed in his gospel, *without* that perfect obedience which *the law* requires, *is now* made *manifest; being* indeed *attested by* the whole tenor of *the law and the prophets,*[d] which join in leading our eyes to the great Messiah: *Even the righteousness of God,* which he hath appointed us to seek *by the* exercise of a living *faith* on the power and grace of his Son *Jesus Christ;* to whom he commands us to commit our souls, with all humble and obedient regard. This way of obtaining righteousness and life is now, I say, made manifest *to all, and,* like a pure, complete, and glorious robe, is put *upon all them that believe,* whether they were or were not acquainted with, or subject to, the Mosaic law before their conversion to christianity; *for there is* in this respect *no difference* at all between one believer and another: *For all have sinned,* as we demonstrated above, *and come short of the glory of God,*[e] they have failed of rendering him that glory that was so justly his due, and thereby have not only made themselves unworthy the participation of glory and happiness with him, but stand exposed to his severe and dreadful displeasure: *And* if any escape it, they are such as, being induced to embrace the gospel, *are justified freely,* without pretending to plead any merit of their own, *by his* rich and sovereign *grace,* proposed there *by virtue of that redemption* and deliverance *which is in Christ Jesus* his well-beloved Son: *Whom God hath* in his 21

22 Even the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

22

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

23

24 Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

24

25 Whom God hath set

25

a *Be justified,* &c.] The learned Vitringa hath with great propriety observed that this word is borrowed from Psal. cxliii. 2. and must therefore signify *to receive the testimony of being righteous from a judge,* and cannot merely signify *to obtain mercy. To be justified* also sometimes signifies to *overcome in judgment,* Psal. li. 4. and the expression of being *just before God* implies the same. And that this is the sense of the word in this Epistle, appears from several passages; particularly Rom. ii. 3. So that on the whole, as he argues, justification is not a phrase parallel to forgiveness, but refers to a judicial process, and carries in it the idea of acquittal, praise, and reward. And indeed it seems to me always ultimately to refer to the being pronounced and treated as righteous in the great day of God's universal judgment. See Rom. ii. 13, 16.

b *By works of the law.*] I think, with Mr. Locke, that the word *law* must here be taken in this extent, comprehending ceremonial and moral, revealed and natural. And this I conclude, not so much from the omission of the article, (compare Rom. ii. 12, 14, 25, 27; chap. iii. 31; chap. v. 13, 20. in all which places, and many more, νομος without the article signifies the *Mosaic law,* as the sense evidently proves,) but from the conclusion which the apostle draws, and the whole tenor of his subsequent argument; which would have very little weight, if there were room to object, though we cannot be justified by our obedience to the law of Moses, we may be justified by our obedience to God's natural law. And nothing can be more evident than that the premises from which this conclusion is drawn refer to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and consequently that *law* has here, and in many subsequent passages, that general sense.—A very learned person has lately proposed to render εξ εργων νομε, *by the law of works;* pleading βαπτισμων διδαχης (Heb. vi. 2.) as a parallel instance: but I have declined this rendering, as (ver. 27.) the apostle expresses the *law of works* by words placed in a different order, νομε των εργων, opposed to νομε πιστεως: and (ver. 28.) χωρις εργων νομε is plainly, as we render it, *without the works of the law;* as the continuation of the apostle's argument in reference to Abraham shows. Nor can I see what great end could be served by allowing this criticism; since the apostle elsewhere asserts *justification* χωρις εργων, *without works,* (chap. iv. 6.) And to say that εργων is put elliptically for νομε εργων, (that is, *works* for the *law of works,*) is very arbitrary. Nor can I conceive that any one can be justified by the *law of works* without being justified *by the works,* or *vice versa;* and this is expressly Paul's assertion, chap. iv. 4, 5.

c *By the law is the knowledge of sin.*] This strongly implies the broken and disjointed state of human nature, in consequence of which the precepts which God gives us will, on the whole, only serve to convict us of guilt, but not to produce an obedience by which we can finally be acquitted and accepted. Some render it, *the law takes cognizance of sin.*

d *Attested by the law and the prophets.*] See, in this view, Gen. xv. 6; Isa. liii. *ult;* Dan. ix. 24.

e *Come short of the glory of God.*] Mr. Fleming, and after him, if I mistake not, Lord Barrington, explains the *falling short of God's glory,* as signifying *the loss of that lucid resemblance of the glorious Shechinah,* which they, after Mr. Joseph Mede, suppose our first parents to have worn in their primeval state. But if it were to be granted they had such a glory in that state, I cannot think it would have been natural to have called it God's glory, or to explain the word υστερουνται of *losing it,* which certainly signifies a deficiency of what might have been attained, rather than the loss of what is actually possessed. Compare Mat. xix. 20; 1 Cor. i. 7; Heb. iv. 1; chap. xii. 15.

SECT. 7. ROM. I.

infinite mercy *proposed* and exhibited to us in the gospel,[f] *as a propitiation* through whom he may honourably discover himself as propitious to us, and converse favourably with us, as he did with Moses from the mercy-seat; an inestimable privilege, which we receive *by* virtue of *faith in his* atoning *blood*, with which the throne of God is, as it were, sprinkled over, as the propitiatory in the tabernacle was with the blood of the sin-offering. (Lev. xvi. 15, 16.) And this is appointed *for a demonstration of his righteousness in the remission of sins*, which now appears to be accomplished without any reflection upon that awful attribute which might seem to have a claim so directly contrary to it; and this remission extends not only to the present but former age, and to all the offences *which are* long since *past, according to the forbearance of God*, who has forborne to execute judgment upon sinners for their repeated provocations, in reference to that atonement which he knew in due time should be made. He has, I say, proposed his Son *for a demonstration of his righteousness*, which now, *in this present* ever-memorable and signal *time*, is so wonderfully illustrated in the great transactions of our own age, intended for this purpose, *that he might be* and appear *just, and* yet at the same time, without impeaching in any degree the rights of his government, *the Justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus*, whosoever he be,[g] that is, of every one who sincerely believes in him, and acquiesces in that method of salvation which God hath published by him, and established in his perfect obedience and meritorious sufferings.

forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, *I say*, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Contemplate, I beseech you, this only way of redemption and acceptance, and say, *Where then* [*is*] *boasting* in our own righteousness, or on account of any other peculiar privileges? Or what reason can any who partake of these blessings have to glory in themselves? You will easily see that *it is* entirely *excluded*. And reflect farther, *by what law* is it excluded? [*By the law*] *of works?* by that of Moses, or any other law promising life only to perfect obedience, and threatening all disobedience with inevitable death? By *no* means. This would leave a man all the little reason for boasting he could possibly have; even that he had acted perfectly and well, and had all that excellence and worth of character which a being in his circumstances could attain. *But* if you suppose him to have recourse to the gospel, *by the law of faith* it must certainly be excluded, since the very constitution of that requires persons to acknowledge themselves sinners, and, as guilty and indigent, to make an humble application to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon and every other blessing which is necessary to their final happiness.

27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

28 *We therefore are come to a conclusion* of this part of our argument, *that a man*, of whatever nation, profession, or character, *is justified by* a true, lively, and effectual *faith* in the gospel, *without the works of the law*;[h] that is, though destitute of any legal works in consequence of which he could claim justification and life.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 And this naturally leaves room to add, [*Is God*,] who hath established such a method of justification, *the God of the Jews only, and not also of the Gentiles? Surely* he is the God *of the Gentiles too;* since it is very evident that all claim from works being thus universally given up, the Jews and Gentiles must in this respect stand upon a level.

29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 *So that* [*it is*] *one God*, the same eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, *that will justify the* Jews, who have received *circumcision*, not by that, but *by faith; and* will justify the Gentiles too, who are still in their *uncircumcision, through* the same *faith;* and therefore demands the grateful love and the new obedience of both.[i]

30 Seeing *it is* one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Now while we maintain this method of justification and salvation, can it be said that we derogate from the honour of God's justice or his law? *Do we set aside the law by faith* as if it were a faulty, or annihilate it as if it were an useless, thing? *God forbid* that we should ever insinuate such a design or entertain such a thought. *Nay*, on the contrary, *we* really *establish the law*[k] on a firmer foundation than ever, and place it in a juster and more beautiful point of light: for we show also its honour displayed in the atonement as well as the obedience of Christ; and we make it of everlasting use for attesting the truth and illustrating the necessity of the gospel, as well as for directing the lives of men when they profess to have received it; as we shall abundantly show in the process of this discourse.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.

f *Proposed.*] Some contend that προεθετο here signifies *to exhibit;* others, that it signifies *to determine, intend*, or *fix upon*. (Compare Bos, *in loc.* and Eph. i. 9, 11; Rom. i. 13.) I have chosen the word *propose*, as having just the same ambiguity.

g *Just, and the Justifier, &c.*] By *just* Mr. Taylor would understand *merciful*, and Mr. Locke *faithful to his promises;* but either of these makes but a very cold sense when compared with that we have here given. It is no way wonderful that God should be merciful, or faithful to his promises, though the Justifier of believing sinners; but that he should be just in such an act might have seemed incredible, had we not received such an account of the propitiation and atonement. But our explication is vindicated in a most masterly and unanswerable manner by the worthy author of an excellent tract, entitled, *Christ the Mediator*, p. 85. &c. to which I with great pleasure refer the reader.

h A lively and effectual *faith without works, &c.*] By thus guarding the assertion we sufficiently see how very consistent it is with that of St. James, (chap. ii. 17, 23, 24.) who only in effect asserts that no faith can suffice to our justification which is not in fact productive of obedience; and when the matter is thus stated, there is no appearance of contradiction.

i *One God that justifieth the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*] Mr. Locke would render it *seeing God is one*, and supposes it an allusion to the prediction, Zech. xiv. 9. that the Lord shall be one and his name one; fulfilled by the publication of the gospel. But I think this supposed allusion far-fetched, and see not any occasion for supposing εκ πιστεως, *by faith*, and δια πιστεως, *through faith*, to signify different things; nor can I see what different idea can here be affixed to them. L'Enfant renders it, *he will justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision by the same faith.*

k *We establish the law.*] Some render it, *Nay, but we are the persons that observe the law;* which is a just and strong thought, (compare Rom. viii. 3, 4.) but I think, not the proper signification of ιστωμεν.—For the justness of this inference, see *Christ the Med.* p. 90—96.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our whole souls rejoice in this glorious display of the divine mercy, in so beautiful an harmony with divine justice, in our redemption by Christ; to which the apostle in this section bears so noble a testimony. We are all become guilty before God; so that if he should mark iniquity, no flesh living could be justified before him: let us therefore, with all reverence and esteem, and with all joy, embrace the righteousness of God as now attested by the law and prophets, by Christ and his apostles, which shall be upon all believers without any difference; humbling ourselves deeply in the presence of God, as those who have sinned and come short of his glory, and seeking to be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. SECT. 7. ROM. III. Ver. 23

To him let us continually look as the great propitiation; exercising faith in his blood, and rejoicing that those which seemed to our feeble apprehensions the most jarring attributes, are now reconciled and glorified. Let us readily acknowledge that boasting is excluded; and in the grateful overflowings of our souls fall down before that throne whence pardons are dispensed, and confess "that this act of grace is our only plea," and that we must remain humble before God for ever, in a sense of the demerit of our sins and the abundance of his mercy. 25 27

Let Jews and Gentiles unite in thanksgivings to God and in love to each other, as having been all involved in the same condemnation, and all partakers of the same compassion. And let christians remember that God intended by this illustrious display of grace, not to supersede but to establish the law. May we therefore make it our concern, that not only the actions of our lives, but the sentiments of our hearts, be directed and determined by it! as it is now enforced by more powerful motives than when it appeared in its unallayed terrors. 29, 30 31

SECTION VIII.

The apostle here shows that Abraham and David sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends, that is, by faith. Rom. iv. 1—12.

ROM. iv. 1.

WHAT shall we say then, that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

ROM. iv. 1.

I HAVE been observing to you that we christians, by maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, instead of superseding and enervating, do indeed establish the divine law, and assert, in the most convincing manner, both its authority and purity. For the illustration of this, therefore, let us consider the important instance of Abraham, and the manner in which he was justified. *What then shall we say that* the holy patriarch *Abraham, our* reverend *father according to the flesh, hath found* effectual in this respect?[a] and to what must his justification and acceptance with God be ascribed? *For if Abraham were justified by* circumcision, or by the merit of any other *works*, rather than by the free grace and mercy of God, then *he hath something in which he may glory;*[b] *but* it is certain, by what the sacred oracles express, that though the behaviour of this celebrated person was indeed innocent, fair, and honourable before men, *yet* [*he hath*] *not* any thing to boast *in the sight of God. For what saith the scripture* upon this head? (Gen. xv. 6.) "*Abraham believed God*, when he made him the promise of that miraculous and important seed, *and* "so *it was imputed to him*, or placed to his account, *for righteousness*, or in order to his "justification:" that is, God was pleased graciously to accept it, though he had that complete and perfect righteousness which might in strict justice be demanded of every rational creature as the only condition of his being acquitted at the divine bar. *Now to him who* thus *worketh* to the utmost extent of all that was required, *the reward* proportioned to that work *is not charged to account as* matter *of grace,*[c] *but of debt;* and he may glory at least in having diligently earned it. (Compare chap. xi. 6.) *But to him who* in this sense *worketh not*, who can by no means pretend to have wrought all righteousness, *but* humbly *believeth on him who* declareth the freeness of pardoning grace, and by that *justifieth* even *the ungodly*, if he repent and return, the phrase used concerning Abraham may be applied with the strictest propriety, and it may be said that *his faith is imputed to him*, or placed to his account, *for righteousness*, or to the purpose of his being accepted and treated by God as righteous.

SECT. 8. ROM. IV. 1 2 3 4 5

And [*this is*] very agreeable to what we read elsewhere; particularly *as David* (Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.) *describeth the blessedness of the man* who is accepted of God, whom he speaks of as "one *to whom God*, according to the method of proceeding we now maintain, "*imputeth righteousness, without* any supposition of, or regard to, a former series of good "*works*, supposed to have been performed by him." For he expresses himself thus: "*Blessed are they whose iniquities are pardoned, and whose sins are* as it were *covered*[d] "by the veil of divine mercy: *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.*" Which plainly implies that sin had been committed by the best and happiest of men, and 6 7 8

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

a *Hath found.*] Some would transpose the words, and render them, "*Shall we say that our father Abraham hath found*, that is, "obtained, justification and life *according to the flesh*, that is, by "circumcision and observing the carnal rites of the Mosaic economy?" But when the natural order and usual import of the phrase makes so easy and so good a sense, I can see no reason for admitting this construction. Raphelius shows that Herodotus and other authentic Greek authors use ευρισκω for *obtaining*, and that *by merit*. *Annot. ex Herod. in loc.*

b *He hath something in which he may glory.*] This seems to intimate that the Jews maintained not only the necessity but the merit of the Jewish observances; else it might have been replied, that Abraham was indeed justified upon his being circumcised, but that it was by the grace of God in freely annexing the promise of justification and life to such a rite.

c *As of grace.*] Raphelius has shown that μισθον does not only signify *a reward of debt*, but also *a gift of favour*; and that the phrase μισθον δωρεαν occurs in Herodotus: so that a reward of grace or favour is a classical as well as theological expression.—Could we be sure that Abraham was once an idolater, it would be some illustration of the apostle's reasoning here; but the validity of it by no means depends upon that fact.

d *Whose iniquity is pardoned, and whose sin is covered.*] Archbishop Leighton has so elegantly and beautifully illustrated these words, that I must beg leave to refer those of my readers that cannot use his *Latin Meditations* on the xxxiid Psalm, to review the

SECT. 8. that it is matter of mercy and favour that it is not charged to account, so that he should finally be condemned for it.

ROM. IV. *Now* while we are speaking of *this blessedness* of the pardoned and accepted sinner, give me leave to ask, [*doth it come*] *upon the circumcision* [*only,*] *or also on the uncircumcision?* The celebrated instance we have just been mentioning will show how far circum-
9 cision is from being necessary to a share in it: For [*when*] *we say,* as above, *that faith*
10 *was imputed to Abraham for righteousness*;[e] *How* and when *was it thus imputed* and charged to his account, in this view? *When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision?* [*Truly*] the history plainly shows us that it was *not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision;* for it relates this important circumstance of Abraham as taking place many years
11 before circumcision was instituted.[f] *And* it assures us that *he received the sign of circumcision,* not as the means of making him acceptable to God when he was not before so, but as the token of his being already accepted; and therefore as *the seal of the righteousness of* that *faith which he had in uncircumcision*:[g] *that so he might be the father of all those who believe in uncircumcision, that righteousness may also be imputed unto them,* that they may be justified in the same means, and that it may be written down
12 in the book of God's remembrance that they are so. *And* he received this right by divine appointment, that he might also be *the father of the circumcision,* that is, *to those who* should afterwards practise it, and *were not only* partakers of the external ceremony *of circumcision,* which in itself indeed can have no efficacy, *but* shall also *walk in the footsteps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision,* and which rendered him so dear to God while he was in that state.

9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only,* or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision; a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had, yet* being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had,* being *yet* uncircumcised.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 7 If there be indeed such a thing as happiness to be enjoyed by mortal man, it is the portion of that man of whom Da-
8 vid speaks, even of him whose iniquity is pardoned and whose sin is covered, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure the greatest afflictions of life with cheerfulness, and look forward to death with comfort, when the sting of all these evils is taken out, and the returning tokens of the divine favour convert them into blessings. Oh let us earnestly pray that this happiness may be ours; that the great and glorious Being whom by our sins we have offended, and in whom alone the right and power of pardon resides, would spread the veil of his mercy over our provocations, and blot them out of the book of his remembrance!

Let us on the one hand fix it in our mind, that it is the character of that man to whom this blessedness belongs, that in his spirit there is no guile; and on the other, let us often reflect that it is in consequence of a righteousness which God imputes, and which faith receives and embraces. We are saved by a scheme that allows us not to
1, 2 mention any works of our own, as if we had whereof to glory before God, but teaches us to ascribe our salvation to believing on him who justifieth the ungodly. Nor need we be ashamed of flying to such a method, to which
5, 1, 3 Abraham the father of the faithful had recourse himself, and on which he built his eternal hope. May we share his
12 disposition of mind, that we may inherit the same promises, walking in the footsteps of our father Abraham! So shall we also be called the friends and children of God, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in his heavenly kingdom.

SECTION IX.

In order to recommend the scheme of justification by believing God's promises, the apostle shows that it was an illustrious act of faith which entailed everlasting honours on the great patriarch Abraham; in which he was intended for an example to us. Rom. iv. 13, *to the end.*

Rom. iv. 13.

SECT. 9. I HAVE spoken of Abraham as the father of uncircumcised believers as well as those of the circumcision, (ver. 11, 12.) and that with evident propriety; *for the promise to Abra-*

ROM. IV. *ham and his seed, that he should be heir of the world,*[a] that is, that he should inherit all the nations of the earth as a seed that should be blessed in him, *was not* and could not be
13 *by the law* of circumcision or of Moses, being, as we have already observed, prior to both; *but* it was *by the righteousness of faith.* God gave him that promise on his exerting a remarkable act of faith, on which God in the most gracious and honourable manner de-
14 clared his acceptance of him as righteous. *Now if they who are of the law,* and depend upon that alone, [*are*] *heirs* exclusive of all others, (as some so eagerly contend,) then that

Rom. iv. 13.

FOR the promise that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith

English translation of it in the 2d volume of his *Expository Discourses;* printed at Edinburgh, 1748.

e *Imputed to him for righteousness.*] I think nothing can be easier than to understand how this may be said in full consistence with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that is, our being treated by God as righteous for the sake of what he has done and suffered; for though this be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be imputed to us, εις δικαιοσυνην, *in order to our being justified* or becoming righteous; that is, according to the view in which I have elsewhere more largely stated it, as we are charged as debtors in the book of God's account, what Christ has done in fulfilling all righteousness for us is charged as the grand balance of the account; but that it may appear that we are, according to the tenor of the gospel, entitled to the benefit of this, it is also entered in the book of God's remembrance "that we are believers;" and this appearing, we are graciously discharged, yea and rewarded, as if we ourselves had been perfectly innocent and obedient. See my *Sermons on Salvation by Grace,* p. 14—19; which account is perfectly agreeable to what Witsius has remarked, *Econ. Fed. lib.* iii. chap. viii. § 36.

f Many years before circumcision was instituted.] It is said this imputation was made on Abraham's believing the promise, Gen. xv. 6. about a year before the birth of Ishmael; but he did not receive circumcision till Ishmael was thirteen years old, Gen. xvii. 27. consequently Abraham was declared justified at least fourteen years before he was circumcised.

g *Seal of the righteousness of faith.*] This seems an incontestable proof that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace, and not merely of temporal promises; and consequently obviates the most considerable objection that hath ever been urged against infant-baptism.

a *Heir of the world.*] Κοσμος cannot here signify, as γη sometimes does, one *country* or *land,* how fine or large soever. It must therefore imply his inheriting a seed out of all nations, whom he might be said to possess in such a sense as children are said to be an

is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that it *might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

faith which in the instance before us was so eminently honoured of God, *is made useless*, and treated as a thing of no value; *and* so *the promise* made to it is in effect *abrogated*, the performance of it being put, not only on new conditions, but on such as cannot be perfectly performed in this sinful state.[b] *For the law* of God, considered in itself alone, and without any regard to that grace which, though it was in fact mingled with it, yet makes no part of the legal dispensation as such, is so extensive and difficult, and we are so weak and sinful, that in fact, instead of securing to us the promised blessings, it only *worketh wrath*, that is, it becomes to us accidentally an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors; *for where there is no law*, either revealed or intimated, [*there is*] *no transgression;* but the multiplication of precepts increases the danger of offending, and the clearer declaration of those precepts aggravates the guilt attending the violation. But *therefore* [*it*,] that is, the promise and the inheritance to which it relates, [*is*] *of faith*, or annexed to it, *that it* [*might be*] *of grace;* that God might magnify the riches of his grace in proposing justification and life to us in a way that might in multitudes of instances be effectual, *that* so the blessing exhibited in *the promise might be* firm and *secure to all the* believing *seed, not only to that* part of his descendants *which was* placed under the dispensation *of the* Jewish *law*, who are not indeed excluded from it if they seek it in a proper manner, *but to that which is* the seed of that holy patriarch to whom the promise was made by a nobler relation, even by a participation *of the faith of Abraham, who is* in this view *the father of us all: As it is written*, (Gen. xvii. 16.) *I have made thee a father*, not of one family alone to descend from Isaac or Jacob, but *of many nations;* so that he is in some degree even *like God* himself,[c] who is the Father of all good men; like that Almighty Being *in whom he believed as re-animating those who are dead, and calling* into action and enjoyment *things that are not* now in existence, with the same ease *as those that are.*[d]

SECT. 9. ROM. IV.

15 16 17

And since I have begun to touch upon it, permit me, my brethren, to animate your faith by dilating a little farther upon that of this illustrious patriarch. It was he *who, against* all human and probable *hope, believed with* an assured and joyful *hope*, on the security of the divine word, *that*, unlikely as it seemed, *he should be a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken* to him (Gen. xv. 5.) when he was called to take a view of the stars of heaven, and God said, "*So* numerous and glorious *shall* "*thy seed be.*" *And* having received such a promise, *not being feeble in faith*, how feeble soever he might be in his animal constitution, *he considered not his own body*, which, with regard to the probability of begetting children, was *now dead, being about an hundred years old; nor the deadness of Sarah's womb*, of whom the sacred historian tells us, "that it ceased to be with her after the manner of women." (Gen. xviii. 11.) Amidst all these difficulties and discouragements, *he objected not to the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened by* the exercise of the most vigorous and triumphant *faith*, thereby *giving* a due and becoming *glory to* the great *God*, the Lord of universal nature; *And was* confidently *persuaded, that what he had* thus graciously *promised, he was*, and ever is, *able to perform*, though that performance should, to sensible view, seem ever so improbable. *And therefore* this heroic faith was so acceptable to the Divine Being, that *it was*, as we have heard again and again, *imputed* or accounted *to him for righteousness*, that is, in order to his justification. *Neither was it written* in the sacred records, which are to reach the remotest ages, *with regard to him only*, or chiefly to do a personal honour to that illustrious patriarch, *that it was* thus *imputed to him; But* also *for our sakes, to whom it*, that is, the like faith, *shall also be imputed, if we* steadily *believe in him who* not only brought Isaac as from the dead womb of Sarah, but, in the most literal sense, *raised Jesus our Lord from the dead*, when he lay among them slain and mangled by his cruel enemies: Even that great and glorious Redeemer *who was delivered* up to them by the determinate counsel of God, that by his death and sufferings he might atone *for our* many *offences, and*, when he had fully satisfied the divine justice for them,[e] was *raised again for our justification;* that putting our trust in him who was thus apparently discharged from all farther claim upon him as our Surety, we might obtain, by virtue of our relation to him, plenary pardon and eternal life.

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us continually bear in our mind the great and venerable example of our father Abraham; labour to the utmost to trace his steps, and have faith in God, who at his pleasure *quickeneth the dead, and calleth things* Ver. 17

heritage, Psal. cxxvii. 3. Compare Gen. iv. 1; Prov. xvii. 6. See also Psal. lxxxii. 8. where God is said to inherit the nations that are taken into his family on the profession of the true religion.

b Cannot be perfectly performed.] This is here said with reference to a moral impossibility. It seems evident, from what follows, that the law is to be considered as insisting on an obedience absolutely perfect; so that these good men who were justified under it, were not justified by it, but by the dispensation of grace under which Abraham was, which, though not a part of the covenant of God by Moses, was not and could not be abrogated by it. Compare Gal. iii. 17.

c *Like God.*] So I think ὡς θεὸν may here signify; and accordingly it is rendered, *ad instar Dei*, by Paræus.

d *Calling things that are not.*] That this is to be understood of summoning them, as it were, to rise into being, and appear before him, Elsner has well proved on this place.

e Fully satisfied the divine justice for them. By satisfying the divine justice, I mean, "doing all that was necessary amply and "perfectly to secure the honour of the divine government in the "pardon and acceptance of penitent and believing sinners;" but I do not mean "the payment of the debt, in such a sense as that our "engagements to holiness should be dispensed with or in any de"gree weakened, or our obligation to the free grace of the Father "in our salvation transferred or enervated." And I desire it may be remembered and attended to throughout, that this is the sense in which I would use the phrase wherever it occurs in any of my writings, and I hope it will not be found that I have ever deviated from it.

SECT. 9. ROM. IV. *which are not as if they were.* If sense were to judge, it would pronounce many of those difficulties invincible which lie in the way of the accomplishment of his promises; but they shall all be fulfilled in their season. Let us therefore be strong in faith, remembering that thus it becomes us to glorify that God who condescends so far as to engage the honour of his word for the support of our souls. He who hath promised is able to perform, for with him all things are possible. Already hath he done that for us which we had much less reason to expect than we 25 now have to hope for any thing that remains. He delivered his Son Jesus for our offences, to redeem us by his blood from final and everlasting ruin.

24 Let it be our daily joy that *he was raised again for our justification;* and let his resurrection be continually 22, 23 considered as a noble argument, to establish our faith in him who performed this illustrious work of power and mercy. So shall it be imputed to us likewise for righteousness; yea, so shall the righteousness of our Redeemer be reckoned as ours, to all the purposes of our justification and acceptance with God. And though, by our trans- 14, 15 gression of the law, we can never inherit by any claim from that which only worketh wrath and condemnation 16 in consequence of our breach of it; yet shall we, by believing and obeying the gospel, find the promise sure to us as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and be for ever happy in the enjoyment of that better Canaan, when every earthly inheritance shall be no more found.

SECTION X.

The excellency of the gospel-dispensation is farther illustrated, believers being hereby brought into so happy a state as turns even the heaviest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. Rom. v. 1—11.

ROM. v. 1.

SECT. 10. ROM. V. WE have been reviewing the manner in which Abraham and David, those illustrious patriarchs, looked for justification and happiness, and in which we are to seek it if we desire to succeed. We have been speaking of our adorable Saviour as delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification: Let us now *therefore* reflect a little on those invalu- able benefits which we who have embraced this dispensation, whether Jews or Gentiles, en- 1 joy in consequence of it. And here it is in the first place evident, that *being* thus *justified by* means of *faith* in Christ, *we have peace with God:*[a] Our guilty fears are silenced, and we are taught to look up to him with sweet serenity of soul, while we no longer conceive of him as an enemy, but under the endearing character of a Friend and a Father; 2 even *through* the mediation and grace of *our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom we have been introduced,*[b] *by means of faith, into that* state of *grace* and acceptance *in which we* now *stand* with humble boldness in his presence, and cheerful confidence that nothing shall remove us from his favour. *And* by a farther consequence, we do not only rejoice in some considerable present privileges, but *boast in* a pleasant and assured *hope of* in- heriting at length *the glory of God,* a state of perpetual splendour and happiness in the house and presence of our heavenly Father, in which he will, as it were, adorn us with 3 the rays of his own glory. *And not only* do we [*so*] boast in this hope, *but we also glory in our tribulation*[c] and affliction, which, far from esteeming, as the Jews are ready to do, any token of reprobation or displeasure, we look upon as being, in this connexion, the allotment of God's paternal love to us, that we may thereby be enabled to do him a more singular honour, and be prepared for a more exalted happiness; *knowing that tri- bulation,* under the influence of divine grace, *worketh* a calm, silent, humble *patience,* a most beautiful and happy disposition of mind, which is daily strengthened by exercise: 4 *And* this *patience* produceth such an *experience* of God's supporting goodness, and such proof of our own sincere faith,[d] strict integrity, and steady resolution for him, as we are sure will be acceptable to him; *and* therefore this *experience* and proof of our graces, which like pure gold brighten in the furnace, worketh a more lively and triumphant *hope* 5 of a glorious future reward. *And* this *hope,* sublime and confident as it is, *does not shame* and confound [*us*] with disappointment; yea, we know it cannot, *because* we have already within ourselves the very beginning of that heaven at which it aspires. For *the love of God,* in the perfection of which the blessedness of that celestial world consists, *is* in a plentiful effusion *poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit, which is given unto us,* and enables us to see his love amidst all his corrections, and to delight

ROM. v. 1. THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also knowing that tribulation worketh patience,

4 And patience experience, and experience hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us:

a *We have peace with God.*] It seems very unreasonable to suppose that when the apostle wrote such passages as this and Eph. i. 1—3. he should mean to exclude himself, who was no Gentile; they are not therefore to be expounded as spoken particularly of the Gentiles; nor could he surely intend by these grand descriptions and pathetic representations to speak only of such external privileges as might have been common to Simon Magus, or any other hypocritical and wicked professor of christianity. And if he did not intend this, he must speak of all true christians as such, and as taking it for granted that those to whom he addressed this and his other Epistles were in the general such, though there might be some few excepted cases which he does not think it necessary often to touch upon. And this is, after all, the true key to such passages in his Epistles, and as such I have used it throughout my work; and as I have more particularly stated and vindicated it in the post- script which I have added to the preface of my *Sermons on Re- generation,* in the second edition, I must beg leave to refer my reader thither, and hope I shall be excused from a more particular ex- amination of that very different scheme of interpretation which Mr. Taylor has so laboriously attempted to revive. The main principles of it are, I think, well confuted by my pious and wor- thy friend Dr. Guyse, in the preface to his *Paraphrase* of this Epistle.

b *We have been introduced:* την προσαγωγην εσχηκαμεν.] Raphelius has shown from Herodotus, that προσαγωγη is often used as a sacer- dotal phrase, and signifies "being with great solemnity introduced "as into the more immediate presence of a deity in his temple, so "as, by a supposed interpreter, from thence called προσαγωγευς, "*the introducer,* to have a kind of conference with such a deity."

c *We glory also in tribulation.*] The Jews might object to the persecution of christians, (as we know they did to that of their Master,) as inconsistent with what they concluded would be the state of the people of the Messiah. It is therefore with great pro- priety that the apostle so often discourses on the benefit arising from the sufferings of true believers, by which he lays in the strongest answer to any such insinuation. And this delicacy of ad- dress is so apparent in many passages of the Epistles, that I should swell the notes too much if I were accurately to trace it.

d Proof of our faith.] Mons. Saurin very justly observes that the word δοκιμη has this signification, and is a metaphor taken from gold proved by purifying fire. Compare 1 Pet. i. 7. see Ecclus. ii. 5, Saur. *Serm.* Vol. VII. p. 159.

ourselves daily in him, though for the present he appoint us trials which may seem ever so rigorous.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Now all these invaluable privileges and hopes, which make our lives so joyful amidst such various tribulations and extreme sufferings, are to be traced up to the death of Christ, and resolved into his love; *for when we were yet* in a weak and languishing, infirm and helpless state, destitute of all these divine principles and hopes, yea, incapable of delivering ourselves from the depths of guilt and misery into which we were plunged, *Christ* most *seasonably died* for us, even *in the stead of the ungodly*,[e] for Jews and Gentiles, when they were, as we have proved before, all under sin. 6

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

Now[f] this is a most memorable thing, and worthy our frequent, attentive, and affectionate consideration: For *scarcely would one* be willing to *die in the stead of a righteous man*, though we apprehended him in the most immediate danger; [*if*] *perhaps, in the stead of a* remarkably *good* and benevolent *man*,[g] *one would even dare to die;* for certainly it is but here and there one in a great multitude who would be willing to redeem the most eminently useful life at the price of his own. 7

8 But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

But God hath recommended his astonishing *love towards us*, and set it off as it were with this grand circumstance of high embellishment, if I may so speak, *that when we were yet sinners*, and therefore not only undeserving of his favour, but justly obnoxious to wrath and punishment, *Christ died in our stead*, that our guilt might be cancelled, and we brought into a state of divine acceptance. 8

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Since *therefore* it hath pleased the blessed God to give us such an unexampled display of his love as this, how high may our expectations rise, and how cheerfully may we conclude, that *much more being now justified by* the efficacy of *his* most precious *blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him!* For we can never imagine that God would provide at so expensive a rate for our justification, and then finally leave us under wrath, though we have acquiesced in the scheme of his grace for our deliverance. 9

10 For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

For if, as I have already maintained, *when we were enemies*, through the perverseness of our minds and the rebellion of our lives, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his* own dear *Son;* and if, foreseeing we should fall into this state of hostility, he made this wonderful provision for our being admitted to terms of peace, *how much more, being* thus *reconciled, shall we be saved* from misery and made completely happy *by his* recovered *life*, now he is risen from the dead, and ascended to glory! 10

IMPROVEMENT.

With what ecstacies of holy joy may we justly survey these inestimable privileges, the blessed consequences of having embraced the gospel and being justified by faith unfeigned! How great a happiness to have peace with God, Ver. 1 with that Omnipotent Being who can at pleasure arm all nature against us or for us! to have access to him by Jesus Christ, and daily converse with him as our Father in heaven! to rejoice in an assured hope of enjoying glory 2 with Christ in his presence, yea, of enjoying the God of glory! to see all affliction not only disarmed but turned into matter of triumph, while tribulation worketh experience, patience, and hope! So may all our tribulations work; 3, 4 and be they ever so severe, they will be reasons for our joy and praise. The pain of them will soon be over, the happy consequences will be as lasting as our immortal souls.

Let us endeavour to dilate our hearts, that we may receive the largest effusions of the love of God to be shed 5 abroad there. The love of God! that plant of paradise which will spring up unto eternal life. And to excite it, let us be daily meditating upon the rich wonders of redeeming love and grace; adoring that seasonable interposition of divine mercy, that when we were weak and guilty creatures, when we lay for ever helpless under a sentence 6 of everlasting condemnation, that is, when we appeared thus in the eyes of him who beholdeth things which are not as if they were, Christ died for us, and gave a token of his love even for the worst of sinners, which few among the 7 children of men are willing to give with respect to the most upright and benevolent of their brethren. Since the love of God comes thus recommended, let us cordially embrace it, and awaken all the powers of our souls to a diligent care to secure the happy fruits, that we may not receive the grace of God in vain. If we do indeed experience in ourselves, not only that there is a foundation laid for our reconciliation, but that we are actually reconciled to God 10 by the death of his Son, our hopes may rise high that we shall much more obtain consummate salvation by his life.

e *Died in the stead of the ungodly.*] By *ungodly* here, Mr. Locke understands *Gentiles;* as also, by *weak sinners, enemies, &c.* They are undoubtedly included; but it seems very inconsistent with the whole strain of the apostle's argument in the preceding chapters, to confine it to them. Compare chap. iii. 9—20, 22, 23; iv. 5; v. 20. I therefore all along explain such passages in the most extensive sense; and think nothing in the whole New Testament plainer than that the gospel supposes every human creature to whom it is addressed to be in a state of guilt and condemnation, and incapable of being accepted with God any otherwise than through the grace and mercy which it proclaims. Compare John iii. 16, 36; chap. v. 24; 1 John iii. 14; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 47. and especially 1 John i. 10. than which no assertion can be more positive and express. Albert (*Observ. Sacr.* p. 304.) has well proved that κατα καιρον should be rendered, *seasonably*, and Raphelius (*Not. ex Xen.* in ver. 3.) has abundantly demonstrated that υπερ τινων αποθανε signifies, *he died in our room and stead;* nor can I find that αποθνησκειν υπερ τινος has ever any other signification than that of *resigning the life of another at the expense of our own;* and the very next verse shows, independent on any other authority, how evidently it bears that sense here; as one can hardly imagine any one would die for a good man, unless it were to redeem his life by giving up his own. How much higher not only Grotius, but Le Clerc, carried their explications of this great doctrine than some moderns have done, may be seen by consulting Grotius's gloss on 1 Pet. ii. 19. (*De Satisf. cap.* ix.) and Le Clerc on John i. 29.

f *Now:* γαρ.] It is very evident that γαρ cannot have the force of an illative particle here or in the preceding verse; and it is hardly possible to number all the passages in Paul's writings to which the like remark may be applied.

g *Righteous,—good.*] It is true that in one sense *righteousness* must include *goodness*, as we owe to every man a benevolent affection, and are bound in duty to God to do all the good we can to the whole human species. But he may in common speech be called a *just* or *righteous man* who gives to every one what is by law his due, and *he a good* or *benevolent man* who voluntarily abounds in kind and generous actions to which no human laws can compel him. Tully has the like distinction, (*De Offic. lib.* 1. *cap.* x. *edit. Pierc.*) and it is admirably illustrated by Raphelius, (*Not. ex Xen. in loc.*) by apposite quotations from other ancient writers. It may very possibly (as Godwin has shown in his *Jewish Antiquities, lib.* 1. *cap.* ix.) bear some allusion to a distribution of mankind into the three classes, חסדים, צדקים, and רשעים, *good men, righteous men*, and *sinners*, which some rabbinical writers mention. All the beauty and grace of this passage is lost by reading αδικου instead of δικαιου, as the editor of the new version of 1727 does, without, as I can find, any single authority: *For a wicked man no one would willingly die,*

SECT. 10. For surely it is infinitely more astonishing that the Son of God should die to reconcile enemies, than that having subdued their hearts by his dying love, and received them to friendship as the purchase of his blood, he should employ his recovered life and extensive authority for their protection and complete salvation.

SECTION XI.

The apostle shows that the calamities brought by the first Adam on his seed are repaired, with glorious advantage, to all who, by faith, become interested in the second Adam. Rom. v. 11, *to the end.*

Rom. v. 11.

SECT. 11. I HAVE been breathing out our hopes and our joys, as we are christians, and are taught by the principles of our divine religion to rejoice, not only in the prospect of glory, but even in tribulation itself. *And* now I must add, that it is *not only* [*so,*] *but* that there is another grand consideration which, though not yet mentioned, lies at the root of all our confidence and happiness; which is this, that *we boast in God* as invariably our covenant God and Father *through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have now,* in these late times, *received the* great and important *reconciliation,*[a] which not only averts the terrors of his wrath, but opens upon us all the blessings of his perpetual friendship and love.

ROM. V. 11

12 And *therefore*[b] we may from these premises infer that the benefit which we believers receive from Christ[c] is equal to the detriment we receive from Adam, yea, is on the whole greater than that; for we now obtain righteousness and life from one, *as by one man,* that is, Adam, the common father of the human species, *sin entered into the* new-made *world, and death,* before unknown in the creation of God, entered *by sin; and so death passed* on from one generation to another *upon all men, unto which all have sinned* in him;[d] that is, they are so far involved in the consequence of his first transgression, as by means

13 of it to become obnoxious to death. And that this was indeed the case, and this offence the engine of mortality in the whole human species, we may infer from one very obvious fact, I mean the death of infants from the very beginning; *for* from the fall of Adam *unto* the time when God gave *the law* by Moses, as well as after it, *sin was* and appeared to be *in the world,* by the continual execution of its punishment, that is, death. *But* it is a self-evident principle, that *sin is not* and cannot be *imputed where there is no law,* since the very essence of sin is the violation of a law. And consequently, if we see in fact that sin was imputed, we must conclude that the persons to whose account it appears to have

14 been charged were under some law. *Nevertheless,* it is certain *death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over* infants as well as others, over *those,* I say, *who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam,*[e] that is, who had never in their own persons offended God as Adam their father did; *who,* with respect to the extent of his actions to all his seed, *was the figure* or model[f] *of him who was to come,*[g] that is, a kind of type of the Messiah, as being a public person and federal head.

15 *Yet* I must observe by the way, that with respect to *the free gift* of God in the gospel-dispensation, it [*is*] *not* exactly *as the offence,* nor limited in all respects as that is; *for if by the offence of one many died,* if the whole human family, numerous as it is, became obnoxious to death and destruction thereby, how *much more hath the* free *grace of God, and the gift* [*which is granted*] *by* that *grace,* as manifested and displayed *in* that *one* greater and better *man Jesus Christ, abounded to many,* that is, to all the numerous family of believers!

16 *And* this in two very important respects. In the first place, *the gift* [*is*] *not* merely, *as* the ruin that came upon us *by one that sinned,* in respect to the number of offences

ROM. v. 11.
AND not only *so,* but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; who is the figure of him that was to come:

15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the

though for a benefactor some have readily offered to die. And αγαθου does not signify merely a *personal benefactor,* but in general a *benevolent man.*

a *Received the reconciliation.*] The word καταλλαγη here has so apparent a reference to κατηλλαγημεν and καταλλαγεντες in the preceding verse, that it is surprising it should have been rendered by so different a word in our version; especially as it is so improper to speak of our *receiving an atonement,* which God receives as made for our sins.

b *Therefore.*] Διατουτο certainly does often signify, *in this respect;* but there are some instances, even among the texts collected by Mr. Taylor here, in which it may as well be rendered *therefore;* particularly Matt. xiii. 13; John ix. 23; chap. xii. 18; chap. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 17; chap. xi. 33; Eph. i. 15. In all which places our rendering seems preferable to what he would propose.

c We believers.] As this 12th verse is an inference from the 11th, it seems evident that they only are spoken of; for it is plain, from comparing the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses with the 1st, that it is only they *who are justified by faith who have peace with God, and who joy in him by Christ, as having received the reconciliation.* And this obvious remark clears the following passage of difficulties, which would be exceeding great if it were to be considered without regard to this connexion, and which have in fact misled many commentators; who for want of attending to it, have plunged themselves and their readers into great perplexity, and given a sense to the paragraph of which it is by no means capable.

d *Unto which all have sinned:* εφ' ω παντες ημαρτον.] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 26.) would render it, *on account of whom:* and he produces some remarkable authorities for it; compare Phil. iii. 12; Rom. x. 19; chap. xvi. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 7.) but I think those produced by Mr. Taylor, (from Gal. v. 13; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 14.) with the use of the particles in some of the purest Greek classics, sufficient to support his rendering, which I have here followed. See his *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin,* Part I. p. 51. &c. note.

e *Likeness of Adam's transgression.*] Mr. Locke and several more interpret this of the Gentiles, who did not sin against a *positive law:* But they might certainly have died for their transgression against the *natural law,* under which they were born, and for which the apostle expressly asserts, not only that they were in fact liable to perish, (chap. ii. 12. &c.) but that they knew they were worthy of death. (Chap. i. *ult.*)

f *Figure* or model.] That the word τυπος has this signification, will appear from Acts vii. 44; Rom. vi. 17; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 7; Heb. viii. 5; 1 Pet. v. 3.

g *Of him who was to come:* του μελλοντος.] Here is evidently an ellipsis. Most commentators have explained it as referring to the great person that was to come, or in other words, *the future* [*Adam,*] that is, *Christ.* But Sir Norton Knatchbull would explain it of *mankind to come.* He thinks that Adam cannot with any propriety be called *a type of Christ,* as the *type* of a thing is its *shape, model,* or *representation,* and therefore if the thing be good, the type of it must be so too. Dr. Milner, in vindication of this interpretation, observes that this will best agree with the apostle's design: For if Adam was to be considered as a public person, the type, figure, or representation of mankind, his conduct will, as the apostle says it does, affect infants. Dr. Milner's *Ending Flowers of Life,* p. 14.— But it may be sufficient to answer, that upon the common interpretation there was plainly a correspondence between Christ and Adam, as each was a public head, though the influence of each on his respective seed was different; so that the whole reasoning of both these learned and ingenious writers seems inconclusive.

gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

in question; *for the sentence of* but *one* [*offence passed*] upon us *to condemnation*, and we were no farther affected by the subsequent sins of Adam than by those of any intermediate parent; *but the gift* of divine grace exhibited in the gospel, [*is effectual*] *to* our *justification from* the guilt of *many offences:* It not only delivers us from the sentence to which we were from our birth liable on account of Adam's sin, but from that more grievous and dreadful sentence which we had brought upon ourselves in adult life by our innumerable and aggravated personal transgressions. *Moreover*, there is another important article in which the grace of the gospel exceeds the seeming severity which attended the imputation of guilt from our first father Adam; namely, that *if by one man's offence death reigned, by one*, over all his posterity, as we observed above, *they who* thankfully and obediently *receive*[h] *the* overflowing *abundance of* free *grace, and of the* munificent *gift of righteousness* exhibited in the gospel, *shall much more reign in life by* the *one* great Restorer and Recoverer of his seed, *even Jesus Christ;* that is, believers shall by him be brought to a much nobler and more excellent life than that from which Adam fell, and which they lost in him.

SECT. 11.

ROM. V.

16

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

17

Therefore, on the whole, you see, as I began to observe to you before,[i] that *as* [*the consequence*] *of one offence*, on the one hand, [*extended*] *to all men, to* bring *condemnation* upon them, *so also*, on the other side, [*the consequence*] *of one* grand *act of righteousness* [*extended*] *to all men* who receive and embrace it, securing *to* them that *justification* which will be crowned with the enjoyment *of* eternal *life*. *For as by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners*, that is, became obnoxious to death as if they themselves had sinned, *so by the* complete and persevering *obedience of one many shall be constituted righteous;*[k] that is, they shall be treated as such in the day of God's final account, though they have no perfect righteousness of their own to plead, in consequence of which they should stand before God and claim the reward.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one, *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

18

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

19

But as for *the law* of Moses, that could not possibly procure this great benefit to them; for that *made a little entrance*,[l] that is, took place among comparatively a very small number of mankind for a few ages, *that the offence might*, instead of being removed, *abound* much more than before; as in consequence of it many things became offensive to God which were before indifferent, and the guilt of moral offences was aggravated by so express a declaration of the rule of duty violated by them: so that, on the whole, it seemed intended to convince and humble rather than to justify. *Yet*, on the whole, God hath taken an occasion to glorify the riches of his mercy by that dispensation, and *where sin* has *abounded* under the most aggravating circumstances, *grace hath superabounded*, so as thereby to gain a superior and more illustrious triumph: *That as sin had reigned in* the wide and universal devastation which *death* had made on those whom it had brought under that fatal sentence, *so grace might reign to* such a degree as to bestow *eternal life* and happiness, *through* the glorious and complete *righteousness*[m] which we obtain *by Jesus Christ our Lord*, when we sincerely believe in him as our Saviour, and give up our souls to the authority of his equitable and auspicious government.

20

20 Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

21

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us daily remember our relation to God by Christ Jesus, and glory in this relation; saying frequently, "He is indeed our Father. This God, with all his adorable, unfathomable, immutable perfections, is our God. He will be our Guide unto death, and our Portion for ever. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. What relation can be so honourable, what can afford such an unfailing spring of perpetual joy?" Ver. 11

Let us honour him in all his dispensations, even those which may appear the most mysterious. In this number we are undoubtedly to reckon his constituting Adam the covenant-head of his posterity, and involving our life or death in him; yea, adjusting the relation so, that our spiritual state should be greatly affected by his conduct, and we should by his transgression become the heirs not only of death but of moral pollution, and ultimately, by virtue of our descent from him, be shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

It is a consideration which must carry awe and solemnity, grief and lamentation, throughout all ages, *that by one man sin entered into the world, and death* made such a progress *by* the entrance of *sin*, as to pass upon all men in consequence of that act. O God, how terrible are thy judgments! and yet how rich thy compassion in appointing the second Adam to repair the ruin and desolations of the first! Yea, more than to repair them; to 12

h Thankfully and obediently *receive.*] It is so very plain that the *abundant reign in life by Jesus Christ* is appropriated to persons of a particular character, expressed here by *receiving the gift*, that it is surprising any should have spoken of it as common to the whole human race. And nothing is more evident than that the word λαμβανω has often this sense, and signifies *being active in embracing* a benefit proposed, or a person offering himself under a character of importance. Compare John i. 11, 12; iii. 11, 32; v. 43; xii. 48; xiii. 20; Jam. v. 10; 1 John v. 9; 2 John 10; 3 John 7.

i As I began to observe, &c.] This 18th verse seems connected with the end of the 12th, and all the intermediate verses do undoubtedly come in as a parenthesis; and the reader, by perusing the interwoven text alone, will observe that these verses, viz. 12th, 18th, 19th, make one continued sentence. But I judged it necessary, here and elsewhere, to break the paraphrase into several sentences, lest the excessive length should have rendered the sense obscure, and the passage unwieldy and disagreeable. Many of Paul's sentences are, as they stand in the text, obscured by the length. Compare 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii.

k *Many shall be constituted righteous.*] To become liable to death for the offence of another, is indeed being thereby constituted a sinner, or treated as a sinner; since death is, in its primary view, to be considered as *the wages of sin*, or the animadversion of a righteous God upon it: but simply to be raised from the dead is not being made righteous, or treated as a righteous person; since it is a very supposable case, and will in fact be the case of millions, that a sinner may be raised in order to more condign and dreadful punishment. The whole interpretation, therefore, which Mr. Taylor has given of this text, in this view appears to me destitute of a sufficient foundation.

l *Made a little entrance.*] So παρεισηλθε properly signifies, and is well rendered by the Vulgate, *subintravit*, in which sense παρεισακτοι is used, Gal. ii. 4. Thus the partial and limited entrance of the law is distinguished from that universal entrance of sin which passed on all, as Mr. Locke well observes. This I think preferable to M. L'Enfant's rendering ii, *the law intervened*, that is, between Adam and Christ.

m *Grace might reign to eternal life through righteousness*, &c.] This trajection the sense absolutely requires

SECT. 11. deliver us from all our most aggravated transgressions, if we believe in him, and receive the gift of righteousness! to cause us to reign in life by him! to bring us to a more exalted and secure happiness than Adam himself enjoyed in the day in which he was created, or than Eden, the garden of God, could afford!

ROM. V. 17—20 Let us adore these superaboundings of divine grace, and its reign unto eternal life. And let all our knowledge of the law of God, our distress under a sense of having broken it, and being thereby exposed to its condemning sentence, be considered as illustrating the riches of that grace whereby we are saved, and so animate us to returns of the humblest gratitude and a persevering obedience. Amen. March 23. 1856 (Easter.)

SECTION XII.

The apostle shows that the gospel, far from dissolving our obligations to practical holiness, does strongly increase them; which is a consideration tending highly to recommend it to the esteem and acceptance of all. Rom. vi. 1—14.

ROM. vi. 1.

SECT. 12. THUS we have asserted the doctrine of justification by faith, or, in other words, of salvation by grace. And now let us consider how it is to be improved. *What shall we say, then*, concerning the practical inferences to be drawn from it?[a] Shall we say, *Let us continue in* the habitual practice of *sin, that grace may abound* so much the more in pardoning and saving us? *God forbid* that such an unworthy thought should ever arise in our hearts! We have disclaimed the consequence above, (chap. iii. 7, 8.) and we most solemnly disclaim it again. *We who are dead to sin*,[b] we who, by our profession, are under such sacred engagements to mortify it with the greatest care, *how shall we yet live in it?* Surely it were the grossest contradiction that can be imagined. On the contrary it is apparent that nothing has so great a tendency to animate us to avoid sin, and to enable us to conquer it, as this doctrine of gospel-grace.

ROM. VI. 2

3 *What*, Sirs, *know ye not*, and is it possible that any of you should be ignorant of this great and obvious truth, *that as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ*,[c] that is, into the profession of the christian faith, which is the case of us all, *have been baptized into his death*, and engaged to conform to the great purposes of it, which we

4 know were to abolish sin? (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2; 1 John iii. 5.) *Therefore*, as this is the known obligation of this solemn initiatory ordinance, it may be said that *we are buried with him in that baptism*[d] which we received as bringing us *into* a kind of fellowship in [*his*] *death*; most evidently for this purpose, *that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father*, and the operation of his illustrious though mysterious power, *so we also should* continue, during the remainder of our days, to *walk in newness of*

5 *life*, maintaining a course of conduct and actions entirely different from the former. *For* surely these two must go together; and we may conclude that *if we are* thus *made to grow together in the likeness of his death*,[e] *so also shall we be* united [*in the likeness*] *of* [*his*] *resurrection*, and shall rise up to a life spiritually new, as he rose to immor-

6 tal life and vigour; *As we know this, that our old man*, that is, the whole system of our former inclinations and dispositions, which did by a fatal contagion spread themselves over the whole man, and were incorporated with it, *hath* now, as it *were, been crucified together* [*with Christ*,] the remembrance and consideration of his cross co-operating in the most powerful manner with all the other motives which the gospel suggests to destroy the former habits of sin, and to inspire us with an aversion to it; *that so the body of sin*, of which this old man did as it were consist, *might be enervated*, deposed, and destroyed;[f] *that we might no longer be in bondage to sin*, as we were before we were so happy as to know the gospel and the efficacy of this great doctrine

7 of a crucified Saviour: *For he that is* thus *dead* with Christ *is set at liberty from sin*,[g] sin being crucified to him and he to sin, on the principles mentioned before; just as the

ROM. vi. 1.
WHAT shall we say then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 God forbid! how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted togther in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

a *What shall we say, then?* &c.] The apostle here sets himself more fully to clear and vindicate the doctrine he taught, from the consequence suggested before, chap. iii. 7, 8. He had then only in strong terms denied and renounced it, but here removes the very foundation of it.

b *Dead to sin.*] Elsner shows how frequently moral writers among the heathens speak of wise and good men as dead to sensualities and animal pleasures. Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 28.

c *Baptized into Jesus Christ.*] As the church at Rome seems to have been planted about the year 43, and this Epistle was written in the year 58, that is, 15 years after, and yet the apostle speaks of the converted Romans in general as baptized, it must be supposed, as Dr. Gale well argues, that baptism was administered to those whose parents had been christians at the time of their birth. Compare Col. ii. 12. See Gale's *Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 202, 203.

d *Buried with him in baptism.*] It seems the part of candour to confess that here is an allusion to the manner of baptising by *immersion*, as most usual in these early times; but that will not prove this particular circumstance to be *essential to the ordinance*: and in whatever manner it was administered, if it were intended as a declaration of faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, as it is well known Christ died for sin, it would infer an obligation to die to it and rise again to a holy life, which is the main point the apostle labours.

e *Made to grow together.*] Dr. Wells observes that this is the most exact import of συμφυτοι, and that it does not signify merely being *planted together*.—As there is something harsh in the construction of ει and αλλα here, Beza would for αλλα read αμα: but Raphelius in his notes from Herodotus has produced many parallel constructions in which αλλα signifies *so*. As for the future εσομεθα, he shows that it signifies a necessary consequence from the premises.

f *Enervated*, deposed, and destroyed: καταργηθη.] We render it *destroyed*, not only tormented or enfeebled, but utterly slain; and so the same word is rendered, 2 Thess. ii. 18; and 1 Cor. xv. 26—perhaps not with exact propriety, Heb. ii. 14. *The utter destruction of the body of sin in us* is certainly intended in the gospel, but the particular import of this word is to *make void, debilitate, enervate, disannul, abolish, or dispose.* Compare Rom. iii. 31; iv. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 6; xiii. 8; xv. 24; Eph. ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 10. I have joined the significations in the paraphrase, and given the version which appears to me most exactly to answer the import of the original. The body of sin in believers is indeed an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction.

g *Set at liberty.*] Δεδικαιωται signifies to be *justified* or *vindicated*, and here it seems to import *being delivered from future claims of subjection.* But this sense is so uncommon, that I am much in doubt whether it might not be rendered *justified* here, to intimate that a sense of justification by the cross of Christ is the great means of our delivery from the bondage of sin, as it animates and excites us to shake off its yoke.

SECT. 12.

ROM. VI.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

death either of the master or the slave, and much more evidently of both, dissolves the relation and destroys the oppressive power which might before be exercised. *And* let me farther remind you, that as we are christians, *we believe that if we be* thus *dead with Christ, we shall also live* together *with him.* We expect ere long to share with Christ in the complete holiness and glory of the heavenly world; and you will easily understand, and I hope easily feel, the obligation which that hope lays upon us, not only to cease from sin, but through his grace to cultivate universal holiness. We should ever be under the influence of these views, even to the very end of our course, *as we know that Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more; death no more reigneth over him,* as it seemed for a while to do. And thus your immortal life and happiness, if you pursue it according to his direction and intention, is secure: *For whereas he died, he died once for all,* as a sacrifice *for sin,* to atone the injured justice of God and repair the honours of his violated law: *And as he liveth, he liveth to God* for ever; his immortal life is entirely appropriated and devoted to his service, wherein we ought to make it our constant care to imitate his example. Suffer therefore the word of exhortation grounded on this important principle, and *so do ye also reckon yourselves to be* once for all *dead unto sin,* never to return under its power any more; *and* being thus made *alive,* let it be your care, in imitation of your Divine Master, to devote your recovered life *to* the honour and service of *God in Christ Jesus our Lord,* whose pattern and authority in such a relation concur to demand it of us. *Therefore let not sin reign* as an uncontrollable sovereign, now you have another Lord so much greater and better; let not the irregular inclinations of your minds, when they may move *in your mortal bodies,* give law to them. The early conquest of sin over the human nature hath, alas! reduced them to the sad state of mortality; but do not go on, after such a deliverance hath been wrought out for you, in a servile and wretched manner *to obey it in its licentious desires* and demands: *Neither present your members to sin* [*as*] weapons and *instruments of unrighteousness; but* with all devout affection and holy zeal *present yourselves to God as* those who, by his rich mercy and almighty power, are now made spiritually *alive,* and called out *from* that wretched state in which you lay as among *the dead.* Conscious therefore of the obligations you lie under to him who hath raised you to this new *and* glorious life, present all *your members* and powers *to God as* weapons and *instruments of righteousness* to fight his battles,[h] and to be for ever devoted to his service. Do it boldly and resolutely, and not as if you feared that your former master should recover his power and prove a severer tyrant, after you had thus attempted to revolt; *for* you may on the contrary be assured that *sin shall not have* any more *dominion over you, as you are not under the law,*[i] a dispensation of bondage and terror, *but under grace,* under the merciful dispensation of the gospel, which affords such consolations, and inspires such hopes, as may animate the soul to a much more successful combat with sin than the law could do, and give a much nobler assurance of a complete victory over it. Rom. viii. 1—4.

9 Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

9 10 11 12 13 14

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our hearts rise with indignation at the thoughts of so ungrateful an abuse of the divine goodness, as to take encouragement from the aboundings of grace to continue in sin. Are not we likewise by profession dead to it? are not we bound by our baptismal vow, as the ancient christians to whom Paul addresses himself were? Or has the use and purpose of baptism been since altered, so as to allow a covenant with sin, an agreement with hell, even to those who are listed under the banners of a Saviour? Is Christ then become the Minister of sin, or shall his death lose all its effect, while we profess to honour the solemn memorials of it? Recollecting that we *are not under the law, but under grace,* let so glorious a dispensation animate us to resolutions proportionably heroic; and may the remembrance of the death of the Son of God, in concurrence with that of his resurrection, engage us to walk in newness of life, if we desire another day to be planted into the likeness of that resurrection, and to rise victorious and triumphant from the grave!

Ver. 1 2 14 4, 5

No more let us return under the power of that spiritual death from which Christ, at the price of his own life, hath delivered us; but let us live to God, solemnly presenting our bodies and our souls to him, to be honoured as the instruments of his service, and employing each of our members, according to its proper office, for his glory. *We are alive from the dead,* we are raised by a divine power: Let us therefore daily set ourselves as in the presence of the God of our renewed lives, and account that time lost in which we are not acting for him. Without this, in vain do we know the vital truths of his gospel, in vain do we plead for them, and amuse ourselves with a sanguine hope of bearing the image of Christ in glory, if all these powerful arguments cannot now engage us to bear it in holiness.

10, 13

SECTION XIII.

The apostle takes this opportunity of urging on the christians at Rome that holiness to which they were so strongly obliged by the gospel. Rom. vi. 15, *to the end.*

SECT. 13.

ROM. VI. 15.

ROM. vi. 15.

WHAT then? Shall we sin, because we are not

I HAVE just been reminding you christians of your great privileges; that you are now under a dispensation of the most glorious grace in the gospel, and not under the restraints nor

h *Instruments to fight his battles.*] The word ὁπλα properly signifies *weapons,* and in this sense it has a beautiful propriety.

i *Under the law.*] The Mosaic law may be particularly intended; and the propriety of what is here said, when considered in reference to that, is illustrated by that excellent discourse of the apostle in the viith chapter: but it may very well imply that we are not so under any law as to be utterly condemned for want of a legal, that is, a perfect, righteousness; an apprehension of which would tend utterly to discourage the soul in all its attempts to free itself for the future from the dominion of sin.

SECT. 13. ROM. VI.

under the terrors of the Mosaic law. And *what then* are we to infer? *Shall we* take encouragement from thence to offend him to whose distinguishing goodness we are so much obliged, and *sin* securely and presumptuously *because we are not under the law, but under* the *grace* of the gospel? *God forbid!* The inference would be so odious and so dangerous, that though I disclaimed it before, (ver. 1.) I cannot too frequently guard you against it. And should you allow yourselves to argue thus, it would sufficiently prove that you do not belong to Christ, however you may glory in a pretended external relation. *Know ye not that to whomsoever ye present yourselves* [*as*] *servants*, actually *to obey* his commands, *his servants you are?* Not his whose name ye may bear without practically acknowledging his authority, but his *whom you* in fact *obey*. Least of all can you divide yourselves between two contrary masters, but must *either* be entirely the servants *of sin*, which you know by a certain consequence leads *to* eternal *death*, *or* entirely the servants of God, by a course *of* resolute and persevering *obedience*, which, notwithstanding your former failures, will securely lead *to righteousness* and life. *But thanks be to God, that whereas you were* once *the servants of sin*, this is to be spoken of as a bondage past and gone; and that *ye have* now *obeyed*, not in profession alone, but *from the heart, the model of doctrine into which ye were delivered* as into a mould;[a] that your whole temper and life might be formed and fashioned into an amiable and glorious correspondence with it. *And* therefore *being* thus *made free from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness*, and are at once enabled and obliged to lead a life of true piety and exemplary goodness.

I speak as a man, and upon the common principle of human equity and justice, as well as with a reference to civil customs, with which you Romans are so familiarly acquainted. And I reason thus with you *because of the weakness of your flesh*, because of those infirmities and temptations arising from it, against which I would endeavour to fortify you by every consideration that may render you victorious over it. *As ye have*[b] in time past, while ignorant of the gospel, and many of you the slaves of heathen vice and idolatry, *presented your members servants to uncleanness*, and *to* other kinds of iniquity into which that debauchery too naturally leads; *so* let it *now* be your care *to present your members servants of righteousness*, in order *to* the practice of universal *holiness*.

And it is very fit that this should be your entire employment; *for when ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness*, you never did any single action that was truly good and on the whole acceptable to God, because none was performed from such principles as could entitle it to his complete approbation. Now surely you should be as ready to obey righteousness as you have been to obey sin, and show as much zeal in the best as you have done in the worst of causes. To engage you *therefore* to this, consider *what fruit* or advantage *did you then derive from those things* of the very remembrance of *which you are now* heartily *ashamed*, which you would not be if you had indeed obtained any solid advantage by them; whereas this is far from being the case, *for the* certain *end of those things* [*is*] *death*. *But* remember you have *now* what is most honourable and most advantageous in your view; for *being set free from sin, and engaged to God as his servants* and property, *you have your fruit unto holiness*, in which you find a present and most solid advantage, *and the end* you have in view is nothing less than *eternal life*; such is the infinite difference, and so advantageous the exchange you have made. *For* eternal *death* [*is*] *the* proper *wages* and desert *of sin*, and is all the gain which its wretched slave will have to show from the hand of his tyrannical master in the great day of future account;[c] *but eternal life* [*is*] not, as in the former instance, the justly-deserved retribution of the action, but *the gift of* a gracious and bountiful *God in Christ Jesus our Lord*, to whom we are to ascribe it that any of our services are accepted, and much more that they are recompensed with a munificence worthy the Lord of all.

under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin: but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed! for the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15 BEING set at liberty from the condemning sentence of God's law, let us charge our souls, by all the ties of gratitude, that we do not turn his grace into wantonness, or deceive ourselves with vain words in a matter of infinite importance. We cannot be at the same time the servants of God and the servants of sin; and certainly our understand-
17 ings must be darkened to infatuation if we can long doubt whose service we should prefer. *The work of righteous-*
23 *ness is peace, the effect of it quietness and assurance for ever*, (Isa. xxxii. 17.) but death is the wages of sin, and it shall be repaid to all that go on in it. And oh what and how terrible a death, *to be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death!* How merciful are all the repeated admonitions
18, 19 which warn us to flee from it! Let us all judge that it is already too long that we have yielded ourselves the servants of

a *Model of doctrine, &c.*: εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης.] That τυπος may properly be rendered *model*, see note f, on Rom. v. 14. p. 602. and add to the instances there given, Elsner's note on this place; and see Dr. Sykes, *Of Christianity*, p. 178.—Mr. Locke thinks it is an elegant metaphor to represent the delivery of a servant over from one master to another, and that the gospel, expressed by the form of *sound words*, is the master succeeding to the law. But it seems more probable that it may allude to *melted metal* being formed by the mould into which it is poured; and it finely expresses that pliancy of temper with respect to the gospel, which constitutes so lovely a part of the true christian's character.

b *As ye have.*] It is in the original ωσπερ γαρ: but γαρ is here most evidently an expletive, as in Greek it often is. It is of some moment to observe this; and I think it had been better if our translators had more frequently attended to it.

c Eternal *death*—in the great day of future account.] I see no imaginable reason to believe, as some late writers have intimated in their paraphrase on this verse, that *death* here signifies *being cast out of existence*. See chap. ii. 12. note i, p. 590. If this could be inferred with relation to wicked heathens from the places before us, it might also, contrary to the opinion of these authors, be concluded to be the case of wicked christians, from chap. viii. 13. The truth is, that to die signifies to fall under the capital sentence of the divine law; and it is well known that being cast into the ever-burning lake is in this view called death, Rev. xxi. 8.

sin; too long that our members, made for the service of their Creator, devoted perhaps with great solemnity to our Redeemer, have been abused and prostituted as the instruments of unrighteousness. Surely it is too much time that we have already spent, too much vigour that we have already exerted, in so base a servitude. For the future let us act as those who are made free from sin. SECT. 13. ROM. VI.

And to animate us to it, let us often reflect how unfruitful the works of darkness have been found, in what shame they have already ended, in what shame and everlasting contempt they must end if they be finally pursued. Ver. 21
And let us daily direct our eye to that everlasting life that crowns the happy prospect of those who have their fruit unto holiness. Blessed effect of serving God now, to serve and enjoy him for ever! to enjoy, through eternal ages, the pleasures of a nature thoroughly sanctified, and the sight and favour of that God who is the original Source and Pattern of sanctification! It is the glorious mark at which we are aiming. Let us pursue it steadily and resolutely; yet always remembering that it is the gift of God, and never presuming to think of so glorious a remuneration as the wages of any duty we can perform. Alas! the imperfections of our best services daily forfeit the blessings of time: how impossible then is it that the sincerity of them, amidst so many frailties and defects, should purchase the glories of eternity! 22 23

March 25. 1756.

SECTION XIV.

The apostle enters upon his design of taking off the believing Jews from their fond attachment to the Mosaic law, now they were, in a spiritual sense, married to Christ by the gospel. Rom. vii. 1—6

ROM. vii. 1.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

ROM. vii. 1.

I HAVE been endeavouring to direct your regards to the gospel, and to Christ as there exhibited, in order to your justification and salvation. Now you may perhaps be ready to object, that you, who are Jews, will certainly be out of the way of obtaining those privileges if you should neglect the Mosaic law, the divine authority of which none can reasonably question. *But know you not, brethren, (for I am* now *speaking to those that are* supposed to be familiarly *acquainted with the* contents of that *law* for which they are so zealous;) *that*, on the principles which *the law* itself lays down, it *ruleth over a man* only *so long as it liveth*;[a] its dominion over particular persons can, at the utmost, last no longer than till it is itself abrogated; for that is as it were its death, since the divine authority going along with it was the very life and soul of the law. Suppose that to cease, and the letter of the precept is but a dead corpse, and, with respect to its obligation, as if it had never been. Just as it is, according to the law itself, with respect to the power of an husband over his wife, which death entirely dissolves: *for the married woman is* indeed *bound* and confined *by the law to* [*her*] *husband while he is alive; but if* [*her*] *husband be dead, she is set at liberty from* any farther subjection to *the law of* [*her*] *husband*, that is, from that law which had given him a peculiar property in her and authority over her. *Therefore, if she become the property of another* man[b] *whilst her husband liveth, she carries the* infamous *name of an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is set at liberty from the* obligation of the *law* that bound her to him, *so as to be no more* subject to the shame and punishment of *an adulteress, though she become the property of another* man: for death, having interposed between them, hath dissolved the former relation; he is dead to her and she to him. *Thus ye also, my* dear *brethren, are* in effect *dead to the* Mosaic *law by the body of Christ*,[c] his death and sufferings having now accomplished its design and abrogated its authority; and this with a gracious intent *that ye might be*, as it were, *married to another*, [*that is,*] *to him who was* in so glorious and triumphant a manner *raised from the dead*, no more to die; *that* in consequence of this new marriage *we might bring forth fruit unto God* in all the ways of holy obedience. SECT. 14. ROM. VII. 1 2 3 4

And ye should do it with the greatest zeal; *for when we were in the flesh*, that is, under the comparatively carnal dispensation of Moses, a variety of *sinful passions*, accidentally occasioned and irritated *by the law, were active in our members, so as* to produce visible sinful actions, and in them *to bring forth* a very different *fruit* from that which I have just been mentioning; even, as I observed before, (chap. vi. 21, 23.) such fruit as would expose you *to* eternal *death* if God were to be strict to mark your offences, and if his mercy did not interpose to break the fatal connexion; a circumstance which it is of the utmost importance seriously to reflect upon. *But now we are set at liberty from* our obligation to *the law*, that obligation *in which we were held being* in effect *dead* or abrogated, (as I told you above, ver. 1—4.) *so as* that now you are, in a more liberal manner, and from nobler principles, *to serve* God as your Master and Father in Christ, *in the* 5 6

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

3 So then, if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve in

a *So long as it liveth;* εφ' οσον χρονον ζη.] It would be contrary to the apostle's design to suppose the sense of this to be, as our translation renders it, *as long as he*, that is, the man in question, *liveth;* for he professedly endeavours to prove that they had outlived their obligations to the *law*. Elsner would connect ανθρωπω with νομος, and render it, *the law and authority of the husband continues in force as long as he*, that is, *the husband, liveth;* and produces authorities to prove that κυριευω is often applied to the *obliging force of a law*, or *matrimonial customs* are sometimes called *laws*. (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 31.) But this, if it avoid, as he pleads, one tautology, certainly occasions another; for the 2d verse plainly expresses this sense; and it would require a transposition not to be allowed without more apparent reason. Our rendering is more natural, and suits the connexion with the following verses, in which the law is represented as the first husband, whose decease leaves them free to be married to Christ.

b *If she become the property of another* (εαν γενηται ανδρι ετερῳ) *while her husband liveth, &c.*] The apostle here speaks in the general, not entering exactly into every excepted case that might be imagined: to infer therefore, contrary to our Lord's express decision elsewhere, that adultery is not a sufficient foundation for divorce, seems very unreasonable; though Bishop Burnet assures us that stress was once laid on the argument. Burn. *Hist. of the Reformation*, Vol. II. p. 57.

c *By the body of Christ.*] He is to be considered here as testifying by the authority of a christian apostle, that this was the design of Christ's death; so that all he does in his argument here, is to show that allowing it to have been thus, (as Jewish believers all did,)

SECT. 14. ROM. VII. 6

newness of the spirit, and not [*in*] *the oldness of the letter:*[d] that is, you are to live as those that are renewed by the Holy Spirit of God, in a rich abundance poured out upon you under this new and better dispensation, whereby you are brought to observe the spiritual meaning and design of the law, being no longer bound by these literal and ceremonial precepts which were indeed obligatory long since, but now begin to be antiquated and out of date. (Heb. viii. 13.)

newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4 God hath conferred upon all christians this singular honour, that the whole body of them should be represented as espoused to Christ. Let us always remember how we are engaged by that sacred relation to *bring forth fruit unto God.* And may the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ put continual vigour into our obedience, while we regard him as the ever-living Lord, to whom our obligations are indissoluble and everlasting!

5 Too much have sinful passions reigned in our flesh during our unconverted state. In too many instances have they wrought effectually to *bring forth fruit unto death.* And we owe it to the wonderful mercy and forbearance of God, that death, eternal death, hath not long since been the consequence.

6 Being freed from the yoke of the ceremonial law, being freed also from the condemning sentence of that moral law under the obligations of which, by the constitution of our intelligent and rational nature, we are all born, let us thankfully acknowledge the favour, and charge it upon our grateful hearts that we serve God in newness of spirit and of life. To engage us to this, may we experience more abundantly the renewings of the Holy Ghost, and the actions of our lives will be easily and delightfully reduced to the obedience of these precepts which his omnipotent and gracious hand hath inscribed on our hearts. March 26. 1747.

SECTION XV.

To wean the believing Jews from their undue attachment to the law of Moses, the apostle represents at large how comparatively ineffectual its motives were to produce that holiness which, by a lively faith in the gospel, we may so happily obtain. Rom. vii. 7, *to the end;* viii. 1—4.

Rom. vii. 7.

SECT. 15. ROM. VII. 7

I HAVE been observing above, to those of my christian brethren who were educated in the Jewish religion, that irregular passions, while we were under the law of Moses, and were acquainted with no superior dispensation, did in some instances, by means of the law, operate so as to bring forth fruit unto death. And it is necessary that I should not only farther illustrate that important remark, but expressly caution against any mistake with relation to it. *What shall we say then,* or what do we intend by that assertion? [*that*] *the law* itself [*is*] *sin,* that there is any moral evil in it, or that it is intended by God, or adapted by its own nature, to lead men into sin? *God forbid!* We revere the high authority by which it was given too humbly to insinuate any thing of that kind. And *indeed* there are many particulars in which *I should not have known sin but by the law.*[a] I should not, in a mere state of nature, have apprehended the evil of them; which I now learn from finding them so expressly prohibited. *I had not,* for instance, *known* the sinfulness of *lust* or irregular desires, *unless the law had said,* "*Thou shalt not covet;*"[b] from whence it was easy to infer that this law takes cognizance of the heart as well as of external actions. *But* as soon as I had understanding enough to perceive that the law forbade the indulgence of irregular desires, I found that I had in fact broken it, and thereby incurred the penalty, without any hope of help and deliverance from the law. And this, while I looked no farther, naturally tended to throw my mind into a state of dejection and despair. So that I may say that *sin, taking occasion from the* awful sanction of the *commandment,*[c] the wrath and ruin which it denounced, brought me into so sad a situation of mind, and left me so little strength and spirit to resist future temptation, when I seemed already undone, that it might in a manner be said to have *wrought powerfully in me all manner of concupiscence;*[d] such advantage did sin gain against me. And I mention this as the effect of my becoming acquainted with the law *because* while I was ignorant of the sentence, and considered myself as *without the law* of God, *sin*

Rom vii. 7. WHAT shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence: For without the law sin *was* dead.

their freedom from the Mosaic law followed on the very principles of that law itself.

d *Newness of the spirit, not* [*in*] *the oldness of the letter.*] This is the literal version, but *new spirit,* and *old letter,* are tantamount expressions, and are more agreeable to the turn of our language.

a *I should not have known sin, &c.*] The apostle here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the person, and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does, (Rom. iii. 6; 1 Cor. x. 30; chap. iv. 6.) when he is only personating another character. And the character assumed here is that of a man first *ignorant of the law,* then *under it,* and sincerely desiring to please God, but finding, to his sorrow, the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all, *with transport discovering the gospel,* and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy, by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed christian that he really was when he wrote this Epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary, to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as to what is expressly asserted, chap. viii. 2.

b *Thou shalt not covet.*] This, by the way, proves that Paul thought the covetousness forbidden in the tenth commandment related to the *heart,* and not merely, as some have represented it, to any *overt act,* to an attempt to take away what belongs to another. And this might be a hint to all thinking men, that the secret powers of their souls were under a divine inspection, and that much guilt might be contracted which did not appear to any human eye.

c *Sin taking occasion from the commandment.*] Most commentators have explained this as signifying that sin was quickened by the prohibition, the inclination of human nature in general being like that of a froward child, who will do a thing because it was forbidden, and perhaps is, as it were, reminded of an evil, on hearing it mentioned in a prohibition. But not to examine how far this is a universal case, it must surely be acknowledged that all lust does not arise from hence, much being previous to any possible knowledge of God's law, whether revealed or natural. I therefore incline to the interpretation which Mr. Dunlope has given in his excellent *Sermon* on this passage, the tenor of whose thoughts I have followed in the whole of my paraphrase upon it, begging leave to refer my reader to his discourse for the reasons that have determined me to it. Compare Jer. ii. 25. See Dunl. *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 46, 47.

d *Wrought in me.*] The word κατεργαζομαι in many places signifies *to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner,* (compare 2 Cor. iv. 17; v. 5; vii. 11; xii. 12.) and may well here signify a *strong irritation* of what might, without it, have been in some degree natural.

[*was*] *dead;* I was no more aware of any danger from it, or any power it had to hurt me, than if it had been a dead enemy. *For I once was*, as it were, *alive without the law*;[c] considering myself as a man unacquainted with it, I may say I was comparatively cheerful and happy: *but when the commandment came*, and I became acquainted with it, in its wide extent, unspotted purity, and awful sanctions, then *sin* immediately *came to life again;* it sprung up against me as a living enemy armed with instruments of destruction; *and I*, as incapable of resisting it, fell down and *died*, finding myself unable to resist my miserable doom. *And* thus *the commandment which* [*was*] in its original constitution [*intended*] *for life*,[f] and calculated so to regulate men's temper and conduct, as, if perfectly obeyed, to give them a legal claim to life and happiness, was quite changed in this respect: For *I* having thus broken it, and by such breach brought its condemning sentence upon me, really *found* it [*to be*] *unto death.* I found it attended with deadly consequences, both as it consigned me over to destruction for past sin, and occasionally, though not intentionally, proved productive of new guilt and misery. *For sin*, as I before said, *taking occasion by the* terror and curse of the violated *commandment*, and representing the great Lawgiver as now become my irreconcilable enemy, *deceived me* into a persuasion that I could be no worse than I was, *and thereby it slew me;* it multiplied my mortal wounds, and rendered my case still more desperate.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

So that you see, upon the whole, *the law* in the general [*is*] acknowledged to be *holy*, 12
and the particular *commandment* in question is acknowledged to be agreeable to the *holy* nature of God, *just* in reference to the reason of things, *and*, on the whole, in its consequences *good*, and subservient to men's happiness, if they continue in a state of rectitude. *Was then that which was good* in itself *made death to me?* Shall I charge my ruin on 13
this holy and good law of God? By no means. *God forbid* I should ever utter any thing like that! *But* I must rather charge it upon *sin*, which by means of so holy an instrument undid me. I say it again, sin was made death to me, *so that it appeared to be sin* indeed,[g] (that odious, dreadful thing of which nothing can be said worse than that it is itself,) as *working death in me by* the occasion of *that which is* so eminently *good; that* so *sin might, by the commandment* thus perverted, *appear exceeding sinful*, and stand forth in all its native and detestable colours, capable of turning the law itself into a means of producing the guilt it so solemnly forbade, and the ruin it was intended to prevent.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

It is on this therefore that I lay all the blame; *for we* well *know that the law is spiritual*, 14
and, as it extends to the spirit, was intended to purify and exalt it, and to assert its superiority over the meaner part of our nature. *But*, alas! may the man I have been describing and representing above be ready to say, *I am* in a great measure *carnal*, *and* in so many instances subdued by the remaining infirmities of my nature, that I am ready passionately to cry out, I am even *sold under sin!*[h] which often rises, with an almost irresistible strength, to assume a tyrannical dominion over me, as if I were its slave and property. *For that which I* actually *do*, *I* allow or *approve not*[i] in many instances; *for* 15
too often, through the strength of passion and surprise of temptation, *I practise not that which* in the general tenor of my mind *I* habitually *will; but the things which I* even *hate*, which I think of with the greatest abhorrence, *those things* in many respects *I* am so unhappy to *do;* which indeed makes me a burden to myself. *Now if I do that which I* 16
would not, in willing not to do it *I* do so far, though to my own condemnation, *consent to the law*, and bear my testimony to it *that* [*it is*] *good*, and do indeed desire to fulfil it; though, when a pressing hour of temptation comes, contrary to my resolution, I fail in observing it. *But now*, in these circumstances, *It is no more I myself that* can properly 17
be said to *do it*, *but* rather *sin*, *which dwelleth in me*, and which makes, as it were, another person, having desires and motions and interests entirely contrary to these of the renewed part within, which I would call my better self. *For I* well *know that in me*, 18
that is, in my flesh, the corrupt and degenerate self, *nothing that is good dwelleth*: and I find my animal powers sadly debased and enslaved: *for to will is indeed present with me;* I form many good purposes and resolutions; *but* when the time comes in which I should bring them into effect, *I find not* in my heart a sufficient [*ability*] strenuously *to perform that which* I know *is good*, and which I acknowledge to be most amiable and desirable. It is indeed so grievous a reflection to me, that I cannot forbear repeating it again and again; 19
for it is really so that *I do not the good* that *I* often *will* and resolve to do; *but the evil*

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

c *I was once alive without the law.*] The apostle cannot, as Mr. Locke supposes here, speak in the person of the whole Jewish people, and in this clause refer to the time between Abraham and Moses; for, not to examine how far this description would suit them then, we must on that principle of interpretation suppose they are all represented, in the close of the chapter, *as believing in Christ;* which, alas! we know to have been very far from being their case.

f *Intended for life.*] The law may be said to have been *intended for life*, though by sin made the occasion of death; as medicines which, not being rightly applied, prove fatal, may nevertheless be said to have been *intended for cure.*

g *So that it appeared:* ἵνα φανῇ.] Elsner contends that φανῇ is an expletive here; but I chuse not to allow any word in scripture to be an expletive that may fairly and naturally be expounded into any significant sense; as it is plain this may here be. See Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 37.

h *Sold under sin.*] This is often urged as an argument that the apostle here speaks in the person of a wicked man, and is represented as a phrase parallel to 1 Kings xxi. 20; 2 Kings xvii. 17. where some of the worst of men are described as having *sold themselves to do evil.* But the diversity of the expression is very obvious; and yet had this person been represented as lamenting that *he had sold himself to sin*, it might have been understood as the language of penitent remorse for past guilt, and so very consistent with a good man's character. And the many instances in which very excellent persons in the distress of their hearts for the remainder of imperfection in their character, adopt this very phrase, plainly show with what propriety Paul might put it into the mouth of one whom he did not consider as an abandoned sinner, and destitute of every principle of real piety.

i *I approve not.*] Gataker (*De Styl. Nov. Testam. cap.* 4; *Advers. Miscell. lib.* i. *cap.* 6.) and Raphelius (*in loc.*) bring apposite instances of such a use of the word γινωσκω.

SECT. 15. ROM. VII.

which I will not to do, which I form the strongest purposes against, *that I do*[k] in repeated instances. *If therefore*, as I said before, *I do that which I would not*, and am, as it were, overpowered in some cases and circumstances, contrary to the settled and prevailing bent and inclination of my soul, *it is no more I that do it, but sin, which*, as another person, *dwelleth in me*,[l] and, like an evil demon when it has taken possession of a man, uses my faculties and powers, over which it usurps an abhorred dominion, to carry on its own contrary and destructive interests. *I find then*, upon the whole, *a* sort of constraining *law*, which so influences me, *that when I would do good, evil is* in fact *present with me.* *For with regard to the inner man*, that is, my mind, the better and nobler powers of my intellectual nature, *I delight in the law of God*,[m] I most heartily approve it, and look upon its whole system with complacency, as what I could rejoice to be conformed to in the completest manner and highest degree. *But*, alas! *I see another* and quite opposite *law* of vicious and irregular inclinations seated *in my members*, which, taking its rise from a lower and meaner principle, is continually *making war against the* better *law of my mind, and* too frequently *captivating me to the law of sin, which is*, as I said, seated *in my corporeal members.* *Wretched man that I am!* do I often cry out, in such a circumstance, with no better supports and incitements than the law can give; *who shall rescue me*, miserable captive as I am, *from the body of this death?* From this continual burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious as a dead carcase tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes.[n]

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 Thus I bemoan myself when I think only of the Mosaic law, the discoveries it makes, the motives it suggests, and the circumstances in which it leaves the offender: but in the midst of this gloomy prospect, a sight of the gospel revives my heart, and I cry out as in a kind of rapture, as soon as I turn mine eyes to it, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*,[o] in whom he now reveals himself to me, and by whom he delivereth me from this bondage and misery. *So then, whereas I myself*,[p] *with* the nobler powers of *my spirit, serve the law of God, though* in too many instances I am so oppressed *with* the infirmity of *my flesh*, that I am subdued by *the law of sin*, [*There is*] *now*, under the gospel-dispensation, *no condemnation, to those in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*;[q] that is, to those who, making a profession of the christian faith, do in the main course of their lives verify that profession, governing themselves by spiritual views and maxims, and not by carnal appetites and interests. I say it again, I thank God for this dispensation with all the powers of my soul; *for* though, when considering myself as only under the law, I made such melancholy complaints, *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, that glorious gospel which is attended with an abundant effusion of the vivifying and animating Spirit, *has* now recovered me, mortally wounded as I seemed to have been, and *set me at liberty from* that lamented captivity to *the law of sin and death.*[r] *For God hath* now, by a gracious and most wonderful appearance, [*done*] *what it was impossible for the law to do, in that it was* comparatively *weak through* the great infirmity of *the flesh*,[s] against which in so corrupt a state it could not, merely by its own principles, sufficiently provide:[t] [*he*,] I say, the great Father of mercies, *by sending his*

ROM. VIII.

Rom. viii. 1. *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the

k *The evil which I will not, that I do.*] If the meaning of such expressions as these were, that, upon the whole, the person using them went on in a prevailing course of habitual wickedness, against the convictions and dictates of his own conscience, one would imagine Paul would have rebuked such a one with great severity, and answered these vain and hypocritical pleas; whereas he represents this person afterwards as with joy embracing the gospel, and so obtaining superior strength, upon the full manifestation of pardoning grace there.

l *Sin that dwelleth, &c.*] This seems indeed no more than a repetition of verse 17. but it is a graceful and expressive repetition, and shows how near the affair lay to the heart of the person thus complaining, and in what sad and frequent successions the complaint was renewed. The beautiful passage in the 6th book of Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, (p. 328. edit. Hutchin. 1738. 8vo.) where Araspus complains of two souls contending within him, (a passage which it is very possible St. Paul might have read,) contains an agreeable illustration of this paragraph.

m *I delight in the law of God after the inner man.*] This is so sure a trace of real piety, and is represented in scripture as, in this view, so decisive, that if it be supposed a true representation of the character, we must surely allow it to have been that of a truly good man, whatever lamented imperfections might attend it.—Plato uses the phrase ο ενδοτερος ανθρωπος for the *rational part of our nature.*

n Dead carcase, &c.] It is well known that some ancient writers mention this as a cruelty practised by some tyrants on miserable captives who fell into their hands; and a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented cannot surely enter into the mind of man.

o *I thank God, through Jesus Christ.*] For ευχαριστω τω Θεω, some copies read η χαρις του Θεου, *the grace of God*, which to be sure makes a noble sense; but that of the received and much more authentic copies comes very near it, and in the main coincides with it.

p *Whereas I serve, &c.—there is now no condemnation, &c.*] I think there is not in the whole New Testament a more unhappy division between two chapters than what has been made here, not only in the midst of an argument, but even of a sentence. Αρα ουν and αρα νυν answer so evidently to each other, that I think it plain the former should be rendered *whereas*, and then the sense appears plain and strong. I must confess this to be an uncommon use of αρα: but if it be, as it often is, an expletive, it will come to much the same.

q *To those in Christ Jesus who walk, &c.*] It is certain that to be in Christ, though it sometimes imports a true and sanctifying faith, (2 Cor. v. 17.) at other times expresses only an external profession; (John xv. 2.) and as the article τοις is not repeated, I think it is plain the latter clause limits the former, which justifies our rendering. Compare Psal. lxxiii. 1.

r *Hath set me at liberty, &c.*] It is to be observed that the same person who spoke before is here represented as continuing the discourse, and speaks of himself as delivered from the bondage so bitterly complained of.

s *What it was impossible for the law to do, &c.*] It is indeed true in the general, as the pious Professor Zimmerman justly observes, (in his excellent *Comment. de Emin. Cognit. Christi*, p. 6, 7, and 34.) "that the strength of the *law* is not adequate to that of corrupt "nature; and it is by *evangelical* considerations that we are most "effectually animated to subdue sin." But that is to be considered as a consequence of what the apostle here asserts concerning the law of Moses, rather than the assertion itself. And indeed, whoever considers the awful nature and sanctions of that law, must acknowledge that it was calculated to be a much more efficacious restraint from sin than the unassisted light of nature, or than any other dispensation revealing God's law, prior to the gospel, so that the above-mentioned consequence is very strong.

t Merely by its own principles, sufficiently provide.] By this clause I endeavour to lay in an effectual answer to that objection which might lie against the apostle's argument and our explication of it, from the eminent heights of goodness attained by some holy men under the law. It was not by the law, though under it, that they obtained them, but by those evangelical promises which mingled with the law, though they did not make a part of it, but sprang from the Abrahamic covenant, which, as the apostle elsewhere urges, was unrepealed by the law; and this, which the Jews were so ready to forget, (Rom. x. 3.) is the point that he so particularly labours, both in this Epistle and that to the Galatians, to inculcate.

likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

own well-beloved *Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh,*[u] with all those innocent infirmities which the first apostasy of our nature brought upon human flesh, *and* by appointing him *to be a sacrifice* to make expiation *for sin,*[x] *hath condemned sin in the flesh.* Instead of being victorious, it is now brought under a sentence of death and destruction, which we, animated by these glorious motives of the gospel, are enabled to put into execution: *That the righteousness of the law,* in all its fundamental branches, *may* with greater ardour of holy zeal *be fulfilled in us, who* answer the engagements of our christian profession, and, in the tenor of our lives, *walk not after the flesh* to indulge its desires and demands, *but after the Spirit;* that is, who, under the influences of the Spirit of God, abound in the sentiments and duties of a truly spiritual life. You see therefore, my dear brethren, by the whole series of this discourse, not only how safely you may cease the observation of the Mosaic law, but how absolutely necessary it is that you should look beyond that, and consequently beyond any other law, natural or revealed; as ever you expect justification before God, and desire to be animated to serve him in an acceptable manner.

SECT. 15. ROM. VIII. 4

IMPROVEMENT.

ADMIRABLE and adorable indeed were the condescensions of the blessed God, *in sending his own Son in the likeness of* our *sinful flesh,* stript of its original glories, that he might become an expiatory sacrifice for sin. Let us remember the grand purpose for which he did it; that he might condemn sin in our flesh, that he might enable us to do execution on sin as a condemned malefactor. In his name therefore let us pursue the victory, and rejecting every overture of accommodation, with determined zeal to do justice upon it. And may what we have been reading establish our resolution of walking, *not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,* since we are now delivered from the curse of a broken law, and blessed with a dispensation so properly called *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus:* a dispensation by attending to the peculiarities of which we may be enabled to extend our conquests over sin in the most effectual manner, and to attain heights of virtue and piety to which no legal considerations and motives alone could raise us. Ver. 3 1 2

But oh, what reason of humiliation is there that we improve it no better, and that these melancholy strains should so well become us! that instead of pressing forward daily to fresh victories, and making new improvements in the divine life, we should so often complain, and have so much cause to complain, of a law in our members, not only warring against the law of our minds, but even, in many instances, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death; so that we christians should cry out, like those under the Mosaic economy, *O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us?* Let renewed views of Christ Jesus animate us to renewed vigour in this warfare; lest, when we are delivered from those servile terrors which the legal dispensation under a consciousness of guilt might have awakened, sin, no longer able to take this occasion from the law, should appear yet more exceeding sinful, by taking occasion, in another view, even from the gospel itself; which in many instances it seems to do. 23, 24 25 8, 11 13

Let us remember that the law of God is holy, just, and good; delighting in it more and more after our inner man, and taking heed that we do not deceive ourselves, by such a passage as this, into a secret but vain and fatal hope, that because we are convinced of our duty, and feel in our conscience a sense of the evil of sin, we might be said to serve the law of God, while, by abandoning ourselves to known acts of wilful transgression, we are, in our flesh, serving the law of sin. Habitually to allow ourselves in neglecting the good we approve and committing the evils we condemn, is the readiest way that hell itself can point out for the ruin of immortal souls; in such a case, all that we know and all that we feel concerning the obligations of duty and the excellence of holiness, aggravate rather than extenuate our failures; and though the sublime views which eminently good men under the gospel have of religion may sometimes incline them to adopt such complaints as these, in reference to the unallowed and lamented deficiencies and infirmities of a truly upright and pious life, it remains an eternal truth, which, instead of being abrogated under the New Testament, is most expressly confirmed, that he who doth righteousness is righteous, and not he that merely wishes to do it; and he who committeth sin is of the devil, even though he should speak against it like an apostle or an angel. 12, 22 21, 24

It is indeed impossible exactly to lay the line that separates the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ and of Satan; nor is it by any means a desirable thing that we should know the lowest state of weakness and degeneracy into which a christian may fall while he continues in the main a christian. We have great reason to doubt whether we be really christians ourselves, if for our own sakes we wish to know it. Our calling obliges us to aspire after the most eminent attainment in religion; it obliges us never to rest till we find ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ, so as to abound in all the vital fruits of righteousness unto his praise and glory.

SECTION XVI.

The obligations which the gospel lays upon us to a holy life are further urged, and especially those arising from the communication of the Spirit of God to believers. Rom. viii. 5—17.

ROM. viii. 5.

FOR they that are after the flesh, do mind the things

ROM. viii. 5.

I HAVE in the preceding discourse urged it again and again, that we who profess ourselves christians should walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, as ever we desire to rejoice in the glorious deliverance which the gospel brings; and with the greatest reason: for this is indeed the most important distinction in the character of men, and not any form of outward

SECT. 16. ROM. VIII. 5.

u *The likeness of sinful flesh.*] Those writers who imagine that our first parents were in their original state clothed with a visible lustre, which was lost by their transgression, in reference to which it is said *that they knew they were naked,* naturally explain this clause by that hypothesis.

x *For sin.*] That αμαρτια signifies *a sacrifice for sin,* is very apparent from Heb. x. 6; 2 Cor. v. *ult.* and a vast many other passages. The reader will observe how very easy this little transposition, on account of what is so plainly a parenthesis, makes this passage, which is generally thought so obscure.

SECT. 16. ROM. VIII.

profession, or rite of worship and devotion. *They who are after the flesh*, that is, who remain under the influence of a corrupt and degenerate nature, *do mind the things of the flesh*, they prefer and pursue carnal and animal gratifications; *but they who are after the Spirit*, that is, who know any thing experimentally of that Spirit of life which I mentioned above, (ver. 2.) [*do mind*] and pursue *the things of the Spirit;* their minds are formed to
5 a superior relish of spiritual, intellectual, and sacred pleasures, suited to that nobler and
6 immortal part of their nature. *Now* as the character of these persons is so widely different, their end will be proportionably so; for *the minding of the flesh*,[a] the preferring and pursuing its interests, [*is*] *death;* it is the greatest misery that can be imagined, and that which leads to everlasting death and ruin; *whereas the minding*, preferring, and pursuing the interests *of the Spirit* [*is*] *life and peace;* the greatest present good and happiness, which
7 leads to life and glory everlasting. And it must needs be so; *because the carnal mind*, as I have described it above, [*is*] in the very essence of it an absolute *enmity to* the blessed *God*, from whom all life and peace and happiness proceed; and consequently it brings us into a state of hostility against him. *For* it is impossible his creatures should be in a state of friendship with him unless they are in a state of willing subjection to him. Now as for the carnal mind, *it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it* possibly *be* [*so.*] For, however you may suppose any law of God to vary as to ritual and ceremonial institutions, while the nature of God continues pure and holy, as it must eternally and immutably do, he cannot but require the observation of the grand branches of moral virtue, founded on the unalterable nature and relation of things; he therefore must require us to be
8 spiritually minded, and to prefer the interest of the soul to that of the body. *So that they who are in the flesh*, that is, under the government of a fleshly principle, whatever ceremonial precepts they may observe, or whatever orthodox principles of faith they may profess and maintain, yet *cannot* possibly *please God:* He must either abhor and punish them,
9 or dishonour his own law, and contradict his pure, holy, and unchangeable nature. *But* blessed be God *you* christians *are not in the flesh*, in that carnal, enslaved state described above, *but in the Spirit*, and under his influence; yea, my brethren, are certainly so *if* that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;* for wherever he dwells he reigns, and makes the soul thoroughly holy. *And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ* thus residing and governing in him, then, whatever he may pretend, *he is none of his;* he is not to be reckoned as a disciple of Christ, and Christ will disown him another day, as having only abused his name while he wore it.

10 *And*, by the way, to animate your hopes and all your graces, remember that *if Christ* [*be*] thus resident *in you* by his sanctifying Spirit, though *the body* [*is*] *indeed dead because of* the first *sin* that ever entered into the world,[b] which, as I showed above, has brought on a sentence of universal death; *yet the Spirit* [*is*] *life*, and shall after death continue living, active, and happy, *because of* that *righteousness* of which our great
11 Head, the second Adam, is the Author, as I have inculcated at large. *And* we have this farther joyful hope, that *if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus*, our great Covenant-Head, *from the dead, dwell in you, he that* so powerfully and gloriously *raised up Christ from the dead will also*, in due time, *quicken your mortal bodies*, though corrupted and consumed in the grave, *by* the agency of *that* great and powerful *Spirit which* now *dwelleth in you*, and acts to quicken you in the divine life.

12 *Therefore*, my dear *brethren*, since it is certain the gratifications of the flesh can do nothing for us like that which will be done for us at the resurrection, and since all present enjoyments are mean and worthless when compared with that, here is a most substantial argument for that mortification and sanctity which the gospel requires. And it necessarily follows that *we are debtors* to the Spirit, which gives us such exalted hopes, and *not unto*
13 *the flesh, that we should live after* the dictates, desires, and appetites of *the flesh*. *For* I must plainly and faithfully tell you, and must repeat and inculcate it upon you as a matter of infinite importance, that *if you*, though professing christians, and some of you eminent for so high and distinguishing a profession, (compare chap. i. 8.) do *live after the flesh*, and mind nothing superior to its interests, *ye shall* assuredly *die*, that is, shall perish by the sentence of an holy God, no less than if you were Jews or heathens. *But if you, through the* influence and assistance of God's Holy *Spirit*, and the exercise of those graces which he by regeneration has implanted in your souls, *do mortify* and subdue *the deeds of the body*, those carnal inclinations from whence all criminal indulgences of the body arise, *ye shall live;* ye shall finally obtain a state of complete felicity, in spite of all that death can do to dissolve these animal bodies; not now to insist on that true, rational delight which is only to be found here in such a course, and without which our abode on earth scarce deserves the name of life. Well may it be expected that in this case you shall live for ever, since hereby your adoption of God, which must entitle you to a blissful immortality, will
14 be approved. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*, and humbly resign themselves to be guided whithersoever he will, by his sweet and secret influence on the soul, *they are* indeed *the sons* and daughters *of God*, and shall inherit eternal life with their

5 of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace:

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life, because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

a *Now the minding, &c.*] It is plain γαρ must here signify *now*, for nothing could be more absurd than to say that some *minded* the things of the flesh, *because* it is death to do it.

b *The body is dead because of sin*, &c.] Some would render it *with respect to sin;* but as there is no seeming opposition between a death with respect to sin, and a life with respect to righteousness, I think the version here retained much preferable; and if this be admitted, it will certainly determine the sense of the next verse quite contrary to Mr. Locke's unnatural gloss, which explains *quickening the mortal body* by *sanctifying the immortal spirit.*

heavenly Father; of which, indeed, if we are obedient to his holy dictates and motions, we already receive the earnest and foretastes. *For ye* who are real christians *have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear,*[c] ye are not come under another dispensation like that of Moses, which was much more adapted to strike the mind with terror, and often produces a servile disposition; *but,* on the contrary, *ye have received the spirit of adoption,* the confidence of children in approaching to God; *by which* spirit, whatever our different nations and languages may be, *we* can with equal joy and freedom, present our addresses to his throne, and *cry,* with the overflowings of filial affection to him, and fraternal love to each other, *Abba, Father.*[d] *For* as the communication of the visible and extraordinary gifts of *the Spirit* both to Jews and Gentiles, witnesses that we are without distinction in this respect accepted and owned by God as his people; so also he *himself,* by his internal and gracious operations, *beareth witness with* the answer of *our spirits,* when seriously examined and interrogated, and gives us an inward and joyful assurance *that we are the children of God,* and personally interested in his paternal love. *And* from hence arises a most joyful and triumphant hope; for *if* we are his *children, then* we are undoubtedly *heirs* of a glorious and immortal inheritance; we are then *heirs of God,* and shall for ever enjoy him as our gracious Father, whose presence and love is the very heaven of heaven. *And* we are also *joint-heirs of Christ,* we shall enjoy this happiness as with him in his sight, and shall be formed to a resemblance of him as the great foundation of that enjoyment. But then let it ever be remembered that this is to be taken in connexion; it is *provided that we* are willing, not only to deny ourselves in prohibited carnal gratifications, and to govern our lives by his precepts, but also to *suffer with* [*him,*] that is, in conformity to him, if called out to it for the honour of God and for the testimony of a good conscience, *that* so *we may also be glorified together* with him in that world where he now triumphs, and where all the infamy and pain we endure for his sake shall be amply repaid with honours and joys everlasting.

SECT. 16.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him,* that we may be also glorified together.

ROM. VIII. 15 16 17

IMPROVEMENT.

WELL may we rejoice in privileges like these: well may we be astonished to think that they should be bestowed on any of the children of men! That any of them should be *heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ:* the adopted children of an heavenly Father, and marked out by the communications of his Spirit for an inheritance which he hath prepared! That they should be fitted and enabled to approach him with that endearing compellation, *Abba, Father,* in their mouths! Oh that every one of us may know by experience, which alone can teach us, how sweet it is! and if we would obtain and secure this witness, let us see to it that we be obediently led by the Spirit of God; for that Spirit is not where he does not effectually govern; and *if any man have not that Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's* disciples, nor is he entitled to any of the privileges of his people. Ver. 17 15 14 9

Let the matter therefore be seriously examined; and let it be determined by inquiry, whether we do on the whole walk after the flesh or the Spirit. Let us guard more and more against that carnal mind which is enmity against God and cannot be subject to his law, nor leave room for us to please God while it presides and governs in us. Let us often reflect upon that death which would be the consequence of our living after the flesh: and never conceive of ourselves upon any occasion as persons who, in consequence of something that has already passed, have found out a way to break the connexion here established, and in the nature of things essentially established between a carnal mind and death. May our spirits be more and more enlivened by that vital union with a Redeemer which may give us a part in the merits of his righteousness, and in the life it has secured for all true believers! and may the efficacy of his Spirit to raise our souls from a death of sin to a life of holiness, be in us a blessed earnest that he will complete the work, and at length *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in us!* When flesh and sense can administer a consolation like this, let us hearken to them: in the mean time, let us remember, let us always remember, how much we are debtors to the Spirit; and let us endeavour to act according to these immense obligations. 1 7 6

SECTION XVII.

The glorious prospects which the gospel sets before us are represented and urged as a further advantage which it gives us for holiness; even that consummate glory the discovery of which the whole creation, now subject to vanity, seems to wait and call for. The apostle then mentions consolations which are derived from the assistances of the Spirit in prayer, as further illustrating his main design. Rom. viii. 18—27.

ROM. viii. 18.

FOR I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

ROM. viii. 18.

IN representing the high privileges of our adoption, I have been observing, that if, in consequence of our fidelity to our Saviour, we should suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together with him: and in this persecuted state in which, as christians, we now are, I beseech you attentively to enter into this thought, that your hearts may be duly quickened and fortified by it. I have for my own part been obliged, amidst the peculiar hazards of my apostolic office, frequently to weigh and exactly to examine the matter: *and I find, upon* the most deliberate *computation, that the sufferings of the present time,* how extreme soever they may be, [*are*] *not worthy* [*of any account*] at all, nor so much as

SECT. 17.

ROM. VIII. 18

c *The spirit of bondage.*] Both Mr. Locke and Mr. Pierce understand this of *the fear of death* under which the legal dispensation left the Jews; but I rather understand it of that comparatively *servile spirit* which ran through the whole Mosaic economy, and which is finely illustrated by Dr. Evans in his *Sermon* on this text. Evans's *Christian Temp.* Vol. I. Serm. 17, 18.

d *Abba, Father.*] I suppose few of my readers will need to be informed that the word *abba* signifies *father* in the Jewish language, that is, the Syro-Chaldaic; and the insertion of it here beautifully represents the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in those devotions which were dictated by a filial spirit.

SECT. 17. worthy of a mention, *when set against that* great and unalterable *glory that shall* in due time *be revealed to us*, but which at present exceeds even our most elevated conceptions, and can never be fully known till we see each other wear it, and by consciousness feel it in ourselves.

ROM. VIII. These, my dear brethren, are the views with which I would animate your minds; and
19 surely no object can give them more noble or more delightful employment. *For* methinks, when I look round upon the blasted and wretched state of this world of ours, it seems that all nature does, as it were, call aloud in pathetic language for that blessed change which the gospel was intended to introduce. *The earnest expectation of the* whole *creation*,[a] so far as it now lies open to our view, *is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God:* for the happy time when he shall appear more openly to avow them, and that reproach and distress shall be rolled away under which they are now disguised
20 and concealed. *For the creation* soon lost its original beauty and felicity, a sad change passed on man and his abode, so that all the visible face of nature *was made subject to vanity* and wretchedness in a variety of forms; and this *not willingly*, not by the personal misbehaviour of those who are now most deeply affected with it, *but by him who subjected* [*it*,] that is, by Adam, when he stood at the head of our race as a public person, and by
21 his transgression brought us into so deplorable a state. Deplorable indeed! but blessed be God not entirely abandoned, since it is still *in hope* that the salvation so happily begun shall at length be much more widely extended; *that the creation shall*, at least in ages to come, *be set free from the bondage of corruption* by which men are now abusing themselves and the inferior creatures; and that they shall even be brought *into the glorious liberty of* which we christians are possessed in consequence of our being *the sons of God:* as it is certain the creation would be made inconceivably happier than it is if this blessed dispensation, by which we are introduced into God's family and taught to do
22 our utmost to diffuse good to all around us, were universally to prevail. In the mean time, such is the state of the whole world, that it seems to call in the most importunate manner *for* this great interposition of divine power and mercy in its favour; yea, I may say in reference to it, *We know that the whole creation*, ever since the first apostasy of our nature from God, *groaneth together and travaileth together until now;* it laboureth in strong pangs to bring on this important birth of sons and daughters unto the Most High.[b]
23 *And not only* doth the whole creation seem [*so*] to travail in pangs around us, when we survey those parts of it where the gospel is yet unknown, *but even we* christians *ourselves*, *who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit*, and thereby have attained no inconsiderable degrees of liberty and deliverance, even we *groan within ourselves* under many remaining imperfections and burdens; while we are yet *waiting* with strong desire *for the* great event which may, by way of eminence, be called our *adoption*,[c] as it shall be the public declaration of it, when our heavenly Father shall produce us before the eyes of the whole world, habited and adorned as becomes his children. You will easily perceive I now refer to *the redemption of our bodies*, their final deliverance from the power of the grave at the general resurrection,[d] which shall introduce us to a happiness incomparably exceeding the freest and most glorious state into which the earth shall ever be brought, even by the greatest triumph and prevalency of the gospel.
24 This, I say, we are longing and breathing after; and we shall still be so while we continue here: *for we are saved by hope;* the firm belief and cheerful view of this complete salvation is our great security amidst so many evils, temptations, and dangers. *But hope which is seen*, that hope which relates merely to objects now visible, *is not* worthy the name of *hope: For what a man sees, how doth he yet hope for?* the more we know of these worldly things, the less shall we amuse ourselves with any high hopes and
25 expectations concerning them. *But since we hope for what we see not*, for a happiness far exceeding any thing we have ever seen or can see, *we patiently wait for it*, and find

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope:

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now:

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

a *The earnest expectation of the creation*, &c.] This and the following verses have been generally, and not without reason, accounted as difficult as any part of this Epistle. The difficulty has perhaps been something increased by rendering κτισις *creation* in one clause, and *creature* in another. To explain it as chiefly referring to the brutal or inanimate creation is insufferable; since the day of the redemption of our bodies will be attended with the conflagration which will put an end to them. The interpretation, therefore, by which Dr. Whitby and Mr. Grove refer it to the Gentile world, is much preferable to this. But, on the whole, I think it gives a much sublimer and nobler sense to suppose it a bold *prosopopœia*, by which, on account of the calamity sin brought and continued on the whole unevangelized world, (though few of its inhabitants saw so much of their misery as actually to desire the remedy,) it is represented as *looking out with eager expectation* (as the word αποκαραδοκια exactly signifies) for such a remedy and relief as the gospel brings, by the prevalency of which human nature would be rescued from vanity and corruption, and inferior creatures from tyranny and abuse. Nothing is more common than to represent *a land* as *mourning* or *rejoicing*, as *calling for rain*, &c. And if this be allowed to be the meaning of these three verses, the gradation in the 23d will be much more intelligible than on any other scheme that I know. See the next note.

b Bring on this important birth, &c.] It is indeed true, that to be in *pangs like a woman in travail* sometimes only signifies being in great distress, where there is no reference to any expected birth; but it seems to me very probable that the apostle in these metaphors here alludes to what he had been saying before, ver. 14—17, 19, 21. In all which places he describes christians as the children of God, and so here expresses the general prevalency of the gospel by the birth of many more with which nature was pregnant, and of which it longed, as it were, to be delivered: thereby beautifully representing the sad condition of those who, while they have faculties fitting them for standing in such a relation to God as his children, are lost in darkness and vanity, while ignorant of God and the way of salvation; during which time they were even pained by the excellency of their nature, it having no suitable object to act upon. And this is the well-adjusted but generally unobserved gradation I referred to above, note a: the world seems to wait, and call, and groan, for the spreading of the gospel; and those among whom it prevails are still travailing, as it were, with the hope and desire of a yet more exalted state after the resurrection.

c *The adoption*, &c.] I entirely agree with Mr. Howe, (*Works*, Vol. I. p. 680, 681.) that here is an allusion to the two kinds of adoption among the Romans: the *first* of which was *private*, the *second public* in the forum, when the *adopted* person was solemnly declared and avowed to be the son of the *adopter*. Compare Luke xx. 36.

d Deliverance, &c.] That *redemption* sometimes signifies *deliverance*, is very certain. Compare Luke xxi. 28; Eph. i. 14; Heb. xi. 35.

something in the greatness of the prospect to repay the tediousness of the most afflicted circumstances, and to excite us to prepare for it by cultivating a suitable temper in all its branches. SECT. 17.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered

Such hope doth our holy profession administer to us for our support amidst all the difficulties of our christian course; *and* we have *moreover* this important privilege, that *the* Holy *Spirit* of God graciously *lendeth us his helping hand*[e] *under* all *our* burdens and *infirmities;* so that we are not left to sustain them alone: which is of vast moment in many respects, and particularly in the conduct of our devotions; *for* we are surrounded with so much ignorance and prejudice, that in many instances *we do not know what we should pray for as we ought,* because we know not on the whole what may be best for us; *but the Spirit itself manages* these *affairs for us,* guiding our minds to suitable petitions, and exciting in them correspondent affections, and sometimes inspiring us *with* that intense ardour of holy desire which no words can express, but must therefore vent themselves in *unutterable groanings. But* though we are not able to speak these desires, they are not concealed from God: *he who searcheth the* inmost recesses of human *hearts, knoweth what* [*is*] *the mind of the Spirit;*[f] he reads all these secret agitations of our spirits which answer to the emotions of his; *for he manages affairs for his saints according to* [*the*] gracious [*will*] and appointment [*of*] *God:*[g] a circumstance which we cannot recollect without the greatest pleasure, and the most cheerful expectations of receiving every suitable blessing in consequence of it, and in answer to these prayers which are presented to God under such influence. ROM. VIII. 26

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. 27

IMPROVEMENT.

For ever adored be the divine goodness, in sending down his Spirit on such sinful creatures to *help our infirmities;* to implant and to excite graces in our hearts, to be a source of present delights and of eternal happiness. May we feel him helping our infirmities and improving our joy in the Lord to such a degree, that all our devotions may be animated sacrifices! Let not the want of expression in that case trouble us; these unutterable groanings are sometimes the sweetest music in the ear of God. Ver. 26 27

Well may such fervent groanings be excited, when we view that great and glorious object which the gospel proposes to our hope. Let us encounter the sufferings of the present time with a fortitude becoming those that see them so short and so far overbalanced by the immense and boundless prospects which lie beyond them; prospects of unclouded lustre and unmingled felicity. 18

When we consider the state of that part of the world in which christianity is unknown, or of those among whom it is a mere empty form; when we consider the vanity to which that part of God's creation is subject, let it move our compassion and our prayers, that the state of glorious liberty into which God has already brought those who by faith in Christ are his children, may become more universally prevalent, and *the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the channel of the seas.* Oh that divine and omnipotent grace may give a birth to that grand event, in the expectation of which nature seems in pangs; such a birth that nations might be born in a day: and where the children are born, may it give a more abundant growth and more happy increase! 19 20 21 22

We have received what the travailing creation has not, the first-fruits of the Spirit, and they must surely excite us to groan after the redemption of bodies; yet still with humble submission to the will of God, waiting his wisely-appointed hour for the dissolution and for the restoration of them. That God in whose hand these important events are, best knows how long to exercise our faith, whether in this mortal world or in the intermediate state; nor should any delay be esteemed long by those who have so cheerful an hope of enjoying God for ever. 23

SECTION XVIII.

The apostle represents other advantages for holiness which the gospel gives us, particularly those which arise from an assurance that all things shall work together for our good; and from the view we have, as true christians, of an eternally gracious plan which God has laid for our happiness, in pursuance of which he hath already done such great things for us, especially in sending his Son for our redemption; whence his people may be assured that no accusation shall prevail against them, and no temptations separate them from his love. Rom. viii. 28, *to the end.*

Rom. viii. 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,

Rom. viii. 28.

I HAVE taken occasion to hint at many privileges which, in consequence of participating of the gospel, you enjoy: *and* now I must add this to the rest, that though our afflictions may lie heavy upon us, and though our burdens may continue long, yet *we* assuredly *know that all things* which occur in the course of Divine Providence, either in their present and immediate, or future and more remote, consequences, do and shall *work together for* real and everlasting *good to them that* sincerely and prevalently *love* the blessed *God,*[a] 28 SECT. 17. ROM. VIII.

e *Lendeth us his helping hand.*] I know not how better to render that expressive phrase, συναντιλαμβανεται ημιν, which literally expresses *the action of one who helps another to raise or bear a burden, by taking hold of it on one side and lifting it or bearing it with him;* and so it seems to intimate the obligation on us to exert our little strength, feeble as it is, in concurrence with this almighty aid.

f *The mind of the Spirit.*] The phrase is here φρονημα του πνευματος, the very same that was used ver. 6. and expresses not merely the *meaning,* but the *temper* and *disposition* of the *mind,* as, under the influences *of the Divine Spirit,* pursuing and breathing after such blessings as suit its rational and immortal nature.

g *Manages affairs for the saints, &c.*] I agree with a late ingenious writer, several times mentioned before, in rendering εντυγχανειν υπερ αγιων, *manages affairs for the saints,* as the office of an intercessor with God is so peculiarly that of Christ, *our Advocate with the Father,* 1 John ii. 1. As for the phrase, κατα Θεον, it is capable of many different significations; but I do not think it here signifies the same with ενωπιον του Θεου, *in the presence of God,* but rather *on the part of God,* that is, by his appointment, or perhaps, as we render it, *according to the will of God.* I have therefore retained our version, and included both the senses in the paraphrase.

a *All things* which occur in the course of Divine Providence, &c.] It is so plain from the whole context that the apostle only speaks of providential events, and it is so evident that the universal expression *all* is sometimes to be taken in a limited sense, that it must argue, I fear, something worse than weakness, to pretend that sin is

SECT. 18. ROM. VIII.

and are by divine grace *called* and formed to this happy principle, *according to* [*his*] gracious and effectual *purpose*. We have this confidence, I say, because God in his eternal counsels designed this, and appointed a proper series of subordinate causes to make way for that blessed event in which all is to terminate; establishing a certain connexion between the one and the other; a connexion which in the greatest distress is our confidence

29 and our joy: *For whom he foreknew* as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards,[b] knowing with everlasting complacency his own thoughts of peace towards them, (compare Jer. xxix. 2.) *he did also predestinate* [*to*] stand in a peculiar relation to the great Redeemer, and [*be*] *made* in due time *conformable to the image of* that glorious and blessed Person, even Jesus *his* only-begotten and best-beloved *Son*, who is now exalted high above all heavens. He appointed, I say, such a conformity between him and them, *that he might be*, and appear to be, *the first-born among many brethren;* and might at length see many of his brethren by his means sharing with him in that happiness to which he is now received, and in which he shall for ever shine, distinguished from them

30 all in rays of peculiar glory. To this felicity did the Father of mercy decree to raise a part of our fallen and miserable race; *and those whom he* thus *predestinated he* in due time *hath called*, or will hereafter in their succeeding generations call, by the invitations of the gospel and operations of his Spirit, to repent and believe, that so they might claim the promised blessings, in virtue of that everlasting covenant which they cordially embrace; *and whom he hath* thus *called, he hath*, on their compliance with that call, *justified*,[c] freed them from the condemning sentence of his law, and given them a pleadable right to a full acquittal at his bar; *and* those *whom he hath* thus *justified he hath also glorified*,[d] that is, he hath appointed they should ere long attain to complete glory and happiness, to which, by virtue of their union with him, they may be said even now to arrive. (Eph. iii. 4.)

31 On the whole, *what shall we therefore say to these things*, or conclude upon this review? surely we may courageously defy all our enemies, and say, *If* that *God* who hath all power in himself, and all the events of time and eternity under his direction, [*be*,] as we have heard, *for us, who* [*can*] presume to [*be*] *against us*, or be able to do us any hurt by the fiercest opposition, while we are guarded by such a Protector? Yea, I may add,

32 not only what have we to fear, but what have we not to hope and expect, in connexion with such views as these? *He that spared not his own*, his proper and only-begotten *Son*, when even his blood and life came into question, *but* willingly *delivered him up* to agony and death, that he might be a sacrifice *for us all, how shall he not with him freely grant us all* other *things* subservient to our truest happiness, which may now be regarded as the purchase of his blood? We may reasonably conclude that what is now withheld would be detrimental rather than advantageous to us.

33 Upon the whole, then, we may take courage and say, *Who shall lodge any accusation against the elect of God*,[e] against those who love him, and have been, as we before observed, predestinated and called according to his eternal purpose? [*Is it*] *God?* What! *he who* himself *justifieth?*[f] as the prophet in his own case expresses it; (Isa. l. 8. 9.) he

34 is ready to answer all objections, and solemnly to pronounce us absolved: *Who* [*is*] *he* then *that condemneth?* [*Is it*] the Lord Jesus *Christ*, whom we know to be appointed as the final Judge? What! doth *he* condemn, *who hath died* to expiate our guilt and rescue us from condemnation? *yea rather*, (which is the most delightful consideration of all,) *who is risen again?* shall he undo the purposes of his death and resurrection? He *who is now* sitting *at the right hand of God*, where he appears under a quite contrary character, *and is also making intercession for us;* undertaking the management of our

to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren

30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth;

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

comprehended in the apostle's assertion. Plato's sentence, so nearly parallel to this, is a commentary infinitely preferable to such an explication. "Whether a righteous man be in poverty, sickness, or "any other calamity, we must conclude that it will turn to his "advantage either in life or death." See Plato, *De Rep. lib.* ix.

b *Whom he foreknew* as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards.] *To know* sometimes signifies *to favour*, Amos iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Exod. xxxiii. 12, 17; Psal. i. 6; Jer. x. 14; Rom. xi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2; Hos. xiii. 5; and they who interpret these verses, as Mr. Locke and many others do, of God's intending to bring the Gentiles into the church on a footing of equal privileges with the Jews, must certainly take the word in this sense. But the reader will easily perceive, by my paraphrase, that I consider them as applicable to all true christians, whether originally of Jewish or Gentile descent; as the privileges themselves relate not to communities as such, but to individuals.

c *Whom he hath called he hath justified.*] Barclay pleads that this *justification* must include *holiness*, or it is left out of the chain. Barcl. *Apol.* p. 221. But the apostle had so plainly declared, in the beginning of the chapter, that a *freedom from condemnation* was the peculiar privilege of *those who walk after the Spirit*, that it was the less necessary for him here distinctly to mention *sanctification*.

d *Whom he justified he glorified.*] It is plain that *justification* is here considered as distinct from and prior to *glorification;* and consequently, that there is a sense in which believers may be said to be *justified* now, (as they often are, compare Luke xviii. 14; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. v. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) though it is at the great day that their complete *justification* will be declared; and there seems generally to be an ultimate reference to that great transaction, in the use of this forensic term. (Matt. xii. 37; Rom. ii. 13; iii. 30.) To suppose that christians are said *to be glorified* merely in reference *to the Spirit of glory now resting upon them*, (1 Pet. iv. 14.) is limiting the phrase to a sense less sublime and extensive than it generally has, particularly verse 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Col. i. 27; iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10. to which a multitude of other texts might be added, where *glory* refers to the exaltation and blessedness of the future state.—This is a memorable instance, and there are scores, and perhaps hundreds more, in which things that shall certainly and speedily be done are spoken of as done already. Moses gave a remarkable example of this noble language of faith, *in his song*, (Exod. xv. 13, &c.) *on the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red sea;* and the prophets and apostles have continued it in a variety of triumphant passages, which it will be a great pleasure to the pious reader to observe for himself.

e *Who shall lodge any accusation, &c.*] This εγκαλεσει plainly signifies—By *the elect of God*, many understand the Gentiles; but as it is certain the phrase, whatever it imports, is not to be confined to them, and is presently after used of *believing Jews*, (Rom. xi. 5, 7, 28.) it seems highly reasonable to consider it here as including them also; especially as their unbelieving brethren might be ready to lodge the heaviest accusations against them, as deserters and apostates from their own law if they acted on the principles the apostles had been laying down in the former chapter.

f *God who justifieth*, &c.] I here follow the pointing proposed by the learned and ingenious Dr. Samuel Harris, in his *Observations*, (p. 54, 55.) which greatly illustrates the spirit of this passage, and shows how justly that author adds, that it is remarkably in the grand manner of Demosthenes.

affairs, and, far from accusing us, appears ready to answer all accusations brought against us, and to frustrate all the designs of our enemies? SECT. 18.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Confident therefore in his protection and favour, we defy them all; and say in strains of yet sublimer triumph, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Who or what shall dissolve that union to him which is our great security, and be able to alienate our hearts from him who is the source of such invaluable blessings, and hath displayed such incomparable riches of grace? [*Shall*] the severest *affliction*[g] *or* the most pressing *straits, or* the most cruel *persecution,* to the inconveniences and extremities of which we may indeed be exposed in our christian warfare; *or hunger,* if we be starving in desolate places;[h] *or nakedness,* if it had not so much as sheep-skins or goat-skins to cover it; *or,* in a word, any other *peril* to which in our different situations we may be exposed, *or* even the *drawn* sword of our blood-thirsty enemies, ready to be plunged into our defenceless bosoms? It may indeed cut short the residue of our mortal days; *as it is written,* in words which may justly be applied to us, (Psal. xliv. 22.) "*For thy sake we are* without remorse *killed all* "*the day long, we are accounted as* so many *sheep destined to the slaughter,* and deli- "vered over to it without resistance on our part or mercy on that of our enemies." *Nevertheless,* while we appear in so weak and helpless a state, *we do in all these things more than conquer,* we triumph in certain and illustrious victory, *through him who hath loved us,* and, having redeemed us to God by his own blood, will secure us amidst all these temptations, and finally show that our sufferings and death have been precious in his sight, and have made a part in his merciful scheme for our more exalted happiness. ROM. VIII. 35

36 (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

36

37 Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

37

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Well may I thus boast of the securest and completest victory, even amidst the combat; *for I am persuaded that neither* the fear of *death,* in any imaginable form of terror, *nor* the hope and desires of *life,* in the most agreeable circumstances that can be imagined, *nor* all the efforts of infernal *angels, nor* of *principalities, nor of powers,*[i] however various their rank, however subtle their artifices, however furious and malignant their rage may be, *nor things present,* difficult as they are, *nor things future,* extreme as they may possibly prove: *Nor* the *height* of prosperity, *nor* the *depth* of adversity, *nor any other creature* above or beneath, in heaven, earth, or hell, *shall be able to separate* any of *us,* who are christians indeed, *from the love of* the almighty and ever-blessed *God, which is* graciously given us *in Christ Jesus our Lord,*[k] by a tenure so certain, that it shall never be lost: and being thus secure that nothing shall separate us from that, we assuredly know that nothing can, on the whole, hurt us; and feel a courage which nothing can dismay. 38

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

39

IMPROVEMENT.

O BLESSED souls indeed, who, having been in the eternal counsels of the divine love foreknown and predestinated, are, in consequence thereof, called and justified, as the earnest of being ere long glorified! Who would not desire to see his own title to privileges so inestimable as these? And how shall we know that we have our part in them? how, but by securing an evidence that we love God? Then may we be assured that *all things shall work together for our good,* and glory in it that we are the elect of God; to whose charge therefore nothing shall be alleged, since God justifieth; whom none shall condemn, since Christ died to expiate our sins, and is ascended into heaven continually to intercede for us. In cheerful dependence on his patronage and care, let us bid defiance to all our enemies, and be willing to submit to the greatest extremities, since they shall not be able to *separate us from the love of Christ,* even though for his sake we should be *killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* Ver. 29, 30 28 33 34 35 36

O blessed souls, whom neither death nor life, nor angels, nor any other creature, shall be able to divide and cut off from the love of God! What then can harm us? what evil can we then suffer? what good can we want? When God is for us, and when we are sensible of his love in giving us his Son, how can we allow ourselves to suspect his readiness with him to give us all things truly reasonable or desirable? All other blessings, when compared with these, will appear unworthy of a mention; and we should have a great reason to suspect that they were not ours, if we did not find a heart superlatively to value them above every thing else. 38, 39 32

g *Shall affliction,* &c.] None can imagine that Christ would love a good christian the less for enduring such extremities for his sake. The text must therefore be intended to express the apostle's confidence that God's invariable love to his people, illustrated already in so glorious a manner, would engage him to support them under all their trials, by vital communications of divine strength.

h *Hunger.*] The word λιμος is more extensive than *famine,* and may be applied to personal as well as public necessity.

i *Angels, principalities, and powers.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 42.) has sufficiently shown that *good angels* are sometimes called *powers,* to express their being used as instruments of the *divine power,* (compare Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; Col. i. 16; ii. 10.) as likewise that αρχαι may signify *magistrates,* compare Tit. iii. 1. But as it is certain that *evil angels* are called *principalities and powers,* (Eph. vi. 12; Col. ii. 15.) and as that interpretation of the words best suits the context, (for it is not to be thought that *good angels* would attempt to separate men from Christ's love,) I must adhere to it.

k *Shall separate us,* &c.] Archbishop Tillotson thinks (Vol. I. p. 491.) Paul speaks thus confidently in reference to himself, and the experience he had passed through of so peculiar a nature; but he seems to me to found the argument on considerations common to all christians, ver. 28; and the connexion is such, that if these latter clauses are limited to St. Paul, I do not see how the preceding can be extended farther.

SECTION XIX.

The apostle now finding it necessary to speak more expressly of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, introduces the subject with very tender expressions of his regard to his Jewish brethren; and then shows that the rejection of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac, from the peculiar privileges of God's chosen people, was an incontestable fact, which the Jews could not but grant to have happened, that is, with regard to the descendants of Ishmael and of Esau. Rom. ix. 1—13.

Rom. ix. 1.

SECT. 19. ROM. IX. 1

THUS, my brethren, I have endeavoured to animate you by leading your meditations to those inestimable privileges which we receive in virtue of the gospel, which renders us so far superior to all the hardships we can endure; and I hope the thought of them will be abundantly sufficient to establish your adherence to it. Faithfulness will also oblige me to add, that as all who embrace and obey this gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, are accepted of God, so all who reject it are rejected by him.[a] And lest, while I maintain this important truth, any should imagine that I bear hard upon my dear countrymen the Jews, on account of any personal injury which I, or my christian brethren of whose sufferings I have been speaking, (chap. viii. 35—39.) have received from them or by their means; I begin this discourse with the most solemn assurance I can give you to the contrary. And herein *I say the truth in Christ*, I speak with that candour and integrity which becomes a christian, and as in the presence of that blessed Redeemer who searches all hearts. He knows that *I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness* as to the truth of what I say *in the Holy Ghost*, as under his influence who so thoroughly discerns the soul on which he operates. With all this solemnity, on so great an occasion, do I declare to you, *that I have great grief and incessant anguish in my heart*, when I think of what hath happened and will happen unto them in consequence of their opposition to the gospel. *For* methinks, if I may be allowed to express myself so, *I could* even *wish, that* as Christ subjected himself to the curse, that he might deliver us from it, so *I myself* likewise *were made an anathema after the example of Christ*;[b] like him exposed to all the execrations of an enraged people, and even to the infamous and accursed death of crucifixion itself, *for the sake of my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh*, that they might thereby be delivered from the guilt they have brought upon their own heads, and become entitled to the forfeited and rejected blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. So cordial and disinterested a regard have I for my dear nation, *who are Israelites*,[c] the seed of Jacob that eminent patriarch, who, as a prince, had power with God, and prevailed; *whose the* spiritual *adoption* [*is*,][d] in consequence of which, as a people, they were called the sons and daughters of the Most High God; *and the glory*, which in the Shechinah resided visibly among them on the mercy-seat,[e] *and the covenants* made successively, first with Abraham and then with Moses, *and* with the whole Jewish people in him, who were honoured with *the giving of the law* in such solemn pomp, *and* received with the precepts of that excellent polity an exact ritual for *the service* [*of God*] in their tabernacles, afterward practised in their temple with unequalled solemnity *and* magnificence; who were also *the* heirs of such peculiar and important *promises*, relating not only to their abode in Canaan, under the administration of an equal and miraculous providence, but likewise including and centring in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, who was to arise among them. I cannot but have a respectful and tender regard for a nation thus dignified and distinguished; a nation *whose* privileges [*are*] handed down to them from so many illustrious ancestors, in a long descent, who were in their respective ages *the* great *fathers* of the world and church; *and from whom*, to crown the whole, *according to the flesh*, *Christ* himself is [*descended*,] *who*, though found in fashion like a man, and truly Partaker of our nature in all its sinless infirmities, is also possessed of a divine nature, by virtue of which he *is above all* our conceptions and praises, above creatures of the highest order, and indeed *God blessed for ever*,[f] the worthy Object of our humblest adoration, as well as unreserved dependence, love,

ROM. IX. 1
I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

4 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

a As all who embrace, &c.] This the apostle had intimated all along in the preceding discourse, which is addressed to christians as christians, without any regard to their having been Jews or Gentiles; nay, he had expressly declared in the 2d and 3d chapters, that their having been Gentiles would be no obstruction. And it is certain the peculiar oppositions and persecutions which the believing Jews met with from their obstinate countrymen would make encouragements and consolations like those suggested in the eighth chapter, as necessary for them as for any christians in the world. So very much mistaken have some learned commentators been in the peculiar turn they have given to that chapter, and several passages in those preceding it.

b *Made an anathema after the example of Christ.*] This sense is given by the learned Dr. Waterland, (*Serm.* Vol. I. p. 77, 78.) who urges the manner in which απο is used, 2 Tim. i. 3. απο των προγονων, *after the example of my forefathers*. Compare 1 John iii. 16. Next to this I should incline to the interpretation given by Dr. Clarke, (*Seventeen Serm.* p. 340.) who supposes the apostle means, that he could be content that Christ should give him up to such calamities as these to which the Jewish people were doomed for rejecting him; so that if they could all be centred in one person, he could be willing they should unite in him, could he thereby be a means of saving his countrymen. Compare Deut. vii. 26; Josh. vi. 17, vii. 12.—Grotius understands it of a separation from the church of Christ, (which is sometimes called by the name, Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 27.) or of excommunication.—Elsner (who, agreeable to Dr. Clarke's interpretation, joins απο του Χριστου with ηυχομην,) shows very well, as many other commentators have done, how very absurd it would be to suppose he meant that he could be content to be delivered over to everlasting misery for the good of others.

c *Who are Israelites.*] The apostle with great address, enumerates these privileges of the Jews; both that he might show how honourably he thought of them, and that he might awaken their solicitude not to sacrifice that divine favour by which they had been so eminently and so long distinguished.

d *The* spiritual *adoption is.*] That is, whom God hath taken into a special covenant with himself, whereby he stands engaged ever to act the part of a God and Father to them, and to own them as his children. Deut. xiv. 1; Jer. xxxi. 9; Exod. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1.

e Resided on the mercy-seat.] Hence the *ark* was called *the glory*; Psal. lxxviii. 61; 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22. to which some add Psal. liii. 3.

f *Above all, God blessed for ever.*] How ingenious soever that conjecture may be thought by which some would read this ων ο Θεος

and obedience. *Amen:* Let his divine glories be ever proclaimed and confessed! May all the house of Israel know this assuredly, and fall down before him, as in and with the Father of all, their Lord and their God! SECT. 19.

Yet, notwithstanding all these tender prejudices in favour of my own dear countrymen, I cannot defend or excuse their conduct; nor must I conceal the ungrateful truth asserted above, that by rejecting the gospel they bring upon themselves rejection from God. But to prevent mistakes, let me in the first place observe, that it is *not* to be supposed I would *by any means* insinuate *that the word of God hath fallen* ineffectual *to the ground*, even all that glorious system of promises by which he engaged to bestow protection, favour, and happiness upon his people. *For* in order to provide against any such allegation, I must insist upon it, as a very certain and apparent truth, that *all* [*are*] *not* reckoned to be the *Israel* of God, so as to be the heirs of the promises made to his people, *who are* descended *of Israel* by natural generation: *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham*, the head of the holy family according to the flesh, [*are they*] *all children* of the promise; *but* you know it is said, (Gen. xxi. 12.) though Ishmael were the son of Abraham long before, "*In Isaac*, then unborn, *shall thy seed be called;* the descendants of Isaac shall be "spoken of as thy seed by way of eminence, to the exclusion of those who may spring "from thee by thine other children." *That is*, on the whole, *not the children of the flesh* alone, nor any one of them merely as such, [*are*] *the children of God, but the children of the promise*, in one peculiar line, *are accounted as the seed* of Abraham, and honoured with the adoption: *For this* [*is*] *the word of the promise*, (Gen. xviii. 10, 14.) "*According to this time*, that is, reckoning the conception of the child from hence, *I* "*will come* [*to thee*] in a way of gracious and merciful interposition, *and Sarah shall* "*have a son:*" which was said when Hagar had many years been Abraham's wife, and had long since born a son to him. ROM. IX. 6 7 8 9

Nor was [*this*] the *only* instance of the kind; *but* in the case of *Rebecca, when she was with child* of twins *by one man*, that is, *our father Isaac; While* [*the children*] *were not yet born, and had done neither good* to merit *nor evil* to forfeit the divine favour, *that the* sovereign *purpose of God, according to* his free *election, might stand* stedfast, and appear *not* to be formed in respect *of* the *works* done by either, *but* according to the mere good pleasure *of him who calleth* things that do not yet exist into being, and disposeth of all according to his own will: *It was said to her*, when consulting the divine oracle on the unusual commotions she felt in her womb, that two different people should proceed from the birth then approaching, (Gen. xxv. 23.) and "*that the elder* of them, "that is, the posterity of Esau, *should serve the younger*, that is, the descendants of Jacob." *As it is* also *written*, (Mal. i. 2, 3.) "*I have loved Jacob and hated Esau*, "that is, I have greatly preferred the former to the latter,[g] bestowing many peculiar privi- "leges and favours upon the posterity of Jacob which I have denied to that of Esau, whose "habitation I have laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness, while that of his brother "flourished in the richest abundance of all things." We see then, to close this branch of the argument, that the exclusion of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the descendants of Isaac, from the special promises of God, is not only a case which may be supposed possible, but a case which, according to the Jewish scriptures themselves, hath actually happened. 10 11 12 13

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel which are of Israel:

7 Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac,

11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth:)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET that affection which the apostle expresses for the Jews, his countrymen and brethren according to the flesh, and the tender and pathetic representation which he makes of the privileges which they once enjoyed, awaken in our hearts an earnest solicitude that they may, by divine grace, be brought back; that they may again be adopted into the family from which they have been cut off, again clothed with the glory which is departed from them; that through him who was given for a covenant to the people they may receive the law of life and grace, be formed to that spiritual service which it introduces instead of their pompous ritual, and embrace the promises on which the faith and hope of their illustrious fathers were fixed. Ver. 1 2 4 5

Let it likewise teach us spiritual compassion for our kindred who are strangers to Christ, and let us be willing to submit to the greatest difficulties, and think nothing too much to be done or borne for their recovery. 3

Let our souls pay an humble homage to him who is in such an incommunicable and sublime sense the Son of God, as to be himself *over all, God blessed for evermore*. With prostrate reverence let us adore him as our Lord 3 5

ο επι παντων to answer to ων οι πατερες, (*whose are the fathers, and whose is the supreme God,*) I think it would be extremely dangerous to follow this reading, unsupported as it is by any critical authority of manuscripts or ancient quotations.—Nor can I find any authority for rendering Θεος ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας, *God be blessed for ever.* I must therefore render and paraphrase and improve this memorable text, as a proof of Christ's proper deity which I think the opposers of that doctrine have never been able nor will ever be able to answer: Though common sense must teach, what christians have always believed, that it is not with respect to the Father, but to the created world, that this august title is given to him. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27, &c.

g Greatly preferred the former to the latter.] That to *love* and *hate* have this sense in scripture, is evident. Compare Gen. xxix. 31; Luke xiv. 26; John xii. 25. and the notes there. These words, in their connexion with the preceding and following, do indeed prove that God acts with a sovereign and unaccountable freedom in the dispensation of his favours; and do, I think, consequentially prove that it was not upon the foresight of the obedience and piety of Jacob on the one hand, or the profaneness of Esau on the other, that this preference was given; for then the argument taken from their having actually done neither good nor evil would be very weak, since, to an omniscient God, that which he certainly foreknew would be, is, with regard to his purpose of events, to succeed it as if it already were. Nevertheless it is certain the apostle does not here speak of the *eternal state of Jacob* and *Esau*, (whatever some may suppose deducible from what he says,) nor does he indeed so much speak of their *persons* as of their *posterity;* since it is plainly to that *posterity* that both the *prophecies* which he quotes in support of his argument refer: Gen. xxv. 23; Mal. i. 2, 3. *His laying waste the heritage of the Edomites for the dragons of the wilderness*, is so different a thing from his appointing the *person* of *Esau* to *eternal misery* by a mere act of sovereignty, without regard to any thing done or to be done by him to deserve it, that I will rather submit to any censure from my fellow-servants than deal so freely with my Maker as to conclude the one from the other.

SECT. 19. and our God, and repose that unbounded confidence in him which such an assemblage of divine perfections will warrant, putting our most hearty amen to every ascription of glory, to every anthem of praise, addressed to him.

ROM. IX. 10—13. And, to conclude, since we see that many of the children of Abraham and of Isaac failed of any share in the special promises of God, let us learn to depend on no privilege of birth, on no relation to the greatest and best of men. May we seek to be inserted into the family of God, by his adopting love in Christ Jesus, and to maintain the lively exercise of faith; without which no child of Abraham was ever acceptable to God, and with which none of the children of strangers have ever failed of a share in his mercy and favour. April 1. 1856.

SECTION XX.

The apostle shows that the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges, to which none had any claim, and the sovereign appointment, from among many criminals, of some to peculiar and exemplary punishments, was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. Rom. ix. 14—24.

ROM. ix. 14.

SECT. 20.

ROM. IX. 14 I HAVE already shown you how possible it is that persons descended from Abraham, and even from Isaac, may be cut off from the special promises of God; as the posterity, first of Ishmael and then of Esau, evidently were. *What therefore shall we say* to this? [*Is there*] *unrighteousness with God* in the proceedings and distributions of his providence, in this or any other instance to be produced? *God forbid* we should insinuate any thing of that nature! It is, in the highest consistence with justice, matter of the freest choice to

15 whom such favours shall be granted. *For he saith to Moses*, (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) when intimating a gracious purpose toward Israel, though they had broke his covenant so soon after the first confirmation of it, and by an act of flagrant idolatry had justly merited immediate destruction, *I will have mercy on whomsoever I will have mercy, and will compassionate whomsoever I please to compassionate*, so as to dispense acts of pardon according to my own sovereign pleasure.

16 Jacob and Esau, of whom I was speaking just above, may be farther considered as an illustration of the sovereignty of the divine dispensations in such cases: the latter of them, after he had foolishly sold his birth-right, was exceedingly desirous of obtaining his father's blessing, and ran out eagerly to hunt venison for him; (Gen. xxvii. 5—30.) nevertheless it was bestowed upon Jacob. [*It is*] *not therefore*, you see, to be referred into the forwardness of *him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but* it is *of God that showeth mercy* to one rather than another, on sovereign reasons which we cannot penetrate, but must always believe to be worthy of himself.

17 And *moreover* we may add, that such is the conduct of God in other instances, when of various sinners he appoints one rather than another to be a monument of special vengeance: For *the scripture says to Pharaoh*,[a] (Exod. ix. 16.) "*For this cause have I raised thee* "*up* to that height of eminence in which thou gloriest,[b] *that I may* remarkably *show forth* "*my power in thee, and that my name*, in consequence of distinguished judgments to be "righteously inflicted upon thee, *may be celebrated through all the earth*, in the most dis-

18 "tant nations and remotest ages." And accordingly he hardened his heart that he should not let Israel go; that is, he took measures which he knew would be attended with that effect, and at last brought the extremity of his wrath upon him. *So then* we must, after all our objections, rest the matter here, that the blessed God, as he is uncontrollable, so he is also unaccountable, in his dispensations; that in chusing this or that creature to distinguished favours, or appointing this or that sinner to deserved punishment, *he hath mercy on whom he will* have mercy, *and he hardeneth* and destroyeth *whom he will*.

19 *But thou wilt* perhaps be ready, while thou readest this declaration, to raise an objection against it, and *say to me*, "If God acts thus, *why doth he then find fault* and blame his "creatures for their obstinacy, when he determines to give what he knows will in fact prove "a prevailing occasion to it? *Who hath* ever, in any instance, *resisted*, or who can ever "be able to resist, *his will?* If he hath determined by such methods to destroy a nation "or a person, who can prevent it, or prevent those evils which shall, according to his high "appointments of providence, be in fact the means of bringing on that destruction?"

20 *Nay, but*, let me rather reply, Who art thou, *O* vain, weak, and ignorant *man*, with all thy boasted wisdom and penetration, *who art thou who* thus arrogantly *enterest into a debate with* the all-wise, almighty, and all-gracious *God*, and chargest his proceedings as arbitrary and unjust? Surely it becomes us, whenever we treat such a subject, to do it with the humblest reverence, and through the whole to remember the infinite distance between him and us. *Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed* [*it*,] *Why hast*

ROM. ix. 14.
WHAT shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid!

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

a *Moreover the scripture says, &c.*] It is plain that this is no proof of what immediately goes before; I therefore chuse to render γαρ by *moreover*, which is consistent with making it introductory to what proves something asserted at some distance, if it come in as a co-ordinate proof. This is so important a remark in the illustration of scripture, and clears an attentive reader of so many embarrassments, that I hope I shall be excused repeating it on different occasions. The reader will observe the apostle does not produce an instance of an innocent person being made an object of divine displeasure out of mere sovereignty, but one of the most insolent sinners that the world ever knew.

b *I have raised thee up.*] Some would render it, *I have made thee to stand*; that is, I have supported thee during the former plagues, that I might make thee a more remarkable example of vengeance; but though (as Dr. Shuckford, *Connect.* Vol. II. p. 433. and many others, observe) that agree with διετηρθης, the word used by the LXX. in their version of the text in question, and with the original העמדתיך, yet it does not answer to the Greek word used by St. Paul, εξηγειρα. If, as some writers suppose, the Pharaoh here spoken of were an Egyptian king (I think Apophis) who made his way to the throne by treason, incest, and murder, the words had a singular weight in the sense we have here given them. Mr. Taylor explains it of his having been recovered from the plague of blains, which was indeed said to have been upon Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 15, 16; and this may possibly be the true sense, but I think the other stronger and nobler.

thou made me thus? Let us remember he is our almighty Creator, and not imagine we can ever have any room or right to expostulate with him, or in any circumstance to complain of him. *Hath not the potter power over* [*his*] *clay*,[c] as God himself represents the case, (Jer. xviii. 4—6.) *out of the same mass to make one vessel to* uses of *honour, and another to* the basest offices of *dishonour*, and to break and renew it at his pleasure? [*What*] then is it to thee, or what right hast thou to find fault, *if God, resolving* at last *to manifest* the terrors of [*his*] *wrath*, and *to make known his* awful and tremendous *power* in their aggravated destruction, *hath* in the mean time *endured with much long-suffering* those who shall finally appear to be *the vessels of wrath* which are *fitted to destruction*?[d] Is he to account to thee for punishing them who justly deserve punishment, at what time and in what manner he pleases, and to ask thy leave to delay or to execute the stroke of his righteous vengeance? *And* [*what if,*] on the other hand, *that he may make known* in the most affecting and endearing manner *the riches of his glory*, and display his compassions *in* those whom he will make *the vessels of mercy*, *he* graciously waits upon them and [*long endures*] them,[e] even [*those*] *whom he hath*, by the power of his own grace, *previously prepared to glory*, that they might in the most honourable manner be at length called to partake of it? *Even us, whom he hath* already *called* into the happy number of his people, *not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles* too. Shall he make an apology to thee, O man, that he hath appointed some of our sinful race to such mercy; that he hath exercised much long-suffering towards them; that he hath at length wrought upon them by his effectual grace; or that, determining to deal thus mercifully with some of Jacob's race, he hath added to their number others whom he hath taken from Gentile nations? Know thy place, and acquiesce in humble silence. Allow the blessed God to do what he will with his own, and let not thine eye be evil because he is good.

SECT. 20. ROM. IX.

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?
22 *What* if God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:
23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?
24 Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

21 22 23 24

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from the memorable section which we have now been reading, humbly to adore the righteousness and holiness of God, in all the most amazing displays of his sovereignty, which we are sure are always consistent with it. Let us own his right to confer on whom he pleaseth those favours which none of us can pretend to have deserved: and adore his wonderful goodness in chusing to exercise mercy and compassion on any of the children of men, yea, on many who must own themselves in the number of those who had the least claim to it. He hath of his mere goodness given us those privileges, as christians and as protestants, which he hath withheld from most nations under heaven. And if we improve them aright, we have undoubtedly reason to look upon ourselves as vessels of mercy whom he is preparing for eternal glory. Let us adore his distinguishing favour to us, and arrogate nothing to ourselves. It is *neither of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy*, and *worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

Ver. 14 15 16

Long did his patience wait on us; and let that patience be for ever adored! It shall be glorified even in those that perish: for he is so far from destroying innocent creatures by a mere arbitrary act of power and terror, that he endureth with much long-suffering those who by their own incorrigible wickedness prove vessels of wrath, and whom the whole assembled world shall confess fitted for the destruction to which they shall finally be consigned. That after long abuse of mercy they are hardened, and perhaps after long hardness are at length destroyed; yea, that some of the vilest of men are exalted by providence to a station that makes their crimes conspicuous as those of Pharaoh, till at length he shows forth his power the more awfully, and maketh his name the more illustrious by their ruin, is certainly consistent with that justice which the Judge of the whole earth will never violate.

22 18 17

But if, in tracing subjects of this kind, difficulties arise beyond the stretch of our feeble thought, let us remember that we are men, and let us not dare to reply against God. Retiring into our own ignorance and weakness, as those that are less than nothing and vanity before him, let us dread by any arrogant censure to offend him who has so uncontrollable a power over us: *As clay in the hand of the potter, so are we in the hand of the Lord our God.* Let us acquiesce in the form he has given us, in the rank he has assigned us; and instead of perplexing ourselves about those secrets of his counsels which it is impossible for us to penetrate, let us endeavour to purify ourselves from whatever would displease him: that so we may, in our respective stations, be vessels of honour fit for the use of our Master now, and entitled to the promise of being acknowledged as his in that glorious day when he shall make up his jewels.

20 21

SECTION XXI.

The apostle shows that the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of God's peculiar people, when Israel should be rejected, was so far from being inconsistent with scripture, that it had been actually foretold both by Hosea and Isaiah. Rom. ix. 25, *to the end.*

SECT. 21.

ROM. ix. 25.

AS he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people

ROM. ix. 25.

I HAVE been remonstrating as to the unreasonableness of quarrelling with the divine dispensations in distinguishing one creature from another by his favours; or one sinner

ROM. IX. 25

c *Potter power over* [*his*] *clay.*] It is observable that Plutarch uses the very same similitude with this before us; and Aristophanes, among other contemptuous expressions by which he describes the frailty of human creatures, calls them πλασματα πηλε, *vessels of clay.* See Bos, *in loc.*

d *Endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath*, &c.] The apostle seems here to have had the impenitent Jews in his thought, though he did not think it proper expressly to name them. It is certain they were *vessels of wrath*, and that they were long borne with, under many advantages which they ungratefully abused.

e *He waits and endures.*] As it is certain there is an ellipsis in these words, and that something must be supplied, it seems most natural to borrow a word or two from the preceding verse to complete the sense. Every attentive reader will, I doubt not, infer for himself the great difference of phrase in which they who are *vessels of wrath*, and they who are *vessels of mercy*, are spoken of: it being said simply of the former, that they were *fitted for destruction*, but of the latter, *that God prepared them for glory.* A distinction of so great importance, that I heartily wish we may ever keep it in view, to guard us against errors on the right hand or on the left. Compare Mat. xxv. 34, 41. and the note there, p. 333.

SECT. 21. ROM. IX.

from another, by appointing him to peculiar severities of punishment not exceeding the demerit of his offence: I will now venture, without further reserve, to say, that in what I have been writing I had some peculiar reference to God's calling so many of the Gentiles by the grace of his gospel, and his appointing the impenitent Jews to be monuments of wrath. And let me now address myself to the latter, and say, Who gave thee, O Jew, an authority to question and dispute with thy God on this occasion? Yea, is there on the whole any reason for thee, who hast the scriptures of the Old Testament in thine hands, and professest such a regard for them, so much as to be surprised at this, when there are so many hints of it in these divine oracles? *As* particularly *in Hosea*, where *he* hath spoken of calling Israel, Loammi, as disowning them for their wickedness, and *hath also said*, (Hos. i. 16.) "*I will call them my people who were not my people* before, *and her* "*beloved which was not* for a long time *beloved*:[a] *And it shall come to pass*, [*that*] *in the* "*place where it was* most expressly *said to them, Ye* [*are*] *not my people; there shall they* "*be called* not only the people, but *the sons* and daughters, *of the living God*, by special "adoption and favour." As he is the living God he can easily bring it into execution; and the more you reflect on the whole tenor of his word, the more you will be sensible of the propriety with which I apply this passage, whatever its original sense might be, to the purpose in view. I must *also* observe, that *Isaiah crieth concerning Israel* with great earnestness and affection, (Isa. x. 22, 23.) "*Though the* whole *number of the children of Israel be as the* "*sand of the sea*, [*yet*] only *a remnant shall be saved*, and the bulk of the people cut off. "*For the Lord is finishing and cutting short his account in righteousness; for the* "*Lord will make a short account upon the earth*:[b] there shall be such a consumption of "them, that when accounts come to be balanced there will be found but a very small overplus." *As* the same *Isaiah hath formerly said*, in a passage very much resembling that which I just now referred to, (Isa. i. 9.) "*Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we* "*should have been as Sodom, we should have been made like to Gomorrah.*" There was then, you see, but a little remnant which preserved the whole people from being utterly consumed: so that it is no unexampled thing that the main body of the Jewish nation should fall into a revolt from God and become the object of his displeasure to the most dreadful degree. *What shall we then say* in the conclusion of the whole argument? Surely this: *That the Gentiles, who pursued not after righteousness*, who had a little while ago no knowledge or expectation of it, and no desire after it, *have* now, to their own unspeakable surprise and that of the whole world, *attained to righteousness*, that is, to profession of the religion whereby they may be justified and saved; *even the righteousness which is by faith* in the gospel, and consists in humbly committing the soul to Christ in the way that he hath appointed. *But* while *Israel* was *pursuing the law of righteousness*, and expecting to obtain righteousness by legal observances, it *hath not attained to* that which is indeed most properly to be called *the law of righteousness*, that is, to the blessings of that dispensation by which alone righteousness and life is to be secured. And *wherefore* did they miss those blessings? Because they never heard of the way to divine favour and acceptance? nay; but *because* [*they did*] *not* [*pursue it*] *by faith*, whereby alone in this fallen state of our nature it is to be obtained; *but* merely *as* if it was to be gained *by the works of the law*. *For they* in fact *stumbled* and fell *at that stone of offence* which lay in their way; *As it is written* in these ever-memorable words, (Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16.) "*Behold, I lay in Zion*, "that is, I exhibit in my church, what, though so well fitted to be a foundation of their "happiness, shall in fact prove *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*, that is, an "occasion of sin and ruin to many, through their own prejudice and perverseness; *and* "*every one who believeth in him shall not be ashamed*, shall not be brought under a "necessity of seeking his refuge elsewhere, in helpless and hasty confusion, to which all "they who slight him shall at last be reduced."

which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called, The children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:

31 But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone:

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

IMPROVEMENT.

How can we sinners of the Gentiles ever sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of God to us in calling us to that full participation of gospel-blessings which we enjoy? That in our native lands, where the name of the true Ver. 26 God was so long unknown, we should have the honour of being called his children! Oh that we may indeed be 27 so, not only by an external profession, but by regenerating grace! May we be of that remnant, that little 28 remnant, which shall be saved, when numbers countless as the sand of the sea, which had only the name of God's Israel, shall perish, even in the day when *his work shall be cut short in righteousness!*

29 Blessed be God that there is a seed remaining. It is the preservation of the people among which it is found; and had it not been found among us, we had probably long since been made a seat of desolation. May it increase in the rising age, that the pledges of our continued peace and prosperity may be more assured, till our *peace be like a river*, and our *salvation like the waves of the sea!*

It will be so if we be awakened seriously to inquire how we may be justified before God, and seek that invalu-

a *Call them my people which were not my people.*] It seems very evident, from the connexion of these words in Hosea, that they refer to God's purpose of restoring the Jews to the privileges of his people after they had been a while rejected of him. But it is obvious they might with great propriety be accommodated to the calling of the Gentiles; and indeed that great event might with some probability be inferred, partly from the temporary rejection of the Jews, of which this text spake, (for it was not to be imagined God would have no people in the world,) and partly as it was in the nature of things more probable that he should call the heathen than that he should restore the Jews, when he had cast them off for such ingratitude as rendered them less worthy of his favour than the most idolatrous nations. Compare Jeffery's *True Grounds*, p. 149.

b *Cutting short his account in righteousness.*] Mr. Locke would translate it, *For the Lord, finishing or cutting short his work in righteousness, shall make a short or small remnant in the earth.* This is undoubtedly the sense, but the version is not exact.

able blessing in the way here pointed out; *if we seek it not as by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ as the Lord our righteousness.* He hath in this respect been to many *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence!* May divine grace teach us the necessity of building upon him, of resting upon him the whole stress of our eternal hopes! Then shall they not sink into disappointment and ruin; then shall we not flee away ashamed in that awful day when *the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters* of that final deluge of divine wrath *shall overflow every hiding-place* but that which God hath prepared for us in his own Son. SECT. 21. ROM. IX.

SECTION XXII.

The apostle shows that God hath offered pardon and salvation on the same equitable, gracious, and easy terms to all; though Israel, by a bigoted attachment to their own law, rejected it. Rom. x. 1—13.

ROM. x. 1.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

ROM. x. 1.

YOU see, *my brethren*, to what this discourse of mine tends, in which I have been re- SECT. presenting faith in Christ as the only method to prevent our shame and ruin, without the 22. exception of any, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should reject him. I know how unkind and unjust an interpretation may be put on such an assertion, though thus supported by ROM. the sacred oracles themselves; and therefore I think it proper to renew the assurances I X. before gave, that *the* most *affectionate desire of my heart*, in the accomplishment of 1 which I should find the greatest complacency, *and* [*my*] *supplication*, which I am with daily importunity repeating *before God concerning Israel, is for its* present and eternal *salvation* and happiness, which I wish as sincerely as my own *For I* am ready to 2 *testify*, from what I well know *of them* by my own observation and experience, *that they have a* very ardent *zeal for God; but* I lament that it is a zeal *not* regulated *according to knowledge*, or directed into a right channel, in consequence of which it leads them into the most fatal mistakes and excesses: *For they being ignorant of the right-* 3 *eousness of God*, of the purity of his nature, the extent of his law, and the method which in consequence thereof he hath established for the justification of a sinner; *and seeking* with great diligence *to establish* and shore up, as it were, by the most insufficient props, the ruinous edifice of *their own righteousness*, by the observation of the precepts or expiations of their law,[a] *have not submitted* with due humility *to the righteousness of God* exhibited in his Son, nor placed their own attempts of obedience in a due subordination to that.

2 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge:

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This is the most fatal error that can be imagined; *for* how insensible soever Israel in 4 general may be of it, it is on the whole most certain that *Christ* [*is*] *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*,[b] that is, it is the great scope and design of the law to bring men to believe in Christ for righteousness and life, and its ceremonial and moral precepts and constitutions most harmoniously centre in this. *For Moses* most 5 exactly *describeth the* only way of *righteousness which is* attainable *by the law*, [*when he saith*,] again and again, (Lev. xviii. 5. compared with Deut. xxvii. 26.) *The man who doth them shall live* in and *by them*;[c] that is, the man who perfectly observes these precepts in every particular and in every punctilio, he, and he alone, if such a person there be, may claim life and salvation by them. Now this is a way of justification which, when the law has once been broken, becomes absolutely impossible to the transgressor. *But the righteousness which is by faith speaketh* a very different language, and may be 6 considered as expressing itself *thus:* (if I may be allowed to borrow the words of the great Jewish legislator, when representing the plainness and perspicuity of his law, Deut. xxx. 11—14.) "*Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, that is*, as I "may in this view accommodate the passage, *to conduct Christ down with him* [*from "thence,*] to teach and instruct us, or to atone for our offences? *Or, Who shall descend* 7 "*into the deep* abyss, *that is, to bring Christ again from* his abode *among the dead* "in the bowels of the earth?" No: blessed be God, Christ hath already descended from heaven to bring down the gospel, and he hath in a triumphant manner arisen from the dead, to set an everlasting seal to its divine authority; so that there is no more room to puzzle ourselves about difficulties, or to wish for a power of doing what to human skill or strength is impossible. *But what saith he* afterwards? even these words, so remarkably 8 applicable to the subject before us: "*The word is nigh to thee*, [*even*] *in thy mouth* "*and in thine heart;* easy to be understood, easy to be remembered, and, if thine heart "be rightly disposed, easy to be practised too." And *that is* eminently the case with relation to *the word of* christian *faith which we preach: For* God hath given a very 9 plain and intelligible revelation in his gospel; and the substance of it is this: That *if thou*

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the

a Observation of the precepts or expiations of their law.] Many writers, and especially the late Dr. Sherlock, in his book, *Of the Knowledge of Christ*, have been much mistaken in the representation they have made of the Pharasaical righteousness, as if it consisted merely in substituting ceremonial observances instead of moral duties. The Pharisees certainly inculcated the external duties of morality, how much soever they might themselves fail in observing them, or rest merely in outward acts; but they trusted in legal expiations to procure the pardon of those evils which might happen; and the composition of these, if I may be allowed the expression, constituted the righteousness which they went about ζητοῦσι, *to establish or prop up*, decrepit as it was.

b *The end of the law.*] The *scope* of it, as Elsner shows, on this place, that τέλος signifies; he paraphrases the words, *no one can fulfil the law till he believe in Christ.* But that, how true soever, (compare chap. viii. 2—4.) seems not the chief view of the apostle here.

c *The man that doth them shall live by them.*] The Sinai covenant made no express provision for the pardon of any sin deliberately and wickedly committed against it, and so was indeed a covenant of works; though the dispensation of Moses contained some further intimation of the covenant of grace which was made with Abraham, and was quite a distinct thing from the law. And the apostle builds so much on these thoughts here and elsewhere, that it will be of importance to render them familiar to the mind, and to trace the evidence and illustration of them in the Mosaic writings.

SECT. 22. ROM. X.

dost courageously *confess with thy mouth* that *Jesus* is *the Lord, and* at the same time *believe in thy heart*, with a vital and influential faith, *that God hath raised him from the dead* in proof of his divine mission, *thou shalt* assuredly *be saved*, whoever thou art, and how heinous and aggravated soever thy past sins may have been. *For* it is *with the heart* that a *man believeth to righteousness*, or so as to obtain justification, nor can any 10 thing but a cordial assent secure that; *and with the mouth confession is made to salvation*, and that public profession of christianity is maintained without which a secret conviction of its truth would only condemn. Let therefore the heart and the tongue do their respective parts on this occasion, and your salvation and happiness will be secure; though your obedience to the law of God may have been very defective, and you could have no 11 claim to reward or forgiveness from thence. *For the scripture*, in reference to Christ, as in the fore-cited text, (Isa. xxviii. 16.) *saith*, " *Every one that believeth in him shall* " *not be* in danger of being *ashamed* and put to confusion in any imaginable circum- 12 " stance." Every one without distinction, *for* you see *there is no difference between Jew and Greek: For the same Lord of all*, the Creator, Governor, Preserver, and Benefactor of the whole human species, *displays his riches* and magnifies his bounty *to all that call upon him*, imparting to them all the same blessings of his providence 13 and grace. *For whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord shall be saved*,[d] as the prophet Joel testifies, (Joel ii. 32.) when he had been speaking of those great events which have in part been so wonderfully accomplished in the effusion of the Spirit, and shall be farther fulfilled in those scenes of providence which are shortly to open on the Jewish nation.

Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET our hearts, after the example of St. Paul here before us, be overflowing with love and compassion to our 2 brethren, and let us be earnestly interceding with God for their salvation. Where we see a zeal for God, let us pay all due regard to it, and compassionate that ignorance which may sometimes be mingled with it; especially 3 if it effect so important an article as that of our becoming righteous before God by a better righteousness than our own. Let us pray that God would teach us, and would enable us, according to our respective situations, in a 4 proper manner to teach others that Christ is indeed the end of the law, of all the laws which God ever gave to fallen man for righteousness; all were intended to convince men of their need of coming to him that righteousness and life may be obtained.

Great reason have we to adore the divine goodness, and to congratulate ourselves and one another upon our great happiness in this respect, that God hath given us a revelation so obvious and intelligible in all the grand 6, 7 points of it. We have indeed no necessity, no temptation to say, *Who shall go up into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep?* or, Who, like the industrious but bewildered sages of antiquity, shall cross the seas, to bring that knowledge from distant countries which is wanting in our own? The word is nigh to us; it is indeed 8 in our mouth: Oh that it may be in our heart too! We know a descending, a risen Redeemer. He still visits us in his gospel, still preaches in our assemblies, and stretches out a gentle and compassionate hand to lead us in the 9, 10 way to happiness. May our profession of faith in him be cordial, and then it will be open and courageous, whatever sacrifices we may be called to make. *Believing on him we shall not be ashamed, calling on his name we* 5 *shall be saved;* though we can meet with nothing but despair from a dispensation that saith, The man who perfectly doth these precepts shall live by them.

M. S. April 1856

SECTION XXIII.

The apostle pursues the view given in the last section, and shows that the gospel had been diffused widely through the world; though, according to other prophecies, which he here mentions, from Moses and Isaiah, the Jews had rejected it, while the Gentiles embraced it. Rom. x. 14, *to the end.*

ROM. X. 14.

SECT. 23. ROM. X.

FROM the promise of salvation to them that shall call on the name of the Lord, I have just been inferring (ver. 12, 13.) that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles as to the possibility of obtaining salvation from God. And from hence we may farther infer what is very sufficient to justify me and my brethren in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, though we are the objects of so much reproach and persecution on that account. 14 Let us *therefore* attend to the inference. For *how shall they call on him on whom they have not believed* as worthy to be invoked with divine honours and adoration? *and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear* of him *without a preacher* to carry these important tidings, which the light of nature could 15 never be able to discover? *And* as for the ministers of the gospel, *how should they preach except they be sent* expressly for that purpose? For as we were originally Jews, our own prejudices on this head were so strong, that we should never have thought of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles if God had not particularly charged us to do it. But blessed be God that the charge has been given and the embassy sent; and most welcome should it be to all that receive it, *as it is written* and described in that lively prophecy,[a] (Isa. lii. 7, 8.) " *O how beautiful are the feet*, the very footsteps, *of those*

ROM. X. 14.

HOW then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of

d *Invoke the name of the Lord, &c.*] Bishop Pearson argues at large from hence, that if Christ be not here called Jehovah, the apostle's argument is quite inconclusive. Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 149.

a In that lively prophecy.] Most commentators think that the liid chapter of Isaiah is to be explained as a prophecy of the return of the Jews from Babylon, and that the text here quoted refers to the joyful welcome that should be given to the messengers who brought the first tidings of Cyrus's decree for their dismission. And if it were so, the apostle might very justly infer from thence the

them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

" *who bring the good tidings of peace, who bring the good tidings of* those various " *good things* which God hath now been pleased to bestow on his church. It is pleasant to see and hear the messengers, pleasant to view the very tract of ground over " which they have passed on the mountains which surround Jerusalem."[b] SECT 23. ROM. X.

But, alas, *all have not obeyed the gospel*, glorious as its tidings are, nor given it that cordial reception which its happy contents might well have demanded. And they who are well acquainted with the oracles of the Old Testament, and study them impartially, will not be surprised at it: *For Isaiah saith*, in that very context which contains so many illustrious testimonies to the cause in which we are engaged, (Isa. liii. 1.) " *Lord, who* " *hath believed our report*, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed and made " bare?" *Faith indeed* [*cometh*] *by hearing, and hearing* in the case now before us *by the word*, the express command *of God*, to make the declaration.[c] It is therefore our duty to deliver the message wheresoever we come, whether to Jews or Gentiles, in humble hope that some will believe though we have so much reason to fear that many will reject it. 16 17

This is our duty, *but* a duty which we cannot perform without some discouragements; yet *I* may confidently *say* it hath in the main been practised; and I may appeal to what you at Rome knew of the matter, in consequence of your correspondence with all parts of the empire. *Have they not heard* of the gospel all abroad, so that I may take up the words of David (Psal. xix. 4.) when describing the course of the celestial luminaries, and apply them to the zeal, and in some measure to the success, with which the missionaries of this holy religion have exerted themselves, assisted by the blessed Spirit of God, and animated by the hope of that glorious immortality to which they have taught others to aspire? Of them may I say, that " *verily their voice is gone out through all the earth,* " *and their words to the end of the world:*" many distant nations have already heard these glad tidings, which God will at length render universal. (Col. i. 6, 23.) 18

But I may farther *say*, *Hath not Israel known*, or had an opportunity not only of knowing that the gospel should be preached, but that it should be carried to the Gentiles too? *For first Moses saith*, in that celebrated song of his which the children in all generations were to learn, (Deut. xxxii. 21.) " *I will raise your jealousy by* [*those who were*] " *not a nation*, [*and*] *your anger with a foolish people*;" which may well be understood as ultimately referring to this great scheme. *And Isaiah hath the boldness to say*, in a context where so many things evidently refer to the gospel, (Isa. lxv. 1, 2.) " *I was found* " *of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that inquired not for me*, " nor discovered any concern to be informed of my nature or my will:" *Whereas*, invidious as he knew it would be to a nation so impatient of rebuke, *with relation to Israel he saith* in the very next verse, " *All the day long have I stretched out mine hands* in the " most importunate and affectionate addresses *to a disobedient and gainsaying people*, " who are continually objecting and cavilling; whom no persuasion can win to regard " their own happiness, so as to be willing to admit the evidence of truth and the counsels " of wisdom." It appears then, on the whole, that since the prophets so plainly foretold that the Gentiles should be called and the Jews rejected, it is no way unbecoming my character as a messenger from God, and a friend to the Jewish nation, to assert the same, and to act upon it. 19 20 21

IMPROVEMENT.

BLESSED be God for the preaching of the gospel, so absolutely necessary to that faith without which we can have no well-grounded hope of salvation. Blessed be God therefore for the mission of his ministers, and for his abundant goodness in sending them to us sinners of the Gentiles. Let us give them a respectful and attentive hearing, and say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that preach salvation, that publish peace!* And let us take great care that we do not only speak respectfully of their doctrine, but that we comply with the purpose of their embassy. Ver. 14 15

It is matter of continual joy to reflect, not only that God hath afforded to all men such means of attaining divine knowledge by the intimations of it which he hath given in the constitutions of the heavenly bodies, and in the whole frame of visible nature, but also that he hath sent the express messages of grace to so many millions in the extensive publication of his gospel. Let us rejoice in the spread it hath already had, and let us earnestly and daily pray that the voice of those divine messengers that proclaim it may go forth unto all the earth, and their words reach, in a literal sense, to the remotest ends of our habitable world. Let us pray that wherever the word of God hath a free course, it may be more abundantly glorified, and that its ministers may not have so much reason to say, *Who hath believed our report?* and to complain of *stretching out their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people.* Exert, O Lord God, thine almighty arm, make it bare in the sight of all the nations! Shed abroad thy saving influences on the hearts of multitudes, that they may believe and turn unto the Lord! May the great Saviour of his Israel be found of those that seek him not; and by the surprising condescensions of his 18 16, 21 20

superior joy with which the messengers of the gospel should be received. But I think a great deal may be said to show it probable that the context in question has in its original sense a farther reference. Compare Isa. li. 4—6. But not judging it necessary in the paraphrase to build upon it as an argument, I shall not by any means discuss the matter here.

b The very footsteps.] L'Enfant thinks the *feet* are put for the *arrival*. Compare Gen. xxv. 30. in the original. But I think the turn given in the paraphrase illustrates it much better. Bos observes, that in Sophocles the hands and feet of those who come upon a kind design are represented as beautiful to those who received benefit by their arrival.

c *Faith indeed* [*cometh*].] M. L'Enfant would transpose the 16th and 17th verses; and it is certain, as any one may easily perceive, that the connexion of all from the 15th to the 18th would in that view be clearer; but as no copies warrant it, I think it is by no means to be presumed upon. I have therefore translated ἄρα, which is often a sort of an expletive, by the word *indeed*, which throws this

SECT. 23. grace may he manifest himself to those that do not inquire after him! And may his ancient people not only be provoked to anger, but awakened to emulation too, and put in their claim for those blessings which God has by his Son vouchsafed to offer to all the Gentiles!

SECTION XXIV.

The apostle shows that though the rejection of Israel be for the present general, according to their own prophecies, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet it is not total, there being still a number of happy believers among them. Rom. xi. 1—10.

ROM. xi. 1.

SECT. 24. WE have seen, my brethren, how the perverseness of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles hath been foretold; but, *do I say then, that God hath* entirely *rejected his* whole *people* so as to have mercy on none of them? *God forbid!* I should then pro-
ROM. XI. nounce a sentence of reprobation upon myself; *for I also am an Israelite*, as it is well known I am *of the seed of Abraham*, and can trace my genealogy, and show particularly that I am [*of*] *the tribe of Benjamin.* No: blessed be his name, *God hath not rejected* those of *his people whom he foreknew;* but hath still, as in the most degenerate ages, a seed whom he hath chosen to faith and salvation. *Know you not what the scripture saith* to this purpose *in* the story of *Elijah?* (Compare 1 Kings xix. 14.) *when he pleads with God against Israel, saying,* "*Lord, they have* cruelly *slain* all *thy* faithful "*prophets, and they have digged up* the very foundations of *thine altars;*[a] *and I am* "*left alone*, after the slaughter of all thine other servants: *and they seek my life* too, and "send murderers in pursuit of me from place to place, that there may not be one worshipper "of Jehovah left in their whole land." *But* recollect, *what says the Divine Oracle to him* in answer to this doleful complaint? "*I have reserved unto myself*, by my grace "and providence, no less than *seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee before* "the image of *Baal*, nor complied with any of these idolatrous rites which are established "by these iniquitous laws." *And so also in the present time*, bad as this generation of Israelites is, and sure they were never worse, yet *there is a remnant* who continues faithful to God, *according to the* free *election of* his *grace*, whereby God hath reserved them to himself, and made them to differ from others.[b]

And by the way, I cannot forbear observing and entreating you to reflect, that *if it be*, as I have said, according to the election *of grace, then* [*it is*] *no more*, as some have maintained, *of works*, whether of the Mosaic or any other law; *else grace is no longer grace*,[c] if the glory of our acceptance with God is not on the whole to be ascribed to that. *But* on the other side, *if* [*it be*] *of works, then it is no more of grace, else work is no longer work.* There is something so absolutely inconsistent between being saved by grace and by works, that if you lay down either, you do of necessity exclude the other from being the cause of it.

But to return from this short digression: *What then* do we conclude? What but this, that *Israel hath not obtained that* justification and righteousness *which it has sought*, nor retained these particular privileges of the church of God which they pretend entirely to engross: *but the election*, the chosen remnant, *hath obtained it*, having been by divine grace engaged to embrace the gospel; *whereas the rest were blinded* by their own fatal prejudices, to which God hath in righteous judgment given them up: *According as it is written*, (Isa. xxix. 10. Compare Deut. xxix. 4; and Isa. vi. 10.) *God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* He threatened, you see, to punish their perverseness when it should come to a certain degree, by abandoning them to increasing stupidity and obstinacy, and he hath done it even *unto this day;* for their blindness continues notwithstanding all the extraordinary things which have been done, even in our own age of wonders, for their conviction. *And* this is agreeable to what *David hath said*, in that prophetical imprecation which is applicable to them as well as to Judas, (Psal. lxix. 22, 23. Compare Acts i. 20.) *Let* all the blessings of *their* most plentiful *table become a snare* to them, *and* that which should, according to its original use and intention, have been for their welfare, *a trap.* Thus the gospel, which should have been the means of their salvation, is now become an instrument of ruin and destruction to them, *and an occasion of stumbling* in the most fatal manner. *And* it must be acknowledged to be *a* just *recompense* for their wickedness, that the best of blessings should thus be turned into a curse *to them* that so ungratefully rejected and despised it. And in them the following words are also fulfilled: *Let their eyes be dark-*

ROM. xi. 1.

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not

verse into some kind of connexion with the next, and if referred to αλλα there, will, I hope, be thought agreeable enough to the Greek idiom.

a *Digged up thine altars.*] It seems from hence, that though, according to the law, there was only one altar for sacrifice, and that in the place where God had fixed his peculiar residence; yet, by some special dispensation, pious persons in the ten tribes built altars elsewhere. It is well known, at least, that Samuel and Elijah had done it; and perhaps they were either kept up, or others raised on the same spots of ground.

b *The election of grace.*] Some explain this of *their having chosen grace*, that is, the gospel; but that turn is very unnatural, and neither suits the phrase nor the connexion with the former clause or with the next verse, in which the apostle comments on his own words.

c *Else grace is no longer grace*, &c.] Some interpret this, "The "gospel would not deserve the name of *grace*, if the observation of "the Mosaic law were to be taken in as a part of the terms of our "acceptance with God." But this would have been a strange position. Who that in any degree knew the terrors of God's anger, would not most gladly have accepted of the full pardon the gospel offers, on much more rigorous terms than obedience to the Mosaic ritual? The meaning rather seems to be, "What is given to works "is the payment of a debt, whereas the notion of grace implies an "unmerited favour; so that the same benefit cannot, at the same "time, be derived from both." This seems to be a reflection on the

see, and bow down their back alway.

ened that they may not see, and keep their back continually bent down under a perpetual weight of sorrows which they may not be able to support, and which may be a just punishment upon them for having rejected so easy a yoke. (Compare Lev. xxvi. 13.) SECT. 24. ROM. XI.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from the answer of God to Elijah, when he thought himself left alone, and knew nothing of the seven thousand which God had reserved, to encourage ourselves in a secret hope that there may be much more goodness in the world than we are particularly aware of. The numbers of those that constitute the invisible church are unknown to us, but they are known to God. They are all registered in the book of his remembrance, as they are all reserved unto himself by his grace; nor shall *his people whom he hath foreknown be cast away.* May we be of that blessed number; and may the degeneracy which we see so prevalent around us, animate us to a holy zeal to hold fast our own integrity; yea, to seize the occasion of approving it in a more acceptable manner, from a circumstance, in every other view, greatly to be lamented. Ver. 3, 4 2

Let us often reflect upon this great and important truth so frequently inculcated upon us in the word of God, that it is to his grace, and not to any works of our own, that we are to ascribe our acceptance with him. And let the ministers of Christ be ready, after the example of the apostle, sometimes to turn as it were out of the way, to dwell a little on a thought at once so humbling and so reviving. 6

We see the miserable circumstances of God's ancient Israel, given up to a spirit of slumber, to blind eyes and to deaf ears. Oh let us take heed that we do not imitate their obstinacy and folly, lest God make our own wickedness our destruction, lest he *send a curse upon us, and curse our blessings, so that our table should become a snare to us,* our temporal enjoyments, or our spiritual privileges! Lord, let us often say, *Give us any plague rather than the plague of the heart;* and bow down our backs under any load of affliction rather than that which shall at last crush those who have refused to accept of thy gospel, and to take upon their shoulders the light burden which a gracious Saviour would lay upon them. 7, 8 9 10

SECTION XXV.

The apostle shows in this and the next section that the rejection of Israel is not final; but that the time shall come when, to the unspeakable joy of the christian world, the Jewish nation shall be brought into the church of Christ. Rom. xi. 11—24.

ROM. xi. 11.

I SAY then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

ROM. xi. 11.

I HAVE asserted above the rejection of the Jewish nation in general; yet I have observed that it is not total, so that none of them should remain objects of mercy. And do I assert it to be final? *Do I then say they have* so *stumbled* as *that,* as a nation, *they should fall* into irrecoverable ruin, and never more be owned by God as his people? *God forbid!* *but* I assert, that *by this fall of theirs salvation* [*is*] at the present [*come*] *to the Gentiles;* the future consequence of which shall be *to provoke them to* a holy *emulation* of sharing the blessings and benefits to be expected from their own Messiah, when they shall see so many heathen nations enjoy them. SECT. 25. ROM. XI. 11

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?

But these should be no unwelcome tidings to you Gentiles: for *if their fall* [*be*] by accident *the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of the Gentiles,* by scattering the preachers of the gospel among them, by proving our veracity and integrity, and in some measure exciting compassion too; though their rejecting us, in itself considered, might rather appear as an argument against it; *how much more* shall the bringing in *their* whole *fulness,* that is, the whole body of the Jewish nation, be a means of propagating the gospel much farther, and recovering multitudes, by whom it hath been rejected, from their scepticism and infidelity, when so great an event appears in accomplishment of its known predictions?[a] 12

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

For I now speak to you Gentiles, and I do it with tenderness and respect, *as I am,* by a special designation of Providence, *the apostle of the Gentiles; I* therein *extol my office,* and esteem it the most signal honour of my life to be employed in it. 13

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

And while I thus address you, it is also with a desire *that I may,* if possible, *excite to emulation* [*them who are*] *my* brethren according to the *flesh, and* who are dear to me as the members of my own body; that if I may not prevail for the recovery of their nation in general, I *may* at least *save some of them,* while I speak of those kind purposes which I assuredly know God will accomplish towards the whole Jewish people in his appointed time. And this thought gives new spirit to my address to you, as I hope it may not only tend to your edification and salvation, but also to theirs.[b] 14

15 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling

In like manner, when I wish their recovery, it is not for their sakes alone, but also with respect to those happy consequences which I know it will have upon the spread of the 15

riches of divine grace which the apostle makes by the way, and which well agrees with the fulness of his heart on this subject.

a Accomplishment of its known predictions.] So many of the prophecies of the Old Testament do evidently refer to the reduction of the Jews into their own land as the people of the Messiah, that I can by no means doubt of the certainty of that event. Compare Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xi. 17—21; xx. 34—44; xxxiv. 13, 14; xxxv. 25—29; xxxvi. 24—28; xxxvii. 21—28; Amos ix. 14, 15; Obad. ver. 17; Mic. vii. 14, 15; Zech. xiv. 10, 11; Hos. i. 10, 11. And the wonderful preservation of them as a distinct people thus far, not only leaves a possibility of this great event, but encourages our hope of it. When it shall be accomplished, it will be so unparalleled as necessarily to excite a general attention and to fix upon men's minds such an almost irresistible demonstration both of the Old and New Testament revelation, as will probably captivate the minds of many thousands of deists in countries professedly christian; (of which, under such corrupt establishments as generally prevail, there will of course be increasing multitudes;) nor will this only captivate their understanding, but will have the greatest tendency to awaken a sense of true religion in their hearts; and this will be a means of propagating the gospel with an amazing velocity in Pagan and Mahometan countries; which probably had been evangelized long ago, had genuine christianity prevailed in those who have made a profession, and God knows, for the most part, a very scandalous profession, of its forms.—The 15th verse has so natural a connexion with the 12th, that Elsner includes the 13th and 14th in a parenthesis.

b Also to theirs.] Perhaps we can no where find an instance of a more popular and affectionate turn than this, in which the apostle seems to find a reason for his zeal to convert the Gentiles in his love to his own countrymen the Jews.

SECT. 25. ——— ROM. XI.

gospel among the Gentiles. *For*, as I hinted above, *if their rejection* [*were*] *the reconciliation of* so great a part of *the* heathen *world* to God, as it was the means of sending the gospel of peace among them; *what* [*will*] *the reception* [*of them be*] *but life from the dead?* What joy will it necessarily give, and what a general spread of the gospel will it naturally produce!

of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

16 And this blessed event we may assuredly expect; *for if the first-fruits* [*be*] *holy, so* [*is*] *the lump.* The consecration of them was looked upon as in effect the consecration of all. And so would I look upon the conversion of some few of the Jewish nation as an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. *And* so much the rather, when I consider how eminently dear to God those pious patriarchs were from whom they have descended: for *if the root* [*be*] *holy, the branches* [*are likewise*] *so*, and will surely at length be regarded 17 as such. And this though some of them be at present in so melancholy a state; *for if some of the branches were broken off, and thou*, O Gentile, *being* as it were a scion of *a wild olive, were grafted in among them* that remained,[c] *and art with them partaker of*, and nourished by, *the root and fatness of the good olive*, being not only a graft upon 18 another stock, but a meaner graft on a stock originally noble and more excellent; *Boast not thyself* presumptuously and ungratefully *against the* natural *branches: and if thou boastest*, [*remember*] to thy humiliation [*that*] *thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.* Thou hast received many benefits from Abraham's seed and the covenant made 19 with him, but they have received none from thee. *Wilt thou therefore* object and *say*, "*The* natural *branches were broken off that I might be grafted in*, and therefore we 20 "may glory over them as they once did over us?" *Well*, take this thought at least along with thee, *they were broken off for their infidelity, and thou* hitherto *standest* in their place *through faith.* Therefore *be not high-minded* and arrogant, *but fear*,[d] lest thou 21 by thy sins forfeit the privileges to which thou art so wonderfully raised. *For if God spared not the branches which were according to nature, neither will he by any means spare thee*, if thine unbelief make thee, after all thy peculiar obligations, as bad, and in 22 that respect even worse than they. *Behold therefore*, on the whole, a remarkable display of *the* intermingled *goodness and severity of God*, and endeavour to improve both well. *Towards them that fell* thou *indeed* seest a memorable instance of his *severity; but to thee* a display of gentleness and *goodness, if thou* wilt be careful to *continue in* [*his*] *goodness*, and endeavour gratefully and dutifully to improve it; *else thou also shalt be cut off*, for the blessed God will not bear always to be insulted with the petulancy of 23 sinners. *And* I would have you farther to consider, as a motive to think of the Jews with respect rather than contempt, that *they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, shall be grafted on again*, and restored to their former privileges: *For* it is certain *God is able again to ingraft them;* hopeless as their state may seem both with respect to their obstinacy and their misery, his powerful access to their mind can subdue their prejudices against the gospel, as thou mayst easily argue from what thou hast thyself 24 experienced. *For if thou wert*, as I may properly enough express it, *cut off from the olive-tree, which was naturally wild, and, contrary to* the course and process of *nature, wert grafted on the good olive-tree;* if thou wert admitted into covenant with God, though descended from parents that were strangers and enemies, *how much more shall they who are the natural* [*branches,*] to whom the promises do originally belong, *be grafted on their own olive?* God will not seem to do so wonderful a thing in restoring them to what might seem the privilege of their birth-right and descent, and saving the seed of Abraham his friend, as he hath done in calling you sinners of the Gentiles to participate the blessings of which you had not the least notion, and to which you cannot be supposed to have had any imaginable claim.

16 For if the first-fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity, but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive-tree?

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us set ourselves seriously to pause upon the conduct of God towards the Jews and Gentiles in that part of it which the apostle here describes, and rejoice with trembling in it. Let us reflect on the divine severity to them and Ver. 22 the divine goodness to us. What immense goodness! that we should be taken from that wretched condition in which we were utterly ignorant of the great Author and end of our being, of the nature of true happiness, and the 24 way of obtaining it, that we and our offspring might be grafted on the good stock, be called to the most important 17 of those privileges and hopes with which the seed of Abraham were honoured and enriched! We partake of the fatness of the good olive, may our fruit abound to the honour of God, to the benefit of mankind!

Let us cherish the most benevolent and tender disposition towards the house of Israel, to whose spiritual privi- 11 leges we are raised; and let us earnestly pray that they may be awakened to emulation, especially as their *fulness* 15 *is to be the riches of the Gentiles*, and *the receiving them again as life from the dead* to the languishing and decaying church.

In the mean time, as the gospel comes to us in so awful a manner vindicated from the contempt of former despisers, let us solemnly charge upon our souls this lesson of holy caution, these salutary words, (Oh that they may be con-

c *Wild olive grafted in among them.*] It is very improper to object that it is unnatural to suppose an *ignoble branch grafted on a rich stock:* for it was not necessary that the simile taken from inoculation should hold in all its particulars: and the engagement to humility arises in a considerable degree from the circumstance objected against. Had the scion been nobler than the stock, its dependence on it for life and nourishment would render it unfit that it should boast against it: how much more when the case was the reverse of what in human usage is practised, and the wild olive is ingrafted on the good!

d *Be not high-minded*, &c.] Archbishop Tillotson well observes that this caution ill suits the claim to infallibility which the modern church of Rome so arrogantly makes, amidst all the absurdities with which her doctrine and her ritual are loaded.

tinually present to our thoughts!) *Be not high-minded but fear.* Whatever our privileges, whatever our experiences are, whatever our confidence may be, let us dwell upon the thought; for there is no christian upon earth that hath not reason to fear in proportion to the degree in which he feels his thoughts towering on high, and grows into any conceit of himself. Daily let us recollect what we were in our natural estate; and what, with all our improvements and attainments, we should immediately be if God should forsake us. SECT. 25. ROM. XI.

Let us pray therefore that we may continue in God's goodness; and whoever may appear to fall from it, let us not glory but rather mourn over them, and pray for their recovery and salvation to that God who is able to recover from the most obstinate infidelity and impenitence, and to graft on not only foreign branches, but what may seem yet more wonderful, those that have appeared more than twice dead. 22 18

SECTION XXVI.

The apostle farther illustrates the future conversion of the Jews to the gospel; and concludes the argument with observing, that in the mean time their obstinacy is overruled to such happy purposes as make the whole scene a most glorious display of the unsearchable wisdom of God. Rom. xi. 25, *to the end.*

ROM. xi. 25.

FOR I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

ROM. xi. 25.

AND now, my *brethren*, upon the whole I will conclude what I have to say upon this interesting and affecting subject, which I have indeed enlarged upon pretty copiously; for it lies with great weight upon my heart. And therefore *I would not have you to be ignorant of this* material circumstance relating to the great *mystery* in the dispensation before us, which, on the first views of it, may appear very unaccountable; *lest you should have too high an opinion of yourselves*, when you see the Jews rejected for their fatal error. I would not, I say, have you ignorant of this, *that* the lamentable *blindness* and infatuation we have been speaking of *is in part happened unto Israel*, and has spread itself over by far the greatest part of the Jewish people, not that they may utterly perish and be for ever cut off, but that they may continue in this humbled and rejected state *till* a certain period arrive, when *the fulness of the Gentiles*, the appointed harvest of them, *shall be brought in*,[a] and incorporated with those already associated to the church of Christ. *And so*, when this happy season marked out in the divine decrees, though to us unknown, *shall* be come, that blessed event shall make way for it, and *all* the seed of *Israel* shall, by a general conversion, *be saved* from its dispersion and misery, and fixed in a state of covenant-favour and acceptance with God again: *As it is written*, (Isa. lix. 20.) *a Deliverer shall come out of Sion, and he shall turn away* the punishment of their former *impiety from Jacob*, when he hath brought them to true repentance.[b] As it is added, *And this* [*is*] *my covenant* which I shall make *with them when I shall take away their sins;* that is, when their sins as a nation are remitted, it shall be to bring them again into covenant with myself. And thus, on the whole, *with respect to the gospel* [*they are*] indeed regarded as *enemies for your sakes;* that is, for their obstinate rejecting the gospel, God hath rejected them in favour of you, and that he might receive you into his church as in their stead:[c] *but as for the election*, that remnant of them which God hath graciously chosen to be subdued by the grace of the gospel, [*they are*] *beloved for their fathers'* sakes. God's gracious regard to the memory of their pious ancestors engages him to take care that some of their seed shall always continue in covenant with him, till at length he recover them as a nation, and astonish the world with their unequalled glory and felicity. And this shall most assuredly be, *for the gifts and calling of God* [*are*] *not to be repented of:*[d] he doth not resume the gifts he hath once bestowed, nor retract the calls he hath once given, but will maintain a remembrance of them, and act in perfect harmony with them, in all his dispensations; according to that wise plan which he hath laid in his eternal counsels, and from which no unforeseen contingency can ever cause him to vary. SECT. 26. ROM. XI. 25 26 27 28 29

As then ye Gentiles *were once*, and for a long time, *disobedient to God*, and buried in ignorance and superstition, *but now have obtained mercy by means of their disobedience*, God having taken you to be his people instead of the Jews: *So they also having been disobedient* to the gospel, and the more prejudiced against it *on occasion of your* admit- 30 31

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief;

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that

a *Till the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in*, &c.] It is well remarked by my late learned, pious, and candid friend, Dr. William Harris, that as this Epistle was written about the year 57, that is, long after the most remarkable conversion of the Jews by the first preaching of the apostles, and after Paul had been about 30 years engaged in his work, it appears that the prophecies relating to the calling of the Jews were not accomplished then, and consequently are not yet accomplished. Harris's *Practical Discourses on the Messiah*, p. 91. Dr. Whitby very justly observes that there is a *double harvest* of the Gentiles spoken of by Paul in this chapter; the first, called *their riches*, verse 12. as consisting in the preaching the gospel to all nations, whereby indeed they were happily enriched with divine knowledge and grace; the second, *the bringing in their fulness*, which expresses a more glorious conversion of many to the true faith of christians in the latter age of the world, which is to be occasioned by the conversion of the Jews. Whit. *in loc.* This answers Orobio's objection, (*Limb. Collat.* p. 94.) that Paul's account is contrary to the prophecies of the Old Testament, which represent the recovery of the Gentile nations as consequent on the redemption of Israel.

b *As it is written*, (Isa. lix. 20.) *&c.*] This text, as it stands in the Hebrew, seems different from the sense in which it is here quoted, *A deliverer shall come—to those that turn from iniquity.* But if Christ be here foretold as *a Deliverer to the Jews*, it is all that the apostle's purpose requires. Yet it is observable the LXX. agrees better with the words of the quotation, as it possibly might with the original reading: and it is certain that the general tenor of God's covenant with Israel gave no hope of deliverance, after rejection and chastisement, but in a way of repentance and reformation. Compare Lev. xxvi. 39—45; Deut. xxx. 1—10.

c *Enemies for your sakes.*] The most natural sense of these words, were they considered alone, might seem, that the calling the Gentiles prejudiced the Jews against the gospel; but as they generally rejected it before the Gentiles were called, I, on the whole, prefer the sense given in the paraphrase. The different sense of διὰ here supposed, may seem a strong objection against it; but if διὰ be rendered *with a regard to*, it may be applicable to both.

d *Not to be repented of.*] Elsner has produced many passages from approved Greek classics, in which the word αμεταμελητος is used exactly in this sense; and has collected, in his curious note on this verse, many testimonies of Pagan authors relating to the divine perfections, which might have taught some christian divines to speak more honourably of them than they do in some of their writings.

SECT. 26. ROM. XI.

tance to such distinguishing *mercy*, yet shall not be utterly and finally ruined, but *shall also*, to the glory of divine grace, at length themselves *obtain* the *mercy* they have envied you. And thus the divine goodness is illustrated even by that which might seem most contrary to it: *for* it appears that *God hath* for a certain time *shut up all under* obstinacy and *disobedience*,[e] suffering each in their turn to revolt, under different degrees of light, 32 *that he might* in a more remarkable manner *have mercy on all*, and glorify the riches of his grace in favours bestowed on those who evidently appeared so undeserving.

through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 And now to conclude this article: Who in the view of such a series of events must not cry out, *O the* awful and unfathomable *depths of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God!* How rich are the treasures of his mercy, how deep the contrivances of his wisdom, how boundless the stretch of his knowledge! *How unsearchable*, and yet how unquestionable [*are*] *his judgments! and his ways such as cannot be traced out! For who hath* completely *known the mind of the Lord* in these things, *or who hath been his counsellor* in forming the plan of them? *Who*, whether Jew or Greek, can pretend that he *hath first given* any thing *to him*, or conferred any obligation upon him? Let him make out the claim, *and* we may answer for it, that *it shall be* exactly *repaid him again*. *For*, on the whole, *of him* as the original Author, *and through him* as the gracious Preserver, *and for him* as the ultimate End, [*are*] *all things*.[f] *To him* therefore [*be*] *glory for ever* and ever; and let all the creation join their utmost force to advance it to the highest degrees, and unite their voices in saying, *Amen*.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 36 LET our whole souls be engaged to glorify this great and blessed God, from whom and through whom we and all the creatures exist. Oh that it may be our eternal employment to render adoration, and blessing, and glory to 33 him! to him whose counsels none can trace; to him who hath prevented us all with the blessings of his goodness: 35 so that far from being able to confer any obligation on him for which we should pretend to demand a recompense, on the contrary, we must own, that the more we are enabled and animated to do for him, the more indeed are we 34 obliged to him. We cannot pretend to have known the mind of the Lord in all its extent, or to have been admitted into his secret counsels. He is continually doing marvellous things which we know not; yet surely we know enough to admire and adore: We know enough to cry out in raptures of delightful surprise, *O the depths of the riches both of his wisdom and goodness!*

33 One instance, though but one of many, we have here before us, in his mysterious conduct towards Jews and Gentiles; in which occurrences that seem the most unaccountable, and indeed the most lamentable, are overruled by God to answer most benevolent purposes. That the sin of the Jews should be the salvation of the Gentiles, and 32 yet the mercy shown to the Gentiles in its consequences the salvation of the Jews, and so both should be concluded under sin, that God might more illustriously have mercy on both!

26 Oh that the blessed time were come when all Israel shall be saved; when the Deliverer, who is long since come 25 out of Sion, *shall turn away iniquity from Jacob;* and *the fulness of the Gentiles come in*, so that *from the rising to the going down of the sun the Lord shall be one and his name one!* Our faith waits the glorious event, and may perhaps wait it even to the end of life. But a generation to be born shall see it; *for the gifts* 29 *and callings of God are without repentance.* Let our assured confidence in the divine promise travel on, as it were, to the accomplishment, over mountains of difficulty that may lie in our way; and let our hearts be cheered with this happy prospect, under all the grief which they feel when we see how few now believe the report of the gospel, and to how few God hath revealed his arm.

While the glorious expected event is delayed, let us add our fervent intercessions with God to those prayers by which the church has in every age been endeavouring to hasten it on. They are all written in the book of God's remembrance, and shall all be reviewed and answered in their season. Let us in the mean time comfort ourselves 27 with this reviving thought, that the covenant which God will make with Israel in that day is in the main the same he has made with us, to take away sin. Eased of such an insupportable burden, that would sink us into final ruin and despair, let us bear up cheerfully against all discouragements, and glory in the gospel, which brings us this invaluable blessing, how long and how generally soever it may be *to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

SECTION XXVII.

The apostle enters on a series of most admirable practical exhortations and directions, in which he labours to persuade christians to act in a manner worthy of that gospel the excellency of which he had been illustrating. And here particularly urges an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their various talents. Rom. xii. 1—11.

SECT. 27. ROM. XII. 1.

ROM. xii. 1.

HAVING thus despatched what I proposed in the argumentative part of the Epistle, and suggested a variety of considerations which may convince you of the great excellency of the gospel, and the singular favour which God has shown to those Gentiles whom he hath

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of

e *Shut up all under disobedience*, &c.] It is of great importance to observe that this refers to different periods. First, God suffered the Gentiles, in the early ages of the world, to revolt, and then took the Abrahamic family as a peculiar seed to himself, and bestowed extraordinary favours upon them. Afterwards he permitted them, by unbelief and disobedience, to fall, and took in the Gentiles on their believing; and he did even this with an intent to make that very mercy to the Gentiles a means of provoking the Jews to jealousy, and so bring them to faith by that which had at first been an offence in the way to it. This was truly a mystery in the divine conduct, which the apostle most rationally as well as respectfully adores, in the concluding words of the chapter.

f *Of him, through him, for him*, &c.] Antoninus, speaking of Nature, that is, of God, has an expression which one would imagine he had borrowed from this of Paul, εκ σε παντα, εν σοι παντα, εις σε παντα, *all things are of thee, in thee, and to thee.*

SECT. 27.

ROM. XII.

God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

called into the christian church, and to that remnant of the Jews who are kept in so happy a relation to them, while the bulk of their nation are fallen into a state of rejection; let me now endeavour to animate you all to behave in a suitable manner. *I entreat you therefore,*[a] my dear *brethren*, partakers with me in this holy calling, *by* all *the tender mercies of* our most compassionate *God, that* instead of the animal victims whose slaughtered bodies you have been accustomed to offer, either to the true God or to idols, *you* would now *present*, as it were, at his spiritual altar, *your* own *bodies*, as *a living sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to God.* Let all the members of your bodies and all the faculties of your souls,[b] being sanctified and animated by divine grace, be employed in the service of him to whom you are under such immense obligations. This he requires of you [*as*] *your rational service;* and it will be much more acceptable to him than any ceremonial forms, though most exactly prescribed in a ritual of his own appointment. *And* as you desire to engage his approbation and favour, *be not*, in the general course of your temper and actions, *conformed to* the sentiments and customs of *this* vain and sinful *world, but* rather *be* ye *transformed in the renewing of your mind:* endeavour to become new creatures, contracting new habits, and engaging in new pursuits, under the influence of the Divine Spirit on your hearts; *that you may* not only be speculatively acquainted with the doctrines, precepts, and design of the gospel, but may *experimentally know that will of God* [*which is*] in itself so excellently *good*, and which, as it is most *acceptable* to him, has the most apparent tendency to purify *and perfect* our natures.[c]

1

2 And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

2

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

And I particularly *say*, and give it in charge,[d] *according to that grace which is given to me* as an inspired apostle, *to every one that is among you*, as if personally named, to take the greatest heed that he be not exalted into spiritual pride by the gifts and privileges which God hath conferred upon you. I charge each *not to arrogate* [*to himself*] *above what he ought to think*,[e] *but that he think* of himself *with* modesty, *sobriety*, and humility; *according to the measure of* that *faith*, and in correspondent proportion to those gifts, *which God hath distributed to every man* among you. And surely when you consider it is God who hath given all, there will appear little reason to magnify yourselves on any distinguishing share of his bounty which any one may have received. Especially when you remember, that this distribution is made, not only or chiefly for your own sake, but out of regard to the good of the whole: *For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same use*, but each its proper function and service appointed by the wise Former and gracious Preserver of the whole; *So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one member of each other;* we should therefore endeavour each of us to know his own place and condition, and mutually to make our various capacities as serviceable as we can.

3

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

4

5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

5

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

Having therefore gifts, all proceeding from God, the great Fountain of every good thing, and *different according to* the diversity of *the grace* that is *given unto us: whether* [*it be*] *prophecy*, as enabling us to foretell future events, or to make discourses for the edification and direction of the church, [*let us be employed in it*] *according to the* degree of our gift, which is in *proportion* to the degree *of faith* that is respectively in us:[f] *Or* [*having*] *the office of ministry*, as deacons, let a man employ himself actively and faithfully *in* his *ministration*:[g] *or* if he be *an instructor* of catechumens, who are to be fitted for the communion of the church, let him continue humbly, tenderly, and patiently *in* the work of *teaching: Or* if he be *an exhorter*, whose peculiar business it is to urge christians to duty, or to comfort them in the discharge of it, let him continue *in* his *exhortation; he that giveth* any thing to a charitable use, [*let him do it*] *with* true *simplicity* and unfeigned liberality of heart, neither seeking the applause of men nor any other sinister end which he could desire to conceal: *he that presideth* in the distribution of charities so collected, let him do it *with diligence*;[h] that he may know the case proposed, and that *he* may see that nothing be wanting to make the charity as effectual

6

7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

7

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

8

a *Entreat you therefore.*] Some apply this to the Gentiles; and as most of the members of the church at Rome were originally so, it is reasonable to believe the apostle had them principally in view; but not excluding the converted Jews, who, as he had just before expressed it, remained as a remnant according to the election of grace, when the rest were hardened, and therefore had surely reason to acknowledge the tender mercies of God to them, and were under strong obligations to devote themselves to him. I have accordingly in the paraphrase applied it to both.

b Bodies and souls.] The body is here by a usual figure put for the whole person; nor can the soul be now presented to God otherwise than as dwelling in the body, or truly consecrated to him, unless the body be employed in his service; nor, on the other hand, can the body be presented as a living sacrifice, otherwise than as acted and animated by the soul.—For the propriety of the word παρασταται, which properly signifies *placing the victim before the altar*, see Elsner, *in loc.*

c *Good, acceptable, and perfect.*] L'Enfant explains each of these as opposed to the Jewish ritual: this christian sacrifice being more excellent in itself, Ezek. xx. 25. more pleasing to God, Psal. xl. 7, 8. and tending more to make us perfect, Heb. vii. 19. I understand it as referring to all the preceptive part of christianity, the excellency of which they will best understand who set themselves most exactly to practise upon it.

d *Say*, and give it in charge.] So λεγειν signifies, Acts xv. 24. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herodot. in loc.*

e *Not to arrogate, &c.*] Raphelius, *Annot. ex Herod. in loc.* has shown that υπερφρονειν has properly this signification.

f *According to the proportion of faith.*] Many interpret this, "Do it according to the general scheme of divine revelation, not "setting up any novel interpretations of scripture injurious to it." But Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen. in loc.*) objects that λογος, not αναλογια, would be the proper word to express that. Dr. Sam. Clarke (*Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 6.) by *faith* understands the trust reposed in them, or the nature and use of the gift they had; which is a very unusual sense of the word πιστις. The Rhemish Jesuits suppose it was a confession or summary of faith, drawn up by all the apostles in conjunction: to which they refer Rom. vi. 17; xvi. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 20; Gal. i. vi; Acts xv. 6. none of which texts seem to imply any thing like it; nor is it pretended that such a creed was ever quoted in antiquity by the name of αναλογια πιστεως, or indeed, that I can find, by any other. If we suppose the prophetic gift to be given in proportion to the exercise of faith, that is, of dependence on God when he signified a disposition in general to impart it, we have, I think, the clearest explication the phrase will admit. See p. 301. note b, on Mark xi. 22.

g Employ himself *in ministration.*] It seems the word εστω is understood. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.—The word διακονια properly signifies the *ministration of a deacon*, and so interpreted gives the distinctest sense.

h *He that presideth, with diligence.*] In this and the following clause, I follow the interpretation of Lord Barrington, (*Misc. Sacra,*

SECT. 27. ROM. XII.

as possible; and as for him *that showeth mercy*, that is, who has the care of those who, on account of peculiarly grievous calamities are the objects of particular compassion, let him do it *with* an obliging *cheerfulness* of temper, cautiously guarding against any disgust at what may seem mean and disagreeable in the offices which must necessarily be performed for such.

9 On the whole, [*let*] *love* [*be*] *undissembled*, and all your expressions of mutual friendship as free as possible from base flattery and from vain compliment. *Abhor that which is evil*, in every instance, and *adhere* resolutely *to that which is good*. Practise benevolence in all its branches, and every other virtue, with the greatest determination and

10 perseverance of mind, whatever discouragements may for the present arise. Do not only abound in the exercises of common humanity, but *in brotherly love*, as christians, [*be*] *mutually full of tender affection*,[i] yea, cultivate those gentle dispositions of mind with delight; and endeavour to think so modestly of yourselves, that you may still be *in honour preferring one another*. Let each in his turn be ready to think better of his brethren than of himself; and so to prevent them in every office of respect,[k] and, out of regard to their advantage, to give up with as good a grace as possible any thing in which his

11 own honour or personal interest may be concerned. When you are actually engaged, be *not slothful* and sluggish *in* the prosecution of your proper *business* in life, but endeavour to rouse your spirits, so that it may be despatched with vigour and alacrity, and without an unnecessary expense of time. For this purpose be *fervent*, warm, and active *in spirit:* and certainly you will see the greatest obligation and encouragement to be so, when you consider that you are *serving the Lord* Jesus Christ,[l] to whose condescension and love you are infinitely indebted. May you always attend his service with the greatest zeal and delight, and may every action of life be brought into a due subordination to that great end!

9 *Let* love *be* without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

IMPROVEMENT.

How rich were a christian in practical directions for the conduct of life, even if this excellent chapter were his only treasure of this kind! Let such scriptures as these be welcome to us; the scriptures that teach us our duty, as well as those that display before our eyes the richest variety of spiritual privileges. Indeed it is one of our greatest privileges to be taught our duty, if at the same time we are inclined by divine grace to perform it; and if we are not, we have no privileges that will prevent, none that will not increase, our ruin.

Ver. 1 Wisely does the great apostle lay the foundation of all virtue in a principle of unfeigned piety towards God—in presenting before him our bodies as living sacrifices. How great an honour and happiness will it be to us to do it! That we may be engaged to this, let us often think of his tender mercies, so many and so great; and especially of that most illustrious of all mercies, his redeeming us by the blood of his Son, and calling us into the christian covenant. Can there be a more reasonable service than this? that we should be consecrated to our Creator, to our Redeemer, to our Sanctifier, to our constant Benefactor, to our supreme End and Happiness?—The world indeed neglects him, yea, even what is called the christian world neglects him to such a degree as, if we did

2 not continually see it, we should not suppose to be possible. But let us not in this instance be conformed to it. Oh that divine grace may so transform and renew our hearts, that we may not! Nothing but experience can teach us how good, and perfect, and acceptable the will of God is, and how happy a thing it is to be governed, in every respect, by its unerring declarations.

Let us remember, that as our sanctification so also our humility and our usefulness are his will; and therefore

3, 4 let us endeavour to conquer every high conceit of ourselves, and every sordid and selfish sentiment. Let us often

7. &c. reflect that we are all members of each other; and being so happily united in Christ, have all but one interest, which is that of the body and of its glorified Head. Whether our station in the church be more public or private, whether our capacities and endowments be more or less distinguished, let us all be faithful, be affectionate, be disinterested, be active, endeavouring to serve Christ, and even the poorest of his people, with simplicity, with diligence, with cheerfulness; preferring others to ourselves; abhorring that love which is spent in hypocritical

11 words and unmeaning forms; cultivating that which gives to the soul tenderness, condescension, and vigour. In one word, let us remember we are serving the Lord, the Lord Christ; and doing all in his name and for his sake, let this add fervour to our spirit, zeal to our diligence, and abasement to our humility; for nothing surely can be so animating, nothing so melting, nothing so humbling, as to recollect, on the one hand, how much we owe him, and, on the other, how little we are able, how much less we are careful, to do for his service.

Vol. I. p. 77—80.) and refer to him for the reasons which I think sufficient to justify it, only mentioning the application of the word προϊστὰς in the same sense to Phœbe, Rom. xvi. 2. who could not be supposed a ruler in the church. Προϊσταμενος properly signifies *one who presides*, but in what, the connexion must determine. For the extraordinary mercy exercised among the ancient christians, see Lucian, *De Morte Pergrin. apud Opera*, Vol. II. p. 764. *Edit. Salmur.* 1619; and Julian. *Epist.* xlix.

i *In brotherly love [be] mutually full of tender affection.*] Perhaps the extremely expressive words of the original, τη φιλαδελφιᾳ εις αλληλους φιλοστοργοι, might justly be rendered, *delight in the tenderest fraternal affection to each other:* The word φιλοστοργια not only signifying *a strong affection*, like that of parent animals to their offspring, but *a delight in it*, as the ingenious Dr. Balguy has justly observed in his excellent *Sermon* on this text.

k Preventing them in every office of respect.] Archbishop Leighton well observes, (*Expository Works*, Vol. II. p. 429.) that the original words, τη τιμη αλληλους προηγουμενοι, are very expressive, and might literally be rendered, *leading on each other with respect*, or *in giving honour going before each other*. This I have endeavoured to express in this clause of the paraphrase, but have retained our version, as expressing something of the esteem from which this respectful behaviour should proceed. L'Enfant renders it, *mutually prevent one another with honour.*

l *Serving the Lord.*] Several copies for κυριω read καιρω, *serving the time*, that is, husbanding your opportunities; and Dr. Mill, trusting chiefly to the authority of Jerome and some other Latin translations, admits this as the true reading. But it is by no means supported by an adequate number of Greek manuscripts; and besides that it would be an unnatural and inelegant expression in that sense, it sinks the noble sense of the commonly received reading so much, that I could by no means persuade myself to follow it. It is a lively exhortation to christians to be always serving Christ, and to cultivate the temper which the apostle expresses when he says, εμοι το ζην Χριστος, Phil. i. 21. *To me to live is Christ.* It also suggests a motive to enforce the former exhortation; as I have hinted in the paraphrase.

SECTION XXVIII.

The apostle pursues his practical exhortations, and particularly recommends devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, a peaceful temper, and a readiness to forgive injuries. Rom. xii. 12, *to the end.*

ROM. xii. 12.

REJOICING in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

ROM. xii. 12.

I HAVE been exhorting you, my brethren, to many christian duties and graces, and among the rest to the greatest activity and zeal in the service of Christ. Let me exhort you to guard against such a dejection of spirit as would enervate that holy activity and zeal. On the contrary, [*be*] you that are the servants of Christ always *rejoicing in* the *hope* of those glorious rewards which your Divine Master, in the riches of his grace, hath set before you, and in that support which he gives you in the way to that eternal glory. And animated by that hope, be *patient in* all the *tribulation* which you may bear in his cause, or from his hands, in the wise disposals of his gracious providence. And while under these pressures, *continuing instant in prayer*, draw down those necessary supplies of his Holy Spirit which may carry you honourably through all your trials: Liberally *communicating to the necessities of the saints*, and accounting nothing your own which their relief requires you to furnish out; particularly *pursuing* that *hospitality* which present circumstances so peculiarly demand,[a] especially towards those strangers that are exiles or travellers in the cause of christianity. Stay not till occasions of this kind force themselves upon you, and much less till importunity extort the favour, as it were, against your will; but, like Abraham, look out for proper objects of such a bounty, and follow after them to bring them back to your houses. On the other hand, *bless them who* are pursuing you with evil intentions, and *persecute you* with the greatest severity for conscience-sake. Wish them well, and pray for their conversion; yea, if they should go on to revile you for all the expressions of your love, go on to *bless, and curse* them *not*, though provoked by their bitterest imprecations against you. Make it a constant maxim with yourselves to maintain a constant sympathy with your brethren of mankind, which may lead you to *rejoice with them that rejoice, and* to *weep with them that weep;* to congratulate others on their felicity, and to bear your part with them in their sorrows, as members of one body, who have all, as it were, one common feeling. [*Be*] *entirely united in your regards for each other.*[b] Let each condescend to the rest, and agree with them as far as he fairly and honourably can; and where you must differ, do not by any means quarrel about it, but allow the same liberty of sentiments you would claim. *Affect not high things*, either to possess exalted stations of life or to converse with those that bear them, *but* rather *condescend* and accommodate yourselves *to men of low rank;* for it is chiefly among the poorer part of mankind that the gospel is like to prevail: and all christians ought, in this respect, to bear the image of their great Master, who spent most of his time in conversing with such. *Be not* so *wise in your own conceit* as to think yourselves above the divine direction, or that of your fellow-christians, in this respect or in any other. *Render to none evil for evil;* nor imagine that any man's injurious treatment of you will warrant your returning the injury; but act in such a cautious and circumspect manner, that it may evidently appear you *provide* against the malignity which will lead many to put the worst constructions upon your actions. And do only those *things* which may be above the need of excuse, and may appear, at the first view, fair and *reputable in the sight of all men. If it be possible*, and at least *to the utmost of your power*, as far as it is consistent with duty, honour, and conscience, *live peaceably with all men;* not only your own countrymen or fellow-christians, but Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians.[c]

Upon the whole, my dearly *beloved* brethren, whatever wrongs you may receive, *revenge not yourselves* on those that have injured you; *but rather* yield and *give place to* the *wrath* of the enemy;[d] *for* God hath forbidden us to indulge any of the vindictive passions: as *it is written*, (Deut. xxxii. 35.) *Vengeance* [*is*] *mine*, that is, it properly belongs to me, and *I will recompense* the deserved punishment, *saith the Lord.* And indeed it requires the wisdom as well as the dignity and majesty of a God to claim and manage it aright. *Therefore*, instead of bearing any thoughts of hurting them that have used you most unkindly and unjustly, *if thine enemy hunger, feed him*, and *if he thirst, give him drink;* and on the whole, do him all the good in thy power, as Solomon urgeth,

SECT. 28. ROM. XII. 12

13 Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality.

13

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

14

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

15

16 *Be* of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

16

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

17

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

18

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

19

20 Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him

20

a *Pursuing hospitality.*] It was the more proper for the apostles so frequently to enforce this duty, as the want of public inns (much less common than among us, though not quite unknown, Luke x. 34, 35.) rendered it difficult for strangers to get accommodations, and as many christians might be banished their native country for religion, and perhaps laid under a kind of bann of excommunication, both among Jews and heathens, which would make it a high crime for any of their former brethren to receive them into their houses. For the illustration which the paraphrase gives of the energy of this text, I am obliged to Mr. Blackwall, *Sacred Class.* Vol. I. p. 232.

b *Be entirely united in your regards for each other.*] This, on the whole, seemed the most proper version of αυτο εις αλληλους φρονουντες· and though Dr. Whitby paraphrases it, "Desire the same "things for others that you do for yourselves, and would have them "desire for you," I think the sense given above preferable, as it supposes less of an ellipsis, which I would not suppose without apparent necessity.

c Greeks and barbarians.] It is remarkable that Dr. Barrow adds, this must include living peaceably with heretics and schismatics; Barrow's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 278. however, the ill treatment which must be expected under these hard names from men of unpeaceable tempers, should never lead any to deny or slight what they in their consciences judge the truth of doctrine or purity of worship.

d *Give place to wrath.*] L'Enfant and others explain this of *giving way to the wrath of God*, and quote the phrase of *giving place to the physician*, (Ecclus. xxxviii. 12.) and *giving place to the law*, (chap. xix. 17.) as authorizing that interpretation. But I think, in both those passages, *to give place* signifies to *yield* without opposing; in which sense it best suits the interpretation given in the paraphrase, which seems most natural. The ingenious and learned Dr. Balguy determines in favour of the other interpretation, (Balguy's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 222, 223.) though the force of the reason that follows is not at all impaired by ours.

SECT. 28. ROM. XII.

(Prov. xxv. 21.) *for by doing this thou shalt,* as it were, *heap coals of fire on his head:*[e] thou wilt touch him so sensibly, that he will no more be able to stand against such a conduct than to bear on his head burning coals; but will rather submit to seek thy friendship, and endeavour by future kindness to overbalance the injury.

drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

On all occasions act on this as an inviolable maxim, and if you do not find the immediate good effect, persist in such a conduct; *be not overcome with evil* where it seems most obstinate, *but overcome evil with good:* for that is the most glorious victory, and a victory which may certainly be obtained, if you will have the courage to adhere to that which, being good, is always in its own nature, on the whole, invincible, to whatever present disadvantage it may seem obnoxious.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 SURELY if any thing consistent with the burdens and sorrows of mortal life can inspire constant joy, it must be the christian hope, the hope of our calling. Surely, with a joy thus supported, no tribulation can be too great to be endured with patience, yea, with cheerfulness; since whatever it be, the glorious object of our hope, far from being endangered or diminished by it, shall rather be secured and increased. Let us therefore continue instant in prayer, that our minds may be so fortified and ennobled that we may dwell upon these views.

Well may they keep the heart in so serene and pleasant a state as to make us ready to every act of kindness 13 to our fellow-creatures, but especially to those who are heirs with us of this hope, whom we ought to esteem it our great honour and privilege to be able in any measure to assist and accommodate, while they are travelling through this too often inhospitable wilderness in the way to that kingdom they are going to receive. It is no wonder, that as we are not of this world, but are chosen and called out of the world to so glorious a prospect, the world should hate and persecute us: but let us neither be dismayed nor in any degree exasperated with the ill usage we may meet with. Rather, with unfeigned compassion and good will to the most injurious of our enemies, let us not only re- 17 frain from repaying evil with evil, but render them blessing for curses, and benefits for wrongs, since we have ourselves found such mercy, and are called to inherit such a blessing.

Let us cultivate those kind and social affections which this great proficient in them all so forcibly inculcates;— 15 that tender sympathy which may teach us to share in the joys and sorrows of all about us—that candid humility 16 which shall, with graceful, unaffected freedom, stoop to the lowest and the meanest, and while it stoops, rise in unsought honours—that distrust of ourselves which shall cause us to cease from our own wisdom, that we may 18, &c. repose ourselves upon the unerring guidance of our heavenly Father—that kindly obstinate attachment to peace—that heroic superiority which melts down with kindness the heart that but a little before was glowing with rage: 21 And, on the whole, that resolute perseverance in goodness which must be finally victorious, and will assuredly rise with a new accession of strength and of glory from every seeming defect.

SECTION XXIX.

The apostle urges obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, and love as the fulfilling of the law: concluding the chapter with a warm exhortation to that universal sanctity which might become and adorn the excellent dispensation of the gospel. Rom. xiii. 1, *to the end.*

ROM. xiii. 1.

SECT. 29. ROM. XIII.

AMONG the many exhortations I am now giving you, my christian brethren, to a life worthy of the gospel, that of obedience to magistrates, to which I now proceed, must be acknowledged of distinguished importance. I know the Jews are strongly prejudiced against the thoughts of submitting to heathen governors; but *let* me strictly charge and enjoin it upon *every soul* among you without exception, how holy soever his profession 1 be, and however honourable his station in the church, that he *be in* all regular and orderly *subjection to the superior* civil *authorities* which Divine Providence hath established in the places where you live. *For there is no* such legal *authority but* may, in one sense or another, be said to be *from God.* It is his will that there should be magistrates to guard the peace of societies; and the hand of his providence in directing to the persons of particular governors, ought to be seriously considered and revered. *The authorities that exist* under one form or another, *are* in their different places ranged, *disposed,* and esta- 2 blished *by God,*[a] the original and universal Governor. *He, therefore, who,* by an unjust resistance, endeavours to confound these ranks, and *sets himself,* as it were, in array[b] *against the authority* of which magistrates are possessed,[c] *withstands the disposition of*

ROM. xiii. 1. LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of

e *Thou shalt heap, &c.*] The sense cannot be, *thou shalt consume him* and bring judgments upon him; for that would be applying to revenge, and building upon it, while it is most expressly forbidden. It must therefore intimate in how tender a manner human nature is affected with favours received from one who has been considered as an enemy.

a *Disposed* and established.] So I render the word τεταγμενοι, thinking the English word *ordained* rather too strong. Compare Acts xiii. 48. and the note there. Divine Providence *ranges* and in fact *establishes* the various governments of the world; they are, therefore, under the character of governments, in the general, to be revered: but this cannot make what is wrong and pernicious in any particular forms, sacred, divine, and immutable, any more than the hand of God in a famine or pestilence is an argument against seeking proper means to remove it.

b *Sets himself,* &c.] This seems the most direct import of αντιτασσομενος which may allude to the word τεταγμενοι, *ranged* or *marshalled* by God, used above with respect to the magistrate, ver. 1.

c *Authority* of which magistrates are possessed.] Bishop Hopkins lays great stress on the word εξουσια here used, as signifying a *lawful authority,* and incapable of being applied to an usurper; and, in pursuance of this, has taken some pains to show that the power of the Roman Emperors in the apostle's time was not usurped, the people having given up their original rights to the senate, and the senate to the Emperors. But as this is a very abstruse question, and the pretended evidence for it very slender and exceptionable, and, so far as I can judge, quite unsatisfactory; so it is certain that εξουσια is sometimes applied to an *usurped* authority, being applied to the *power of Satan,* Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. ii. 2. Compare Eph. vi. 12; Col. i. 13; ii. 15; Rev. xiii. 2, 4, 5. to which several other instances might be added. But the natural and candid interpretation proposed above needs not the support of such a criticism, and frees us from the endless embarrassment of the question of a king *de jure* and *de facto.* I should think it unlawful to resist the most unjust power that can be imagined, if there was a probability only of doing mischief by it.

God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

God for the public peace and order: *and they who withstand* so wise and beneficial an appointment *shall receive to themselves condemnation*, not only from the civil powers they injure, but from the Supreme Sovereign, whose laws they break, and whose order they endeavour to reverse.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

And indeed the good purposes to which magistracy is subservient, make it very apparent 3 that God must be displeased when that is despised: *for rulers*, in their several offices, *are not*, on the whole, *a terror to good works, but to* such as are *evil*,[d] being intended to encourage the former by punishing the latter. *Wouldst thou not therefore be afraid of the* high *authority* with which they are invested? *Do that which is good, and thou shalt*, according to the general course of administration, *have* not only protection but *praise* and respect *from it*.[e] This, I say, may reasonably be expected, and will be the 4

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

case where the magistrate understands himself and his office: *for he is*, according to the original appointment, to be considered as elevated above his fellow-men, not for his own indulgence, dominion, and advantage, but that he might be *to thee*, and to all the rest of his subjects, as *the servant* and instrument *of God for* thine and the public *good*. *But if thou dost* that which is *evil*, and so makest thyself the enemy of that society of which he is the guardian, thou hast indeed reason to *be afraid: for he holdeth not the sword* of justice, which God hath put into his hand, *in vain*.[f] It was given him *for* this very purpose, that he might smite malefactors, and thereby preserve peace and order in his dominions. And in doing it *he is* to be regarded, not as acting a severe and oppressive part, but as *the servant* and substitute *of God; an avenger* appointed in his name, *to* [*execute*,] not his own personal resentment, but the *wrath* of a righteous Providence, *against him that doeth evil*, in instances wherein it would be highly improper to leave

5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience-sake.

that avenging power in the hands of private injured persons. *Therefore*, when this is 5 considered, piety, as well as prudence and human virtue, will teach thee that *it is necessary to be in* a regular *subjection, not only out of regard to* the dread thou mayst reasonably have of that *wrath* and punishment which man can execute, *but also for the sake of conscience*, which will be violated and armed with reproaches against you, if you disturb the public peace, and resist the kind purposes of God, by opposing governors, while they act under his commission. This is in effect what all subjects profess to own, 6

6 For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

as *on this account you also pay tribute;* which magistrates everywhere receive, and is levied *for* this apparent reason, that *they are* to be considered as *the ministers* of the good providence *of God*, who give to the public the whole of their time, care, and labour, and *continually applying themselves to this one affair*, the execution of their high office, have a right to be honourably maintained out of the public revenues, on the most obvious principles of equity and justice.

7 Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute *is due*, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

On this principle, *therefore*, be careful that you *render to all* what is justly *their due*, 7 even though you may have opportunities of defrauding them of it, to your own immediate and temporal advantage. *To whom tribute* [*is due*] for your persons or estates, [*render*] such *tribute* or taxes;[g] and *to whom custom* is due for any commodity exported or imported, render that *custom;* and seek not clandestinely to convey such commodities away without paying it. *To whom reverence* is due[h] on account of their worth and character, render *reverence;* and *to whom* any external form of civil *honour* and respect is due by virtue of their office and rank of life, though it should so happen that they have no peculiar merit to recommend them to your regard, scruple not to pay all proper marks of *honour;* and guard against that stiffness which, under pretence of christian simplicity, by disputing such common forms, may rather indulge pride and occasion reproach. On 8 the whole, *owe nothing to any, but* endeavour to manage your affairs with that economy and prudent attention, that you may as soon as possible balance accounts with all who have demands upon you, except it be with respect to that debt which while you pay you will be renewing; I mean the obligation you will ever be under *to love one another*. That I would recommend to your constant care; *for he that loveth another, hath* in a compendious manner *fulfilled* every thing that *the law* requireth with respect to him. *For that* [*precept,*] *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt* 9

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt

d *Are not a terror to good works, &c.*] If circumstances arise in which this argument is not applicable, it is reasonably to be taken for granted that the apostle did not intend here to pronounce concerning such cases. Nothing can be said for interpreting these passages in favour of unlimited passive obedience, which will not prove any resistance of a private injury unlawful, by the authority of our Lord's decision, Matt. v. 39, 40. And this would subvert the great foundation of magistracy itself, which is appointed by force to ward off and prevent it, or avenge such injuries. But it was very prudent in the apostle not to enter into any question relating to the right of resistance in some extraordinary cases, as those cases are comparatively few, and as the just decisions which could have been given on that subject might possibly have been misrepresented to his own detriment and that of the gospel. The general laws of benevolence to the whole, so strongly asserted in this context, are in particular cases to determine; and all particular precepts, in whatever universal terms they are delivered, are always to give way to them.

e *In the general course of administration, &c.*] As it is certain the case often is otherwise, and was particularly so with respect to Nero, under whom this Epistle was written, it is necessary to interpret the words with this latitude. And there is great reason to conclude *that magistrates in general are in fact much more beneficial than hurtful to society*, which is a good argument for a general submission; and that was, as we observed above, all the apostle could intend to enforce. Compare Prov. xviii. 22. where, if I mistake not, the sense is similar, and is to be understood thus; "Generally "speaking, a wife is a felicity rather than a detriment to her hus- "band, though to be sure there are many excepted instances."

f *Holdeth not the sword in vain.*] This strongly intimates the lawfulness of inflicting capital punishment, which to deny, is subverting the chief use of magistracy.

g *Tribute to whom tribute.*] It is well known that the Jews had a favourite notion among them, that they, as the peculiar people of God, were exempted from obligations to pay tribute to Gentiles; (Joseph. *Antiq. lib* xviii. *cap.* 1; *Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* i. § 2. *et cap.* 8. [al. 7.] § 1.) against which this passage is directly levelled, though without pointing them out in any invidious manner.

h *Reverence.*] This must certainly be the import of φοβον here, as also of φοβηται, Eph. v. *ult.* and it expresses the *inward disposition*, as τιμη, *honour*, expresses the conduct and external behaviour proceeding from it.

SECT. 29. ROM. XIII. 9

not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, *Thou shalt not covet* any thing that is thy neighbour's, *and any other command* respecting our fellow-creatures, *if such* [*there be,*] *is summed up in this* one excellent and comprehensive *precept*, which I wish may be engraven on all our hearts, so as to regulate every affection and action, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Thou shalt learn to put thyself, as it were, in his place, and to act as, in a supposed change of circumstances, thou couldst reasonably

10 desire to be treated. Now it is very obvious that *love worketh no evil to one's neighbour;* nay, wherever that noble principle governs, it will put men upon doing all they can to ward off injury from one another, and to make the life of each as comfortable and happy as possible: *therefore* it may well be said, as it is asserted above, that *love* [*is*] *the accomplishment of the* whole *law.*

not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

11 *And* let me urge you to attend to *this* and to the other precepts I have given, with so much the greater diligence, *knowing the* circumstances of the present *season*, which if you consider, you will see *that* [*it is*] *high time now to awake out of sleep*, and vigorously to improve every opportunity of doing good and prosecuting the great business of life, which is to secure the divine favour and your final happiness: *for our* great expected *salvation* [*is*] *now* considerably *nearer than when we* at first *believed.* We have complete salvation in view, it is continually advancing upon us, flying forward, as it were, on the swiftest wings of time; and that which remains interposed between the present moment and our entering on the promised reward, is comparatively but a very small span. Act therefore at all times

12 in a holy subordination to such a circumstance. And since *the night is far advanced*, since the dark state of the present life, in which we often confound good and bad, is almost over, and *the day is drawing near*, even that day which will show every thing in its proper colours and forms; *let us therefore put off the works* which suit only a state *of darkness, and* let us *put on the* complete *armour of light.* Let us be clothed with all the christian graces, which, like burnished and beautiful armour, will be at once an ornament and defence, and which will reflect the bright beams that are so gloriously rising upon us.

13 *And as* [*being*] now *in the* clear and open *day, let us* take care to *walk* decently, *honourably*, and gracefully,[i] since the lustre already shining about us requires great reformation and exemplary holiness; *not in rioting and drunken debauches, not in chambering*,[k] effeminacy, *and lasciviousness*,[l] the vices in which so many are wasting and polluting the hours which nature has destined to necessary repose: *not in the contention and emulation*

14 which the indulgence of such irregular desires often occasion. *But* laying aside all these abominations and enormities, let us *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*,[m] our great Sovereign and Saviour. Endeavour, my brethren, to obtain the greatest conformity to his temper, and to appear as like him as possible in every particular in which he can be the object of our imitation; for that short precept will contain all that is necessary to adorn our profession to its greatest height. *And* while so many are spending their time and thoughts and substance in those low pursuits which regard only the meaner part of their nature, *make not* a solicitous *provision for the flesh, to* [*fulfil its*] irregular *desires*, nor be intent in pleasing any of the senses, even where their demands may not appear directly criminal; but labour to preserve the superiority of the immortal spirit, and to keep it continually under the discipline of so holy and so noble a religion.

11 And that knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof.*

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1—5, 3, 4

WHILE subjects learn reverence and obedience to their magistrates, not only for wrath but for conscience-sake, may magistrates learn a correspondent care to answer that end of their office which the apostle makes the foundation of such precepts as these, and to be indeed the ministers of God for good, a terror not to good but to evil works.

GREAT BRITAIN, while I write this,* is happy in a government to which this character may justly be applied. Its subjects are under the greatest obligations to the divine goodness, in having so remarkably overthrown the attempts of those who would have left us little use of the scripture, but would themselves have abused it, to have riveted on the heaviest fetters by perverting this passage of St. Paul, as if he had intended to subvert every free constitution under heaven, and to put a sword into the hand of merciless tyrants, to kill and take possession of the

7 heritage of the Lord, counting his people but as sheep for the slaughter.

While we are thus happy, we shall be doubly inexcusable if we fail in rendering both honour and tribute where they are so justly due.

8—10 May we extend our care to the universal law of love; and may it be so deeply engraven on our hearts, that the practice of every social virtue may become easy and delightful.

* Anno Domini, 1749.

i Let us walk *honourably* and gracefully.] So ευσχημονως exactly signifies. Dr. Milner renders it, *let us walk with a grace.—Fading Flowers of Life*, p. 38.

k *Chambering:* Κοιτας.] This Leigh explains of *lying long in bed.* I will not defend that sense of the word; but I will here record the observation, which I have found of great use to myself, and to which I may say that the production of this Work, and most of my other Writings, is owing; *viz.* that the difference between rising at 5 and at 7 of the clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life, of which (supposing the two hours in question to be so spent) eight hours every day should be employed in study and devotion.

l Effeminacy *and lasciviousness.*] I think ασελγειαις properly signifies a *soft, luxurious, and effeminate manner of life*, attended with an affected delicacy, very detrimental to that resolution which is so necessary an ingredient in the character of one who would approve himself a *good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

m *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*] A strong expression for endeavouring to be clothed with all the virtues and graces which composed his character: which reminds me of what Plutarch tells us concerning the kings of Persia, that on their coronation-day they put on a robe which the first Cyrus wore before he was king, to remind them of imitating his exemplary temper and behaviour. Plutarch, *Artaxerx. apud Opera, tom.* vi. p. 1851. Edit. Steph. 1572. It is observable the apostle does not say, "Put on *purity* and so-"*briety, peacefulness* and *benevolence;*" but he in effect says all at once, in saying, *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

And on the whole, being animated by the approach of salvation, may we awake to the vigorous discharge of our duty; and while the light of the gospel scatters about us so bright a ray, may we walk in every respect worthy of it, that we may have no reason to wish for the veil of darkness to cover our shame. May we not only abstain from the vices which are here branded with the infamy they deserve, but distinguish ourselves in cultivating the contrary virtues. And that we may do it effectually, may we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, remembering continually the obligations we are under to consider his life as the model of our own. So shall we make the gospel day yet brighter in the eyes of all around us, and anticipate, while we are here in this world of comparative darkness, the lustre with which we hope, through his influence and grace, to shine forth in the celestial kingdom of our Father. SECT. 29. ROM. XIII. 14

SECTION XXX.

The apostle recommends mutual candour, especially between those christians who did and those who did not think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and strenuously attempts to turn their zeal for or against those observances into a concern to prepare for their final appearance before the great tribunal. Rom. xiv. 1—12.

ROM. xiv. 1.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

ROM. xiv. 1.

I KNOW there are different opinions among you christians at Rome with regard to the obligations of the Mosaic ritual. Now here I would be solicitous to suggest the most peaceful counsels, and to persuade you to mutual forbearance and mutual love. As for *him that is* so *weak in the* christian *faith* as still to retain the prejudices of a Jewish education on this head, let me prevail on you Gentile believers, in this respect better instructed in the nature and extent of christian liberty, to *receive* and converse with him in a friendly and respectful manner: and do *not* indulge yourselves in the inclination which you may sometimes find, *to* run into *debates* and distinctions *about matters in doubt* between you.[a] SECT. 30. ROM. XIV. 1

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

For one, that is, the converted Gentile, *believeth* very truly and rightly *that he may eat all things* indifferently that are good for food; but *another*, *who is* in this respect *weak*, *eateth* nothing but *herbs* and other vegetables,[b] to express his humility and self-denial, and to guard against the pollution that might attend even the use of clean animals for food, if they are not killed and prepared after the Jewish manner. Now in this diversity of opinion and practice, exercise candour and forbearance to each other, and all will be well. 2

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Let not him that eateth all kinds of flesh freely, *despise* and set at nought *him that eateth not* these prohibited or suspicious things, as if he were a weak and superstitious bigot: *and let not him that eateth* them *not*, but conscientiously abstains from them, *judge* and condemn *him that eateth* them, as a profane, unclean, and intemperate person: *For God hath received him* into the number of his children and people, without laying him under such restraints; and surely where God receives we should not presume to reject. 3

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Let me ask thee seriously on this occasion, whoever thou mayst be, and how wise and holy soever thou mayst think thyself, *Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?* Wouldst thou think it an indecent thing to meddle with the domestic servant of thy neighbour or of thy friend, and wilt thou pretend to govern Christ's family, and judge of his administration towards the members of it? Know that not to thee, but *to his own master, he standeth or falleth:* it is by Christ he is to be finally acquitted or condemned. *Yea*, if he offends in no greater points than these in debate amongst you, *he shall be upheld* in his christian profession, and established to eternal salvation; *for God is able to establish him*,[c] and his promises assure us that he will do it. 4

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

What I have said with relation to the distinction of meats may also be applied to that of days. *One man*, that is, the Jewish convert, *esteemeth one day above another*:[d] He thinks their sabbaths and new-moons, and yearly fasts or feasts, have something inviolably sacred, and that the observation of them is matter of perpetual and universal obligation. *Another* educated among the Gentiles, or more thoroughly instructed in the design and genius of christianity, *esteemeth every day* [*alike*,] without any regard at all to the Jewish institution. *Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment*,[e] and go on in his own way, 5

a *Debates* and distinctions *about matters in doubt*.] Dr. Whitby explains διακρισεις of *discriminating persons* according to their *inward thoughts and reasonings* on these heads. The force of the apostle's admirable reasoning in favour of *candour* and *mutual condescension* cannot be enervated by saying, as some have unhappily done, that here was no separation between Jewish and Gentile christians. Had the things judged indifferent by the latter, and apprehended sinful by the former, been imposed, a separation of communion must have ensued, and the schism, on the apostle's principles, would have been chargeable on the imposers. When it shall please God to awaken in the governors of established protestant churches such a spirit of moderation and goodness, joined with a true zeal for religion, as to leave such things in that natural state of indifference in which almost all sensible men confess it is best they should be left, many separations will cease of course, and the healers of such breaches will do a noble service to their country, be honoured by all that love christianity, and amply rewarded by the great Head of the church.

b *Eateth herbs*.] Dr. Whitby demonstrates by many learned quotations here, that some of the Jews used to eat no flesh at all, and others looked upon it as a very high pitch of virtue to abstain from it in Gentile countries, and to subsist entirely on vegetables; because they did not know but any flesh sold in the shambles might have been offered to idols, or at least contracted some other ceremonial pollutions. Mr. Baxter thinks here is a reference to such christians as might have been Pythagoreans before their conversion, and might retain their old prejudices against animal food. Baxter's *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 614. But as that aversion to animal food depended on their doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which no christian could retain, I think that interpretation is much preferable which refers it to Jewish converts, who were also much more numerous in the church, and possibly might some of them come from the Essenes, a Jewish sect peculiarly strict on this head, so that they abstained not only from flesh but from fruit.

c *God is able to establish him*.] Dr. Whitby explains this of God's convincing the Jewish converts in general of the indifference of the Mosaic ritual, by putting a speedy period to the very possibility of observing it, in the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem; which would have a peculiar efficacy to wean men's minds from an attachment to it, when considered in connexion with Christ's predictions of that event. But I chuse the more extensive interpretation, as more obvious and less liable to objection.

d *Esteemeth one day above another*.] Raphelius here produces some apposite passages to show that κρινειν in such a construction signifies *to prefer*.

e *Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment*.] Critics have ob-

SECT. 30. without impediment or censure. For we may reasonably hope that christians are actuated, in the main, by the same principles, when their practices differ according to the difference of their judgments; so that *he that regardeth a day* in this peculiar manner, *regardeth* ROM. XIV. [*it*] *to the Lord*, and takes this distinguishing notice of it, because he thinks it is the will of Christ that an honour should still be done to these Mosaic institutions: *and* on the

6 other hand, *he that regards not a day*, it is *to the Lord* we hope that *he doth not regard* [*it*;] it is because he thinks Christ will be honoured by asserting the liberty of his followers in this respect. *He that eateth* freely of whatever comes before him, *eateth to the Lord*, endeavours to glorify him for it, as becomes a good christian, *and giveth God thanks* for the various provision of his liberal providence; *and he that eateth not* the food which the law forbids, may act on the same pious principles, and we ought charitably to conclude that it is out of a regard *to* what he apprehends the will of *the Lord* that *he eateth* it *not*; he cheerfully denies himself what he supposes Christ would have him forbear; *and he* likewise *giveth God thanks* that other food is provided on which he may conveniently subsist, and that he is not forced to eat what he thinks unclean out of absolute necessity. Now where is the damage of all this? and while such a religious temper towards God prevails, how little does it comparatively signify whether it acts by the use of these things, or by a conscientious abstinence from them!

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not; and giveth God thanks.

7 It may well be supposed that this is a just representation of the case; *for* it is certainly what every christian is obliged to by virtue of our common profession; as *none of us*, who understands and answers that engagement, *liveth to himself; and none of us*, so far as the circumstances of his death are under the direction of his own choice, *dieth to himself*,

8 nor determines the most important affairs by his own humour or present interest. *But* from the time of our giving up our names to Christ, as our Divine Master, to the last day and hour of our continuance in life, *if we live*, it is our concern that *we* may *live to the Lord*, and strenuously pursue the great purposes of his glory; *or* that *if we die*, *we* may *die unto the Lord*, either by sacrificing our lives to his gospel, if he demands it of us, or if we expire in a natural way, by behaving to the last as those who have his love ruling in our hearts, and his sacred cause still in our eye: *so that whether we live or die we are the Lord's;* in consequence of being thus faithfully devoted to Christ, both in life and death, we have the pleasure to think that, living or dying, we are the objects of his care

9 and favour. *For to this purpose Christ both died and rose again* from the dead, *and* still *continues alive*, *that he might be* the sovereign *Lord both of the dead and of the living*. This is the reward bestowed upon him for all his services as Mediator, that he should be exalted to such a kingdom, and that all christians should thus own themselves his servants; not only in this present world, but in that unchangeable state into which they pass by death; yea, that all the inhabitants of both worlds should be ever subject to his disposal and command.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 *But* the thought of Christ's exaltation furnishes another argument for the candid temper I am now recommending, as it implies his future appearance to the universal judgment, where our temper, in this respect, will be strictly reviewed. In this light, then, let me seriously ask, *Why dost thou*, O Jewish convert, *judge thy* Gentile *brother* for the non-observation of those precepts by which thou thinkest thyself bound? *Or why dost thou*, O Gentile believer, *set at nought* and deride, as weak or superstitious, *thy* Jewish *brother*, who conscientiously observes that burdensome ritual from which thou art so happy as to apprehend thyself free? This censoriousness or contempt is greatly to be blamed, and either must very ill become the state in which we are and must quickly be: *for* no principle of our common faith is more certain than this, that *we must all* at length *appear* and be solemnly presented *before the tribunal of Christ:* and as it is there that we are all to

11 take our final trial, it must be dangerous presumption to anticipate that judgment. Remember it, my brethren, and ponder seriously upon that awful day; for it will assuredly come, *as it is written*, (Isa. xlv. 23.) "[*As*] *I live, saith the Lord, surely every knee* "*shall bow unto me, and every tongue shall confess to God;*" and it is then only that

12 such a great and extensive prophecy shall be completely accomplished: *So that every one of us shall render an account of himself to God.* Let each of us therefore apply it to his own case, and say to his heart, "This account must be mine." And we shall then be too intent on regulating our own conduct, to have either leisure or inclination to be severe or pragmatical in censuring that of our brethren.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God,

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET all the different sects and parties of christians study to imbibe more of the equitable and lovely temper which the apostle here expresses in so genuine a manner. The divisions of the church are not to be healed by imposing our own sentiments, phrases, and forms, and censuring and harassing those that will not acquiesce in them. Such a temper will only engender strife, and mutual provocations will produce mutual increasing resentment.

Let us receive our weaker brethren with tenderness and respect; not despising those who scruple what we

served that the word πληροφορεισθαι is most properly applied to a ship which is carried on by the wind and tide, with all its sails spread to forward it, and nothing to obstruct it; and so the meaning is, *Let him go on in his own way without impediment.* How strong a text this is for the right of private judgment, I need take no pains to show; but the reader may see it vindicated from the evasions of a very celebrated writer, in Mr. Bennet's *Appendix* to his *Irenicum*, p. 120—124.

practise, not judging those who practise what we scruple. God may receive the one and the other: yea, the different practices of both may proceed from the same general principles, a desire to please him, and to approve ourselves in his sight. SECT. 30.

In this we may all unite in a concern that we may not live or die to ourselves, but to Christ. His dying love, his living care, may surely challenge this. Worthy is he who died, and rose again and revived, to be adored and obeyed as *the Lord both of the dead and of the living!* And such, in one view or another, he will finally appear. We shall know it in that day when we shall be called before his judgment-seat. Conscious of so many crimes, and, even in our best days, of so many imperfections, how shall we dare to appear before him, especially if we should then receive judgment without mercy? Let us not tempt it, to our own everlasting confusion, by showing no mercy. ROM. XIV. 8, 9 10

Let us not add to all the offences which may justly cause us to tremble before his tribunal, the criminal arrogance of usurping the place and prerogative of our Judge. Let us remember our relation to him and to each other, and act in a manner becoming it. Let us diligently judge ourselves as those who must be judged of the Lord; so thinking of that grand account, as with an increasing solicitude to prepare for it. *The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day!* The Lord grant that it may also be imparted to many of our brethren who have differed most from us; yea, and through the indulgence of our compassionate Saviour, to many who have been prone to censure and condemn us for those things which he knows we have done from a desire to please him, or refused to do from a fear of offending him! 12

SECTION XXXI.

The apostle further urges the mutual tenderness and candour he had recommended above, by representing the love of Christ to all christians, the nature and design of his religion, and the danger of a contrary temper. Rom. xiv. 13, *to the end.*

ROM. xiv. 13.

LET us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or any occasion to fall, in *his* brother's way.

ROM. xiv. 13.

I HAVE just been reminding you of your appearance before the tribunal of Christ, and the account which every man must render of himself there: and now give me leave a little farther to pursue the consequence which so naturally follows. *Let us not therefore any longer judge one another,*[a] *but rather judge ye* and determine *this* as matter of undoubted and important duty, *not to lay any stumbling-block or scandal before a brother:*[b] to do nothing, how indifferent soever it may be in itself, which may tend to prejudice, discourage, or mislead any other christian. SECT. 31. ROM. XIV. 13

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

I know, for instance, *and am* at length *persuaded, by* the powerful teaching of *the Lord Jesus Christ*, though it be so contrary to the principles I imbibed in my education, and so strenuously maintained in my Pharisaical state, *that nothing* [*is*] *unclean of itself*, that there is no moral turpitude in any kind of food by which the human body may be nourished; but that, separate from particular circumstances which may arise, it may lawfully be eaten; there is nothing, I say, unclean, *unless* [*it be*] *to him that* in his conscience *accounteth any thing to be unclean:* [*and to him,*] while he retaineth that opinion, [*it is*] indeed *unclean*, how indifferent soever it is in itself; and he will contract guilt before God, by allowing himself in it, whether it be to indulge his own taste or to engage the favour of others, whilst he hath this inward apprehension of its being unlawful. 14

15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

But if there should not be such an apprehension concerning the thing in itself considered, yet it may be in effect prohibited to thee, as injurious to others; for *if thy brother be grieved,*[c] wounded, and let into sin, *by* [*thy*] use of *meat, how dost thou* any longer *walk according to* that noble principle of *love* which I have just now been so earnestly recommending? How innocent soever it may in itself seem, O *do not*, if thou hast any bowels for him, or any regard for thy great Master, *destroy him by thy* rash and unkind use of such particular *meat, for whom Christ* not only submitted to smaller instances of self-denial, but *died* in the agonies of the cross. Is a morsel of meat indeed so great a thing to a christian, that for the sake of it an immortal soul should be endangered, and the blood of a Redeemer injured? 15

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of.

Let not then your liberty, which is in itself *good, be slandered* and blamed for being the occasion of so much mischief as such an ill use of it may probably produce. 16

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And surely none of you can pretend to object any thing from conscience, against abstaining from these things. *For the kingdom of God*, into which we are entered by believing in Christ and becoming his subjects, *consists not in meat and drink;* it neither prohibits nor enjoins such things as these, nor is taken up with such little matters: *but* the great design of it is to regulate the temper of its professors, and *in* the most effectual manner to cultivate and promote *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;* that is, a cheerful temper, supported by a consciousness of strict integrity, established on principles of universal love, and inspired by the blessed Spirit of God.[d] 17

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

And he that in these things faithfully *serveth Christ*, and acts upon the great maxims of his religion, [*is*] *acceptable to God*, whether he abstain from the liberties in question 18

a *Let us not therefore any longer judge one another.*] It is very plain that the word κρινωμεν is here used in two very different senses; as Raphelius on this text shows κατακριναν is used in the same sentence by Herodotus.

b *A stumbling-block.*] Some say that σκανδαλον properly signifies "a piece of wood that supports a trap, which falls on its being "moved," and so may with peculiar propriety signify *whatever may be the occasion of ensnaring another, and drawing him into sin and mischief.*

c *If thy brother be grieved.*] Hence it appears that grieving a person does not signify merely putting him out of humour, but leading him into sin. The grief therefore is that which arises from a consciousness of having acted amiss, in conformity to the example of a person considered as superior, whether in rank or genius, knowledge or piety.

d A cheerful temper, &c.] This is the interpretation which Dr. Scott has given in his *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 285, and I think it, on the whole, preferable to any other.

SECT. 31. ROM. XIV.

or allows himself in them: *and* he will also be in the main *approved by men* too; for bad as the world is, upright and benevolent men who put on no affected rigour and severities in religion, are generally esteemed and beloved in it. Thus *let us therefore* act, and with all possible diligence *pursue the things which tend to peace, and* may promote our *mutual edification* in our common faith. And whoever thou art that mayst disrelish
20 the exhortation in this connexion, *do not* indulge so mean a taste as *for the sake of* this or that particular kind of *meat* to *destroy* thy brother; who, as a man, would appear *the* noblest *work of God* in this lower world, if all the peculiar considerations of christianity were out of the question. It is true *indeed*, as I hinted above, that in themselves *all things* [*are*] *pure; yet* [*that is*] morally *evil to a man, that he eateth with offence* and
21 scandal, contrary to the rule of his own conscience, and ensnaring to that of others. In this view, I may venture to say, [*it is*] *good neither to eat* any kind of *flesh*, though that would be a much more rigorous self-denial than I am now pleading for; *nor* even *to drink wine*, though in the most moderate degree; *nor* indeed to indulge in [*any thing*] else *by which thy brother is scandalized or weakened*, that is, by which he may either be ensnared or discouraged in his religious course.

22 Thou wilt perhaps plead, that *thou hast faith* in a superior exercise, and beholdest christianity in a more extensive and generous view. It is well; and I could not wish thy views should be more contracted. But if thou hast such a just persuasion of the indifference of these things which others scruple, yet in circumstances like these which I here suppose, *have it to thyself before God;* content thyself that he is witness to it, and conceal those apprehensions, just as they may be, in thine own breast, when they cannot be published with advantage or without offence. But permit me to add, upon this occasion, *happy* [*is*] *he who doth not condemn himself in the thing which he alloweth:* it is a happy thing for a man to be quite easy in what he does, and free not only from the reproaches but the suspicions of his conscience, and to use even lawful enjoyments only in a lawful and re-
23 gular degree. *But he that* really in his conscience *maketh a difference* between one sort of food and another, *is condemned* by God as a sinner, *if he eat* out of unbridled appetite, vain complaisance, or weak shame. It must in such a case be criminal, *because* [*he eateth*] *not with faith*, that is, with a full satisfaction in his own mind that God allows and approves the action. *For* it may be laid down as a general maxim in all these cases, that *whatsoever* [*is*] *not of faith is sin;* since the divine authority ought to be so sacred with every man, as to engage him not only to avoid what is plainly and directly contrary to it, but what he apprehends or even suspects to be so, though that apprehension or suspicion should chance to be founded on his own ignorance or mistake.

ceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after these things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith, is sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 STILL let that great and final account which each *must render of himself to God* be kept in our mind, that we may learn obedience to him, candour to each other, and a tender care to avoid every thing that might give unnecessary offence to our brethren. And in the views of it, let us learn always to reverence our own consciences, so as never to be engaged to do what we suspect to be unlawful: since no consideration can ever balance
14—23 the infinite evil of offending God and bringing guilt on our own souls. That is to us unclean which we esteem to be so, and what is not of faith is sin.

Let us also be cautious that we do not incur guilt and condemnation, even by things which we allow as in the main lawful; solicitously attending, not only to the general nature, but the probable consequences, of our actions.
15 And where there is danger of injuring the souls of others, let us often reflect that Christ died for them; and estimate, so far as we can conceive it, the value of souls by the value of that blood by which they were redeemed.
16 Let us also take great heed that we do not give occasion to others, by our imprudent conduct, to speak evil of that which is in itself good. And that we may not do it, let us study those great and generous notions of religion
17 which this excellent passage of scripture gives us. Let it be written upon our hearts, *that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink;* that it doth not consist in a zeal for or against any of the little distinctions by which christians have been so often divided, and which have been too frequently the occasion of mutual alienation in their
18 affections. Let us study and practise more *righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* The approbation of God consequent on this may well support us, though men should censure us as lukewarm, yea, perhaps as hypocritical and interested too, in the candid regards we show to those which differ from each other and from us. God will remember their rashness and forwardness to these uncharitable censures: but let us rather say, "May he cure and forgive them!"

Yet while we cultivate the amiable temper here set before us, bad as the world is, we may hope that we shall be accepted by many: and indeed, in proportion to this knowledge of our real character, by all whose acceptance and friendship is most to be valued. Let us not therefore be discouraged at any ill usage which, in par-
19 ticular instances, we may meet with; but still *follow the things that make for peace and conduce to mutual edification;* and the God of peace will be with us, and Jesus the great Lord of the church, which is his house, will smile on our attempts to build it up into one united and beauteous edifice, till he calls us to his temple above, where all is order, and harmony, and love, for ever.

SECTION XXXII.

The apostle further urges mutual condescension by new motives, particularly the example of Christ and the goodness of God to us all, and the regard which Christ had shown to Jews and Gentiles, in bringing or sending the gospel to them, according to the tenor of prophecies which he adds to the list of those produced above. Rom. xv. 1—17.

ROM xv. 1.

WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

ROM. xv. 1.

SECT. 32.

ROM. XV.

SEEING *therefore*, my brethren, it is so dangerous for any to do that concerning which they are not in their consciences satisfied that it is assuredly lawful, we ought to take great care that we do not, by our uncharitable impositions or irregular examples, lay a temptation in their way to do it. And *we who are strong*, that is, who perfectly understand the liberty which christianity gives to its professors, *ought*, with all tender sympathy and compassion, *to bear the infirmities of the weak*, not only tolerating them, but in some instances restraining our own inclinations out of a regard to their advantage, *and not*, as too many do, *to please ourselves*, to gratify our own inclinations and humours, whether others be comforted or grieved, edified or ensnared. On the contrary, *let every one of us* rather make it his care, so far as he lawfully and conveniently can, to *please* [*his*] *neighbour* where it may be *for* [*his*] real *good*, and condescend even to his ignorance and prejudices, where there is reason to hope it may conduce *to* his *edification* and that of the church, which is nearly interested in the mutual tenderness of its members for each other. 1

2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

2

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

And surely we must be disposed to act such a part towards our brethren; *for* we all well know that the Lord Jesus *Christ*, our great and divine Master, though so infinitely exalted above us, *pleased not himself; but* when he vouchsafed in mercy to visit this low world of ours, instead of studying his own ease and pleasure, he submitted to an almost continual series of self-denial, mortification, and trouble, for our sakes. He considered the weakness and infirmities of those about him, that he might teach them and train them up for service, as they were able to bear it. (Mark iv. 33.) Yea, he even submitted, with the greatest gentleness, to much reproach and contempt; *as it is written*, (Psal. lxix. 9.) in words which may well be applied to him; "*The reproaches of those who "reproached thee are fallen upon me.*[a] I have placed myself in a world where I have "been afflicted with the wickedness of mankind, which I have continually seen and heard "about me, and which has been, through the whole course of my life, my continual "grief and burden." 3

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Now, by the way, I accommodate this text to the purpose before me, because I think we may make the best we can of every scripture, to produce and cherish good dispositions and pious sentiments in our hearts. *For whatever things were formerly written were written for our instruction, that we through patience and consolation of the scriptures*, that is, by the strenuous exercise of that patience which the consolations administered in scripture so powerfully support, *might have* an assured and joyful *hope* in the midst of all our tribulation. 4

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus;

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God

Now may the God of patience and consolation, from whom all these gracious and seasonable provisions proceed, *give you* more of this blessed temper, that you may have *the same mutual affection, according to* the example of *Jesus Christ*:[b] *That with one mind* [*and*] *one mouth*, with united hearts and voices, *ye may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath sent his beloved Son into the world, to unite our hearts in love to each other, and to tune them to those devout praises which we address to his blessed self through him. *Therefore*, whether ye were, before your conversion to christianity, Jews and Gentiles, considering it now as an endearing bond, which causes every difference to be forgot, *receive ye one another*, and embrace one another, with mutual love; *as Christ hath*, without any distinction, *received us* all *to the glory of God.* And greatly will that sublime end at which he aimed in all, even the glory of his heavenly Father, be promoted by such endeared affection in his people towards each other. 5 6 7

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth

Now I say this with peculiar regard to those differences in judgment which I know are so ready to prevail among christians of different educations, as to the obligations of the Mosaic law. And I would remind you Gentiles, *that* you ought not to suffer your hearts to be alienated from your Jewish brethren for their attachment to it; because *Jesus Christ was* [*made*] *a minister of the circumcision;* as he was a Jew by birth, he received circumcision himself, in token of his obligation to observe the law: and confined his personal ministry, according to what he himself declared concerning the limitation of his embassy, 8

a *The reproaches of those, &c.*] Some expositors refer this to Christ's having undertaken by his sufferings to expiate the guilt of sin, every species of which may be considered as a reproach cast on the law and government of God. See Cradock, *in loc.* I have given what seemed to me the more direct and natural sense, but will not say this other should be excluded, which may well agree both with the words and connexion. It must, on the principle on which the apostle goes in many of his quotations, be very pleasant to observe how all the expressions of the highest piety and devotion, to be found in the writings or discourses of good men of old, are applicable to Christ. But many learned critics maintain that the lxixth Psalm may, in its original sense, be interpreted as a prophecy of the Messiah. How inexpressible a grief and burden the sight of so much wickedness must have been to so pure and holy a mind as that of our Lord, it is impossible for us fully to conceive; but were we more like him, we might, and we certainly should, enter more into it than we generally do.

b *The same mutual affection, according to* the example of *Jesus Christ.*] Raphelius has evidently shown that ὁμονοεῖν signifies *to agree in an harmonious and affectionate manner*; and that the preposition κατα may be rendered *according to the example of.* Compare Gal. iv. 28; 1 Pet. i. 15; Eph. iv. 24. See Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod. in loc.*

SECT. 32. ROM. XV.

(Matt. xv. 24.) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And this was *for the* illustration of the *truth* and fidelity *of God, to confirm* and verify *the promises* so long since [*made*] *to* Abraham and *the* other *fathers* of that nation. *And* I would remind Jewish believers, that he also came *that* he might gather together all the children of God scattered abroad among *the Gentiles*, that they *might glorify God for* [*his*] *mercy* in granting them a
9 participation of the same privileges; and gave it in charge to his apostles, that they should raise disciples to him among all nations: (Matt. xxviii. 19.) So that it is a failure of love and duty to Christ, not to receive them. And accordingly the Gentiles are often spoken of in the Old Testament, as called to join with the Jews in worshipping the God of Israel: *as it is written*, (Psal. xviii. 49.) "*For this cause will I confess to thee among the*
10 "*Gentiles, and sing praises unto thy name.*"[c] *And again, he*, that is, Moses, *saith*, (Deut. xxxii. 43.) "*Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people;*" which may intimate their
11 being called to participate the blessings once peculiar to Israel. *And again*, David saith, (Psalm cxvii. 1.) "*Praise the Lord, all ye* distant *nations, and repeat his praise, all* "*ye people.*" Now surely this glorious privilege of an admission into the church, may justly engage the Gentile nations to praise God in sublimer strains than any other occasion
12 to which we can suppose either Moses or David to refer. *And again, Isaiah says*, expressly in this view, (Isa. xi. 10.) "*There shall be a root* from the stock *of Jesse, and* "*one arising to rule over the Gentiles*, [*and*] *in him shall the Gentiles* hope and *trust;* "not dreading destruction, but cheerfully expecting protection and salvation from thence." It is evident, therefore, how unreasonable it would be to despise them, and how fit it is affectionately to receive, esteem, and embrace them.

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles: and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 I am willing, therefore, to persuade myself that this mutually candid temper will prevail among you; and in the confidence of it, I commend you all, without any distinction, to the divine grace and blessing. *And* accordingly, *may the God of hope*, from whose mercy all the hopes both of Jews and Gentiles are derived, *fill you with all* ~~sacred~~ *joy and peace in believing!* May he give you a well-grounded complacency and comfort, in consequence of the growing strength of your faith, *that you may abound in* a more cheerful and lively *hope* of eternal glory, *through the power of the Holy Spirit* confirming all those habits of grace which you experience, as planted and rooted in your souls by his
14 agency. *And* cheerfully do I expect this, when I reflect on what he has already done; for *I am* indeed *myself persuaded concerning you, my brethren, that ye are* already *full of goodness* and of unfeigned benevolence to each other, *being filled*, through these illuminating influences which you have received, *with all* spiritual *knowledge, and* so well acquainted with the whole nature and genius of the christian religion, as to be both *able* and inclined *to admonish* and encourage *one another* as to this meek and peaceable disposition which I have been recommending, and every other part of an amiable and valuable
15 character. *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly to you*, and enlarged with the greater freedom, *in this part* of my Epistle, on the privilege to which God hath called Gentile believers, in some measure *as stirring up your* grateful and pious *remembrance* of them, *because of that* great *grace* and favour *which is given to me of God:*
16 Even *that I should be the* ministering *servant of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, administering to them*, in his name and by his authority, *the* infinitely valuable *gospel of God: that the offering the Gentiles* to him, as a holy sacrifice, by my hands, *may be acceptable to God, being sanctified* and set apart *by the Holy Spirit*, so plentifully
17 communicated to them in a rich variety of gifts and of graces.[d] *I have therefore*, in this respect, considerable *matter of boasting in Christ Jesus, with respect to the things of God*,[e] and the office which I bear in his church, which I esteem far more honourable than any services of the Jewish state or priesthood.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 MAY the abundant communication of the Spirit that is in Jesus Christ form us more to the amiable temper here recommended! That we may prove the distinguished strength of our minds by the superior fortitude with which
2 we bear the infirmities of our weaker brethren, and may seek the noble pleasure of pleasing our neighbours for their good, and to their edification. Let the generous self-denial of our great Lord be in this view before our eyes: and
3 let us endeavour to feel the reproaches which are cast upon God much more sensibly than those which immediately fall upon ourselves.
4 Happy are we in the scriptures, which, through Divine Providence and grace, have been written for our instruction. May they inspire us with patience and consolation, and establish our souls in humble hope! May our hearts

c *I will confess to thee, &c.*] Diodati and many others suppose this to be only an allusion to the words of David in the place referred to. Mr. Pierce has taken great pains to prove that the whole xviiith Psalm is a direct prophecy of Christ, who is, according to his interpretation, to be considered as speaking throughout the whole of it. In which view he would render the title "The "song which David sang when God delivered him from the hand "of Sheol, (instead of Saul,) that is, *the grave.*" But I cannot think his reasoning conclusive; and the 23d verse of that Psalm seems an invincible objection against this solution. I have taken a middle way, which I hope the attentive reader will see reason to approve. Compare chap. ii. 24. where the same method of quoting seems evidently to be taken.

d *Sanctified by the Holy Spirit, &c.*] To explain this of the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, supposed to have happened at Antioch in Pisidia, on converts who might be called the first-fruits of the idolatrous Gentiles, (Acts xiii. 52.) which is the interpretation advanced by the author of *Miscel. Sacra.* (Vol. I. p. 112.) and his followers, is not only a needless limitation of the more noble and natural sense here given, but in my judgment, for reasons in part given in my notes on the Acts, an explication which goes upon various principles, precarious, or rather utterly incredible.

e *With respect to the things of God, &c.* τα προς τον Θεον.] Raphelius very justly observes that this phrase has a peculiar propriety when applied to sacerdotal affairs, and especially victims presented to God, of which the apostle is here speaking. Other texts are illustrated by this remark, and particularly Heb. ii. 17. See Raphel. *Not. ex Xen. in loc.*

be cemented in the bond of mutual love, *that with one mind and one mouth we may glorify God;* and receive each other with an endearment like that with which, if we are true believers, notwithstanding our smaller differences, we are received by him. SECT. 32.

Mercy is communicated by Christ to Jews and Gentiles, who therefore are justly required to unite their praises to the root of Jesse. Let us all trust under the shadow of this pleasant plant, and may we be filled with *all joy and peace in believing*. What can furnish out so calm a peace, so sublime a joy, as the christian hope? May we all abound in it by the power of the Holy Ghost. And surely if we are filled with such joy and hope, we must be filled with all goodness too, with a truly benevolent temper towards others, which a sense of our own happiness tends most powerfully to promote. We Gentiles have been presented to God as a holy offering; may we be sanctified more and more by his Spirit, and established in a firm confidence in Christ, that he will transact all our concerns with God under the character of the great Mediator: esteeming that the most happy and glorious circumstance in the station which providence may have assigned to us, which gives us the greatest opportunity of spreading the honour of so dear a name, and of presenting praises and services to God through him. ROM. XV. 13 14 16 17

SECTION XXXIII.

The apostle takes occasion from what he had been saying, to mention the extent of his own labours and his purposes of further journies, in which he hoped to visit the Romans; in the mean time earnestly recommending himself to their prayers. Rom. xv. 18, *to the end.*

ROM. XV. 18.

FOR I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God: so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 But, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by

ROM. XV. 18.

I HAVE hinted above at the cause I have to rejoice and boast in Christ as to what relates to God and the office of my christian ministry. *For I will not dare to* boast falsely, nor even *speak* any thing *of what Christ hath not* indeed *wrought by me to bring the Gentiles into obedience.* No: God forbid that I should either exceed the bounds of truth in making the report, or arrogate any thing to myself as my own work, when speaking of the conversions that have indeed been made. I humbly confess that it is Christ who hath wrought whatever is done: yet I boldly declare that his grace and mercy hath in this respect distinguished me *both in word and deed*, by the manner in which he hath enabled me to speak, and the things which he hath strengthened me to perform. He hath wrought *by the* miraculous *energy of signs and wonders*, accomplished in and *by the* amazing *power of the Spirit of God*, which hath not only been plentifully imparted to me, but bestowed on others by the laying on of my hands; *so that*, thus supported, *I have* with the happiest effect *fully preached* and explained *the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem*, Antioch, and Arabia, in the east, *round about* through all the Lesser Asia and Greece, *even as far as* the western shores of *Illyricum*, which so nearly borders on your own celebrated Italy.[a] *For it has* still *been the object of my ambition*, so far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, *to preach the gospel, not where Christ was* [*already*] *named, lest I should* seem desirous to *build upon another man's foundation*,[b] and so decline the difficulties which attend the settlement of new churches. Others indeed have done this and little else; *but* I have chosen a different manner of acting, *as it is written*, in words well applicable to the series of my labours, (Isa. lii. 15.) "*They to whom no-thing was declared concerning him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand.*" Thus have many received from my mouth the first notices they have ever had of true religion, and of the method of salvation by the great Redeemer. The consequence *therefore* was, that *I have been long hindered from coming to you;* which, out of my singular affection for you, I was very desirous of doing, though it be something contrary to the method of proceeding which I generally chuse, as you have the christian religion already, by the divine grace, most happily planted among you. *But now having no longer place*, either at Corinth or elsewhere *in these* Grecian *climates*, no more work of this kind remaining to be done here of which Providence seems to open any probable prospect, *and having* also on various accounts *a great desire for many years to come to you*, I will attempt to put it into execution. *If I go into Spain, I will* endeavour, if possible, to *come to you*;[c] *for I hope* quickly to have an opportunity of going thither, and *as I pass by*, will contrive, if I can, *to see you*, and shall expect *to be brought forward by you in my way thither*, by the kind attendance of some of my friends at SECT. 33. ROM. XV. 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

a *As far as* the western shores of *Illyricum*.] Though it is evident from hence that St. Paul, before the date of this Epistle, which was in the year 58, had preached the gospel in these regions, it is observable that Luke takes no notice of this in the history of the Acts, where he also omits to mention the journey he took to Arabia on his first conversion, and several other very remarkable facts, referred to in the xith chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and elsewhere; and it is very possible that the visit to Crete, when Titus was left behind to ordain elders, Tit. i. 5. might be of this number.

b *Object of my ambition*, so far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, *to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, &c.*] The meaning, to be sure, cannot be that Paul scorned to come after any other christian minister; which would have argued a height of temper very inconsistent with the humility of this blessed apostle, and does not agree with what we read in the history of the Acts, of his going to preach the gospel at Damascus, Antioch, and Jerusalem; to which it seems probable Troas, if not Corinth or Ephesus, may be added. It may signify, that far from declining dangers and oppositions which might especially be expected in first breaking up, as it were, the fallow-ground of heathen and unevangelized countries, he rather felt a sublime ambition, as φιλοτιμειν signifies, (see Elsner, Vol. II. p. 64.) to make the first *proclamation* of a *Redeemer's* name in places where it had before been quite unheard of. And probably, in mentioning this, he may glance upon those false apostles who crept into churches which he had planted, and endeavoured to establish their own reputation and influence there, by alienating the hearts of his own converts from him, their spiritual father; while, like some in our own days, who have trod most exactly in their footsteps, they built on his grand and noble foundations an edifice of wood, and hay, and stubble, 1 Cor. iii. 12.

c *If I go to Spain, &c.*] It appears probable from hence, considering the principle which St. Paul chose to govern himself by, of not building on another man's foundation, that no apostle had yet planted any church in Spain; which, as Dr. Geddes justly observes, very ill agrees with the legend of St. James; for, according to that, he had now been 15 years in Spain, and had erected several bishoprics there. Gedd. *Misc.* Vol. II. p. 221.

SECT. 33. ROM. XV.

Rome, and the refreshment which my spirit may receive from others; *if I may first* not only have a short interview in passing, but make such an abode with you as to *be in some degree satisfied with your* [*company*:] I say, in some degree, for I know that if I were to indulge my own affection to you, my visit would be much longer than the views of duty elsewhere will permit.

you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*

25 This I speak with relation to my future designs: *but I am now going to Jerusalem, ministering to* the necessities of *the saints* there by such contributions as I have raised for
26 their subsistence, or may farther collect as I prosecute my journey. *For it hath pleased* [*the churches of*] *Macedonia and Achaia*[d] *to make a certain collection for the poor saints*, their believing brethren, *that are in Jerusalem*, who are exposed to such peculiar
27 persecution and affliction. I say, *it hath pleased them* to do this; *and* though I acknowledge their free love and generosity in it, yet I may say that in a sense *they are their debtors: for if the Gentiles* have been brought into so happy a union with God's once peculiar people, and *are made partakers of their spiritual things*, the invaluable blessings of the gospel, first brought to them from Jerusalem, and by persons of the Jewish nation too; *they ought* certainly to be ready with all religious gratitude and respect *to minister to them in their carnal things*, and impart the inferior blessings of Providence, in which
28 they so much more abound. *Having therefore despatched this affair, and sealed to them*, that is, safely delivered as under seal, *this* present, which is the *fruit* of that love and care which their Gentile brethren so justly express towards them, *I will*, if it please
29 God to give me a favourable opportunity, *come by you into Spain. And* as I doubt not but you will pray for me, that my coming may be comfortable and useful for your confirmation in religion; so I have a cheerful confidence that God will hear your prayers, and may say, that *I know that when I come among you I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*, that is, with a full and abundant blessing attending my
30 ministerial and evangelical labours. Yet when I write thus, it is not from any particular revelation to assure me that I shall be enabled to fulfil this purpose. I know that in this journey to Jerusalem I have, humanly speaking, a very dangerous scene before me, having some of my most mortal and implacable enemies to contend with. And therefore, as I cannot *but* apprehend the interest of the gospel to be concerned in my life and liberty, *I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love* which is the genuine fruit *of the Spirit*,[e] *that you join your* utmost *strength* and fervency *with*
31 *mine*,[f] *in* [*your*] daily *prayers to God for me, That I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea*;[g] who are so full of rancour against me as a deserter from their cause, and will, I am sure, spare no force or fraud to destroy me; *and* also *that my ministration at Jerusalem*, in the charitable affair which I mentioned above, *may be acceptable to the saints*, for whose use it is intended; so that no prejudices in our christian brethren there, against the believing Gentiles, may prevail so far as to prevent their receiving it with a
32 becoming candour and gratitude: *That* so, in consequence of all, *I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and that I may be refreshed* [*together*] *with you* in our
33 intended interview. *And*, in the mean time, *may the God of peace*, who has graciously given us that peace with himself which we esteem the first and greatest of blessings, and hath cemented our hearts in those christian bonds of peace and love to each other, [*be*] *with you all*, whether I am present or absent. *Amen!*

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem:

27 It hath pleased them *verily*, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I *have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints:

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18, 19

LET us behold with pleasure the modesty and humility which is joined with all the zeal of his holy apostle while he thus obliquely owns, in a manner which shows how familiar the thought was to his mind, that all he had done in the christian ministry, and for the propagation and advancement of the gospel, was only what Christ had done by him to procure such obedience of the Gentiles, both in word and in deed.

Adored be the grace that made his labours so successful, and sowed the blessed seed so wide by his diligent hand, from Jerusalem unto Illyricum. Most divine instructions did he give them in matters of faith, and he taught them to express that faith by their works. While he was dead to all thoughts of enriching himself, and in some instances chose rather to maintain himself by his own labours than to subsist on the bounty of others, his liberal soul devised
25, &c. liberal things for his necessitous brethren. He raised a noble collection, and was much concerned, not only that it
31 might be safely but acceptably delivered.

Well may our souls be edified by observing the things which lay nearest the heart of this generous apostle, that coming to his christian friends at Rome *he might come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*, and that if he was spared through their prayers, it might be for public usefulness. Saint Paul, dead as he was to human applause, was, from much nobler motives, solicitous about his acceptance; and he shows by his manner of speaking, what a sense he had of the degree in which it depended upon the turn and disposition which God should be

d *Churches of Macedonia, &c.*] As we read of no more than one collection of the Macedonian churches, which was that directed by Paul when he went from Ephesus to Macedonia, (Acts xx. 1.) in the year of Christ 57, this circumstance seems to fix the date of this Epistle pretty early in 58, as was observed in the introduction, and the former note there referred to.

e *By the love of the Spirit.*] Some would explain this of the *love* which the *Spirit* of God bears to us, or the *affection* which we owe to that *gracious agent*; and were we certain that either of these were the genuine sense, important consequences would follow.

f *Join your utmost strength with mine.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 65.) has a beautiful note on this word συναγωνισασθαι, to show how exactly that is the import of it.

g *That I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea.*] How extreme their bigotry and rage was, appears from their behaviour to him at the very time here referred to, Acts xxi.—xxiv. It was from a sense of the great importance of his life to the cause of christianity, that he is thus urgent; else we may be assured he would gladly have given it up. Phil. i. 21, &c.

pleased to give to the spirits of men: may this just and pious thought frequently dwell upon the hearts of the ministers of Christ! SECT. 33.

Some of the prayers which the apostle so affectionately bespeaks were answered, and some seemed to be forgotten: Yet did God make what seemed the rejection of some the means of answering the rest. He was for a while delivered into the hands of those in Judea who believed not; and this providence, which might have seemed an invincible obstacle to his design, proved the occasion of bringing him to Rome, and promoted the success of his ministry there. ROM. XV.

Let us adore the God of grace and peace, who works the most important ends by methods to us unthought of; and let us be greatly cautious that we do not rashly judge that he hath rejected our prayers, because we do not see them answered in that particular way which might have been more agreeable to our own wishes. 33

SECTION XXXIV.

The apostle, after recommending Phebe to the Romans, particularly salutes several of his friends resident among them. Rom. xvi. 1—16.

ROM. xvi. 1.

1 COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is in Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary; who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles; who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ; and Stachys my beloved.

10 Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus's *household*.

ROM. xvi. 1.

HAVING thus despatched the substance of my epistle, *I* would add, by way of postscript, something relating to a few particular christian friends, with us or with you: and first would *recommend to you* the bearer of this Epistle, *Phebe our sister, who is* not only partaker with us in the profession of the gospel, but in the office of *a* stated *servant* or deaconess[a] *of the church in Cenchrea*,[b] in the neighbourhood of which I write to you. SECT. 34. ROM. XVI.

And I desire *that you* would *entertain her, in* regard to her relation to *the Lord* Jesus Christ, our common Saviour, with all christian affection, and *in a manner becoming* those that profess themselves *saints*, separated from the world to the honour of his name; *and* that you would *assist her in any thing in which she may need it of you; for* I can assure you *she has been*, in her office, *an helper of many, and of myself in particular*; on which account she is well worthy of your regard, and will I hope meet with a very kind reception from all that love me or have any concern for the common cause. 2

I desire you would also *salute* the pious *Priscilla and* her worthy consort *Aquila*,[c] who have both deserved the name of *my fellow-labourers in Christ Jesus*, as they have each of them, according to their different stations and characters, been ready to do their utmost to promote the interest of the gospel amongst us. And indeed they are *persons who, for* the preservation of *my life*, exposed to so many tumultuous dangers, (Acts xviii. 6, 7, 12, 13.) *have*, as it were, *laid down their own necks*, that is, offered themselves to the extremest dangers; *to whom therefore I do not only owe my own* personal *thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*, whose apostle I peculiarly am, and for whose spiritual liberties and privileges I am always so strenuous an advocate. You will also, I hope, present my sincere *and* affectionate salutation to *the church that is in their house*; as I know there are several other christians with them, resident in the family, or meeting them for social worship there. *Salute also my beloved Epenetus, who is* one of *the first-fruits of Achaia*[d] *to Christ* in the number of the first christian converts of these regions, and therefore worthy my particular remembrance. *Salute Mary, who has taken a great deal of pains on our account*, to accommodate me and my companions when we were in her neighbourhood. *Salute Andronicus*[e] *and Junias my kinsmen, and* dear in the bond of christian fellowship and united sufferings too, having once been *my fellow-prisoners; who were* early *in* great *reputation among the apostles*,[f] *and were also* happy *in* being joined to the church of *Christ before me*; and therefore, though once the object of my furious persecuting zeal, are now honoured and beloved as my elder brethren in the Lord. *Salute Amplias, my beloved in the Lord*, for whom I have a most affectionate friendship, cemented in the bonds of mutual faith and love. *Salute* also *Urbanus, my fellow-labourer in* the gospel of *Christ*, to the service of which he is so faithfully devoted, *and* with him *my beloved Stachys*, of whose friendship I cannot but retain an affectionate remembrance. *Salute Apelles*, whose long-experienced worth renders him thoroughly *approved in* the cause of *Christ*, as a disciple of a character undoubtedly honourable. *Salute* also *those* 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

a *A* stated *servant* or deaconess.] Compare 1 Tim. v. 9. That there were some grave and pious matrons engaged in such an office in the primitive church, is, I think, very apparent from these places; but it is obvious there were circumstances which rendered such sort of servants much more useful and necessary in the churches at that time, than they would now generally be.

b *The church in Cenchrea.*] As Paul mentions the church in Cenchrea as distinct from that at Corinth, though Cenchrea lay in the suburbs of it, I must submit it to the candid reader, whether it be not probable that it had a distinct pastor or bishop of its own.

c *Priscilla and Aquila.*] This excellent couple appear, by this passage, to be returned to Rome, on the ceasing of that edict against the Jews which had driven them from thence, in the reign of Claudius, Acts xviii. 2. Priscilla seems to have been a woman of great note, and probably of distinguished genius and influence; which appears, not only from the manner in which she is here named, but also from the edification which the eloquent Apollos received from her instructions, in concurrence with those of her husband.

d *The first-fruits, &c.*] It is very probable he might be converted at the same time with Stephanas, called also the *first-fruits* of Achaia, (1 Cor. xvi. 15.) for there is no manner of necessity to understand by that expression, the very *first christian convert*. Indeed it is possible Epenetus might be one of that happy family to which this appellation is given.

e *Andronicus, &c.*] Dr. Jenkins very justly observes that this list of names can be no objection at all to the authority of this Epistle; for it might be an encouragement to the persons thus particularly mentioned, might conciliate some additional respect to them, whereby their usefulness might be promoted, and would render each of these persons a kind of witness to the genuineness of the Epistle, as we may naturally suppose it was shown to each of them. Jenk. *Of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 37.

f *In reputation among the apostles.*] Diodati thinks that apostles here signifies Evangelists; and that the meaning is, that these persons were noted messengers of the churches, 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. ii. 5. But I rather apprehend with Mr. Cradock, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 43.) that they were some early converts who had been known and much esteemed by the apostles before the dispersion occasioned by the death of Stephen, (Acts viii. 2.) and if so, perhaps Paul might once have been active in persecuting them, and have learned their names at first, with an hostile intent of hunting them down to destruction.

SECT. 34. ——— ROM. XVI.

[*of the family*] *of Aristobulus*,[g] and assure the christians that hold the lowest station in it, that they are not forgotten by me. *Salute my cousin Herodion*, still dearer to me in the ties of grace than in those of nature; *and those belonging to* [*the household of*] *Narcissus, who are* believers *in the Lord* Jesus Christ. *Salute* those excellent women, *Tryphena and Tryphosa, who*, according to their stations, *have laboured* with great diligence
12 *in* the service of *the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who* distinguished herself among many who were faithful and diligent; so that it may properly be said, she *laboured much*
13 *in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord*, whom I esteem as a christian of a most excellent character; *and* pay the most affectionate respects in my name to *his mother and mine*;[h] for so I may call her, on account of that maternal tenderness and care which she
14 has often shown towards me. *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and* all *the brethren with them*, as if every one of them had been particularly named.
15 *Salute Philologus and Julias, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the* other sincere *saints* and christians[i] *that are with them*; whom, with the rest of the persons
16 that I have mentioned, I most sincerely honour and love. In a word, whether you be Jews or Gentiles, when you meet at your assemblies, *salute one another with a holy kiss*;[k] and take care that the kiss which you give to each other at the conclusion of your worship, be expressive of a pure and undissembled affection, and conducted with the gravest and most decent circumstances. All *the churches of Christ* in these parts *salute you*; as they, with me, have heard of the eminent figure you make in religion, and the many excellent persons who are resident among you.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

IMPROVEMENT.

THOUGH so much of this section be a mere catalogue of names, it is not without its moral and religious instruction. We see in it the good heart of the apostle; how full he was of the sentiments of christian friendship; how solicitous he was to express his esteem and love for his brethren in the Lord. And God hath made him the means of transmitting to posterity the memorials of many excellent persons of whom we no where else read or hear any thing: of whom all that we know is, that they were such as deserved the particular affection of St. Paul, and were professors of the gospel at Rome in the reign of a very worthless and wicked prince, under whom it is highly probable that some of them suffered martyrdom for Christ.

His large heart opened to embrace them all, whether by birth Jews or Gentiles: and as they shared in his sa-
VER. lutations, we cannot doubt but they shared in his prayers too. We find some of these pious and much-esteemed
1, 2 friends of the apostle were women, of whom he speaks with great regard, as of persons whom divine grace had made very useful in the church; who had been helpers of many, and particularly of him; who had laboured,
12 yea, *had laboured much in the Lord.* Let not that sex therefore think that it is cut off from the service of Christ because the ministry is appropriated to men. Eminently useful have many of them been. The most valuable ministers have often been assisted by them in the success of their work, while their pious care, under the restraint of the strictest modesty and decorum, has happily and effectually influenced children, servants, and young friends; yea, has been the means of sowing the seeds of religion in tender minds, before they have been capable of coming under ministerial care.

3 Generous was the zeal which Aquila and Priscilla showed in exposing even their own lives in the defence of this holy apostle. Great obligations did they thereby lay upon all the churches of the Gentiles, and on us, who, at this distance of time, receive so many blessings from the longer continuance of St. Paul's life, which they were ready
4 so heroically to defend at the hazard of their own.

Truly valuable were these mutual friendships, of which zeal for Christ was the common bond; lasting, and indeed everlasting. These excellent persons are doubtless the companions of Paul in glory now, and will many of them be his crown in the day of the Lord. Some of them indeed were in Christ before him, and he speaks
7 of it as peculiarly to their honour. Let those who were early in Christ rejoice in the thought. Let those who came later into his church be exhorted to exert themselves with the greater vigour in his service, that they may recover the time they have lost: and let us all learn to esteem it as the most substantial proof of our love to those who are peculiarly dear to us, to show, upon all occasions, how sincerely we wish that they may early form an acquaintance with Christ; that they may constantly walk in him, and grow up in all things in him, as our common Head.

g *Those* [*of the family*] *of Aristobulus.*] The Roman church hath consecrated days to the honour of many of the saints mentioned in this chapter, whom they declare, I know not on what sufficient authority, to have been martyrs. See L'Enf. *Pref. to the Romans*, p. 6, 7. To these they have added Aristobulus and Narcissus, though there is no certain evidence that they were christians. It seems most probable they were persons of high rank who had each a great family of slaves; and some of them being christian converts, the apostle would not forget them, low as their rank in life was, when he was saluting his brethren in so particular a manner. We may observe what a regard the apostle had for foreign churches, when he informed himself of the names, circumstances, and abodes of so many then in Rome.

h *His mother and mine.*] Hence some have thought that Rufus was at least half-brother to Paul; but perhaps he might in this expression refer to the maternal care this good woman had taken of him.

i *All the saints*, &c.] Calvin and others very justly observe, that had Peter been now at Rome, he would undoubtedly have been named; since no one in this numerous catalogue was of a dignity and eminence by any means comparable to him; and yet, if he were not there at this time, the whole tradition of the Roman bishops, as the Roman church delivers it, fails in the most fundamental article of all.

k *A holy kiss.*] The custom of thus saluting each other was borrowed from the Jewish synagogue; and as chastely and prudently as it was managed, it seems to have been the occasion of those false and scandalous reports which were so industriously propagated among the heathen, of the adulterous and incestuous practices in christian assemblies; on which account it seems to have been laid aside very early.

SECTION XXXV

The apostle concludes with other salutations, and a necessary caution against those who would divide the church, together with a doxology suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. Rom. xvi. 17, *to the end.*

ROM. xvi. 17.

NOW I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them.

ROM. xvi. 17.

AND *now*, having despatched these salutations which christian friendship has largely dictated, let me conclude my Epistle to you with a few words of additional advice. And *I* would particularly *exhort you, brethren*, to have your eyes upon, and *to mark out* for the caution of others, *those* persons, whether in public or private life, *which cause divisions and offences* [*among you,*] by false doctrines, factious tempers, and scandalous lives: therein doing *contrary to that* pure, certain, and uniting *doctrine which you have learned* of us, the apostles of Jesus Christ who have been commissioned by him as the authentic teachers of his gospel. *And* when you have discovered such pernicious seducers, *avoid them*, so as to have no intimate converse with them, nor even to permit them to continue in your communion, if they will not be reclaimed by the milder methods of brotherly admonition. *For* you may be assured that *such*, whatever they may pretend, *serve not the Lord Jesus Christ*, under whose commission we so apparently act, and the nature of whose religion is so holy and benevolent: *but*, on the contrary, it is plain they serve *their own belly*; they have only their own secular interest in view, and hope to gain some temporal advantage by setting themselves up as heads of parties among you; *and by fair speeches and flattering forms of address*,[a] they *deceive the hearts of the innocent* and well-meaning, and lead them into snares of which they are little aware.

SECT. 35. ROM. XVI. 17. 18

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

It is very possible, that having done so much mischief here at Corinth and at other places, they may also make some attempts upon you, especially considering the figure you make in the christian world; but I trust their endeavours will be unsuccessful, *for* the report of *your* exemplary *obedience* to the dictates of our holy religion *is come abroad unto all; therefore I rejoice on your account*, in hope you will overcome this and every other danger, and maintain the good character you have already gained. *But* I give you this caution out of my abundant tenderness and care; because *I am desirous you may be wise* and sagacious *with respect to* every opportunity of practising and maintaining *that which is good, and* as *simple* as possible *with regard to that which is evil;* perfectly free from all ill views and designs of every kind. And I know how much the insinuations of those men tend to destroy those benevolent dispositions which should ever reign in the hearts of christians, and to fill them with such prejudices against each other as may produce mutual injuries. 19

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

And I have an agreeable persuasion that you will take care to maintain this happy mixture of innocence and prudence, and will succeed in that care. Yes, my brethren, I am well assured that *the God of peace*, from whom we derive all our peace and happiness, and who delights in seeing this peaceful temper prevail among his servants, *will quickly bruise Satan under your feet;* will defeat the artifices by which the great enemy of God and men is endeavouring to insinuate himself into the church, and to infuse his own malignant spirit into its members. God will enable you, animated by the first great promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) which you have seen so illustriously fulfilled, to trample on the sly deceiver, as on a wounded serpent whose head your great Leader hath already crushed. And for this purpose, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which hath already been in so considerable a degree imparted to you, [*be*] still more constantly and abundantly *with you! Amen.* 20

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

I add by way of postscript, that *Timothy my* pious and zealous *fellow-labourer*, to whose affection I am so much obliged, *and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater*, the messengers of the church at Berœa,[b] and both of them *my kinsmen, salute you* with sincere christian friendship. 21

21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

I Tertius, or Silas, *who wrote* [*this*] *Epistle*, while the apostle Paul dictated it to me;[c] as his secretary, *do also* most affectionately *salute you in the Lord.* 22

22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

The generous *Gaius*, who is *my host, and* indeed I may say, *that of the whole church*, so ready is he to every act of hospitality and goodness, *salutes you*, [*and*] *Erastus the steward of the city* [*also*] *salutes you; and* so doth one *Quartus*, who though you may not particularly know him, is *a* christian *brother*,[d] whose name I think worthy of being inserted. 23

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Once more receive my repeated good wishes that the best of all blessings may attend 24

24 The grace of our Lord

a *Flattering forms of address.*] Ευλογιας, in this connexion, has a force which I knew not how to express but by this periphrasis. We see here what these weapons are which these false apostles opposed to the miracles of the true.

b *Sosipater.*] As it appears from Acts xx. 4. that Sosipater was with St. Paul when he travelled in Greece, in the year 58, this is one argument for fixing the date of this epistle to that year.

c *Who wrote this Epistle*, &c.] St. Paul seems not himself to have been very well versed in the Greek characters, Gal. vi. 11. compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21. He therefore made use of the hand of Silas, or, as the Latin would express his name, Tertius, who wrote what the apostle dictated; and I submit to consideration, whether some of the intricate and some of the unfinished sentences which we meet with in these Epistles, might not be owing to this method of writing by an amanuensis. They whose variety of business has obliged them to dictate to others, and use their pens in such a manner, will be very sensible this is no absurd or very improbable conjecture. Compare Jer. xxvi. 17, 18. as an instance of a similar nature.

d *A brother.*] Mr. Pierce thinks this expression intimates that he was a *christian minister*. Compare Phil. iv. 21, 22; but I cannot say it appears sufficiently evident.

SECT. 35. you; even that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* may *be with you all:* to which I again put my cordial *Amen.*

Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

ROM. XVI. 25 *Now,* let me sum up all with ascribing praise to the great Author of all the blessings of which I have been writing; even *to him, who,* as he has called you to participate these invaluable blessings, *is able to strengthen you*[e] in every virtuous disposition and good resolution; *according to* the tenor of *my gospel, even the preaching of Jesus Christ,* as our only and almighty Saviour, whom I proclaim, wherever I come, to Gentiles as well as to Jews: a gospel which, however it is opposed as contrary, is indeed most exactly *agreeable, to the revelation* which God has now been pleased to make *of that mystery* 26 *in ancient times kept in silence,*[f] and never before so fully exhibited: *But,* adored be his goodness, it is *now made manifest according to the* tenor of the *prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God.* And it is not only discovered to us by the Spirit, but publicly made known *to all* the Gentile *nations,* as well as the people of Israel, *for the obedience of faith;* that they, firmly believing it, may yield a correspondent practical submission to it, and so obtain by it everlasting salvation; 27 subjecting themselves in all things *to* the sacred authority of *the only wise God,* who has so prudently contrived and so effectually executed this grand scheme. To him, on the whole, [*be*] *glory by Jesus Christ,* in all the churches, and in the general assembly, *to endless ages! Amen.*

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:)

27 To God only wise, *be* glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 25 WORTHY are these concluding words of being deeply engraven on every heart. The gospel was a mystery long concealed in the breast of the divine wisdom, and opened but by imperfect hints, even to the church itself, in former ages. Let us be humbly thankful that it is now made manifest, and that we are among the nations who 26 are called to the obedience of the faith. Let us be solicitous to answer that call; and if we have already done it in 25 any measure, let us remember we are still surrounded with many snares and dangers, so that we have continual need of being strengthened and confirmed by him who hath done us the honour to *call us into the fellowship of* 18 *his gospel.* Let us walk worthy of it, and faithfully endeavour to advance its interests in a noble superiority to all those secular and mercenary motives by which bad men, under a christian profession, are often influenced, and in consequence of which they often abuse even the ministry of religion to the most infamous purposes.

Let us show how thoroughly we have imbibed the spirit of this divine dispensation, by the generosity of our 17, 18 sentiments; guarding both against scandals and divisions, and aiming in wisdom, integrity, and love, both to unite and edify the body of Christ. Satan will indeed lay discouragements and stumbling-blocks in our way, and perhaps may sometimes use very subtle arts to promote discord and division among those who ought to be most dear to each other in the bonds of the Lord. But let us use a holy caution, and commit ourselves to the divine keeping, and we may humbly hope that the God of peace will make us victorious over all the artifice and power of our spiritual enemies, and will shortly bruise Satan under our feet.

Let us humbly hope that he will, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of that great original promise which was given to cheer our first parents when they lay under their deep distress and heavy load of new-contracted guilt. (Gen. iii. 13.) And as we see how God hath taken the subtle in his own craftiness, and triumphed over Satan by that event which he laboured to accomplish as his own triumph, even the death of our 27 Divine Redeemer; let us ascribe to him, as the only wise God, everlasting glory. And oh that we may join with all the redeemed world in this ascription, when the accuser of the brethren, the great enemy of God and man, with all his adherents and instruments, shall be cast out for ever! Amen.

N. B. A note added to the end of this Epistle says that *it was written to the Romans from Corinth, by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea.* Part of this the first verse of this last chapter justifies; but as the most ancient manuscripts have not these notes, and some of them are plainly contrary to some passages in the Epistle to which they are affixed, they are to be esteemed of no authority.

e *Now to him, &c.*] This doxology is found in many copies at the end of the xivth chapter, and in the Alexandrian MS. is inserted both there and here. Jerome says that Marcion rejected the two last chapters, as contrary to his opinion; and Sir Norton Knatchbull conjectures, that in order to prevent any suspicion as if the Epistle ended with the xivth chapter, some orthodox christian transferred this passage from thence, which he supposes to have been its true place. Dr. Mills is of the same opinion; and supposes the two last chapters to have been added by way of postscript, as the apostle had time before he sent it away. All the other Epistles of Paul end with the benediction.

f *Mystery, &c.*] Many commentators explain these verses as referring to the calling of the Gentiles into the church, and then some of them suppose the χρονοις αιωνιοις to refer to the *division of time* by *jubilees;* but it is certain the words will make good and weighty sense on the different interpretation we have given; and as the jubilees so early grew into neglect among the Jews, it would be less natural to suppose the periods of time they measured to be designed here.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE Apostle Paul had been the instrument, in the hand of God, of planting a numerous christian church, chiefly of Gentile converts, at Corinth; where his ministry was so successful, that he continued there near two years. (Acts xviii. 1—18.) Corinth was a city of Achaia, situated on the isthmus which joins Peloponnesus (now called the Morea) to the rest of Greece. From the convenience of its situation for commerce, it abounded in riches, and was furnished with all the accommodations, with all the elegances and superfluities, of life. This, by too natural a consequence, led its inhabitants into luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vice; and they were accordingly infamous even to a proverb.

About the space of three years after the apostle had left Corinth to preach the gospel in other parts of Greece, he had occasion to write this Epistle to the Corinthians; which he accordingly wrote from Ephesus, about the year 57, the third of the Emperor Nero. See note d, on Acts xviii. 23. p. 530. and note a, on Acts xix. 21. p. 534.

The reason for which this Epistle was written, was to answer some important queries proposed by the Corinthians, and correct the various criminal irregularities and disorders of which they were guilty.

In correcting the abuses with which they were chargeable,

The *first* article on which the apostle thought himself obliged to insist, related to the *parties* and *factions* into which they were fallen, and the opposition which was made by some of them to his own apostolical mission. On this head he largely discourses in the first four chapters; introducing the Epistle with an affectionate address to the Corinthian converts, in which he congratulates them on the rich variety of gifts and graces God had bestowed upon them, and animates their hopes of his continued favour in the Lord Jesus Christ, even till the day of his final appearance: (Chap. i. 1—9.) And then, expressing his great concern on account of their animosities and factions, he expostulates with them on the unreasonableness of setting up christian ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to Christ as their common Saviour and Master. (Ver. 10—16.) And as he well knew that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of the Corinthian teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, he sets himself to show how little stress was to be laid upon them; which he illustrates by the choice that God had made of gospel preachers entirely destitute of these boasted accomplishments. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*) The apostle further explains the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence when he came among the Corinthians, and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach, which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit; their nature being so wonderful that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught. (Chap. ii. *throughout.*) After this the apostle more directly comes to the case of their animosities and divisions, and reproves their carnality in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper. (Chap. iii. 1—9.) Reminding them, for this purpose, of the great trial which every man's work must undergo, the guilt of polluting by unhallowed divisions the temple of God, the vanity of human wisdom in his sight, and of glorying in men, since ministers and all things are appointed for the common benefit of believers. (Ver. 10, *to the end.*) The apostle farther discourses, with the same view, of the nature of the ministerial office, reminds them of the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligation they were under to the divine goodness for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others: (Chap. iv. 1—7.) And as a particular opposition had been made in the Corinthian church to himself, he represents the hardships and dangers to which he and his brethren had been and were exposed in the service of the gospel, and the obligations which he had in an especial manner laid upon them; warning them not to force him upon severities which he was very unwilling to use. (Ver. 8, *to the end.*) And having thus

discoursed with admirable wisdom, faithfulness, and zeal, he dismisses, for the present, this part of his subject; which, on account of his personal concern in it, was attended with circumstances of peculiar delicacy.

The *second* topic which the apostle considers, was the case of a notorious offender in the Corinthian church, who was guilty of most scandalous *incest* with his father's wife. Animated, therefore, with a warm zeal for the honour of Christ, for the purity and credit of the christian church, with a benevolent concern for the conviction of the offender, and that others might be deterred from the like enormous practices, he exhorts them, upon these principles, to beware of all unnecessary connexion with him, and to exclude him from christian communion. (Chap. v. *throughout.*)

The *third* article which, in this Epistle, St. Paul exhibits against the Corinthians, is, that by a covetous and litigious temper they were led, contrary to the rules of christian prudence and love, and sometimes contrary even to the principles of justice, to prosecute their brethren in the heathen courts. This he solemnly censures and condemns, and closes what he offers upon this head, by warning them of the sad consequences that would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions in which christianity found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them. (Chap. vi. 1—11.)

In the *fourth* place, the Apostle Paul cautions them against the sin of *fornication*, to which they had been, in their Gentile state, greatly addicted. And it should seem that having been formerly wont to look upon this heinous crime as lawful, there were even now some among them who reckoned it among the things indifferent, and that they were not in general sufficiently convinced of its enormity. He therefore introduces what he proposed to say on this subject, with some useful reflections on things really indifferent, and then illustrates the heinous evil of fornication, from views peculiar to the christian religion. (Ver. 12, *to the end.*)

Having thus largely, and with great faithfulness and plainness, corrected some sad disorders with which the Corinthians were chargeable,

The apostle proceeds to the other main end of his Epistle, namely, to answer certain important questions which it seems the Corinthians had proposed. And here,

He determines, *first*, Those which related to the *marriage state*. Some questions upon this would naturally arise among the first converts to christianity, as, Whether they should disown and withdraw from their partners if they continued unbelievers? And, Whether it was good to marry in the present circumstances of the church, when the contracting new and especially such near alliances in those times of persecution, would involve in peculiar difficulties those who should enter into the marriage relation, which they might, notwithstanding, judge it proper for other reasons to do? Now the apostle shows, at his entrance upon this subject, that in some circumstances the marriage state should be entered into and continued in, but in others forborne, particularly at that time; and enjoins wives not to depart from their husbands, and husbands not to dismiss their wives: (Chap. vii. 1—11.) He then shows that marriages were not to be dissolved, as some thought they might, on account of a difference in religion; and very properly urges in the general, contentment with the stations in which they were called, and a concern to serve God in their proper condition, whether married or single, bound or free. (Ver. 12—24.) And with regard to single persons, he asserts the inexpediency of their marrying in the circumstances of the church at that juncture, inculcating a serious sense of the shortness of time, as the best remedy against inordinate attachment to any secular interest. (Ver. 25, *to the end.*)

A *second* query which the Corinthians had proposed to the apostle to be resolved, was, How far they might comply with their heathen neighbours in *eating things sacrificed to idols?* St. Paul upon this reminds them, that though all christians might well be supposed to know the vanity of those imaginary deities to which the sacrifices were offered, yet it might prove to some an occasion of grief and scandal, that the professors of christianity should partake of these sacrifices in their temple: which therefore charity would require them by all means to avoid. (Chap. viii. *throughout.*) And having, in this instance, urged them to a christian condescension to their brethren, that he might enforce the principle more strongly, by his own condescension to the weak in waving to accept of a maintenance from the Corinthians, he introduces what he had to say upon this head with a short discourse on the right which, as a gospel-minister, he really had to be supported by those among whom he laboured; which he argues both from natural equity and scripture principles; (Chap. ix. 1—14.) He then proceeds to show, that out of tenderness to them, and to prevent exceptions to the gospel, he had waved this right, and had been cautious upon all occasions to avoid offence, by exercising self-denial, which he illustrates by a very expressive simile taken from those who contended in the Grecian games. (Ver. 15, *to the end.*) And to recommend this self-denial and holy caution to the Corinthians, he represents the privileges which Israel of old enjoyed, and the displeasure which, notwithstanding this, God manifested against them in the wilderness, when they indulged their irregular and luxurious desires, and in contempt of the *manna*, lusted after quails; an example proper to put the Corinthians in mind of the danger they ran of incurring the divine displeasure, if they should be induced, for the sake of gratifying a luxurious appetite, to partake of entertainments upon *things offered to idols* in the heathen temples. (Chap. x. 1—13.) That he might therefore caution them against all approaches to idolatry, he particularly argues, from that communion which as christians they had with Christ at his table, that they ought to keep at the remotest distance from what might justly be called having communion with devils. (Ver. 14—22.) After which he lays down more particular directions as to the cases and circumstances in which *things sacrificed to idols* might or might not lawfully be eaten; and urges further considerations to engage them willingly to resign their own gratification for the glory of God and the good of their brethren. (Ver. 23, *to the end;* chap. xi. 1.)

The apostle now proceeds to a *third* query, concerning the manner in which *women* should deliver any thing in public, when by a divine impulse called to it. And after having settled this point, he particularly corrects the indecency of women's prophesying with their head uncovered. (Ver. 2—16.) Being thus led to consider circumstances which attended the christian worship, he takes the occasion naturally afforded, of introducing a discourse upon several abuses among them of a higher nature, with respect to the public celebration of the Lord's Supper; leading back their views to its original institution, and inferring from thence the danger of profaning it in the manner they did. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*) Being thus naturally, and as it were accidentally, brought to take notice again of the corruptions prevailing in the Corinthian church, the apostle makes some remarks upon their abuse of the *spiritual gifts:* observing that they all proceed from the same Sacred Agent, and are intended for the edification of the same body in which all christians are united. (Chap. xii. 1—13.) Inculcating humility in the use of those gifts, and that mutual affection which the Corinthians needed to be taught, he pursues the allegory further, and represents christians as so united in one body as to have entirely the same interest; and insists on a tender care of the least member, from its subserviency to the good of the whole. (Ver. 15, *to the end.*) And to engage the Corinthians to

cultivate love, as more important than the gifts about which they contended, he gives a lovely description of that excellent grace; concluding it with a reflection on its perpetual duration, in which it exceeds even faith and hope. (Chap. xiii. *throughout.*) After this inculcating charity and love, a grace which they needed much to adorn their christian profession and direct the exercise of their spiritual gifts, the apostle particularly cautions them against their prevailing vain ostentation of the gift of tongues, and reasons with them concerning the absurdity of the manner in which they, some of them at least, abused that gift. (Chap. xiv. 1—19.) And adds, upon the whole, proper motives to prevent that abuse. (Ver. 20, *to the end.*)

Some among the Corinthians doubted, and others denied, *the resurrection of the dead.* To prove and establish, therefore, this great and peculiar article of the christian faith, the Apostle Paul makes some remarks on the certainty and importance of the resurrection of Christ: (Chap. xv. 1—11.) And infers, from the resurrection of Christ, the certainty of the *resurrection of the dead;* urging the importance of this grand fundamental doctrine of christianity, and mentioning, in the series of his argument, that surrender of the mediatorial kingdom which Christ, at the consummation of all things, shall make to the Father. (Ver. 12—34.) After which he answers objections to the resurrection, drawn from our not being able to conceive of the particular manner in which it shall be effected; and concludes with urging this doctrine, as a noble incentive to the greatest readiness and the warmest zeal in religion. (Ver. 25, *to the end.*)

This is the connexion of the several parts of this excellent Epistle, and a sketch of the apostle's design, which was to correct the corruptions and abuses, and answer some queries, of the Corinthian church. And though he hath not throughout discussed these two points separately, and with the exactness of systematical method, yet he hath handled his subject in a more natural manner, and given a masterly specimen of the freedom usual in epistolary writings.—Before he concludes, he gives some advices to the Corinthian church, relating to the collection proposed to be made for the poor saints in Judea; (Chap. xvi. 1—12.) And then closes all with some particular salutations and directions, with general exhortations to courage and love, a solemn benediction to true christians, and an awful anathema against those who were destitute of love to our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ver. 13, *to the end of the Epistle.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle introduces his Epistle with a most affectionate and suitable salutation, in which he congratulates the Corinthians on the rich variety of gifts and graces which God had bestowed upon them, and animates their hope of his continued favour in the Lord Jesus Christ, even till the day of his final appearance. 1 Cor. i. 1—9.

1 CORINTHIANS i. VER. 1.

1 CORINTHIANS i. VER. 1.

SECT. 1.

1 CORINTHIANS I.

1 PAUL, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

PAUL, who was in so peculiar a manner *called* [*to be*] *an apostle*[a] *of Jesus Christ*, not undertaking that office of himself, but invested with it *by the* most express declaration of the *will of God*, signified at the time of that miraculous interposition of which you have so often heard; *and Sosthenes*,[b] so well known unto you, whom I esteem as *a* dear *brother*, concur in writing this Epistle *to the church of God which is in* the rich, populous, and learned city of *Corinth*, whose chief glory it is that they (if they are what their christian profession speaks them to be) are *sanctified in* vital union with *Christ Jesus*,[c] as well as *called* with an external vocation, by which they are separated from the rest of the world [*as*] the *saints* of God. *And* when we express our affectionate regard to you, and our good wishes for your edification and comfort, we extend them *to all that in every place*[d] *invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[e] whom we, and all true christians, join in acknowledging and adoring as *their* [*Lord*] *and ours*. May you experimentally know more of the privileges and blessings of his gospel; and for that purpose, [*may*] *grace and peace* [*be*] *with you*, that abundance of divine influence which may establish your peace and multiply your prosperity; even *from God*, the original Fountain of all blessings, whom we are now taught to look upon as *our* reconciled and gracious *Father*, *and* [*from*] *Jesus Christ our Lord*, that anointed and exalted Saviour by whom we receive the adoption, and through whose hands all its blessings are communicated to us.

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

2

3 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ:

I cannot address you, my dear brethren, without assuring you in the first place, that *I always give* humble *thanks to my God on your account*, whenever I mention you before him in prayer, as I frequently do, *for the* abundant *grace of God given unto you in Christ Jesus*, by virtue of which you have been received into the christian church, and are made ornaments to it. For ever adored be his holy name, *that in all things ye are enriched in him*[f] with a variety of gifts and graces, and particularly, that ye are made copious *in all utterance, and* ready [*in*] *all knowledge* of spiritual and divine things: *As the testimony* which I bore to the gospel *of Christ*, when I abode so long at Corinth, *was confirmed among you*[g] by such various communications of the Spirit, in consequence of which you became living witnesses of it to all who knew you. *So that you are deficient in no gift* which can render you useful in his church, while you are *waiting for*

4

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge:

5

6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.

6

7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the

7

a *Called* [*to be*] *an apostle.*] There is great propriety in every clause of the *salutation* prefixed to this Epistle, and particularly in this, as there were those in the church of Corinth who affected to call the authority of his mission into question.

b *Sosthenes.*] This was a Corinthian minister who attended Paul in his travels. (Compare Acts xviii. 17.) It was both humility and prudence in the apostle thus to join his name with his own, in an Epistle in which it was necessary to deal so plainly with them, and to remonstrate against so many irregularities.

c *Sanctified in Christ Jesus.*] I cannot agree with Mr. Locke, in concluding that this must signify only an *external* separation to the profession of the *true religion*, as the Jews were *externally* a holy people, 1 Pet. ii. 8, 9, 10. It seems rather to intimate the persuasion which he had, that notwithstanding some lamented irregularities among them, which he was faithfully solicitous to reform, they were, in the general, a body of sincere christians, and the exceptions comparatively few.

d *With all that in every place, &c.*] Nothing could better suit the candid and catholic views which Paul was so much concerned to promote in this Epistle, than this declaration of his good wishes for *every true christian* upon earth, whether Jew or Gentile, *learned* or *unlearned*, Greek or Barbarian. To limit it, as Grotius, L'Enfant, and some others would do, to the christians in Achaia, is to spoil all the *strength* and *beauty* of the sentiment.

e *Invoke the name, &c.*] This strongly implies, that it might well be taken for granted that every true christian would often pray to Christ, as well as address the Father in his name.

f *That ye are enriched, &c.*] These respectful congratulations and acknowledgments of the things in which they did really excel, had a most happy tendency to soften their minds, and to dispose them the better to receive the plain reproofs he was going to give them, and which, in their circumstances, faithful love extorted from him.

g *Confirmed among you.*] As they could not but know they had received these gifts by the hand of Paul, this expression suggests a rational and tender argument to reduce them to their former affection to him as their spiritual father.

SECT. 1. *the* glorious *manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in connexion with which, I hope, you will always consider this extraordinary furniture for his service, and improve it so as to advance your preparation for that day: Still keeping up an humble dependence on him,

1 COR. I. *who*, if you faithfully apply to him for the continued communication of his almighty aid, *will confirm you to the end:* [*so that*] when so many others shall be condemned, [*ye*

8 *may be*] presented *blameless* and irreproachable *in the* great *day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[h] Fear not, my brethren, but this blessed day will come, and bring with it those

9 glories which we have so long been taught to expect. Fear not but divine grace will still be effectual to bear you through all difficulties in your way to it; for *God* [*is*] *faithful, by whom you were called into the communion* and society *of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, that you may participate of the blessings he hath purchased; the grand promises of whose kingdom, ye know, refer to that illustrious day of which I have been speaking. Be therefore courageous and cheerful in the assured expectation of it.

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us remember that we also are sanctified in Christ, and saints by our calling. Though we are not enriched with such extraordinary endowments as those which were bestowed upon this primitive Corinthian church, yet

2 we call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and let it be considered as a band of love to all those who join with us, to acknowledge him under the character of their Lord and their Saviour. Let it engage us to pray that

3 the same grace and peace may be with them from God our Father, and from Christ Jesus our common Lord, which we wish for ourselves.

4, &c. Let our hearts be ever open to such noble sentiments of christian love; not envying the gifts or endowments

6 of others, but rather rejoicing in them, blessing God for them, and praying that they be largely increased; that so the testimony of Christ may be confirmed by the flourishing state of religion among his followers, than which no confirmation will probably carry a stronger and more affecting conviction into the hearts of those who observe it.

7 To quicken us to this, let us be continually waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ; thinking seriously, how certainly and how quickly he will be revealed from heaven, to bring us and all our brethren to an account for

9 the improvement we make of the various favours he hath conferred upon us; of which, surely, to be called into the fellowship of Christ, and the participation of spiritual blessings by him, is to be reckoned among the chief.

Let us rejoice in the fidelity of those promises which encourage us to hope that he whose grace hath called us

8 to a participation of the gospel will confirm us blameless, even until the day of Christ: and as we have such prospects of present support and comfort and of final and complete salvation from him, let us, like this blessed

1—9 apostle, take a pleasure in sounding forth his name, and in keeping up a most affectionate remembrance of him, even of Jesus Christ our Lord and our Saviour, in our own minds, and in those of our christian brethren.

SECTION II.

The apostle expresses his great concern on account of the factions in the church of Corinth, of which he had been informed; and expostulates with them as to the unreasonableness of setting up christian ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to unite in Christ as their common Saviour and Master. 1 Cor. i. 10—16.

1 COR. i. 10.

SECT. 2. I *NOW* hasten to the great things which I have in view in this address to you, and *I* must first of all *beseech* as well as exhort *you*, my *brethren*, *by the* venerable and endearing *name of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[a] as you desire either to secure his favour or to advance

1 COR. his cause and interest in the world, *that ye all* endeavour, so far as possible, to *speak the*

10 *same thing*, that is, that you do not unnecessarily *and* unkindly contradict each other, but rather maintain a peaceful, unanimous temper; [*that*] *there may be no schisms among you*, nor mutual alienation of affection, *but* [*that*] *ye be all knit together in the same mind and in the same sentiment*;[b] waving unnecessary controversies, debating those which are necessary with temper and candour, and delighting to speak most concerning those great and excellent things in which as christians you cannot but be agreed, and which, if duly considered, will cement your hearts to each other in the strictest and most tender bonds.

11 I urge this with the greatest earnestness, *because it hath been certified to me, my brethren, concerning you, by those of Chloe's* [*family*,][c] *that there are* some *contentions among you*, which by no means become the relation wherein you stand to each other, and the regard which you profess to the gospel of Christ.

12 *Now this I say* and mean by the preceding charge, *that*, if my information be right, there are among you various parties which avowedly set themselves up as under different heads, though you are not yet come to an open separation; so that *every one of you* lists

1 COR. i. 10.

NOW I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am

h [*That ye may be*] *blameless*, &c.] I think it would make a very low sense of this, to explain it, as some have done, that they would be preserved *if blameless*; the apostle plainly intends to encourage their hope in that grace which might enable them so to persevere, that they might be found *blameless*.

a *By the* venerable and endearing *name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] This is beautifully and properly opposed to the various human names under which they were so ready to list themselves.

b *In the same mind and in the same sentiment.*] It was morally impossible, considering the diversity of their educations and capacities, that they should *all* agree in opinion; nor could he intend *that*, because he does not urge any argument to reduce them to such an agreement, nor so much as declare what that one opinion was in which he would have them agree. The words must therefore express that *peaceful and unanimous temper* which christians of different opinions may and ought to maintain towards each other, which will do a much greater honour to the gospel and to human nature, than the most perfect uniformity that can be imagined.

c *Those of Chloe's* [*family*].] Grotius supposes Fortunatus and Achaicus (mentioned, chap xvi. 17.) to have been her sons.

of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

himself under one or another of those dividing names which are so unhappily used among you on this occasion. One, for instance, *says*, *I am for Paul*, admiring the plainness and purity of his doctrine; *and* a second, *I* am *for Apollos*, charmed with the eloquence and beauty of his address; *and* a third, *I* am *for Cephas*, the apostle of the circumcision, who may be well called a foundation-stone in the church, as he maintains so strict a regard to the Mosaic ceremonies *and* the peculiar privileges of God's ancient people; while a fourth says, *I* am *for Christ*,[d] whose superior name, and strict observation of the Mosaic law in his own person, unanswerably testify its perpetual obligation, however any of his ministers may regard or neglect it.

SECT. 2.

1 COR. 1. 12

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Give me leave now to ask, *Is Christ divided* into as many parties as you are split into, so that each has a distinct Saviour? or is he become only the head of one party of his followers, that his name should thus be appropriated by way of distinction, as if it were to exclude all the rest of his disciples from any relation to him? And on the other hand, (not to introduce the name of my honoured and beloved brethren upon this invidious occasion,) *was* this *Paul*, whom some of you so much extol, *crucified for you?*[e] *Or were you baptized into the name of Paul*, that you should thus affect to wear it as a mark of distinction? Since there have been these unhappy divisions in your society, and my name, among others, has been made use of to such a purpose, *I thank God that* it so happened in the course of his providence that *I baptized none of you except Crispus*, once the ruler of the synagogue, *and* my worthy friend the hospitable *Gaius: Lest any should* have a pretence to *say*, though ever so falsely, *that I* made the waters of baptism waters of strife; and *had baptized into my own name*,[f] or in a view of particular and personal attachment to myself, to the injury of my brethren or of the church in general. I remember that *I baptized also the family of Stephanas*, the first-fruits of Achaia; *and I know not whether I baptized any other*.[g] And indeed it might very naturally happen that I should baptize only these few; *for Christ sent me not* so much *to baptize;* which was an office that others of a much inferior rank in the ministry might as well perform; *but to preach the gospel*, and thereby to bring persons to that faith which would entitle them to this appropriate ordinance of christianity. And I bless God with all my heart, that I have been enabled to do it with such simplicity, fidelity, and success.

13

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius;

14

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

15

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other.

16

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:

17

IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we live in the midst of so much darkness, and continue obnoxious to so many prejudices and errors, it will be absolutely impossible for us to speak the same thing, and so perfectly to be joined in the same mind and judgment, as that there should be no diversity of opinion or expression. But let us labour to obey the apostle's pathetic exhortation, so far as the imperfection of this mortal state may admit. Let us be entreated in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that venerable, that endeared, that sacred name, that there be no schism among us, no mutual hatred or animosity, no uncharitable contentions, no severe censures of each other. And as we desire that there may not, let us take care that we do not impose upon our brethren indifferent things as necessary, and thereby drive them into a separation for conscience-sake, and tempt them at the same time, by our ill usage, to that bitterness of resentment which would make them what the mere separation would not, transgressors of this precept, and us partakers in their sins.

Ver. 10

On the other hand, let none of us be disposed to dispute merely for the sake of disputing, nor unnecessarily oppose the judgment or taste of our brethren, out of an affectation of singularity, or a spirit of contention. But let us rather labour, so far as with a safe conscience we can, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And while we do this, if our brethren will exact such submissions from us as they are not warranted by God to require, and as we cannot in conscience pay, let us follow conscience whithersoever it leads us, taking all necessary care that it be rightly guided; and if in that circumstance our brethren will cast us out and say, *Let the Lord be glorified;* and if to the rest of their unkindness they will add the farther injury of branding us with the odious names of schismatics or of heretics, let it be a light thing to us to be judged of man's judgment. Let us not render railing for railing, nor injury for injury, but rather, by our meekness, endeavour to overcome their severity; and wait for that happy time when more of the spirit of knowledge and of charity shall dispose them to throw down those middle walls of partition by which the temple of God is straitened and defaced, and the convenience, the symmetry, and grandeur of its original plan so lamentably spoiled. Above all, let us wait that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, and that world where they who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity shall

d *I am for Christ.*] They might perhaps be displeased with Peter for his condescension to the uncircumcised at Antioch, (Gal. ii. 12.) which happened long before the date of this Epistle; and might also, as L'Enfant intimates, have valued themselves on having heard Christ preach in his own person during the time of his ministration on earth.

e *Was Paul crucified for you?*] As if he had said, Are your obligations *to me* equal or comparable to those you are under to our *common Master*, to him who died for us upon the cross? He mentions *himself*, as it was least invidious to do it, though the application was equally just as to every other instance. Compare chap. iii. 6.

f *Lest any should say I baptized into my own name.*] If any should object that others might do it for him, it may be answered, that Paul's attendants (who seem to have been Timothy and Silas, Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19.) were persons of an established character, so as to be above such suspicion; that baptism was probably administered too openly to allow of this; and that the apostle herein does, as it were, appeal to the baptized persons themselves, challenging any one of them all to say that the ordinance was administered to him in Paul's name.

g *I know not whether I baptized any other.*] This expression of *uncertainty* as to such a *fact*, is by no means inconsistent with *inspiration*, in that view and notion of it which I have endeavoured to state and vindicate in *my discourse on that subject*, annexed to this work. I can by no means think with Bishop Burnet, that the reason why Paul baptized so few, was because baptism was delayed till some considerable time after conversion to christianity, and that the apostle did not stay so long in a place as to do it; (Burnet, *On the Articles*, Art. xxvii. p. 304. *Edit.* 1699.) for it does not appear to me that baptism in these earliest and purest ages was long delayed; and it is certain that this cause could not take place here, as Paul continued at Corinth 18 months. I rather think the office was generally assigned to inferiors, as requiring no extraordinary abilities, and as being attended with some trouble and inconvenience, especially where immersion was used, as I suppose it often, though not constantly, was.

SECT. 2. retain no remembrance of the controversies that once divided them, unless it be to balance the alienations of time with the endearments of eternity.

In the mean while, let us avoid as much as possible a party-spirit, and not be fond of listing ourselves under the
1 COR. I. 12, 13 name of this or that man, how wise, how good, how great, soever. For surely if the names of Peter and Paul were in this view to be declined, much more are those which, in these latter days, have so unhappily crumbled the christian and protestant interest, and have given such sad occasion to our enemies to reproach us. Christ is not divided: nor were Luther or Calvin, or even Peter or Paul, crucified for us; nor were we baptized into any of their names.

Happy shall that disciple of our compassionate Lord be, whom he shall most eminently own in healing the breaches which the artifices of the tempter, too often abetted by the infirmities of Christ's faithful servants, have already made in the church, and which the great enemy is continually endeavouring to multiply, and to widen! Happy he, who, reverencing and loving his Master's image wherever he sees it, shall teach others to do so too! And who, being himself an example of yielding, so far as he conscientiously can, and of not taking upon him to censure others, where he cannot yield to them, shall do his part towards cementing, in the bonds of holy love, all the children of God, and the members of Christ! How unsuccessful soever his efforts may be, amidst that angry and contentious, that ignorant and bigoted, crowd who miscal themselves christians; or by whatever suspicious and reproachful names his moderation may be stigmatized; his Divine Master will neither fail to consider it in its true view, nor to honour it with proportionable tokens of his acceptance and favour. Love is the first and greatest of his commands; and after all the clamour that has been made about notions and forms, he who practises and teaches love best, shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

SECTION III.

The apostle, knowing that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of their teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, sets himself to show how little stress was to be laid upon them; which he illustrates by the choice which God had made of gospel-preachers quite destitute of those accomplishments. 1 Cor. i. 17, *to the end.*

1 COR. i. 17.

SECT. 3. I JUST now told you that *Christ did not send me to baptize*, as my principal business, *but* rather *to preach the gospel*;[a] and now I must add, that in the commission which I had the honour to receive from him, he did *not* instruct me to preach it *with* those philo-
1 COR. I. 17 sophical niceties of expression, or laboured rhetoric, which many are so ready to esteem as the *wisdom of words*; *lest* if I had attended to these little things, *the cross of Christ should have been* deprived of its just honours, and so have been enervated and *rendered vain*.[b] For this must have been the natural consequence, when men saw one who pretended to know so much, and to have received such extraordinary discoveries of the gospel, and of Christ crucified as its great foundation, seeming not so much to trust to the grand important facts he averred, as to artificial reasonings, or ornaments of speech, in his manner of representing them to the world.

1 COR. i. 17.
FOR Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 I might well be cautious on this head; *for the doctrine of the cross is indeed folly*, with respect *to* the judgment of *them that are perishing*; to wretched creatures, who are in the way to be for ever undone. They, in that fatal madness, which leads them to speedy ruin, think it a ridiculous and mean thing, to expect salvation from one who seemed unable to save himself; and glory from one that expired in ignominy. *But to us who are saved* from the contagion of so wicked an age, and are in the way to everlasting salvation, *it is* a most illustrious display of *the power of God*, to the noblest
19 purposes our minds can conceive. *For it is written*, and the words are remarkably applicable to this great event, 'Isa. xxix. 14.) *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and abolish the sagacity of the prudent*; thus hath God, by this dispensation, poured con-
20 fusion on human wit and learning, eloquence and philosophy: so that, in allusion to other words of the same prophet, we may say,[c] (Isa. xxxiii. 18.) *Where* [*is*] *the* celebrated sage, whose *wise* counsel and penetrating genius have been held in greatest esteem? *Where the* learned *scribe? Where the* ostentatious *disputer of this world*,[d] who has been most

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this

a *Baptize, but to preach.*] As I knew not how to avoid the repetition of this clause, without prolonging the former section beyond due bounds, or making an improper division; I hope the reader will excuse it and a few other instances of this kind which will occur.

b *Should have been* enervated or *rendered vain.*] If the doctrine of the *crucifixion of the Son of God* for the sins of men be indeed *true*, it is undoubtedly a truth of the highest importance, and it might reasonably be expected, that a person who had been instructed in it by such extraordinary methods, should appear to lay the main stress of his preaching upon it. The design of this wonderful dispensation might therefore have been in a great measure frustrated, if it had been the care of the first preachers of it, and particularly of Paul, to study a vain parade of words, and to set off their discourses with those glittering ornaments which the Grecian orators so often sought, and which the Corinthians were so ready to affect. But amidst all the beautiful simplicity which a deep conviction of the gospel tended to produce, there was room left for the most manly and noble kind of eloquence; which therefore the christian preacher should labour to make habitual to him, and of which this apostle himself is a most illustrious example.

c In allusion to other words of the same prophet, we may say.] I think it would be a very unnecessary labour, to endeavour to prove that these words are an exact translation of the passage referred to; or to show that passage to be a prophecy of the success of the gospel. The context in Isa. xxxiii. refers to the deliverance of Judea from Sennacherib; and the 18th verse describes the Jews as reviewing and meditating on the terror into which they had been thrown; and then crying out in a noble exultation over all the baffled schemes of the enemy: Where is the scribe that mustered the forces? Where the receiver, or paymaster, who distributed money or stores among them; Where the engineer, that counted the towers, to determine where the attack might most conveniently be made? In a bold and beautiful allusion to, and imitation of, these words, though with very different ideas, the apostle proceeds, in the animated clause that follows, to triumph over the oppositions of human science in its various forms, when levelled against God's victorious gospel.

d Sage, *scribe, disputer.*] Notwithstanding all the learned pains which Dr. Fuller, in his *Miscellanies*, (*lib.* iii. *cap.* 7.) or Goodwin, in his *Hebrew Antiquities*, (*lib.* ii. *cap.* 6.) have taken to prove that these *three words* refer to *three orders* of learned men among the Jews—*the natural philosopher*, and *the literal*, and the *allegorical interpreter of scripture*; I rather think the apostle meant to include persons most eminent for their learning and sagacity, whether among Jews or Gentiles. The sages of the latter, and scribes

world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

admired for the subtilty of his reasoning, and accuracy of his distinctions? As God of old delivered his people, in spite of all the proud preparations and insolent boastings of the Assyrians, not by their own counsels or arms, but by his almighty power; so doth he now conduct his grand design for the immortal happiness of his chosen. Look upon the dispensation of the gospel as now administered, and say, *hath not God made the wisdom of this world* appear to be *foolish* and vain, when the highest results of it are compared with those great effects which he knows how to produce without it, and even in opposition to it all. SECT. 3. 1 COR. I. 20

21 For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For it is indeed so: *since in the wisdom of God,* in the midst of the most stupendous displays of the divine wisdom with which they were always surrounded, *the world, by* all the improvements of its boasted *wisdom, knew not* the living and true *God,* but ran into the wildest and most absurd sentiments that can be imagined concerning the Deity; (some of them absolutely denying it, and others representing it under the most monstrous notions and forms;) when this I say was generally the case, *it pleased God, by* that which they have impiously ridiculed as *the* most egregious *folly of preaching,* by preaching, which is indeed destitute of all the wisdom of which they boast, *to save* multitudes; and those, not such as are the most artful cavillers, or the most sagacious reasoners, but *those that* with honest simplicity and plainness of heart, *believe* what is credibly testified to them, and taught by a superior authority. 21

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

For whereas the Jews demand a sign[e] from heaven to introduce a Messiah, who shall establish a temporal kingdom, victorious over all their enemies; *and the Greeks seek* a depth of *wisdom* and philosophy, or the ornaments of eloquence and charms of address; 22

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

We nevertheless, conscious of our high commission, and faithful to our important trust, without regarding at all the unreasonable and petulant demands of either, go on plainly to *preach Christ crucified; to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block,*[f] being most directly contrary to all their secular expectations; *and foolishness* in the abstract, *to the Greeks,*[g] who treat it as a low and idle tale, hardly worth the least degree of notice: 23

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

But to those who are by divine grace effectually *called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ,* amidst all the dishonours of his cross, is known and acknowledged as *the power of God and the wisdom of God;* to the converted Jews his mission is confirmed by miraculous evidence, and the accomplishment of prophecies, far more important than any event which their carnal brethren expect; and the believing Gentile finds it infinitely fuller of divine wisdom and goodness to a lost world, than any system of philosophy that was ever invented. 24

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

And well may they thus judge *because* what *the* world profanely censures as a *folly* most unworthy *of God,*[h] *is,* and in its effects appears to be, incomparably *wiser than* all the projects which the wit of *men* can devise; *and* what it impiously insults, as *the weakness of* christian teachers, which it charges them with falsely ascribing to *God,* being really his own work, will be found to be *stronger than* all the efforts which *men* can make, either to reform the world any other way, or to obstruct the prevalency and success of this: and this is the necessary consequence of its being indeed divine. 25

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:*

And *for* the farther illustration of this thought, let me call you to *behold,* and seriously to contemplate *your calling,*[i] *brethren;* consider the state of your fellow-christians in general, and even of those who are employed as ministers of the gospel, and you will perceive [*there are*] *not many wise according to the flesh,* according to those maxims which a sensual world governs itself by, in its principles of secular policy; there are *not many mighty* heroes renowned for their martial courage, there are *not many* of *noble* birth and illustrious rank among men, to be found on their list. 26

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

But God hath chosen those that are reputed *the foolish things of the world, that he may shame the wise* men of whom it is most ready to boast; *and the weak things of the world,* who pretend to no extraordinary strength or valour, *hath God chosen, that he may,* by their heroic patience under the severest sufferings, *shame its mighty things,* which have never been able, with all their boasted fierceness, to equal that meek fortitude with which we trace the footsteps of the Lamb of God: 27

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea,* and things which are

And ignoble things of the world hath God chosen, and things most commonly and scornfully *set at nought*[k] among men; yea, *and things which are* 28

of the former, are well known; and the disputer of the age may include such of both, as, proud of their natural sagacity, were fond of engaging in controversies, and fancied they could confute every adversary. If, as Mr. Locke supposes, the chief leader of the faction against St. Paul (whom that learned and ingenious writer styles the false apostle) called himself a scribe, there will be a peculiar propriety in the use of the word here; but without that supposition, it might easily be understood by the Corinthians, who had so considerable a synagogue of Jews among them.

e *The Jews demand a sign,* &c.] When we consider how many miracles were continually wrought by and upon the first preachers and converts of christianity, this may seem an astonishing demand; but from a memorable passage in Josephus, in which he speaks of an impostor, promising his followers to show them a sign of their being set at liberty from the Roman yoke, compared with their requiring from Christ, amidst the full torrent of his *miracles, a sign from heaven;* I am led to conclude, that the sense given in the paraphrase is the genuine interpretation of this much controverted passage. See the paraphrase and note on Matt. xii. 38. p. 126. and Matt. xvi. 1. p. 177.

f *To the Jews indeed a stumbling-block.*] It is well known, that nothing exposed christianity more to the contempt of the Jews than the doctrine of the cross; they therefore called Christ in derision תלוי, *Tolvi, the man that was hanged,* that is, on the *cross;* and christians עבדי תלוי, *Abde tolvi, the disciples of the crucified malefactor;* and by a *paronomasia,* or maliguant playing on the word, they called איוון גלון, *Aven gelon, a revelation of vanity.* See Leigh's *Critica Sacra, in loc.*

g *To the Greeks foolishness.*] It is well known how profanely Lucian insults the christians, on worshipping a *crucified impostor;* and many of the fathers speak of the same reproach. Archbishop Tillotson appears to have given credit to the charge brought against the Jesuits, who, to avoid the like offence of the Chinese, denied that *Christ was crucified,* and represented it as an invention of the Jews to asperse christianity. Tillotson's *Works,* Vol. II. p. 284.

h *The folly of God, &c.*] As it is absolutely impossible that there should be either *folly* or *weakness* in God, so it is certain that the world did not in general believe that there was; and consequently these strong phrases must be used in a very peculiar sense, and must mean that scheme which was really *his,* though the world, for want of understanding it, represented it as *weakness* and *folly* unworthy of God.

i *Your calling.*] L'Enfant renders it, *those among you who are called:* which, with many other passages in this version, retains the sense, but departs from the exactness of St. Paul's expression.

k *Things set at nought.*] Agreeable to this, the Danish mission-

SECT. 3. 1 COR. I. *not* in the least regarded, but overlooked as if they had no being, and were below contempt itself, hath God chosen, *that he may abolish* and annihilate *things that are* in the highest esteem, and make the most illustrious figure among the children of men: *That* his great end of humbling us might be more effectually secured, and that *no flesh might boast* of any advantages or distinctions *in his presence*. *For* on the whole, all we have 30 that is worth mentioning, we receive from Christ; and we receive it from him as the gift of God, since it is *of him*, and his free mercy and grace, that *ye are* called to share *in* the blessings given by *Christ Jesus* his Son. He exhibits this blessed Saviour to us, and disposes our hearts to accept of him, *who*, amidst our ignorance and folly, *is made of God unto us* a source of *wisdom; and* through him, guilty as we are, we receive *righteousness;* polluted as we are, we obtain *sanctification; and* enslaved as we naturally are to the power of our lusts, and the dominion of Satan, we obtain by him complete *redemption*.[m] 31 So *that* we may now indeed boast of our happy change, in whatever point of light it be considered; but it is a boast not of insolent presumption, but humble gratitude; *as it is written*, (Jer. ix. 23, 24; Isa. lxv. 16.) "*He that boasteth let him boast in the Lord*, "and in this, that he knoweth me who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteous-"ness on the earth."

not, to bring to nought things that are;

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY divine grace form the taste of ministers and their hearers more to this doctrine of Christ crucified! May he VER. 17 every where be preached, and that be accounted the truest wisdom of words by which his cross may become most efficacious. There cannot be surely a more evident demonstration of folly, or a more dreadful token of approaching 18 ruin, than despising the wisdom of God and the power of God. If we are ever shaken by that contempt for the gospel which so many are continually ready in our age to express, let us recollect what glorious effects it hath pro- 21 duced; whilst, in the midst of such illustrations of the wisdom of God, the world by all its wisdom knew not its Maker; how many believers have been saved, how many by believing are daily brought into the way of salvation! 20 In this view let us triumphantly say, *Where is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world?* what has wisdom, learning, disputation done in comparison of what the plain and simple doctrine of a crucified Saviour has wrought, and is continually working? Let us earnestly pray that God would, by the power of his grace, disperse the preju- 23 dices of men; that the Jews may not so demand a sign, as that Christ crucified should be a stumbling-block to 24 them, nor the most learned of the Gentiles so seek after science, as that the wisdom of God should seem foolishness to them; but that both may join in feeling and owning how divinely wise and how divinely powerful the dispensation of the gospel is.

26, 27 Let us not be offended with our calling, though so few of the wise, the mighty, and the noble, partake of its benefits. If God hath chosen the weak things, they shall confound the mighty; and the foolish, they shall shame the wise. Never shall we find ourselves truly happy till we come to feel that we are naturally foolish and guilty, polluted and enslaved; and that our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, are in Christ, 30 who is made unto us of God, all this, and indeed all in all. Then shall we know, and not till then, what true 31 glory means, even when we can abase ourselves to the dust in his presence, and have learned only to glory in the Lord.

SECTION IV.

The apostle farther illustrates the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence when he came among the Corinthians; and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach, which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit; their nature being so wonderful that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught. 1 Cor. ii. 1, *to the end.*

1 COR. ii. 1.

SECT. 4. 1 COR. II. I HAVE observed that the design of God in the gospel is of a very humbling nature, admirably calculated to stain the pride of human glory, and bring men to boast in him alone. *And* with truth and pleasure *I* can say to you, my *brethren*, that in perfect harmony with this wise and excellent scheme, *when I* first *came among you, I came not with the pomp of language*[a] *or* worldly *wisdom*, with the laboured charms of eloquence or philosophy: 1 for I remembered that I was *declaring to you* no human invention, which needed or admitted such ornaments or recommendations, but was exhibiting *the testimony of God* to a plain fact, for which I produced authentic evidence by visible divine operations. I therefore endeavoured to exhibit it in as intelligible a way as I could, and treated it as one who be- 2 lieved that it really came from God, and so needed not the varnishing of human art. *For I* was previously *determined* in my mind, *that*, fond as I knew you were of refined speculation and polite address, *I would* appear to *know*,[b] and employ myself to make known,

1 COR. ii. 1.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you,

avies tell us, that most of the Malabarian converts were the poorest of the people; the poets and wits, who valued themselves upon their genius, learning, and politeness, despising the gospel, and doing their utmost to oppose its progress. See Nieuchamp's excellent *History* of this important mission.

l *Things which are not.*] Dr. Whitby shows here how well this represents the supreme contempt in which the Jews held the Gentiles. Compare Deut. xxxii. 21; Isa. xl. 17.

m *Wisdom, righteousness, &c.*] Bos would render the words, *for of him, in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom,) ye are righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, that is, completely justified, sanctified, and redeemed.

a *The pomp of language.*] This certainly alludes to the vain affectation of sublimity and subtilty so common among the Greeks of that age, and very remote from the true eloquence in which (as was observed above) our apostle did so remarkably excel. L'Enfant thinks he refers to his not being perfectly master of the Greek language in all its purity and elegance, with which the Corinthians spoke it; but I prefer the former sense as more suitable to the original.

b Appear to *know*.] In that sense the word γινωσκω is used by

save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling:

4 And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the rulers of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man

SECT. 4. 1 COR. II.

nothing among you[c] *but Jesus* as the *Christ*, the great promised Messiah of the Jews, *even that crucified person*[d] against whom so many scandals are raised. Yet did I resolve steadily to maintain the doctrine of his cross, and endeavour to exalt its honours wherever I came, not excepting your opulent and polite city. *And* to this plan you know I resolutely adhered, though *I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling;* for I know I had enemies about me on every side, (Acts xviii. 6, 9.) and laboured under natural disadvantages, (2 Cor. x. 10.) and the force of the prejudice which I had to encounter was strong. *And* you well know, that *my speech* in private, *and my preaching* in public, [*was*] *not in the persuasive discourses of human wisdom*,[e] eloquence, or philosophy, nor with that pomp and sophistry of argument which the learned men of the world are so ready to affect. *But* far from being contemptible on that account, it had other much nobler recommendations: for it was *in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*, by the most convincing evidence, arising both from the prophecies of the Old Testament inspired by the Holy Ghost, and from the miraculous energy which he hath exerted in and by the apostles, and other ministers of the New. And on this I laid the whole stress; *that your faith should not depend on the wisdom*, reason, or address *of men, but on the power of God*, a much surer foundation, which shows how little reason you have to value yourselves on any appearance of the former.

Nevertheless, though we want what is commonly called human wisdom, yet *we speak* the truest and most excellent *wisdom among those who are perfect*, and, if I may so express it, completely initiated into these divine mysteries; such well-instructed and experienced souls will bear witness to its incomparable excellence. *But* we speak *not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world:* nor that which is admired and sought by the great politicians of the age, whether Jews or Gentiles, *who nevertheless shall* soon *be brought down* and abolished, shall find difficult and dreadful scenes arising, in which all their boasted sagacity and penetration will be of no avail.[f] *But we*, taught of God to despise the transient vanities which delude them, *speak* what must be infinitely more worthy your most attentive consideration and regard, for it is *the wisdom of God* himself *in a mystery:* that mysterious wisdom, *which was* long *hidden* and entirely unknown, and now appears to contain wonders which no understanding of man or angel can fully penetrate; even that wisdom *which God from eternal ages*[g] *predetermined* in the secret of his own all-comprehending mind, *for* the great purposes of *our* final salvation and *glory*.[h] A wisdom this, *which none of the* Jewish *rulers of this* our *age*, or of the heathen that were concerned in it, *knew; for if they had* indeed *known* [*it*,] *they would not by any means*[i] *have* presumed to have *crucified* one so greatly their superior as *the Lord of glory:* wicked as they were, they would for their own sakes have been afraid to attack the Son of God, his long-promised Messiah, had they been thoroughly apprized of his high character and dignity. *But* [*this is*] *as it is written*,[k] (Isa. lxiv. 4.) when the prophet, speaking of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, says, *Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, what* glorious *things God hath prepared for them that love him.* Nor had the generality of mankind, or even the people who enjoyed the benefit of the Jewish scripture, any just conception of the nature of this sublime plan, and the method by which it was to be accomplished. *But God hath revealed* [*them*] *to us* christians, and especially to us his apostles, *by* the extraordinary inspiration of *his Spirit*, who intimately and fully knows them: *for the Spirit searcheth* and penetrates *all things, even the deep things of God*, the profoundest mysteries of his counsels, and his gospel. (Compare Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. i. 9; chap. iii. 3, 5, 7.) And well may he be acquainted with all these things; *for who of mankind knoweth the things of a man*, the secret recesses of his mind, on many occasions, and in many cir-

Pindar, (*Olymp.* xiii.) and it is most natural to give it that signification here.

c *Among you.*] There seems a peculiar emphasis in this expression, as if the apostle had said, I did not change my usual method at Corinth, and you know with what glorious success it was attended.

d *Even that crucified person:* και τουτον εσταυρωμενον.] The Jews and heathens probably gave Christ this name by way of contempt; but St. Paul declares that instead of concealing this as an infamy and scandal, it was the main thing he insisted upon: as indeed all the most important doctrines of the gospel stand in a close and natural connexion with it. And no doubt but he took them in that connexion; for he refers in the course of these Epistles to several doctrines relating to the Father and the Holy Spirit as what he had taught them, though not expressly included in the doctrine of the crucifixion.

e *Persuasive discourses of human wisdom.*] This seems to be the just rendering of the expression πειθοις ανθρωπινης σοφιας λογοις, and so, I think, it is rendered by the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray.

f Politicians of the age, &c.] Mr. Locke insists upon it, as an observation of great importance, that αιων αυτος, generally signifies *the Jewish economy:* and supposes that the apostle here also aims a silent stroke at the Jewish teacher that set himself up in opposition to him, and refers to the approaching destruction of the Jews by the Romans. And M. L'Enfant agrees with this, only explaining it of the learned rabbies of their synagogues. But as the Jewish magistrates, or scribes, were not the only princes in crucifying Christ, (compare Acts iv. 27.) and as the word αιων has sometimes undoubtedly a more extensive signification, (compare Rom. xii. 2; Gal. i. 4; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12; and even in this Epistle, chap. iii. 18. and the next chapter, iv. 4.) and as St. Paul's observation here may so well be applied to Gentile as well as Jewish princes, I saw no reason for limiting the sense, which I never chuse to do, without some apparent necessity. On the same principle, I have receded from Mr. Locke's interpretation of the next verse.

g *From eternal ages.*] To what I have just said of my reasons for not interpreting this of the time of setting up the Jewish economy, I must add, that it signifies little to endeavour to bring such expressions down to any period of time. If it be granted, that they intend any thing previous to the existence of those to whom they refer, the same difficulties will still lie in the way; nor is it possible to avoid them.

h *Our* final salvation and *glory.*] L'Enfant explains this of the *glory of the apostles*, in being appointed to publish this revelation; but the sense we have given equally suits the phrase, and is much more sublime and important.

i *Not by any means.*] Ουκ αν, is an expression which seems to have this force. Compare Luke xxiii. 34.

k *As it is written*, &c.] The context in Isa. lxiv. may well be explained to express *the church's earnest desire of the manifestation of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom;* and I think it more probable that this is a quotation of those words, with some little variation, than that it refers to a passage said to have been found in an apocryphal book ascribed to Elijah, (which probably was a forgery of much later date than this time,) where these words are indeed extant, being perhaps transcribed from St. Paul.

SECT. 4. 1 COR. II.

cumstances, *unless it be the spirit of a man which is in him*[l] which knows it by consciousness, to a degree of certainty which no observation or reasoning can produce in another: *so also no one knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God* himself, who is intimately conscious of all, and can conceal or discover whatever he pleases.

which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 *Now* this is entirely to the present purpose; for *the Spirit, which we have received, is not that of the world*, nor do we govern ourselves by those carnal views which engross and enslave so great a part of mankind; *but* we have received, in large and liberal supplies, *that Spirit which is from God*, and which is the noblest of his gifts to the children of men, by which their minds are both informed and regulated; *that* so *we might* both notionally and experimentally *know the things which are freely given us by God: Which we also* make it our business to *speak*, and to communicate to others, *not in words dictated by human wisdom*, to excite men's curiosity, amuse their imaginations, or gain their applause; *but in those dictated by the Holy Spirit*;[m] and so consequently best adapted to convey such ideas as he would impart, and to impress the hearts and consciences of men with a reverent and deep sense of those holy mysteries; and this we do with all serious care and attention, *explaining such spiritual* and sublime *things by spiritual*[n] [*words*,] suggested by him as best adapted to them. *But* in the mean time, vain and foolish men find a great deal in our preaching to cavil at, and object against. And it is no wonder they do; for *the animal man*,[o] who continues under the influence of his appetites and passions, and is a stranger to the noble exercises and principles of the divine life, *receiveth not*, with any inward relish or sense, *the things of the Spirit of God*, which are too sublime and refined for his low, corrupted, and degenerate taste: *for* in proportion to the degree in which *they are* full of divine wisdom, they will appear *foolishness to him; neither can he* rightly *know* [*them*] whilst he continues in his present state, and under such unhappy prejudices as these: *for they are spiritually discerned*, and a man must have a spiritual taste, formed by the influences of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, before he will thoroughly enter into their excellence. *But the spiritual man*, whose heart, illuminated and sanctified by the Divine Spirit, is set on spiritual and noble objects, *discerneth all things* about him rightly, *while he himself is discerned by no man;* by none of those who are most forward and heady in their censures; but remains like a man endowed with sight, among those born blind, who are incapable of apprehending what is clear to him, and amidst their own darkness cannot participate of nor understand those beautiful ideas and pleasing sensations which light pours upon him.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 And surely, if you consider matters aright, you cannot much wonder at this: *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath instructed him?*[p] There must undoubtedly be in the divine counsels many secret and hidden things, and a man must have a mind capacious as that of the blessed God himself, to take upon him to judge of his schemes, and arraign his conduct. *But we*, even I Paul and my brother-apostles, *have the mind of Christ*,[q] who is the incarnate wisdom of God himself; and therefore we are not to be called to the bar of those who arrogantly pretend, merely on the foot of human reason, to censure us, as some of your presumptuous teachers do, to their own shame, and the detriment of those that hearken to their suggestions.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

VER. 2 LET it be the resolution of every christian, and especially the determination of every minister, with St. Paul, to know nothing but Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified: to esteem this the most important of all knowledge, 1 to cultivate it in their own minds, and endeavour to propagate it to others. With this divine science, shall those ministers of the gospel who know least of the excellency of speech and the enticing words of man's wisdom, do more important things for the reformation of the world, and the salvation of souls, than without it the greatest 6 masters of language, or adepts in philosophy, will ever be able to effect. Let the princes of this world boast of the knowledge and refined policy which is so soon to perish, by which so many of their subjects perish, and sometimes themselves before their time. In how many instances does it leave them to imitate the destructive maxims 8 of those who, under pretence of public good, but really under the instigation of the basest private passions, crucified Jesus, the adorable Saviour, the Lord of glory.

May God teach us more of that hidden wisdom which they who are truly initiated into real christianity know, and which opens upon us views and hopes, beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath particularly and

l *The spirit of a man.*] I do not apprehend that the distinction between the *soul* and *spirit*, to which some refer these words, is of great importance in the interpretation of them. They must signify the *perfect acquaintance* with all the divine schemes and purposes which the *Holy Spirit* has, and which the apostle's argument directly proves that no creature can have: so that it seems a glorious proof of the deity of the Spirit, and has accordingly been urged as such, by all who have defended that important doctrine.

m *Those dictated by the Holy Spirit.*] This expression may certainly convince us of the great regard which we ought always to maintain to the words of scripture; and may especially teach ministers how attentively they should study its beauties, and how careful they should be to make it the support of their discourses.

n *Explaining spiritual things, &c.*] This sense of συγκρινοντες occurs, Gen. xl. 8; and Numb. xv. 34. in the LXX.

o *The animal man.*] Without examining all that the learned and judicious Dr. Owen hath said one way on this text, or Dr. Claget and Dr. Stebbing another, I have taken that which seems to me the due medium, and for the farther vindication of this exposition, must refer to Clifford, in the second volume of the *Phœnix*, p. 544. and to my *Third Letter* to the author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 39, 40. only reminding my reader, that this very word ψυχικος is rendered *sensual*, Jam. iii. 15; Jude, ver. 19.

p *Who hath instructed him?*] Some good interpreters, and particularly Mr. Pyle and Dr. Guyse, explain this of the *spiritual man*; but it seems more agreeable to the construction and its connexion with what follows, by *him* to understand *God*.

q *We have the mind of Christ.*] This part of the Epistle is very artificially conducted. He is now aiming at the great point of establishing his authority, which had been suspected, amongst them; yet he does not directly propose, but obliquely insinuate, arguments against such suspicions; arguments which might possess their minds before they were aware of what he intended to effect by them. This important remark will often present itself to the attentive reader of St. Paul's Epistles.

fully entered into the heart of man to conceive. There is no need we should distinctly conceive it. It is enough that we know in the general it is what God hath prepared for them that love him; which consideration may surely teach us to trample under our feet that which he so often bestows on them who hate him, and are abhorred by him; on those with whom he is angry every day. SECT. 4. 1 COR. II.

May that Spirit which searcheth all things, even the hidden things of God, give us more deeply and affectionately to know the things which are freely given us of God, and to adore that free grace from which we receive them! These things we learn with the highest advantage from the holy scriptures, where they are delivered in words which the Holy Ghost taught: in words, therefore, the most admirably adapted to express those spiritual and sublime ideas they were intended to communicate: In which words, consequently, we learn to speak of the things of God with the exactest propriety and the truest edification. 12 13

May we be enabled spiritually to discern them, with whatever contempt they may be treated by natural, that is, by animal men; by those who, though conceited of their rational powers, can relish little or nothing but what relates to this low and sensual life. Conscious of that inward discerning which discovers all things to us in their true light, even things of infinite importance, may we pity that undiscerning rashness of blind arrogance and pride, with which some who think themselves the wisest in proportion to the degree in which they are the most wretched, of mankind, may treat us, and not only us, but that gospel which is our glory and our joy. We have the mind of Christ delivered to us by his holy apostles, who were intimately and miraculously instructed in it. Let us humbly receive the oracles they deliver; and whilst others are presuming haughtily to censure them, may we think ourselves happy, if, with meek subjection to their unerring authority, we may sit at the feet of such teachers, and regulate our lives by their instructions. 14 15 16

SECTION V.

The apostle reproves the carnality of the Corinthians, in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper. 1 Cor. iii. 1—9.

1 COR. iii. 1.

AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

I HAVE been speaking of that great plainness with which I addressed myself to you when I came to preach the gospel among you at Corinth: *and I* hope, my *brethren*, you will not despise me for it; for truly, as it became my character as an apostle of Christ, so it suited yours, as being under the power of prejudices, which so far prevailed, that even when you were converted to the profession of christianity, I *could not speak unto you as unto spiritual* persons, who had made any attainments in religion, proportionable to the illuminations and influences of the Spirit, which you had received: *but* was obliged in many instances to address you *as* those who were still, in too great a measure, *carnal* in your temper and views, and therefore were but *as babes in Christ*,[a] and beginners in the divine life. I might have said sublimer things, and in a more elevated manner; but found so much pride and faction among you, that it was necessary to insist much upon the plain and fundamental doctrines of the cross, rather than on things which, if they might have suited your inclinations better, would have suited your circumstances less. *I* was forced to preach to you, as to persons weak as infants; and so *fed you with milk*,[b] which I did as it were pour into your mouths with a tenderness like that of a mother, or a nurse, when feeding her sucking child; *and* could not conveniently feed you with *strong meat*. I waved discoursing on some of those doctrines which left room for the curiosities of sublimer speculation, and admitted of the greatest ornaments of discourse,[c] *because ye were not* then *able* [*to bear it,*] *nor* indeed *are ye yet able;* as I perceive by the account which our brethren give of your present state. *For* it evidently appears, by what I hinted above, that *ye are yet carnal*, still under the influence of weak and indeed sinful prejudices. I appeal to your own consciences on this occasion *for* the proof of this: *while* [*there is*] *emulation, and contention, and factions among you, are you not* indeed *carnal? and do ye not walk* and conduct yourselves *as* unregenerate *men* do? So that by this behaviour, a stranger would not know that you were christians, or see any thing in you above uninstructed and unsanctified nature. *For when* you eagerly contend about the honours of this or that teacher, and set him up as the head of a distinguishing party; so that *one says, I am for Paul, and another, I* am *for Apollos*,[d] I admire the sublime sentiments of the one, and the fine language and address of the other; *are ye not carnal?* and do ye not talk in the spirit of your heathen neighbours, who have their favourite philosophers and orators too? And is this language for christians? *Who then is Paul? and who* [*is*] *Apollos?* For what reason do you regard either the one or the other? It is for no consideration *but* that of talents, which they have in common with many who are strangers to the gospel? Or ought it not rather to be in a different view? SECT. 5. 1 COR. III. 1 2 3 4 5

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I *am* of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers

a *Babes in Christ.*] By explaining this of *beginners in the divine life*, or such as had made but little proficiency in it, we reconcile this with those passages which speak of the eminence of their gifts. 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 7.

b *Fed you with milk.*] The word εποτισα exactly signifies, *I gave you to drink;* but as that rendering would not suit the other word with which it is connected, *strong meat*, I thought it best to retain our version. Parallel instances to this manner of expression are produced by Mr. Blackwall, in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 72.

c Ornaments of discourse.] If any think that the use of them might have been a proper condescension to their weakness, it is to be remembered that the emulation of eloquence so ready to prevail among them, might have rendered such an indulgence dangerous.

d *I for Apollos.*] Mr. Locke fancies (comparing chap. iv. 6.) that by Apollos, Paul means that Jewish teacher who was set up in opposition to him, and came among them, after he had preached the gospel to them; but it seems much more probable to me, especially from the text just referred to, that he chose this name, that he might give no offence, and to show that he should lament and condemn any division among them, though it were in favour of himself, or the dearest friend he had in the world. I cannot think St. Paul would have described the false apostle, if there were any one person who might be so called, as watering his plantation, which he rather wasted; or have spoken of himself, and that messenger of Satan, as one; as he does, verse 6.

SECT. 5. 1 COR. III.

even because they are the *ministers* of Christ, *by whose means you have* been instructed in his religion, and under whose teachings ye have *believed* and embraced it; and because they have humbly attempted to do their part for this great purpose, *even as the Lord gave to every man* both furniture and success. *I have planted* a christian church among you; *Apollos has* since *watered* it by his affecting and useful addresses, (Acts xviii. 27.)
6 *but* it was *God* who *gave the increase*, and caused the plantation thus watered to grow: no labourer can make his seed spring up without the influence of heaven, sunshine, and
7 rain. When you come, *therefore*, to compare our part with that of God, it appeareth even as nothing in the comparison. We freely own, that, how highly soever you may think of us, *he that planteth is nothing* at all, *and he that watereth; but God, who* by his efficacious Spirit and grace *giveth the increase*, is all in all.
8 *But as* for this opposition which you make between us, and this zeal with which you contend for one against another, it is altogether unreasonable and absurd: for *he that planteth and he that watereth are one*;[e] we are united in interest, *and* united in design and affection; so that instead of being pleased, we are rather displeased and grieved, with these invidious comparisons in favour of either. Our great concern is to please our great Lord, to whom we are shortly to give up our account, and from whom *we shall receive every one his own* proper *reward according to his own labour*, and not according to the
9 prejudices of our fellow-servants either for or against us. *For we* are not lords and proprietors of the church, nor persons that have independent schemes of our own to carry on; but we *are the fellow-labourers of God*,[f] the great Master of the family. *Ye are the husbandry of God*, which we are to cultivate, that ye may bring forth fruit for him. [*Ye are*] *the building of God*, which we are to endeavour to advance, that he may dwell in you as in his holy temple, and glorify his name among you.

by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WHO that wishes the welfare of the church of Christ, must not lament those sad remainders of carnality which are often to be found among them who have the greatest advantage for becoming spiritual; while the same contentious principles, fermented no doubt by the same malignant enemy of the whole body, breathe in so many of
3 its members, and diffuse a kind of poison which at once swells and torments it! What envyings, and strife, and factions among those who ought to join as brethren, and to know but one interest! What a desire, in many instances, to increase the burdens of each other, instead of bearing them with friendly sympathy!
4 May christians be cured of this dishonourable and fatal attachment to distinguished parties and human names! May ministers feel more of that generous and noble spirit which this great apostle expresses! His reasoning hath the same force still. Ministers are still intended to be only the instruments of producing and establishing faith in
5, 6, 7 their hearers, and still depend as entirely as ever upon the blessing of God to give the increase to their labours. To that may they daily look, and be sensible that they are nothing without it, and that with it their part is so small that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. May their hands and hearts be more united; and retaining a due sense of
9 the honour which God doth them in employing them in his vineyard and in his building, may they faithfully labour,
8 not as for themselves, but for the great Proprietor, and till the day come when he will remember them in full proportion to their fidelity and diligence.

SECTION VI.

As a useful lesson both to teachers and private christians in the present state of the Corinthian church, the apostle reminds them of that great trial which every man's work was to undergo, the great guilt of defiling God's temple, the vanity of human wisdom in the sight of God, and the great happiness of the true believer in that universal grant which God had made him of every thing necessary to his welfare. 1 Cor. iii. 10, *to the end.*

1 COR. iii. 10.

SECT. 6. 1 COR. III.

I HAVE spoken of you as God's building; and in that view have the pleasure to say, that in my first preaching amongst you, when you were entire strangers to the first principles of the gospel, *according to* the measure of *the grace of God given to me*; to which I desire to refer the honour of all that I am and of all that I do in this excellent work;
10 I have been enabled *to* act *in the character of a skilful architect* or master-builder: for with all due care and application *have I laid the* great *foundation*, which hath strength sufficient to bear all the stress even of our eternal hopes. *And* one and *another*, whom God calls to labour among you, *buildeth thereon*, for the farther edification of your church, and of the souls of its particular members: *but let every one* carefully *see to it, how he*
11 *buildeth thereon*, and what superstructure he raises. This is all indeed that remains to be done; *for other* solid *foundation no one is able to lay beside what is* already *laid, which is Jesus Christ*,[g] the great foundation-stone which God hath laid in Zion, elect and precious; and I take it for granted, no one who calls himself a christian will attempt

1 COR. iii. 10.

ACCORDING to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[e] *Are one.*] This is (as Mr. Cradock well observes in his *Apost. Hist.* p. 156.) another cogent argument against divisions: that, though their labours were different and their rewards proportionable, yet they had in the general *one office*, and were employed as *workers together by God* to plant the seeds of grace and holiness in the souls of men, and to bring them on to perfection. He here introduces an excellent discourse of the happy consequences of the faithfulness in the ministerial work, and the awful account of it to be given up to God: a subject familiar to his own mind, and so proper for their teachers, that if it render the Epistle something less regular, it balances the account by rendering it so much more useful.

[f] *The fellow-labourers of God.*] This is the exact import of συεργοι Θεου, which our version renders, *labourers together with God*: an improper rendering on every account.

[g] *Which is Jesus Christ.*] L'Enfant would render it, *even this, that Jesus is the Christ*: but I think the sense given in our text much nobler.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

to lay any other. *If any man build*, I say, *upon this foundation*, let him look to the materials and nature of his work; whether he raise a stately and magnificent temple upon it, adorned, as it were, like the house of God at Jerusalem, with *gold* and *silver*, [*and*] large, beautiful, and *costly stones*; [*or*] a mean hovel, consisting of nothing better than planks of *wood* roughly put together, and thatched with *hay* [*and*] *stubble*: that is, let him look to it, whether he teach the substantial, vital truths which do indeed belong to christianity, and which it was intended to support and illustrate; or set himself to propagate vain subtilties and conceits on the one hand, or legal rites and Jewish traditions on the other; which, though they do not absolutely destroy the foundation, disgrace it, as a mean edifice would do a grand and expensive foundation, laid with great pomp and solemnity. But to prevent this, let me seriously admonish you, that whatever any man's work may be, and however it may be covered, and, as it were, hid behind the scaffolding, *every one's work shall* ere long *be made manifest*. *For the* great *day* which is approaching *shall lay it open, because it shall* then *be*, as it were, *discovered by fire; yea, the fire* of that great day of general conflagration, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, *shall prove every man's work, of what kind it is*.[b] It shall stand a severe examination, which will as soon expose the vanity of many things which some admired preachers value themselves upon, and for which they are extolled by their hearers, as the flame of some mighty burning shows the difference between the stability of a straw roof and a marble wall. And then *if any man's superstructure abide* the test, and be approved, he will not only have the comfort of it in his own mind, which is an immediate and permanent satisfaction, but *he shall* also *receive a* glorious *reward* from Christ, the great Head of the church, and Proprietor of the building, in comparison with which the applauses of men, or any thing they can bestow, deserve not to be mentioned by the name of a reward. *But if any man's work be* then *burnt* up, if on that trial it be found like the combustible and mean materials which I represented by the wood, the hay, and the stubble, the consequence is, that *he will sustain a* proportionable *loss*.[c] He will find he has been spending his time and strength to little purpose, and has lost a great deal of that reward which he might, through divine grace, have secured, had he applied himself with vigour and zeal to the proper labours of a gospel-minister. *Yet*, if he be upon the whole a good man, who hath built upon Christ as the Foundation, and, on the terms of the gospel, committed his soul to him, *he shall be saved*, and find mercy of the Lord; *though* in comparison with that more abundant entrance into his kingdom which others will have, it may be said, that he is saved with extreme difficulty, and as a man whose house is in flames while he is in it, and who is therefore forced with great terror to escape *through the fire*,[d] sustaining the loss of every thing but his life.

SECT. 6. 1 COR. III. 12

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

Again, before I dismiss this topic of your being the building of God, let me lead you into some farther reflections, and ask you seriously, *Know ye not that you are the temple of God?* that the whole body of christian converts is dedicated to his peculiar service, *and* honoured by his most gracious presence, as *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, and you thereby appear to be consecrated to himself? Now *if any one* defile or *destroy the temple of God*, it may well be apprehended, that *God*, ever jealous of his own honour, *will destroy him*. And you may assure yourselves from this view, that whatever preaching, or whatever conduct, tends to diminish its purity and glory, will be very severely resented by him; even much more than the violation of the place, (great as that impiety and provocation was,) where he so long caused his name to dwell upon Mount Zion. *For the temple of God*, considered as such, *is* undoubtedly *holy*, and awful. Much more then must that be so, which he hath erected by his grace in the breasts of intelligent creatures, and sanctified to himself, as the everlasting residence of his peculiar complacency. (Compare Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 1, 2.) *Now ye are this* [*temple*;] each of you, if a true christian, is such a sacred shrine, and the whole christian church the complete and magnificent building. It therefore becomes every member of it to be very careful how he behaves, and

b *The day shall prove every man's work.*] It is so very unnatural with Dr. Whitby to interpret this of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of any approaching persecutions of the christian church, that one cannot but wonder that critics of character should have adopted such a sense.

c *Sustain a* proportionable *loss.*] I cannot but fear that an application to such niceties of unprofitable learning as those in which some who have the charge of souls spend almost the whole of their time, to the neglect of the vitals of christianity, will be found in this day lost labour. Though such as employ themselves chiefly to inculcate in their preaching, *doctrines, ceremonies*, or *forms of human invention*, come nearer the case immediately referred to here. L'Enfant refers this *loss* to the reproach and shame which such shall suffer before the tribunal of Christ.

d *Through the fire.*] To be as *a brand plucked out of the burning*, is well known, as a proverbial expression, to signify a narrow escape from extreme danger. Compare Zec. iii. 2; Amos iv. 11; and especially Isa. xxxiii. 11, 12, to which some have thought the apostle here alludes. Διὰ πυρὸς, (Jude 23.) is put for passing *through the fire*, as δι' ὕδατος, (1 Pet. iii. 20.) signifies to be saved from the *water*, by passing *through it*, as the ark did. The learned Elsner, who urges and illustrates these instances, shows that the most approved heathen writers use the phrase in this sense. (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 78.) Many divines have well shown how far this text is from giving any support to a popish purgatory. And though Mr. Fleming follows many of the ancient fathers, in explaining it of some terror or pain which christians of very imperfect character may be exposed to, when they rise (as he supposes they will) amidst the flames of the last conflagration, (Flem. *First Recur.* p. 44.) the text will admit so fair a sense on the interpretation here given, that I cannot persuade myself from hence, without further evidence, that numbers of holy souls, who have long been glorified in heaven, will be re-united to their bodies, which are to be raised in glory, to be in the first moments of that union *terrified* and *tormented*; though it should be but for ever so short a time. That the pagans, as well as some of the Fathers, had a notion of some such purgatory, Elsner has shown in the passage cited above.

e *You are the temple of God.*] Elsner hath many fine passages here, from Philo, Plato, and other writers, in which they represent a virtuous mind as the *temple of God*, and in which heathens speak in the highest and strongest terms of the obligations men are under to keep his temples *inviolate* and *unpolluted*. And if, as Mr. Locke supposes, Paul's chief opposer was a Jew, the vast veneration he would of course have for the temple at Jerusalem, would add great weight to this argument with respect to him and his followers.

SECT. 6. what he teaches among you, lest he should commit an evil, of the enormity of which he may not be immediately aware.

1 COR. III. I know there are those among you whose pride and self-conceit may lead them to despise this admonition, especially as coming from me; but *let no one deceive himself* with vain speculations of his own worth and abilities. *If any one of you seem to be wise*
18 *in this world*, if he value himself upon what is commonly called wisdom among Jews or Gentiles, *let him become a fool, that he may be wise* indeed. Let him humbly acknowledge his own natural ignorance and folly, and embrace that gospel which the wisdom of the world proudly and vainly derides as foolishness, if he desire to approve himself really and substantially wise, and to reap at last the honours and rewards of those who are truly
19 so in the sight of God. *For* all *the* boasted *wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, who with one glance sees through all its vanity; *as it is written*, (Job v. 13.) *He entangleth the wise in their own* crafty *artifice*, often ruining them by those designs which they had formed with the utmost efforts of human policy, and were most intent
20 upon executing. *And again*, it is said elsewhere, (Psal. xciv. 11.) *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.* He sees how they ensnare themselves in their own subtilties, and, when they think themselves most sagacious, are only amused with their own sophistry and deceit.

21 *Therefore*, upon the whole, (that I may return to the point from whence I set out,) considering all I have said, and especially considering in what view the great God regards these things which we are so ready to value ourselves upon, *let none glory in men*, or divide themselves into parties, out of attachment to this or that teacher. *For all things are yours*, and we, in particular, are to be regarded, not as your lords and commanders,
22 that you should list under our banners; but rather as your servants. I except not myself, or the most honoured among my brethren; *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas*, be in question, we are all equally yours, to serve you to the utmost of our abilities, in the advancement of your best interests. Yea, I may go farther, and say, *whether* we speak of *the world*, God will give you so much of it as shall be for your real good; and indeed he supports its whole frame in a great measure for your sakes; *or* if we survey *life*, in all its various conditions, *or death*, and all its solemn harbingers and attendants, God will make the one *or* the other, in different views, advantageous to you, and will adjust the circumstances of both with the kindest regard to your happiness. *Things present, or future*, the comforts and privileges of this life on the one hand, or its afflictions and troubles on the other, and at length, the boundless felicity of the eternal state, where affliction and trouble shall be no more known; *all are*, through the divine grace, *yours*. Remember this, and let the thought raise your minds above these little things which now occasion such contention between you; and be united in love, as God hath united you
23 in privileges and hopes. *And* bear in mind too, as the counterpart of this happy detail, that *ye* [*are*] *Christ's;* his property, his subjects, his people; and let that engage you to attend to his royal law of charity,[f] by which you may be peculiarly known to be his. *And* as *Christ* [*is*] *God's*, and refers all his services as a Mediator to his Father's glory, it will most effectually promote that great end of his appearance, that you should learn such a subjection of soul to him, and imbibe those candid and generous sentiments which I am labouring to produce and cherish in your minds.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

23 And ye *are* Christ's; and Christ is God's.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 21—23 WITH what delight may the christian survey this grand inventory, and, conscious that he is Christ's, call all things his own! With what pleasure survey the various gifts and graces of ministers, and consider them as given by God for his edification! With what complacency look round on things present, and forward on things to come, in this connexion, and call the world his own; and count not only life, but death, amongst his treasures! Both, in their different aspects, are subservient to the happy purpose of glorifying God: and surely, when by death we may do it more effectually, death should be more welcome than life. And welcome it must indeed be to every believer, as the appointed means of transmitting him to the sight and enjoyment of God, and the possession of better blessings than Paul or Apollos could ever describe, or any thing present, or any thing to come in this world, could ever afford.

Let these sublime views elevate the christian above those occasions of contention, which, for want of ascending to such noble contemplations, are often the source of innumerable evils. And let us add to them that other consi-
16, 17 deration, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost; if christians indeed, we are inhabited by God, even by his Spirit. Let this engage us to take the strictest care, neither to defile ourselves, nor to injure our brethren; lest in either view, it should be resented and punished by the holy God, as a sacrilegious profanation.

19 Let us not over-value the wisdom of this world, since it is little regarded by God; nor be greatly concerned, if fools account our wisdom folly, and our life madness. So censured they the prophets and apostles, before us; nor did our Master himself escape the calumny and outrage. We shall be happy enough, if we approve our
11 fidelity to him, and if we build a wise superstructure on Christ, as the great, the only Foundation.

Let his ministers especially be solicitous that they may not lose the labour of their lives, by chusing unhappily to employ them in that which will turn to no account in the great day of his appearing. Let them carefully examine their materials. Surely if they have senses spiritually exercised, it cannot be hard to distinguish between

[f] Royal law of charity.] Nothing could have a greater efficacy to put an end to the contention so prevalent among the christians at Corinth, than the consideration of those high privileges and hopes which were common to them all, as it would tend to sweeten their spirits, and to inspire them with honourable and affectionate sentiments with respect to their brethren.

the substantial and undoubted doctrines of christianity, which are as gold, and silver, and precious stones, and those fictitious, or at best, dubious and intricate, points, which, in comparison with the former, are but wood, and hay, and stubble. And if, in urging these, they passionately inveigh against their brethren, and endeavour to bring them into contempt or suspicion, what do they but cement these combustible materials with sulphur? SECT. 6. 1 COR. III. 13

O! let the frequent views of that last searching fire, that grand period of all, be much in our thoughts; that day, when not only the works of ministers, but every private person, must, as it were, pass through the flames. May we then be saved, not with difficulty, but with praise and honour! May our works, of what kind soever they are, abide, so as to be found worthy of applause, and through divine grace receive a distinguished reward!

SECTION VII.

To lay in a farther remedy against the pride and faction so ready to prevail among the Corinthians, the apostle leads them into several useful reflections on the nature of the ministerial office, the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligations they were under to the divine goodness for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others. 1 Cor. iv. 1—7.

1 COR. iv. 1.

1 COR. iv. 1.

LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

I HAVE told you how rich and happy you are in the divine donation, in consequence of which all things are yours; and particularly, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, with their various gifts and endowments. Learn, therefore, to form your estimate of us aright; and *let a man so account of us,* not as the masters of the church, but *as the servants of Christ,* who are, in obedience to his commands, to wait on his family; esteeming it honour *and* happiness enough, if we approve ourselves as *stewards of the mysteries of God;* as persons whose business it is, with the sincerest regard to his glory, to dispense that gospel which contains such sublime truths, for so many ages concealed from the knowledge of the world. And *as for what remains* to be done in the discharge of this office, I hope we shall always remember, that *it is demanded in stewards, that a man be found faithful;* since they also, as well as lower servants in the family, are subject to account. And accordingly it is my highest ambition that my great Master may judge me faithful, whether my fellow-servants be pleased or displeased with my conduct. And if my fidelity to my Lord may offend them, which is a very supposable case, I am well contented to abide all its consequences. *For* I will freely declare, in this view, *it is with me the smallest thing that can be* imagined, *that I should be judged by you,* dear as you are to me, *or by any man's judgment;* his day will so soon be over, his censures can effect so little, that amidst the great prospects I have before me, it seems scarce to deserve a mention. *Nor* indeed *do I* so *judge myself,* as if my case were finally to be determined by my own apprehensions concerning it. *For* though, I bless God, *I am not conscious to myself of any thing* criminal, of any designed neglect of my office, or unfaithfulness in my trust, *yet I am not hereby justified:*[a] that is not the main thing in question; I know partiality to ourselves may often lead us to overlook many faults, for which God may another day condemn us. *But he that judgeth me,* the Person by whose judgment I am to stand or fall, *is the Lord* Jesus Christ, who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. *Therefore* be strictly careful that ye *judge nothing before the* appointed *time,* that is, *until* he, *the* great *Lord* of all, *shall come, who shall* pluck off the mask of every artful hypocrite, how high soever he may bear himself in the christian church; shall *bring to light the hidden things of darkness,*[b] *and* shall *manifest* all *the* secret *counsels of the hearts.*[c] *And then shall every one have* in the most public manner that *praise from God* before the assembled world, which is proportionable to his real character and conduct.

These things, brethren, I have by a very obvious *figure transferred to myself, and* [*to*] *Apollos;*[d] mentioning our names, and that of Cephas only, instead of many more, since you know the entire friendship there is among us, and how far the names of most about whom you contend are inferior to these. And I have done this not on our account, as you may easily apprehend, but *for your sakes, that you may learn, in* attending to what has been said concerning *us,* distinguished as we are by our office, furniture, and success, *not to entertain too high an opinion of yourselves,* or others whom you are most ready to admire, *above what is* here *written,*[e] and appears reasonable on the principles which have been laid down: *that you may not be puffed up for one* teacher, and *against*

SECT. 7. 1 COR. IV. 1 2 3 4 5 6

2 Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self:

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

a *Yet I am not hereby justified.*] This seems a gentle, but a very affecting, insinuation, that his opponents, confident as they might seem in their own integrity and safety, would do well to take greater heed that they were not imposed upon by the deceitfulness of their own hearts.

b *Bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*] This is a lively and just insinuation that under specious forms his enemies concealed very dark designs, which would not bear the discoveries of that awful day.

c *Manifest all the* secret *counsels of the hearts.*] This passage also suggests a very solid argument against magnifying one minister above another, namely, that the secret principles of men's actions are unknown: and it is enlarged upon to very good practical purposes; while the apostle at the same time takes an opportunity of making a very solemn profession of his own faithfulness, and showing the boldness he had towards God, and his modesty and candour to men; all which were extremely suitable to the general purposes he had in view.

d *Transferred to myself, &c.*] Some, and particularly Mr. Locke, have inferred from hence that not St. Paul and Apollos, but some other persons, were set up among the Corinthians for heads of parties, for whose names the apostle substituted his own and that of his most intimate friend; but the learned and judicious Witsius well observes, (*Meletem.* p. 104.) that it is probable their names were used among some others omitted, and the figure was only this, that the names of St. Paul and Apollos were used to signify themselves and any others so extolled; and when the apostle would say how little ministers were in themselves, he chose out of humility and prudence rather to take such freedom with himself and his most particular and intimate friend than with others.

e *What is here written.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 85.) confirms this interpretation, and produces many instances in which ὑπερ is used to express *having too high an opinion of one's self.* L'Enfant explains it in something of a different sense, "*above what scripture warrants.*"

SECT. 7. 1 COR. IV.

another, which surely you cannot allow with respect to other teachers, when you see us renouncing all such attachment to ourselves. And indeed this would be very unreasonable, if the distinctions were as great as you, or they who have the highest conceit of themselves, can imagine. *For* allowing all that self-love and prepossession can wish, let me ask the man who carries it to the greatest height, *Who maketh thee to differ* [*from another*] in any furniture or attainment, whether intellectual or moral?[f] *And what hast thou* of any kind *which thou didst not receive* from God, the great Parent of universal good? *But if thou hast received* [*it*] all from him, *why dost thou boast* in the gift of his liberal goodness, *as if thou hadst not received* [*it*] from him, but it were originally and essentially thine own? Would you all but seriously reflect upon this, it would teach you humbler sentiments, much more rational in themselves, and, on the whole, much more for your credit as well as comfort.

7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*

IMPROVEMENT.

NOTHING can be more conducive to the advantage of christianity, and, by consequence, of the world, whose happiness is so much concerned in its support and success, than that its preachers should consider, and their hearers
Ver. 1 remember, the nature of their office. They are not lords over God's household and heritage, but ministers of
2 Christ, whose business it is to promote their Master's honour; stewards of his mysteries, who are to endeavour both to keep and to dispense them with all good fidelity. From their Master therefore may they take all their instructions, and to him let them refer all their administrations. Various judgments will be passed upon them; and they who will oppose the attempts of some of their brethren to introduce corruption and confusion into his family, will have many an unkind reflection thrown upon them, and experience the severity of censure for a
3 conduct which merits the justest approbation. But let them learn by this excellent apostle, to be above the judgment of men, and to keep the judgment of the Lord in view; that they may not only be supported under that petulance of their fellow-servants, but may learn to guard against what is much more dangerous, the treachery of their own hearts, and the flattery of self-love; lest they fondly mistake the voice of prejudice for that of conscience, or, in other words, the voice of an erroneous conscience, for that of a conscience well informed.

4 Let us often recollect the narrow limits of our own knowledge that we may learn modesty in our censures of each
5, &c. other. He only can judge who knoweth the heart; and there is a day approaching which will manifest all its secrets. While others, with a pitiable mixture of arrogance and ignorance, judge one another, and judge us, let us rather be concerned that we may secure that praise of God, which will be heard and felt by the soul, with the highest rapture, and will silence every echo of human applause or censure.

7 To conclude: If it hath pleased God, in any respect, to distinguish us from others, by the gifts or graces which he hath bestowed upon us, let us humbly trace these distinctions to their true source; and instead of indulging the least degree of pride on their account, let us rather be the more humble. For surely the more we receive from God, the more we are indebted and obliged; and the more we are obliged to the divine goodness, the greater ought our shame and confusion to be, that we have not answered those obligations by more faithful care and more constant gratitude.

SECTION VIII.

The Apostle, in order to gain farther upon their affections, represents the many hardships and dangers to which he and his brethren were exposed, in comparison of that easy state in which the Corinthians were; and reminding them at the same time of their particular obligations to him, he warns them not to force him on severities, to the use of which he was very averse. 1 Cor. iv. 8, *to the end.*

1 COR. iv. 8.

SECT. 8. 1 COR. IV.

I HAVE suggested some humbling thoughts to your consideration; but I fear you will have little relish for them, as you seem to indulge yourselves in very different views. Am I not rather to congratulate christians, whose rank and figure in the world is so much superior to that of many of the brethren, and even of their first apostle too? For *now you*
8 *are full; now you are rich;* you enjoy so great a degree of prosperity and plenty, that methinks *you have* even *reigned as kings without us:*[a] so happy in a variety of secular enjoyments, that you have hardly missed my company. *And* indeed *I wish you did reign*, in the truest and noblest sense, and were altogether as happy as you think yourselves. I wish the most excellent powers of the human nature had, through divine grace, greater rule and sovereignty in your souls, *that we*, in the midst of all our present distress, *might also reign with you*, and partake of your happiness, in that high degree, in which, if it were sincere and solid, our affection for you would enable us to share it. And surely

1 COR. iv. 8.

NOW ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign; that we also might reign with you.

f Whether intellectual or moral.] I include moral attainments, because the apostle had in the preceding verses been speaking of fidelity in the ministry, and he elsewhere in this Epistle speaks of *obtaining mercy to be faithful*, (chap. vii. 25.) and would be understood as referring not only to his giving us our faculties, but exciting us to the right use of them, both by external calls and advantages, and by inward impressions of his grace on the heart; though still in a manner suited to our free and rational natures, and which, however some may be distinguished by them, leaves all who chuse wrong without excuse, and admits the exercise of justice as well as grace in the final distributions of good and evil. See the paraphrase on chap. iii. 7. which seems very applicable to this clause. Yet as it is certain the Corinthians chiefly gloried in their gifts, and in those of their favourite teachers, I doubt not but it is to these that the apostle chiefly refers in this place, and cannot think that the stress of the controversy relating to the sanctifying influences of divine grace does by any means rest on this passage.

a *You have reigned as kings, &c.*] This is a proverbial expression of the most splendid and plentiful circumstances; and some think when the apostle adds, *I wish ye did reign*, he means, "I wish you "had the authority of princes, that ye might shelter and accommo- "date us amidst all our distresses and afflictions." But one can hardly think he did indeed wish each of them a prince, or the civil power in their hands. It seems much more probable, that as spiritual objects were so familiar to his mind, he changes the idea in the manner the paraphrase expresses; in which sense it seems that christians are called *priests and kings*, (Rev. i. 6.) as it is certain they are called *a royal priesthood*. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) I cannot think with M. L'Enfant, that this refers peculiarly to the factious pastors of the church at Corinth.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

we sufficiently need such consolation as this; *for I think God hath exhibited us, the apostles* of his Son, like those gladiators which are brought out on the stage *last* of all, *as appointed to* certain *death*,[b] and therefore not furnished with weapons of defence, nor allowed so much as a chance of escaping; *for we are* produced, as it were, on a public theatre, and *made a spectacle to the* whole *world* of rational creatures, both *to angels and men*,[c] who are all held in solicitous attention to so strange and tragical a sight. Imagine 9

10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised.

not that I have aggravated the representation; the more you attend to our circumstances, the more you will discern its justice: for *we* [*are*] treated like *fools*, babblers, and madmen, *for the sake of Christ*, (Acts xvii. 18; xxvi. 24.) as if we were the weakest and most ignorant of mankind, because we preach the plain truths of the gospel, and endeavour to the utmost to exalt our Lord. *But ye* [*are*] *wise in Christ;* yè set up for a kind of christian philosophers, of more refined understandings than your brethren, and think you have found out a political way at once of securing the blessings of the gospel, and escaping its inconveniences and persecutions. *We* [*are*] *weak*, in presence, in infirmities, and in sufferings: *but ye* [*are*] *strong*, have great confidence in yourselves, and are got above many of those tender alarms and impressions which hearts like ours are subject to on a variety of occasions: *you* [*are*] *honourable*, adorned with extraordinary gifts, in which you are ready to glory, and many of you set off with circumstances of external distinction; *but we* [*are*] poor *despised* creatures, treated with contempt wherever we come. For *even to this present hour*, after all the battles fought, and all 11

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place,

the conquests already gained by the gospel, we are often exposed to circumstances of the extremest want and misery. Sometimes *we both hunger and thirst*, and amidst our charitable journies to diffuse the gospel, hardly find entertainment of the plainest kind, to relieve our necessities, or money to purchase it. *And* our clothes are so worn out with travelling, and we are so ill-furnished for buying more, that we *are* often almost *naked*,[d] not having decent raiment to wear, though we appear so often in public assemblies. *And* in many instances, where our benevolent and important message is heard, instead of being received with due respect, we *are* insulted and perhaps *buffeted*, by the unruly and barbarous mob; *and* at best, if we now and then meet with a little more hospitable usage, it is for a very little while; for, whereas you dwell in a rich and magnificent city, we *have no certain abode*, but are continually removing from one place to another. *And* though we 12

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it:

are engaged in a work of so great importance to the souls of men, which might well engross all our time and care; yet such are the circumstances in which we are often placed, that we are obliged in duty and prudence to *labour* in some secular calling, *working with our own hands*, to procure the necessary supports of the most frugal and parsimonious life. *Being* in the most insolent and provoking manner *reviled* to our faces, and loaded 13

13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the off-scouring of all things unto this day.

with every opprobrious name of contempt, *we* meekly *bless*, and pray for our enemies; *being persecuted, we endure it* patiently, unable to right and help ourselves. *Being blasphemed*, and spoken of in the most scandalous, and, considering our sacred character, the most impious terms; *we* only *entreat* that men would more impartially examine our pretensions, that they may entertain more favourable sentiments concerning us; and in the mean time, we freely forgive them their rash and injurious censures. And on the whole, such is the usage we meet with, that *we are made* and treated *like the* very *filth of the world*,[e] like the wretches which, being taken from the dregs of the people, are offered as expiatory sacrifices to the infernal deities among the Gentiles, and loaded with curses, affronts, and injuries, in the way to the altars at which they are to bleed: [*or like*] *the refuse of all things to this day*, the very sweepings of the streets and stalls, a nuisance to all around us, and fit for nothing but to be trampled upon by the meanest and vilest of mankind.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.

I do not write these things to shame you, or in any degree to stain your credit with 14 other churches, by such a representation, as if you were unmindful of my sufferings for the gospel; *but* considering the relation in which we stand to each other, and looking upon

b *Last of all.*] I cannot think, as Elsner seems to do, that the word εσχατοι refers to the *low rank* which the apostles held in secular life; or with Messieurs Calvin, Locke, and L'Enfant, that St. Paul speaks of himself as the *last called apostle;* but that there is a reference to the Roman custom of bringing forth those persons on the theatre in the after-part of the day, either to fight with each other, or with wild beasts, who were appointed to certain death, and had not that poor chance of escaping which those brought forth in the morning had. Compare Sen. *Epist. cap.* vii; Reeve's *Apol.* Vol. I. p. 237. Such kind of spectacles were so common in all the provinces, that it is no wonder we should find such an allusion here. The word απεδειξεν, *exhibited*, and θεατρον, *a spectacle on the theatre*, have in this connexion a beautiful propriety. The whole passage is indeed full of high eloquence, and finely adapted to move their compassion in favour of those who were so generously exposing and sacrificing themselves for the public good.

c *A spectacle to—angels and men.*] This representation is wonderfully pathetic and sublime: while they considered evil angels and men as beholding them with all the malignant, and good angels and men with all the benevolent, passions, it must have a great tendency to inspire their minds with the most heroic sentiments.—Elsner has given an excellent collection of passages from heathen writers, in which such a figure is made use of by them.

d *Are naked*, &c.] Surely one cannot imagine any more glorious triumph of the truth, than what it gained in these circumstances, when St. Paul, with an impediment in his speech, and a personage rather contemptible than graceful, appeared in a mean, and perhaps sometimes tattered dress, before persons of the highest rank, and yet commanded such attention, and made such impressions.

e *Filth of the world.*] The word καθαρματα has a force and meaning here which no one in our language can express; I have given what I am persuaded is the true meaning of it in the paraphrase, and must refer to Dr. Hen. More, (*Theol. Works*, p. 63.) and Dr. Whitby, *in loc.* for the illustration of this bold and noble figure. Suidas says that these wretched victims were called καθαρματα, as their death was esteemed an *expiation;* and he tells us the word περιψηματα, which we render *off-scouring*, was also applied to them; and Bos (*Exercit.* p. 125.) illustrates the sense of the word by a very large and judicious collection of Greek quotations. See also Dr. Ridley's *Christian Passover*, p. 22. It appears from some of these passages, that when the ashes of these unhappy men were thrown into the sea, these very words were used in the ceremony, υπερ περιψηματος, υπερ καθαρματος: but the former of these titles was given them, in reference to that original signification of the words, which the paraphrase on the end of the verse expresses. That so wise and ancient a republic as that of Marseilles, originally a Greek colony, should have retained this savage usage, is astonishing; yet Servius expressly asserts it. Serv. *in Æneid. lib.* iii. *lin.* 75.

SECT. 8

you *as my beloved sons, I warn* [*you*] of those dangers to which I fear you may be exposed, and of the regard which it is your duty and interest to pay to those who voluntarily subject themselves to so many evils on your account, that you ought surely to be the last

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to increase their burdens. And I may particularly urge this with respect to myself; *for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ*, be they ever so many or ever so valuable,

15 *yet* [*you have*] *not many* spiritual *fathers, for in Christ Jesus I* Paul *have begotten you by the gospel:* I preached it first among you, and was the happy means of your spi-

16 ritual birth, and all the privileges of God's children which you receive by it. *I beseech you, therefore,* [*that*] with filial piety and duty *ye be* all *imitators of me*, keeping strictly to the faith which I taught you, and carefully copying my meekness and humility.

17 *For this reason*, that you may be the better able to trace my steps, and may be animated to do it with the greater care, *I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son*, or dear convert, (Acts xix. 22.) *and* who, though yet but a young man, is remarkably *faithful in the Lord*, an excellent christian, *who will* be able more perfectly to *bring to your remembrance my ways in Christ*, as *I am every where teaching in every church* where I come; by which you will perceive, that I do not act partially with respect to you, but proceed on general principles of integrity and prudence, from which I nowhere allow myself to vary.

18 *Some*, I hear, *are puffed up* in vain and proud confidence, *as if*, after all I have said, *I would not come to you*, and did not dare to appear in a place where I have now so many

19 opposers. *But* they are extremely mistaken, for *I will* certainly *come to you*, and that *quickly* too, *if the Lord*, who holds the reins of universal government in his hands, *permit; and* I *will* then *know* and examine, *not the* confident *speech* and florid talk *of those that are* thus *puffed up, but the power* they have to vindicate their pretensions, and what miraculous proof they can give of that authority in the church which they presume to

20 oppose to mine. *For the kingdom of God is not in speech*, in confident assertions, or in elegant forms of address, *but* is established in the exertions of a miraculous *power*, conferred on the true and genuine apostles of our Lord by the effusion of his Spirit upon them, by virtue of which his faithful subjects may be fully satisfied they act according to his will,

21 in paying them the regard they require. *What*, therefore, *do you* on the whole desire and *chuse? That I should come to you*, as it were, *with a rod*[f] of correction in my hand, using my apostolic power for your chastisement; *or*, which for your sakes I should much rather chuse, *in love and* in *the spirit of meekness* and gentleness, comforting and commending, instead of chastising? You will, I hope, think seriously upon the matter in time, before things are driven to such an extremity as may not any longer leave it in my choice or yours.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9 How adorable is the efficacy of divine grace which bore those zealous and faithful servants of Christ through all their labours and fatigues, when they were made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and men! How glorious a spectacle! worthy surely, as any thing, since that wonderful scene on Calvary, of the eye of God himself.

How little are we to judge of the divine favour by external circumstances, when those best of men were of all others the most miserable, farther than as their heavenly hope supported and animated them! And when that is taken into the account, who would not emulate their lot, though hungry and thirsty, though naked and destitute,

11—13 without habitation, without protector, without friends? When we consider their share in the divine friendship, when we consider the blessed effects of their labours, and the glorious crown which awaits them after all their sufferings; surely they must appear happy in proportion to the degree in which they seemed miserable, and glorious in proportion to the degree in which the world held them as infamous!

That illustrious person, whose Epistles are now before us, knew not the pleasures of domestic life in many of its most endearing relations. But God made him a spiritual father to multitudes; and no doubt, as he urges the

15 consideration on his children in Christ, he felt the joy arising from it strong in his own soul, when he said, I have begotten you in Christ Jesus by the gospel. Surely it ought never to have been forgotten by them; and if, through the artifices of ill-designing men, and the remaining infirmities of their own character, it was sometimes and in some degree forgotten now, yet undoubtedly it would be remembered by them in the heavenly world for ever;

14 even by as many as the Lord his God had graciously given him. And if there be any remembrance there that they once grieved him, it will be an engagement to all those offices of an eternal friendship which the exaltation of the heavenly state shall allow. In the mean time, his paternal affection for them wrought, not in a foolish fondness of indulgence, which in the language of divine wisdom is hating a son, but in the character of a prudent

21 and faithful parent, who, desirous that his children may be as wise and good as possible, will rather use the rod than suffer them to be undone. Yet when he speaks of using it, he speaks with regret, as one who would rather chuse to act in the spirit of gentleness, and without any mixture of severity, how necessary soever. The whole of his subsequent conduct to the Corinthians, as far as it may be learned from this or the following Epistle, bears a perfect consistency with these expressions, and illustrates their sincerity.

[f] *With a rod* of correction.] That the apostles had often a miraculous power of inflicting death, and other temporal judgments, in case of aggravated offence, appears from other passages of scripture, Acts v. 5—10; xiii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 20. and is referred to more than once or twice, in these Epistles to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 23; x. 6, 8; xiii. 2, 3, 10. And I cannot mention these passages, without leading my reader to reflect on the wisdom of Providence, in permitting such opposition to arise against St. Paul, particularly at Corinth. It gave him an opportunity of making the strongest appeals to what they are supposed to know of his miraculous power; and had these appeals not been indeed founded on the most certain and evident truth, they must, instead of restoring him to their regards, as we find in fact they did, have been sufficient of themselves utterly to have ruined all his reputation and interest among them, had it before been ever so great.

May God give to his ministers more of this truly apostolical spirit, more of those overflowings of holy love, attempering and attempered by that ardent zeal against sin, and that firm resolution in the discharge of duty, which shone so brightly in the apostle, and in which he so freely and justly recommends himself to the imitation of his children and his brethren. SECT. 8.

SECTION IX.

The apostle proceeds to mention the irregularities which prevailed in the Corinthian church; and here handleth the case of the incestuous person, whom he commands them to separate from their communion. 1 Cor. v. 1, *to the end.*

1 Cor. v. 1.

1 COR. v. 1.

IT is reported commonly, *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

I HAVE spoken of coming to you with a rod of correction; and it is too probable I may be laid under a necessity of using it, though it be an unwilling necessity. For *it is generally reported,*[a] [*that there is*] a kind of *lewdness among you, and that* too *such* scandalous and enormous *lewdness as is not heard of* even *among the heathen,* degenerate as they are, and abandoned as their practices are known to be, even *that a certain person should have* used criminal converse with *his father's wife.*[b] SECT. 9. 1 COR. V.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

2 One would have imagined that a scandal like this should have thrown the whole society into distress and humiliation like the public mourning of a Jewish synagogue on the apostasy or ejection of one of its members; *and* yet it is said that *ye are puffed up* with this spirit of pride and carnality which I have been mentioning *and* reproving. *Should ye not rather have lamented* on this sad occasion? and pursued those strenuous measures for reformation which the genius of the gospel so evidently dictates, *that he who hath committed this fact should be taken away from you,* and be no longer allowed to continue in your communion? *But* however negligent you have been, and whatever consequence I draw upon myself, by interposing in this affair, I cannot, I will not, be silent. *I am absent indeed in body,* and therefore cannot take those vigorous steps which my zeal for the honour of Christ, and my tender concern for your reputation and happiness, dictate: *but* I am *present in spirit;*[c] *I have* a distinct view of all the circumstances of the case, and therefore in as determinate a manner *as if I were* actually *present,* I have *judged* and passed sentence on *him who* I know *has* indeed *committed this enormity.* And the sentence I have passed is this: *That ye being* all solemnly *gathered together* in full assembly, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and my spirit* being present with you, *with the* efficacious *power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* acting according to my determination, though I be at such a distance, and being ready to add an awful efficacy and sanction to your censure, *Do,* by a public and express act, *deliver such an one* by name *to Satan,*[d] to be by him, as the terrible executioner of the divine justice and displeasure, chastised and tormented, *in order to the destruction of the flesh, that,* for this shameful indulgence of its lascivious appetites and desires, it may be emaciated and enfeebled, and the offender, alarmed by sufferings of so extraordinary and formidable a nature, if possible, may be brought to true repentance and humiliation, that so *the* immortal *spirit may be saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus,* from those infinitely more insupportable and everlasting agonies to which it might otherwise be doomed.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed.

3

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

4

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

5

6 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

6 And give me leave on this occasion farther to tell you, that *your boasting,* whether of such a person as your friend, if he be remarkable for any peculiar distinction in gifts, abilities, and circumstances, or against him, as your enemy, if he be of an opposite faction, [*is*] *not* by any means *good.*[e] *Do you not know,* in a familiar instance, which it may be profitable for you to recollect, *that a little leaven* quickly diffuses itself by a secret fermentation, till it *leaveneth the whole mass.* Thus will evil examples tend to spread in the church; and if a brand of infamy be not quickly set upon the incorrigible offender, wickedness will grow familiar, and lose its horror; so that many other members of your society may be polluted, ensnared, and dishonoured.

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ

7 Set yourselves *therefore* with a resolution and diligence, like that which the Jews show in all their dwellings, when the annual feast of the passover is approaching, to *purge out the old leaven:* search for it, as it were, with lighted candles, wherever you suspect any of it to lurk unobserved, *that ye may* indeed *be* entirely *a new mass: as you are* by your christian profession *unleavened,* let there be no mixture of any thing inconsistent with that simplicity and purity which the gospel teaches.

It is a diligence and resolution that becomes you; *for* we have not only the divine

a *Generally reported.*] Dr. Whitby thinks that the scandalous stories that were generally told among the heathen of the incestuous practices of primitive christians, had their original from the misrepresentation of this fact, Many quotations, brought by this learned author and others on this text, show that incest was held in high abomination among the heathen; and an enormity of this kind is (as is well known) called by Cicero, *Scelus incredibile et inauditum, an incredible and unheard-of wickedness.* See also Grot. *De Jure Bel. et Prac. lib.* ii. *cap* v. § 14. No. 2.

b Criminal converse.] Probably some father had parted with his wife, perhaps provoked by her indiscretion, and his son, to whom she was mother-in-law, had married her; for by 2 Cor. vii. 12. it seems probable the person injured was yet alive.

c *Present in spirit.*] Some think this refers to an extraordinary gift which St. Paul had of discerning clearly and circumstantially what was done at a distance. Compare Col. ii. 5; 2 Kings v. 26; vi. 12. See Dr. Benson's *Hist.* Vol. II. p. 16.

d *To deliver such an one to Satan,* &c.] Some think that, as Satan is considered as the head of all who are not under Christ as their head, that is, in the church of Christ, every one who was cut off from the church, must of course be delivered over to Satan; but it seems much more reasonable to believe that this refers to the infliction of some bodily pains or diseases, in which Satan might act as the instrument of the divine justice. Compare 1 Tim. i. 20. and this was for the destruction of the flesh; not directly of the fleshly principle, for in that sense it could not be opposed to the *saving the spirit in the day of the Lord;* but probably, as the paraphrase intimates, for the emaciating and enfeebling the powers of animal nature.

e *Your boasting is not good.*] L'Enfant would render it interro-

SECT. 9. command to enforce it, but this tender additional obligation, that *even Christ our passover was slain for us.*[f] He hath made his precious blood the price of our redemption, that he might make it the means of our sanctification, and that we, instead of being smitten by the
1 COR. V. sword of the avenging angel, might sit down to a divine banquet in peace. *Let us then keep the* holy *feast* which he hath at such an expense provided for us, and in which he
8 feedeth us even with his own flesh; and let us celebrate it in a manner which may do him the greatest honour, and be most pleasing to the adorable Author of our liberty and our happiness; that is, *not with the old* stale *leaven* of uncleanness, so common in your Gentile estate, *nor* with *the leaven of malignity and mischief*, which your judaizing teachers would infuse, though it is as inconsistent with the benevolence, as the other with the purity, of the gospel: *but* avoiding these with the strictest care, keep it *with the unleavened* [*bread*] *of sincerity and truth*, with the most simple and sincere desire of knowing and practising every branch of our duty; which, if we really have, it will keep us from all these evils, and secure an uniformity of behaviour honourable to our profession, and agreeable to the glorious scheme and design of its illustrious Author.

our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

9 In this connexion it occurs to me, and I conclude you remember, that *I wrote to you in an Epistle* which I sent you before your messengers reached me, *that you should not con-*
10 *verse with* fornicators and *lewd persons*,[g] or others of ill fame and character. *But* I think you must apprehend, that by what I then wrote, I intended *not entirely* to forbid all converse *with the lewd people of this world, or with covetous men, or extortioners, or idolaters* among your heathen neighbours; *for then*, as these characters so generally prevail among mankind in this degenerate state, *you must indeed go out of the world*, and seek some solitary abode in the wilderness, which is what I never intended to require or
11 encourage. *But* the intent of what I then said, and of what *I have now written unto you*, is, *that if any who is named a* christian *brother be* evidently *a lewd person, or* remarkably *covetous, or* in acts of occasional though not stated and customary worship, *an idolater, or* even *a railer*, who labours to provoke others by foul language and insulting behaviour, or injures any in their absence by slanderous reports, *or a drunkard*, and in any other respects an abandoned sensualist *or* rapacious *extortioner, you should not converse* familiarly, *or so much as eat, with such an one*, in common life, and much less in such religious solemnities as are peculiar to the church of Christ, which ought ever to be a pure and holy society.

9 I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 You must understand my caution with such a limitation as this: *for what have I to do*, as a christian apostle, *to judge those that are without* the pale of the church? Of others indeed I may speak; for *do not* even *you*, in your more private capacity, *judge those that are within?* I have taught you that every private christian should be concerned in his station to maintain the discipline of the church of Christ, and to bear his testimony against disor-
13 derly walkers, which may at present have a place in it. *But* let it be remembered, that *those who are without, God judgeth*;[h] and he will find a way, sooner or later, to testify his awful displeasure against them for crimes which they have committed against the law of nature, and that acquaintance with it which he knows they actually had or might have attained. *Therefore*, in consideration of this, both in one view and the other, let it be your immediate care, as you regard the peace of the church and the safety of your own souls, speedily, and with all due solemnity, to *take away from among yourselves the wicked person*[i] I have mentioned, and any others whose characters may, like his, be scandalous and infectious.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13 HAPPY are those churches who have it in their power to exercise godly discipline, and to chase from their communion such members as are its reproach and scandal! Happy they who, having this power, have the courage and fidelity to use it, so as not to be shamed and condemned by it. Let us not be too much surprised that offences
1 come, and if there are, even in christian societies, some enormities beyond what are commonly heard of among the Gentiles. It is no wonder, if such abandon themselves, yea, if they are in righteous judgment abandoned of God, to the uncontrollable rage of their own lusts and corruptions, and the great enemy of souls be suffered to carry them captive at his pleasure. Let it however be our concern, that when this is the case, the wicked person be taken away. And though the extraordinary power which the apostles had, be long ceased, and we cannot deliver over offenders for correction to Satan, as they did, let us take such methods as are still open, for purging the old leaven
5—7 out of our churches; and O, that we may be enabled to purge it out of our hearts! remembering Christ our Passover, who was slain for us, feeding daily upon him by faith, and keeping the sacred festival at once with joy and gladness, and with simplicity and sincerity of heart.

gatively, *Have you not a fine subject for boasting?* which is indeed more animated than our version; but I think, not in the taste and manner of St. Paul, nor does it seem exactly to suit the original.

f *Christ our passover was slain.*] It is well known, that Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, accuses the Jews with having taken out of the book of Esdras the following words: "*The passover is our Saviour and our refuge.*" L'Enfant thinks these words of St. Paul are an allusion to them.—It is a very inconclusive inference of some from this context, that this Epistle was written about the time of the passover. Compare chap. xvi. 8.

g *Lewd persons.*] I have rendered πόρνοι, *lewd persons*, in these verses, as I think it very plain the apostle intended the word should be taken in that extent; his argument concluding yet more strongly against some other species of lewdness than against what is called *simple fornication*, detestable as that is. See p. 78. note f, and p. 266. note f.

h *Those who are without, God judgeth.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this is an oblique reference to the mother-in-law of the incestuous person, who was a heathen: which, from the apostle's giving no directions concerning her, is not improbable. But I think the views of St. Paul in this clause were more extensive, and have paraphrased them accordingly.

i *Take away, &c.*] This seems plainly to imply, that the Corinthians had a power of *excommunication* in *themselves*, as has generally been pleaded by congregational writers from this text.

Lamentable indeed is it that so many vices should prevail in human nature; that he, who would avoid all society with persons of a bad character, must needs go out of the world. But most lamentable of all, that any one who is called a brother should be a fornicator, or covetous, an idolater, or railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner. May God preserve us from such detestable crimes, and may he purge out all such spots as these from our feasts of charity! and to that end may he quicken our zeal to bear a testimony against them, in every such method as suits our relation and circumstances of life! Above all, let not any ever imagine, that being joined in communion with a christian church can excuse the guilt of such immoral and scandalous practices, for which the wrath of God comes even upon the children of disobedience among the heathen. God will have his time to judge them that are without; and not only christians at large, as some may fondly and perhaps profanely be ready to call themselves, but Mahometans and Pagans too, shall find articles like these sitting upon their souls with a dreadful weight, and if sincere repentance do not make way for pardon, plunging them into the lowest abyss of misery, into a state of everlasting separation from the blessed God, and all his holy and acceptable servants. SECT. 9. 1 COR. II. 13

SECTION X.

The apostle reproves the Corinthians for prosecuting their brethren in heathen courts; and solemnly warns them of the sad consequences which would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions and practices in which christianity found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them. 1 Cor. vi. 1—11.

1 COR. vi. 1.

DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

1 COR. vi. 1.

I HAVE already mentioned one very great irregularity among you; and now I am under an unhappy necessity of animadverting upon another; which is, that you enter into suits of law with each other in heathen courts. And is this possible? *Dare any of you* indeed act so shameful a part? Can you really be so imprudent, *having any matter* [*of complaint*] *against another*, as to *refer it to the* decision of men, who lie under so many temptations to be *unjust, and not* of *the saints*,[a] of your christian brethren, from whose sanctity of character and profession you might reasonably expect the most equitable usage, and the utmost tenderness in accommodating differences, upon the easiest terms that justice will allow. *Do you not* yet indeed *know*, have you never been told it by me, or by any other, *that the saints shall* in the great day *judge the world?* that they shall be assessors with Christ in that solemn judgment when he shall condemn all the ungodly? (Compare Matt. xix. 28.) *And if the world is* shortly *to be judged by you, are ye unworthy of determining the most inconsiderable matters* which daily occur in your secular affairs. SECT. 10. 1 COR. VI. 1 2

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

I repeat it again, and you will find it a striking argument, if you will allow yourselves to reflect upon it; *know you not that we shall judge* even the fallen *angels*[b] themselves, who, notwithstanding all their malignity and pride, shall be brought to that tribunal at which you, having gloriously passed your own trial, shall be seated with Christ your victorious Lord, when by his righteous sentence he shall send these rebellious spirits to that flaming prison which divine justice hath prepared for them. *And* [*are ye*] *not* then much more apparently [*worthy to judge*] *the* little trifling *affairs which relate to this* mortal *life? If therefore ye*, who have such great honours and dignities in view, *have* in the mean time, any little *controversies* with each other, *relating to the affairs of this life, do ye set those to determine them, who are of no esteem at all in the church*,[c] but whom ye know to be idolaters, despisers of the gospel, and enemies to your great Master and his cause, as your heathen neighbours undoubtedly are? *I speak* [*this*] *to your shame;* and hope you blush while you read it. Are things indeed come to such a pass in your church, celebrated as it is, and boasting so much of its wisdom, that this should be necessary? *What, is there not one* wise, *intelligent person among you* all, *who may be able to determine the cause of a* christian *brother? But* though the civil constitution allows you to decide these things among yourselves, *one brother hath a suit against another, and this before infidels*,[d] who cannot but be greatly scandalized at this, and 3 4 5 6

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

a *Unjust—saints.*] The heathen judges, as Paul seems here to insinuate, or rather in effect to declare, were *generally* unjust: christians were *generally* good, righteous, and holy men. There might be exceptions on each side, but the apostle's argument turns on what might commonly be supposed. The saints, who are to judge angels, are not merely professing christians.—To suppose that the case of the incestuous Corinthian had been carried before a heathen judge, as Mr. Locke supposes, seems entirely groundless. A thousand other disputes might have occasioned the remonstrance before us.

b *Shall judge angels.*] Had the apostle, as Dr. Whitby supposed, referred to the power which many christians had of driving out demons from those who were possessed by them, he would not have spoken of this as a future thing, nor can we suppose it to have been common to all christians, nor would it have afforded an argument equally forcible with that which the paraphrase suggests. Mr. Reynolds extends the interpretation yet farther, and seems to infer from it, that the holy angels are still in a state of probation, and shall be rewarded at the last day, according to the degree of their fidelity and activity in the services assigned to them by Christ, as the head of angels, who shall take his redeemed from among men, to be assessors with him in that final sentence. Reyn. *Of Ang.* p. 183. But the angelic legions are represented in quite another view, namely, as ministering to Christ, adding pomp to his appearance, and executing his sentence, which, I think, sufficiently proves that this is an ungrounded interpretation, and that if any such judgment is to pass with regard to them, it must be at some other time, and in some other place. But there seems a peculiar dignity and propriety in this determination of the great God, that when the *devils*, who are expressly said *to be reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day*, shall be condemned, the *saints*, being raised to the seats of glory which these wicked spirits have forfeited and lost, should assist in that sentence which shall display the victory of Christ over them in these his servants, once their captives, and will, no doubt, render the sentence itself yet more intolerable, to creatures of such malignity and pride.

c *Do ye set them, &c.*] Our translation renders it, *set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the church;* as if the apostle had said, "Take the meanest christian, rather than any heathen." But I follow that preferred by Beza and Whitby. Limborch would understand κριτηρια as equivalent to δικαστηρια, and render it as a piece of advice, "constitute to yourselves courts of judicature, relating "to civil affairs."—Elsner shows that καθιζειν signifies *to place persons on judicial seats, Observ.* Vol. II. p. 93.

d *One brother hath a suit against another, &c.*] Josephus observes, that the Romans (who were now masters of Corinth) permitted the Jews in foreign countries to decide private affairs, where nothing capital was in question, among themselves; and from hence Dr. Lardner argues the justice of this rebuke of St. Paul, as there is no room to doubt but christians might have had the same

SECT. 10. take occasion from your mutual quarrels and accusations to brand the whole body of you as injurious and avaricious; who, while you pretend to be so far superior to secular views, are yet so strongly attached to them, that with all your professions of universal benevolence and brotherly love, you cannot forbear wronging one another? *Therefore*, whoever may have the right on his side, on this or that particular question, *even this is altogether a* 7 *fault among you*, that you bring it under the cognizance of heathens,[e] on whatever occasion it be, *that ye have* such lawsuits and *contests with each other. Why do ye not rather endure wrong* patiently, and sit down by the loss? *Why do ye not rather suffer* 8 *yourselves to be defrauded*, than seek such a remedy as this? *But* indeed, to speak plainly, *you do wrong, and* you *defraud even* [*your*] *brethren.* By such proceedings as these, you do much greater injury to the church of Christ, and the common cause of religion, than you can sustain from any particular brother against whom you advance a complaint. Nor is this the only thing wherein you are to blame, nor the only instance in which you injure each other.

1 COR. VI.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer your selves to* be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 And permit me to expostulate with you a little on this head. *What!* can you contentedly sacrifice this great and glorious hope which the gospel gives you? With all your boasted knowledge, *do ye not indeed know, that the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived* by a vain imagination, that the christian name and privileges will secure you in the practice of your vices: for I now solemnly assure you, as I have often done, that *neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate persons* who give themselves up to a soft, indolent way of living, and can endure no hardships in the way of duty and honour, *nor Sodomites*, those infamous degraders of 10 human nature: *Nor thieves, nor* those who are insatiably *covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons*, who by extortion, or any other kind of violence, invade the property of their neighbours; *shall inherit* that pure and peaceful region, *the kingdom of God*, where holiness and love must for ever reign, under the auspicious government of his Son.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 *And* while I write this, excuse me, that I think it my duty solemnly, though tenderly, to call you, my dear brethren, to recollect, that *such* detested creatures as these, *were some of you* in your unconverted state; as many of your neighbours know, and as you yourselves, with deep humility and agony of soul, confessed. *But ye are washed*, not merely by the baptism of water: *but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified;* divine grace has made a happy change in your state and temper; and ye are purified and renewed, as well as discharged from the condemnation to which ye were justly obnoxious, *in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of* him whom we are now taught, through that common Saviour, to call with complacency *our God.* You ought therefore ever to maintain the most grateful sense of this important blessing, to stand at the remotest distance from sin, and to be tender of the peace and honour of a society which God hath founded by his extraordinary interposition, and into which he hath been pleased in so wonderful a manner to bring even you, who were once in the most infamous and deplorable state.

11 And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

IMPROVEMENT.

ALAS! How great a reproach do we bring on our christian profession, by so immoderate an attachment to our Ver. 6 secular interests! How much does the family of our common Father suffer, while brother goes to law with brother! What are these little interests of mortal life, that the heirs of salvation, by whom angels are to be judged, should wrangle about them, and for the sake of them do wrong, and that even to their brethren!

8, 9 Men had need, where such a temper prevails, to examine themselves, and take heed that they be not deceived; for though good men may fall into some degrees of this evil, through negligence or mistake, yet certainly it looks 9, 10 too much like the character of such of whom the apostle testifies, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let us observe that in this catalogue are contained, not only the most infamous and enormous offenders, but some, who perhaps may be tempted, because of their freedom from flagitious crimes, to think much better of themselves than they ought. We find here the effeminate, and covetous, and revilers, and extortioners, ranked with adulterers and fornicators, with thieves and drunkards, with idolaters and Sodomites. We can never be secure from danger of falling into the greatest sins, till we learn to guard against the least; or rather till we think no evil small; viewing every sin in its contradiction to the nature of God, and in the sad aspect it wears with regard to an eternal state.

But how astonishing is it to reflect, that when the apostle is speaking of persons of such infamous characters, 11 he should be able to add, in his address to his christian brethren at Corinth, And such were some of you! Who must not adore the riches and sovereignty of divine grace? were such as these the best of the heathen world? were such as these prepared by their distinguished virtues to receive farther assistance? let us rather pay our homage to that grace, which went, as it were, into the suburbs of hell, to gather from thence citizens of heaven. And let the worst of men learn not to despair of salvation, when made sincerely desirous of being washed and sanctified, as well as justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. It is that name, it is that Spirit alone, which accomplishes works like these. And, blessed be God, all the wonders of this kind were not exhausted in those early ages, but some have been reserved for us, on whom the end of the world is come: the gospel hath exerted its triumphs in our own days, and they shall be renewed in those of our children. Only let none from

privilege, as they were looked upon as a Jewish sect. *Credibility*, Vol. I. p. 165. But separate from that, they might certainly by mutual consent have chosen their brethren as referees.

e *Even this is altogether a fault among you.*] That μὲν should be rendered *even*, Raphelius hath well observed, and proved. *Annot. x Herod. in loc.*

hence presume to turn the grace of God into wantonness; lest instead of being among the few, who are made the trophies of the divine mercy, they should perish with the multitude of the ungodly world, who die in their pollutions, and go down to final and irreversible condemnation. SECT. 10.

SECTION XI.

Whereas some among the newly-converted Corinthians might not be sufficiently sensible of the enormity of the sin of fornication, the apostle, after some useful reflections on things really indifferent, expresses himself strongly on that head, and pleads those views peculiar to christianity, which especially illustrate the heinousness of it. 1 Cor. vi. 12, *to the end.*

1 Cor. vi. 12.

1 Cor. vi. 12. ALL things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I KNOW some of you at Corinth allow yourselves to philosophize with great liberty, and find many excuses for doing things which others conscientiously scruple: but as matters at present stand, I think it necessary to give you some cautions upon this head. Suppose the things in question to be as indifferent in their own nature as many of you would fain persuade yourselves and others they are: I will, for argument's sake, grant that *all* these *things are lawful for me; but* at the same time you must acknowledge, if you reflect ever so little, that *all* such *things are not convenient:* circumstances may make it improper for me to do that which is not absolutely and universally criminal. And though it be allowed that *all things* in question *are lawful for me, nevertheless I will not be brought under the power of any* such *thing:* But am solicitous to maintain such a superiority to appetite and passion as becomes a man and a christian in these cases. This maxim may particularly be applied to the supposed difference between one kind of food and another. All *meats* capable of ministering to our nourishment [*are*] indifferently made *for the* use of the *belly, and the belly* is made *for* receiving and digesting *meats.* It is true; *but* then it ought to be remembered that the time will quickly come when *God will destroy both it and them;* meats, and the organs by which they have been received, and this animal frame which has been nourished by them, shall be mixed together in the grave, and moulder into dust. Since therefore they refer only to this mortal body, so soon to be reduced to its first mean principles, it is certainly beneath the dignity of the christian character to be a slave to this or that kind of meats; or in any instances to indulge this perishing flesh, so as to injure the souls of others or hazard our own. SECT. 11. 1 COR. VI. 12

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

But if any man extend the maxim I have mentioned above, to patronize any kind of lewdness, it would be a groundless and most unjustifiable inference: for it is most certain that *the body is not* made *for* so infamous a purpose as *fornication,* nor can the commission of it be ever necessary or expedient: *but* it was, on the contrary, formed *for* the service of *the Lord,* that while we continue in it we might devote all our animal as well as rational powers to our great Creator and Redeemer; *and the Lord* is in an important sense *for the body,* he is the great Saviour of the body as well as of the soul, and will make it at last appear that he hath not forgotten the meaner part of our nature in the gracious scheme he hath formed for our felicity. *And* this scheme shall surely be effectual; for *God* the Father *hath both raised up the Lord* Jesus Christ from the dead to an immortal life, *and will also raise us up* in like manner, *by his* divine and almighty *power,* and transform these bodies of ours into a resemblance of the glorified body of our Lord; which should certainly raise us above all impure affections and desires, and engage us to live in the body in some conformity to so divine and glorious a hope.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

Enter, I beseech you, into the thought; and let me expostulate freely with those who are ready to forget it. *Know ye not,* indeed, *that* as *your bodies* make an essential part of yourselves, they *are* to be considered as *members of Christ,* belonging, as it were, to his body, and in that view under his care, as to their final and everlasting happiness with him. *Shall I then take* these which I am taught to look upon as in an important sense *the members of Christ, and* prostitute them to so infamous a purpose as to *make them the members of an harlot* by unlawful embraces? *God forbid!* It is a thing not to be thought of without the utmost abhorrence and indignation. *What, know ye not that he who is* thus *joined to an harlot is one body* with her? *For, say* [*the divine oracles,*] speaking of that conjunction which whoredom prostitutes to the dishonour of matrimony, so wisely and graciously ordained by God, (Gen. ii. 24.) *They two,* that is, the man and his wife, *shall be one flesh. But* on the other hand, *he that is joined to the Lord* by a true faith, *is one spirit* with him. And as the head and members of the natural body are one, as they are acted upon by the same spirit, so the same divine and holy Spirit which lives in Christ as the Head, is communicated to us from him; just as the vital spirits are communicated from the head to the limbs. Now what thought can be more monstrous than that any one should think of being, at the same time, one spirit with the Lord, and one flesh with an harlot? Let this therefore be instead of ten thousand arguments to engage you to *flee whoredom:* concerning which, one may farther plead, that *every* [*other*] *sin which a man practises is without the body;* its effects fall not so directly upon the body, but often more immediately upon the mind.[a] *But he that*

16 What! know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that man doeth is without the body; but he that

[a] *Every* [*other*] *sin, &c.*] It would be unreasonable to insist on the most rigorous interpretation of these words; but the general sense is plain and true, and I suppose that, on the whole, there is no other sin by which the body receives equal detriment, considering not only its nature, but how much it has prevailed.

committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

SECT. 11. 1 COR. VI. *committeth whoredom,* or any kind of lewdness, *sinneth* particularly *against his own body,*[b] not only polluting and debasing it, by making it one with so infamous a creature, but perhaps infecting and enfeebling, wasting and consuming it, which these vices, when grown habitual and frequent, have an apparent tendency to effect. (Compare Prov. v. 11; Job xxxvi. 14.) There is also another view, in which the baseness of this crime must 18 appear to you, christians, in consequence of your relation to that blessed Agent, the Spirit 19 of God. Have you not all been baptized in his name, and instructed in your relation to him? *What, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is *in you,* dedicated to him, and inhabited by him; even that Spirit *which you receive of God,* as his most valuable gift? *And,* on the whole, in whatever view you consider yourselves, it will appear that *ye are not* by any means *your own* property, nor can be justly at your own disposal, to seek your present gratification without control, or regard to the will of a superior.

19 What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 *For* the contrary is most apparent; *ye are bought with a price,* and that infinitely beyond what you can pretend to be worth. *Therefore,* far from doing any thing to bring a dishonour on religion, you ought in every action, word, and sentiment, to own yourselves his property, and exert yourselves to the utmost, in a course of vigorous and constant obedience, to *glorify God* both *with your body and with your spirit, which are,* by the justest title, *God's;* as he hath not only created, preserved, and maintained you, but by the invaluable blood of his Son purchased and redeemed you to himself, and by his Holy Spirit taken possession of you, and marked you for his own.

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

IMPROVEMENT.

How peculiar is the excellence of the christian religion! With what incomparable advantages doth it enforce all the lessons of moral virtue which it teaches! With what holy disdain should we look on the baits of sense, and Ver. 15 the pollutions which are in the world through lust, if we seriously and often reflected on these two things—That 19 our bodies are the members of Christ, and that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost! Let it be our care, that they may not only be nominally, but really so: That we may by a living faith be united to the Lord, so as to 17 become one spirit with him, animated by that Spirit which resides in him and dwells in all who are truly his.

Let us, as often as we are tempted to alienate ourselves from the service of God, reflect upon the price with 20 which we are bought. How great, how important a price, which we should never think of but with secret shame, as well as admiration and love! O Lord, hast thou paid such a ransom for me, and shall I act as if I thought even this not enough? as if thou hadst acquired only a partial and imperfect right to me, and I might divide myself between thee and strangers, between thee and thine enemies? O may we be entirely thine! and make it the business of the latest day and hour of our lives, to glorify God with our bodies and with our spirits, which are his.

Under the influence of this thought, may we effectually enter into the wise and pious suggestions of the apostle; 12 and guard not only against things absolutely and universally unlawful, but likewise against those which, in present circumstances, may be inconvenient. May we be ever ready to exert a holy freedom of soul, and a superiority to whatever may ensnare and enslave us! which we shall more easily obtain, if we reflect on the transitory duration 13 of the objects of appetite and sense; how soon the things we enjoy, and those bodies by which we enjoy them, shall be reduced to the dust, out of which they were taken. God destroys all that is present and visible, that we may look more intensely for a kingdom that cannot be moved. He reduces our bodies to putrefaction, that we may learn to cultivate with greater care the interest of a never-dying soul; which, if we faithfully and diligently 14 pursue, God, who hath raised up his Son as our Surety and Saviour, will also raise us up by his own power, to enjoyments sublime, incorruptible, and eternal. O Lord! we would wait for thy salvation, and in the mean while would do thy commandments; and, animated by so exalted a hope, would purify ourselves even as thou art pure.

SECTION XII.

The apostle proceeds to answer certain questions which the Corinthians had put to him; and, first, what related to the marriage-state: and in these introductory verses, he determines that in some circumstances it should be entered into and continued in, but in others forborne; and forbids wives to depart from their husbands. 1 Cor. vii. 1—11.

1 COR. vii. 1.

1 COR. vii. 1.

SECT. 12. 1 COR. VII. I *NOW* proceed to give you my opinion *concerning those things about which you wrote to me.* And I begin with that concerning the lawfulness or expedience of marriage. And here I must first observe, that as to its expedience, [*it is*] in present circumstances *good for a man,* where he is entirely master of himself, *to have nothing to do with a woman;* so many are the conveniences which recommend a single life to those who are proof against 2 some of its most obvious temptations. *Nevertheless,* as the God of nature has for certain wise reasons implanted in the sexes a mutual inclination to each other, *in order to prevent fornication,* and every other species of uncleanness, *let every man have* and retain *his own* proper *wife, and let every woman have* and retain *her own* proper *husband:* for neither divorce nor polygamy are by any means agreeable to the genius of the gospel.

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

[b] *He that committeth whoredom, sinneth against his own body.*] This is well illustrated by a fine passage of Xenophon, produced by Raphelius here, in which Socrates is represented as saying, "that "intemperate men hurt themselves far more than others; whereas "other sinners secure some profit to themselves, though they are "injurious to others."—It is evident that πορνεια must here signify *any unlawful commerce between persons of different sexes,* since whoredom with married women is as directly contrary both to the honour and health of the body, as with single.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

Let the husband, where this relation is commenced, *render* all *due benevolence to the wife, and in like manner also the wife to the husband:* let them on all occasions be ready mutually to oblige and consult the happiness of each other's life. And let them not imagine that there is any perfection in living separate from each other, as if they were in a state of celibacy. For *the wife hath not* in this respect *power over her own body, but* hath by the marriage-covenant transferred it to *the husband: and in like manner also the husband hath not power over his own body, but* it is, as it were, the property of *the wife;* their engagements being mutual, so that on every occasion conscience obliges them to remain appropriate to each other, and consult their mutual good. 4

Withdraw not therefore *from* the company of *each other, unless* [*it be*] *by consent for a time; that ye may* be at leisure to *devote yourselves* more intensely *to fasting and prayer, and* that *ye may come together again*, as usual, *lest Satan tempt you on account of your incontinence*, and take occasion, from the irregular sallies of animal nature, to fill you with thoughts and passions which marriage was, in its original institution, intended to remedy. 5

But you will observe that *I say this by permission* from Christ, but *not by any* express *command*[a] which he gave in person in the days of his flesh, or gives by the inspiration and suggestion of his Spirit now; by which inspiration you may conclude I am guided, when I lay in no such precautions as these. 6

But as *for* the main question we are now upon, *I could wish that all men were* in this respect *even as myself;* that all christians could as easily bear the severities of a single life in present circumstances, and exercise as resolute a command over their natural desires.[b] *But every man has his proper gift of God, one in this kind* or manner, *and another in that.* So that though I give the best advice and example I can, I would not exalt myself on account of this attainment, nor despise those that have it not. *But* as *to unmarried* men, who, like me, have buried their wives, *and* to the *widows, I say it is good for them, (if they* conveniently can,) to *continue, as I do*, in the widowed state. *But if they have not* attained to *such* a degree of *temperance* as to be easy in it, *let them* by all means *marry. For* though it be better to live calmly and soberly in a state of widowhood than to marry, *it is undoubtedly* much *better to marry* a second or a third time, *than to burn*, and to be tormented with those restless passions which some in such circumstances feel. 7 8 9

But as to those that are married,[c] [*it is*] *not I* [*who*] *command, but the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, who enjoins *that the wife should not withdraw herself from* [*her*] *husband: But if she be withdrawn* by her own rash and foolish act, *let her* not by any means contract another marriage, but *remain unmarried, or* rather if it may be accomplished by any submission on her side, *let her be reconciled to* [*her*] *husband*, that they may if possible live in such an union and harmony as the relation requires. *And let not the husband dismiss* [*his*] *wife* on any light account, or indeed for any thing short of adultery. For whatever particular reasons Moses might have for permitting divorces on some slighter occasions, Christ, our great Legislator, who may reasonably expect higher degrees of purity and virtue in his followers, as their assistances are so much greater, hath seen fit expressly to prohibit such separation, and we, his apostles, in our decisions upon this matter, must guide ourselves by the authority of his determination. 10 11

IMPROVEMENT.

THE decisions of the holy apostle are here given with such gravity, seriousness, and purity, that one would hope, delicate as the subject of them is, they will be received without any of that unbecoming levity which the wantonness of some minds may be ready to excite on such an occasion.

It becomes us humbly to adore the divine wisdom and goodness manifested in the formation of the first human pair, and in keeping up the different sexes through all succeeding ages, in so just a proportion that every man might have his own wife, and every woman her own husband, that the instinct of nature might, so far as it is necessary, be gratified without guilt, and an holy seed be sought, which, being trained up under proper discipline and instruction, might supply the wastes that death is continually making, and be accounted to the Lord for a generation: that so virtue and religion, for the sake of which alone it is desirable that human creatures should subsist, may be transmitted through every age, and earth become a nursery for heaven. Ver. 2

With these views let marriages be contracted, when it is proper they should be contracted at all. Let none imagine the state itself to be impure, and let it always be preserved undefiled. Let all occasion of irregular desire be prudently guarded against by those who have entered into it. And let all christians, in every relation, remember that the obligations of devotion are common to all, and that Christ and his apostles seem to take it for granted that we shall be careful to secure proper seasons for fasting as well as for prayer, so far as may be needful, in order that the superior authority of the mind over the body may be exercised and maintained, and that our petitions to the throne of grace may be offered with greater intenseness, copiousness, and ardour. 4 5

a *By permission.*] I cannot, with Mr. Cradock, think that the meaning of this clause is, "I permit marriage, but do not enjoin it;" and have elsewhere observed, that this verse, and others in this context nearly parallel to it, will be so far from affording, on any interpretation, an objection against the general inspiration of St. Paul's Epistles, that they will rather strengthen the proof of it. See *Essay on Inspiration.*

b *That all men were even as myself.*] Common sense requires us to limit this expression as in the paraphrase; for it would be a most flagrant absurdity to suppose that St. Paul wished marriage might entirely cease. It shows therefore how unfair and improper it is, in various cases, to strain the apostle's words to the utmost rigour, as if he perpetually used the most critical exactness; but indeed chap. ix. 22. is so full an instance to the contrary, that it is not necessary to multiply remarks of this kind.

c *To those that are married.*] The translation published by the English Jesuits at Bourdeaux renders it, *to those who are united in the sacrament of marriage;* which I mention as one instance, selected from a vast number, of the great dishonesty of that translation.

SECTION XIII.

The apostle exhorts christians not to break marriage on account of difference in religion; and urges, in the general, contentment with the stations in which they were called, and a concern to serve God in their proper condition, whether married or single, bound or free. 1 Cor. vii. 12—24.

1 Cor. vii. 12.

SECT. 13. 1 COR. VII.

I HAVE reminded you of the decision of Christ with respect to the affair of divorce: *now as to the rest* of the persons and cases to which I shall address myself, it is to be observed, that *I speak* according to what duty or prudence seems on the whole to require; and it is *not* to be considered as if it were immediately spoken by *the Lord*. *If any* christian *brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she consent to dwell with him*, notwithstanding the diversity of their religious persuasions, *let him not dismiss her*. *And* on the other hand, *if any* christian *wife have an unbelieving husband, and he consent to dwell with her, let her not dismiss him*,[a] nor separate herself from him, though the legal constitution of the country in which she lives may allow her to do it. *For* in such a case as this, *the unbelieving husband is* so *sanctified to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is* so *sanctified to the husband*,[b] that their matrimonial converse is as lawful as if they were both of the same faith: *otherwise your children*, in these mixed cases, *were unclean*, and must be looked upon as unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordinances by which the seed of God's people are distinguished; *but now they are* confessedly *holy*,[c] and are as readily admitted to baptism in all our churches, as if both the parents were christians; so that the case, you see, is in effect decided by this prevailing practice. *However, if the unbelieving party*, in such circumstances as these, be absolutely determined, and *will depart, let him* or her *depart*, and take the course they think best; and the consequence is, that *a brother or a sister*, who hath been united to such a wife or husband in matrimonial bonds, is by such a conduct of a former partner discharged from future obligation, and *is not in bondage in such* [*cases.*] *But* let it be always remembered, that *God hath* by his gospel *called us to peace;* and therefore it ought to be our care to behave in as inoffensive a manner as possible, in all the relations of life; that so, if there must be a breach, the blame may not be chargeable upon the christian.

And it is worth your while to be very careful in your behaviour to those who thus make, as it were, a part of yourselves, that you may adorn the gospel you profess, by the most amiable and engaging conduct: *for* it is possible the unbeliever may be thereby gained to christianity. Let each therefore reflect on his own concern in this observation. *For how knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayst save* [*thine*] *husband? Or, how knowest thou, O husband, but thou mayst save* [*thy*] *wife?* And surely the everlasting happiness of the person now the companion of your life, will be more than an equivalent for all the self-denial to which you may be required at present to submit. *But* if this should not be the effect, it still becomes you to do your duty; and therefore, since the providence of God is concerned in all these relations, and in the steps by which they were contracted, *as God hath distributed to every one*, and, as it were, cast the parts of life, *let every one so walk, even as the Lord hath called him*.[d] This is the lesson I would inculcate on you Corinthians, *and thus I command in all the churches*, and charge it upon the consciences of men, as a lesson of the highest importance.

Is any one, for instance, *called, being circumcised, let him not become*, so far as in him lies, *uncircumcised*;[e] nor act as if he were desirous, as far as possible, to undo what was done by his Jewish parents or masters in his infancy. *Is any one called* to the fellowship of gospel-blessings *in uncircumcision, let him not be* solicitous to be *circumcised*, as if that rite were necessary to his salvation, as the Jews and some zealots amongst ourselves have taught. For to speak the important truth in a few plain words, *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing;* the observation or non-observation of the Mosaic law, will neither secure nor obstruct our salvation; *but* all depends upon *keeping the commandments of God*. An obediential faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, produced by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit on the heart, and bringing forth the genuine fruits of holiness in our temper and life, is the great concern; and whether we be Jews or Gen-

1 Cor. vii. 12.
BUT to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases;* but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision, let him not become circumcised.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

a *Let her not dismiss him.*] I have elsewhere observed, that in these countries, in the apostle's days, the wives had a power of divorce as well as the husband. See p. 267, note g.

b *Is sanctified, &c.*] Some think the meaning is, "the christian may convert the infidel;" as appears, in that the children of such marriages are brought up christians. But this cannot possibly be the sense; for that they were brought up so, was not to be sure always fact, and where it was, there was no need of proving from thence the conversion of the parent, which would in itself be much more apparent than the education of the child.

c *Now are they holy.*] On the maturest and most impartial consideration of this text, I must judge it to refer to *infant baptism*. Nothing can be more apparent than that the word *holy* signifies, persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people. Compare Exod. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2; xxvi. 19; xxxiii. 3; Ezra ix. 2. with Isa. xxxv. 8; lii. 1; Acts x. 28, &c. And as for the interpretation which so many of our brethren, the Baptists, have contended for, that *holy* signifies *legitimate*, and *unclean, illegitimate:* (not to urge that this seems an unscriptural sense of the word,) nothing can be more evident, than that the argument will by no means bear it; for it would be proving a thing by itself, *idem per idem*, to argue that the converse of the parents was lawful, because the children were not bastards; whereas all who thought the converse of the parents unlawful, must of course think that the children were illegitimate.

d *As the Lord hath called him.*] This is a very pertinent digression, as it so directly contradicts the notion which prevailed among the Jews, that embracing the true religion dissolved all the relations which had before been contracted. Whereas the apostle here declares, that the gospel left them in this respect just as it found them; increasing instead of lessening the obligations they were under to a faithful and affectionate discharge of their correspondent duties.

e *Become uncircumcised.*] The word επισπαω has an evident relation to *attempts* like those referred to, 1 Mac. i. 15. which it is not necessary more particularly to illustrate.

tiles, circumcised or uncircumcised, we shall be happy or miserable for ever as we are careful or negligent with regard to this. As for other matters, be not excessively concerned about them; but *in whatever calling*, that is, profession and circumstance, *any one* of you *was called, in that let him continue;* affect not to change without the clear and evident leadings of Providence, as there is generally greater reason to expect comfort and usefulness in such a calling than another. And I may apply this not only to the different employments but relations in life, as well as diversity in religious professions. *Art thou*, for instance, *called* into the church of Christ, [*being*] in the low rank, not only of an hired servant, but *a slave? Do not* so much *regard it* as, upon that account, to make thy life uneasy: *but if thou canst*, without any sinful method of obtaining it, *be made free, chuse it rather*, as what is no doubt in itself eligible, yet not absolutely necessary to the happiness of a good man. *For he that is called by the Lord* to the christian faith, [*being*] *a servant* or slave, *is the Lord's freeman.* Christ has made him free indeed, in making him partaker of the glorious liberties of the children of God, (John viii. 36.) *and* on the other hand, *he also that is called*, [*being*] *free* from the authority of any human master, *is* still *the servant*, the property, *of Christ*, and owes him a most implicit and universal obedience. But upon this head remember, that as christians *you were* all *bought with a* most invaluable *price*:[f] Christ hath redeemed you at the expense of his own blood; and therefore let me caution you, out of regard to him, and from a desire to be capable of serving him as much as possible, that ye *do not*, where it may by any lawful means be avoided, *become the slaves of men;* since so many evils, and dangers, and snares are inseparable from such a situation.

SECT. 13. 1 COR. VII.

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

21 Art thou called, *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise he also that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

This, *brethren*, is the particular advice which I thought proper to give upon this head; and the general rule I laid down above is of such great importance, that I must repeat it: *in whatever* [*condition*] *a man was called* at first by the gospel and grace of Christ, *in that let him abide with God*,[g] taking care to behave in a prudent and religious manner, as under the divine inspection; and not changing his business in life, if it be in the general lawful, because he is a christian; but endeavouring to pursue it with such integrity, diligence, and prudence, as that his great Master and Saviour may be most effectually glorified.

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn, from the exhortations and reasonings of the apostle, a becoming solicitude to contribute as much as we possibly can to the christian edification of each other; and especially let this be the care of the nearest relatives in life. What can be more desirable than that the husband may be sanctified by the wife, and the wife by the husband! May all prudent care be taken, in contracting marriages, as to the religious character of the intended partner of life; and in those already contracted, where this precaution has been neglected, or where the judgment formed seems to have been mistaken, let all considerations of prudence, of religion, of affection, concur to animate to a mutual care of each other's soul, that most important effort of love, that most solid expression and demonstration of friendship. Nor let the improbability of success be pleaded in excuse for neglect, even where the attempt must be made by the subordinate sex. A possibility should be sufficient encouragement; and surely there is room to say, How knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayst save him whose salvation, next to thine own, must be most desirable to thee? Ver. 14 16

Let us study the duties of the relations in which God hath fixed us: and walk with him in our proper callings, not desiring so much to exchange as to improve them. His wise providence hath distributed the part; it is our wisdom, and will be our happiness, to act in humble congruity to that distribution. Surely the apostle could not have expressed in stronger terms his deep conviction of the small importance of human distinctions, than he here does; when speaking of what seems to great and generous minds the most miserable lot, even that of a slave, he says, Care not for it.[h] If liberty itself, the first of all temporal blessings, be not of so great importance, as that a man, blessed with the high hopes and glorious consolations of christianity, should make himself very solicitous about it, how much less is there in those comparatively trifling distinctions on which many lay so disproportionate, so extravagant a stress! 24 21

Let christian servants (for, blessed be God, amongst us we have no slaves) remember their high privileges, as the Lord's freemen. Let christian masters remember the restraint, as the Lord's servants. And let the benefits of liberty, especially when considered in its aspect upon religion, be so far valued, as not to be bartered away for any price which the enemies of mankind may offer in exchange. 20

But above all, let us remember the infinite importance of maintaining the freedom of the mind from the bondage of corruption; and of keeping, with all humble and cheerful observance, the commandments of God. While many express the warmest zeal for circumcision or uncircumcision, in defence of, or in opposition to, this or that mode or form of external worship, let our hearts be set on what is most vital and essential in religion; and we 19

f *You were bought with a price*, &c.] Dr. Whitby would render it, "*Are ye bought with a price*, that is, redeemed from servitude? "*Become not servants of men;* do not sell yourselves for slaves "again." It is indeed probable that the apostle does counsel christians against becoming slaves, if it could be prevented; and with great reason, as it was a circumstance which seemed less suitable to the dignity of the christian profession, and must expose them to many incumbrances and interruptions in duty, especially on the Lord's day, and other seasons of religious assemblies; besides the danger of being present at domestic idolatrous sacrifices, or being ill used if they refused their compliance. But I cannot thoroughly approve of the Doctor's version, because the advice is unnecessarily restrained thereby to those slaves who had been redeemed; which plainly as well suited those who had their freedom given them, and indeed suited all christians who never had been at all slaves, and who might more easily have been prevailed upon, by their poverty, to bring themselves into a condition the evils and inconveniences of which they did not thoroughly know.

g *Abide with God*,] L'Enfant explains παρα τω Θεω, *in the sight of God*, (compare 2 Cor. xi. 11; Eph. v. 21.) and thinks there had been some disorders at Corinth, proceeding from some irregular claim which christian slaves made to liberty, under pretence that, as christian brethren, they were equal with their masters.

h Care not for it.] This fine remark (for such indeed it is) occurs in Dr. Goodwin's *Works*, Vol I. p. 50.

SECT. 13. shall find the happiest equivalent, in the composure and satisfaction of our own spirit now, as well as in those abundant rewards which the Lord hath laid up for them who fear him.

SECTION XIV.

The apostle treats on the inexpediency of marriage, in the circumstances of the church at that juncture; and inculcates a serious sense of the shortness of time, as the best remedy against immoderate attachment to any secular interest. 1 Cor. vii. 25, *to the end.*

1 Cor. vii. 25.

SECT. 14. *BUT* I have been insensibly led by these general views of our obligations and hopes as christians, to digress from the subject of marriage, which I had first in view, and to which it is time I should return. And here, *concerning* the case of *virgins* of either sex, *I have*

1 COR. VII. received *no* express *commandment from the Lord*, as I had in the case handled above; whether by what is transmitted to us in Christ's discourses, or by any immediate and per-

25 sonal revelation;[a] *nevertheless I give my opinion as one who hath received* grace and *mercy of the Lord, to be faithful* in the great charge he hath committed to me; and

26 therefore, considering the many instances in which I have been enabled to approve my fidelity to Christ and his church, may expect to be heard with some peculiar regard. *I apprehend this therefore to be* right and *good in the present exigency*[b] and extremity of affairs, while the church is in such a state of persecution, *that* [*it is*] *best for a* single *man*

27 *to continue as he is. Art thou* indeed *bound to a wife* already? my advice affects not thee; in that case bear patiently whatever burdens may occur, and *seek not to be loosed* from her by an irregular and scandalous divorce or separation. But on the other hand, *art thou loosed from a wife?* Hath Providence never led thee into those engagements, or has it broken the bond by the death of thy former companion? If thou canst conveniently and virtuously continue as thou art, *seek not a wife* at present, till the storm which now hovers

28 over the church be a little blown over, and more peaceful times return. *Yet if thou dost marry, thou hast not* thereby *sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned:* the marriage-state is no doubt both lawful and honourable; *yet such will have* probably some additional *affliction in the flesh;* they will be encumbered with the burden of many temporal affairs: and the representation which I make to you of these things, is not out of severity *but* tenderness; as *I* would fain *spare you*, and speak on the whole in this gentle and cautious manner on the subject, to avoid extremes either the one way or the other.

29 *But this I say, brethren*, with great confidence, and desire you would hear it with due attention, that *the* whole *time* of our abode in this world *is contracted*[c] within very narrow limits; *it remains, therefore*, that we guard against too fond an attachment to any relation or possession in life: so *that they who have wives, be* in a manner *as if they had none;*

30 *And they that weep, as not weeping* in streams of inconsolable sorrow, though nature may be allowed to drop its moderate tear; *and they that rejoice as not rejoicing* in dissolute and confident sallies of mirth, as if secure from any distressful revolution; *and they that*

31 *purchase, as not possessing* by a certain tenure what they must shortly resign; *And they who use this world, as not carrying* the enjoyments of *it to an* unbridled *excess; for the* whole scheme and *fashion of this world passes off*,[d] and is gone like a scene in a theatre, that presently shifts; or a pageant in some public procession, which, how gaudily soever it be adorned to strike the eyes of spectators, is still in motion, and presently disappears, to show itself for a few moments to others. So transitory are all our enjoyments and afflictions too, and worthy of little regard, when compared with the solid realities which are soon to open upon us, and never to pass away.

32 *But I would have you without anxiety*, while you continue here amidst all these uncertainties; and therefore it is I advise you in present circumstances to decline marriage, if you conveniently can. For *an unmarried man careth for the things of the Lord* Jesus Christ, *how he may please the Lord*, and is in a great degree at leisure to employ his thoughts, and schemes, and labours, for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom among men; and sure there is no other employment so honourable, so delightful, and, when remote conse-

33 quences are taken into the account, so profitable: *Whereas he who is married careth for the things of the world*, how he may maintain his family, and *how he may please* [*his*] *wife*, and so accommodate himself to her temper, as to make her easy and happy. On the other hand, *there is* just such *a difference between* the condition of *a wife and a virgin*.[e]

34 *She who is unmarried is careful about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy*

1 Cor. vii. 25.

NOW concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; *I say* that *it is* good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none:

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not:

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things

a Or by immediate and personal revelation.] To this I think he refers, rather than the former, as he speaks in the singular number; whereas else he might more properly have said, *we have received none.*

b *Present exigency.*] This must certainly refer to the prevalence of persecution at that time: for nothing can be more absurd than to imagine, that an inspired apostle would, in the general, discountenance marriage; considering that it was expressly agreeable to a divine institution, and of great importance to the existence and happiness of all future generations.

c *Contracted.*] The word συνεσταλμενος properly imports this, being (as many have observed) a metaphor, taken from *furling* or gathering up *a sail.* Dr. Hammond, and some others, would render this, *it is but a little while, and they that have wives shall be as though they had none.* That is, "I see those times of persecution rising, which "will put men out of a capacity of enjoying those temporal delights "which they may now be fondest of." But this does not seem an exact translation, though L'Enfant mentions it with considerable regard.

d *Fashion of this world passes off.*] Σχημα παραγει. Compare 1 John ii. 17.

e *There is* just such *a difference, &c.*] Some would connect the word μεμερισται with the close of the preceding verse, and render it, "*He that is married cares, &c. how he may please his wife, and is* "*divided in his thoughts*, or distracted with a variety of anxieties." But this would occasion an unnecessary ellipsis in the beginning of this verse, and destroy the resemblance between the conclusion of the two verses, when it is evident the apostle meant to say the same of both the husband and wife.

SECT. 14.

1 COR. VII.

of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

both in body and spirit. She has leisure to attend to the higher improvement of religion in her own soul, by the more abundant exercises of devotion, as well as to do something more for the advancement of religion among others; *whereas she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please* [*her*] *husband*;[f] and the diversity of humours both in men and women, and the imperfection of even the best tempers, make this sometimes on both sides a difficult task; on which account single persons have always some considerable advantages, which are especially apparent in these times of public danger.

34

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

But all *this I say for your own benefit*, with a sincere desire to promote your happiness; and *not that I may throw a snare upon you*,[g] and bind you from that which God for wise reasons instituted and allows, and which the state of human nature generally requires; *but out of regard to what is* to be sure very *comely*[h] *and decent in the Lord, without* any *violent constraint*,[i] by which I might seem to drag you into a state of life which should make you continually uneasy: for that would quite spoil its gracefulness as well as acceptance, and might plunge you into much greater inconveniences another way.

35

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

But, on the other hand, *if any* on mature deliberation *apprehend that he acts an unbecoming part towards his virgin* daughter, or any other maiden that may fall under his guardianship and care, *if she pass the flower of* [*her*] *age* in a single state,[k] which I know is an opinion very prevalent among the Jews; *and* if he think *that it ought to be so, let him do what he will* in this respect; *he sinneth not* in his intent of letting her change her present condition; and therefore let him seek out a proper partner in life for her, and *let them marry. But he that hath* hitherto *stood stedfast in his heart*, *having* also on her side *no* apprehension of any *necessity*, in consequence of what he discerns of her dispositions, and no engagement subsisting which might give another a just claim to her, *but hath power over his own will*, being at liberty to act as he pleases: *and hath* in such circumstances *determined in his* own *heart that he will keep his maiden* still single, *he does well*, and the part he acts is so far from being blamable, that in present circumstances it is much to be commended.

36

37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

37

38 So then, he that giveth *her* in marriage, doeth well: but he that giveth *her* not in marriage, doeth better.

So that on the whole, the conclusion of the matter is this; *he that* in such troublous times as these *gives* [*her*] *in marriage, doth well;* she may find opportunities in that relation both to adorn and to serve christianity; *but* as things are circumstanced, I must needs declare, that where a man is under no necessity of doing it, *he that giveth* [*her*] *not in marriage, doeth better;* and more effectually consults both his comfort and safety.

38

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

This however is beyond controversy certain, that *the wife is bound by the law* to continue with her husband, and admit herself to him, *as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is* in that case *free, and may marry to whom she will; only*, let her take care that she marry *in the Lord*, and that, retaining a sense of the importance of her christian obligations, she does not chuse a partner for life of a different religion from herself.

39

40 But she is happier, if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also, that I have the Spirit of God.

She may, I say, lawfully act thus; *but* I would not be understood to advise it; for *she is happier, according to my sentiment, if she continue as she is and* I may modestly say, that *I appear to have the Spirit of God*[l] to guide me, and not merely some degree of experience arising from the many observations which for a course of years I have made on human affairs. I may therefore reasonably suppose my judgment will have its peculiar weight, even where I do not pretend to decide with such an authority as should bind the conscience as by an apostolical dictate.

40

f *How she may please her husband.*] The apostle in this text and the counterpart to it, seems to declare that single persons of either sex have generally opportunities for devotion beyond those that are married, even in the most peaceful times of the church; and that a diversity of humours, both in men and women, makes it difficult for them to please each other so thoroughly as is necessary, in order to make a married life delightful. So that it intimates a counsel to single people to value and improve their advantages, and to married people to watch against those things that would ensnare them, and injure their mutual peace and comfort.

g *Not that I may throw a snare upon you.*] This is the most literal version I could give of βροχον υμιν επιβαλω. Mr. Locke thinks the word βροχον, which signifies *cord*, alludes to the Jewish phrase of *binding* what was declared unlawful.

h *Comely:* ευσχημων.] This seems to intimate that they were now in a circumstance in which God did, as it were, exact a peculiar severity from all their thoughts; and that it was a time to think of the trials of martyrdom rather than the endearment of human passions.

i *Without* any *violent constraint.*] Απερισπαστως is rendered in our translation by the addition of several words, *that ye may attend on the Lord without distraction.* But Sir Norton Knatchbull has convinced me that the version here given is much preferable to ours.

k *Pass the flower of her age*, &c.] There is hardly any passage in the Epistle about the sense of which I have been more perplexed than about this; and I am still far from being satisfied concerning it. I had once translated it, "*If any one thinks that he acts an unbecoming part by continuing in his single state till he be past the flower of his age,—let them marry,—he that marrieth does well*," &c. and had paraphrased the words accordingly. And what induced me to this was, that in verse 37. the apostle puts the issue of the matter on the stedfastness of his own mind, the power he had over his own will, and his having no necessity; whereas, if a daughter or a ward were in question, her inclinations, temper, and convenience were certainly to be consulted; and it would be the same if the virgin spoken of was one to whom the man was himself engaged. But it is really doing such violence to the original to render τηρειν εαυτον παρθενον, *keep himself single*, or keep his own virginity; and to render εκγαμιζων, *he that marries*, that after long deliberation I chose to abide by our own version, especially since it agrees with most of those I have had an opportunity of consulting. And if this be admitted, I think it must be taken for granted that when the apostle speaks of this man's having no necessity, he means to take in whatever might urge him to dispose of her in marriage, whether in her temper and inclinations, or in their domestic circumstances.—As for Heinsius's opinion, that "ασχημονειν επι την παρθενον signifies, *to incur "shame by reason of his virgin;*" meaning, if a man apprehend that his daughter will dishonour his family by fornication, he will do prudently to marry her; I think the above-mentioned objection lies equally against the interpretation. But if the Alexandrine reading of γαμιζων, instead of εκγαμιζων, be admitted, it may deserve consideration whether the whole passage may not refer to the case of a contract between a man and a young maiden, the accomplishment or dissolution of which might in some imaginable circumstances depend very much on the conduct of the man, as he seemed to urge or decline the bringing it into effect.

l *I appear to have the Spirit of God.*] It is very unreasonable for any to infer from hence, that St. Paul was uncertain whether he was inspired or not. Whereas this is only a modest way of speaking; and δοκω εχειν often signifies the same with εχω. Compare Luke viii. 18. with Matt. xiii. 12; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; xiv. 37. And the ambiguity in the expression, *appear to have*, seems exactly to correspond to the ambiguity of this original phrase.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 14. 1 COR. VII. 29–32 33, 34 35—38 39

Let us observe the humility of the excellent apostle with pleasure. When he speaks of his fidelity in the ministry, he tells us he obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. Edified by such an example, let us ascribe to Christ the praise, not only of our endowments, but our virtues; even to him who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

Let us seriously contemplate the affecting lesson which the apostle here gives of the shortness of time; and infer how much it is our wisdom to loosen our affections from the things of this vain world, which are ready to engross so disproportionate a share in them. Let us look upon the world as a transient pageant, and not set our eyes and our hearts on that which is not. We expect, instead of these transitory vanities and empty shows, a kingdom that cannot be moved; in the expectation of which let us be solicitous to please the Lord; making the best of our opportunities, and guarding against all that may unnecessarily divert our minds, and divide our cares, from what will at length appear the one thing needful.

Let us attentively reflect upon the advantages and snares of our respective conditions in life; that we may improve the one, and escape, as far as possible, all injury from the other. Let those who are single employ their leisure for God; and endeavour to collect a stock of christian experience which may support them when the duties and difficulties, the cares and sorrows, of life may be multiplied. Let those who are married, with mutual tender regard, endeavour to please each other, and make the relation into which Providence hath conducted them as comfortable and agreeable as they can. And whatever cares press upon their minds, or demand their attention, let them order their affairs with such discretion, that they may still secure a due proportion of their time for the things of the Lord.

If any in their consciences are persuaded that by continuing single they shall best answer the purposes of religion, and promote the good of their fellow-creatures in conjunction with their own; let them do it. As for those that marry, whether a first or a second time, let them do it in the Lord; acting in the choice of their most intimate friend and companion as the servants of Christ; who are desirous that their conduct may be approved by him, and that any avocations and interruptions in his service which may be occasioned, even in those peaceful times, by marriage, may be, in some measure, balanced by the united prayers, prudent counsels, and edifying converse of those with whom they unite in this tender and indissoluble bond.

SECTION XV.

The apostle proceeds to consider the case of eating things sacrificed to idols; and reminds them, that though all christians might well be supposed to know the vanity of those imaginary deities to which they were offered, yet it might prove an occasion of grief and scandal, that the professors of christianity should partake of these sacrifices in their temple; which therefore charity would require them by all means to avoid. 1 Cor. viii. *throughout.*

1 COR. viii. 1.

SECT. 15. 1 COR. VIII. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I *NOW* proceed to consider the other cases about which you consulted me; particularly that *concerning things sacrificed to idols;* and here it may be observed, that *we know we all have*, as christians, that general *knowledge* of the vanity of these fictitious deities of which some are ready to boast, as if it were an extraordinary matter, and which they sometimes are in danger of abusing, by making it the foundation of liberties which may be very detrimental. But let it be remembered that *knowledge* often *puffeth up*,[a] and is the occasion of great self-conceit and arrogance; *whereas* it is considerate *love*, and gentle tenderness, that *edifies* and has such a happy effect in building up the church of Christ. *And* indeed, *if any one think that he knoweth any thing*, if he be conceited of his knowledge, so as to neglect and despise his brethren, and, upon account of his supposed superiority in that respect, set a very high value upon himself, it appears that *he as yet knows nothing as he ought to know it*, and needs to be taught the very first and most essential principles of that knowledge which is truly ornamental and useful. *But if any man love God*, and show it by a steady regard for the Divine glory and the good of his brethren, *he is* indeed *known of him*;[b] this man hath attained the true knowledge of God, and will be sure of his approbation and favour. *Therefore*, to proceed to the question in debate, *concerning the eating of* the *things sacrificed to idols, we* well *know that an idol* [*is*] in itself *nothing in the world*,[c] but a mass of senseless matter, and, when regarded in a religious view, so empty a vanity, that it deserves not to be named among the things that exist. *And* we all know, *that* [*there is*] indeed *no other God, but* that *one* glorious and transcendent Being, to which the gospel hath taught us to appropriate our worship. *For though there are* many *which are called gods, whether* residing *in heaven or on earth*, or even under the earth; for the heathens have not only their celestial and terrestrial, but likewise their infernal, deities: *as there are many gods, and many lords*, who are in their various subordination adored by the Gentiles, and have great though very absurd worship paid to them: *Nevertheless, to us* [*there is but*] *one God, the Father*,

1 COR. viii. 1.
NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many:)

6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of

a *Knowledge puffeth up.*] Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 96.) acknowledges that, as Bos and Erasmus Schmidius contend, there is a parenthesis here; but he thinks it begins in the middle of the first verse, and ends after the first clause of the 4th, *we have all knowledge—we know that an idol is nothing, &c.*

b *He is known of him.*] Most understand it, *he is approved by God;* as to *know* sometimes undoubtedly signifies. Mr. Locke would render it, *he is instructed by him.* But I acquiesce in Mr. Pierce's reasoning in his 6th *Dissertation*, to prove the construction followed in the paraphrase, by a construction like that of the original of Acts x. 36. where ὃτος plainly refers to the immediate *antecedent.*

c *We know that an idol is nothing in the world.*] Dr. Whitby shows this was a common aphorism among the Jewish doctors, to which the word בּבֹל, the name given them, did probably allude. Mons. Saurin thinks it so hard to reconcile this with what the apostle says elsewhere, that he judges it necessary to understand this as an objection made by one of the Corinthians, with whom he

whom *are* all things, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some, with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

ther[d] of angels and men, *from whom* [*are*] *all things* in created nature; *and we* derived our being from him, were made *for him*, and for his glory: *and* there is also but *one Lord*, even *Jesus Christ*, the only Mediator between God and man, *by whom* [*are*] *all things* created, supported, and guided; *and we by him*, thankfully owning ourselves obliged to his agency and care for all we are, and have, or hope to obtain. These are grand principles, in which all intelligent christians are agreed; and it would be happy, if they kept them steadily and consistently in view. 6

SECT. 15. 1 COR. VIII.

You are possessed of these apprehensions of things; it is well: *But* you ought to remember, that [*there is*] *not in all men this knowledge.* Some christian converts may not sufficiently apprehend this; *but* may imagine there is really some invisible spirit present in the idol, and acting by and upon it. And in consequence of this, *some do, even until now, with consciousness of* some religious regard to *the idol, eat the things* in question, *as* what is *sacrificed to the idol*, intending thereby to pay some homage; *and* so *their conscience, being* too *weak* to withstand a temptation to what, in these circumstances, is really evil, *is defiled*, and brought under a grievous and terrifying load of guilt. 7

But why should we occasion this inconvenience? For we know that *meat commends us not*, in any degree, *to* the acceptance and favour of *God; for neither are we the better if we eat, nor the worse if we eat not.* The great God does not so much esteem a man for being, or disapprove him for not being, superior to such little scruples; but the tenderness of his conscience, together with the zeal and charity of his heart, are the grand qualities he regards. 8

But take heed lest this power and *liberty of yours be by any means a stumbling-block* and occasion of sin *to the weak* with whom you converse, or who observe your conduct perhaps with more regard than you pay to it yourselves. *For if any one see thee, who hast* this boasted *knowledge, sitting down* to an entertainment *in an idol's temple*[e] as freely as thou wouldst in thine own house, and partaking of his sacrifices as cheerfully as if they were the common provisions of thine own table; though this may indeed arise from that sovereign contempt in which thou holdest that idle fiction of deity, can he know that situation of thy mind? And *will not the conscience of him that is* thus *weak*, and who perhaps feels some scruples in his own mind about it, *be encouraged* by thy example *to eat of the idol-sacrifices* with some sentiments of superstitious regard? *And* so *shall the weak brother, for whom* the Lord Jesus *Christ* himself *died*, be liable to *perish by thy knowledge*, in this instance mischievous rather than useful, so that when thou makest a vain ostentation of it, thou dost in effect pride thyself in thy brother's ruin. Imagine not this to be an inconsiderable evil; *but* on the contrary rather know, that *when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences*, leading them into guilt and hazarding their salvation, *you* greatly *sin against Christ;* who had such a tenderness for souls that he died to redeem them, and hath done all that example or precept can do to make his followers enter into such humane and compassionate views. 9 10 11 12

Therefore it is a determined point with me, upon these principles, that *if meat* of any kind *scandalize my brother* and lead him into sin, *I* would not only abstain now and then from this or that agreeable food, but *would never, as long as I live,*[f] *eat* any sort *of flesh.* I would subsist entirely on vegetables *that I may not scandalize* and ensnare *my brother*, if there be no other way of avoiding it. Of such importance should I esteem the preservation of one endangered soul. And herein I wish that God may give you the like self-denial, both for your own sakes and for the peace and honour of the christian church. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from this short but excellent chapter, to estimate the true value of knowledge, and to see how worthless and dangerous it is, when, instead of discovering to us our own ignorance and weakness, it serves only to puff up the mind. Let us rather labour and pray for that love and charity which edifieth ourselves and others, taking heed that we do not demonstrate our ignorance by a high conceit of our attainments in knowledge; for nothing can more evidently show how small those attainments are, than not to know their limits, when these limits so soon meet us, on what side soever we attempt to make an excursion. "Give us, O Lord, that love to "thee which is the best proof of our knowledge, and the surest way to its highest improvements." Ver. 1 2 3

Let us always remember the grand principle of the unity of God; and with the one God and Father of all, adore the one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we exist; setting him in our estimation far above all the powers, dignities, and glories of created nature. 4, 5

Belonging to so divine a Master, let us endeavour to learn the most generous principles of true religion. Let us not 8

is disputing. Saur. *Disc.* Vol. II. p. 476—481. But I cannot, from an impartial view of the context, give in to his interpretation. See Elsner's learned note here on ειδωλον and *simulachrum.*

d *One God, the Father.*] In answer to the argument drawn from hence against the deity of Christ, see Dr. Guyse on this place; and Dr. Edm. Calamy's *Serm. on the Trinity*, p. 25. and 244. The Person to whom the *Son*, as Lord or Mediator, introduces us, is undoubtedly the *Father;* nor is the Son to be considered as *another God.* But it is not the design of these notes largely to discuss theological controversies.

e *Sitting down* to an entertainment *in an idol's temple.*] How commonly entertainments among the heathen consisted of what had been sacrificed to their fictitious deities, and how religiously the christians abstained from them even when most rigorously imposed, Elsner has shown by many very apposite citations, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 96.) and no doubt the apostle's decision here had great weight with them. That these feasts were often celebrated in their temples, the same learned critic has abundantly shown in his notes on this clause; and it is strange that Chemnitius and Erasmus should ever have doubted it.

f *As long as I live:* εις τον αιωνα.] We render it, *as long as the world stands.* But the sense plainly limits the expression (which might simply have been rendered, *never*) to the sense here given.

SECT. 15. 1 COR. VIII. found our confidence on admitting and contending for, or despising and deriding, this or that particular observance, by which, as it may happen to be circumstanced, God is neither honoured nor dishonoured, pleased nor displeased. But let us ever maintain the tenderest concern for the edification and comfort of our brethren, and guard against whatever might either grieve or ensnare them. Let us remember that Christ died for the weakest as well as the strongest; and let their relation to him, and his tender and compassionate regard for them, melt down our hearts, 12 when seized with the cold insensibility which, alas, is too ready to prevail amongst christians! It is Christ we wound, in wounding our brethren; and in smiting them, we smite him.

Let us then stay that rash hand which is so ready in mere wantonness to do mischief; and be willing to deny 13 ourselves in any desire, for ever so long a time, rather than by our indulgence to dishonour God and injure others. This is the excellent lesson St. Paul often inculcates, of which he was an eminent and illustrious example. But O, how low are multitudes of christians, multitudes of ministers, fallen, when they cannot deny themselves in what is unnecessary and even unlawful, where either interest or pleasure solicit the gratification!

SECTION XVI.

The apostle, proposing to illustrate his condescension to the weak, by his waving to accept of a maintenance from the Corinthians, introduces what he had to say on that head with a short discourse on the right which, as the gospel-minister, he really had, to be supported by those among whom he laboured; which he argues both from natural equity and scripture principles. 1 Cor. ix. 1—14.

1 Cor. ix. 1.

SECT. 16. 1 COR. IX. 1 WHILE I thus speak of the concern I have to avoid what may prove an occasion of injury to weak brethren, it leads my thoughts to the part I have acted while I resided among you, in declining to take that maintenance from you, which I might very justly have expected and demanded. And here you must give me leave to express my surprise, as well as my concern, to hear that so unkind and unnatural a construction has been put upon my generosity and tenderness, as if I had declined to accept your contributions, from a consciousness of not being entitled to them as well as my brethren. But can you really imagine that to be the case? *Am not I*, as truly as any man living, *an apostle* of Jesus Christ? *Am not I* as *free* in this instance as any other, and may I not, as justly as they, expect to be maintained by you, while I am serving your best interests? *Have not I*, though called so much later than my brethren, *seen Jesus Christ our Lord*,[a] after his resurrection, so as to be able to testify the important fact on my own knowledge, as confidently as those that were earlier acquainted with him? And, to urge so plain a point no farther, *are not ye* Corinthians, particularly, *my work in the Lord*, and the evident token of his blessing on 2 my apostolical labours? On this account, *if I am not an apostle to* some *others, yet I doubtless am so to you*, who of all people in the world can show the least excuse for questioning my mission: *for ye are* indeed *the seal of my apostleship in the Lord;* and the extraordinary success I have had among you, if others should doubt of my commission, might furnish out a proof of it also to them.

3 *This* therefore *is my apology to those who examine* and censure *me* as to this part of 4 my conduct. Does my waving the use of a privilege prove that I have it not? *Have we not*, both in natural equity and according to the divine constitution, the same *power* as others in the same office, *to eat and to drink* and to subsist ourselves at the expense of 5 those among whom we labour? Yea, *have we not power to lead about* [*with us*] in our apostolical travels, (if we think it necessary,) *a sister*, whom we might take for *a wife*,[b] *as* some of *the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord* do, *and Peter*[c] in particular; and to expect that she likewise, as well as ourselves, should be provided for by those to 6 whom we have done such important services, as nothing of this kind can ever requite? *Or* can it be thought there is any thing singular in my case, or in that of my present companions, that it *should* rob me of the liberties others have, so that *I only and Barnabas*[d] should *not have power to decline working* with our own hands for a maintenance while we are preaching the gospel? I might here insist, indeed, on the natural equity of the thing, that they who devote themselves to the service of the public should be supported by the 7 public whom they serve. *Who*, for instance, *ever goes to war at his own charge?* The community furnishes out provision for those who guard it and fight its battles. And if the services of a soldier deserve that maintenance which, while engaged in the defence of their country, men cannot earn, how much more may it be expected by us, who daily hazard our lives as well as wear them out for men's everlasting happiness? *Who planteth a vineyard and doth not* expect to *eat of its fruit? Or who feedeth a flock and doth not* think he hath a right to *eat of the milk of the flock?* And if it be judged reasonable that men

1 Cor. ix. 1.
AM I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not you my work in the Lord?

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me, is this:

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

a *Have not I seen the Lord?* &c.] That this was necessary in order to his being an apostle, that is, *a witness of Christ's resurrection*, has before been observed. See p. 419. note g. Compare Acts xxii. 14, 15; xxvi. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 8.

b *A sister, a wife.*] The word γυναικα has no force at all here, if it be rendered *a woman*; a *sister* must undoubtedly be *a woman*: not to say how improbable it is that the apostle should have carried about with him, in these sacred peregrinations, a woman to whom he was not married. So that the answer which the papists generally make to the argument often brought from these words, in favour of a married clergy, is absolutely inconclusive.

c *And Peter.*] This is an important clause, both as it declares in effect that St. Peter continued to live with his wife after he became an apostle, and also that St. Peter had no rights as an apostle, which were not common to St. Paul. A remark utterly subversive of popery, if traced to its obvious consequences.

d *I only, and Barnabas.*] From this expression one would indeed think that the judaizing christians, who were the main cause of St. Paul's uneasiness in this respect, had a peculiar spleen against those two apostles of the uncircumcision, who were so instrumental in procuring and publishing the Jerusalem decree, which determined the controversy so directly in favour of the believing Gentiles.—It seems probable from the 12th verse that Barnabas supported himself by the labour of his hands when at Corinth, as well as St. Paul.

should have an equivalent for their labours about natural things, and the accommodations of the body, is it not more evidently so when the felicity of immortal souls is concerned? SECT. 16.

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

But *do I speak these things* merely *as a man*, upon principles of human reason alone, *and doth not the* Jewish *law speak also the same?* *For* there is a passage in the sacred volume on which the like argument may be built, (I mean Deut. xxv. 4.) where *it is written*, even *in the law of Moses* itself, for which some have so distinguishing a regard, "*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*,"[e] but shalt allow the poor animal to feed while it is labouring for thee in the midst of food: a circumstance in which its hunger would be peculiarly painful. Now *is God* so *solicitous about oxen*, that he intended this precept merely for their relief? *Or doth he say* [*this*] with a farther view, and, *on the whole*,[f] *for our sakes?* *Surely* we may conclude he intended such precepts as these, relating to compassion to the brutes, in some measure at least *for our sakes*, to humanize the heart with generous and compassionate sentiments, and to make men much more tender to each other, where their various interests are concerned. I may therefore apply it to the case before us, as entirely comprehended in his extensive, universal views; and say for us indeed *was* [*it*] *written*, that the necessary offices of life might be more cheerfully performed, in the expectation of such due acknowledgments; *that he who plougheth might plough in hope* of success, *and that he who threshcth in* such *hope* should not be disappointed, but *should* in proper time *partake of his hope*, and possess the good for which he has laboured. And surely amidst his care for others who are in meaner offices of life, God could not intend that the ministers of the gospel alone should be sunk under continual discouragement, neglect, and ill-usage. 1 COR. IX. 8 9

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: That he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.

And indeed when we consider what great benefactors these persons are to the souls amongst whom they labour with success, the reasonableness of the conclusion will appear beyond all contradiction. For *if we*, by our incessant diligence in preaching to you the gospel of the blessed God, *have sown unto you spiritual things*, which may spring up in a harvest of eternal blessings, [*is it*] *any great matter that we* should *reap your carnal things?* Is there the least proportion between any thing which your liberality can impart to us, and that which we have been the happy instruments of imparting to you? 10 11

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

This is the privilege of ministers in general, and it is a privilege which you well know some of them have exerted. And *if others* are so readily allowed to *partake of* [*this*] *power over you*,[g] [*shall*] *not we rather* claim it, with yet more evident and apparent reason, who have been the means, not only of edifying and instructing you, but likewise of calling you into the profession of christianity? *But we have not made use of this power*, though founded in such evident and various principles of equity. *But we* rather chuse to *endure all things*, the fatigues of labour and inconveniences of frequent necessity, *that we may not occasion any hinderance to the gospel of Christ*,[h] from the cavils of ill-disposed people, who are always watchful for opportunities to misrepresent and censure our conduct. 12

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

But though I do not now ask any thing of this kind for myself, yet I will not give up the justice of the demand. And I might farther support it, from the provision which God made for the priests and Levites under the Mosaic law. *Know ye not* therefore, *that they who are employed about holy things are fed out of* the provisions which belong to *the temple*, *and* [*that*] *they who wait upon* the service of *the altar are partakers with the altar*, in a part of the victims offered on it, particularly the vows and the sacrifices of peace-offerings: And it is farther to be considered, that *so also*, that is, on principles like these, *the Lord* Jesus Christ himself *hath* expressly commanded and *ordained that they who preach the gospel should live* and subsist *upon the gospel*;[i] when he declares, as you know more than one of the Evangelists assures us he did, "that the labourer is "worthy of his hire." Compare Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7. 13 14

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the disciples of Christ learn, from these instructions, to honour the Lord with their substance, and the first-fruits of all their increase! And may they feel those happy effects attending the ministration of the gospel, and reap such an abundant harvest of spiritual blessings, that the imparting temporal subsistence and accommodation to those who are the instruments of conveying them, may not be matter of constraint, but of free and affectionate choice! May the ministers of Christ, while they thankfully accept of that subsistence which Providence, by the in- Ver. 1—7 11

e *That treadeth out the corn.*] It is well known that this was the custom in Judea and other eastern nations. It is still retained by many of them, and particularly in Ceylon. Raphelius has produced passages from Xenophon which something illustrate it.

f *On the whole.*] It cannot be thought that God had no regard at all to the brute creatures in such precepts as these; and therefore I thought it better to render πάντως, *on the whole*, than *entirely* or *altogether*, though that sense is more frequent.

g *Partake of* [*this*] *power*, &c.] Mr. Pyle thinks this refers to the other apostles of Christ; but I rather think St. Paul intended to glance on the false teachers who carried their claims of this right to such an exorbitant height, though their services had been by no means comparable to those of the apostle. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 20.—Mr. Locke would here read σωτικὸς ὑμῶν, of *your substance*; but Matt. x. 1; John xvii. 2. and many other places, prove that ἐξουσίας ὑμῶν may probably be rendered *power over you*.

h *Hinderance to the gospel.*] From the conduct of the other apostles, and of St. Paul at other places, particularly among the Macedonian churches, we may conclude, that he might see some circumstances at Corinth, (not necessary for us exactly to know,) which determined him to decline accepting of any subsistence from them while he resided there.

i *Live upon the gospel.*] Mr. Mede understands εὐαγγέλιον here, of *the reward given for bringing a good message*, (see *Diatrib. in loc.*) and shows that the word sometimes has that meaning in heathen authors: but it is a very uncommon signification in the sacred, and therefore not to be admitted without farther proof.—That man might be said *to live on the gospel*, who was maintained for preaching it; as he might be said to live *on the temple*, who was supported out of its income for ministering there, though the word, *temple*, has the usual signification.

SECT. 16. strumentality of their brethren, sends them, ever act a moderate and generous part, and maintain such a visible superiority to all secular views, as may do an honour to the gospel, and command veneration to themselves!

May the secular advantages of the office never invite bad men into it, nor its discouragements deter good men from undertaking it. And whatever censures a malignant world, who themselves know not any higher motive than self-interest, shall pass, may the ministers of Jesus ever have a testimony in their consciences, that they seek not the properties but the souls of their hearers.

1 COR. IX.

8—10 Let us attend to the humane genius of the Mosaic law, manifested in the precepts which relate even to the brutes. And remember, that it is the character, and should be the care, of a merciful man, to extend mercy to his beast. Much more then let us show compassion to our fellow-men. Let us not desire to enjoy the benefit of their labours, even in the lowest employments of life, without giving them some valuable equivalent. Let us bear towards all, the hearts of equitable and generous brethren, and constantly wish the prosperity and happiness of the human family. On the whole, may there be between the teachers, and those who are taught by them, a continual intercourse of benevolent affections and friendly actions; as becomes those who stand in such an endearing relation to each other, and have, as christians, the honour of being intimately related to that blessed Redeemer, who sought not his own things, but ours, and hath thereby laid the strongest engagement upon us, if we have any spark of gratitude and honour, not to seek our own things, but his!

SECTION XVII.

The apostle illustrates the condescension and tenderness of his conduct towards the Corinthians, in declining to accept of their contributions; and speaks of his self-denial under a very expressive simile, taken from those who contended in those Grecian games with which they were familiarly acquainted. 1 Cor. ix. 15, *to the end.*

1 COR. ix. 15.

SECT. 17. I HAVE thought it my duty in the foregoing discourse, to plead the natural and the evangelical rights which the ministers of the gospel have to be maintained by the people, to whose spiritual edification they give their time and labours. *But* you well know that *I myself*, during my abode among you, *have used none of these things; nor have I written thus, that* if, according to my purpose and hope, I ever should visit you again, *it should* hereafter *be so done unto me.* I think of the generous and self-denying part which I have acted among you, in declining, *for* some particular reasons, to take a maintenance, with a pleasure so great, that I may even say, [*it were*] *better for me to die* for want of the necessary supplies of life, *than that any man* among you *should make* this *my boasting void*, by having it to say, that I have eaten his bread, and been supported at his expense. *For if I preach the gospel*, after what hath happened in my singular case, *I have no* [*matter of*] *boasting* in that; *for* having received such a commission, how could I refuse? I may say, *a* kind of invincible *necessity lieth upon me, and woe to me* indeed, *if I preach not the gospel!* To decline a work assigned to me by so condescending an appearance of Christ, when with malicious rage I was attempting to destroy his church, would be an instance of ingratitude and obstinacy, deserving the most dreadful and insupportable condemnation. *If indeed I do this voluntarily*, and show upon every occasion a cordial willingness to do it, *I have* indeed some room to expect *a reward; but if* I do it *unwillingly*, as I said before, *a dispensation is entrusted to me*, and I must of necessity fulfil it. *What then is* that circumstance in *my* conduct, for which I may expect a *reward* of praise from the mouth of my Divine Master? [*Surely*] this, *that when I preach the gospel of Christ, I may render it unexpensive; that so I may* be sure *not* in the least degree to *abuse my power in the gospel* to any low and secular purposes, or carry it beyond its due bounds. *For* in this respect, *being free from all* [*men*,] and under no obligation, in this manner, to give them my labours, *I made myself the servant of all*,[a] addicting myself to the most fatiguing duties, *that I might* advance their happiness, and *gain the more* to true religion and salvation; in which I have found a noble equivalent for all I could do or bear. *And* I not only submitted to preach the gospel without any reward, but I made it a constant maxim, to accommodate my manner of living to the way and relish of those about me, sacrificing my own humour and inclination; and that, in some instances, when I could not do it without considerable inconvenience to myself: accordingly, *to the Jews I became as a Jew*,[b] *that I might gain* over more of *the Jews* to christianity: *to those*, I say, *who were*, or apprehended themselves to be, *under the* tedious ceremonies and disagreeable restraints of the Mosaic *law*, I became, *as* if I were still in conscience *under the* obligations of the *law*,[c] though I knew it to have been abolished; and this *that I might gain those* who apprehended themselves to be *under the* bond of that *law*. On the other hand, *to those* who were *without the law* of Moses, and either unacquainted with it, or apprehended themselves under no obligation to conform to its peculiar institutions, I behaved *as* if I had myself

1 COR. IX.

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1 COR. IX. 15.

BUT I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge; that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.

21 To them that are without law, as without law,

a *The servant of all.*] This has a stronger sense than can easily be expressed in the paraphrase; and intimates, that he acted with as self-denying a regard to their interests, and as much caution not to offend them, as if he were absolutely in their power, as a slave is in that of his master.

b *To the Jews, &c.*] Compare, for the illustration of this, Acts xvi. 3; xxi. 21, &c. which instances were undoubtedly a specimen of many more of the like kind.

c *As* if I were still *under* the obligations of *the law.*] This can only signify that he voluntarily complied with it, as an *indifferent thing;* but it cannot by any means imply that he declared such observances necessary, or refused to converse with any who would not conform to them; for this was the very dissimulation which, with so generous a freedom, he condemned in St. Peter, Gal. ii. 14, &c.

(being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

also been *without the law*, neglecting its ceremonial precepts, which I well knew to be superseded and abolished. [*Yet*] still taking care that it might appear both from my word and actions that I was *not without law to God, but* apprehended myself *under a law* of the most affectionate duty and gratitude *to Christ*, who came by new bonds to engage us to the strictest obedience. But these freedoms I used, and this moderation I manifested, not by any means for my own indulgence, but *that I might gain those* who are *without the law*,[d] and make my ministry more agreeable and useful to such as were educated among the Gentiles. *I* therefore *became to the weak as* if I had been as *weak* and scrupulous as they, in the various articles of food and dress which might come into question, *that I might gain* upon *the weak;* for the soul of the weakest appeared to me infinitely valuable; and I have the warrant of my great Master to esteem it more precious than all the treasures of the world. In a word, *I became all things to all* [*men;*] accommodating myself to them so far as with a safe conscience I could, *that by any* or all *means*, if possible, *I might save some;* and it is the daily grief of my soul, that after all these efforts the number is so small. *And this I do for the sake of the gospel*, to promote its success to the utmost of my ability, *that I* also *may be a sharer in* the generous pleasure arising from the communication of *it*.[e]

SECT. 17. 1 COR. IX. 21 22 23

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

I may illustrate this by referring to the games so well known in Greece, and particularly to the Isthmian, so often celebrated among you at Corinth. *Do you not know, that* with respect to *those who run in the* stadium, or foot-*race*,[f] *all indeed run* and contend with each other, whereas *but one receiveth the prize?*[g] Yet the uncertain hope that each may be that one, animates them all to strain every nerve in the course. You have much greater encouragement to exert yourselves in the pursuit of celestial blessings. See to it, therefore, that ye *so run as that ye may obtain*, and that ye lay aside every thing that would be an incumbrance to you, or render you incapable of despatching the race with necessary vigour and alacrity. *And every one who contendeth* in the games, whether in running as above, or in wrestling, or combating, *is temperate in all things;*[h] abstaining from whatever might enervate his strength, and submitting to a regular course of diet, exercise, and hardship, that he may be the more capable of exerting himself with success. [*And this*] *they indeed* [*do,*] *that they may obtain a corruptible crown*,[i] a garland of leaves, that will soon wither and perish: *but we* are animated by the view of *an incorruptible* crown, the duration and glory of which will be commensurate to the existence of our immortal souls.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

It is no small pleasure to me, while I am exhorting you to this, to reflect that I am, through divine grace, myself an example of the temperance I recommend. *I for my part run not as one who is to pass undistinguished;*[k] but knowing what eyes are upon me, and solicitous to gain the approbation of my Judge, and attending with diligence and care to the boundaries which are marked out to us, I exert myself to the utmost. *I* so *fight, not as one that beats the air*,[l] who fights as it were with his own shadow, or practises a feigned combat; but as one who has a real and living enemy to contend with, and who, knowing that his life and his all is in question, would strike sure, and not lose his blows upon empty air. Thus I allow not myself in a habit of indolence and luxury, *but* imitate on a much nobler occasion, and to a much greater degree, the self-denial of the combatants I mentioned above; *I* bruise and *mortify my body*,[m] *and bring* [*it*] *into* such a degree of

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into sub-

d *That I might gain those without the law.*] This seems to imply, that the Gentiles not yet converted to christianity are here referred to; unless gaining the person spoken of signifies, rendering them "better disposed to regard his decisions," which is at most but a subordinate sense.

e *A sharer in* the communication of *it.*] We render it, *that I might be partaker with you;* but as the words, *with you*, are not in the original, which is ινα συνκοινωνος αυτης γενωμαι, I rather understand the words as referring to the satisfaction he found in imparting the invaluable and inexhaustible blessings of the gospel to all around him; a sentiment most suitable to his character and office.

f *The* stadium or foot-*race.*] On comparing the translation I had before made of this passage with that of my learned and worthy friend, Mr. West, (in his excellent *Dissertation on the Olympic Games*, p. 189, 190.) I had the pleasure to find a remarkable agreement; but where there was any difference, I have generally altered what I had written, either in the version or paraphrase, to make it conformable to his; whose judgment in any point of criticism has with me great weight, but especially on a subject of which he appears to have been so eminent a master, that his writings upon it are as distinguished in their kind as the games he so elegantly describes were in theirs.

g *One receiveth the prize.*] It is true that in some games there were several prizes of different value; yet in those to which he here refers there was but one for the victor, and the argument is very strong and striking.

h *Temperate in all things.*] Whoever considers, on the one hand, to what great self-denial in articles of food, sleep, and every other sensual indulgence, they who were to contend in their games were obliged; and, on the other, of how great importance it is that the youth of a community should be formed to a manly taste and resolute self-government, will undoubtedly see the great national prudence of the Greeks in the institution and support of these games; to which, it is very probable, their remarkable valour and success in war, during the best days of their several republics, might in some considerable degree be owing. See, for the illustration of the temperance here referred to, Elsner's excellent note on this text, and Ælian. *Var. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 30. *lib.* x. *cap.* 2.

i *Corruptible crown*, a garland of leaves, &c.] It is well known that the crown in the Olympic games, sacred to Jupiter, was of wild olive; in the Pythian, sacred to Apollo, of laurel; in the Isthmian or Corinthian, solemnized in honour of Palemon, of pine-tree; and in the Nemæan, of smallage or parsley. Now the most of these were evergreens: yet they would soon grow dry, and break to pieces. Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 103.) produces many passages in which the contenders in these exercises are rallied by the Grecian wits for the extraordinary pains they took for such trifling rewards; and Plato has a celebrated passage, which greatly resembles this of St. Paul; but by no means equals it in beauty and force.

k *I run not as one that is to pass undistinguished.*] Τρεχω ουκ αδηλως is, *to run unnoticed.* But as some have explained it of "running "without attending to the marks and lines which determined the "path," I have hinted at that sense. As for Heinsius's interpretation, who explains it, "moving so slowly, as that he might seem to "stand still," it is like many others peculiar to that writer, quite insupportable; no one, in such a circumstance, could be said to run at all.

l *Beats the air*, &c.] In order to attain the greater agility and dexterity, it was usual for those who intended to box in the games, to exercise their arms with the gauntlet on, when they had no antagonist near them; and this was called σκιομαχια, in which a man would of course *beat the air.* But Bos has taken a great deal of pains in his note here, to show that it is a proverbial expression for a man's *missing his blow*, and spending it, not on his enemy, but on empty air.

m Bruise and *mortify my body.*] Υπωπιαζω properly signifies, *to strike on the face* as boxers did, and particularly on (the υπωπιον) the part of it under the eyes, at which they especially aimed. Hence it comes to signify a *livid tumour* on that part; and sometimes it is proverbially used for a face terribly bruised, mortified, and disfigured, like that of a boxer just come from the combat; as Bos has shown at large, *Exercit.* p. 138, &c.

SECT. 17. 1 COR. IX.

servitude as the superior interests of my soul require. And this I judge a most necessary precaution; *lest, after having served as a herald to others*, and after having made proclamation of the glorious rewards to be attained, and endeavoured to animate their zeal in the pursuit, *I should myself be disapproved*[n] of the great Judge, and finally declared unworthy of obtaining a share in them.

jection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16, 18 LET us learn, by the example of the apostle, a generous ambition of excelling in religion. Not of doing more indeed than our duty, for we owe God our best, and our all; but abounding in it to the utmost, carrying our love, our zeal, and our obedience, to the highest degree we can attain, and preserving an honest readiness to know our duty, even in circumstances in which there might be some plausible excuse for overlooking it. In particular, let the ministers of the gospel not think it much to their praise, to perform those services which it would be shameful and almost impossible for them to neglect; but labour to acquit themselves in the very best manner they can: showing, in the whole of their conduct, that they are not animated only or chiefly by secular motives, in the labours they bestow upon the souls of men.

19—22 They are peculiarly concerned to learn and imitate his condescension of the apostle, in becoming all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some. But they are not the only persons who are interested in this. It is the duty of every christian to endeavour to please his neighbours and brethren for their good: and it will be our wisdom and happiness, upon such generous principles, to learn to govern and deny ourselves.

We are all called to engage in the most important race, in the most noble combat. The children of this world fatigue themselves for trifles, and exert the noble faculties of an immortal spirit to purposes far beneath its dignity.

24—26 But all is not vanity. Every crown is not withering and corruptible. We have heard of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And whatever there was in the prospect to awaken these Corinthians, still remains to awaken and animate us. Let us therefore keep our eyes and our hearts fixed upon it, and be in good earnest in what we do; often looking to the marks which are drawn in the word of God; realizing to ourselves the certain existence and formidable character of our invisible enemies; suspecting especially ourselves, fearing the treachery of our own corruptions, and using all that mortification which may promote our spiritual life and usefulness.

27 Who would not tremble, how high soever his profession or office may be—who would not tremble to hear St. Paul insinuate a supposed possibility, that after having preached to others, and made such animating proclamations of the heavenly prize to them, he might himself be rejected, as unqualified to receive it? Let us learn from it humility and caution; learn to watch against dangers, which will still surround us as long as we dwell in this body; and rejoice in the guardianship of Christ, who will at length deliver his faithful servants from every evil work, and preserve them to his heavenly kingdom.

SECTION XVIII.

Farther to awaken that holy caution which the apostle had suggested in the preceding section, he here represents to the Corinthians, on the one hand, the privileges which Israel of old enjoyed, and on the other, the divine displeasure which they brought upon themselves by behaving in a manner so unworthy of them. 1 Cor. x. 1—13.

1 COR. X. 1.

SECT. 18. 1 COR. X. 1

I HAVE been urging you to run your christian race with resolution and diligence; which you should the rather do, considering how fatally many of those miscarried who were once God's peculiar people, and favoured in a very extraordinary manner. *Now* this is so affecting a thought, that I must desire you, my *brethren*, to attend while I farther illustrate it; for *I would by no means have you ignorant*[a] of so instructive a history.

1 COR. x. 1.
MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

1 You have, I doubt not, often heard *that all our fathers*, whom Moses the great lawgiver of our nation led out of Egypt, *were* all *under the* conduct of that miraculous pillar of *cloud* and of fire, which did their camp so singular an honour; *and* they *all passed through the sea*, the power of God opening a way for them, while the mountains enclosed them on

2 either side, and their Egyptian enemies were pressing hard upon their rear. *And* this was so wonderful and solemn an event, that I may say they *were all baptized into Moses*, that is, initiated into the profession of that religion which he was to teach them from God, *in the cloud and in the sea.* God did, as it were, solemnly receive them under protection, as his people; and they, by following his miraculous guidance, declared their dependence

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea:

3 upon him, and entire subjection to him. *And* as they proceeded in their journey, *they did all eat the same spiritual food*, that is, the manna, which for its excellence is called angels' food; (Psal. lxxviii. 25.) and which was indeed an emblem of the bread of life

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

n *Lest, after having served as an herald, I should be disapproved.*] I thought it of importance to retain the primitive sense of these gymnastic expressions. It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the original, that the word κηρυξας expresses the discharging the office of an *herald*, whose business it was to proclaim the conditions of the games, and display the prizes, to awaken the emulation and resolution of those who were to contend in them. But the apostle intimates, that there was this peculiar circumstance attending the christian contest, that the person who claimed its laws and rewards to others, was also to engage himself: and that there would be a peculiar infamy and misery in miscarrying in such a circumstance. Αδοκιμος, which we render *cast-away*, signifies, one who is *disapproved* by the judge of the games, as not having fairly deserved the prize. Mr. Fleming, arguing that St. Paul knew his own sincere piety, and consequently might be assured of his future happiness, maintains that *to be cast away*, here signifies, being judged unworthy of a part in the first resurrection. (Fleming's *Discourse on the first Resurrec.* p. 89.) But it appears to me much more natural, to refer it to the whole christian reward; as it is certain God engages his people to persevere by awful threatenings against apostasy, as well as by the promises of eternal life to those who continue faithful and constant.

a *Would by no means have you ignorant.*] Mr. Locke thinks that when the Corinthians inquired about the lawfulness of eating things sacrificed unto idols, they might urge that they could not be mistaken for heathens, because they maintained an open profession of christianity, holding communion with the church, by partaking of the sacraments, as well as other acts of worship; and that they might be exposed to ill will and ill usage, if they did not sometimes comply with their neighbours. And he supposes the apostle had each of these ideas in view in what follows: it is possible he might.

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink. (For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.)

that cometh down from heaven. *And they did* also *all drink* of what might be called, on the like principles, *the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual* or mysterious *Rock*,[b] the wonderful streams of *which followed them*[c] through so many of their wanderings and encampments; *and that rock was* a most affecting representation of *Christ*, the Rock of ages, the sure Foundation of his people's hopes, from whom they derive those streams of blessings which follow them through all this wilderness of mortal life, and will end in rivers of pleasure at the right hand of God for ever. 4

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

It was the privilege of Israel as a people, to enjoy such typical blessings as these; and *yet* it is plain that *God had no pleasure in the greatest part of them, for they were overthrown in the wilderness:* the whole generation that came adult out of Egypt was made to die there, and they sometimes died in such multitudes, that the ground was overspread with carcases, as a field is in which a battle has been fought. 5

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Now these things were types and *figures to us*, that we might learn wisdom at their expense, and not trust to external privileges, while we go on in a course of disobedience to the divine authority; and particularly, *that we might not lust after evil things*, and indulge ourselves in irregular and luxurious desires; *as they also lusted* after quails in contempt of the manna, and thereby brought the wrath of God upon them, and were consumed with pestilential distempers, while the meat was yet between their teeth. (Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.) Learn therefore, by what they suffered, to cultivate that temperance and self-denial which I have just been recommending to you. *Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them* [*were*] even while they yet continued at Mount Sinai; *as* you know *it is written*, (Exod. xxxii. 6, 19.) with relation to the feast of the golden calf, *The people sat down to eat and drink* of the sacrifices which were offered to it, *and* then they *rose up to play* and dance[d] in honour of this vain symbol of deity. And this naturally leads me to add another caution, no less suitable to your present circumstances than the former; *neither let us commit fornication*,[e] or lewdness of any kind, *as some of them* in their idolatrous revels *committed* [*fornication;*] *and* particularly when they eat the sacrifices of Baal-Peor, and offended with the Midianitish women; the sad consequence of which was, that *there fell in one day twenty-three thousand* by the plague, besides those that were slain by the sword, who amounted to a thousand more. (Num. xxv. 1—9.) *Neither let us tempt Christ* by our unbelief, after the tokens he hath given us to command our faith and engage our dependence; *as some of* the next generation of *them also tempted* [*him,*][f] while he resided among them, as the angel of God's presence; *and were destroyed by* fiery *serpents*, (Numb. xxi. 6.) from the venom of which others were recovered by that brazen serpent which was so illustrious a type of the Messiah. *Neither murmur ye* under dispensations of Providence which may seem at present to bear hard upon you, and are contrary to your present inclinations and interest; *as some of them also murmured* again and again, *and were destroyed by the destroyer*,[g] who was commissioned by one judgment and another to take them off. 6 7 8 9 10

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

But let me remind you on the whole, as I hinted above, that *all these* calamitous *things* which *happened unto them*, were intended *as* types or *examples* to us, that we might learn what we are to expect in the like case; *and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come*:[h] as we live under the last dispensation which God will ever give to the children of men, and with which the whole economy of their probation shall wind up. *Therefore* let me urge this improvement of the whole survey upon you, and upon all into whose hand this Epistle may come, and say, *Let him that thinketh he standeth* most securely, and who may be ready most confidently to trust in his own strength, *take heed lest he fall* so much the lower, in proportion to the degree in which he imagines himself out of all manner of danger. 11 12

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

b *The same spiritual meat—the same spiritual drink.*] It is not necessary to understand by the same meat and drink, the same by which we christians are supported; for this could not properly be said of any Israelites who were not true believers; but the meaning is, that they all, good and bad, shared the same miraculous supply of food and drink.

c *That followed them.*] It is objected, that "this stream did not "constantly follow them; for then they would have had no temptation to have murmured for want of water, as we know they did "at Kadesh, in the circumstances so fatal to Moses; nor would "they have had any occasion to buy water of the Edomites, as they "proposed to do. Deut. ii. 6." Mr. Mede justly answers, that perhaps the streams from the first rock at Rephidim failed, for a farther trial of their faith; and at Kadesh God renewed the like wonder; but that likewise might probably fail when they came into the inhabited country of the Edomites, which was not till near the end of their wandering. Mede's *Diatrib. in loc.* He there illustrates the similitude between Christ and this rock, in many other particulars; but those mentioned in the paraphrase seem the most material.—That the word *was* imports here no more than *signified*, is extremely obvious; and instances of the like use of it every where abound in scripture.

d *To play* and dance.] Dr. Whitby observes, that though many commentators understand this of fornication, it is without sufficient reason. Fornication is indeed spoken of in another clause, and that the very next, ver. 8. which makes it less probable that it is intended here. As the golden calf was designed as a symbol of Jehovah, there is no reason to imagine they would bring such an abomination into worship, however irregular, which was addressed to him. And Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 105.) has abundantly vindicated the remark of Grotius, that παιζειν signifies, to *dance*, a ceremony with which God himself had lately been honoured, (Exod. xv. 20.) and which, it is very probable, might naturally be attended with the shouts and songs which Moses heard on approaching the camp, Exod. xxxii. 17, 18.

e *Commit fornication.*] This was common at many idolatrous feasts among the heathen; and it was the more proper for the apostle to caution these christians against it, as it was proverbially called *the Corinthian practice*, κορινθιαζεσθαι being, as many have observed, equivalent to *scortari*. Strabo tells us, that in one temple of Venus at Corinth, there were no less than a thousand *priestesses*, who made prostitution a part of their devotions to the *goddess*. Strabo, *lib.* ii. *cap.* 16.

f *Tempt Christ as some of them tempted* [*him*].] Though the word, *him*, be not in the original, it seems plainly to be implied; and this is a considerable text in proof of his residence with the church in the wilderness, as the angel of God's presence. Compare Exod. xxiii. 20; Isa. lxiii. 9; Heb. xi. 26; Acts vii. 38.

g *The destroyer.*] The Jews generally interpret this of him whom they fancy to be the *angel of death*, and whom they call *Sammael*.

h *Ends of the world.*] Τελη αιωνων properly signifies the *concluding age* or the *last dispensation* of God to mankind on earth; which, if we believe the gospel to be true, we must assuredly conclude that it is.

SECT. 18. 1 COR. X. 13

It is true, indeed, and it is matter of great comfort and thankfulness to reflect upon it, that *no temptation has* yet *taken you, but such as is common to man,*[i] and such as human reason, properly exercised on the principles of that revelation which you enjoy, may furnish you with motives to resist. *And* we have the pleasure farther to reflect that *God* [*is*] *faithful who* hath promised[k] to preserve his people, and he *will not leave you to be tempted above your ability: but will with the temptation* with which he permits you to be assaulted, *provide you also* with *a way of escape, that* if you be not wanting to yourselves, *you may be able to bear* [*it*;] yea, and may acquire new strength and honour by the combat.

13 There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6—11 MAY christians be always sensible how happy they are in having received such useful hints from the New Testament to assist them in the interpretation of the Old, and particularly those which are here given. We see an Israel according to the flesh, an affecting emblem of the church in general. We see all their external privileges, though many and great, were ineffectual for their security when they behaved as unworthy of them.

1, 2 Alas! how affecting is the thought, that some who were under the miraculous cloud, who passed through the
3, 4 waters of the divided sea, who eat of the bread that came down from heaven, and drank of that living stream which omnipotent mercy had opened from the flinty rock, and made it to follow them in the windings of their journey,
5 should yet become, instead of being on the whole the objects of divine favour and complacency, the monuments of wrath. Let us not ourselves therefore be high-minded, but fear. Let us mark the rocks on which they suffered
7 this fatal shipwreck, if possible to keep clear of them; and pray that divine grace may direct our course. Let us
8 avoid not only those superstitious and idolatrous rites of worship by which, as protestants, we are in little danger of being ensnared, but also those lusts of the flesh which must, considering our superior advantage, be highly displeasing to God, even though they should not rise to a degree of equal enormity and scandal.

9 Let us especially take heed that we tempt not Christ, who has graciously been pleased to take us under his con-
10 duct, and to honour his church with so many demonstrative tokens of his presence. Nor let us murmur if, while we are in this wilderness state, we sometimes meet with difficulties in our way. Still let us make it familiar to our minds, that God adjusts the circumstances of every trial; even that God who stands engaged by the promises of
13 his word, as well as the equity and goodness of his nature, not to permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. If we see not an immediate way of escape, let us calmly and attentively look around us, and humbly look up to him, that he may pluck our feet out of the net.

SECTION XIX.

The apostle further pursues that caution against all approaches to idolatry which he had been suggesting in the former section: particularly arguing from that communion which christians had with Christ at his table, which ought to place them at the remotest distance from what might justly be called having communion with devils. 1 Cor. x. 14—22.

1 COR. x. 14.

SECT. 19. 1 COR. X. 14, 15

I HAVE just expressed my confidence in the care of God to support you under any extraordinary temptation which may hereafter arise to draw you out of the way of your duty: *wherefore, my beloved* brethren, being assured of this, let me exhort you carefully to *flee from* all approaches to *idolatry*, whatever circumstances of allurement or danger may seem to plead for some degrees of compliance. *I* now *speak as unto wise men:* I use a rational argument which will bear the strictest examination, and which I am willing should be canvassed as accurately as you please; *judge you* therefore *what I say:* for I will refer it to your own deliberate and cooler thoughts, whether there be not danger in those idolatrous participations which some of you are so ready to defend; and whether they may not naturally bring some degree of guilt upon your conscience?

1 COR. X. 14. WHEREFORE, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say.

16 *The* sacramental *cup*, which is to us both the commemoration of past, and the pledge *of* future, *blessing, which* in the name of the Lord *we* solemnly *bless*,[a] setting it apart to a holy and religious use; *is it not the* token of our faith and our *communion* in these inestimable privileges which are the purchase *of the blood of Christ*, shed for the remission of our sins? *The bread which we break*, and which was appointed in the first institution of the ordinance for this purpose, *is it not the communion of the body of Christ* in the like sense? That is, the token of our sharing in the privileges which he procured at the expense
17 of sufferings by which his body was broken, and almost torn in pieces. *For we* christians *being many, are* yet, as it were, but different parts of *one* and the same broken *bread*,[b] which we distribute [*and*] receive in token of our being members of *one body; for we are all partakers of one* kind of holy *bread*, and one cup, which we eat and drink together

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

i *Common to man.*] Ἀνθρωπινος may signify also *proportionable to human strength*, as well as frequent to human creatures; the paraphrase therefore imports that.

k *Faithful* who hath promised.] Compare Psal. ciii. 13, 14. and numberless passages in which God encourages his people to hope for his presence and help in pressing danger.

a *Which we bless.*] This text very plainly shows that there is a sense in which we may be said to bless the sacramental elements. To render it, *the cup over which* or *for which we bless God*, is doing great violence to the original. That is said to be *blessed* which is set apart to a sacred use, (Gen. ii. 3; Exod. xx. 11.) and on which the blessing of God is solemnly invoked.

b *Of one bread.*] Many valuable manuscripts read it, *and of one cup*. Elsner has an admirable note upon this text, to prove that eating together in a religious manner hath been, in almost all ancient nations, a token of mutual friendship. See Mr. Lowman's *Hebrew Ritual*, p. 54. and Maimonides, quoted by him there. See more especially, Dr. Cudworth's *Discourse concerning the True Notion of the Lord's Supper*, chap. i. and chap. vi. And it is certain also, as it is intimated below, that by sacrifices, and the feasts on them, they held communion with the real or supposed deity to which they were presented; as the author of a *Discourse on Sacrifices* has shown at large: but that this was the only end of all sacrifices, I cannot think that learned writer sufficiently to have proved.

at the same table, in testimony of our mutual and inviolable friendship, cemented in Christ our great and common Head. SECT. 19.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?

Consider how it is with *Israel according to the flesh*, the lineal descendants of those who were the chosen and peculiar people of God: *are not they who eat of the sacrifices* which have been offered in the court of their temple at Jerusalem, esteemed to be *partakers of the altar* of God, on which part of them have consumed? And is not their eating the flesh of these victims esteemed as an act of communion with the Deity, to whom they were offered? Now you may easily perceive, that the same argument will be conclusive to prove that they who share in the sacrifices presented to idols, knowing what they do, and especially doing it in some apartments belonging to the temples of such idols, hold a kind of communion with these fictitious and detestable deities, by no means reconcilable with the sanctity of the christian character, or the tenor of their sacramental engagements. 1 COR. X. 18

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

What then do I say, that an idol of wood or stone, of silver or gold, *is* in itself *any thing* divine? *Or* do I say, *that the thing which is sacrificed to idols is* in itself *any thing* morally and universally unclean? You well know that I intend to maintain nothing of this kind. 19

20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

But on the other hand, you must be aware, *that what the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to* evil *demons, and not to God;* such spirits as those to which they address their devotions, must to be sure be wicked spirits, if they exist at all; and devils may well be supposed to use their utmost efforts to support such worship, it being grateful to them, in proportion to the degree in which it is affronting and injurious to the great Object of christian adoration, and ensnaring to the souls of men. *Now I would not* by any means *that you*, who have at your baptism solemnly renounced the devil and all his adherents, *should* in any degree *have*, or seem to have, *communion with demons.*[c] And indeed this is most inconsistent with those solemn badges of your holy profession, by which your baptismal covenant is so frequently ratified and renewed. *Ye cannot* with tolerable decency and consistency at one time *drink of the cup of the Lord*, in that holy rite in which you commemorate his death, *and* at another time *of the cup of demons*, of libations poured out in their honour, or cups drank at their feasts. *Ye cannot* surely think you should *be partakers of the table of the Lord, and* go from thence to *the table of demons*, or from theirs to his, to share alternately in such holy and such polluted rites and entertainments. Yet it is certain that by partaking in their feasts, you do, as it were, contract a kind of friendship and familiarity with these infernal spirits. 20

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?

Do we, by such a conduct as this, deliberately mean to *provoke the Lord to jealousy*,[d] by thus caressing those whom he abhors as his rivals? Must it not incense him exceedingly? and must it not, in its consequences, be detrimental and even fatal to us? Or *are we stronger than he?* so as to be able to resist or to endure the dreadful effects of his displeasure. 21 22

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us hear and fear: for it is the tendency of every wilful sin to provoke the Lord to jealousy; it is a challenge to him, as it were, to let loose the fierceness of his wrath. And alas, how can such feeble creatures as we endure its terrors! Let the consideration urged by the apostle, to deter men from partaking in idolatrous sacrifices, be weighed by us, as extending to every thing whereby God may be dishonoured and Christ affronted. Ver. 22

They who are christians indeed, and partake of that feast which the blessed Jesus hath instituted in commemoration of his dying love, do herein partake of the body and the blood of Christ. Let it be remembered as a pledge of everlasting obedience, since it is a memorial of infinite obligation: it shows that we belong to him, as his willing and peculiar people; that we renounce all his rivals, particularly Satan and his kingdom, and whatever favours and supports his accursed cause. Let us be faithful to our allegiance, and have no more to do with any of these abominations. 21

Let us also remember this as a pledge of everlasting peace and love; we are all one bread, and one body. Let us not envy and provoke, grieve and revile one another; but study mutual comfort and edification. And when little jealousies arise, and our secular interests seem to interfere, which may often be the case, let us open our minds to those exalted sentiments which our common relation to Christ tends to inspire; and let the sweet remembrance of the communion we have had with him, and each other, in that holy ordinance, blot out of our minds the memory of every difference which might tend to promote disgust and alienation. 17, &c.

c *I would not that ye should have communion with demons.*] It is a monstrous notion of Olearius, that the heathens imagined the very substance and body of their deities insinuated itself into the victim offered to them, and so was united to the person eating the flesh of the sacrifices. Elsner (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 108.) has sufficiently confuted this his weak inference from some mistaken passages of Firmicus and Jamblicus. But this learned and judicious critic has proved at large, from incontestable authorities, that the demons were considered as present at these sacrifices, and as taking their part with the worshippers in the common feast; by which means, as Maimonides expresses it in a very remarkable passage, (*More Nevoch.* Part. iii. *cap.* 46.) friendship, brotherhood, and familiarity was contracted between them, because "all ate at one "table, and sat down at one board." The altar was called the *table of the Lord*, Mal. i. 12. Compare Deut. xxxii. 17. But then, as Dr. Cudworth has shown, we are not to conclude from hence, that under the gospel-dispensation the *table* of the Lord is properly an *altar;* for the *Lord's supper* is not a *sacrifice*, but a *feast* upon a *sacrifice*. Cudworth, *On the True Notion of the Lord's Supper*, chap. v.

d *To jealousy*, &c.] Alluding to the notion of idolatry, as a kind of spiritual adultery, which moved the jealousy of God. Yet every deliberate sin is in effect daring his omnipotent vengeance.

SECTION XX.

The apostle gives more particular directions as to the cases and circumstances in which things sacrificed to idols might or might not lawfully be eaten; and urges farther considerations to engage them willingly to resign their own gratification in some instances, for the glory of God and the good of their brethren. 1 Cor. x. 23, *to the end;* xi. 1.

1 Cor. x. 23.

SECT. 20.

1 COR. X. 23

I HAVE said a great deal to guard you against all approaches to idolatry. In answer to this, I know, it may be replied, that there are certain things which may accidentally lead to it, and yet, being in their own nature indifferent, may be so used as to decline the danger. Granting it, then, that *all* these *things are lawful for me*, I am persuaded, *nevertheless*, you will readily acknowledge that *all* such *things are not* in every circumstance *expedient*. Granting, I say, that *all* those *things* about which we have been discoursing *are lawful for me, yet* it is undeniably apparent, that *all things edify not;* and I ought certainly to consider what may most effectually conduce to the edification of my neighbour and of the church in general, as well as what may suit my own particular inclination or convenience: for I may find good reasons for declining many things as ensnaring to others, which, were I to regard myself alone, might be perfectly indifferent. *Let no one therefore seek* the gratification of *his own* humour, or the advancement of what may seem his personal interest; *but* let *every one* pursue *another's* [*welfare,*] endeavouring to enrich all that are around him in holiness and comfort.

1 Cor. x. 23.
ALL things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own: but every man another's wealth.

Believe me, my brethren, I am desirous not to lay you under any unnecessary restraints. And, therefore, *whatever* [*flesh*] *is sold in the shambles,*[a] *that* I allow you to *eat; asking no questions for conscience sake,* that is, not scrupulously enquiring whether it have, or have not, made a part of any idol-sacrifice. *For* as the Psalmist expresses it, (Psal. xxiv. 1.) *The* whole *earth* [*is*] *the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* All these things, therefore, are to be taken as they come to our hands, and used with cheerfulness and thanksgiving, as the common bounties of his providence to his human creatures. *And* farther, *if any of the unbelievers* who live in your neighbourhood *invite you*[b] to his house, *and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you* at the entertainment; *not asking any questions for conscience sake,* but receiving it, whatever it be, as that supply which Divine Providence has then been pleased to send you. *But if any one say to you, This* food is part of what *hath been sacrificed to an idol, eat it not; both out of regard to him that showed thee* this circumstance, whether he be an heathen, who may hereby be confirmed in his idolatry, or a brother, who may otherwise be ensnared by thine example, and tempted to violate the dictates of his own mind; *and,* I may say, *out of regard to conscience* too; for thou canst not injure thy brother in this respect, without subjecting thyself to some remorse on a serious reflection. And the scripture I mentioned before may suggest a pertinent consideration here: *for* as *the earth* [*is*] *the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,*[c] thou mayst reasonably hope he will provide for thee some other way, and mayst be assured that he cannot want the means of doing it. *I say,* [*for the sake of*] *conscience;* but I mean *not thine own* immediately, *but that of another* person; for how indifferent soever thou mayst esteem the matter, thou art obliged in duty to be very cautious that thou dost not wound and grieve that of thy brother: (but you will observe that I here speak only of acts obvious to human observation; *for* as to what immediately lies between God and my own soul, *why is my liberty* to be *judged,* arraigned, and condemned *at* [*the bar of*] *another man's conscience?*[d] I am not, in such cases, to govern myself by the judgment and apprehension of others, nor have they any authority to judge or censure me for not concurring with them in their own narrow notions and declarations. *For if I by* the divine *grace* and favour *am made a partaker* of the common gifts of Providence, *why am I reviled for* my free and cheerful use of *that for which I give* God my humble *thanks,* as tracing it up to the hand of the great supreme Benefactor?)

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

26 For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not, bid you *to a feast,* and ye be disposed to go: whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake. For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the others: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

Therefore, on the whole, to conclude this discourse; since no one particular rule can be laid down to suit all the diversities of temper and apprehension which may arise, instead of uncharitable contentions with each other, or any thing that looks like mutual contempt, let us take all the pains we can to meet as in the centre of real religion; see to it then, that *whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever* else *you do,* in the common as well as sacred actions of life, ye *do all to the glory of God,* pursuing the credit of the gospel and the edification of the church; that he may be honoured in the happiness of his creatures, and more universally acknowledged as the Author of all good.

31 Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

a *Sold in the shambles.*] Herodotus observes, that the Egyptians, when they had cut off the head of their victims, used to carry the carcass to the market, and sell it to the Greeks, if they could find any to purchase it; if not, they threw it into the river, judging it unlawful to eat it themselves. Raphel. *ex Herod. in loc.* And though the Grecian priests had no such scruples, yet as they had often more flesh of their sacrifices than they and their families could consume, it was natural for them to take this method of disposing of it to advantage; and at times of extraordinary sacrifice, it is probable the neighbouring markets might be chiefly supplied from their temples.

b *Invite you.*] That κκλεσιν often signifies to *invite,* Raphelius (*Annot. ex Xen.*) has shown at large; but to conclude that it must generally be so rendered, is very unwarrantable.

c *The earth, &c.*] Some good copies omit these words, yet they have so evident a propriety and beauty here, in contrast with verse 26. that I was by no means disposed to follow them.

d *Why is my liberty, &c.*] Some think the meaning is, "Why "should I use my liberty so as to offend the conscience of any?" Others think it is an objection in the mouth of the Corinthians, and to be thus understood: "But why should I suffer myself to be "thus imposed upon, and receive law from any, where Christ has

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

1 Cor. xi. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

In this respect and in every other, see to it that ye *be inoffensive both to the Jews*, who, you know, abhor every thing that looks like the least approach to idol worship; *and to the Greeks*,[e] and other unconverted Gentiles, who are so much attached to it that they are willing to catch at all pretences of justifying themselves in the practice: *and to the church of God*, whether consisting of circumcised or uncircumcised converts to christianity, who would grieve to see the common edification obstructed in instances wherein they themselves might not be endangered. Endeavour to follow, in this respect, my example; acting *as I* also do, who study *in all things* to *please all men*, so far as I apprehend it for their real advantage, *not seeking mine own interest* or gratification, *but that of many, that they may be saved* by being brought to and confirmed in that religion on which their eternal happiness depends. In this grand and important consideration I lose every inferior view, as our great Lord and Master did; *be ye* therefore herein *imitators of me, as I also* [*am*] *of Christ*; and you will be in the way to please him, and to secure infinitely greater advantage from his favour, than you can ever be called to resign for the good of your brethren.

SECT. 20. 1 COR. X. 32 33 1 COR. XI. 1

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT exalted and generous sentiments are these! Well do they become every minister, yea, every disciple of Christ. What a glorious society would his church soon be, if each of its members was actuated by them! not seeking his own things but those of others; not pursuing his own interest but that of many, that they may be saved! Yea, how happy would each particular person be in such a wise and tender care of the whole, beyond what the most eager and successful pursuit of a separate interest can render him! Ver. 23 24, 29

Let us endeavour to steer in the due medium, between the opposite extremes of an excessive scrupulosity and a presumptuous rashness; and attend to the various distinguishing circumstances which will demand a correspondent difference of conduct, in things which may seem to an inattentive eye much the same: not thinking that attention and caution needless, by which the glory of our God and the edification of our brethren may be promoted. We may expose ourselves in consequence of this tenderness of conscience, to inconveniences, straits, and contempt: but let us commit all our concerns to that Divine Providence which extends itself to all its works; and rejoice to think that the earth is the Lord's, and all its fulness: out of which he will not fail to furnish necessary supplies to those who fear him, and are thus solicitous to preserve a conscience void of offence before him. But while we are strictly cautious ourselves, let us not be rash and severe in our censures of others, who stand or fall to their own Master, and who may in some instances have reasons to us unknown, for a conduct most different from ours. 25, 27 31 26, 28

Oh that divine grace may teach us all to govern our whole lives by this extensive, important maxim: that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we pursue the glory of God! Let us dignify and sanctify all the common actions of life by performing them from these high and holy motives; and so turning them into sacrifices of devotion and love. Then shall we not only avoid giving offence to others, but shall conduct ourselves in such a manner as shall make us burning and shining lights in the world, and extend our sphere of usefulness far beyond that of our personal converse, and perhaps beyond the date of our precarious abode in this transitory world. 31 32

Thus glorifying our heavenly Father on earth, and finishing the work he has given us to do, we may hope through his grace in Christ to be glorified with him above, and to be brought to a brighter image of that Saviour who has set us so perfect an example of the temper and conduct here recommended, which even the blessed apostle Paul followed only with unequal steps. 1 COR. XI. 1

SECTION XXI.

The apostle sets himself to reform some indecencies which had crept into the church at Corinth; and particularly that of women prophesying with their head uncovered. 1 Cor. xi. 2—16.

1 COR. xi. 2.

NOW I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman, *is* the man; and the head of Christ, *is* God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having *his*

1 COR. xi. 2.

I HAVE just *now* exhorted you, *my brethren*, to imitate me, as I endeavour to copy the example of our blessed Lord. And while I am giving you such an exhortation, I ought to express my satisfaction in seeing many of you so ready to comply with it. *I praise* such of *you*, therefore, *that in all things you are mindful of me, and* strenuously *retain the charges* I gave, *as I committed* [*them*] *to you. But* as to your inquiring concerning the manner in which women should deliver any thing in public, when they are by a divine impulse called to do it; *I would have you to know*, in order to regulate your judgment and conduct aright, *that Christ is the head of every man*; so that every christian should often recollect the relation in which he hath the honour to stand to him, as an engagement to observe the strictest decorum in his whole behaviour. *And* if the different sexes be compared, *the head of the woman* [*is*] *the man*; to whom therefore she ought to pay a reverent respect as in the Lord. *And the head of Christ* [*is*] *God*: Christ, in his mediatorial character, acts in subordination to the Father, who rules by him, and hath constituted him Sovereign of all worlds, visible and invisible. And as the Father's glory is interested in the administration of Christ, so is the glory of Christ in some measure interested in the conduct and behaviour of those men whose more immediate head he is: and I may add, of these women whose heads such men are. SECT. 21. 1 COR. XI. 3

Now, upon this principle, I may say, in reference to the usages which prevail at this time 4

"left me free?" I rather think that this and the 30th verse come in as a kind of parenthesis, to prevent their extending the former caution beyond what he designed by it.

e *Jews and Greeks.*] As these are both opposed to the church of God, I conclude he speaks of *unconverted Jews* or *Greeks*; and refers to the danger there might be of prejudicing them against christianity, by the indulgences against which he cautions them.

SECT. 21. 1 COR. XI.

in your country; *every man praying or prophesying* in a public assembly, whether he give forth inspired psalms or hymns, or utter predictions, or common instruction; if he do it *with* [*his*] *head covered*, acting therein contrary to the received rules of decency among us, he in a degree *dishonours* Christ *his head*,[a] as behaving unworthy his relation to him. *And* on the other hand, *every woman praying or prophesying*, under such inspiration as above, *with* [*her*] *head unveiled, dishonoureth* man, who is *her head*, by behaving in such a manner as is indecent in an assembly consisting of so many men as are usually present on these occasions: *for* I may say, that *it is* in this respect *the same as if she were shaved:* shaving her head is only taking off the natural covering, and exposing it bare; which is so shameful a thing, that you know it has often been inflicted as a proper kind of punishment on women of the most abandoned character; and it is scandalous, that any thing like this should be used in your christian assemblies; and this too, by persons pretending to extraordinary characters and assistances. I may *therefore* say, *if a woman will not be veiled, let her even be shorn; but if it be* apparently *shameful for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved off, let her* keep as far as possible from so disagreeable an appearance; and *have* her head covered with *a* proper *veil*, at the times and in the circumstances of which we now speak. *For a man* indeed *ought not to have* [*his*] *head covered*, as *being the* immediate *image and glory of God*, and made in his likeness as the first copy of its kind, before woman was created. It is decent, therefore, that he should appear with the marks of that superiority which he indeed bears; *but the woman* should forbear it; and it is enough to say of her, that she *is the glory of the man;* to whom God hath done no inconsiderable honour, as well as favour, in making so excellent and amiable a creature for his benefit and comfort. Yet still her state of subjection to him should be remembered, and it is very expedient she should appear in public with some tacit acknowledgment of it. *For the man is not*, in the first production of his nature, taken out *of the woman; but*, as we read in the sacred history, (Gen. ii. 21—23.) *the woman* out *of the man. Neither* [*was*] *the man created for the* sake of the *woman*, to accommodate and assist her; *but the woman for* the sake of *the man*, that he might have a help meet for him, which before he found not in the whole creation. (Gen. ii. 20.) *On this account*, therefore, as well as for the other reasons I have mentioned above, *the woman ought to have upon* [*her*] *head* a veil, as a token of her being under the *power*[b] and subjection of the man; and so much the rather should she wear it in worshipping assemblies, *because of the angels* who are especially present there, and before whom we ought to be exceeding careful that nothing pass which may be indecent and irregular, and unlike that perfect order and profound humility with which they worship in the divine presence.

I have treated the matter with a plainness and freedom becoming my character: *nevertheless*, let not any hints which I have dropped of the superior dignity of the man be abused, to render him haughty and tyrannical; for it is evident that *the man* [*is*] *not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord.* You know that the existence and comfort of either sex has a dependence upon the other; which the genius of the christian religion requires us to consider, and to behave in a manner corresponding to it. *For as the woman* [*was*] at first taken *from* the rib of *the man*, whom he ought therefore to love as a part of himself, and she to revere him, as under God the source of her being; *so also*, in the ordinary course of the divine production, *the man* [*is*] *by the woman*, born, nourished, and in the tenderest years of life educated by her; a circumstance that ought to be ever most tenderly remembered, as a spring of grateful affection and regard. *But* let me add, that whether in the first creation or the successive production of human creatures, *all things* [*are*] *of God;* whose constitution ought therefore humbly and obediently to be revered, and all the duties of relative life performed, as for his sake and to his glory.

But with respect to the particular circumstance I was speaking of, I may leave you to *judge of yourselves whether it be*, according to the usages generally prevailing among us, *decent*[c] *for a woman to pray to God* with that masculine and confident air which she

head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth, or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered, dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither *was* the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head, because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

[a] *Every man praying, &c. with his head covered, dishonoureth his head.*] It was certainly (as Dr. Whitby and others have proved) the custom among the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Jews, to appear in worshipping assemblies with their head covered: and it is certain the Jewish priests wore a kind of turban, when ministering in the temple. But it seems that the Corinthian men wore a veil, out of regard to Pharisaical traditions, and in imitation of the custom prevailing in the synagogues; which therefore the apostle disapproved. The women seem to have worn their hair dishevelled, when praying by divine inspiration; (which seems to have been the only case in which they could regularly pray in public;) this made them resemble those pagan priestesses, who pretended to be actuated by their gods; the apostle therefore with great propriety discourages it.

[b] *Power on* [*her*] *head.*] Mr. Locke acknowledges, with a modesty which does him much honour, that he did not understand this text; and many seem to have darkened it by their attempts to explain it. But the chief difficulty does not lie in the word *power;* which must, to be sure, be understood of a veil which married women wore on their head, as a token of subjection to their husbands, (see Gen. xxiv. 65.) and Mr. Goodwin (*Moses and Aaron*, p. 236.) supposes the *veil* was in Hebrew called רדיד, (*Radid,*) from a *root*, רדד, (*Radad,*) which signified *subjection;* so that the *veil* was, as it were, the *habit* by which a woman showed she considered herself in *subjection;* and Chardin observes, that the married women in Persia wear a peculiar habit to the very same purpose. Chard. *Pers.* Vol. II. p. 187. It is much more difficult to ascertain the meaning of that clause, *because of the angels.* It seems neither reasonable nor decent to explain this of young ministers, as if they were in peculiar danger of being ensnared by the beauty of women; and it is more grossly absurd still to suppose, with Tertullian, (*De Vel. Virg.* § 7.) that there was any room to apprehend it could be a snare to celestial spirits; (which mistake seemed to be grounded on the wild interpretation of Gen. vi. 2. so generally received among the fathers.) Dr. Whitby understands it of evil angels, and thinks it refers to the punishment which Eve incurred, (Gen. iii. 16.) for hearkening to the suggestions of Satan. A late ingenious writer by αγγελων understands *spies;* who, he supposes, came into christian assemblies to make ill-natured remarks, and so would be glad to blaze abroad any indecencies they might observe there. (See Mr. Gough's *Diss. in loc.*) I have not room to canvass all these; but only add, in support of the sense which, as least exceptionable, I have followed, that the presence of *angels* in religious assemblies is favoured by Eccles. v. 1, 6. and the figures of *Cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple.

[c] *Judge whether it be decent, &c.*] The Grecian women, except-

must have when her head is *uncovered:* Or rather, *doth not* the sight immediately shock us, previous to any reasonings upon it in our own mind? So that *nature itself* seems to *teach you, that* on the one hand, *for a man to have long hair*, solicitously adjusted and artfully adorned, *is* such a mark of an effeminate character, as is, on the whole, *a disgrace to him. Whereas*, on the other hand, *if a woman hath long hair* spread over her shoulders, *it is* rather *a glory to her; for her hair was given her instead of a veil*, in the first constitution of our nature, and before the arts of dress were invented or needed. SECT. 21. 1 COR. XI. 14 15

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

Thus the matter appears to me, when I reflect upon the original and the present state of things, and what seems from that to be the voice of nature. *But if any one appears to be contentious*, and will dispute this, upon his own different views of what is naturally decent, I shall not controvert it farther; but content myself with saying, that *we have here no such custom*, for women to appear with their head uncovered; *neither* do I know of its prevailing in any of *the* other *churches of God*,[d] whether planted by me, or any of my brethren. I think therefore that it ought to be avoided, as a singularity which may appear like affectation, and give offence, even if it be not judged a natural indecorum. And thus I leave the affair to your consideration; and promise myself, you will give me no further cause of complaint on this head. 16

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET christians frequently remember the honourable relation in which they stand to Christ as their Head; and as beyond all dispute he is, under his mediatorial character, most willingly and joyfully subject to God, let us learn to imitate him in that cheerful and entire subjection, out of love and reverence to him, guarding against whatever is unbecoming, lest he be dishonoured thereby. Ver. 3 4

By the passage before us, we see the force of custom for determining in many respects what is decent, and what is otherwise. Let us maintain a proper regard to this: lest even our good should be, through our imprudence, evil spoken of, and all our infirmities magnified into crimes. Let us often recollect the original dignity of our nature, by which we are the image and glory of God: that so far as by sin and folly this honour is lost, we may endeavour to regain it; and where it is not, may think and act more suitably to so high a relation. 14, 16

When in any act of divine worship we have the honour to approach the blessed God, let us reverence his awful presence, and even that of his holy angels who attend the assemblies of the saints. We pray the will of God may be done upon earth, as it is done in heaven: let us be careful to worship God in such a manner, that these celestial spirits, whoever appear before him with sacred awe, may not be offended at the rudeness and folly of sinful mortals; whom they may well wonder to see admitted, in their best estate, to this divine privilege, which they have forfeited by repeated provocations. 10

As for what St. Paul observes of the mutual dependence which the sexes have on each other, let it dispose them to mutual candour and respect: avoiding the cruel tyranny, or the vain affectation, which often arms them, on either side, with ungenerous reflections. And as all things are of God, let it be our concern that all things be to him; that all things be faithfully employed for his glory; and whatever comforts we receive in relative life, which are indeed many and important, let us adore the wisdom of the divine constitution in the original formation of our nature, and the secret influence and conduct of his providence, in the regulation of our respective circumstances and affairs. 11, 12

SECTION XXII.

The apostle, in order to reform several scandalous abuses of the Lord's supper which had crept into the church of Corinth, leads back their views to the original institution of the solemn ordinance, and infers from thence the danger of profaning it. 1 Cor. xi. 17, *to the end.*

1 COR. xi. 17.

THUS you have my free sentiments of the manner in which women, even when most singularly honoured by God, should appear in your religious assemblies. *But while I am giving* [*you*] *these instructions, I do not*, and cannot, *praise* [*you,*] as I would, on several accounts; and particularly on this, *that* when *you come together* in these assemblies, and on the most solemn occasions, there are such irregularities, and sometimes such indecencies, among you, that your meeting is *not for the better, but for the worse*, as you lose more in religion one way than you gain another. *For* before I mention any other instance of this, I must observe, in the *first* place, that *when ye come together in the church*,[a] though it is so evident that nothing but reverence to God, and love to each other, should reign on such occasions; *I hear that there are schisms*, or uncharitable and angry divisions and disputes, *among you, and I* do, *in some respect*, and with regard to some of you, *believe it: For* in the course of things, it is to be expected that *there must be even heresies among you*:[b] contentions will arise to such a height, that separations will ensue. The warmth of some tempers evidently leads to this: and Providence may probably permit it, SECT. 22. 1 COR. XI 17 18 19

1 COR. xi. 17.

NOW in this that I declare *unto you*, I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that

ing the heathen priestesses, used to appear in their veils when they came into public assemblies; as we find in Homer, and many other ancient writers.

d *Nor any of the churches.*] Mons. Amyraut understands it in this sense: "The churches do not use to contend with me, but "to submit to my decision;" but the former clause, *we have no such custom*, will not admit this. The argument on the other interpretation is clear and strong.

a *Come together in the church.*] Some have urged this as an instance in which *church* signifies a *building* for public worship; and have urged also the 22d verse in the same view; but both may be interpreted of the assembly, as the paraphrase shows.

b *There must be even heresies.*] It seems evident from hence, that heresy is spoken of as something worse than the schism mentioned above; but whether it be an evil entirely of a different kind, or only of a higher degree, is not so clear from this passage. I think, for reasons not here to be enumerated, that the word αἱρεσις signifies *a sect of people separated from others*, and forming what we call a distinct denomination; whereas there may be schism without separation, if people assembling together have uncharitable con-

SECT. 22.

that they who are of the most *approved* characters, *may be made manifest among you,* by the steadiness and candour of their conduct.

1 COR. XI.

It is particularly grievous to me, to be forced to complain of your irregular behaviour, while celebrating that most excellent and endearing ordinance of the eucharist: but I am compelled to do it; and *therefore* I tell you plainly, that *when you come together* in
20 such a manner as you do, *into one place*, under pretence of attending this grand solemnity, *it is not eating the Lord's supper*;[c] it does not deserve to be called by that name.
21 Instead of regarding it in a holy and religious view, you confound it with a common meal; and do not indeed behave in the manner that decency would require if it were no more than a common meal: *for* though you sit down at what, even in that case, ought to be a social and friendly table, yet each has his particular mess, and without offering a share of it in an obliging manner to the rest, *every one in eating*, greedily *taketh before* [*the other*] *his own supper*,[d] both the food and liquor which he hath provided; *and so* while *one* poor brother, for want of suitable provisions, *is hungry*, *another* eats and *drinks to excess*;[e] which would in all circumstances be a scandal to a christian, and especially to a religious assembly, as this certainly ought to be.
22 *What* a reproach is this to your common profession! Give me leave to ask you, *have you not houses to eat and to drink in* on common occasions, that you must come to the place of public worship, thus to entertain yourselves there, which is certainly in all views very ill-judged? *Or do you despise the church of God*, which you must greatly offend by such a conduct as this; *and* at the same time *shame those that have not* provisions and accommodations of their own, and might hope at your common meals to be relieved? *What shall I say to you* on this occasion? *Shall I praise you in this* [*respect?*] I wish I could fairly and honourably do it; but at present *I praise* [*you*] *not;* I must rather blame you, and exhort you to amend what is so grossly amiss.
23 And that my admonitions and exhortations may come with the greater weight, let me lead back your thoughts to the original institution of this profaned and affronted ordinance; which if you reflect upon, I am sure you must be heartily grieved at the indignities you have offered it, and will be engaged to resolve you will never repeat them. Now I am able to speak of this matter with great certainty and exactness: *for* my knowledge of it did not depend upon any human tradition whatsoever; but *I received* by special revelation *from the Lord*[f] Jesus Christ himself *that which I also delivered to you* in my former preaching on this subject, in which, as in all things else, I have been careful most exactly to adhere to my original instructions. And you know the substance of it was this: *That the Lord Jesus Christ, the* very [*same*] *night in which he was betrayed*, and amidst all those serious thoughts which his own nearly-approaching sufferings must suggest, after he had finished the paschal supper, *took bread*, some of the remainder
24 of those unleavened cakes with which that solemn feast is celebrated: *And having*, in a most reverent manner, *given thanks* to God, the great Author of all temporal and spiritual blessings, and looked up to him for his blessing upon it for the purposes to which it was going to be appropriated, *he brake* [*it*] into several pieces, *and* distributing it to his disciples who were present, *said*, *Take* this bread, and *eat* it with due reverence and regard; for *this is* the solemn representation of *my body which is* just going to be *broken*, by the most bitter pains and agonies, *for you* and your salvation; *this* therefore *do in* all the succeeding ages of my church, as a *commemoration of me*;[g] that the memory of my painful death may be kept up in the world, and your hearts and those of all my faithful followers
25 be properly affected with the review of it. *In like manner also* [*he took*] *the cup;* which, you well remember, was *after he had supped;* so that it was by no means a part of that meal they had been making, but something quite distinct from it: and he likewise dis-

they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating, every one taketh before *other* his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

23 For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, say-

tentions with each other; which was the case of these schismatical Corinthians.

c *It is not eating the Lord's supper.*] The Corinthians seem to have been guilty of two great faults in the matter here referred to, which St. Paul, in the following discourse, labours to reform:—The *one*, that they confounded the *Lord's supper* with the common meals they made together; (from whence the *love-feasts* were afterwards derived;) thinking it sufficient (as the Quakers now do) if they mingled some thoughts of Christ's death with this common use of bread and wine:—The *other*, that they used such a rapacious behaviour at these *feasts*, and treated one another so rudely and unkindly, as on their own principles would have been very indecent. This latter circumstance is finely illustrated in a passage from Xenophon, (*Memor. lib.* 3. *cap.* xiv. § 1.) in which he observes that Socrates was much offended with the Athenians for their conduct at their common suppers, as some prepared delicately for themselves, while others were but slenderly provided for. That worthy man endeavoured to shame them out of this low taste, by offering his provisions to all the company. Mr. Grove hath with great propriety mentioned a passage from Socrates the ecclesiastical historian, (*lib.* v. *cap.* 22.) in which he speaks of some Egyptians living near Alexandria, who partook of the *sacrament* in a very peculiar manner, (as it seems, much after the Corinthian fashion,) introducing it with a jovial feast, in which they regaled themselves with all kinds of food. See Grove, *On the Sacrament*, p. 108.

d *His own supper.*] This monstrous and, to us, unaccountable circumstance, is cleared up by what is said above of the *social suppers* used among the Greeks: to which each brought his own provisions, which were not always made so common to the whole company as decency and friendship might have required.

e *Drinks to excess.*] The word μεθυει has this signification in a great latitude; but one would hope, that though the Jews and heathens were often intoxicated in their religious festivals, these christians, imprudent and irregular as they were, did not carry their excesses so far; and therefore I chose to soften the version. Compare p. 46. note k.

f *I received* by special revelation, *&c.*] This Epistle seems to have been written before any of the Gospels; and it seems to be intimated, Gal. i. 17, &c. that when he wrote it, he had seen none of the apostles. It is very remarkable that the institution of this ordinance should make a part of that immediate revelation with which Christ honoured him; and it affords a strong argument for the perpetuity of it in the church. For had others of the apostles (as Barclay presumes to insinuate) mistaken what passed at the last passover, and founded the observation of the eucharist on that mistake, surely Christ would rather have corrected this error in his new revelation to St. Paul, than have administered such an occasion of confirming christians in it. For some notes which might have been inserted here, see § 172.

g *This do, &c.*] Because the word ποιειν signifies, in some few instances, *to sacrifice*, Dr. Bret would render it, *sacrifice this;* whence he infers that the *eucharist* is a *sacrifice*. And a learned prelate in the Council of Trent pleaded, with much the like judgment, that when Christ uttered these words before the cup, he ordained them priests; whereas he gave them the bread as laics. See Father Paul's *Hist. of the Council of Trent*, p. 510.

ing, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread and drink of *that* cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

tributed that to them as had done the bread, *saying*, *This cup is the* solemn seal and memorial of the *new covenant* which is established *in my blood*, by which all its invaluable blessings are derived to you. *This* likewise *do*, *as often as ye drink* [*it*,] *in commemoration of me*, and in order to maintain the memory of my bleeding, dying love in the church and the world. *You therefore*,[h] *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*,[i] *do* indeed perform a very solemn and important action; for, according to his own interpretation and institution, you *show forth*, and as it were proclaim, *the Lord's death* in its most affecting circumstances; which the church must throughout all ages continue to do *until he come*,[k] to close the present scene of things, and to receive all his faithful servants to a place where, for ever dwelling with him, they will no more need these memorials of an absent Saviour. *So that*, you see, by a farther consequence, *whosoever shall eat this bread or drink*[l] [*this*] *cup of the Lord unworthily*, that is, in an irreverent manner, without a due regard to him, and to the great original purpose of its appointment, *shall be* counted *guilty of* profaning and affronting in some measure that which is intended to represent *the body and blood of the Lord*; and consequently the affront does evidently rebound to our Lord himself, who was pleased with infinite condescension, for our sakes, to assume human flesh, and to suffer in it.

Let none *therefore* come to the ordinance in a rash and irreverent manner; but *let a man examine himself* as to his knowledge of its intent, and his desire to comply with its great design; *and so let him eat of the* sacramental *bread*, *and drink of the cup* which is used with it. *For he that eateth and drinketh in an* irreverent, profane, and *unworthy manner*,[m] must certainly displease and provoke God; so that it may truly be said that he *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*;[n] he takes the readiest way to bring down the judgments of God upon him, *not distinguishing the Lord's body*, nor making that proper difference which he ought to make between that and common food.

And accordingly many of you have actually brought such judgments upon yourselves; and I must plainly tell you, it is *upon this account*, and to manifest the divine displeasure against you for such shameful irregularities, that God hath sent distempers among you, so that *many of you* [*are*] now *weak and sick*, *and some* considerable numbers of your society *are fallen asleep* in death. Survivors therefore ought to lay the matter seriously to heart, and set about an immediate reformation. *For if we would judge ourselves*[o] with a due severity and impartiality, *we should not* surely *be* so severely *judged* and animadverted upon by God. *But when we are* thus *judged*, it is not in a displeasure wholly inexorable, but with kind designs of paternal goodness; and *we are corrected of the Lord*, *that we may not be condemned with the* impenitent *world*, and consigned over to final and everlasting destruction.

Therefore, *my brethren*, in one word, *when ye come together to eat* in those feasts which frequently precede the administration of this ordinance among you, *wait* decently and respectfully *one for another*, till the whole assembly be convened. *And if any one be so hungry*, that he cannot conveniently stay till that time, *let him eat at his own house*;[p] or at least take a kind of antepast, that may prevent any inconvenience arising from a little necessary delay; *that you may not come together to* your *condemnation*, and in such a manner as to provoke the judgment of God against you. It may suffice to have said thus much for the present on this subject; *and what remains* farther to be adjusted, *I will regulate when I come* to Corinth; which, if Providence answer my hopes and succeed my schemes, will be in a little time.

h *Therefore, as often as ye eat, &c.*] It is plain that γαρ must here have the force of an illative particle; as it also has, Luke xx. 38.

i *Eat this bread, &c.*] It is no wonder a text in which this element is so plainly called *bread* after *consecration*, should be urged against the popish doctrine of *transubstantiation*. And it signifies little for them to plead, that the scripture sometimes calls things changed, by the name of the thing out of which they were made, (as *Adam* is called *dust*, Gen. iii. 19. *Aaron's* serpent a *rod*, Exod. vii. 12.) or calls them according to their sensible appearance, (Josh. v. 13; Mark. xvi. 5.) for these instances rather turn against them, by proving that where the literal interpretation is evidently absurd, we must have recourse to the figurative.

k *Until he come.*] Nothing can be more unreasonable than to refer this (as the Quakers do) to the time when Christ should come, by his *spiritual illumination* on their minds, to take them off from carnal ordinances; for, not to insist upon it, that we have at least as much need of the *Lord's supper* as the primitive christians had, (not having so many advantages as they to keep up the memory of Christ in our minds, to quicken us to holiness, and to unite us in love,) it is evident the grand coming of Christ by the Spirit was, when it was poured out on the day of Pentecost; an event which had happened many years before the date of this Epistle.

l *Eat or drink.*] So it is in the original, πινῃ· nor could our translators surely be under any temptation to render it, *eat and drink*, to elude the argument drawn from hence for *communion* in one kind only; since, as that excellent French preacher, Mons. Superville observes, (*Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 245.) it might as well prove that the *cup* may be received without the *bread*, as the *bread* without the *cup*. So that it is surprising assurance in a late popish writer to plead from hence that communion in one kind only was the practice of the Corinthian church. See *Mod. Controv.* p. 189.

m *In an unworthy manner.*] To receive to purposes of faction or intemperance, was receiving very unworthily; but the sense of that phrase must extend to *every* manner of receiving contrary to the nature and design of the ordinance; and consequently, to the case of doing it merely in a *secular* view, which I heartily pray that all concerned in it may seriously consider.

n *Judgment to himself.*] I think it the most unhappy mistake in all our version of the Bible, that the word κριμα is here rendered, *damnation*. It has raised a dread in tender minds, which has greatly obstructed the comfort and edification they might have received from this ordinance. The apostle afterwards says, *we are judged*, (that is, as he afterwards explains it, *we are corrected*,) *that we may not be condemned*; which plainly shows the judgments spoken of might be fatherly chastisements. This sin, as sin, does indeed expose us to condemnation, should God be extreme to mark it, as an irreverent behaviour under *any other* ordinance does; but it is *superstition* to set this at so vast a distance from all the rest, as many do.

o *Judge ourselves.*] Διακρινω, ver. 29. signifies, *to distinguish*: here διακρινωμεν signifies, *examining that we may distinguish*, and judge of our own character and fitness for the *sacrament*. Mr Locke justly observes, that he is little attentive to St. Paul's writings who has not observed that he often repeats a word he had used before, though in a sense something different from the preceding.

p *Let him eat at his own house.*] Mr. Amyraut and Mr. Cradock (*Apost. Hist.* p. 174.) understand this as a prohibition of *love-feasts*; but I think it evident from antiquity, they were retained in the church long after, though dubious whether they prevailed so soon.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 22. 1 COR. XI. Ver. 26

WHAT just matter of thankfulness to our blessed Redeemer does that account of the institution of the sacred supper afford us, which St. Paul assures us he received immediately from him. Let us often reflect it was in that very night in which he was betrayed, that his thoughts so compassionately wrought for our comfort and happiness; when it might have been imagined that his mind would be entirely possessed with his personal concerns, with the doleful scene of his approaching sufferings. We learn from this account, the perpetuity, as well as the great leading design, of the ordinance. We show forth the Lord's death, and we show it forth till he come. If we do indeed desire to preserve the memory of Christ's dying love in the world, if we desire to maintain it in our own souls, let us attend this blessed institution; endeavouring, by the lively exercise of faith and love, to discern, and, in a spiritual sense, to feed upon the Lord's body. Nor let any humble and upright soul be discouraged by these
29 threatenings of judgment, to the profane sinners who offered such gross affronts to this holy solemnity; affronts, which none of us are in any danger of repeating. These scandalous excesses, when they pretended to be worshipping God on this great occasion, might justly provoke the eyes of his holiness, might awaken the arm of his
32 indignation. Yet even these sinners were chastised, that they might not be finally and for ever condemned.

Let not any then be terrified, as if every soul that approached the ordinance without due preparation, must by necessary consequence seal its own damnation. Thus to attend the table of the Lord is indeed a sin; but blessed be God, not a sin too great to be forgiven. Let those therefore who, though they feel in their hearts a reverential love to Christ, yet have hitherto refrained from attending this feast of love, be engaged to come; to come with due
28 preparation and self-examination, as to their repentance and faith, their love and obedience; then may they, with
24 the most hearty welcome from the great Lord of the feast, eat of this bread and drink of this cup; receiving it as the memorial of Christ's body broken and of his blood shed for the remission of our sins. Through that blood alone let us seek this invaluable blessing, without which, indeed, nothing can be a solid and lasting blessing to us: and let us on every occasion treat our brethren with a tenderness and respect becoming those who have considered ourselves and them as redeemed by that precious blood, and indebted to it for the hopes of everlasting salvation.

In a word, let us never rest in the external rites or exercises of worship, how decently and regularly soever performed; but look to our inward temper, and to the conduct of our minds, if we desire to maintain their peace, and
17 that our coming together should be for the better, and not for the worse.

SECTION XXIII.

The apostle comes to treat on spiritual gifts; and introduces what he had farther to say concerning them, by observing, that various as they are, they all proceed from the same sacred Agent, and are intended for the edification of the same body, in which all christians are united. 1 Cor. xii. 1—13.

1 COR. xii. 1.

SECT. 23. 1 COR. XII.

IT is *now* time I should proceed to speak something *concerning* those *spiritual* [*gifts*] with which God hath been pleased so abundantly to bless you, my Corinthian *brethren:* and as to the right use and improvement of which, *I would not* by any means *have you ignorant*. Upon this head *you* in the general *know*, *that* during your natural state, before
2 the cheering rays of the gospel broke in upon you, *ye were heathens*, without any knowledge of the true God, and *carried* by a blind, implicit credulity *after dumb idols;* which were so far from being able to bestow on their votaries any supernatural endowments, by which they might be enabled to speak extraordinary truths, or in languages before unknown, that they were themselves destitute of the common powers of speech, or any capacity of perception and action. Yet you were blindly enslaved to the worship of such stupid forms, degrading as it evidently is to the rational nature of man; [*just*] *as you were led* by the artifice of your priests, who found their account in your delusions. And I hope, therefore, you will always remember, that the unmerited goodness of God in bestowing such gifts on persons who could pretend so little claim to them, lays you under a lasting obligation to use them in the most dutiful and grateful manner.

1 COR. xii. 1.

NOW concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 And *therefore*[a] I hope you will not allow yourselves to despise any of your brethren, on account of their deficiency in them: since there is an important sense in which they may all be said to have been enriched by divine and supernatural influences. For *I give you to know*, and desire you to admit and retain it as a principle equally certain and weighty, *that* as *no one*, *speaking by the Spirit of God*, *calleth Jesus accursed;*[b] *and* consequently, all pretences made to the Divine Spirit by the Jews are notoriously false and detestable: so, on the other hand, *no one can* sincerely *say* [*that*] *Jesus* [*is the*] *Lord;*[c] none can embrace his religion, and support the profession of it in truth, *but by*

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

a *Therefore.*] The force of this particle διὸ seems to be this: I am careful to give you the following hints concerning *spiritual gifts*, because in proportion to the degree in which God hath magnified his grace in calling you from idolatry to such extraordinary privileges and endowments, I am solicitous you may be preserved from abusing them, and engaged to improve them in the wisest and most faithful manner.

b *Calleth Jesus accursed.*] Mr. Nathaniel Taylor (*On Deism*, p. 60, 61.) thinks this refers in general to the test put on christians by their persecutors, that they should not only deny, but *blaspheme Christ.* This the Gentiles indeed required, (see Plin. *Epist.* x. 97; Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iv. 15.) But I rather think this refers to the Jews, who, while they uttered blasphemies against Christ themselves, (1 Tim. i. 13.) and extorted them, if possible, from those they apprehended to be his disciples, (Acts xxvi. 11.) pretended to the gifts of the Spirit, by which they undertook to cast out devils; and perhaps they might imitate some of the exorcisms which christians under the operation of the Spirit performed. Such a caution might therefore be very useful. (Compare 1 John iv. 1—3. which seems nearly parallel to this passage.) Dr. Owen pertinently observes, that the Jews sometimes call Jesus ישו, instead of ישוע; concealing their *blasphemy* under the three *initial letters* of the words ימח שמו וזכרו, which signify, *let his name and memory be blotted out;* which is equivalent to *Anathema*, or, *let him be accursed.* Owen, *On the Spir.* p. 3.

c Sincerely *say*, [*that*] *Jesus* [*is the*] *Lord.*] Chrysostom well observes, this phrase of *saying that Jesus is the Messiah*, must be supposed to proceed from true *faith* in him; and the expression is

the powerful operation of *the Holy Ghost* on his heart; and therefore, as you are all in a sense spiritual, it would be highly unreasonable that the greatest should despise the least, on account of any distinction which may have been made in his favour, especially when you consider who is the great Source of all. *Now there are diversities of gifts* in different persons, *but* there is one and *the same* Divine *Spirit*, from whom they are all derived. *And* though *there are diversities of administrations*,[d] there is one *and the same* common *Lord*, who appoints his ministers under their distinct offices, and gives them their powers, their ability, and their success. *And* though *there are diversities of operations* and effects produced, *yet it is* one and *the same God who worketh all* these effects *in all* the persons concerned; and they can pretend to nothing more than being the subjects, or at most the instruments, of his almighty and universal agency.

SECT. 23. — 1 COR. XII.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But to every one of his believing servants who are thus honoured, *is given*, according to his wise and holy distribution, *a manifestation of the Spirit:* (for that our portion of gifts may properly be called:) and this in such a degree *as is most* agreeable and *profitable* for the interest of the whole, that all may harmoniously carry on the great design of glorifying God, in the edification and happiness of the whole body. *For to one*, for instance, who is placed in the highest rank of the christian church, *is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom;* a comprehensive view of that grand scheme in which the wisdom of God is so wonderfully displayed, that even angelic intelligences are continually admiring it: *to another, by the same Spirit*, such lower degrees of it as may be called *the word of knowledge*;[e] whether respecting the meaning of the Old Testament, or other things in the christian plan which may render them superior to most of their brethren, though inferior to the class I mentioned above. *To another* is given such an extraordinary *faith*,[f] *by the same Spirit*, that he can commit himself to the divine protection in the midst of the extremest dangers; and is thereby qualified courageously to assert the truth of the gospel, in the very face of its most violent persecutors: *to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit*, in consequence of which, while under its operation, he can by a word or a touch remove the most inveterate diseases. *To another, the working of miracles*[g] of a different kind, such as taking up serpents, drinking any deadly draught unhurt, and especially the ejection of demons: *to another*, the gift of *prophecy;* whereby he shall be able exactly to foretell some contingent future event: *to another, the discerning of spirits*, so as authoritatively to determine by what impulse any one speaks, who pretends to inspiration; or to be capable of pronouncing on the sincerity of men's professions, or their fitness for any public work to be assigned to them: *to another*, the gift of speaking with [*various*] *kinds of tongues*, which he had never had the natural means of acquiring: and *to another*, the no less useful, though less splendid, endowment, which we distinguish from the former, by calling it *the interpretation of tongues*;[h] in consequence of which, a person shall be able to understand, and render into a known language, that which is spoken by a foreigner, in a tongue with which neither he himself nor the other hearers have been acquainted. *But the one and the same* almighty *Spirit worketh all these* diversities of gifts, *dividing unto every one severally as he thinketh fit*;[i] his wisdom fixes the scheme what this variety should be; and his sovereign pleasure determines why they should be imparted to such and such particular persons, rather than to others. The variety, I say, is wisely appointed: *for as the body is one, and* yet *hath many members, but all the members of that one body, many as they are, constitute one body* united in one well-regulated system; *so also* [*is*] *Christ*, that is, the whole society of which Christ is the head; and for the whole of which he may, as it were, be put, being indeed all and in all. *For by* and according to the operation of *one Spirit, we* christians *are all baptized into one body, whether* we be originally *Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen;* the religion we before professed,

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.
9 To another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit;
10 To another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, *divers* kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues.
11 But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.
12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.
13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have

used to import a man's being a *true christian*, because such strong temptations lay against professing Christ under this character, that they who maintained this doctrine were in heart real believers; though there might be a few excepted instances. This seems as plain a proof as could be desired, that *true faith* is the work of the *Spirit* of God upon the heart. See the *Third Letter* to the Author of *Christianity not founded in Argument*, p. 34—36.

d *Diversities of administrations.*] Calling them *administrations*, or *services*, (διακονιων,) was a gentle manner of reminding them of the great design of these *gifts;* and so of reproving those who perverted them to contrary purposes.

e *Word of wisdom—and of knowledge.*] There are, perhaps, few texts in the New Testament more difficult than some in this chapter, and in the xivth of this Epistle, relating to the extraordinary gifts then in the church; which were at that time so well known as not to need explication; and it is a noble instance of the genuine simplicity and modesty of the apostle, that he did not expatiate on so grand a subject with any unnecessary parade. I think the late Lord Barrington, and after him Dr. Benson, have made it highly probable that the *word of wisdom* was that extensive plan of christianity which was revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. See Barring. *Misc. Sacr.* Essay i. p. 39—41. Bens. *Propa. of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 40—46. But that the *word of knowledge* was, as they, after Dr. Whitby, assert, (*Misc. Sacr. ibid.* p. 42—45. and Bens. *ibid.* p. 46—48.) an extraordinary ability to understand and explain the *Old Testament*, and especially its *prophecies*, I do not think equally apparent. Perhaps it might be a lower degree of the *word of wisdom*. See Mr. Chandler, *On Joel*, p. 133—137. In confirmation of which opinion, it may be observed, that when *wisdom* and *knowledge* (חכמה and דעת) are mentioned together, *wisdom* is generally put first, as most excellent. Compare Eccles. i. 16; ii. 26; Isa. xxxiii. 6; xlvii. 10; Col. ii. 3. And it is well known that the highest orders of teachers in Israel were called anciently חכמים, *wise men*. See Deut. i. 13; xvi. 19; 1 Cor. i. 20. M. Saurin explains *knowledge* of a *discerning of mysteries;* such as the appearance of Christ to change the *saints* found alive, the re-establishment of the Jews, the man of *sin*, the *beast*, &c. Saur. *Serm.* Vol. VI. p. 13.

f *Faith.*] *Faith*, as an extraordinary gift, in this connexion, must in the general signify, "a firm persuasion of being called out "by God, at any particular time, to perform some miracle, and ac- "cordingly going about it without any suspicion or fear, in confi- "dent dependence on a correspondent divine interposition."

g *Working of miracles.*] It is difficult to distinguish this from *faith*, as explained above. Some understand it of some very *extraordinary* miracles, such as taking up *serpents*, drinking any deadly draught *unhurt*, curing diseases by a *shadow* passing over the patient, &c. Compare Mark xvi. 18; Acts v. 15. But I rather think, with Mons. Amyraut, (in his excellent paraphrase,) that ενεργηματα δυναμεων may refer to the *aispossession of demons*, or *delivering persons over to them*. This *gift* and that of *healing*, might be comprehended in *faith;* but perhaps, in some instances, it might work only in the one or the other of these effects.

h *To another*, the gift *of tongues—to another, the interpretation of tongues.*] For the farther illustration of these clauses, and the interpretation here given, see the notes on chap. xiv. 28.

i *As he thinketh fit.*] Βουλεται does not so much express arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on *wise* counsel.

SECT. 23. whether true or false, the rank which we now hold in life, whether high or low, makes no difference as to the grand point; our union with the body is the same; and the same happy consequences follow from that union. *And* this in particular, that *we are all made* 1 COR. XII. *to drink into one Spirit*;[k] as we drink of the same sacramental cup, so we do by our communion with Christ, whose blood is represented by it, all imbibe the influences of the same 14 Spirit, by which the divine life was at first produced, and is continually preserved. I say, we have all imbibed it; as the whole body may be said to imbibe the wine which enters in at the mouth, and descends to the stomach; yet it is not intended *for the* benefit of those members alone, but of the whole; so, in like manner, *the body is not one member, but many;* yet so united, that the Spirit, imparted to one, is designed, whether in its miraculous operations or sanctifying influences, for the benefit of the whole.

been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us thankfully acknowledge the divine goodness, that we have not been led on, after the example of our Ver. pagan ancestors, to the vain worship of dumb and stupid idols; but have been taught from our infancy to adore 2, 3 the living Jehovah. May we, in the most solemn and consistent manner, say, that Jesus is the Lord! And while our actions speak a regard to him as such, may it appear that our hearts are under the influences of the Spirit of God, by which alone men are brought to that divine temper.

Let us often reflect upon those glorious attestations which were given to the truth of our holy religion, by that 4, &c. diversity of gifts and operations with which its first teachers were furnished and adorned. Let us thankfully receive their testimony, and thereby set to our seal that God is true. And let a view to that great design in which all these wonderful things centre, engage us to study more a union of heart with all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In him Greeks and Barbarians, bond and free, are united. His glory therefore let all unanimously seek; and while his name is blasphemed by the ignorant and malignant, who cannot bear the purity of that religion which he teaches, may it so be defended by us, as at the same time to be exemplified and adorned.

SECTION XXIV.

The apostle, farther to enforce that humility in the use of their spiritual gifts, and that mutual affection which the Corinthians so much needed to be farther taught, goes on, in prosecution of the allegory used above, to represent christians as so united in one body, as to have entirely the same interest; and insists on a tender care of the least member, from its subservience to the good of the whole. 1 Cor. xii. 15, *to the end.*

1 COR. xii. 15.

SECT. 24. IT is of the highest importance, in your present circumstances, for the honour of God, and your comfort and edification in the use of the gifts with which God hath endowed you, that I should farther illustrate and enforce the observation I have just been making, 1 COR. XII. that the body is not one member, but made up of the conjunction of many, which have 15 various offices and purposes. None can therefore complain of its own situation, as if it were insignificant; nor should any despise another, as unworthy of regard. As to the first of these, *if the foot should say, Because I am not the hand,* but am placed in the lowest order, rest upon the ground, and am often covered with dirt, therefore *I am not of the body; is it* indeed, *for this, not* any part *of the body;* or would it have reason to 16 represent itself as on this account an outcast? *And if the ear should say, Because I am not* so visible, so beautiful, so useful as *the eye,* therefore *I am not of the body; is it* indeed *for this* reason *not of the body?* Is it not a very important and useful part? Yea, is not the body far more perfect, in consequence of the foot and the ear being what they respectively are, than it would be if each of them were another hand, or another eye? 17 For *if the whole body* [*were,*] as it were, *an eye,*[a] and a man could look at will through every pore; *where* [*were*] *the hearing,* that important sense, which admits so much pleasing entertainment and improvement? And *if the whole* [*were*] *hearing, where* [*were*] *the smelling,* a sense which, though less important than the former, is not destitute of its 18 proper delight and its proper use? *But now* we see that *God,* the great and wise Creator, *hath placed the* various *members, every one of them in the body as he hath seen fit;* and his inimitable contrivance, and overflowing goodness, is glorified in their variety and 19 in their arrangement. *But if* they *all were one member,* or the members all of one form and use, *where* [*were*] *the body?* How could it possibly subsist? What a monstrous thing would such a detached member be, if it could be supposed to exist alone? Or if each member were to be transformed into that which might in itself seem most noble, 20 how ruinous to the whole would such a transformation be? *But now,* as [*there are*] *many members,* there is in the union of them all *but one* harmonious, regular *body,* furnished for the various animal functions, and capable of a variety of sensations and actions. 21 *And* no one of them ought to despise any of the rest; for *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee;* since by the hand the body is maintained and fed, and the eye itself preserved and defended. *And again, the head,* elevated as it is, and so admirably furnished with all the nerves and organs planted in it, [*cannot say*] *to* the most

1 COR. xii. 15.

IF the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again,

k *Drink into one Spirit.*] Mr. Locke thinks St. Paul refers to the sacramental *cup* rather than the *bread* here, because the wine is more spirituous, and in a lively manner represents the animating effects of Christ's blood, and the Spirit communicated by it.

a *If the whole body* [*were*] *an eye,* &c.] The apostle by this intends probably to insinuate, that, were there no other gifts in the church but those which they so much extolled in some of their teachers, it would be a very great disadvantage to the body.

the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need! but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

distant and extreme parts, even *the feet*, mean as their form and office seems, *I have no need of you;* since by means of them, the head, and all the other parts of the body, are supported and removed from place to place. SECT. 24.

But it may farther be observed here, agreeably to the point which I have now in view, that *the members of the body which appear to be weaker*[b] than the rest, and perhaps are most delicate and tender in their structure, *are more abundantly necessary*, so that without them the animal functions can by no means be discharged. *And* so likewise with respect to *those which seem to be the more* ignoble and *dishonourable* [*parts*[c]] *of the body, those we surround with more abundant honour;*[d] *and* those which seem *our uncomely* [*parts,*] *have*, by virtue of the dress we put upon them, *more abundant comeliness* than most of the rest. *For our comely* and graceful [*parts*] *have no need* of being so adorned, as they appear to greater advantage uncovered: *but God hath* so *attempered* the several parts of *the body together*, as *to give* a *more abundant honour to that which is* so formed, as rather to appear *deficient;* for by making the meanest part thus necessary, he hath entitled it to the care of the noblest: *That* so *there might be no schism in the body*, no division of separate interests; *but* [*that*] all *the members might have the same care of each other*, as being each an important part of the whole. *So that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*,[e] and are concerned to remove the complaint; *or if one member be honoured* and adorned, *all the members rejoice with it;* the ornament of one part being looked upon as that of the whole. 1 COR. XII. 22 23 24 25 26

Now to apply this to the purpose for which I introduced it: *you are* all *the body of Christ, and members* [*each*] *in particular. And* as *God hath placed some* members in more eminent stations in the body; so also some christians *in the church*. He hath placed in the *first* rank, *apostles;* who are honoured with an office of the highest distinction, and furnished with endowments peculiar to themselves. *In the second place* are ranked *prophets;* whose business it is to foretell future events, or to speak by immediate inspiration, for the edification of the church. *In the third, teachers*, of a more ordinary kind, *afterwards* those who are endowed, upon some particular occasion, with [*miraculous*] *powers; then the gifts of healing* diseases by anointing the sick with oil, and praying for their recovery. Besides these, he has endowed some with such extraordinary activity and sagacity, as may fit them to be *helpers* in the management of charities; others are qualified by their prudence to be *governments*,[f] by whose advice the affairs of societies may be steered and conducted in the safest and happiest manner: there are also wonderful operations, by which men are taught [*different*] *kinds of tongues*, which they had never learned by any human methods. Now as the offices of the church are different, the gifts by which men are fitted to discharge them are proportionably so. [*Are*] *all the* members or ministers of the church *apostles?*[g] Yea, [*are*] *all* who are subordinate to them *prophets?* Or [*are*] *all* that sort of inferior *teachers* whom I observed to stand in the third class? [*Have*] *all* those [*miraculous*] *powers* which I have again and again mentioned? Or, to instance only in one of the lowest of them, *have all the gifts of healing* diseases in that extraordinary manner in which some have effected it? Yea, *do all speak with tongues* which they have never learned? Or *do all* others find themselves able to act in that lower sphere I spoke of before, and to *interpret* into their native language, or any other, what has been uttered in a tongue to them generally unknown? These things are well worthy your consideration; *but* instead of attending to them, *ye contend earnestly about the best* or most shining *gifts*;[h] envying, *and* it may be, detracting from the superior endowments of others. *Yet I show you a way of the highest excellence*, to which it will be your greatest wisdom carefully to attend. 27 28 29 30 31

b *Appear to be weaker.*] Some think this refers to the *brains* and *bowels*, which are very tender, and liable to many disorders. Others understand it of the least *muscular parts*, or *veins, arteries*, and other minute channels in the body, the least obstruction in which would be fatal. If *more feeble* be put for *less noble*, it suggests a very obvious and important sense, relating to the channels by which nature has provided for throwing off the dregs; which, dishonourable as they may seem, are so necessary, that if they be obstructed, intense torment and inevitable death must ensue.

c *Our dishonourable* [*parts,*] *&c.*] It seems as if he had said, *the face*, on which the image of God is particularly stamped, we leave uncovered; but as for those parts which decency or custom teaches us to conceal, we contrive not only to cover, but also, as far as we conveniently can, to *adorn* by covering.

d *We surround with more abundant honour:* τουτοις τιμην περισσοτεραν περιτιθεμεν.] Our version by no means expresses the force of the Greek idiom here.

e *If one member suffer*, &c.] Bos, in his *Exercitations* on this text, has collected many parallel passages from Seneca and other heathen writers.

f *Helpers—governments, &c.*] I think we can only guess at the meaning of these words; not having principles on which to proceed in fixing them absolutely. I have inserted what seemed to me most probable in the paraphrase. The author of *Miscellanea Sacra* thinks much light is to be derived by comparing verses 8—10. with verses 28—38. the order in one text corresponding with that of the other; but the order of the same words differing in the two places, demonstrates the contrary. I have met with no remark here which seems more pertinent than that of Mons. Amyraut; who thinks that the same persons might possess many of these gifts, and sustain several of these characters, which were not stated distinct offices; and might be called helpers, in reference to their great dexterity and readiness to help those in distress; and governments, in regard to that genius for business, sagacity in judging the circumstances of affairs, and natural authority in the councils and resolutions of societies, which rendered them fit to preside on such occasions.

g *Are all apostles?* &c.] It appears that this invidious temper was not extirpated from among the Corinthians, even by this just and lively expostulation; for Clemens Romanus, writing to them many years after, complains of its continued prevalence, as leading them to neglect a due regard to *those presbyters who were, according to divine direction, fixed among them, and to throw them out of their episcopal office.* See Clem. *Epistle to the Cor.* § 44.

h *Ye contend earnestly about the best gifts*, &c.] I doubt not but this is the just rendering of ζηλουτε τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα: for it seems contradictory to suppose that after the apostle had been showing them that these *gifts* were not at their own option, and that they ought not to emulate the *gifts* of each other, nor to aspire to superiority; he should in effect unsay all again, and give them such contrary advice.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 24. 1 COR. XII.

THE wisdom and goodness of God, as displayed in the formation of the human body, is a subject that well deserves our attentive reflection and humble acknowledgment. All its several parts are useful to the whole; and the most noble cannot upbraid the meanest as an incumbrance. Each has reason to rejoice in its own situation, as well as in the addition of all the rest; and were the lowest placed higher than it is, it would become useless, burthensome, and monstrous.

Let us acknowledge the same hand in the wise subordination appointed in civil societies and in the church of Christ. Let none be discouraged at the low station wherein they are fixed, but rather let all acquiesce in the prudent and gracious disposal of the supreme Lord, and apply themselves to their proper functions. Let each member consider all the rest with pleasure, and rejoice with thankfulness in the health and vigour of the other parts, making the proper use of them, and communicating in return its proper services. If any be weak, let all strengthen
Ver. 23 it. If there be any blemish and imperfection in any part, let all the rest tenderly cover it, unless when a regard to the health and happiness of the whole requires that it should be laid open and searched in order to its being
25 cured. And upon the whole, so far as we can prevent it, let there be no schism in the body. Alas, that there should be so many breaches and contentions! Let us lament them; let each in his place endeavour to heal them; and unite in a sympathizing care of one another. So shall we best express our regard to our common Head; so shall we, in the remotest consequences, best consult our own interest and honour.

28 Blessed be God that he hath in his church given not only apostles and prophets, but also pastors and teachers! Adored be that bounty with which he hath scattered down his gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary, on the children of men. Let all be used, not to the purposes of ostentation, but of edification. And let us be desirous of those whereby we may bear most of the image of Christ, and may most promote the great design for which he visited this low world of ours, and was pleased to unite his church unto himself, and its several members to each other, in such dear and indissoluble bonds.

SECTION XXV.

To engage the Corinthians to cultivate charity as more excellent and important than any of those gifts about which they were so ready to contend, the apostle gives a most lovely description of it; which he concludes with a reflection on its perpetual duration, in which it exceeds even the graces of faith and hope. 1 Cor. xiii. *throughout.*

1 COR. xiii. 1.

SECT. 25. 1 COR. XIII.

I HAVE been urging you to pursue something more excellent than any of those gifts about which some among you have been so ready to contend; and I have recommended it as a more excellent way. That of which I speak is the incomparable and divine grace of LOVE, which indeed is not only of the highest excellence, but of absolute necessity. For
1 *if I* were to *speak with* all *the* variety of *tongues*[a] which are used among all the nations *of men, and* were capable of employing them even with the eloquence of *angels*, and knew their celestial dialect; *but have not love*[b] to God and my fellow-creatures, be my strains of discourse ever so harmonious or ever so sublime, *I am become* but *sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal*,[c] at best but like an instrument of music, and hardly worthy to be compared to an instrument of the nobler kind. So little delight would any of my most pompous performances give to God, or to any of his most valuable creatures, who should know that love was wanting, that I might as well think to recommend myself to acceptance by the noisy clank made by brazen instruments, in the worship of Isis or Cybele.
2 *And if*, besides those gifts of tongues and eloquence, *I have* that of *prophesying*, so as to foretell the most distant and important future events; *and know all* these *mysteries* which have hitherto been concealed from the most penetrating *and* illuminated eyes; or have *all* the exactest *knowledge* of religion, or any other object that can be supposed the subject of my enquiries; *and if*, joined with this, *I have all* the most miraculous *faith*,[d] by virtue of which I should be able to produce effects that might amaze the whole world, *so as to remove mountains* from their basis, to transport them from one part of the earth to another, and to change the whole face of nature with a word; *but* with all these wondrous endowments, *have not love*, simple as that principle is, and comparatively mean as it may be esteemed, yet for want of it *I am nothing*[e] in the sight of God, and have in reality no
3 true worth and excellence. *And* I may farther add, that no external act of charity, or of zeal, will signify any thing, if this inward principle, which should be the life of all, be wanting; for *if I distribute all my goods in alms* for the sustenance of the poor, *and deliver up my body to be burnt* in defence of religion itself, and do it from a secret design of human applause, and ostentation of charity or of piety; *but have not* in the sight of God that *love* to which I make so high a pretence, *I shall receive no advantage by it;* but in the

1 COR. XIII. 1.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

a *Speak with the tongues*, &c.] Dr. Whitby shows, by a great many admirable quotations, both from Josephus and the Jewish rabbies, how much each of these things was regarded by the Jews which St. Paul here speaks of as absolutely of no avail without charity.

b *Have not love.*] Αγαπην is not so properly rendered *charity*. It must here be taken in the noblest sense, for such a *love* to the *whole* church and the *whole* world as arises from principles of true *piety*, and ultimately centres in God.

c *Tinkling cymbal.*] Mr. Locke very justly remarks, that as a cymbal was made of two pieces of hollow brass, which being struck together made a tinkling, with very little variety of sound; St. Paul chose to instance in this, rather than in a harp, or flute, or any other more harmonious instrument of music. See *Commentar. de Cymbalis*, at the end of *Fortuita Sacra*.

d Most miraculous *faith.*] As it is here supposed that this *faith* might in fact be separated from *love;* it cannot signify the same as in the Epistle to the Romans, where it is such an assent to a divine declaration as produces a suitable temper and conduct.

e *I am nothing.*] A person so eminently favoured by God as this description supposes, yet destitute of true piety and benevolence, must be very contemptible, and justly odious.

day of final account, my Judge, instead of applauding and rewarding me as a saint and a martyr, will condemn me as a wicked and vain-glorious hypocrite.

Indeed the properties of this love which I am now recommending are such, that one would imagine the description of them should be enough to charm the whole world to pursue it. Sufficiently must that show how happy it renders the soul which is under its influence, as well as how amiable such must be both to God and man. For *love suffereth long* injuries [*and*] provocations, without being transported into rage, or instigated into revenge. On the contrary, under all this ill usage it *is* gentle and *kind*. *Love envieth not* the advantages which others enjoy; but rather takes pleasure in them, and by friendly participation makes them its own. *Love is not insolent* and overbearing,[f] does not act with such precipitancy and rashness as pride and ill-nature often hurry men into; but engages us with tenderness to look round on those about us, lest we should by any means harm them before we are aware. Love *is not* presently *puffed up* with arrogant self-conceit, on account of any distinguished station or peculiar endowment which a man may possess; nor outwardly boasteth of these things, or inwardly overvalueth itself upon them. Love *doth not behave indecently*,[g] in a manner unbecoming a person's station, age, or circumstances. Love *seeketh not her own things*, but makes all reasonable concessions in any point of self-interest, where any superior interest of others is concerned. Love *is not exasperated*, and thrown into bitter and implacable resentments, even where the usage it meets with is most apparently unjust; and where the intention is dubious, it *imputeth not evil;* but puts the kindest construction upon the action itself, or the principle from whence it proceeds, which the nature of circumstances may by any means allow. Love *rejoiceth not at iniquity;* it takes no pleasure to see an adversary fall into a crime by which his reputation should be blasted and his interest ruined; *but*, on the contrary, it *rejoiceth with others in the truth*, and is pleased when its greatest enemies behave themselves in a manner agreeable to the word of God and the reason of things. Far from delighting to blaze abroad the faults of others, it *covereth all things* that are amiss, so far as it can lawfully conceal them; all which benevolence to the public, or kindness to an individual, does not require them to make known. It is not apt to suspect the integrity and veracity of others; but rather, knowing itself to be sincere, *believeth all things*, so far as with the most candid allowances it rationally can; and where it is constrained to confess that many things are wrong, it is unwilling to treat the worst of mankind as utterly incorrigible; but *hopeth all things*, and with that hope supports itself in every kind effort it can make for their recovery; and as it is long-suffering with regard to human provocations, so from the hand of God it *endureth all things*, even the most sharp and heavy afflictions, acquiescing in his will, trusting in his care, and rejoicing if its own sufferings may be a means of consolation and edification to others.

4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up:

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

And farther to recommend this excellent principle of *love*, give me leave to observe, that it is a grace which *never faileth*, but will accompany and adorn us to all eternity, and indeed makes a very essential part of our preparation for the heavenly world; in which it hath an apparent advantage over many of those gifts which some are so ready to emulate and pursue, to the neglect and injury of love. *But whether* men admire *prophecies*, it is fit *they* should know they *shall be abolished*, when the faith of God's people shall no longer need to be encouraged, nor their devotion to be assisted, by such exhortations and instructions as are necessary now; *or whether* they boast themselves of the variety of *tongues*, *they shall cease* in those celestial regions; one speech and one language shall prevail among all the blessed inhabitants, *and* the languages of earth be forgotten, as too low and imperfect. Yea, I may add, that a great deal of that *knowledge* which we now pursue with the greatest eagerness, and which is very conducive to our present usefulness among mankind, *shall* then *be abolished*[h] and superseded, as referring to things altogether antiquated and passed away, or swallowed up in discoveries so much clearer, stronger, and more important, that it shall appear, in comparison of them, as nothing. *For* now *we know* but *in part*, *and we prophesy* but *in part;* there is a great deal of obvious imperfection attending all our knowledge, and all the services we can here perform for God and for his church: *But when that which is perfect is come*, as in the heavenly state it shall, then *that* [*which is*] only *in part shall be abolished;* all these slow and unsatisfactory methods of obtaining knowledge, and all the little stock we have here laid up, shall be exchanged for the most extensive views of whatever it can be desirable to know, opening upon the mind in the most easy, clear, and delightful manner.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

It shall indeed be like a state of adult age, when compared with that of feeble infancy.

11 When I was a child, I

f *Is not insolent*, &c.] The Greek word πεφυσιοω, from whence the verb here used is derived, signifies, *rash and inconsiderate:* so that the word must here import, "one that acts with such precipitancy "and inconsideration as pride and ill-nature often hurry people "into," which charity would preserve them from, and induce that tenderness and caution which engages us to look about us, that we may do ourselves and others no harm.

g *Does not behave indecently.*] I cannot read this passage without thinking of the venerable Mr. Hales's story of the lancet concealed in a sponge, in order to open an imposthumated part, without giving any alarm to the patient, who dreaded the operation. There is great reason to believe, that in all this description the apostle had in his mind that contrast to this beautiful character which was so prevalent among the Corinthians, as is evident from many passages in both these Epistles.

h *Knowledge shall be abolished.*] This cannot refer to all kind of knowledge; for the noblest shall be much improved. Some think it here signifies that of *Old-Testament mysteries*, which will be superseded in that world where scripture shall be of no farther use; and hence some have farther argued for that interpretation of the *word of knowledge* which was spoken of above. (Chap. xii. 8.) But the explication given in the paraphrase seems more natural and unexceptionable. To trace the gradual openings of the christian scheme through the various dispensations of God to the church, may be an important part of the celestial happiness.

SECT. 25. 1 COR. XIII. 11 Just as *when I was a child, I spake as a child* would naturally do, a few imperfect words, hardly at first articulate and intelligible, and often in themselves unmeaning. *I was affected as a child*, thrown into transports of joy or grief on trifling occasions, which manly reason soon taught me to despise; *I reasoned as a child*, in a weak, inconclusive, and sometimes ridiculous manner. *But when* my faculties ripened and *I became a man, I put away the things of the child*, and felt sentiments, and engaged in pursuits, correspondent to such advancements of age and reason. Such shall be the improvements of the heavenly state, in comparison with those which the most eminent christian can attain here. *For we now see* the most noble objects of our intellectual view *in an ambiguous* and obscure *manner, as* we discern distant objects *by means of a* glass or *mirror*,[1] which reflects only their imperfect forms, so that (as when riddles are proposed to us) our understandings are often confounded with the uncertain and indeterminate appearances of things. *But then* we shall see, not the faint reflection, but the objects themselves, *face to face*, in as distinct a manner as we could wish. *Now I know* [*but*] *in part*, and though the light of an immediate revelation from heaven has been imparted to me in many instances, and in an extraordinary manner, I am sensible how great a part is still kept under the veil. *But then* it shall be taken off, and *I shall know even as also I am known*, in an intuitive and comprehensive manner; so that my knowledge shall bear some fair resemblance to that of the Divine Being, which, while our notices of things hover about their surface, penetrates to the very centre of every object, and sees through my soul, and all things, as at one single glance.

11 spake as a child, I understood as a child; I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

13 And thus upon the whole it appears, and I hope you will remember and consider it, that *there now abide these three* most excellent graces, *faith, hope, and love*; each of them far to be preferred to the most shining gifts about which you can contend. *But the greatest of these* graces [*is*] *love*; which most directly transforms us into the image of God, and which shall continue to exert all its influence, when faith is superseded by sight, and hope by enjoyment.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY after having attentively surveyed the beautiful description which the apostle gives us of this divine grace, love, it cannot be necessary that its cause should be farther pleaded. It speaks for itself; speaks to our very hearts. But oh, who that enters into the description must not mourn that its angelic form is so much a stranger to multitudes who bear the christian name! So that in many instances it can hardly pass uncensured; while those extremes which most evidently violate it are often consecrated under honourable names, and men build much of their hopes of heaven on breathing what is indeed the temper of hell. How many that style themselves christians, can endure no provocations, can cover no faults of their brethren, can keep themselves within no bounds, can believe nothing to their advantage, against whom, on party-principles, they have entertained prejudices! They vaunt themselves, they are puffed up with the conceit of their own wisdom, they behave unseemly, they seek only their own reputation and profit, they believe the worst they can hear of others, and suspect more than they hear; they envy those whose endowments and stations are superior to their own, and instead of labouring themselves to excel, they affect by calumny and slander to bring down their brethren to their own level, or rather as far as possible below it. Alas, that the dictates of our Divine Master, and the genius of our religion, are so little understood, are no more regarded! and that we so entirely forget the precepts of christianity, as not to remember even those of common humanity!

Ver. 4, &c.

Yet surely if these precepts are wholly forgotten, it is in vain that we remember or contend for any of its doctrines and principles. As all languages and gifts, so all knowledge and faith is vain, if it be separate from love, by which true faith always operates.

1, 3 8—10 11 12 Let us cultivate love more and more, and so much the rather as it is a plant of the celestial paradise; which will there for ever flourish, when tongues shall cease, and that knowledge on which men value themselves highly shall utterly vanish. The ripeness of adult age, and the knowledge of the most improved sciences, human or divine, is but as the trifling of an infant, when compared with that manly and perfect state after which we are aspiring. The dim mirror of faith shall then be laid aside; and the truth of the objects now so imperfectly discerned, shall in full lustre be presented to our eye, purged from every film, and strengthened for a brightness which would now overwhelm it. In the mean time, attending humbly to the narrow limits and necessary obscurity of our present knowledge, let us not be puffed up in ourselves, let us not despise others; but by a modest estimate and a faithful improvement of such degrees of light as God shall be pleased to afford us, let us press on towards the regions of eternal day; where in his light we shall see light, and where, amidst the fullest communications of his love, we shall for ever love him and each other, with ardours which the best hearts, in their best moments on earth, can neither attain nor conceive.

i *By means of a mirror.*] This is the exact rendering of δι' εσοπτρου. It is well known that the use of dioptric glasses in telescopes did not prevail till many ages after the date of this Epistle. And the LXX. use this word for the women's looking-glasses, or mirrors of metal, out of which Moses made the laver. Exod. xxxviii. 8.

SECTION XXVI.

The apostle cautions the Corinthians against that vain ostentation of the gift of tongues which was so prevalent among them; and reasons with them concerning the absurdity of the manner in which that gift was abused by some of them. 1 Cor. xiv. 1—19.

1 Cor. xiv. 1.

1 COR. xiv. 1.
FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

I HAVE exhorted, and I would still exhort you, my brethren, to *pursue love*,[a] to cultivate it to the utmost of your power in your own breasts and in all around you, not grudging any labour necessary to promote so excellent a cause. Yet I would not lead you to slight any inferior endowment by which the edification of the church may be promoted. I permit you, therefore, zealously to *desire spiritual* [*gifts*,] so far as submission to God, the great Dispenser of them, and love to your brethren, may admit. *But* I would *especially* urge you to desire and pray *that ye may* be enabled to *prophesy*, in that sense of the word in which we commonly use it, to express the gift whereby we are enabled to explain scripture, and publicly to discourse of divine things in an instructive and edifying manner; for by this you may hope to do the greatest good. *For he that speaketh in a tongue*[b] unknown to the auditory to whom he addresses himself, *speaks* in effect *not to men, but to God; for no one* else present *understands* [*him*;] and as God alone knows the truth and importance of what he says, so it is all lost on the audience, *though in the Spirit he speak* the most sublime *mysteries*. *Whereas he that prophesieth*, in the sense in which I now use the word, that is, discourses of divine things in a known language, *speaketh to men*, and affords them *edification, and exhortation, and comfort*, according to the particular tenor and contents of what he says. And thus, on the most favourable concessions that can be made, *he that speaketh with a tongue edifies himself*[c] only, if peradventure his own good affections may be awakened by the truth he fervently delivers; and the consciousness of that miraculous power which he feels working in him, may farther establish his faith in christianity; *but he that prophesies*, while he has a share of this advantage, *edifies the church* also, by taking those methods which are most likely to promote the number of its converts, and to do good to those who are already gathered into it.

SECT. 26.

1 COR. XIV.

1

2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.

2

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

3

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

4

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

For my own part, far from envying any of your gifts, *I wish* them increased, and *indeed that ye all spake with tongues*, in as great a variety as I myself can, or as God hath imparted the gift to any man living: *but* on the whole, I had much *rather that ye might* all *prophesy; for* when we come to consider the different effects and tendencies of these different gifts, we must own that, with respect to the prospects of usefulness, by which these things are much to be estimated, *he that prophesieth* [*is*] *greater than he who speaketh with tongues*,[d] which the auditory cannot understand, *except he interpret* what he says, *that the church may receive edification:* and even then, his speaking with an unintelligible tongue is but an unnecessary incumbrance, which it would be much more modest and prudent to omit.

5

6 Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

Now, as perhaps you will apprehend this better by an example, suppose it were your own case, *brethren: if I came to you*, the next time I make you a visit at Corinth, *speaking* to you *with* a variety of unknown *tongues*, *what shall I profit you*, who are supposed not to understand me, *unless I speak* not merely in your hearing, but *to you*, that is, in a language with which you are acquainted? Else all is absolutely lost, whatever my message may be, *whether* I speak *by* the *revelation* of some gospel-doctrine and mystery, *or* by *knowledge*[e] in the explication of some controverted text in the Old Testament, *or* by *prophecy* in the prediction of some future event, *or* by *doctrine* for the regulation of life and manners.

6

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

So also inanimate things which give a sound, whether it be *pipe or harp*, or any other instrument of music, *unless they give a due distinction* in the variety *of sounds* proceeding from them, *how can it be known what is piped or harped?* How should dancers be directed by music, unless the proper tone and modulation be duly maintained?

7

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who

Moreover, in war, *if the trumpet give an uncertain sound*, so that there is an undis-

8

a *Pursue love.*] The word διωκετε properly signifies, "to pursue "with an eagerness like that with which hunters follow their "game." And it may be intended to intimate how hard it is to obtain and preserve such a truly benevolent spirit in the main series of life; considering on the one hand, how many provocations we are like to meet with, and on the other, the force of self-love, which will in so many instances be ready to break in upon it.

b *He that speaketh in a tongue* unknown, &c.] Dr. Whitby thinks that the gifts of languages and prophecy were always to be found in the same person; but that the first was permanent, the other transient. Yet it seems to me very conceivable, either might be without the other. The miraculous instamping, as it were, on a man's mind a new language, would indeed enable him to speak all he knew in it; but his fitness to discourse in public, as well as his capacity of predicting future events, were matters quite of another nature.

c *Edifies himself.*] After all that is said in the paraphrase to prove that this might be possible, it was much more probable that a man might be hurt than edified by the exercise of this gift, when attended with such ostentatious circumstances. But the apostle, according to that happy address for which he was so remarkable, makes his supposition most honourable and favourable to the person reproved; as Hector ascribes the retreat of Paris from the battle to resentment against the Trojans rather than to cowardice. Hom. *Iliad, lib.* vi. ver. 326. and Eustath. *in loc.*

d *He that prophesieth, &c.*] How happily does the apostle teach us to estimate the value of gifts and talents, not by their brilliancy, but *usefulness*. *Speaking with tongues* was indeed very serviceable for spreading the gospel abroad; but for those who staid at home, it was much more desirable to be able to discourse well on useful subjects in their own language; which might serve more for the improvement of the society they belonged to, and the conviction of such of their unbelieving neighbours as might out of curiosity happen to step into their assemblies. Compare ver. 23—25.

e *Revelation or knowledge*, &c.] I am not certain how far different ideas are to be affixed to each of these words; or supposing that how far these are the appropriate ideas intended by each; but I could think of no more proper explication; and must number this among the many texts which I dare not pretend fully to understand.

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tinguishable mixture of various kinds of notes, *who should prepare himself to battle?* Could soldiers know when to advance or when to retreat, unless the trumpet's sound be adjusted and constantly adhered to? *So likewise* in your religious assemblies, *unless ye*

9 *utter by the tongue significant words,* to which the ear of your auditory are accustomed, *how shall it be known what you speak? For ye shall* be in that case as those that *speak to the air,* or make a mere inarticulate noise; and I leave you to judge how absurd it would be to bring such unmeaning sounds into the worship of God, as ye would not endure in the common affairs of life.

10 *There may be ever so many sorts of language in the world,* perhaps as many as there are persons in your most numerous assemblies; *and none of them* is *without* its proper *signification* among those that use it; there are great numbers that inhabit the same region

11 who perfectly understand it. *Yet unless I know the* proper *force* and import *of the* particular *language* which is used in my hearing, no one can converse with me, and I shall in vain ask an explication in my own; for *I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh* [*shall be*] *a barbarian to me:* and if the language be ever so copious, harmonious, expressive, and polite, I shall hardly be able to distinguish it from

12 that of the most unpolished savage. *So* that, on the whole, I must urge it upon *you also,* that *seeing ye desire spiritual* [*gifts,*] and are ready to vie with each other in the excellence of them, ye *seek to abound* [*in them*] *for the edification of the church,* and not merely for your own honour, according to those rules of honour which you may too rashly lay down to yourselves.

13 *Therefore let him that speaketh in a tongue* generally unknown to the congregation to which he would address himself, *pray that he may* be able rather to *interpret* the discourse of another, than to amuse, or indeed amaze and weary, the audience, by the ostentatious exercise of the gift he has already received, and with which he is fond of making

14 a vain parade. *For if I pray in a* strange and unknown *tongue,* without making use of any explication, *my spirit* indeed *prays,* and I may have true devotion of heart towards God, as I understand the language myself; *but my understanding is* in this respect *unfruitful* as to others,[f] and I perform an action void of that prudence and good sense which ought always to govern in my addresses to God, and act so childish and foolish a part,

15 that the reason of a man may seem at that time to have deserted me. *What then is* [*my duty*] in these circumstances? Truly it is plain enough; it requires me to say, *I will pray with the spirit,* exercising the faculties of my own soul in devotion; *but I will pray with the understanding also.*[g] *I will sing* the praises of God *with the spirit; but I will sing* them *with understanding also,* and will take great care to mingle no foolish, trifling action, unworthy the dignity of a rational creature, with my prayers or songs of praise. And it becomes you especially to consider this, who are so proud of your own wisdom, and yet in some respects act so foolish a part.

16 *Moreover,* whoever thou art who actest in this ostentatious manner, consider a little, for the farther illustration of this argument, the situation of one of thine own hearers. *If thou givest thanks,* for instance, *in the spirit,* in the manner that we now suppose it to be done, that is, in an unknown tongue, *how shall he that filleth up a private place,* and should join with thee in thy devotion, *say, Amen, to thy thanksgiving, seeing he knows not what thou sayest?* You know it is customary for the audience to pronounce their Amen: now it seems a very absurd not to say hazardous thing, for people to testify in such a public and solemn manner their consent to, and concurrence with, they know

17 not what. *For* we will grant that *thou indeed givest thanks well,* and that there is nothing improper either in the sentiments or expressions, if they were understood; *nevertheless the other is not* at all *edified* or improved, in order to which it is absolutely necessary that he should know what is said.

18 For my own part, *I thank my God,* and desire to mention it entirely to the glory of that blessed Being from whom all my gifts and talents are derived, *that I speak with tongues more than you all,* even the whole society taken together, and am distinguished from my other brethren in this endowment, in proportion to the more extensive commission which I have received to bring a variety of nations to the knowledge of the gospel, and

19 persuade them to embrace it. *But in a* christian *church,* when assembled with them for the purposes of public devotion, *I had rather speak five* plain *words with my understanding* in a rational manner, *that I might teach others also,* and promote the edification of those who were joining with me, *than ten thousand* of the most pompous and elegant *words in an* [*unknown*] *tongue,* though uttered with the greatest readiness, and expressing conceptions ever so excellent; yet I had rather be entirely silent in an assembly, than take up their time, and prostitute the extraordinary gifts of God to such vain and

shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise you, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

11 Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian: and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts,* seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore, let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue, pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all.

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

f *Understanding unfruitful* to others.] This I think a more natural interpretation than that which supposes the apostle to suggest a thought which the papists urge to palliate the absurdity of *prayers in an unknown tongue,* namely, "There may be some general good affections working, where the person praying does not "particularly understand what he says." But this would make it almost impossible to conceive how the *gift of tongues* could be abused, if the person exercising it was under such an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit as to utter sensible words which he did not himself understand; in which case a man must be, in the most extraordinary sense that can be conceived, the *mere organ* of the *Holy Ghost* himself.

g *Pray with understanding.*] Mr. Locke and most other commentators seem here to have lost the sense and high spirit of the apostle in this clause, when they explain νοὸς as if it merely signified *a manner intelligible to others.* I apprehend it is designed farther to intimate what a want of *manly* sense and *right* understanding it must betray, to talk in a language the hearers could not take in, how sublime soever the discourse might be. This the 20th verse, and especially the use of τελειοι there, strongly suggests.

foolish purposes. And I heartily wish I may be able to bring you to the same reasonable way of thinking; which would be much to the credit of your own understanding, as well as of your christian profession. SECT. 26.

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IMPROVEMENT.

How weak and poor a thing is pride and ostentation, and how wise and honourable charity and humility! Who that has a right discernment would not rather have been the obscurest christian, that now, almost unseen, joins our assemblies, and, in heart at least, humbly puts his Amen to the petitions presented there, than the most fluent talker at Corinth; abusing the special gifts of the Spirit, and trifling away, in an unseasonable display of his own then unprofitable endowments, the precious moments which were destined to the highest purposes of religious edification! Who must not lament to see pride and vain-glory so early insinuating themselves into christian societies! Who must not, from so sad an instance, learn to be greatly watchful over their own hearts, on a side where they are subject to such dangerous attacks! Ver. 2—12

Had the most able and zealous protestant divine endeavoured to expose the absurdity of praying in an unknown tongue, as practised in the church of Rome, it is difficult to imagine what he could have written more fully to the purpose than the apostle hath here done. And when it is considered how perversely the papists retain the usage of such prayers, it will seem no wonder they should keep the scriptures in an unknown tongue too. But they proclaim at the same time their superstition and idolatry in so universal a language, that even a barbarian might perceive and learn it in their assemblies. Let us pity and pray for them, that God may give their prejudiced minds a juster and happier turn. And since we see the unreasonable and pernicious humour of immutably adhering to ancient customs, prevailing to maintain in the church of Rome so flagrant an absurdity as praying in an unknown tongue, let it teach us to guard against every degree of the like disposition; and not so much consider what hath been the practice of any church in which we were educated, or have chosen to worship, as what the reason of things, and the authority of scripture, concur to dictate. 13—16

Of this wise and benevolent apostle let us learn to estimate the value of gifts by their usefulness, and to seek above all things the edification of our brethren; especially if we are providentially called to minister in public. There is perhaps a manner of speaking in an unknown tongue, even when the language of our own country is used; a height of composition, an abstruseness of thought, an obscurity of phrase, which common christians cannot understand. Let not the ministers of the humble Jesus seek such high things; but in this important sense of the exhortation condescend to men of low estate. If the ignorant may be instructed, if the careless may be convinced, if the vicious may be reformed, if the devotion of our christian brethren may be excited, their love to each other cherished, and their holy resolutions confirmed, the great ends of divine ordinances are answered; and that plainness of speech which may be most like to promote them, is rather the glory than reproach of the christian orator. 18, 19 3, 4

SECTION XXVII.

St. Paul gives proper advices for preventing that abuse of the gift of tongues which he had been reproving in the preceding section. 1 Cor. xiv. 20, *to the end.*

1 COR. XIV. 20.

1 COR. xiv. 20.
BRETHREN, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

MY *brethren*, permit me to be the happy means of forming you to a more noble and manly way of thinking, with respect to these spiritual gifts which are the occasions of so many unbecoming emulations among you. Do you desire to be distinguished in the church? distinguish yourselves by solid wisdom; and *be not*, as this ostentation of tongues would show you to be, *children in understanding*:[a] *but in malice*, indeed, *be* as much as possible like *little infants*; have all the gentleness, sweetness, and innocence of their tender age: *but*, as ye have arrived to years of maturity, *in understanding be perfect* [*men*:] for that religion which the gospel hath now taught you, far from impairing any of the natural faculties, rather exalts and improves them, and directs them to the highest and noblest use. To return to the subject we were upon: you know *it is written in the law*, that is, in the Old Testament, (Isa. xxviii. 11, 12. where God had been complaining of the unteachable disposition of the Jews,) "*Surely in foreign lan-*"*guage*,[b] *and with foreign lips, I will speak unto this people; and even so they will not* "*hear me, saith the Lord*;" which may be considered and interpreted as an intimation of the purpose God had of sending one last message to them, by his servants endued with the gift of tongues. *So that*, according to this intimation, *tongues are a sign not to believers, but to infidels.* The gift was intended to propagate the gospel among those who were strangers to it, not to edify those that had already believed. *Whereas*, on the contrary, *prophecy* [*is*] designed, *not for infidels, but believers*, to edify churches already gathered; in which respect it is nobler, and more worthy your pursuit. But as there is a manner of using this gift of tongues, which would even pervert the original end for which it was given, and obstruct rather than promote the conversion of infidels, I must observe, *therefore*, that *if the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with* SECT. 27. 1 COR. XIV. 20 21 22 23

21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips, will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak

a *Children in understanding.*] This is an admirable stroke of true oratory, adapted to strike and bring down the height of their spirits, by representing those things in which they were most ready to pride themselves, as comparatively *childish*.—The word νηπιάζετε refers to *infants*, and is not sufficiently expressed by the word *children*, for they are sometimes vain, and sometimes malicious too.—Τελειοι signifies, *full-grown men*; intimating it was a kind of *boyishness*, if I may be allowed to use that word, to emulate and quarrel with one another.

b *In foreign language, &c.*] Most critics refer these words, as they stand in Isaiah, to the Babylonians, who should come and speak to the Jews in a language unintelligible to them; in which sense the phrase is used elsewhere, Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. v. 15. Diodati thinks the meaning is, "Because they would not attend to plain "messages, God would speak to them by such as they could not "understand:" and then the apostle's argument will be, "Since "God threatens this as a curse, do not voluntarily bring it upon the "church, merely to make ostentation of your own gifts." But perhaps the apostle in this application intends to give us the true, though not most obvious, interpretation of the words.

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a variety of unknown *tongues, and any* of the *uninstructed, or,* in other words, the *infidels, come in,* when they hear such a confused jargon as this must be, *will they not* presently *say that you are distracted,* and adopt the censure which was at first so rashly passed in the day of Pentecost, that these men are full of new wine? (Acts ii. 13.) *Whereas if all prophesy, and an infidel or ignorant man,* (for I esteem every one ignorant who is

24 uninstructed in the great mysteries of the gospel, whatever else he may know,) *comes in, he is convicted by all* who thus speak; *he is judged by all:* every one says something to which

25 his conscience bears witness: *And so the secrets of his heart are made manifest,*[c] in a manner to him very surprising and unaccountable; insomuch that sometimes a person who comes into your assembly out of mere curiosity, or possibly with some ill design, is not able to command himself under the impression which the word of God thus spoken makes upon them; *and so,* under the power of it, *falling down upon* [*his*] *face, he will worship* that one living and true *God* whom you adore; *declaring that* this ever-blessed *God is indeed among you:* and perhaps, immediately professing on that account his resolution of joining himself to you; and proclaiming afterwards wherever he comes, in what an extraordinary manner he has met with the divine presence, and what a wonderful impression hath been made upon his mind. Now surely, that degree of honour which is brought to God and his gospel by one such effect of prophesying, should appear far more desirable to you than any applause or admiration which you can receive from your fellow-christians by the exercise of your most splendid gifts.

26 I might also urge upon this head, the great disorder which is introduced into your assemblies by this ostentatious manner of proceeding: for indeed, if you think seriously, *what a* shocking *thing is it,* my *brethren, that when you come together* for the purposes of social worship, in which all hearts should unite, each of you is desirous himself to officiate publicly, in such a manner as best suits his present inclination, without any regard to decency and order? *Every one of you hath a psalm* to read, *hath a doctrine* to inculcate, *hath a tongue* in which to preach or pray, *hath a revelation* of some mystery to produce, *hath an interpretation,* which perhaps he immediately begins, while the person from whom he is to interpret hath but begun to speak, and thus five or six,[d] if not more, may be speaking at the same time: in consequence of which no one can be distinctly heard, and the assembly degenerates into a kind of tumultuous riot. I beseech you, my friends, to rectify this, and to proceed upon the general canon, which I would recommend to you upon all such occasions, *Let all things be done,* not for ostentation but *for edification,*[e] in such a manner as you do in your consciences believe will be most like to do good to the souls of men, and to build up the church of Christ.

27 And in particular, *if any* should *speak with an* [*unknown*] *tongue,* [*let it be*] *by two, or at most* [*by*] *three* in one meeting, *and* that *by course; and let* some *one* present still

28 *interpret* what is said.[f] *But if there be not an interpreter, let him be silent in the church,*[g] where he can do no manner of service by uttering what none but himself can understand: *and let him speak to himself and to God;* let him make use of this language in his own private devotions, if he has a mind by exercise to keep up his readiness in it: but let him not produce it so unreasonably as in the present case. And as for those prophesy-

with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest: and so falling down on *his* face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

c *Secrets of his heart are made manifest.*] It is very possible that (as in the known cases of Nathanael, and the woman of Samaria, John i. 47; iv. 18.) some secret facts, relating to a stranger, might in some instances be revealed to the prophet; perhaps the ill designs which had brought them into the assembly, when they came only as spies: and this was well suited to the purpose of producing strong convictions of the presence of God with christians. But I chose to paraphrase the words in such a manner as to include any remarkable correspondence between what was spoken, and the thoughts and state of the mind which such a stranger might be conscious of. Many memorable instances of which still happen, where ministers preach in an experimental manner; and lasting effects have often been produced in consequence of such impressions.

d Five or six, &c.] Five such cases are mentioned. It seems probable that some of these christians were so full of themselves, and so desirous of exercising their respective gifts, that without waiting for the permission and direction of him who presided in the assembly, (which in the synagogues the apostles themselves seem to have done; compare Acts xiii. 15.) several began speaking or singing in the same minute, and some began while others were speaking. The manner in which discourses were carried on in the schools of the philosophers, where several little knots of disputants seem so to have been engaged at the same time, and what happened in Jewish synagogues after worship was concluded, might possibly have given some occasion to an irregularity which to us seems so shocking.

e *Done for edification.*] I must presume to say, that it appears probable to me that had one officer been appointed as a representative of the apostle, to whose direction the society would in conscience have been obliged in all indifferent matters to submit, some hint would have been given of it, amidst the many opportunities which the state of this Corinthian church especially gave both to St. Paul, and afterwards to Clemens Romanus.

f *Let one interpret.*] In this method it is evident that any discourse thus delivered would take up more than twice the time in which it might have been delivered, had it first been spoken in a known tongue.

g *If there be no interpreter, let him be silent.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this was only enjoined to avoid the ostentation of a man's speaking first in an unknown tongue, and then acting as his own interpreter; but I think it evident from this text, compared with verse 13. that a man might have the *gift* of speaking with tongues, *who could not interpret:* and the great difficulty is to say, how this could happen, and yet the thing wanting not *be another tongue;* which the distinction between *the gift of tongues* and the *interpretation of tongues* seems to demonstrate that it was not. I can only offer a conjecture here, which it becomes me to do with the greater modesty, as I think it is a pretty singular one: (as indeed the difficulty itself, great as it is, has seldom been stated by commentators.) The miracle which conferred the gifts of tongues seems to have been the instantaneous impressing on the mind the familiar and perfect knowledge of a language with which the person was before unacquainted; yet so, that from that time the person receiving it should be able, without any new miracle, to use it as he thought fit; and this, as Dr. Leland well observes, is the only hypothesis on which the abuse of this gift can be accounted for. (See Leland *against Morgan.* Vol. I. chap. xiii. p. 375.) But I apprehend that though every man using this gift, and understanding what he said, must have been able to have rendered his discourse, sentence by sentence, into his native language, he might be unable to render it into a third, which might be that of many present. Now in such a circumstance the *gift of interpretation* might take place, if it consisted, as I conjecture it did, in an instantaneous capacity of understanding a strange language just for that time, and rendering what was spoken in it into the native tongue of the interpreter. (Compare the paraphrase on chap. xii. ver. 10.) On this hypothesis, and truly I think on this alone, one who had the gift of interpretation might not be able to speak any foreign language at all; and he who had the gift of a tongue might not in some circumstance be able to interpret to those who were then his hearers. In this case the *gift of interpretation,* enabling a man only to act a secondary part, would be less splendid; but whenever it was exercised, it would always argue the person under an immediate agency of the Spirit, and conduce to his usefulness.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.
30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.
31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.
32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not *the Author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.

36 What! came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.
40 Let all things be done decently, and in order.

SECT. 27.

1 COR. XIV.

ings which we chiefly speak of when scriptures are explained; *let* only *two or three of the prophets speak* in one assembly: *and let the rest judge* and compare one doctrine with another, for the farther improvement of all. *But if*, while the discourse continues, [*any thing*] *be revealed to another that sitteth by, let* him not immediately arise and interrupt *the first*, but let him sit still till he *have done speaking*.[h] *For* by this means *ye may all*, who are thus furnished for it, *prophesy one by one, that* your instruction and consolation may not be thrown away, which would be the case if many were speaking at once; but *all may learn, and all may be comforted*. And there is no impossibility of doing this; *for* the Spirit of God that inspires you is not a wild, irresistible impulse, like that by which the Pythian priestess, and others who profess inspiration and prophecy among the Gentiles, pretend to be agitated; but *the spirits* or inspirations *of the* christian *prophets* produce those calm emotions which *are subject to the prophets;* they leave a man master of himself, so that he can moderate his passions, and wait the most convenient time and manner of uttering his oracles. *For God is not* [*the Author*] *of* disorder and *confusion, but of peace* and regularity; and this orderly method of proceeding I the rather urge upon you, *as* it is practised *in all the* other *churches of the saints;* and I should be sorry that you, my Corinthian friends, should be remarkable for the irregularity of your proceedings, when God hath been pleased so graciously to distinguish you by such a variety of gifts, and the flourishing state of your society.

Let your women be silent in your religious *assemblies*, if they have not some extraordinary revelation; *for it is not* commonly *permitted to them to speak* on such public occasions, *but* it is their duty *to be in subjection* to the superior authority of the man: *as the law also says*, in recording that early sentence on Eve and her daughters for the first transgression, (Gen. iii. 16.) To him shall be thy desire subjected, and he shall rule over thee. *And if they have a mind to learn* the meaning of *any thing* which they cannot well understand, *let them ask their own husbands at home*, as they may more conveniently and freely talk with them without any appearance of ostentation, or suspicion of any other ill principles: but let them not break in upon the assembly with questions; *for it is* evidently an *indecent* thing *for a woman to speak in the church*,[i] and suits very ill with that modesty and reserve which is so universally esteemed an ornament to the sex.

I know the present custom among you is contrary to some of these regulations, and perhaps some opposition may be made to them: but permit me to ask, *Did the word of God* indeed *come out from you?*[k] Are you the first church in the world, by whose example all others should be modelled? *Or did it reach to you alone?* Are you the last and the only christian society, that you should take upon you to act in so singular a manner? The gospel came from Jerusalem, it is going all over the world, and therefore I must admonish you to behave with such a modest respect to others as becomes those who know yourselves to be but a very small part of that noble and extensive body.

And *if any of you appear to be a prophet, or spiritual* [*person*] endowed with extraordinary gifts above his brethren, *let him* prove that he is indeed under the influence of the Divine Spirit, by his submission and obedience to these determinations; for he must necessarily *acknowledge, that the things which I* now *write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*, dictated by inspiration from him, and not the private conception of my own mind. *But if any one is*, or affects to appear, *ignorant* or uncertain about it, *let him be ignorant:*[l] if he pretend not to own these decisions, I shall not enter into any debate with him; let him stand by the consequence of his ignorance, whether real or affected. But I am confident that most of you have received proofs of my mission too convincing to be shaken by any petulant opposition which may arise against it.

Therefore, my *brethren*, to conclude this long discourse, and to sum up the point in a few words, *desire* chiefly *to prophesy*, and *yet forbid not* those who are willing to do it under such regulations as I have advanced, *to speak with tongues;* for it is a noble endowment, which I would encourage none to slight or neglect. But especially remember this great comprehensive rule, to be applied to a thousand varieties which may arise, *Let all things be done decently,*[m] *and according to order:* let all be conducted in a regular manner, to prevent such disturbances, disputes, and scandals for the future, as have already arisen in your society, and will proceed to greater evils, if you do not immediately set upon reforming them.

h *Let the first have done speaking.*] So I think αυγατω must here be rendered; for if the direction had been, "Let him that was "speaking immediately hold his peace, as soon as another intimates "that he has a revelation;" it would introduce a confusion which this advice was intended to prevent; and I think such an interpretation equally inconsistent with reason and the connexion of the place. Compare ver. 32, 33.

i *A woman to speak, &c.*] There is an apparent difficulty in reconciling this with chap. xi. 5, 13. in which the apostle seems to grant a liberty which he here denies. Besides the solution suggested in the paraphrase on verse 34. some have thought he intended in the former passage only to say how women should speak, if they spoke at all; but here, absolutely to *prohibit* their doing it: but I cannot think he would debate and adjust the circumstances of doing an unlawful action. Taking this prohibition to be universal, I should suppose, with Dr. Whitby, that *prophesying*, in the foregoing place, signified *singing psalms*, and *praying*, not leading the devotions, but *joining with others in prayer*.

k *Did the word, &c.*] That *Scoticism, Whether did the word of God come forth from you alone?* would be the exactest version of η αφ' υμων, &c.

l *Let him be ignorant.*] Dr. Whitby would render αγνοειτω, *let him not be acknowledged to be a true prophet;* but that is changing the interpretation of the word in a manner one would not chuse to admit without greater necessity.

m *Decently, &c.*] It must be by a mere accommodation that this expression can be applied to ceremonies, which may be decent or indecent, according to different circumstances attending them. In the sense given in the paraphrase, the words are used by the philosopher when he exhorts men to consider the exact order and regu-

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 27. How fondly do men flatter themselves with empty appearances! And often how justly do those deserve the imputation of childish folly, the height of whose temper will least allow them to bear it! Let us dare to examine ourselves impartially, and be concerned that we may not be children in understanding: but forming our minds on the
1 COR. XIV. maxims of scripture, and our lives on the example of Christ, may we grow up in him to the measure of the stature of a perfect man. But let us be children in malice: let us endeavour to be as free from every gloomy, malignant,
Ver. 20 selfish passion, as new-born infants are. Who can say he has fully attained this happy and amiable character? Yet let us follow after it, remembering that there is a sense in which (proud and interested, envious and malignant, as, alas! we too much are) we must become as little children, or we cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Those extraordinary gifts which suited the first planting of christianity in the world are now ceased; but let us bless God they were ever given, and that we have such an incontestable evidence of the truth of the gospel as this chapter affords. Such endowments must certainly argue a divine power setting its seal to the gospel; and the reality of such endowments can never be questioned, when we reflect on the manner in which the apostle here reproves the abuse of them: and that in a society where so many were alienated from him and his ministry; and consequently, where such appeals, if not founded on the strictest and most apparent truth, must have exposed him to a contempt never to have been removed.

24, 25 These miraculous gifts, having abundantly answered their end, are wisely withdrawn; yet still the divine presence is with the church; of which we have this happy proof, that there are those who find the secrets of their hearts made manifest by the faithful and skilful administration of christian ordinances: so that if they do not publicly fall down upon their faces in such extraordinary transports, they inwardly adore the Lord God in their hearts, and acknowledge that he is with his church of a truth. May instances of this kind be more frequent, and may the spirituality and fervour with which divine ordinances shall be administered, be such as may afford more reason to expect them!

33 Let us regard God as the Author, not of confusion, but of peace; making it our concern to behave in his sanctuary in a manner agreeable to this view; with such solemn decorum, and with such a tender regard to the edification and comfort of each other, as he may approve. May the God of peace deliver christians of every sect and rank from that spiritual pride which has thrown many religious societies into great disorder. And to advance a state so happy as that of humility and love must necessarily be, may what the apostles have written be acknowledged as
37 the commandments of the Lord, and christian worship and practice be more regulated by their truly authentic canons; which would render many that have been since devised, relating to indifferent matters, as unnecessary as some others are burdensome, superstitious, and absurd.

SECTION XXVIII.

The apostle enters on his discourse concerning the resurrection of the dead; which he introduces with some remarks on the certainty and importance of Christ's resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 1—11.

1 COR. xv. 1.

SECT. 28. THERE is one topic more that remains to be handled, of those concerning which you write to me; I mean, the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; which I perceive some among you begin to doubt; whether seduced by any Jewish teachers of Sadducean
1 COR. XV. principles, or biassed by the vain pretences of heathen philosophers, who would despise it
1 as a mean and unworthy hope.[a] *But I make known unto you, brethren,* and remind you of *the gospel which I* have *preached to you* at the very beginning of my ministry among you; *which ye have also received* with readiness and delight, *and in which ye* may be said to *stand,* as much of your establishment in christianity will depend on your retaining
2 it in its genuine simplicity, and purity: *By which* gospel *also,* whereof the doctrine of the resurrection makes so considerable a part, *ye are* happily brought into the way of being completely and eternally *saved, if ye* faithfully *retain*[b] *those joyful tidings which I delivered unto you; unless indeed*[c] *ye have believed in vain:* which will certainly be the case, if ye let go that great anchor of your soul which must support it in the fierce
3 storms and tempests to which you will here be exposed. *For I delivered to you among the first* [*principles*] which I inculcated when I came to preach the gospel among you, *what I have also received,*[d] and been taught by divine inspiration, *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures* of the Old Testament, in which he was foretold and
4 represented as the great sin-offering: (Isa. lii. 6, 12; Dan. ix. 26.) *And* I also instructed you, *that he was buried* in a new tomb, *and that* his dead body was kept by a guard of his enemies: but kept in vain; for to their confusion, and the perpetual establishment of

1 COR. XV. 1.
MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand:

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures:

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the

lar motions of the heavenly bodies, that they may thereby learn το ευτακτον και το τεταγμενον, *what is decent and orderly.* Whichcot's *Sel. Serm.* p. 177. Edit. Edin.

a **Unworthy hope.**] It is well known that the primitive christians were often insulted by the heathen philosophers for their hope of a resurrection; which one of them, ridiculously enough, calls the hope of worms. Compare 2 Tim. xi. 18. and the note there. Others taught virtue to be its own necessary reward, in such a manner as tended to overthrow the strongest of all natural arguments for a future state; I mean, that taken from such an unequal distribution of rewards and punishments, as could not otherwise take place under the government of a righteous God. If christians were by this tempted so to refine on the doctrine of the resurrection, as in effect to explain it away, it shows the propriety of the apostle's setting himself to prove the resurrection of christians, rather than a resurrection in general.

b *Retain.*] So κατεχετε evidently signifies. *To keep in memory* suggests a very inadequate sense.

c *Unless indeed.*] Εκτος ει μη is a very remarkable form of expression. Perhaps there may be more in it than most readers are aware. If I mistake not, it suggests the thought expressed, ver. 17. So the two first verses may be a transition; as if he had said, I preach the *same gospel* still, and I hope you will retain it; yet I have reason to fear some of you entertain notions which tend quite to enervate it.

d *Received.*] For the import of this phrase, see Gal. i. 12; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

SECT. 28.

1 COR. XV.

third day, according to the scriptures:
5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.
8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.
9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

the faith and hope of his humble followers, *he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures,*[e] which intimate that he should not see corruption in the grave. (Psal. xvi. 10.) *And* in confirmation of this great truth, I told you, *that* the same day that he rose, *he was seen* first *of Cephas*, or Peter, to whom, that he might comfort his wounded heart under its sorrows, for his late fall, he condescended to make his first appearance, excepting that to the women at the sepulchre; and *afterwards* he was seen *by* that company who were called *the twelve*[f] apostles, though several of the number were then absent. *Afterwards he appeared*, according to his repeated appointments, *to above five hundred brethren at once*[g] in Galilee, where he gave the most glorious and incontestable proof of the reality of his resurrection in the presence of this great concourse, *of whom the greater part continue* [*alive*] *until now*, and constitute a cloud of witnesses to this important truth; *but some are fallen asleep* in Jesus, and gone to dwell with him as the great Lord of life.

And you may remember I told you also, that *after this he was seen of James*, and *afterwards*, just before his ascension, *by all the apostles.*[h] *But last of all he also appeared to me, as to* an embryo, or *one born out of due time*, a poor, weak, contemptible creature, from whom nothing good was to be expected, not worthy of the least patience: how much less worthy of being marked out with such distinguishing favours! *For* I must humbly acknowledge, and I would continually bear it in my mind, that *I am the least of* all *the apostles, who am not* indeed *worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God;* on which account, considering the transports of my savage zeal, I think myself hardly deserving to be numbered amongst the meanest followers of my divine Master, and less than the least of all saints. (Eph. iii. 8.) *But by the grace of God I am what I am*, a christian, an apostle, and not inferior to any of my honoured brethren in that office; *and his grace* [*manifested*] *towards me*, in raising me to so high a dignity and so happy a state, *was not* displayed *in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all*, conscious that I could never do enough to balance the mischief I had formerly committed, or answer the obligations under which such rich and distinguishing mercy laid me. I exerted myself therefore to the utmost in my apostolical work; which should, by the way, shelter me from the contempt which some are ready to throw upon me; *yet*, to speak more properly, it was *not I, but the grace of God that was with me:* God furnished me for the work, he excited me to diligence and zeal in it; to him be the glory of all! His grace was the cause of all; and *whether therefore I, or they*, laboured most, and to whomsoever we delivered our message, whether among you or elsewhere, *so we preach, and so ye believed.* All agree in bearing our testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and ye, with all other christians, have agreed to receive it as the great foundation of our holy religion.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET it be the daily joy of our hearts to think how firm that foundation stands, and what various and convincing evidence we have, that as Christ became incarnate, visited this wretched world, and died for our sins, according to the scriptures; that as he condescended to go down into the caverns of the grave, and lie there in the cold and silent tomb, humbled in the dust of death; so also, according to the same scriptures, he was raised again on the third day. Let us be very thankful that such convincing proof was given of his resurrection, demonstrated by such infallible tokens, and repeated appearances to all the apostles; who had every opportunity the most scrupulous doubt could demand, of examining at leisure into its certainty. More than five hundred persons were witnesses to it at one time; and witnesses who survived to many future years to attest this important fact, that our faith and hope might be in God: in God, who quickeneth the dead, and who by this resurrection of Jesus his Son, hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. As we have received, so let us stand fast in this doctrine; and remember that our salvation depends on our stedfastly retaining it, and that we believe in vain, and worse than in vain, if we ever, on any considerations, make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience.

Ver. 3 4 5 1, 2

It is matter of joy and thankfulness, that St. Paul was added to this cloud of witnesses who attested the resurrec-

e *Raised the third day, according to the scriptures.*] It has been queried, where the scriptures foretell that Christ should rise from the dead on the third day? Some think there is a transposition or parenthesis; so that the meaning will be, he rose again, according to the scriptures; and this on the third day. Chand. *Of Christianity*, p. 370. and so Dr. Bullock replies, that he would have risen according to the scriptures, had it been on the fifth or tenth day. (Bull. *Vind.* p. 48.) But Mr. Jeffery, whom I follow in the paraphrase, gives what appeared to me the best solution, as it is intimated, John xi. 39. that bodies began to corrupt on the fourth day. See Jeff. *Review*, p. 127.

f *Of the twelve.*] It is certain neither Judas nor Thomas were there; and as it is observed below, James might probably be absent; but as the council of twenty-three among the Jews might be said to be assembled if the greater part were present, though the number might not be complete; so the company might be called *the twelve*, though we should suppose the fourth part to have been absent. Compare Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 26.

g *Above five hundred.*] Probably it was in Galilee, where there was such a number of disciples; though there were no more than an *hundred and twenty* at Jerusalem, when Matthias was chosen. Dr. Prideaux, Mr. Ditton, and many others, urge this as a glorious proof of the resurrection of Christ. Had it been an imposture, so many false hearts and tongues could never have acted in concert, nor would they all have kept a secret, which remorse, interest, and perhaps often torture, might urge them to divulge; especially as there had been one traitor among the *twelve*, on account of which, had they been conscious of fraud, a general suspicion of each other's secrecy must have arisen. See Prid. *Lett. to a Deist*, p. 241.

h *By all the apostles.*] The change of phrase, from that in the conclusion of the 5th verse, is very remarkable; and as a very learned, candid, and sagacious person has suggested to me, it very probably intimates, that they who were there called *the twelve*, that is, the greater part of the company who used to be so denominated, were not *all* the apostles. On which circumstance this gentleman grounds a very probable conjecture, that James might by some accident, perhaps illness, or affairs indispensably necessary, be detained from meeting his brethren, both on the day of the resurrection, and that day seventh-night, and likewise at the time when Christ appeared to the *five hundred*; and that he might, in this respect, be upon a level with them, our Lord appeared to him *alone*, after all the appearances mentioned before. And this account of the matter appears vastly more credible than that which St. Jerome quotes from the gospel of the Nazarenes, that on the death of Christ, James made a vow, that he would neither eat nor drink till he saw Christ risen from the dead: an event of which the apostles had certainly no expectation.

SECT. 28. 1 COR. XV. 10

tion of Jesus; that great apostle in whom the grace of God was so richly magnified; magnified particularly in that humility which he here expresses in so amiable a manner; calling himself the least of the apostles, and declaring that he was unworthy of the name of an apostle; and amidst all the labours and glories of this eminent station in the church, still keeping in his eyes that madness with which, in the days of his infidelity, he had wasted it. Shall we not all learn of him to say, *By the grace of God I am what I am?* Let us be solicitous that his grace bestowed upon us be not in vain; and ever bearing in mind the many sins of our unconverted state, and our great unprofitableness since we have known God, or rather been known of him, let us labour in our Lord's service with proportionable zeal; and when we have laboured to the utmost, and exerted ourselves with the greatest fidelity and resolution, let us ascribe it to that divine agency which strengthened us for all, and say again, though some should esteem it a disagreeable tautology, *Not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

SECTION XXIX.

The apostle shows the necessary connexion between the resurrection of Christ, which he had established above, and the resurrection of the dead; and urges the importance of retaining that great fundamental of christianity; in the series of his argument mentioning the surrender of the mediatorial kingdom which Christ shall make at the consummation of all things. 1 Cor. xv. 12—34.

1 Cor. xv. 12.

SECT. 29. 1 COR. XV. 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

YOU have heard, my brethren, something of the convincing evidence which attended this great and important doctrine of Christ's resurrection; *but if Christ is* thus *preached, that he was* assuredly *raised from the dead, how do some among you* presume to *say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* With what face can any who allow of Christ's resurrection pretend to deny the other, whether out of an attachment to Sadducean or philosophical prejudices? *For* it is certain that *if there is no resurrection of the dead,* if that doctrine be in the general altogether incredible, then *neither is Christ raised.*[a] *And* this would be a consequence at once the most false and the most melancholy that can be conceived; for *if Christ be not raised, then our preaching,* which pretends to take its authority from a commission after his resurrection, in a view of declaring the certainty of it, [*is*] *vain, and your faith,* founded chiefly upon the testimony which God then bore to him, [*is*] *also vain. Yea, and we* the apostles, notwithstanding all the miraculous evidences we give of the truth of our mission, *are found,* what I am sure you cannot believe we are, *false witnesses of God, because* you know that *we bore* this as our most important and solemn *testimony concerning God, that he raised up Christ, whom* nevertheless *he* indeed *did not raise up, if* the notion of a resurrection in the general be, as they teach, an absurdity, and *the dead rise not at all.* I repeat it again as a point of the highest consequence; *for if the dead are not* finally to be *raised, neither is Christ raised: And* what terrible consequences would arise from hence! Surely such as might be sufficient to strike us with horror: for *if Christ be not raised,* all *your faith* in the gospel [*is*] *vain,* and ye are without any salvation; *ye are* in that case *still in your sins,*[b] under the pressure of their unexpiated guilt; for with the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, that of the efficacy of his atonement is inseparably connected. And *then also* there would be this deplorable consequence farther attending, that *they who sleep in Christ are perished;* even all deceased christians, not excepting the most excellent of them, who have died for their religion. They have lost their life and being together on this supposition, in the cause of one who, if still among the dead, must have been an impostor and false prophet.

And this scheme, which would represent those that sleep in Christ as perished, would, I am sure, be a very terrible doctrine to us the apostles of Jesus, in such a circumstance as this: for *if* it were *in this life only* that *we have hope in Christ, we* who are exposed to such a variety of calamities and dangers for his sake, *were of all men* in the world *the most pitiable:*[c] since it is evident that amidst such evils as these, nothing could comfort and support us but the hopes of immortality; and we must be at once the vilest and the most wretched of mankind, if, while we make such pretences to them, we were indeed governed by any lower views.

But we will *now* dwell no longer on these melancholy suppositions; for we assuredly know that *Christ is* indeed *risen from the dead,*[d] [*and*] we are sure that in this his resur-

1 COR. XV. 12.

NOW if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become

a *Neither is Christ raised.*] This argument, on which the apostle dwells in so copious a manner, would appear to be of great moment, whatever the principles were by which the doctrine of the *resurrection* was assaulted. It could not be said that was in its own nature *impossible* which was accomplished in Christ; and it would prove that the hope of a *resurrection* was not, as the Gentiles represented it, *a mean and sordid hope,* since it was accomplished in the Son of God. Compare ver. 1. note a.

b *Still in your sins.*] This plainly shows how necessary it was that there should be something *more than reformation,* which was plainly, in fact, wrought in order to their being delivered from their sins; even that *atonement,* the sufficiency of which God attested by raising our great *Surety* from the grave.

c *Of all men the most pitiable:* ελεεινοτεροι.] It is quite foreign to the purpose to argue from this text, as some have done, that "if "there were no future state, virtue would make men more miserable than they would otherwise be." It is evident St. Paul here speaks, not of the case of *good men in general,* if their hopes of future happiness should after all be disappointed, but of the case of the apostles and other preachers of christianity, if amidst all their hardships and persecutions they were not supported by this hope. Destitute of this amidst the extremest sufferings, they must have been perpetually subjected to the upbraidings of their own minds for sacrificing every view of happiness in this world or another, to advance what they knew to be a pernicious falsehood. Perhaps there never were men on earth so criminal and so wretched as they must, on this supposition, have been. See the thought illustrated at large in my *Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ, &c.* Serm. ix. p. 259—262.

d *Christ is* indeed *risen, &c.*] It is a great mistake to imagine that the apostle is employed throughout this chapter in *proving the resurrection.* The proof lies in a very little room, chiefly ver. 12—19. and almost all the rest of the chapter is taken up in *illustrating, vindicating,* or *applying* it. The proof is indeed very short, but most solid and convincing—that which arose from Christ's resurrection. Now that not only proved a resurrection to be in fact *not impossible,* but, which was much more, as it proved him to be a Divine Teacher, it proved the doctrine of a *general* resurrection, which he so expressly *taught.* It was natural for so good a man also to insist on the sad consequences which would follow with

the first-fruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under *him; it is* manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise

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1 COR. XV.

rection he is *become the first-fruits of them that slept*;[e] so that it is the security of ours. *For as death* [*came*] on the whole human race *by* means of one *man*, who brought mortality on all his posterity as the consequence of that one great offence, *so likewise by* means of another *man* [*cometh*] *the resurrection of the dead*; and our happy relation to him abundantly repairs the damage we sustained by our fatal relation to the former. *For as in* 22 *Adam all are dead*, and a sentence of inevitable death is come upon us all, as descended from him; *so* we christians have a joyful persuasion for ourselves and for our brethren, that (though we are neither capable of effecting or meriting such a change) *in Christ* we *all shall also be made alive*. *But* it was fit that *every one* should be re-animated, raised, 23 and glorified *in his own order*: it was fit that *Christ*, after a very short abode in the grave, should rise as *the first-fruits*, and as such should present himself to God, and use his recovered life in his service; *and they who are Christ's* property, the whole body of those that belong to him, should be raised up a considerable time *afterwards*, and appear as a glorious harvest in full maturity, *at* the important hour of *his coming*, when his voice shall awaken and his almighty hand restore them.

And *then* [*shall*] *the end* of the world [*be*,] the grand catastrophe of all those wonder- 24 ful scenes that have held in suspense so many succeeding generations; *when he shall* publicly and solemnly *deliver up the* mediatorial *kingdom to God, even the Father*, by whose commission he has held it, and to whose glory he has always administered it: *when he shall have abolished*[f] and deposed *all principality, and all authority and power*, that has opposed itself to his government, and shall have triumphed over all the efforts which either men or devils could ever make against his ever-growing empire and dominion. *For* we know that according to the tenor of that ancient prophecy, (Psal. cx. 1.) 25 which carries with it so illustrious a reference to the Messiah and his kingdom, *he must reign till he have put all* [*his*] *enemies under his feet*; so as that they should become his footstool, and subserve that exaltation which they have endeavoured to prevent. And 26 so universal shall the triumph be, that *the* very *last enemy*, [*even*] *death, shall be* deposed and *destroyed*; that enemy which continues in some measure to hold the subjects of Christ under its dominion, even when the temptations of the world, and the malice of Satan, can hold them no longer, and when every remainder of corrupt nature and human infirmity has long since ceased in the perfect holiness of the intermediate state, and its unmingled serenity and joy.

This, I say, must necessarily be employed: *for* it is elsewhere said, *he hath put all* 27 *things under his feet*, (Psal. viii. 6.) and it must accordingly be accomplished; *but* [*it is*] *evident* enough, *that when he saith that all things were subjected* to him, *it is with the exception of him by whom all things were* thus *subjected to him*. None can surely imagine that the Son was ever to reign over the great and glorious Father of all; but on the contrary it may naturally be concluded, that he would still direct his administration to the glory of him from whom he received his kingdom. *But when* the Fa- 28 ther shall have fulfilled this promise in its utmost extent, and *all things shall be subjected to him*, so that it shall appear to every eye that he is indeed Lord of all; *then shall the Son also himself*, amidst all the glories of that triumph, be, and declare himself to *be, subject to him that subjected all things to him*,[g] by a public act in the midst of this most august assembly, giving up, as it were, his commission to preside as universal Lord in the mediatorial kingdom to him; as having answered the end for which it was given him, in the complete salvation of all his people, whom he shall then introduce into a state of the greatest nearness to God, and most intimate converse with him; *that God may be*, and that he may appear to be, *all in all*; that they all may enjoy complete and everlasting happiness, in the full communication of the divine favour to them for ever, in a world where they shall no longer need a mediator to introduce them to him.

Such are our views and hopes as christians; *else*, if it were not so, *what should they do* 29 *who are baptized* in token of their embracing the christian faith *in the room of the dead*,[h]

respect to himself and his brethren from giving up so glorious a hope; and the cordial manner in which he speaks of this is a noble internal argument, which I hope many of my readers will feel, though I have been obliged to be less copious in the paraphrase than I could have wished.

e *First-fruits of them that slept.*] It is without sufficient reason that Mr. Fleming (*Christ.* Vol. I. p. 218.) would render απαρχη, *ruler, governor*, or *commander*.—Κεκοιμημενων here is explained by κοιμηθεντες, ver. 18. and both must refer to christians, of whose resurrection alone, and not that of the wicked, he evidently speaks in this whole chapter.

f *Abolished* and deposed.] The word καταργεομαι generally signifies, "divesting a thing of some power, whether lawful or usurped, "which it formerly had, and reducing it to an incapacity of exert- "ing that energy any more." Thus it is used of Satan, Heb. ii. 14. of *death* here and ver. 26. and 2 Tim i. 10. of *temporal princes*, 1 Cor. i. 28; ii. 6. and of the *ceremonial law*, Eph. ii. 15.

g *Then shall the Son also himself be subject, &c.*] I hope I shall be forgiven, if after the best attention I could use, I have missed the true and exact sense of this most difficult text. It is surprising to find authors of such different sentiments as Witsius and Crellius, agreeing to speak of Christ as returning, as it were, to a *private* station, and being "*as one of his brethren*," when he has thus given up the kingdom. The union of the divine and human natures in the person of the great Emanuel, the incomparable virtues of his character, the glory of his actions, and the relation he bears to his people, with all the texts which assert the perpetuity of his government, prohibit our imagining that he shall ever cease to be illustriously distinguished from all others, whether men or angels, in the heavenly world, through eternal ages. To me it appears that the *kingdom* to be given up is the *rule of this lower world*, which is then to be consumed; and that it may not seem as if a province of his empire were destroyed, his administration, undertaken in avowed subservience to the scheme of redemption, (Eph. i. 10.) and completed in the resurrection of all his people, shall close in a *decent* and *honourable* manner; God will declare the ends of it fully answered, and the whole body of his people shall be introduced by him into a state of more intimate approach to and communion with God, than had been known by the spirits of the blessed in their separate state.

h *Who are baptized in the room of the dead.*] It would be almost endless to enumerate, and much more to canvass, all the interpretations which have been given of this obscure and ambiguous phrase, υπερ των νεκρων. I think that of Sir Richard Ellys, which I have given in the paraphrase, much preferable to any other. See *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 137, &c. As for other interpretations, there is no reason to believe that the superstitious custom mentioned by Epiphanius, of baptizing a living person, as representing one who

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who are just fallen in the cause of Christ, but are yet supported by a succession of new converts, who immediately offer themselves to fill up their places, as ranks of soldiers that advance to the combat in the room of their companions, who have just been slain in their sight? *If* the doctrine I oppose be true, and *the dead are not raised at all, why are they nevertheless* thus *baptized in the room of the dead*, as cheerfully ready, at the peril of their lives, to keep up the cause of Jesus in the world? *And* indeed, how could my conduct be accounted for in any other light, but by supposing that we act with a steady and governing view to this great principle and this glorious hope? *Why* otherwise *are we every hour exposed to* so much *danger* in the service of the Master from whom it is evident we have no secular rewards to expect? Yet, my brethren, *I* do upon this solemn occasion *protest* and even swear *to you*, by the greatest of all asseverations, by our hopes and our joys as christians, *by our rejoicing*[i] and confidence common to us all, and *which I* with you *have in Christ Jesus our Lord;* I protest, I say, by this, that *I daily die;* that is, that I am every day surrounded, as it were, with death in its most terrible forms, and bear so many evils, that every hour of my life seems a new martyrdom. One great instance of this has so lately happened, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. *If,* to speak *after the manner of men*, or to use a common proverbial phrase, *I have*, like a slave exposed upon a public theatre, *fought with* wild *beasts at Ephesus*,[k] having been assaulted with the most savage fury by a tumultuous multitude there, *what advantage have I* gained by such a combat, if my hopes may not be allowed to open into immortality? On the contrary, *if the dead rise not* at all, the Epicurean maxim might seem to be justified, "Let us make the best of this short life, which is the whole period of our being: and "giving up those sublime sentiments and pursuits which belong not to creatures of so short "and low an existence, *let us eat and drink, since we* are to *die*, as it were, *to-morrow*[l] "or the next day: for so little is the difference between one period of such a life and "another, that it is scarce worth while to make the distinction."

Be not deceived, brethren, but be upon your guard against such pernicious maxims and reasonings as these; and if you value either faith or a good conscience, do not converse familiarly with those that teach them; for, as the poet Menander well expresses it, *Good manners are debauched by talk profane.*[m] *Awake*, therefore, *as becomes righteous* and good *men*,[n] from the intoxications of such wild and delusive dreams as these; *and sin not* in supporting or countenancing doctrines so subversive of the christian faith and hope; *for some are* still *ignorant of God*, and with the abused light of christianity know less of him than well-improved reason might teach them. *I say* [*this*] *to your shame*, considering how much you boast of your knowledge, which, in this plain and important branch of it, appears so wretchedly deficient; while you cultivate so many vain subtilties, which tend rather to corrupt than to exalt and perfect your minds.

not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12—16 20 21—23

WELL may we rejoice to see the doctrine of our own resurrection so closely connected in the sacred writings, and especially in this excellent discourse of St. Paul, with that of our blessed Redeemer, as that they should be declared to stand or to fall together. For Christ is assuredly risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. He hath repaired, to all his spiritual seed, the damage that Adam brought upon his descendants; yea, he is become to them the Author of a far nobler life than the posterity of Adam lost by him.

24—26

Let us meditate with unutterable joy on the exaltation of our glorified Head, of our gracious Sovereign, who has conquered death himself, and will make us partakers of his victory. He hath received from his Father glory, honour, and dominion; and he shall reign till his conquest be universal and complete, and till death be not only

had died unbaptized, is here referred to; it is more likely to have risen from a mistake of this passage, than to have been so early prevalent. Mr. Cradock's supposing it to allude to washing dead bodies, neither suits the grammar, nor really makes any significant sense. Nor is there any need of supposing that νεκρων is put for νεκρους, and refers to their being baptized into the religion of Jesus, who, on the adversary's hypothesis, is *still dead*. The senses which Crellius and Bishop Atterbury maintain, differ so little from each other and that we have given, that it may suffice to say, that each expresses but a part of the sense, and loses something of the spirit which we apprehend in these words.

i *Our rejoicing.*] Our received copies read it, υμετερον, *your rejoicing;* but the reading which I follow seems so much more natural and easy, that one can scarce forbear believing it authentic. Yet it may be interpreted into a very pertinent sense: "I protest by "*your* joys, which I do so cordially take part in, that I may call "them my own."

k *Fought with* wild *beasts at Ephesus.*] The stories which Nicephorus (*lib.* ii. *cap.* 25.) and Theodoret give us, of an encounter which St. Paul had with *wild beasts* on the theatre at Ephesus, (see Witsii *Mel. Vit. Paul. cap.* viii. § 23, &c.) have been so far regarded by Dr. Whitby, that he contends for the literal interpretation of this passage; in favour of which it is also urged, that had he spoken of *brutal men*, he would rather have mentioned the assault that was made upon him at Lystra, where he was stoned, and supposed to be dead. But the danger of being pulled to pieces might be greater at Ephesus; it had happened very lately, and as the scene was much nearer Corinth, it might be more natural for him to mention it here. The silence of St. Luke in his history, as to so memorable an event as a combat with *beasts* would have been, and St. Paul's omitting it in the large catalogue of his sufferings, (2 Cor. xi. 23.) together with his known privilege as a Roman citizen, which would probably, as to be sure it should legally, have protected him from such an insult, do all (as Mr. Cradock and others have observed) favour the figurative interpretation. And the expression, κατα ανθρωπον, *after the manner of men*, or, *humanly speaking*, has a propriety on this hypothesis which it cannot have on the other, and seems to be quite decisive.

l *Let us eat, &c.*] This is the great argument urged to prove that by the resurrection of the dead St. Paul means a *future state*. But the true solution seems to be, that he writes all along upon a supposition, that if such proof as he had produced of Christ's resurrection were not to be depended upon, we could have no certainty at all with respect to *any future* existence. And I must declare that it seems to me, that the natural arguments of the immortality of the soul, and future retributions, do appear to carry with them great probability, notwithstanding all that Mr. Hallet has offered to invalidate them. Yet the degree of evidence is by no means comparable to that which, admitting the truth of the facts alleged, the Corinthians must have had of Christ's resurrection, with which ours has so necessary a connexion. And consequently, had these proofs been given up, what might have been pleaded in favour of the other, would probably have made very little impression.

m *Good manners are debauched.*] The original words of Menander are an iambic verse: I chose therefore to translate them thus, and it is very agreeable to the Greek in this connexion, which seems to determine ομιλιαι κακαι to *profane discourses*.

n *Awake, as becomes righteous men.*] As some read for δικαιως, δικαιοι, which gives rather a more forcible sense, I chose this rendering, which is a kind of medium between the two readings.

stripped of its trophies, but rendered subservient to his triumphs; shall reign, till all his purposes for his Father's glory and his own be finally accomplished SECT. 29.

But oh, who can express the joy and glory of that day when Christ shall give up the kingdom to the Father, and present unto him all its faithful subjects transformed into his own image! a beautiful and splendid church indeed, for ever to be the object of the divine complacence, for ever to dwell in the divine presence, in a state of the greatest nearness to God, who shall then be all in all. Well may the expectation of this illustrious period cheer the christian under his greatest extremities, and make him of all men the most happy, when otherwise, on account of his sufferings in the flesh, he might seem of all men the most miserable. Well may this his rejoicing in Christ Jesus that sacred oath which this persecuted and distressed apostle, with so sublime a spirit, here uses, encourage him to go on, though he be daily dying; though he were daily to encounter the most savage of mankind, and death itself in its most dreadful forms. Well may this knowledge of God, of his gracious purposes, and of his exalted Son, awaken us to righteousness; well may it deliver us from the bondage of sin. 1 COR. XV. 28 29 31 32, 34

Let us retain these noble principles of doctrine and action, and guard against those evil communications, those sceptical and licentious notions, which would corrupt our spirits, which would enervate every generous spark which the gospel kindles up into a flame, and by bounding our views within the narrow circle of mortal life, would degrade us from the anticipations of angelic felicity to the pursuits of brutal gratification. 33

SECTION XXX.

The apostle answers objections against the resurrection, drawn from our not being able to conceive of the particular manner in which it shall be effected; and concludes with urging it as a noble incentive to the greatest steadiness and zeal in religion. 1 Cor. xv. 35, *to the end.*

1 COR. XV. 35.

1 COR. XV. 35.

BUT some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

I HAVE thus endeavoured to confirm your faith and establish your hope in the great and glorious doctrine of a resurrection; *but some* [*one*] *will perhaps* be ready petulantly to object and *say*, *How are the dead raised up*, when their bodies are quite dissolved, and the particles of which they consisted scattered abroad, and perhaps become parts of other bodies? *and*, if they are raised, *with what* [*kind of*] *bodies do they come* out of their graves, and what alteration is made in their constitution and organization, to fit them for a future life in so many respects different to this? SECT. 30. 1 COR. XV. 35

36 *Thou* fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

[*Thou*] *thoughtless creature*, who perhaps prides thyself in the sagacity of this objection, as if it were some mighty effort of penetration, how easily mightst thou find an answer to it from what passes every day in the works of nature? *That seed which thou sowest* in thy field *is not quickened* to new life and verdure, *except it* appear to *die*;[a] before it springs up to the future vegetable, whatever it be, it is macerated, decayed, and at length consumed in the earth. 36

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:

And [*as for*] *that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body which shall be* produced from that seed which is committed to the ground, *but bare grain, perhaps of wheat, or of any other* kind of [*grain,*] in which there is no appearance of root or of stalk, of blade or of ear. 37

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

But God, in the course of his natural operations, by certain laws of vegetation, with which thou art entirely unacquainted, *gives it a body as he pleases*, and such a variety of parts as he hath thought fit to determine for that particular species, *and to each of the seeds its own* proper *body*;[b] not only a body of the same sort, but that which, by virtue of some connexion it had with this or that individual grain, may properly be called its own, though in its form much different and much more beautiful. 38

39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.

There is an immense variety in the works of God, even in those which fall under the inspection of our senses, feeble and limited as they are, while we dwell in flesh and blood. *All flesh*, you know, [*is*] *not the same* kind of *flesh, but the flesh of men, and of cattle,*[c] *of fishes, and of fowls, is different each from the other*, in its form, qualities, and manner of being subsisted. 39

40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.

[*There are*] *also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial and the terrestrial are* apparently *different*, and the brightest lustre the latter can have, is but a faint reflection of what is received from the former. 40

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from *another* star in glory.

And even in the glory of the celestial bodies there is also a wonderful variety: *There is one* superior and incomparable *glory of the sun*, which often shines with a lustre scarce to be endured; *and another* reflected and milder *glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars*, which, as they appear to us, are far inferior to either of the two great luminaries. *And* again, [*one*] *star differeth from* [*another*] *star in glory*,[d] according to their respective magnitudes, in reference to which they are ranged by astronomers under different classes. 41

42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is

So [*shall be*] *also the resurrection of the* pious *dead*:[e] another kind of glory shall ap- 42

a *Except it die.*] To this it hath been objected, "that if the "seed die, it never bears fruit." But it is certain that the seed in general does consume away in the ground, though a little *germen* or bud which makes a part of it springs up into new life, and is fed by the death and corruption of the rest. So that these wise philosophers of our own talk just as foolishly as the *Corinthian freethinkers*, whom they vindicate. See John xii. 24.

b *Its own* proper *body.*] The apostle seems more directly to speak of *that* as its proper body, which is peculiar to that species of grain; yet undoubtedly each ear has a peculiar reference to one individual as its proper seed, in such a manner as another of the same species has not; and what follows plainly suits such a view.—God is said to *give it this body as he pleases*, because we know not how it is produced; and the apostle's leading thought is, "That it is "absurd to argue against a resurrection, on a principle which is "so palpably false as that must be, which supposes us to under-"stand all the process of the divine works."

c *Cattle.*] So κτηνων signifies; but it seems to be put for *beasts* in general.

d *And one star differeth, &c.*] It is in the original γαρ, that is, *for*; but I conclude that *particle* is here used only as a *copulative*; else we must suppose the apostle to argue more philosophically than he probably intended, and to assert that the sun and moon were *stars*. He plainly speaks of the lustre which these celestial luminaries exhibit to us, not of what they have in themselves, without any regard to their aspects on us.

e *The resurrection of the* pious *dead.*] Of them it is evident the apostle here speaks, and not of the *dead* in general. Compare ver.

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pear than human nature has known in its purest state, in any beauty of form or ornaments of dress. There shall indeed, as I intimated but now, be some difference in the degree of that glory, correspondent to the different excellences in the characters of good men, on whom it is to pass: but all shall experience a most illustrious and happy change; so that it may be said concerning the body of them all in general, *It is sown* or committed, like seed
42 to the ground, *in corruption*, just ready to putrefy, and through various forms of putrefaction to be reduced to the dust: but *it is raised in incorruption*, so that no accident or disorder whatsoever shall be able to dissolve it again, or to threaten it in the least degree.
43 *It is sown in dishonour*, in a poor, contemptible state, and under a kind of infamy put upon it by the execution of God's first sentence against sin: but *it is raised in glory*,[f] every part and trace of the curse being abolished, and itself being formed in such a manner as to make it appear that the King of heaven delights to honour the happy spirit on which he bestows such a dress. *It is sown in weakness*, absolutely incapable of any even the lowest degree of action or sensation, and deprived of those limited abilities which it possessed in this its mortal life: but *it is raised in power*, endowed with almost angelic degrees of
44 strength, vigour, and activity. *It is sown an animal body*, formed to the purposes of animal life in this present world; but *it is raised a spiritual body*, formed to a noble superiority to the mean gratifications of this imperfect state, and fitted to be the instrument of the soul, in the most exalted services of the spiritual and divine life. For it is certain, that as *there is an animal body*, with which we are now by daily *and* frequently by unhappy experience acquainted, so *there is* also *a spiritual body:* God can exalt and refine matter to a degree of purity and excellence to us unknown; and there are many bodies now ex-
45 isting so pure and active, as that in comparison they may be called spirits. *And so it is written* with respect to the former, (Gen. ii. 7.) that *the first man Adam*, when God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, *was made a living soul*;[g] so that even in the original state of rectitude and felicity in which man was created, he was made capable of, and fitted to, an animal life here upon earth: whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, who by virtue of the influence he has upon all his seed, as their spiritual Head and great federal Representative, may well be called *the* second or *latter Adam*, [*is*] *for an enlivening spirit*[h] to those who are united to him, and will not only purify their souls by the operation of his
46 Spirit communicated to them, but at last spiritualize their very bodies. *Nevertheless, the spiritual* Adam [*was*] *not first, but the animal, and afterward the spiritual;* and as the first Adam existed before Christ was sent to become our Saviour, so must we first wear that animal body which we derive from the one, before we put on that spiritual body which
47 we derive from the other. *The first man* [*was*] *from the earth*, and so *earthy:* he was created out of the dust of the earth, and his body was only a mass of animated clay, in reference to which it was said, Dust thou art, (Gen. iii. 19.) *the second man*, of whom we speak, [*is*] *the Lord from heaven:* he came originally from the heavenly world, to which he is returned; and whatever of earth there was in the composition of the body he condescended to wear, it is now completely purified and refined into the most glorious form.
48 And *such as the earthy* [*was, are*] *they also that are earthy:* they all descended from him, and have no higher original, are mean, mortal, corruptible creatures; *and such as the heavenly* [*is, are*] *they also that are heavenly:* they who are, as it were, born of Christ by the regenerating influences of his Spirit, and therefore are to live with him in
49 heaven, shall at last have such glorious bodies as he hath. *And* it is delightful beyond all expression, to think of it with self-application, that *as we* in particular *have borne* and do now bear *the image of the earthy;* as assuredly as we are now sinful, afflicted, and mortal men, like the first Adam; so surely *shall we also bear the image of the heavenly;* so surely shall we be brought to resemble Christ in purity, glory, and immortality.
50 *But* when I spake of bearing the image of the earthy Adam in mortality, I would not be understood as asserting that every one of the descendants of Adam shall, in fact, go through these pangs of death, and that dissolution in the grave, which Adam has experienced. *This I say, brethren*, I affirm it as a constant and important truth, *that flesh and blood*, such weak and crazy systems of it as those in which we now lodge, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth* a body impregnated with the seeds of *corruption inherit incorruption:* it is utterly unfit for the pure, ethereal regions of the blessed,
51 and indeed incapable of subsisting in them. This is universally true; yet, *behold! I tell you a mystery*, that is, a doctrine hitherto unknown, and which you cannot now be able fully to comprehend: for *we* christians *shall not all sleep*, shall not all submit to the stroke of death, so that our bodies should all lie mouldering in the grave, which is their general

sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written. The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit, that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all

23, 43, 49, and 57. with 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. and 54. St. Paul (Phil. iii. 11.) and our Lord (Matt. xxii. 30; Luke xx. 35.) mean the *same* thing by the resurrection.

f *It is raised in glory.*] Some think this refers to the *garment of light* which the body shall put on at the resurrection; on which Dr. Whitby has a remarkable note here, (compare Matt. xvii. 2; Acts ix. 3; Rev. i. 14, 15; Dan. xii. 3; Wisd. iii. 7; Matt. xiii. 43; and Mark ix. 3.) and which he thinks remarkably to illustrate the matter *ex adversa*.

g *Made a living soul.*] This is a quotation from Moses; and there seems to be a peculiar emphasis in the original, which I know not how to preserve in the translation, in the reference of ψυχη to ψυχικον, in the former verse, as distinguished from πνευματικον · and refers to such a difference between ψυχη, *the animal soul*, and πνευμα, the *rational spirit*, as is more clearly expressed, (1 Thess. v. 23.) and is also very agreeable to the import of נפש חיה, the word which Moses uses.

h *The second—an enlivening spirit.*] This is not a quotation from scripture, as some have thought, but what the apostle adds on occasion of the quotation brought above; as if he had said, Christ is the last Adam, as an illustrious antitype of the first, (Rom. v. 14.) and he hath in himself a *spirit*, with which he quickeneth whom he pleases, and in what degree he pleases. (John i. 4; and ver. 21, 26.) The words *living* and *enlivening* have such a correspondence to each other, as ζωσαν and ζωοποιουν. I therefore preferred the latter of them to *quickening*, though the sense be entirely the same.

sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

doom; *but we shall all*, the living as well as the dead, at the appearance of Christ to the final judgment, *be changed* in a most glorious and happy manner into the image of our descending Lord. And this change, great and illustrious as it is, the divine power shall effect in less time than we have been speaking of it: for it shall pass *in a moment*, in an imperceptible point of time, and even *in the twinkling of an eye*, just *at* the instant when *the last trumpet* is blown by the divine command, to awaken all the millions of saints who are sleeping in the dust: *for the trumpet shall* then *sound*, the voice of the archangel, and attending celestial legions, shall fill the whole earth and heaven with an astonishing noise, *and the dead shall* immediately, as upon its summons, *be raised incorruptible, and we*, that is, those of us christians who are living, *shall be changed*,[i] as Enoch and Elijah were in the day of their translation: that body which but a moment before appeared just as ours now do, shall, quick as thought, be transformed into an image of that worn by our triumphant Lord, and fitted for all the most active services, and all the purest sensations and delights, of the celestial state. *For* in order to that, as I have just observed, *it is necessary that this corruptible put on incorruption, and* that *this mortal put on immortality*, so as to be no longer subject to diseases or death. *But* when this glorious and long-expected event shall be accomplished, *when this corruptible* part of our frame *shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall the saying be brought to pass which is written*, (Isa. xxv. 8.) *Death is swallowed up in victory*, and perfectly subdued and destroyed, and so happy a state introduced, that it would not be known that death had ever had any place or power among Christ's subjects at all: And in the assured view of this, may the christian, even now, with the greatest pleasure, take up his song of triumph: *Where* [*is*] *thy* pointed and destructive *sting, O death? Where* [*is*] *thy victory, O grave?*[k] How little hurt canst thou do me! For how little a while shalt thou be able to triumph over me! *The* very *sting* and torture *of death*, that which arms it with its greatest terrors, [*is*] the consideration of its being the punishment of *sin*, and consequently its foreboding future misery as the effect of the divine displeasure: *and the power of sin*, that which constitutes its malignity, and gives it these killing weapons, [*is*,] that it is a transgression of *the* divine *law: But thanks* [*be*] *to God, who* in his infinite mercy hath taken away the sting and terror of death, and *giveth us* the prospects and *the* joys of a complete *victory* over it, by the displays of his pardoning grace, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. May we ever remain under those grateful impressions that suit so important an obligation!

SECT. 30.

1 COR XV. 52

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave where *is* thy victory?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye fixed on this as the great foundation of your souls, and *immoveable* in your regards to it, though strongly borne and pressed upon by a variety of temptations and dangers; be *abounding always in the work of the Lord*, in every service you are capable of performing, which may be acceptable to this your great and compassionate Redeemer; as well *knowing that your labour in the* service of such a *Lord is not*, on the whole, *in vain*, but that whatsoever you may at present suffer for his sake, you shall receive a most glorious reward in that happy day of the resurrection concerning which I have been speaking so largely.

58

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from this incomparable discourse of the apostle, to curb that vain curiosity which is so ready in matters of divine revelation to break out into an unbecoming petulance; and where we are sure that God declares the thing, let us leave to him to overcome every difficulty that may seem to attend the manner in which it shall be effected. Nothing may be more useful in order to the conquering such a weakness, than to observe the operations of God in the works of nature, where he gives to every seed, whether animal or vegetable, such a body as shall please him. Each is proper for its sphere, and beautiful in its connexion and order, though the degree of their glory be different. And thus all the diversity of glory which shall at last be apparent among the children of God, even the children of the resurrection, shall serve to illustrate the divine wisdom, and goodness, and faithfulness. Ver. 35, 38, 39, 40

The alterations made in every instance will indeed be wonderful, when this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible puts on incorruption. Let us for ever adore the divine goodness, that when, by our relation to the first Adam, we were under a sentence of condemnation and death, he was pleased in his infinite mercy to appoint that we should stand related to Christ, as the second Adam, in so happy a bond, that by him we might recover what we had lost in the former; yea, and far more: so as that we have borne the image of the earthly, we might as surely bear the image of the heavenly. O let us earnestly aspire after this blessedness; and remember that our bearing the image of his holiness is inseparably connected with the hope of so glorious a privilege! 53, 47, &c. 49

Let us endeavour, therefore, by cultivating holiness in all its branches, to maintain this hope in all its spirit and energy; longing for that glorious day when, in the utmost extent of the prophetic expression, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and millions of voices, after the long silence of the grave, shall burst out at once into that triumphant song, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? And when we see death disarmed, 54, 55, 56

i *We*, that is, those of us christians who are living, *shall be changed.*] As the phrase will admit of the looser sense the paraphrase gives, I cannot allow of the argument drawn from hence, to prove either that the apostle expected he should live till Christ appeared to judgment, or that he should be raised from the dead, and *continue upon earth* some time before that great event happened; Though I confess the argument which Mr. Fleming draws from hence, in favour of the last of these opinions, is very plausible. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 15.

k *Where is thy sting? &c.*] The original has a kind of poetical turn which seems in some measure to suit the sublimity of the sentiment; for the first of the clauses is an *ionic*, and the second a *trochaic verse*, Πυ σου, θανατε, το κεντρον; πυ σου, αδη, το νικος; and Mr. Pope has only transposed them to make them, as they stand in our version, the conclusion of one of his stanzas; *O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?* It is generally thought that these words are borrowed from Hos. xiii. 10, 14. which we render, "*O death, I will be thy plague, &c.*" and some urge that יפ has been read for יפ; but I do not see there is any certain evidence that the apostle intended any quotation at all.

SECT. 30. 1 COR. XV. and the terrors of the law silenced, let us bless God for Jesus Christ, by whom the precepts of the law were perfectly fulfilled and its penalty endured; that so we might not only be delivered from the curse, but called to inherit the blessing. Let it be considered as an engagement to universal obedience; and in the assurance that whatever other labours may be frustrated, those in the Lord shall never be vain, let gratitude and interest concur to render us stedfast, immoveable, and continually active in his service.

SECTION XXXI.

The apostle gives some advices relating to the proposed collection for the poor saints in Judea. 1 Cor. xvi. 1—12.

1 Cor. xvi. 1.

SECT. 31. 1 COR. XVI. BEFORE I conclude this Epistle, I must add a word or two *concerning the collection* which you propose making *for the* poor *saints* which are in Judea, who are in such great straits both on account of the famine and the persecution to which they are exposed. And here I would only say this; *as I have given it in charge to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye* proceed: for nothing occurs to my thoughts at present, which can be more
2 subservient to that generous and good design. When you hold your christian assemblies *on the first day of the week,*[a] in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord, which has made that day sacred amongst us, *let every one of you lay something by, in proportion to the degree in which,* by the divine blessing, *he hath been prospered* in his affairs; and let him bring it with him to the place where you meet for your public worship; then *treasuring it up*[b] in the common stock, *that so* it may be ready in one sum, and *there may be no* necessity of making any particular *collections when I come.* This will save us some trouble, at a time when we shall necessarily have so much important business on our hands; and when a little is added to the stock weekly, it may rise, by almost imperceptible degrees, to a greater sum than could perhaps be expected if the whole were to be deposited
3 at once. *But when I am arrived* at Corinth, *whomsoever ye shall* appoint and *recommend by* your *letters,* signed by the congregation or its proper representatives, *them will I send to carry your favour to Jerusalem,* and shall cheerfully intrust them to de-
4 liver it with their own hands to the poor christians there. *And if it be* thought *convenient that I should also go* up thither myself on this occasion, *they shall go with me;* that every thing may be conducted in the most open and honourable manner, and that your messengers may witness for me, that none of the money has been employed to any purposes whatsoever different from those for which it was given.
5 This I hope, will quickly be despatched; *for I will,* if Providence permit, *come to you, when I have passed through Macedonia; and I am just upon my journey through*
6 *Macedonia;*[c] *And* then *perhaps may continue a while* with you, *and* even *spend the winter among you; that* so, when I have made you as long a visit as my affairs will admit, *you may bring me forward on my journey* to Jerusalem, or *whithersoever* else *I* shall *go,*[d] or through whatever parts I may pass to it; for that is a circumstance about which I am not yet determined, and in which I refer myself to the future direction of Providence.
7 I speak of my coming as at some distance; *for* though from these maritime parts I might easily come to you by sea, and so travel northward, when I have despatched my business at Corinth; *I will not now see you* in this manner, *in my way; but hope* the little delay which this scheme may occasion will be made up to your satisfaction: for I fully purpose *to spend some time with you, if the Lord permit;* which the necessities of the churches
8 of Macedonia will not at present give me leave to do. *But I shall continue* here *at Ephesus till* about *Pentecost,*[e] reserving the remainder of the summer for my tour through
9 Macedonia and the neighbouring parts. In the mean time, though I have spent so many months here, I am willing to make my stay as long as with any tolerable convenience I can; *for a great and effectual door* of usefulness *is opened to me* under my apostolical character, in this populous and celebrated city, *and* [*there are*] *many opposers* who may perhaps take the advantage of my absence to injure this new-planted church, on which I have bestowed so much labour, and for the interest of which I have the tenderest concern.[f]
10 *But if,* in the mean time, my beloved friend and brother *Timothy* should *come* to you,

1 COR. XVI. 1.
NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first *day* of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3 And when I come, whomsoever you shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

7 For I will not see you now by the way: but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be

a *On the first day of the week.*] So κατα μιαν σαββατων signifies. Compare Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1. with Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2.

b *Treasuring it up: εκαστος παρ' εαυτω τιθεις, θησαυριζων.*] We render it, *let every one of you lay by him in store.* But the following words show that it was to be put into a common stock. The argument drawn from hence for the religious observation of the first day of the week in these primitive churches of Corinth and Galatia, is too obvious to need any farther illustration, and yet too important to be passed by in an entire silence.

c *I am just upon my journey through Macedonia.*] Thus I think we may justly render Μακεδονιαν γαρ διερχομαι. Macedonia was not the direct way from Ephesus to Corinth. It seems by his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, written a few months after this, that he was either in Macedonia or on his way thither, (compare 2 Cor. i. 16.) from whence it appears that he had a secret purpose of seeing Corinth in his way to as well as from Macedonia; but he does not express this purpose here, so that we know not how it was signified to them, as from the text last mentioned it seems that it was.

d *Whithersoever* else *I go.*] In the forecited text, Judea is mentioned; but St. Paul does not seem to have fixed his scheme so particularly, as yet.

e *I shall continue at Ephesus till Pentecost.*] I look upon this as a very plain intimation that he was now at Ephesus; and consequently, that the inscription added at the end of this Epistle, which tells us *it was written from Philippi,* is very far from being authentic; and I hope it will be remembered, that no credit is to be given to any of these additions, which have been very presumptuously made, and I think very imprudently retained.

f *A great and effectual door is opened, &c.*] Some think that here is an allusion to the *door of the Census,* from whence chariots were let out when the races were to begin; and that the word ανθικειμενοι, which I render, *opposers,* signifies the same with *antagonists,* with whom the apostle was *to contend as in a course.* (Acts xix. 20, &c.) This opposition rendered his presence more necessary to preserve those that were already converted, and to increase the number, if God should bless his ministry. Accordingly, a celebrated church was planted at Ephesus; and so far as we can learn from the tenor of his Epistle to it, there was less to correct and reprove among them, than in most of the other churches to which he wrote.

with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

see that he be with you without fear of any unkind usage, or of any attempt to set him up as the head of a party, as in some instances you have been ready to do by others; *for* as *he* is a man of a very tender and affectionate, so he is likewise of a very candid and humble, spirit, and he *laboureth in the work of the Lord* Jesus Christ with great sincerity and zeal, *as I also* [*do*:] and we are in all respects so much in the same sentiments, that I am well assured the things which would grieve me in your conduct, would be equally disagreeable to him. And *therefore*, though he be yet but a young man, (1 Tim. iv. 12.) *let no man* *despise* or make light of *him; but*, on the contrary, *bring him forward on his journey in peace*, and do all that you can to make it commodious and agreeable to him; *that* so *he may come to me* at Ephesus as soon as possible: *for I expect him* here *with the* other *brethren*,[g] who are now the companions of his journey, and who are all dear to me in the bonds of christian love.

SECT. 31. 1 COR. XVI. 10 11

11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

But *as for* [*our*] *brother Apollos*, who is so well known to you, and for whom many of you have so high a regard, I am sorry to tell you that you are not at present to expect a visit from him. *I was* indeed *very importunate with him to come to you with* Timothy and *the* other *brethren;* as I have an entire confidence both in his friendship and prudence, and hoped that whatever improper use has been made of his name in opposition to mine, (compare chap. i. 12; iii. 4—6.) his presence among you might have been useful, just at this crisis. *Nevertheless, he was by no means willing to come now*, lest any advantage should be taken from that circumstance to inflame those divisions he would gladly do his utmost to allay: *but he will come when he shall have a convenient opportunity;* and you may assure yourselves that he retains a most cordial affection for you, and tender solicitude for your peace and prosperity. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

Let ministers, from the example of the apostle, learn to be ready to promote charitable collections for the relief of poor christians: and let them frequently exhort their hearers to do good and to communicate; reminding them, that their contributions ought to bear a proportion to the degree in which God has been pleased to prosper them.—We see an evident reference to the stated assemblies of the church on the first day of the week in this early age; and it is a proper duty of that day to devise and execute liberal things, according to our respective abilities. Ver. 1 2

The prudent caution of St. Paul as to the management of pecuniary affairs, is worthy the attention of the ministers of the gospel; and may teach them to take care, not only that they satisfy their own consciences in the fidelity of their transactions, but also that they provide things honest in the sight of all men. The apostle's courage in making the opposition he met with at Ephesus a reason for his continuance there, may instruct us not to study our own ease in the choice of our abode, but rather to prefer those circumstances, however disagreeable in themselves, wherein we may be providentially led to do most for the advancement of religion in the world. 3, 4 8

His care that his young friend Timothy might be as easy as possible, constitutes likewise a very amiable part of his character, and suggests, in a manner well worthy of notice, how careful private christians should be that they do not terrify and distress the minds of those who are entering on the ministerial office. A faithful disposition to labour in the work of the Lord ought to command respect; yet sometimes, as in the instance of Apollos, even that diligence may be so liable to misrepresentation, that it may be the wisdom of ministers to absent themselves from places where they have many to caress and admire them. On the whole, the great business of life is to glorify God in doing our best for promoting the happiness of mankind; and no self-denial ought to seem hard to us, while we keep that glorious end in view. 10, 11 12

SECTION XXXII.

The apostle concludes with some particular salutations and directions; with general exhortations to courage and love, a solemn benediction to true christians, and an awful denunciation against those that were destitute of love to Christ. 1 Cor. xvi. 13, *to the end.*

1 Cor. xvi. 13.

WATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

1 COR. XVI. 13.

NOW, my brethren, to conclude all, suffer a word of the most affectionate exhortation. Remember the situation in which you are, and with how many formidable enemies you are surrounded, and *be watchful* against all their assaults; *stand fast in the* profession of the christian *faith; acquit yourselves* not *like* children, but as *men* of knowledge and fortitude; and *be strong*,[a] in a dependence on the best supports while you make that your constant care. And that you may not mistake this exhortation as breathing any thing of a contentious spirit, or fitted only for persons in military life, I would subjoin this necessary caution; *let all your affairs be transacted in* mutual *love*, and under the influence of that noble principle of unfeigned benevolence which I have been so largely describing and recommending in the former part of this Epistle. (See chap. xiii.) SECT. 32. 1 COR. XVI. 14

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints)

And I farther *beseech you*, my *brethren*, that forasmuch *as ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia*, he and they being among the first that were converted to christianity in all your country, ye pay a proper regard to them; *and* so much the rather, *as they have set themselves* with peculiar resolution and care, according to the rank in which Providence has placed them, and the abilities which God hath 15

g *I expect him* here *with the brethren.*] The original words are something ambiguous; but I have taken the sense which seemed most natural. Accordingly I think it probable that he came to Ephesus before St. Paul was driven out of it by the tumult; and that the apostle being obliged to leave that city in so abrupt a manner, desired Timothy to stay awhile after him, to settle the affairs of that important church more completely than he had an opportunity of doing it. 1 Tim. i. 3.

a *Stand fast—acquit yourselves like men; be strong.*] There is no need of seeking a different sense of each word. If there be any dif-

SECT. 32. 1 COR. XVI.

given them, *to* the labour and charge of *ministering to the saints*.[b] Now I would by all means inculcate it upon you, *that you* should in your respective ranks and circumstances of life *subject yourselves to such, and* not only pay them all due personal regard, but act as you have opportunity, in harmony with them; and that under their influence you should do your utmost for the good of your christian brethren. And thus I would have
16 you behave *to every associate in that* good *work and labour* in which they are engaged; especially to those who are honoured with the ministerial office.

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.

17 *I* could not but *rejoice* greatly *at the arrival* and presence *of* that worthy person I have just mentioned, that is, *Stephanas, and* of *Fortunatus*[c] *and Achaicus*, who accompanied him; *because they filled up your deficiency* with respect to me, and gave me by their converse and friendly offices that consolation which I might justly have expected from you all, had I enjoyed an opportunity of conversing with you, and about which I could, for
18 your own sakes, wish that some of you had been more solicitous. *For they refreshed my spirit* greatly by their obliging behaviour *and* edifying conversation; as I doubt not but they have often refreshed *yours* by their ministrations among you. *Therefore* I must again urge it upon you, that you *pay all proper regards to such*, and treat them on every occasion with such respect and affection as so worthy a character well deserves.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

19 I must now tell you, that *the churches of* the provincial *Asia*, which lie about Ephesus, and with whom I have frequent opportunities of corresponding, *salute you* with all christian affection; heartily wishing you peace and prosperity. Your good friends *Aquila and Priscilla*,[d] who have made so long an abode among you, and are now providentially brought hither, *most affectionately salute you in the* bowels of our common *Lord*. And *with* these tokens of respect receive those of *the church in their house*, as you know their
20 family is happy in a large number of christian members. But I will not enter into a more particular detail of names; for your society is so celebrated, and esteemed of so great importance to the christian interest, that I may truly say that *all the brethren salute you*. Entertain therefore that affection for each other, which those that are almost strangers bear to you, and *salute one another with an holy kiss*; but let it be as cordially sincere as I doubt not but it will be decent.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

21 I have hitherto used the assistance of a friend to write what I dictated to him; but in order to assure you that this Epistle is genuine, I here add *the salutation of* [*me*] *Paul*, your well-known minister and father in the gospel, *with my own hand*; most cordially
22 wishing you every blessing, both temporal and spiritual. And let me here add, (that being thus written with my own pen, it may have the greater weight:) *If* there be *any man* amongst you, or elsewhere, who under the specious forms of christianity *loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ* in sincerity, but maintains a secret alienation of heart from him while he calls himself his servant, preferring any interest of his own to that of his Divine Master; *let him be Anathema, Maran-atha*:[e] such an one is indeed worthy of the most dreadful curse, and if he persist in such a wretched temper, it will certainly fall upon him. And let him be assured, that though his crime be of such a nature as not to admit human conviction and censure; yet it is known to him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, so that he searches the hearts and trieth the reins. And ere long, the Lord himself will come in awful pomp, to execute vengeance upon him, pronouncing him accursed before the assembled world, and devoting him to utter and everlasting destruction.

21 The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.

23 But it is my hearty prayer that no such root of bitterness and heir of misery may be found among you; and that it may not, may *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] *with you*, and all the blessed tokens and effects of his favour rest upon you, for time and eternity!

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

24 Be assured that in what I have here said I intend nothing in the least unkind to any single person among you. Far from that, *my* tenderest and most affectionate *love* [*be*] *with you all in Christ Jesus*;[f] depend therefore upon my constant readiness to do all in my

24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

ference, ἀνδίξεσθε may refer to a *strength of resolution*; κραταιοῦσθε, to that *cheerful* and *courageous* expectation of a happy event, which the consciousness of so good a cause would naturally administer.

b *They have set themselves*, &c.] This seems to imply that it was the generous care of the whole family to assist their fellow-christians, so that there was not a member of it which did not do its part.

c *Fortunatus*.] This worthy man survived St. Paul a considerable time; for it appears from the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, (§ 59.) that he was the messenger of the church at Corinth to that of Rome, by whom Clement sent back that invaluable Epistle.

d *Aquila and Priscilla*.] They had formerly made some abode at Corinth; and there St. Paul's acquaintance with them commenced. Acts xviii. 1, 2. It is therefore no wonder they were particular in their salutations.—Some copies add, παρ' οις ξενίζομαι, *with whom also I lodge*; but the authority of those manuscripts is small.

e *Anathema—Maran-atha*.] Among the many various interpretations of these words, none seems to me so probable and satisfactory as this—when the Jews lost the power of life and death, they used nevertheless to pronounce an anathema on persons who, according to the Mosaic law, should have been executed; and such a person became an anathema, or cherem, or accursed; for the expressions are equivalent. They had a full persuasion that the curse would not be in vain; and indeed it appears they expected some judgment correspondent to that which the law pronounced would befall the offender; for instance, that a man to be stoned, would be killed by the falling of a stone or other heavy body upon him; a man to be strangled, would be choked; or one whom the law sentenced to the flames, would be burnt in his house, and the like. Now to express their faith, that God would one way or another, and probably in some remarkable manner, interpose, to add that efficacy to his own sentence which they could not give it; it is very probable they might use the words *Maran-atha*, that is, in Syriac, *the Lord cometh*, or he will surely and quickly come to put this sentence in execution, and to show that the person on whom it falls is indeed *anathema, accursed*. In beautiful allusion to this, when the apostle was speaking of a secret alienation from Christ, maintained under the forms of christianity, (which might perhaps be the case among many of the Corinthians, and much more probably may be so among us,) as this was not a crime capable of being convicted and censured in the christian church, he reminds them that the Lord Jesus Christ will come at length and find it out, and punish it in a proper manner. This weighty sentence the apostle chose to write with his own hand, and insert between his general salutation and benediction, that it might be the more attentively regarded. Compare Grot. on Rom. v. 13; and Isa. xiv. 20. Bishop Patrick, on Deut. xxvii. 15.

f *My love* [*be*] *with you all in Christ Jesus*.] When we consider what an alienation of affection some of these Corinthians had ex-

power for promoting and establishing the christian interest among you: and may it flourish more and more, till your happiness be completed in the kingdom of God above. *Amen.* SECT. 32.

IMPROVEMENT.

1 COR. XVI.

HOWEVER the particular trials of christians may vary in different ages, the same works, in general, demand their diligence; the same enemies, their watchfulness; the same difficulties, their courage and fortitude: nor will they ever be more likely to perform, to resist, and to endure well, than when charity reigns in their hearts, and presides over the whole of their behaviour. 13, 14

We owe our humble thanks to the Author of all good, when he raises up the spirits of his servants to any distinguished activity and zeal in his cause. Christians of standing superior to their brethren, ought to emulate such a character; and when they do so with genuine marks of becoming modesty and upright views, let all proper respect be paid to them; especially to those who are honoured with, and labour faithfully in, the ministerial office. To such let others submit themselves in love; not indeed as to the lords of their faith, which even the apostles pretended not to be; but as friends, whom they esteem and reverence, ever tenderly solicitous to secure their comfort and increase their usefulness. 15, 16

We see how much the apostle was concerned to promote mutual friendship among the disciples of our blessed Redeemer; how kindly he delivers the salutations of one and another. It becomes us to remember each other with cordial regard, and, in imitation of this wise example, to do all we can to cultivate a good understanding among our christian brethren, and to abhor that disposition to sow discord, which has been so fatally successful in producing envyings and strife, and every evil work. 19, 20

To conclude all; let us lay up in our memory, and often review, this awful sentence, this Anathema, Maran-atha, which, to give it the greater weight, the apostle records with his own hand. Let it ever be remembered, that professing christians, who do not sincerely love their Master, lie under the heaviest curse which an apostle can pronounce or a God inflict. Let the unhappy creatures take the alarm, and labour to obtain a more ingenuous temper, ere the Lord, whom they neglect, and against whom they entertain a secret enmity, descend from heaven with unsupportable terror, and pronounce the anathema with his own lips, in circumstances which shall for ever cut off all hope and all possibility of its being reversed. If his solemn voice pronounce, his almighty hand will immediately execute it. How will they be cast down to destruction, as in a moment! How will they be utterly consumed with terrors! To prevent so dreadful an end of our high profession, of our towering hopes, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us! Amen. 22, 21, 23

pressed with respect to the apostle, this expression of tender regard to them all without any exception, is so much the more affectionate, but it would not have been agreeable to the generous spirit which dictated it, to have glanced too plainly on that circumstance in the paraphrase.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians was written, as hath been before observed, from Ephesus, about the year of our Lord 57, towards the end of his continuance there and in the neighbouring parts. (See p. 534. note a.) Upon leaving Ephesus the apostle removed to Troas, which was situated on the shore of the Ægean sea, in expectation of meeting Titus, and receiving an account of the success with which he hoped his former Epistle had been attended, and of the present state of the Corinthian church; (2 Cor. ii. 12.) but not meeting him there, (ver. 13.) he proceeded to Macedonia, where he obtained his desired interview, and received satisfaction concerning the promising state of affairs at Corinth. From this place the apostle wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, intrusting it to the care of Titus, who was returning to Corinth, to forward the collection intended for the poor christians in Judea. From these historical circumstances, the date of this Second Epistle must be fixed within a year after the former. (See p. 538. note b.)

In the Introduction to the First Epistle, we observed, that its design was to rectify some sad disorders and abuses which had crept into the church at Corinth; and answer their queries upon some important points in which they had desired his determination. The intention of the present Epistle is, in general, to illustrate some of the same points upon which he had discoursed in the former, according to the light which Titus had given him into the circumstances and temper of the Corinthian church; interspersing and enforcing some occasional reflections and advices upon various subjects, as he thought most conducive to their instruction and edification.

But to give a more distinct view of the scheme and contents of this Second Epistle.—The apostle, after a general salutation, expresses his grateful sense of the divine goodness in preserving him from the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia; professing his unshaken confidence in God's continued guardianship, supported by a sense of his own integrity: (chap. i. 1—12.) Which declaration of his integrity he farther illustrates; applying it particularly to those views on which he had declined the visit to Corinth, which in the former Epistle he seems to have promised. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*) The case of the unhappy person who had committed incest with his father's wife, and whom, upon account of the scandal he had brought on his christian profession, the apostle directed them to exclude from communion, had made a deep impression on his mind. This, he intimates, was the reason of his having deferred his visit to Corinth, that he might not meet them with grief, nor till he had received advice of the effect of his apostolical admonitions, and their salutary and seasonable discipline. The affection of the apostle to the Corinthians is here manifested, both in his sympathy with the offending member of their church while under censure, whom now, being penitent, he advises them to re-admit to their communion; and also in his solicitude for certain tidings concerning their welfare by Titus, whom not finding at Troas, (as before observed,) he went to meet in Macedonia. (Chap. ii. 1—15.)

In farther vindication and support of his apostolical character against the insinuations and objections of the false teachers at Corinth, the apostle, having just intimated that a large door of success had been opened to him at Troas and elsewhere, makes a transition to this subject; and expresses in the most affectionate terms his thanksgiving to God for having intrusted him with the ministry of the gospel, and for the success attending his services; declaring his lively confidence, in all events, of the divine acceptance, and speaking of the Corinthians as his credentials written by the finger of God. (Ver. 14, *to the end;* chap. iii. 1—6.) And as an illustration of the dignity of the ministerial office, he descants, in a very pertinent and judicious manner, on the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic law, and the superior glory and permanence of the gospel. (Ver. 7, *to the end.*) He then disclaims all sinister views and distrust of success, in pursuing the glorious ministry he had described, from a firm persuasion that such a gospel could not be rejected but in consequence of the most fatal prejudices. (Chap. iv. 1—6.) And while he acknowledges his own infirmities, he glories in the strength communicated to him from

God, as an effectual support under the extremest trials; (ver. 7—15.) describing the glorious hopes which he entertained beyond the grave, as a ground of triumph in the face of danger, and a noble incentive to persevering fidelity and stedfastness. (Ver. 16, *to the end;* chap. v. 1—10.) Touching again upon the ardour with which he prosecuted the gospel-ministry, he makes a kind of apology for it, pleading the irresistible constraints of the Redeemer's love, and the infinite importance of the overtures of reconciliation; which in a most pathetic address he urges the Corinthians to embrace. (Ver. 11, *to the end:* chap. vi. 1, 2.) And then expatiates with great copiousness on the temper with which, in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, he and his brethren executed their important embassy. (Ver. 3—10.)

It is easy to observe, on the most cursory view of this argument, with what delicacy, as well as energy, it is all along conducted. As the apostle manages his subject in the tenderest and most affectionate manner, and intermingles general reflections for the instruction and consolation of the Corinthians, which, however, had an evident subservience to his main design; he conciliates their regard, and fixes the impressions which his former Epistle had made, in a more insinuating and therefore more effectual way, than if he had exerted his authority, and wrote with more closeness and severity of style. And having been informed by Titus, that the defence of his mission, and apology for his conduct, contained in his former Epistle, had not been utterly in vain, he manifests his satisfaction in the present disposition of the Corinthians, by giving his reasonings upon this head a more diffusive and practical turn.

After this, the Epistle affords us a farther instance of his affection, in his judicious and pathetic exhortation to the Corinthians, (additional to what he had formerly said, when they desired his opinion upon the head of marriage,) to avoid those alliances or intermarriages with idolaters, which might tend to ensnare them; pleading the gracious promises of God to his people as an engagement to the strictest purity, and as a motive to aspire after the sublimest attainments in religion. (Ver. 11, *to the end;* chap. vii. 1.)

From this digression he returns to the subject he had before been treating; and to remove any degree of prejudice which might yet lurk in their breasts against his apostolical character, he appeals to them for the integrity and disinterestedness of his conduct; professing that the freedom he uses was not intended to reproach their diffidence, but sprung from an unfeigned and ardent concern for their welfare; which he illustrates by the pleasure with which he received the assurances of their good state by Titus, and the part he had taken in their sorrows, which his necessary reproofs had occasioned, and by his present joy, in that those sorrows had happily issued in their reformation. (Ver. 2, *to the end.*)

The apostle had proposed to the Corinthians, in the close of the former Epistle, their making a contribution for the relief of the poor saints in Judea: resuming the subject, he recommends to them the example of the Macedonians, reminds them of the grace of our blessed Redeemer, and gives some advices as to the manner of collecting and transmitting their bounty: (Chap. viii. 1—13.) Expressing his joy for the readiness of Titus to assist in finishing the collection, and making an honourable mention of the worthy character of other christian brethren, whom he had joined with him in the same commission. (Ver. 16, *to the end.*) He then, with admirable address, further urges their liberal contribution, and, in a full assurance of its success, recommends them to the divine blessing. (Chap. ix. *throughout.*)

Having expressed in the former part of the Epistle, and on occasion of this contribution, his confidence in the abundant grace which had been bestowed on the Corinthians, the apostle takes an opportunity of stating and obviating some reflections which some among them had thrown upon him for the mildness of his conduct, as if it proceeded from fear. He therefore asserts his apostolical power and authority; cautioning his opponents that they should not urge him to give too sensible demonstrations of it upon themselves. (Chap. x. *throughout.*) And further vindicates himself from the perverse insinuations of such as opposed him at Corinth; particularly on the head of his having declined to receive a contribution from the church for his maintenance: which, though greatly to his honour, was by his opposers ungenerously turned to his disadvantage. (Chap. xi. 1—15.) To magnify his office as an apostle, he commemorates his labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ; yet in such a manner as plainly shows it was disagreeable, however necessary it might be, to dwell on a subject that appeared like sounding his own applause. (Ver. 16, *to the end.*) And with great clearness and plainness, yet at the same time with equal reluctance and modesty, he gives a detail of some extraordinary revelations which he had received from God, and of his experience of those divine aids which taught him to glory in his own infirmities. (Chap. xii. 1—10.) And upon the whole, vindicates the undisguised openness and sincerity of his conduct, and his visible superiority to secular considerations, in all his carriage towards the church at Corinth. (Ver. 11, *to the end.*) Closing his Epistle with the tenderest assurances, how much it would grieve him to be obliged to evince his apostolical power by inflicting any miraculous punishment on those who continued to oppose him; and then subjoining the most respectful salutations, and his solemn benediction. (Chap. xiii. *throughout.*)

It is evident from this view of the Epistle, that a very large part of it is employed in reclaiming the Corinthian church from their undue attachment to judaizing teachers, and from that party-spirit into which they had fallen; and in rekindling proper regards to the unadulterated doctrine of the gospel, and to his own apostolical counsels, who had been their spiritual father in Christ. That this leading design of the apostle is occasionally interrupted by the introduction of other matters, and particularly the subject of the contribution for the poor saints in Judea, will be no objection, I apprehend, if narrowly examined, to the accuracy and beauty of this excellent composition; for the transitions which St. Paul makes, arise from some obvious and important sentiments, which render them natural and just. And there is an admirable wisdom in such digressions, as they relieve the minds of the Corinthians from that painful uneasiness which they must have felt from a constant attention to so disagreeable a subject; I mean their unsuitable conduct towards the apostle himself. It is with the same kind of propriety and sagacity that the severe intimations which the dignity of the apostolic character obliged St. Paul to drop against those who might persevere in their opposition, are reserved to the close of the Epistle; as they would fall with additional weight, in all probability, after their minds had been softened with the reiterated expressions of his tender affection to the Corinthians in general, and the innocence and amiableness of his character had been represented in such a variety of views.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul, after a general salutation, expresses his grateful sense of the divine goodness, in preserving him from the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia; professing his unshaken confidence in God's continued guardianship, supported by the consciousness of his integrity before him. 2 Cor. i. 1—12.

2 CORINTHIANS i. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia;

YOU receive this Epistle from *Paul*, who hath the honour to call himself *an apostle of Jesus Christ by the* sovereign *will of God;* who hath shown by the victory of his grace over me, how able he is to bend the most obdurate and reluctant will to his own purposes, and triumph over the opposition of the most obstinate heart. *And Timothy, a* beloved *brother*[a] in Christ Jesus, joins with me in this second address *to the church of God that is in Corinth;* whom he hath mercifully called out from the world and united to himself. A society for which I have always the tenderest regard; the respective members of which I now most cordially salute; *with all* who, by their christian profession, are numbered among *the saints* that are *in the whole region of Achaia.* I greet you, as I do all my brethren in such addresses: saying from my heart, May *grace and peace* [*be*] in rich abundance communicated *to you* all, *from God our Father,* the compassionate Source of universal goodness, *and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ;* through whom alone such invaluable blessings can be conveyed to such sinful creatures as we are. While I sit down to write to you, my dear brethren, in the midst of circumstances which the world might think very deplorable, (compare 1 Cor. iv. 9, &c.) I cannot forbear bursting out into the language of joy and praise,[b] for such a variety of divine favours as is conferred on myself and you. *Blessed,* for ever blessed, by the united songs of men and angels, [*be*] *the* great *God and Father of our* beloved *Lord* and gracious Saviour *Jesus Christ,* through whom we have this free access to him, this secure interest in him: so that we can now, with unutterable delight, view him as *the Father of mercies,* from whose paternal compassion all our comforts and hopes are derived; *and* as *the God of all consolation,* whose nature it is ever to have mercy, and who knows how to proportion his supports to the exigence of every trial.

SECT. 1.

2 COR. 1.

1

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

2

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

3

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

For ever adored be this benevolent and compassionate Being, *who comforteth us in all our* pressing *tribulation,*[c] by such seasonable appearances in our favour. And this I know is not merely for our own sakes, but *that we,* taught by our own experience, *may be able,* in the most tender, suitable, and effectual manner, *to comfort those who are in any tribulation, by the* communication of that *comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God;*[d] and methinks every support I feel is much endeared to me by the con-

4

a *Timothy, a* beloved *brother.*] This shows that Timothy was returned to St. Paul since he wrote the last Epistle; and his joining the name of Timothy with his own, is an instance of the generous desire which St. Paul had to establish, as much as possible, the reputation and influence of this excellent young minister. Some have thought this is the reason why the apostle so often speaks in the *plural* number in this Epistle; but it is certain he often speaks in the *singular,* and that there are passages here, as well as in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, in which he uses the *plural,* without intending to include Timothy. See chap. iii. 1—3; vii. 5; xii. 19; 2 Thess. ii. 1—9. He also joins the name of Sosthenes with his own, in the former Epistle, as also the name of Timothy to the Epistle to the Philippians and Colossians; yet does not use the *plural* there.

b Cannot forbear bursting out, &c.] It is very observable that *eleven* of St. Paul's *thirteen Epistles* begin with *exclamations* of joy, praise, and thanksgiving. As soon as he thought of a christian church planted in one place or another, there seems to have been a flow of most lively affection accompanying the idea, in which all sensibility of his temporal afflictions or theirs was all swallowed up, and the fulness of his heart must vent itself in such cheerful, exalted, and devout language.

c *Comforteth us.*] It is certain that the mention of these experiences must have a powerful tendency to conciliate the regard of the Corinthians to St. Paul; and such an introduction to his Epistle as the whole of this is, must naturally prejudice them strongly in his favour; yet this does not seem to have been by any means his aim, nor is there any appearance of art in it; but all is the genuine overflowing of an heart which rejoiced in the consolations of the gospel felt by itself, and communicated to others. See ver. 12, which is much illustrated by this connexion.

d *Comforted of God.*] Some think this refers particularly to the comfort which the repentance of the incestuous person gave St. Paul, after the affliction he had endured on his account; (compare chap. vii. 7.) but it seems more natural to understand it of the general consolation arising from the pardon of sin, an interest in God, an assurance that nothing should separate him from Christ, that afflictions should co-operate for his advantage, and that a crown of

SECT. 1. 2 COR. 1.

sideration, that the benefit of it may be reflected upon others. *Because as the sufferings* we endure in the cause *of Christ*, and in conformity to his example, *abound with respect to us, so our consolation by Christ*, the comforts which arise from God in him, *does abound* much more, and quite overbalance the distress.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ.

And much of this satisfaction to us arises from the hope we have with relation to you, 6 my dear friends and christian brethren; *for whether we be afflicted*, [*it is*,] we doubt not, *in subservience to* the views of *your* present *consolation, and* your future and eternal *salvation; which is* so much the more *effectually wrought out, by the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also undergo*, and which by our example you are taught the less to wonder at, and to bear with the greater fortitude: *or whether we be comforted*, [*it is*] still with the same view, *for your consolation and salvation;* that your eternal happiness may be promoted by those comforts which we are enabled to communicate to 7 you with the greater efficacy. *And our hope concerning you*, that this will be the happy end of all, [*is*] *stedfast* and cheerful:[e] *knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings* to which we refer, *so* you *also* have already, in some degree, your share *of the consolation* which arises from principles and hopes which are not peculiar to us, who are apostles, or inferior ministers of the gospel, but common to all sincere believers; in which number I persuade myself that you in the general are.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

8 We write thus concerning the trials of the christian life, having so lately experienced them in a large measure: *for we would not have you*, our dear *brethren, ignorant concerning our affliction, which* within these few months *befell us in Asia*,[f] and particularly at Ephesus; *that we were exceedingly pressed* with it, even *beyond our power; so that we despaired of being able even to live* any longer, and were looked upon by others as 9 dead men. *And* not only did others apprehend this concerning us, but *we ourselves* did indeed think that the appointed end of our ministry and life was come; and had, as it were, *received the sentence of death in ourselves*, the execution of which we were continually expecting; but the event showed that it was wisely appointed by Divine Providence to make our deliverance the more remarkable; and *that we might* learn for the future *not* to *trust in ourselves*, nor merely to regard human probabilities, *but* in the greatest extremities to repose a cheerful confidence *in* the power and providence of that *God who raiseth the* 10 *dead*, at his holy pleasure, by his omnipotent word: *Who rescued us*, on this ever-memorable occasion, *from so great a death* as then threatened us, *and doth rescue* us from every danger which now surrounds us, and *in whom we trust that he will* make our deliverance complete, and *still rescue* us from evil, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us;*

11 I say that I have this confidence in God's continual care; and it is the more cheerful, as I persuade myself *you* are and will be *working together in prayer for us, that so the favour* [*obtained*] *for us by* the importunate prayers of *many, may be acknowledged by the thanksgiving of many on our account;*[g] as nothing can be more reasonable than that 12 mercies obtained by prayer should be owned in praise. And this confidence which we have both towards God and you, is much emboldened, as we have an inward assurance of our own integrity, however men may suspect or censure us: *for this is* still *our rejoicing*, which no external calamities can impair or injuries destroy, even *the testimony of our conscience* in the sight of God, who searcheth the secrets of all hearts, *that in simplicity*[h] *and godly sincerity*, maintaining perpetually that sense of the divine presence and inspection which is the surest guard upon unfeigned integrity, and *not with* that *carnal wisdom* which is so ungenerously and unrighteously imputed to us, *but by the grace of God*, and such sentiments of fidelity and benevolence as that blessed principle inspires, *we have had*, and still continue to have, *our conversation in the world; and more especially towards you*,[i] with respect to whom, in some circumstances of opposition that have happened among you, we have been peculiarly obliged to watch over our conduct; lest inadvertency should

11 You also helping together by praying for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

glory heightened by these trials should close the scene. On these topics he frequently insists in his Epistles, and none can be more important and delightful.

e *Our hope concerning you is stedfast.*] These words, in several good manuscripts, are put in connexion with the first clause of the 6th verse; and so the version will run thus: *Whether we be afflicted, it is in subservience to your consolation and salvation, which is effectually wrought out by the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also undergo; and our hope concerning you is stedfast: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation; knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolation.* And the repetition of the words, *consolation* and *salvation*, shows how agreeable the thought was to him; so that he loved to speak of it again and again.

f *The afflictions which befell us in Asia.*] Mr. Cradock thinks that here he begins to apologize for not coming to Corinth, and introduces these troubles as an excuse for not seeing them. I think it is rather to be connected with the preceding discourse. Yet still it might incline them to drop their complaints, and judge more favourably of him, when they considered in what painful and dangerous circumstances he had, on the present openings of duty, been spending that time in which they had been expecting him at Corinth. As for the *afflictions* here spoken of, some have thought that this may refer to the persecutions at Lystra, where St. Paul's danger had been so extreme, and he had been recovered by miracle; (Acts xiv. 19, 20) but as that happened so long before the visit to Corinth, in which he planted the church there, (Acts xviii. 1.) it seems more probable that he either refers to some opposition which he met with in his journey through Galatia and Phrygia, (Acts xviii. 23.) of which no particular account has reached us; or to what happened at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 29, 30.) which is Dr. Whitby's opinion.

g *That so the favour* [*obtained,*] *&c.*] There is something very perplexed and ambiguous in the structure of this sentence. I have sometimes thought it might be rendered, that (υπερ ημων) *on our account thanks may be rendered by many persons for* (το εις ημας χαρισμα) *the gift*, or miraculous endowment, *which is in us*, or deposited with us, (δια πολλων) *for the sake of many:* as if he had said, That many may join with us in returning thanks for those miraculous endowments which were lodged with me, not for my own sake, but for the benefit of many. This would be a sentiment worthy an apostle; but the rendering in the paraphrase seemed, on the whole, the most natural and simple; especially as δια, with a genitive, seldom, if ever, signifies *for the sake*, but rather *by the means* of any afterwards mentioned.

h *Simplicity, plain-heartedness.*] Not only meaning well on the whole, but declining an over-artful way of prosecuting a good end.

i *Especially towards you.*] His working with his own hands for his maintenance among the Corinthians, (Acts xviii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 15.) which he did not every where do, must be a convincing proof of this.

in any instance give an handle to the malice of our enemies, to exert itself in strengthening prejudices against us, and destroying those fruits of our labours among you, for which we could not but be greatly concerned. SECT. 1.

2 COR. I.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the venerable title of saints, by which the apostle so often describes and addresses christians, be ever retained in our minds; that we may remember the obligations we are under to answer it, as we would avoid the guilt and infamy of lying to God and men, by falsely and hypocritically professing the best religion, very possibly to the worst, undoubtedly to the vainest, purposes. And that we may be excited to a sanctity becoming this title, let us often think of God, as the Father of mercies, and as the God of all consolation; and let us think of him as assuming these titles under the character of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: so shall we find our hearts more powerfully engaged to love and trust in him, and enter into a more intimate acquaintance and frequent converse with him. Ver. 1 3

From him let us seek consolation in every distress; considering these supports which we so experience, not as given for ourselves alone, but for others; that we, on the like principles, may comfort them. Let ministers, in particular, regard them in this view, and rejoice in these tribulations which may render them more capable of comforting such as are in any trouble, by those consolations with which they themselves have been comforted by God; that so the church may be edified, and God glorified in all, by the thanksgiving of many, for mercies obtained in answer to united prayers. 4 11

Let us particularly remember the support which St. Paul experienced when he was pressed above measure, and as it seemed, quite beyond his strength, so as to despair of life, and received the sentence of death in himself; as what was wisely appointed to teach him a firmer confidence in God, who raised the dead. Strong as his faith was, it admitted of farther degrees; and the improvement of it was a happy equivalent for all the extremities he suffered. He therefore glories, as secure of being rescued from future dangers. Nor was his faith vain, though he afterwards fell by the hand of his enemies, and seemed as helpless a prey to their malice and rage as any of the multitudes whose blood Nero, or the instruments of his cruelty, poured out like water. Death is itself the grand rescue to a good man, which bears him to a state of everlasting security; and in this sense every believer may adopt the apostle's words, and while he acknowledges past and present, may assuredly boast of future, deliverances. 9 10

Happy shall we therefore be, if by divine grace we are enabled at all times to maintain the temper and conduct of christians; and may confidently rejoice in the testimony of our consciences, that our conversation in the world is in simplicity and godly sincerity; that our ends in religion are great and noble; that our conduct is simple and uniform; in a word, that we act as in the sight of an heart-searching God. Then may we look upon the applauses or the censures of men as comparatively a very light matter; and may rest assured if, as with regard to the apostle in the instance before us, he suffers a malignant breath for a while to obscure the lustre of our character, the day is near which will reveal it in unclouded glory. 12

SECTION II.

The apostle goes on solemnly to declare his general integrity: and particularly applies that declaration to the views on which he had declined that visit to Corinth which he had intimated an intention of making. 2 Cor. i. 13, *to the end.*

2 COR. i. 13.

FOR we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

2 COR. i. 13.

I SPEAK of the integrity with which I have conducted myself among you, with great freedom; *for we write no other things to you* on this head, *but what ye* well *know*,[a] *and* must be obliged to *acknowledge; and I hope that ye will* have equal cause to *acknowledge* [*them,*] *even unto the end;* for by the divine grace you shall never have just cause to speak or think dishonourably of us, or to reflect upon any inconsistency in our behaviour. SECT. 2. 2 COR. I.

14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

As indeed ye have already *acknowledged us in part;* you have acknowledged that you have had no occasion of blaming us; for though some among you are not so ready to do us justice as the rest are, yet most avow it with pleasure and thankfulness, *that we are your boasting*, and that ye have cause to glory in your relation to us; *as ye also* in this respect (with humble gratitude to the great Author of all our successes be it ever spoken,) [*are*] *ours* now, and will, I trust, be so *in the* great *day of the Lord Jesus;* when we hope to present you before Christ as the seals of our ministry, and to lead you on to that heavenly kingdom, in the faithful pursuit of which we have already been so happy as to engage you. 14

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit;

And in this confidence I was long *before desirous of coming to you*, and enjoying another interview with friends who have long lain so near my heart: that the expected transports of that blessed day might in some degree be anticipated, both on my part and on yours; and accordingly would have come to you much sooner, not only on my own account, but likewise *that ye might have had a second benefit;* as I doubted not but it would have been much to your advantage, as well as have given you a great deal of joy, to have seen and conversed with your father in Christ, who had once been so dear and so welcome to you. 15

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to

And indeed my scheme was *to pass by you into Macedonia*, and make you a short visit[b] in my way thither; *and* then having despatched my business in the way. But as he went from Ephesus to Macedonia, it was not his direct way to go by Corinth; especially considering the road we know he did take, by Troas: and if he were now in Macedonia, as I think there is great reason to believe he was, there would on that interpretation have been no such appearance of change in his pur- 16

a *What ye know.*] The word επιγινωσκω is ambiguous, and may signify either to *acknowledge*, to *know*, or to *read;* but I think the sense here plainly determines it to *knowing*.

b Make you a short visit.] Δι' υμων διελθειν εις Μακεδονιαν some have understood of going into Macedonia without calling on them in his

SECT. 2. churches there, *to come to you again from Macedonia, and* make a longer stay; that so I might *be brought forward by you in my journey toward Judea*, when I shall go thither to deliver the money raised by the contribution of the Gentile christians for their Jewish brethren, when they shall meet at Jerusalem on occasion of some of their great feasts. (See Acts xx. 16.)

2 COR. I.

come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

17 *Now when I intended this, did I use levity* in projecting my scheme, or throwing it aside on any trifling occasion? *Or the things which I purpose* in general, *do I purpose according to the flesh*, according to carnal principles and views; that I should be continually changing my measures in the prospect of every little interest that may lead one way or another, and breaking my word, *so that there should be with me yea, yea, and nay, nay:* such an uncertainty and inconsistency of counsels and actions, that none
18 should know how to depend upon me, or what they had to expect from me? No: I solemnly protest that [*as*] the *God* whom I serve [*is*] *faithful, our word to you* on other occasions, and on this, *hath not been* wavering and uncertain, sometimes *yea and* sometimes *nay:* but that I have always maintained a consistency of behaviour, the natural
19 attendant of sincerity and truth, which is always uniform and invariable. *For* our Lord *Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, our great Redeemer, *who was preached by us amongst you*, that is, *by me, and Sylvanus, and Timothy*, who joined our labours among you, (Acts xviii. 15.) as we now join in writing to you this Epistle, (according to what I observed in the inscription of it,) *was not yea and nay;* Christ and his gospel were not inconsistent and contradictory, *but in him* all *was yea:* as he is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, the declarations of his word and the engagements of his covenant are
20 inviolably the same. *For all the* many and invaluably precious *promises of God* which are given us by this covenant, and established in his blood, [*are*] *in him yea, and in him amen.*[c] They are now attended with stipulations and engagements which may be sufficient to confirm the weakest faith, when we consider what an astonishing way God has been pleased to take for the communication of mercy by his Son; so that the more we attend to them, the more we shall see of their invariable truth and certainty; and all tends *to the glory of God by us*, which we constantly make the end of our administration, and so are animated to maintain one regular series of uniform truth, as in his sight and presence.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

18 But *as* God *is* true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.

21 But we say not this as arrogating any thing to ourselves; *for* we must readily acknowledge that *he who also* by his strengthening grace confirmeth and *establisheth us*,[d] *together with you, in* the faith and love of *Christ, and* he that *hath anointed us*, as a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, with that Spirit which gives us a capacity for all the services to which we are called out, and furnishes us with all our credentials in it, [*is*] the blessed
22 *God* himself: *Who hath also sealed us*[e] to mark and secure us[f] for his peculiar property, *and* in further confirmation of his regard for us, *given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*, those sacred communications both of gifts and graces which lead us into enjoyments that we look upon as the anticipation of heaven, and not only as a pledge, but a foretaste of it. This is the happy state into which we are now brought, for which I desire ever to glorify and adore the divine goodness, and to behave as one that is favoured with such invaluable blessings and with such glorious prospects as these.

21 Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God:

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 *But* with respect to that change in my purpose of coming to you, which some would represent as an instance of a contrary conduct, *I call God for a record on my soul*, and declare to you, even as I hope he will have mercy upon it,[g] *that* it was not because I slighted my friends or feared mine enemies, but out of a real tenderness, and with a desire *to spare you* that uneasiness which I thought I must in that case have been obliged to give you, that *I came not as yet to Corinth*, as I had once intended, and given you some reason
24 to expect. I mention this, *not because we* pretend to *have any* absolute *dominion over your faith*, so as of my own authority to dictate what you should believe or do; nor would we exert the power with which Christ has endowed us to any tyrannical or over-

23 Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith,

pose as should have needed any apology. I therefore conclude that his first scheme was to have made them two visits, the one in his way to Macedonia, (perhaps sailing from Ephesus to Corinth,) and then another and longer, in his return. This the word πάλιν, *again*, seems to intimate; and if this were his purpose, it was now plain, in fact, that he had changed it. The grand objection against this is 1 Cor. xvi. 7. which can only be reconciled by a supposition, that he had altered his purpose between the date of that Epistle and his quitting Ephesus; and had given them, perhaps by some verbal message, some intimation of it.

c *In him yea, and in him amen.*] Nothing can really render the promises of God more certain than they are; but God's giving them to us through Christ, assures us that they are indeed his promises, as in Christ there is such a real evidence of his conversing with men, and as the wonders which God hath actually wrought in the incarnation, life, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, (facts in themselves much stranger than any of the glorious consequences to follow,) tend greatly to confirm our faith, and make it easier for us to believe such illustrious promises as those which are given us, the very greatness of which might otherwise have been an impediment to our faith, and have created a suspicion, not whether God would have performed what he had promised, but whether such promises were really given us.

d *Establisheth us.*] To explain this as furnishing St. Paul with such arguments as enabled him more and more to confirm the Corinthians in the christian faith, and himself in the character of a faithful minister, is, I think, giving but a small part of the genuine and sublime sense of this excellent passage.

e *Hath anointed us—sealed us.*] M. Saurin thinks that the difference between the *unction*, the *seal*, and the *earnest* of the Spirit, is this: that the *unction* chiefly refers to those extraordinary endowments by which the apostles were set apart to their work, as priests and kings were consecrated to theirs, by being anointed; the *seal*, to the sacraments, which marked them out as the peculiar property of God; and the *earnest* he explains of those joys of the Holy Ghost which were the anticipation of celestial happiness. See Saur. *Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 83—85.

f Mark and secure us.] That *sealing* refers to both these, is well shown by Dr. Whitby's note on this text. Some understand this verse as insinuating how unreasonable it would be to suspect him of levity who was sealed by such extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. Compare John vi. 27. But that argument would be something precarious; and as he speaks of the *earnest of the Spirit* in the hearts of believers, I thought the interpretation here given much preferable.

g Have mercy on it.] Nothing but the great importance of St. Paul's vindicating his character to such a church, would have justified the solemnity of such an oath.

but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

bearing purposes; *but we*, even I and all the faithful ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ, SECT. 2.
are joint *helpers of your joy;* we labour to use all the furniture which God hath given us to the advancement of your real comfort and happiness, which can only be secured by reducing you to your duty: but this very care will oblige us sometimes to take disagreeable steps with regard to those that act in such a manner as might tend to subvert the faith of their brethren; *for by faith ye have stood* hitherto; I readily acknowledge ye have in the general adhered to it; and it is by retaining the same principles pure and uncorrupted, with a realizing sense of them on our hearts, that we may still continue to stand in the midst of all the opposition we necessarily meet with from men insensible of every bond of duty and gratitude. 2 COR. 1. 24

IMPROVEMENT.

ALL the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ: let us depend upon it that they will be performed; and make it our great care, that we may be able to say that we are interested through him in the blessings to which they relate. Let there be a proportionable steadiness and consistence in our obedience, and let not our engagements to God be yea and nay, since his to us are so invariably faithful. Ver. 20, 19

Are we established in Christ? Are we sealed with the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts? Let us acknowledge that it is God who hath imparted it to us; and let christians of the greatest steadiness and experience be proportionably humble, rather than by any means elated, on account of their superiority to others. 21, 22

We see the light in which ministers should always consider themselves, and in which they are to be considered by others: not as having dominion over the faith of their people, having a right to dictate by their own authority what they should believe, or, on the same principles, what they should do; but as helpers of their joy, in consequence of being helpers of their piety and obedience. In this view, how amiable does the ministerial office appear! What a friendly aspect it wears upon the happiness of mankind! And how little true benevolence do they manifest who would expose it to ridicule and contempt! 24

Let those who bear that office be careful that they do not give it the most dangerous wound, and abet the evil works of those who despise and deride it; which they will most effectually do, if they appear to form their purposes according to the flesh. Let them with a single eye direct all their administrations to the glory of God and the edification of the church; that they may be able to appeal to their hearers, as those that must acknowledge and bear their testimony to their uprightness. In that case they will be able to look on them as those in whom they hope to rejoice in the day of the Lord. And if, while they pursue these ends, they are censured as actuated by any mean and less worthy principle, let them not be much surprised or discouraged: they share in exercises from which the blessed apostle St. Paul was not exempted; as indeed there is no integrity or caution which can guard any man from the effects of that malice against Christ and his gospel, with which some hearts overflow when they feel themselves condemned by it. 17, 13, 14

SECTION III.

The apostle expresses his great affection to the Corinthians, as manifested both in his sympathy with the offending member of their church, who having been under censure, was now penitent; (in which view he advises his re-admission;) and also in his solicitude for tidings concerning them from Titus, whom not finding at Troas, he went to meet in Macedonia. 2 Cor. ii. 1—13.

2 COR. ii. 1.

BUT I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you with heaviness.

2 COR. ii. 1.

I NOW plainly and faithfully tell you the true reason of that delay of my journey which has so much surprised most of you, and at which some appear to be scandalized. It was not that I forgot you, or failed in any friendly regards to you; *but I determined this with myself*, on hearing how things stood among you, *that I would not*, if it could by any means be prevented, *come to you again in grief*,[a] in circumstances which must have grieved both myself and you; but that I would wait for those fruits which I had reason to hope from my endeavours, in my former Epistle, to regulate what had been amiss. *For if* I should be obliged to *grieve you, who should then rejoice me, unless it be he who is* now *grieved by me?*[b] My affection to you as a church is indeed so great, that I could enjoy very little comfort myself if you were in sorrow, especially in consequence of any act of mine, however necessary it were: *And* therefore *I have written thus to you*, in order to the farther promoting of that reformation which is necessary to my own comfort, as well as to your honour and peace; *that I may not, when I come* again, *have grief on account of those for whom I ought to rejoice, having this* confident *persuasion concerning you all* in general, *that my joy is* [*the joy*] *of you all*,[c] and that you do in the SECT. 3. 2 COR. 11. 1 2 3

2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

a *I would not come to you in grief.*] It may be objected, Why then did he speak of coming in his former Epistle, (1 Cor. xvi. 5—7.) when the incestuous person being yet impenitent, and their obedience to his directions, with relation to that case, being as yet unapproved, the cause of sorrow, and the necessity of grieving them, seemed yet greater than now? But it is very likely that after he had written that Epistle, and perhaps while these things were in suspense, he had received news of other disorders among them; and indeed it is evident that he seems apprehensive, even on supposition that the incestuous person were happily restored, he might yet be under a necessity of exercising an unwilling severity among them. Chap. xii. 20, 21; and xiii. 1—6, 10.

b *Unless it be he who is grieved by me.*] It cannot reasonably be objected, that the sound part of the church would rejoice him; for even they would be grieved by the necessity of such severities; they would sympathize with the afflicted and corrected persons; and on the other hand, the recovery of offenders would give him more sensible joy than any thing else; which considerations taken together will abundantly justify this expression.

c *My joy is the joy of you all.*] Mr. Locke argues from hence, that a distinction is to be made between the Corinthians, to whom this Epistle was written, and the false teachers, who were Jews, and who crept in among them, and whom he does not comprehend in the number of those concerning whom he speaks with such tenderness and hope. And thus he would reconcile this passage, and chap. vii. 13—15. with xi. 13—15; x. 6—11. Compare chap. xi. 22. where it is intimated some of them were Hebrews. But as we are sure some of the Corinthians had been seduced and alienated from St. Paul by them, I think it most reasonable to understand this as spoken of what he might conclude to be their general character; and it was both generous and prudent in the apostle to set it in this point of view.

SECT. 3. main bear the same affection towards me as I feel in my heart towards you. *For* some time ago, *with much affliction and* overbearing *anguish*[d] *of heart, I wrote* an Epistle *to you*,[e] which was attended *with many tears*, and I designed by it, *not*, as you may be sure,
2 COR. II. *that ye might be grieved, but that ye might know*, by one of the most genuine tokens which it was possible for me to give, *that overflowing love which I bear to you*, of the
4 degree and tenderness of which I was never myself so sensible as I have been since this sad
5 occasion of discovering it happened. *And if any* one of you *hath* been so unhappy as to have *occasioned grief, he hath only grieved me in part;* I am but one of a much greater number who have felt this affectionate concern. And this I say, *that I may not overburden you all*, nor fix any unjust charge upon the whole body of the Corinthian church, as if it had taken part with such an offender in afflicting me: far from that, I rather believe
6 it has sympathized with me in my grief. And *sufficient to such an one*,[f] who hath here been the aggressor, [*is*] *this rebuke* and censure, [*that he hath*] already [*suffered*] *by many*, and indeed by the whole body of your society; which has shown so wise and pious a readiness to pursue the directions I gave for animadverting upon him, and bringing him
7 to repentance. *So that*, on the whole, I am well satisfied in what the church has done; and instead of urging you to pursue farther severities against him, who now, by the blessing of God on the discipline you have used, is become a penitent: I, *on the contrary*, declare it to you as my judgment, that *you should rather forgive and comfort* [*him*,] *lest such a one*, if kept under continual rebuke, *should be swallowed up with an excess of sorrow*, and rendered incapable of those duties of the christian life, to the performance of
8 which I would cheerfully hope that he is now inclined. *Therefore I beseech you to confirm* [*the assurances*] and demonstrations [*of your*] *love to him* in the most tender and endearing manner that you can; which may convince him that your seeming severity pro-
9 ceeded from cordial affection. *For* indeed it was partly *to this purpose* that *I have written, that I might have experience of you, whether ye would be obedient in all things* to my apostolical instructions and decisions; and it gives me unspeakable pleasure
10 to find that ye have been so. And truly I have such confidence in you as a society, that I may say, not only in this instance but in any other that may happen, that *to whom you forgive any thing* which hath been esteemed an offence, so as to be willing to restore the offender to your communion, *I also* shall be ready to [*forgive it;*] *and if I forgive any thing, to whomsoever it may be*, [*it is*] not out of regard to the offender alone, but in a great measure *for your sakes*, that as *in the person of Christ*, and by the high authority
11 with which he hath been pleased to invest me, I join in taking off the censure. For I know the prosperity of the church in general is concerned in conducting these affairs aright, and am solicitous, *lest*, if they be carried to any excess of rigour, *Satan should get an advantage over us*, and turn that severity into an occasion of mischief to the offender, to his brethren, and to others. *For we are not ignorant of his devices*, and of the great variety
12 of stratagems which he is continually making use of to injure us, and to turn even discipline itself to the reproach of the church, and the destruction of souls. These are the sentiments which prevail in my heart towards you; and my conduct, since the date of my last Epistle, hath been a genuine demonstration of this my affectionate concern. *For when I came unto Troas*[g] *in the service of the gospel of Christ, and* found things there so situated, that *there was a* large *door opened to me in the Lord*, many circumstances seeming to invite my stay, and to give a prospect of success in my ministry; Yet *I had no rest in*
13 *my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus* there, whom I had sent to enquire into your affairs, and from whom I expected tidings of you. I would not therefore make any abode at Troas, though so many considerations concurred to invite me to it; *but taking my leave of them, I went* out of Asia *into Macedonia*, where I thought he might be, and to receive that news of you which has given me so much pleasure, and in consequence of which I have found occasion to write to you in a more comfortable manner, as I here do. And I bless God that the purposes of my christian ministry have not upon the whole been frustrated by this journey, but that the divine blessing hath attended my labours here as well as in the places which I left, that I might come hither.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.

7 So that contrariwise, *ye ought* rather to forgive *him* and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm *your* love towards him.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgive any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ:

11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 LET ministers learn from hence, after the example of this wise and benevolent apostle, to be very tender of the ease and comfort of those committed to their care; doing nothing to grieve or distress them, unless, as in the case before us, love requires it in order to their safety and happiness. Let them learn this candid and endearing method
3 of putting the best interpretation upon every thing, and of believing, where there is any reason to hope it, that

d Overbearing *anguish.*] This seems the import of συνοχη, which nearly resembles συνεχει, (compare chap. v. 14.) which I render *bears away.*

e *Wrote* an Epistle, *&c.*] Probably he here refers to such passages as those in the First Epistle, which speak of scandalous persons among them, and direct to the methods to be taken to reduce them to order.

f *To such an one.*] Mr. Locke very well observes the great tenderness which the apostle uses to this offender; he never once mentions his *name*, nor does he here so much as mention his *crime;* but speaks of him in the most indefinite manner that was consistent with giving such directions in his case as love required.

g *Came unto Troas.*] Mr. Owen (*Of Ordin.* Part I. p. 124.) thinks this happened in St. Paul's journey from Corinth to Macedonia: and mentions it as a fact omitted by St. Luke, to be collected from the Epistles. Many such facts there undoubtedly are, and this seems one of them, though not just in that circumstance. It seems to have happened in that passage from Asia to Macedonia, of which so very short an account is given, Acts xx. 1, 2. He afterwards ordered some christian friends, who were attending him to Asia after he had spent three months in Macedonia, to wait for him at Troas, (*ib.* ver. 4, 5.) probably for this reason among others, that they might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel to a people who seemed so ready to receive it.

their joy is the joy of their people also. When professing christians offend, and cannot be reclaimed by gentler methods, let them, not out of resentment, but affection, have recourse to the discipline which Christ hath instituted in his church; and when that discipline hath answered its end, and the offender is recovered to a sense of his evil, let them with the greatest pleasure concur in re-admitting him to the communion of the church from which he has been excluded, with a tender concern lest he should be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow; always considering how watchful the enemy of souls is to get an advantage over us; and remembering that it will be the peculiar wisdom of ministers to acquaint themselves with these artful and malicious devices of Satan, by which he is incessantly endeavouring to distress and ruin the church, and to lay snares for its members in their hopes and their fears, their joys and their sorrows, so as to take occasion from every incident and from every interest to weaken and to wound them. SECT. 3. 2 COR. II. 6, 7 8

The great source of a right conduct on all these occasions is unfeigned love: that let us labour to establish in our hearts towards each other; praying that God by his Spirit would establish it. And though the consequence of this will be that our spirits, like the apostle's, will be accessible to many sorrows which we should not otherwise feel; and though it is possible that we, like St. Paul in the instance before us, may sometimes be interrupted in active services of life which we might otherwise have been more ready to pursue; yet we may hope that while we are faithfully influenced by love, under the direction of that christian prudence which ought ever to attend it, views of usefulness may be opened where we least expect them, may be opened one way while they are obstructed another; yea, upon the whole, what has for a while interrupted our success, may in its remoter consequences greatly advance it. 4 12

SECTION IV.

The apostle expresses in the most affectionate terms his thankfulness to God for having intrusted him with the ministry of the gospel, and for the success attending his services therein; and declares his joyful confidence in all events of the divine acceptance; and speaks of the Corinthians as his credentials written by the finger of God. 2 Cor. ii. 14, *to the end;* iii. 1—6.

2 Cor. ii. 14.

2 Cor. ii. 14. NOW thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other, the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2 Cor. iii. 1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epistle writ-

I HAVE informed you that I left a fair opportunity of preaching the gospel at Troas, in consequence of that great desire I had to hear from you; for which purpose I went into Macedonia. *But* I desire thankfully to own the divine goodness in attending my ministry with very comfortable success there. And indeed I have great reason to break out into a transport of praise in the reflection: Yes, my brethren, thanks, everlasting *thanks*, [*be rendered*] by you and me *to* the *God* of all power and grace, *who always causeth us to triumph in Christ*,[a] carrying us on from one spiritual victory to another, *and manifesteth by us in every place the* fragrant and powerful *odour of his* saving *knowledge*. Well may I rejoice upon this account: *for we* the apostles, and other ministers of his gospel, *are to God a sweet* and acceptable *odour of Christ:* he is as it were pleased and delighted with the incense of his name and gospel as diffused by us, both *with respect to them who* believe and *are saved, and to them who* in consequence of their unbelief *perish* in their sins. *To the latter indeed* [*we are*] *an odour of death:* the fragrancy, so rich in itself, instead of reviving, destroys them, and is efficacious *to* bring on *death* in its most dreadful forms. *But to the other* [*we are*] *an odour of life;* the gospel revives their souls, and is effectual *to* their eternal *life* and salvation. *And* when we consider all these awful consequences, which one way or other attend our ministry, we may truly say, *Who* [*is*] *sufficient for these things?* Who is worthy to bear such an important charge? Who should undertake it without trembling? Nevertheless, though we must acknowledge ourselves unworthy of such a charge, God is pleased to succeed us in the execution of it, as he knows our sincerity in his sight and presence. *For we are not as many who adulterate the word of God*[b] by their own base mixtures, and retail it, when formed according to the corrupt taste of their hearers; *but as of* unmingled *sincerity, but as* by the express command *of God, in the presence of God we speak in* the name of *Christ;* delivering every part of our message as those that know how awful our account is, and how impossible it is to conceal so much as a single thought from that all-penetrating Being, to whom we are shortly to give it up. SECT. 4. 2 COR. II. 14 15 16 17

And when I say this, *do we again*, as some presume to insinuate, *begin to recommend ourselves*, and one another, [*to you?*] *Or do we need, as* I perceive *some* [*do,*] *recommendatory letters to you* from other churches, *or recommendatory* [*letters*] *from you* to others? Truly I may well say, *you are* yourselves *our epistle*, the best recommendation from God himself, his testimonial, as it were, *written upon your hearts*[c] in the glo- 2 COR. III. 1 2

a *Causeth us to triumph.*] Witsius would render θριαμβευοντι, who *triumphs over us*, (compare Col. ii. 15.) and supposes it expresses the joy with which St. Paul reflected on that powerful and sovereign grace which had led him in triumph, who was once so insolent an enemy to the gospel. I rather think the apostle represents himself as triumphing through the divine power. And as in triumphal processions, especially in the East, fragrant odours and incense were burned near the conquerors, so he seems beautifully to allude to that circumstance in what he says of the οσμη, *the odour of the gospel*, in the following verses. And he seems farther to allude to the different effects of strong perfumes to cheer some, and to throw others into violent disorders, according to the different dispositions they are in to receive them; and Ælian observes that some kind of animals are killed by them. *Hist. Anim.* iii. 7.

b *Adulterate the word.*] Καπηλευοντες is a very expressive phrase, and alludes to the practice of those who deal in liquors, which they debase for their own greater gain; and it insinuates in strong terms the base temper and conduct of their false teachers. Bos has finely illustrated the force of this expression in his learned and elegant note on this text. *Exer.* p. 154, 155.

c *Upon your hearts.*] Some copies read *our hearts*, that is, *always remembered and thought of.* But I apprehend the apostle means, that the change produced, not only in their external conduct, but in their inward temper, was so great, that all who could judge of it by intimate knowledge, (and it is certain that some judgment may be formed,) must own it a great attestation of his ministry. The great enormities in which they were once plunged, (see 1 Cor. vi. 11. &c.) would much illustrate this argument.

SECT. 4. 2 COR. III.

rious change by our means produced there; and the effects of it are so apparent in your lives, that I may say ye are *known and read by all men*, who know what you once were, and you now are; and they who consider these things must acknowledge, that such success granted by the co-operation of divine grace, is as evident a proof of God's gracious presence with us as can well be imagined. [*Ye,*] whose characters were some of them
3 once so enormous, (1 Cor. vi. 11.) but [*are*] now so amiable and excellent, are indeed *manifest* and apparent, *as the epistle of Christ* which is *ministered by us;* and by you Christ doth, as it were, declare that he hath been faithfully preached among you by us; an epistle *written not*, as epistles generally are, *with ink, but* by traces drawn *by the Spirit of the* one *living* and true *God*, moving on your hearts, and producing that variety of graces which render many of you so conspicuous and lovely. And the inscription is *not* (as that boasted monument which did so great an honour to the mission and authority of Moses) written *in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart;* to which no hand, but that by which the heart was made, could find access, in such a man-
4 ner as to inscribe these sacred characters there. *Such confidence have we towards God by* Jesus *Christ*, that our ministry shall be effectual in other places, and that the world shall by your means be persuaded of our apostleship.

5 We say this, *not* as insinuating *that we are sufficient of ourselves to reckon upon any thing as from ourselves;*[d] we would not insinuate this, or encourage any others to do it; *for* we are upon all occasions ready most thankfully to acknowledge that all *our sufficiency* [*is*] *from God;* whatever furniture of any kind we have for our work, we humbly ascribe it to him, and from him arise all our expectations of success with this fur-
6 niture, whatever it be: From that great and adorable Author of all good *who also hath made us* his apostles, and others whom he hath sent into the work, *able ministers of the new covenant*, sufficiently qualified to discharge that important trust of proposing this gracious covenant of God, established in Christ, to our fellow-creatures. For we are indeed ministers, *not of the letter, but of the Spirit;*[e] *for* we are enabled to enter into the sense and spirit of the law, and other sacred writings; whereas that divine volume is to the Jews but as a heap of letters and characters, which they know not how to read or understand, and yet pride themselves so much in them, that in that sense it may be said they receive mischief rather than benefit from their own oracles. Thus *the letter killeth:* the unbelieving Jews are undone by their obstinate adherence to it, and more prejudiced against the gospel than those that never heard of any divine revelation at all. *But* when, taught by *the Spirit* of God speaking in us, they enter into the spiritual sense and design of the law, then it *giveth life;* it establisheth our faith, quickens our obedience, and becomes a source of happiness in this world and in the next.

ten in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart:

4 And such trust have we through Christ to Godward.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

IMPROVEMENT.

2 COR. II. 15, 16

MAY the infinite importance of the gospel-message be deeply impressed on all who preach and all who hear it. Life or death is in question; eternal life or everlasting death; and while it is from day to day reviving its thousands, is it not to be feared that in some places it is, by the righteous judgment of God on hard and impenitent hearts, aggravating the guilt and misery of its ten thousands? How awful is the work of dispensing this gospel! who can pretend to be sufficient for such things as these? Who, that considers the nature and importance of the ministerial work, can undertake or pursue it but with fear and trembling?

III. 5

Yet, insufficient as they ought humbly to acknowledge themselves to be to reckon upon any thing as from themselves, there is a sufficiency in God imparted to faithful ministers; in consequence of which they are often

I. 14

made to triumph in Christ, and borne on, in a holy superiority to all the difficulties of their work, and see their labour not to be in vain in the Lord. Well may that support them under the discouragements which, in other instances, they feel, when the fruit of their labours does not immediately appear; yea, when the present

15

state of many under their care is directly contrary to what they could desire; for their work is still with the Lord, and they are a sweet savour to God in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved. Let them therefore gird up the loins of their mind, and exert themselves with the utmost vigour, rejoicing in this, that God will on the whole be glorified, and they shall on the whole be accepted, and through his abundant grace be amply rewarded. Yea, God will consider, in that day of final recompense, the anguish which they have felt for the souls they have seen perishing under their ministrations, as well as the faithful pains they have bestowed to reclaim them.

But as they desire to secure this acceptance, yea, to secure their own salvation, let them never allow themselves,

17

by any foreign mixtures, to adulterate the word of God; but let them speak it in its uncorrupted sincerity, as in the sight and presence of God, and as those who know it is not their business to devise a message out of their own hearts, but to deliver what they have received of the Lord. So may they hope there shall not be wanting those who, according to the views which the apostle gives us of these Corinthians, shall appear as epistles written by the hand of Christ himself, in attestation of their commission from him.

III. 2

That ministers may more cheerfully hope for and expect such an honour, let us all pray, that the Spirit of

6

God may lead them into the true sense and meaning of scripture; that they may not unprofitably amuse themselves and their hearers with vain and cold criticisms on the letter of it, so as to neglect and forget what is most spiritual in its design and meaning; but that they may, under divine illumination, attain to the mind of the Spirit,

d *To reckon upon any thing as of ourselves.*] This seems the most exact rendering of λογισασθαι τι ως εξ εαυτων. Dr. Whitby renders it, *to reason*, as if the apostle had said, We are unable by any reasoning of our own to bring men to conversion; which gives a fine and just sense, but I think only a part of what the apostle intended. Compare Acts xix. 27; Rom. iv. 3, 6, 11; viii. 18, 36; 1 Cor. iv. 1; in all which the word λογιζομαι has the signification we here assign it, and signifies, *to reckon* or *account*.

e *Not of the letter, but of the Spirit.*] To understand this of an allegorical rather than literal explication of the Old Testament, is

and be enabled to make greater proficiency in unfolding and illustrating the important mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and may be to multitudes a savour of life unto life. SECT. 4.

SECTION V.

The apostle, farther to recommend the ministry of which he had been speaking, falls into a very pertinent and useful digression concerning the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic law, and the superior glory and permanence of the gospel. 2 Cor. iii. 7, *to the end.*

2 Cor. iii. 7.

BUT if the ministration of death written *and* engraven in stones was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away:

2 Cor. iii. 7.

I HAVE just been observing, that the letter of the law, in that sense in which it is maintained by the Jews, killeth in itself; it binds down transgressors under a sentence of death, and, by the perverseness of their interpretation, is the occasion of ruin; while the spirit quickeneth. And let me now direct your thoughts to the argument arising from hence to prove the greatly superior excellence of the gospel: *for if* the Mosaic law, which was indeed *the ministration of death*, which was [*contained*] *in* visible *letters*, [*and*] the most excellent part of which was *engraven in* the two tables of *stone*, hewn indeed and prepared by God himself, which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai in his hands, *was attended with* a signal and undeniable *glory, so that the children of Israel could not look directly upon the face of Moses, because of the glory of his countenance, which was* so soon *to be abolished* in death: *How much more shall* that, which may with so much propriety be called *the ministration of the Spirit, be glorious!* Since the work of the Spirit of God on the heart of a rational being, is so much more important than any dead characters which could be engraven on insensible stones. SECT. 5. 2 COR. III. 7 8

8 How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

This may be farther apparent when we consider what I hinted before, concerning the impossibility of obtaining life and salvation by the Mosaic law. *For if* that which was, in its effects, only *the ministration of condemnation*, pronouncing a sentence of death, in many cases without mercy, and which at last certainly ended in leaving persons under condemnation, as it was incapable of taking away the moral guilt of any one offence, [*was attended with*] so bright *a glory*;[a] *how much more shall* the gospel, which may well be called *the ministration of righteousness, exceed in glory!* as it puts us into so certain a way to obtain justification and life everlasting. 9

10 For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

For even that which was made glorious at its first dispensation, that is, the law of Moses, *hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth it* by unutterable degrees; so that as the sun swalloweth up the light of the moon and the stars, in like manner is the lustre of former dispensations swallowed up in that of the gospel. *For if that which was to be* so soon *abolished, was* nevertheless *attended*, as we have seen, *with* some considerable degrees of *glory*, to illustrate its divine original and authority, *how much more glorious* [*must*] *that* [*be*] *which remaineth* immutable through the remotest ages![b] 10 11

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.

13 And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament: which *veil* is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it

This is the glorious ministry in which we are engaged; and it brings along with it the sublimest sentiments and the noblest views. *Having therefore this hope* and confidence, it is no wonder that *we use great liberty of address* when we are speaking to you; *And* [*are*] *not* herein concealed, *as Moses* [*who*] *put a veil upon his face*, (compare Exod. xxxiv. 33.[c]) wherein he was a kind of type and figure of his own dispensation; so *that* he might seem thereby to intimate that *the children of Israel could not directly look to the end of that* law *which* he brought, and which *was*, as I observed before, *to be abolished*:[d] *But*, on the contrary, *their understandings were* evidently *blinded: for until this day the same veil continues* upon the law, or rather upon their own hearts, and is still *unremoved during the reading of the Old Testament*, which contains such distinct prophecies of Christ, and such lively descriptions of him, that one would imagine it impossible that he should not be immediately acknowledged and adored by all that profess to believe its divine authority: *which* [*veil*] *is taken away in* those that receive *Christ*, who have in him the true substance of those shadows, and the great end of its most important prophecies. *But* as to the unbelieving Jews, as I said before, *the veil* which they wear in their synagogues too aptly represents that which *is upon their heart when Moses is read, even to this day*, in their hearing; in consequence of which they can no more see the mind of Moses than their fathers could see his face. *But* it shall not always be so; the house of Israel is entitled to a variety of most excellent promises, relating to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and as when Moses went in to the Lord he laid aside his veil, so *when it*, that is, the people of 12 13 14 15 16

very arbitrary and unwarrantable; and I wish no christian commentators had given encouragement to the deists to abuse this text in the manner it is well known they have done.

a *Attended with glory.*] Dr. Whitby has taken a great deal of pains to prove that there is an intended opposition between the glory, that is, the visible lustre, on the countenance of Moses, (compare Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. where the LXX. use the word δεδοξασται,) with the *glory* which descended on the apostles; (Acts ii. 3, 4.) and considers each as an emblem of the dispensation to be introduced, but with incomparable advantage on the side of the gospel. But laboured as this interpretation is, I cannot acquiesce in what is singular in it; and it had been obvious to have objected to ver. 11. that the cloven tongues of fire left no such lasting lustre on the *face* of the apostles as on that of Moses.

b *If that which was to be*, &c.] Mr. Hallet would render it, "if "that which was done away, was done away by glory, how much "more doth that which remaineth, remain in glory!" But I think this must appear harsh to every one that examines the original; διὰ δόξης is literally *by glory*, and so may signify, *introduced* by it, or *attended* with it, or *confirmed* by it; and in either of these senses may well be applied to the *shining* of the *face* of Moses.

c *And are not*, &c.] All that follows from hence to the beginning of the 18th verse may be included in a parenthesis.

d *Which was to be abolished.*] Such an oblique manner of speaking on this subject makes the argument from these words peculiarly striking. It is taken for granted, as a thing certainly known and quite indisputable, that the Mosaic dispensation was to be abolished.

SECT. 5. Israel, *shall turn unto the Lord*, when the blessed period appointed for their general conversion shall come, *the veil shall be taken away*, and the genuine sense of the sacred oracles shall break in upon their minds with an irresistible light. *Now the Lord* Jesus Christ
2 COR. III. 17 *is that Spirit* of the law of which I spake before, to whom the letter of it was intended to lead the Jews; and it is the office of the Spirit of God, as the great Agent in his kingdom, to direct the minds of men to it. *And* let him be universally sought in this view; for *where the Spirit of the Lord* [*is*] *there* [*is*] *liberty:* a more liberal and filial disposition, to which, under the influence and operation of the Spirit, the gospel brings those who were
18 subject to bondage, under the imperfect dispensation of Moses. *And* in consequence of the liberty enjoyed by virtue of the gracious economy, *we all*, who have been so happy as suitably to welcome it, *with unveiled face* attentively *beholding as by a glass*[e] or mirror, *the glory of the Lord*[f] reflected from his word, *are transformed into* something of *the same* resplendent *image* of the blessed Redeemer, whose shining face we there see; and the more stedfastly we behold this illustrious and amiable form, the more we do partake of it, proceeding gradually, *from glory to glory*. And all this is *as* proceeding *from the Lord the Spirit*;[g] for as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Spirit of the law, so the Divine Spirit, under his direction and influences, is the Cause of this noble and divine effect.

shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

18 But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 STILL doth this glorious glass of the gospel stand full in our view, from which the lustre of the Redeemer's countenance is reflected. Let us daily behold his image there, and contemplate it with an attentive eye, as those who are solicitous that we may wear some of those rays; yea, that we may wear them with still increasing lustre: that we may be transformed from glory to glory, and reflecting those rays, shine as lights in the world.

Let us endeavour to raise our minds to this laudable temper, by frequently reflecting on the excellence of the
7, 8 christian dispensation, as a dispensation of the Spirit and of life; whereas the law was the ministration of death: and while, from the glory attending the law, we infer, with the apostle, the super-eminent glory of the gospel, let us learn also the superior obligation it brings us under to regard and obey it, and the proportionably greater dan-
11 ger of despising it. The law of Moses was soon to be abolished; the gospel still remains, and shall remain to the end of time. Let us pray for its prosperity, and do our utmost to promote it. And let us earnestly plead with
14 God, that whereas there is now a veil upon the face of the Jews even to this day, when the sacred records are
16 read among them, they may turn unto the Lord, and find the veil taken away: that so, by the conversion of Israel as a nation, there may be a glorious accession of evidence to christianity; and that the Jews themselves may be happy in the blessing of him whom their fathers crucified, and whom they continue contemptuously to reject.

Let the ministers of the gospel, while defending so divine a cause, and enforcing so important a message, use
12 all becoming plainness of speech; and may all christians know more of that liberty which the Spirit of the
17 Lord gives, that God may in all things be glorified, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECTION VI.

The apostle declares his courage, and disclaims all sinister views, and all distrust of success, in pursuing the glorious ministry he had described: being persuaded that such a gospel could not be rejected, but in consequence of the most fatal prejudices. 2 Cor. iv. 1—6.

2 COR. iv. 1.

SECT. 6. SUCH are the distinguished glories of the gospel-dispensation, and its effects on the hearts of those who sincerely embrace it. And *therefore, having been entrusted with such a ministration, as we have obtained mercy* [*of God*] to be thus honoured, *we*
2 COR. IV. *faint not* under any of those difficulties we are called out to encounter, nor in any degree
2 desist from our glorious enterprize.[a] *But we have renounced* and set at defiance *the hidden things of shame*:[b] in which the priests of paganism deal so much, in order to impose on the people over whom they preside, practising in their mysteries so many impure and so many foolish rites. We need not any of their artifices, *not walking in craftiness*, as some would insinuate that we do, *nor deceitfully corrupting* and disguising *the word of God; but, by the manifestation of the* genuine and unsophisticated *truth, recommending ourselves to every man's conscience*, we steadily and constantly act as *in the* all-penetrating *sight of God;* and therefore are willing that all the world should know what the arts and mysteries of our ministry are.

2 COR. iv. 1.

THEREFORE, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

e *Beholding as by a glass.*] Some would render κατοπτριζομενοι, *reflecting as from a glass.* But Elsner and Bos have abundantly proved, what indeed is evident to all versed in the language, that it has the signification here assigned; and indeed the other interpretation would obscure and perplex the sense.

f *Beholding—the glory of the Lord.*] Here is one of the most beautiful contrasts that can be imagined. Moses saw the *Shechinah*, and it rendered his face resplendent, so that he covered it with a *veil*, the Jews not being able to bear the reflected light; we behold Christ as in the *glass* of his *word*, and (as the reflection of a very *luminous* object from a mirror gilds the face on which the reverberated rays fall) our faces shine too; and we veil them not, but diffuse the lustre, which, as we discover more and more of his glories in the gospel, is continually increasing.

g *By the Lord the Spirit.*] As the order of the Greek words is unusual, not πνευματος του κυριου, but κυριου πνευματος, Dr. Whitby would render it, *by the Lord of the Spirit*, that is, by Christ, in whom the Spirit dwells, and by whom it is communicated according to his sovereign will. But the paraphrase unites two senses, each I think more natural, though which of the two was chiefly intended, I cannot absolutely determine.

a Desist from our glorious enterprize.] Εκκακειν naturally expresses the *drawing back* from some strenuous undertaking, in what we often call a dastardly manner, on account of some difficulties attending it.

b *Renounced the hidden things of shame.*] Dr. Whitby understands this of *lewd practices;* but the opposition between this clause and the following seems much more to favour the paraphrase, though, to be sure, the phrase may extend to all *dishonest artifices* of false *teachers*. The word απειπαμεθα, which we render, *renounce*, does not imply they ever had any thing to do with these things; but the words "*set them at defiance*," seem still more literally to express the original.

SECT. 6.

2 COR. IV.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

But if our gospel, after such open and generous conduct on our side, *be* still *under a veil too*,[c] as the law is with respect to so many, *it is veiled to those that are perishing*; they must be very bad men, and in a very dangerous state, who, hearing it preached as it is by us, cannot enter into the main design and spirit of it, and are not inwardly engaged to reverence it. *Among whom* undoubtedly, that is, in the number of such unhappy wretches, [*are*] all [*they*] *whose unbelieving minds* Satan, who herein acts as *the god of this world*,[d] whose subjects the children of this world are, *hath blinded* by its dazzling vanities and allurements, *lest the lustre of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of* the invisible *God* in all his perfections and glories, *should beam forth upon them*, and should pain or rather awaken those weak minds, darkened by so many gross and unhappy prejudices, and slumbering to their everlasting destruction. But such as I have before described is our conduct, however perversely it may be mistaken or misrepresented. *For we preach not ourselves*;[e] we aim not at exalting our own authority, at extending our reputation, or securing to ourselves any secular advantage; *but* renouncing all such views, and claims, and desires, we preach *Christ Jesus* as *the* supreme *Lord* of his church; *and* instead of setting ourselves up for your masters, we declare *ourselves* to be *your servants for the sake of Jesus*; and are willing, out of regard to you, and above all, out of duty to him, to stoop to the humblest offices of love by which we may be serviceable to you in your most important interests. And it is no wonder that we are thus disposed, considering the view of things which God hath given us by his grace; *for God, who*, by his powerful word in the first creation of this world, *commanded the light* instantaneously *to shine out of* that *darkness* which covered the whole face of the deep, (Gen. i. 5.) *hath* also *shined into our* once prejudiced and benighted *hearts*, and particularly into mine, by the internal operation of his blessed Spirit, [*to impart*] *the lustre of the knowledge of God's glory*,[f] discovered, as we before observed, *in the face of* our Lord *Jesus Christ*,[g] from thence reflected upon us, and from us to you, for the important purposes of your sanctification and salvation.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let all who are honoured with the ministry of the gospel learn from the apostle courage and fidelity; remembering they are continually in the sight and presence of God. Let them therefore renounce with abhorrence that craft which so many who have called themselves christian priests have studied; and labour to govern their whole conduct by such apparent principles of integrity and honour, that they may commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Ver. 1 2

This end will be much promoted if they learn to lay aside all sinister views of interest and ambition, of human applause, or a dominion over men's consciences; and putting on that humble character so amiably illustrated in the apostle Paul's writings, every where, with all loyal affection, preach Christ as the great Lord and Head of the church, and declare and approve themselves the willing servants of souls for his sake. So humbling themselves, they will be exalted in the eyes of God and man; and will reap those heart-felt pleasures now, and those honours, emoluments, and delights hereafter, which will infinitely more than indemnify them for all they may resign, and exceed not only the low apprehensions of the servants of mammon in Christ's livery, but their own most elevated conceptions. 5

Let every reader seriously examine himself as to the knowledge he has of this gospel, and the degree in which he has felt a sense of its glory and excellence upon his heart; solemnly considering that if the lustre and efficacy of the gospel be hidden from him, it is a sad sign that he is himself a lost creature, and is like to be lost to God and happiness for ever; he is the captive of Satan, blinded by him as the god of this world, and in the probable way to be led on to unseen but irretrievable destruction. Dreadful situation! which might indeed occasion absolute despair, were it not for the views which the gospel gives us of that God who in the beginning of the creation commanded the light to shine out of darkness; who can yet say, Let there be light, and there shall be light in the most benighted soul, and the lustre of the glorious knowledge of God in the person of Christ shall beam forth. Let this divine interposition be earnestly implored; and oh that it may be imparted before the blinded captives be consigned to eternal ruin, to blackness of darkness for ever! 3 4 6

c *If our gospel be under a veil too.*] Ει δε και εστι κεκαλυμμενον το ευαγγελιον ημων is most literally rendered thus: and it has so evident a reference to what was said above of the *veil* on the faces of the Jews, that it seems by all means expedient to translate it thus, rather than *hid*.—This text is justly urged by Dr. Scott (*Christian Life*, Vol. V. p. 320.) as a proof of the perspicuity of the apostle's writings in all matters of importance to our salvation.

d *The god of this world.*] That several ancient christian writers should interpret this of *God the Father*, is one of the most amazing things I have met with. See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.* and Dr. Edwards, *Exercit.* p. 291. I doubt not but Satan is intended; and could it be proved, as has been intimated, that this malignant spirit was so early called by the Jews, חמד, *the god who blinds*, I should think it a beautiful illustration.

e *Preach not ourselves.*] Grotius explains it thus, "we do not "preach that *we are lords*, but that Christ is so:" and this is certainly comprehended. But I think the phrase may well be taken in the larger extent, expressed in the paraphrase. *To preach themselves*, may signify their making *themselves*, in any view, *the end of their preaching*; as preaching Jesus, a phrase often used, may signify preaching so as to direct men's eyes to him.

f *To impart the lustre of the knowledge of God's glory.*] Γνωσεως της δοξης του Θεου, may very well signify the *glorious knowledge of God*; but the following words determined me to the more literal translation, as it is more proper to speak of the glory than of the knowledge of God, as in or upon the face of Christ. Some would render προς φωτισμον, according or in *proportion* to that *lustre*.

g *In the face of Jesus Christ.*] Some would render προσωπω, *person*; but it so evidently signifies *face* in the context, (chap. iii. 13, 18.) that it seemed much better to render it *face*: though the glory here said to be reflected from his face, is undoubtedly that which is manifested in his *person* in the union of *deity* with *humanity*, and all the wonderful things he has done and suffered in consequence of it.

SECTION VII.

The apostle freely acknowledges his own infirmities; but glories in the strength communicated to him from God, as an effectual support under the extremest trials; over which he triumphs in the language of the strongest faith. 2 Cor. iv. 7—15.

2 Cor. iv. 7.

SECT. 7. 2 COR. IV. 7

I HAVE spoken to you of the excellence of the gospel, representing it as a most invaluable treasure; and indeed it is so rich a blessing, that the highest angel in heaven might think it an honour to be employed in dispensing it. *But* such is the conduct of Providence in this respect, that *we have this* invaluable *treasure in earthen vessels:* feeble creatures who dwell in mortal bodies, and are surrounded with numberless infirmities, are employed in dispensing it to us; *that* so *the excellence of the power*, by which its great and important ends are answered, *may appear* to *be of God, and not of us:* who are so far from being able to add efficacy to our own labours, that it is wonderful how we are enabled even to sustain them. [*We are*] indeed *in every respect*[a] greatly *afflicted*;[b] *but* through the divine care over us, we are *not utterly overpressed*[c] with the weight and variety of our trials: we are often *brought into dubious circumstances, but*, blessed be God, we are *not in despair;* [*We are*] continually *persecuted* by men, *but* we are *not forsaken* of God; we are *thrown down* by our enemies, *yet* we are *not* entirely *destroyed* by them; but animated from on high, we spring up again, and renew the combat with increasing vigour: We are *always bearing about* with us *in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus* Christ; so that the cruelties which were exercised in putting him to death, seem to be acted over again upon us, by the rage of the enemy; yet all this is in effect, not that an immediate period should be put to our life and ministry as they desire, but *that the life also of Jesus*, now triumphant above all hostile power, *may be* more evidently *manifested in* the preservation of this *our* feeble *body*, which enemies so many and mighty are continually endeavouring to destroy. *For we who live*, those of us, the apostles and ministers of Christ, who still survive, *are continually delivered over to death for the sake of* the Lord *Jesus*, and, as it were, every day led out to a new martyrdom in his cause; but so many new and unexpected deliverances arise, that it seems as if these dangers were permitted on purpose, *that*, as I said before, *the life also* and power *of* the blessed *Jesus*, our Divine Saviour, *may be manifested* and demonstrated *in* supporting *our mortal* and feeble *flesh* in the midst of all these assaults, and perpetuating our lives from year to year through so many successive dangers which await us wherever we come. *So that* on the whole I may say, that *death worketh* continually to glorify his name *in us, but life in you:* while you are called to live for his honour, we may be said to serve our Redeemer by bearing for his sake repeated deaths.

But *we* endure it all with resolution and cheerfulness, *having the same spirit of faith* by which good men of old were animated in their most active labours and most painful sufferings; *according to what is written*, (Psal. cxvi. 10.) *I have believed, and therefore have I spoken;*[d] *we also* cordially *believe* the certain truth of what we teach, *and therefore* go on to *speak* our important message, whatever may be the consequence, supported by this inward consciousness of our integrity, and animated by a powerful sense of duty towards God, and the hope of the most glorious rewards from his bountiful grace. Those hopes rise to complete and everlasting happiness; which we continually pursue, as *knowing that* if we persevere in that service with which he hath honoured us, *he who raised up the Lord Jesus* Christ from the dead by his almighty power, *will also raise us up by Jesus*, whom he will send at the last day, commissioned to accomplish this great work; *and* that then he *will present* [*us*] *with you*, before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy, in each other and in him; and will introduce us to that heavenly kingdom, to the prospects of which he hath called us by that gospel which we have preached, and which you have believed. *For all* these great *things* [*are*] prepared, not merely on our account, but *for your sakes, that the overflowing grace* being complete in all its diffusive extent and exalted degrees, *might abound by the thanksgiving of many*, even of countless multitudes who shall share for ever in it, *to the glory of God*, the great Original and End of all.

2 Cor. iv. 7.

BUT we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair:

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live, are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 We have the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.

a *In every respect we are afflicted, &c.*] This section may seem a digression; but nothing could be more pertinent to the apostle's grand purpose. He aimed at recovering the affections of these Corinthians, which were much alienated from him; for this purpose he freely opens his heart towards them, and tenderly represents the many and grievous pressures and hardships to which love to souls, and to theirs among the rest, exposed him. This I take to be the true key to this beautiful and pathetic passage.

b *We are afflicted.*] I apprehend the apostle here to speak with some peculiar regard to his own case; yet not so as to exclude that of his brethren, which undoubtedly did very much resemble it. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 9.

c *Not utterly overpressed.*] The word στενοχωρουμενοι properly signifies, *crushed in a strait passage.*

d *I have believed, and therefore have I spoken.*] As for the quotation here, some think there is an allusion to the confidence which David expresses in the preceding words, of *walking before the Lord in the land of the living;* as if the apostle had intended to say, we also shall in a nobler sense do it. Mr. Pierce supposes the *Spirit of faith* here spoken of, is the Spirit of Jesus, which enabled him through faith in God to preach that doctrine which he knew would provoke the rage of a wicked world, so as to end in his death; and he undertakes to prove in his third *Dissertation*, that the cxvith Psalm, in its original sense, is to be understood as spoken by the Psalmist in the person of the Messiah. But I see no necessity for urging this. The simpler sense of the passage, as it stands in the Psalm, is, "Though I have been in very great affliction, and sometimes almost depressed, yet *faith* in God hath supported me, and put this song of praise into my mouth." In this sense of the words nothing could be more natural than for St. Paul to adopt them.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the wisdom and goodness of God, in sending us the gospel-treasure in earthen vessels, in employing our fellow-mortals, rather than angels, under the character of his messengers to us; by which means we are taught more to depend on God for that efficacy of power that renders them successful; to acknowledge his hand in animating and preserving them, and are kept in such an exercise of faith, as is in this present world most honourable to God and most profitable to us. Let the mortality of ministers be suitably remembered by themselves and others, and improved to the best purposes; and let us take care that we do not think the less honourably of the treasure, on account of the weakness of those vessels in which the great Proprietor has thought fit to lodge it. SECT. 7. 2 COR. IV.

Let it encourage them who are struggling with the difficulties of that arduous and important work, to think on those refreshments which the apostles experienced; in consequence of which, though afflicted, they were not depressed, and though persecuted, appeared not to be forsaken; but could boast that the support of their lives, amidst so many pressing dangers, was a demonstration of the life of Christ. We may indeed all say this, with respect to the support of the spiritual life, in the midst of so many difficulties. Having obtained help from him, we continue until this day; and it is because he lives that we live also. Confiding therefore in him, let us exert ourselves vigorously in this holy warfare to which we are called; and strenuously endeavour to maintain our ground against all the enemies who press hard to overbear and destroy us. Ver. 8, 9, 11

And that we may be thus animated, let us labour to engrave on our hearts a more lively and assured belief of the great and important things of which we speak and hear; and that not only in the general, but in particular instances. Let us labour to feel at once their evidence and their energy; having the same spirit of faith which wrought in the apostles and prophets, and engaged them to discharge their office with such distinguished fidelity, fervour, and zeal. Especially let us maintain such believing apprehensions of this great and comprehensive truth, that God hath raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, and that he will by the same power also raise up his faithful ministers and servants, who firmly retain that glorious gospel; and as those discoveries are made for their sakes, that they may obtain salvation by him, and that God may be glorified in their united and everlasting praises, let us daily set before our eyes this risen and triumphant Redeemer, and look forward to that glorious appearance of his when he shall come to be admired in his saints, and to be farther extolled and glorified in all them who believe. Amen. 13, 15

SECTION VIII.

The apostle describes the glorious hopes which he had beyond the grave, as his great support and ground of triumph under all those trials which he had been mentioning before; and endeavours to animate others to fidelity and zeal by that description. 2 Cor. iv. 16, *to the end*; v. 1—10.

2 COR. iv. 16.

2 COR. iv. 16. FOR which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen, *are* eternal.

2 Cor. v. 1. For we know, that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

WE have been speaking of the great design of God, in causing his gospel to be revealed to the children of men, that the thanksgivings of many may redound to his own glory; and *on this account we faint not* under any of the present pressures, nor suffer ourselves to be borne down by the assaults of our enemies; *but* on the contrary, *if our outer man perishes, yet the inner* man *is daily renewed:* the soul gathers new strength, as the body grows weaker and weaker, and we feel our dissolution approaching; which may well be the case. *For* we have the firmest assurance, that *this momentary lightness of our affliction*, which passes off so fast, and leaves so little impression, that it may justly be spoken of as levity itself, *is working out for us a far more exceeding* [*and*] *eternal weight of glory*,[a] the most solid, substantial, and lasting felicity, the exalted degrees of which none of the boldest figures of speech can paint, nor any stretch of human thought distinctly conceive. And we may assuredly promise ourselves that this shall be the blessed end of all, *while we are* conscious that we are *not aiming*[b] *at the things which are visible*, are not endeavouring to secure to ourselves any secular advantages of one kind or another; *but at those which are invisible.* And however vain and visionary such views may seem to the world about us, and we may be despised for attending to them, we have full satisfaction in our own minds that we are acting the wisest part, in such a choice and preference; *for the things which are visible*, and in that respect may seem to have the advantage of others, [*are*] *temporary* and transient; *but those which are invisible* [*are*] *eternal*, and therefore suitable to the duration of that immortal soul which God hath given us, and in the felicity of which our true happiness must consist. Nor is this an uncertain or very distant hope; *for we know* assuredly, that *if our earthly house of* [*this*] *tabernacle were dissolved*, if this mortal body, constituted of dust, were mouldered back to dust again; or if our zeal for the service of the gospel should bring on martyrdom, which should destroy it before its time; *we have*, and should immediately enter on, *a building of* which *God* is the great Architect and Donor; *an house not made with* mortal *hands*,[c] SECT. 8. 2 COR. IV. 16 17 18 2 COR. V. 1

a *Far more exceeding, &c.*] This sentence is one of the most emphatical in all St. Paul's writings; in which (as Dr. Grosvenor well expresses it) he speaks as much like an orator as an apostle. The lightness of the trial is expressed by το ελαφρον της θλιψεως, the *lightness of our affliction*; as if he had said, it is even *levity itself* in such a comparison. On the other hand, the καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην, is (says Mr. Blackwall) infinitely emphatical, and cannot be expressed by any translation. It signifies, that all hyperboles fall short of describing that weighty, eternal glory, so solid and lasting, that you may pass from one hyperbole to another, and yet when you have gained the last, are infinitely below it. Blackw. *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 332.

b *Are not aiming, &c.*] This σκοπουντων exactly signifies; and our English word *scope* or mark aimed at, is derived from the same Greek theme.

c *Not made with hands, &c.*] Whether we consider this divine building as particularly signifying *the body after the resurrection*, in which sense Dr. Whitby takes it; or any *vehicle* in which the soul may be clothed during the intermediate state, considerable difficulties will arise. I am therefore inclinable rather to take it in a more general view, as referring to the *whole* provision God has made for the future happiness of his people, and which Christ represents as *his Father's house, in which there are many mansions. To be clothed upon with an house*, is a very strong *figure*: which yet it

SECT. 8. nor to be compared with the most magnificent structure they ever raised, exceeding them all in its lustre, as much as its duration; though that duration be *eternal in the* regions of the *heavens*, far above either violence or decay. *And in this* view *we groan* through
2 COR. V. that intenseness of soul with which we are *earnestly* and perpetually *desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven: Since being so clothed upon, we shall not*
3 *be found naked* and exposed to any evil and inconvenience, how entirely soever we may
4 be stripped of every thing we can call our own here below. And *moreover, we who are* yet *in* [*this*] *tabernacle do groan*, not only with those longings after a blessed immortality, but also *being burdened* with the present weight of many infirmities and many calamities: for which cause *nevertheless we would not be unclothed*, or stripped of the body; for that is what we cannot consider as in itself desirable; *but* rather, if it might be referred to our own choice, *clothed upon* immediately, with a glory like that which shall invest the saints after the resurrection; *that* so *what is mortal*, corruptible, and obnoxious to these disorders, burdens, and sorrows, *may* all *be* so absorbed and *swallowed up by life*, as if it were annihilated by that divine vigour and energy which shall then exert itself in and upon us.[d]

2 For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 *Now he who hath wrought us to this very thing*, to these noble views and sublime desires, [*is*] *God*;[e] *who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit*, as the pledge of better,
6 even of eternal, blessings. *Therefore*, under the influences of this Divine Spirit, [*we are*] *always courageous* in the midst of surrounding danger; and whatever natural aversion we have to death, are ready to brave its terrors, in the views of that immediate happiness which lieth before us: *knowing, that while we are sojourning in the body*,[f] *we are*, as it were, *in a state of exile from the Lord* Jesus Christ, in the enjoyment of whom our chief hap-
7 piness consists: *For we* now *walk* and conduct ourselves, in the whole course of life, *by* the *faith* of objects as yet unseen; and *not by* the *sight* of those glories or by a regard to
8 those things which we can see. *We are courageous* therefore, [*I say*,] in these delightful views, *and think with complacency of being rather absent from the body, and* banished from all its pleasures and enjoyments, on condition of being, as we know we shall be, *pre-*
9 *sent with the Lord*,[g] and dwelling as those who are at home with him. *Therefore we make it the height of our ambition*,[h] *that whether present* in the body *or absent* from it, *we may be well pleasing to him*, and receive the tokens of his acceptance and favour.

5 For he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight.)

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.

10 This is our concern, and it ought to be the concern of all; *for we must all*, without any exception, whatever our station in life may have been, *be manifest before the tribunal of Christ*; our inmost soul must there be displayed, and all the most secret springs of our actions laid open, *that every one may* then *receive*, in that final distribution of happiness and misery, *according to what he hath done in the body, whether good or evil*; in full proportion to his actions, and the principles from which the Searcher of hearts knows them to have arisen.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

IMPROVEMENT.

2 COR. IV. Ver. 18 BEHOLD the great lesson which as christians we have to learn, and which is of such efficacy, that if we thoroughly master it, all the other parts of our duty will become easy and delightful—to look at the things which are unseen, rather than at those which are seen! And what can be so reasonable, as that eternal objects should employ the thoughts of immortal beings, rather than those which they must soon survive? Let all our souls be directed to them.

V. 1 Let us contemplate the feeble structure of this earthly tabernacle, which gives us so many tokens of its nearly ap-
14 proaching dissolution: this tabernacle, in which we groan under such a variety of burdens; and let us comfort
IV. 16 ourselves with the prospect of speedy deliverance; that so while the outer man perisheth, the inner may be renewed
V. 8 day by day. What though we have death before us in a certain prospect, and know we must soon be absent from
1 the body? If we are true christians, we have the most express assurance, not only that the time will come when we shall inhabit a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; but that we shall imme-
6 diately be present with the Lord, with that blessed Redeemer, whom having not seen we love. How much more shall we love him, how much more shall we rejoice in him, when we are blessed with his presence, and behold his glory!

While we have this consciousness, let us be always confident and courageous, and rejoice in afflictions and
IV. 17 mortality; since this light and momentary affliction hath so happy an influence upon a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and death will be the consummation of our wishes. Let this then be our constant care, to
V. 7 walk by faith and not by sight; having this ever for the glorious object of our ambition, that whether present or
9, 5 absent, we may be accepted of the Lord. May God work us up to this self-same thing; and may the operation
10 of his grace upon our souls for that purpose, be always acknowledged with the humblest gratitude, and its farther

is evident the apostle uses in the next verse; having in his thoughts the glory which each should wear, instead of being clothed, as now, with that mortal flesh which he calls a *tabernacle*, as it is so mean, inconvenient, and precarious an abode.

d *That mortality may be*, &c.] The expression in these and the following verses is not perfectly distinct; but the meaning seems to be this: "That though it appeared most desirable of all to pass "to glory without dying, yet a state in which mortality should be "swallowed up by life, was at all events *desirable*; and an *absence* "*from the body* to be not only submitted to, but *wished*, in a view "of being so *present with the Lord*, as even in the intermediate state "they expected to be."

e *He who hath wrought us to this very thing is God.*] Mr. Howe observes, that this is a most emphatical manner of speaking; not only asserting that God is the author of it, but ascribing deity to the author; as if he had said, "None but God could have raised us "to such a temper." Howe's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 680.

f *Are sojourning in the body.*] So ἐνδημοῦντες here properly signifies; and it is, as Dr. Clarke observes, wrong to render it, *while at home in the body*; since it is the apostle's design to intimate that this is not our home.

g *Present with the Lord.*] From this text Mr. Boyse argues, not only against the *sleep* of the soul during the intermediate state; but that saints, when departed from our world, go into the highest heaven; where they *dwell* with Christ, and are not, as some have supposed, in a place where they have only a transient sight of him on some extraordinary occasions. Boyse's *Four Last Things*, p. 592.

h *We make it the height of our ambition.*] This φιλοτιμεμεθα plainly imports; and it is flat to translate it, *we labour*.

communications sought with the most earnest importunity! Then shall we not dread the tribunal of Christ, before which we are so certainly to appear and be made manifest; knowing that our integrity will be approved, and that those works of faith and labours of love which shall then be commemorated, will meet with gracious acceptance and most munificent rewards. SECT. 8.

SECTION IX.

Touching again upon the zeal with which he prosecuted the gospel-ministry, the apostle makes a kind of apology for it, by pleading the irresistible engagements of a Redeemer's love, and the infinite importance of that message of reconciliation with which he was charged; and which while he recounts, he prosecutes in a pathetic address to the Corinthians. 2 Cor. v. 11, *to the end;* vi. 1, 2.

2 Cor. v. 11.

2 Cor. v. 11 KNOWING therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

I HAVE now touched upon a consideration, which animates us to that zeal in our ministrations with which many are so much surprised, and some not a little displeased. We often reflect how near the solemn time is advancing, when we and our hearers shall appear before the tribunal of Christ; and *knowing therefore the terror of the Lord*, the strict judgment which must then pass on all impenitent sinners, *we*, for their sake and for our own, labour to our utmost to *persuade men* to take all necessary methods for escaping it. *But* as *we are made manifest to God, and* think of it with unutterable pleasure that he knows the integrity of our hearts, in prosecuting the work he hath assigned us, *I hope also we are manifest to your consciences*, and that I have already given, and shall continue to give, such proofs of the simplicity of my views and uprightness of my conduct, that you will not be able to harbour any suspicion concerning it. SECT. 9. 2 Cor. v. 11

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

I say these things freely; *for we do not*, after the modesty and humility with which we have behaved hitherto, now begin to applaud ourselves, or *recommend ourselves again unto you*,[a] as some have very unjustly charged us with doing in some former instances; *but we are giving you occasion of* rejoicing and *boasting on our account*, as you have indeed cause to do: and are suggesting what may be sufficient, *that ye may have something to* [*answer*] *those who glory in appearance, and not in heart;* for that, I am persuaded, is the case with some of your opposing teachers, whose consciences must surely recoil upon them and condemn them, while they pretend to vie with us in the discharge of the christian ministry, and would challenge your regards in preference to us. 12

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God; or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

For if, as some injuriously insinuate, *we be transported beyond ourselves*,[b] and the due exercise of sober reason, [*it is*] *to God;* a zeal for his glory that animates us; *or if we be sober*, as we hope you cannot but acknowledge us to be, [*it is*] *for your sakes* that we take so much serious pains in the prosecution of a work in which your highest interest is concerned. On the whole, love to God and benevolence to man are the grand principles by which we are actuated; and we cannot be cold and unaffected, while we have such grand and noble subjects before us as those which we handle among you, to awaken our piety and our charity. 13

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

For the love of Christ, so illustriously displayed in that redemption he hath wrought, constraineth us; it *bears us away*[c] like a strong and resistless torrent; *while we thus judge*, and, in our calmest and most rational moments, draw it as a certain consequence, from the important principles, which we assuredly know to be true, *that if one*, even Christ, *died for* the redemption and salvation of *all* who should sincerely believe in him and obey him, *then were all dead;* for had not all, even the very best of men, been in a state of condemnation and death, there would have been no need of his dying for them. 14

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

And now we know that *he died for all, that they who live* only in consequence of his dying love, *should not henceforth*, from this remarkable period and era of their lives, (whatever they have formerly done,) *live to themselves*, so as to make their own will their rule, or to seek any interest of their own distinct from his; *but* that they should all agree that they will live *to* the honour, glory, and interest of *him who died for them; and*, when he *rose again* from the dead, retained the same affection for them, and is continually improving his recovered life for their security and happiness. 15

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

So that, on the whole, *we from this time* forward *know not any man after the flesh:* we have no longer any partial regard for any, on account of their being Jews by birth or religion, or as to the aspect which their friendship for us may have on our secular interest; *and if we have known Christ after the flesh*, and governed ourselves by any carnal expectations from the Messiah, as a temporal prince, who should render our nation the terror of the whole world, and raise us to universal monarchy, *henceforth we know* [*him*] in these views *no more*, but entertain quite different sentiments concern- 16

a *We do not recommend ourselves again unto you.*] It appears from hence, and from the beginning of the third chapter, that the Corinthians were ready to misrepresent the care St. Paul took to vindicate himself, as *pride* and *vain-glory*. On the other hand, they would have interpreted his *silence* as the effect of *guilt and confusion*. He therefore plainly and very properly tells them, that he said this only in his own necessary defence, and to furnish his friends with an answer to those whose consciences condemned them, while they endeavoured to asperse him.

b *Transported beyond ourselves.*] Mr. Locke thinks, from comparing chap. xi. 1, 16, 21; xii. 6, 11. that the Corinthians censured St. Paul as a fool or a madman, for what he said in commendation of himself; and then the meaning is, "You say I am distracted for "my present conduct; but this is between God and myself. I am "sure you Corinthians ought not to say it; for all my sober "thoughts and most painful labours are for you." But I apprehend on the whole, that the divided clauses are to be taken in such an united view, as to give the sense with which the paraphrase concludes; that was *piety* to God, and *charity* to them, which wrought up the apostle's mind to that transport which some were so ready to censure; and that a lively view of the *love of Christ* produced such warm impressions of both.

c *Bears us away.*] This is the beautiful import of συνεχει, which suggests a noble simile, which few translations preserve. See the note on Phil. i. 23.

SECT. 9. ing him. And thus it will be with others who enter truly into the genius of the gospel; *so that if any man* [*be*] really *in Christ* Jesus, if he have a vital and prevailing faith in him, [*there is*] *a new creation* in the heart of that man; so entirely are his principles, ap-
2 COR. V. prehensions, and pursuits changed: *old things are passed away*, and with respect to him, *behold, all things are become new;* he is brought as it were into another world, and is him-
18 self quite a different creature from what he before was. *And* as it is the work of God to create, so here it may properly be said that *all things* [*are*] *of God, who hath* in his infinite condescension conquered our prejudices, and *reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;* having by his grace in him laid a proper and honourable foundation for the exercise of his mercy towards us, and for the subduing of our hearts to love and obedience. *And* in pursuance of this great and condescending design, he *hath committed to us* his ministers, and especially to his apostles, *the ministry of reconciliation;* intrusting us with this important message, to proclaim it to the world, and, so far as in us lies, to transmit
19 it to the remotest ages. And this is an abstract and epitome of it all; *namely, that God was in Christ* united to him, and manifesting himself by him, thereby *reconciling the world* both of Jews and Gentiles *unto himself;* and in consequence of that, *not imputing to them*, and charging to their account with righteous, inexorable severity, *their* various and aggravated *offences:* but setting forth an act of grace and unlimited pardon to all those who should believe in him. This is that great divine truth on which our salvation depends; *and* God *hath committed unto us*, as a trust of the highest importance,
20 *the* gracious *word* or message *of reconciliation. Therefore we are* to be considered by you as sustaining the office and dignity of *ambassadors for Christ*,[d] on his account, and in his stead; *so that God is*, as it were, *intreating* [*you*] *by us*, and *we beseech* [*you*] *in Christ's stead*,[e] with the greatest importunity and tenderness of address, *that* when so much is done on God's part to make up the breach which must otherwise have been fatal to his offending creatures, *ye* would not, by your own obstinacy, reject the benefit of all these condescending overtures; but would *be* cordially and truly *reconciled to God*, and thankfully accept of that friendship and protection which he vouchsafes to offer you.
21 And that your hearts may, if possible, be melted, we urge you by the most affecting of all arguments, even the blood and death of his incarnate Son: *for* we tell you that *he*, that is, God, *hath made him who knew no sin*, but was perfectly innocent and perfectly holy, [*a*] *sin*[*-offering*] *for us;* that, by the sacrifice of himself, he might expiate the guilt of our transgressions, and *that* so *we might be made* accepted *in him*, and furnished with a plea, as prevalent for our justification and admission into the divine favour as if we had retained our innocence untainted, and in every respect conformed ourselves to *the*
2 COR. VI. *righteousness* which the law *of God*[f] required and demanded. *We then* [*as*] *the joint-*
1 *labourers* [*of God*] in this important work, (compare 1 Cor. iii. 9. note f,) *beseech* [*you*] with the most earnest importunity, *that you receive not the* surprising *grace of God in vain;* that you do not so slight this merciful proclamation of pardon, righteousness, and
2 life, through the blood of his Son, as to lose the benefit of it. Again, let me urge immediate compliance with it on all who have not as yet secured its invaluable blessings; *for he says*, when represented as addressing himself to the Messiah,[g] in one of Isaiah's prophecies, (Isa. xlix. 8.) *I have heard thee in an acceptable time, and in a day of salvation have I helped* and sustained *thee*. God there, as you see, speaks of a limited time, in which the Messiah's petition in favour of his people was welcome to him, and in which he was ready to grant salvation; and *behold, now* [*is*] *the accepted time; behold, now* [*is*] *the day of salvation;* this is the precious season, when, by the wonderful favour and goodness of God, complete forgiveness and eternal felicity is freely offered. Oh that you may all be so wise as to accept it!

17 Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to *be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

2 Cor. vi. 1. We then *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain:

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

IMPROVEMENT.

How adorable is the divine condescension, that such an embassy of peace should ever be sent to the children of
Ver. 2 fallen Adam! How wonderful the divine patience, that *the accepted time* and *the day of salvation* should, after so many slights, be so long protracted! O, let us not receive such grace in vain, lest affronted mercy should forsake its seat, and give way to inexorable justice!

Surely if there be a sentiment that may justly excite the heart to the greatest fervour of affection, and that will vindicate the most ardent transports of zeal to spread it in the world, it must be that of the love of Christ; which
v. 14 may well bear us away, while we seriously consider in how miserable a state he found us, dead in sin, and under a sentence of death by the divine law; especially when we farther reflect at how expensive a rate he redeemed us, even with the price of his own life. Who, then, that has any remains of judgment at all, must not judge
14, 15 and determine in his own mind, that it is most fit that our ransomed lives should be sacred to him that re-

d *Ambassadors for Christ.*] The apostles were so in a peculiar sense; but if it be the will of Christ that ministers in all ages should press men to accept the treaty of reconciliation established in him, then it is evident they may be called *his ambassadors*, even though such a phrase had never been used in scripture.

e *In Christ's stead.*] So ὑπερ Χριστου plainly signifies here. When Christ was in the world, *he* pressed this treaty of reconciliation, and *we* rise up in his stead to urge it still farther.

f *Made the righteousness of God.*] That is, *divinely righteous.* It is a very strong phrase to signify our being accepted of God as perfectly righteous, when considered as by faith united to him who was perfectly so. There is an evident and beautiful contrast between *Christ being made sin* and *our being made righteousness*, that is, treated as perfectly righteous.

g Addressing himself to the Messiah.] I think it evident that, as these words stand in Isaiah, they are a promise made to Christ; in which God engages to give him the Gentiles as an accession to his church, and reward of his mediatorial undertaking. And in this connexion, it is as if the apostle had said, "Since such a promise "is made, see to it that you seek it, and you will find it an accept-"able time." You will come, as it were, in a good hour, as Christ is represented to have done.

deemed them; that our breasts should be on fire with the most earnest desires to promote his cause and kingdom; that henceforth, from the time we come to the knowledge of this important truth, we should not live to ourselves, but to him who died for us and rose again, resuming, with his renewed life, the same tender concern for our happiness which engaged him continually to exert it in the most generous efforts for our recovery and salvation. SECT. 9. 2 COR. V.

Let all secular views, therefore, be given up; and let us labour to improve in that renovation of soul which is the essential character of the true christian; and as ever we desire to have any satisfactory evidence that we are in Christ, let us see to it that we are new creatures; and if we are indeed so, let us daily acknowledge our obligations to his transforming grace. From him are the first proposals of peace and reconciliation to offending creatures; from him the disposition of soul, humbly to submit ourselves to the terms so kindly proposed, and to sue out our pardon agreeably to the purposes of this grand act of indemnity. How amazing the condescension that grants it, and appoints ambassadors to urge us to have compassion on our own souls, and not reject this counsel of God against ourselves! May the ministers of the gospel often consider themselves in this view, as ambassadors and agents for Christ, by whom God beseecheth sinners to be reconciled; and let them prosecute this embassy with all holy importunity and earnest address. Oh that the success of it might be more apparent; that so that friendship might be established between earth and heaven, which may bring down daily anticipations of heaven to earth! Amen. 17 18 19, 20

SECTION X.

The apostle enlarges with great freedom on the temper with which, in the midst of all their afflictions and persecutions, he and his brethren prosecuted that important embassy of which he had been speaking in the former section. 2 Cor. vi. 3—10.

2 COR. vi. 3.

2 COR. vi. 3.

GIVING no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the

THIS is the affair we negotiate, this is the message we deliver; and while we are thus employed, it is our constant care that *we* may behave in such a manner as may add the greatest efficacy to our address, and *give no offence*[a] to any *by any* part of our [*conduct;*] *that the ministry* of reconciliation *be not blamed*, and the success of the gospel thereby obstructed. *But* on the contrary we would be, and I hope we are, *in every respect approving ourselves* to all that see and know us, such *as* they ought to be who have the honour of being *the ministers* and ambassadors *of God;* in this view we govern the inmost emotions of our souls, endeavouring to possess them *in much patience*, *in* the midst of all the *afflictions* which his providence calls us to bear, *in* all the *necessities* we are compelled to endure, *in* all the *straits* to which we are at any time reduced, and all the anguish of heart we may unavoidably feel in them.[b] This steady patience we endeavour to maintain, *in stripes*, when we are scourged in synagogues and cities, as if we were the most notorious offenders against God and men, and the vilest pests of society; *in imprisonments*, though we not only endure so many hardships in our confinement, but are cut off by it from those public labours for the glory of God and the edification of the church, which are dearer to us than our lives: *in tumults*,[c] which are raised against us by Jews and Gentiles, and by which our enemies are often endeavouring to tear us in pieces: *in labours*, which we incessantly pursue, either in our ministerial work, or in those secular callings by which we are often obliged to earn our daily bread: *in watchings*, when, in prosecution of these various employments, the hours of the night are added to those of the day, and we have hardly time for our necessary repose: *in fastings*, to which, besides those which devotion chuses, we are often obliged to submit, for want of proper supplies of food: Yet still, in the midst of all these difficulties, conducting ourselves *in* unspotted *purity*, labouring to improve daily *in the knowledge*[d] of those divine truths which it is our great business to teach others, and by the exercise of a constant command over our passions to grow *in long-suffering* and *in gentleness*, and every other amiable disposition, which we cultivate *in* humble dependence on the sanctifying influences of *the Holy Spirit;* who dwells *in* our hearts, as a continued principle of that *undissembled love* which we exercise without limitation, not only to friends and benefactors, but enemies and persecutors. Still we are faithful in asserting and zealous *in* propagating *the* sacred gospel, that *word of* uncorrupted and infallible *truth;* and we persist *in* it, supported by *the* almighty *power of* that *God* by whom it is revealed, and by whom we know it shall be rendered finally victorious; and in the mean time, while our enemies assault us on every side, it is 4 5 6 7

a *Give no offence*, &c.] This clause is so connected with the foregoing, that it would have been highly expedient to have continued the preceding section, at least to the end of this; but the length would be inconvenient. And there are some other instances in which we have been forced to yield to necessity on such occasions; but the common division, which separates the last verse of the 5th chapter from the first of the 6th, seems yet more improper. To render the beginning of the section less apparently abrupt, I render, that *we give no offence*, which had more literally been translated by the participle *giving*, &c. as in the following clauses; but such little variations, as they affect not the sense, will I hope be excused, as what on my plan I knew not how to avoid.

b *Afflictions—necessities—straits.*] Dr. Whitby thinks the first word, θλιψις, signifies, *affliction* in general—the second, αναγκη, more *grievous* and unavoidable troubles—and the third, στενοχωρια, such *pressures* as reduce us to the greatest straits: the compound sense therefore on the whole is, we are, as it were, hemmed in with *inevitable* and, humanly speaking, *inextricable calamities*, on every side. Compare § 7. note c.

c *In tumults:* ακαταστασιαις.] Beza interprets this, (and I think no man seems better to have understood the peculiar propriety of Greek words,) of such *attacks* as a man cannot stand against, but which bear him hither and thither by violence: he would render it in Latin, *exagitationibus*.

d *By knowledge.*] Interpreters give many different senses of this word. Dr. Scott says it signifies, *prudence*, which is a christian virtue, whereas the mere understanding of divine things was a *gift*. Mr. Pyle thinks it signifies their *improving* the knowledge of divine mysteries. Mr. Cradock refers it to an acquaintance with the true sense of scripture; which brings it to much the same with what has been called *the word of knowledge*. I conclude it implies not only a solicitude to grow in the knowledge of the gospel, but to improve that knowledge to the edification of others; which accordingly is expressed in the paraphrase.

SECT. our care still to be clothed and girded about *with the armour of righteousness*, both *on*
10. *the right hand and the left*;[e] well knowing that armour to be impenetrable. And in this
——— consciousness we pass unhurt, and in a great measure unmoved, *through honour and dis-*
2 COR. *honour, through evil report and good report*, neither elated with the one nor depressed and
VI. dejected with the other. We are treated by many *as* if we were a set of artful *deceivers*, that
8 scruple no fraud and falsehood by which we might carry our cause; and *yet* we know in
our own conscience, and God can witness for us, that we are *true* and faithful, and would
not deviate from the strictest rules of integrity to carry any point, how important soever it
9 might seem to ourselves, or the religion we propagate. We are treated by men *as* incon-
siderable creatures, in the lowest rank of life, obscure and *unknown*, as undeserving any
public notice and regard; and [*yet*] we are really *well known* to multitudes by the hap-
piest tokens, as the men by whom they have not only received that bodily healing which
they could never have expected from natural means, but by the yet more valuable memo-
rials of having enlightened their eyes with divine knowledge, and brought back their
wandering souls to God. We are regarded by others *as dying* men, and we seem our-
selves to be in daily danger of being sacrificed to the rage of our enemies; and *yet behold*
hitherto, through the guardian and astonishing care of that Redeemer whom we preach,
we continue in life, and *live* to the most important purposes. Our afflictions are many,
and we consider ourselves under them *as chastened* by our heavenly Father; *yet*, blessed
be his name, we are *not killed*; and far from intending our destruction, we know that he
10 will overrule these chastisements to the advancement of our salvation. If our external cir-
cumstances alone be regarded, we must indeed appear *as sorrowful*, and the world will
naturally conclude that we have cause for continual lamentation: and *yet* when the inward
dispositions of our minds are known, and the views with which we are secretly supported,
it will be found that we are *always rejoicing*, in the present assurances of the divine favour,
and the certain expectation of complete felicity and eternal glory. We appear *as poor* in
this world, and indeed we are so; having neither silver, nor gold, nor estate; and *yet* we
are continually *enriching many* with treasures which they would not part with for all the
revenues of princes and kings; *as having nothing* that we can call our own, and *yet* in-
deed *possessing all things*, which we know to be ours, so far as our heavenly Father shall
see fit; and therefore are as easy and happy as if we were actually the proprietors of the
whole world.[f]

armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and *yet* possessing all things.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHOSE soul can remain untouched while he reads this eloquent period, in which the apostle's mouth is (as he afterwards expresses it) thus opened, in consequence of his heart's being enlarged? In how lively yet unaffected a manner does this sacred writer paint his own character and circumstances: and how much profound and important sense is there in those paradoxes which he so naturally introduces on this occasion! Let the ministers of the gospel
Ver. 3 herein behold, at once, their model and their support. Let them cultivate this inoffensive behaviour, not only out
of regard to themselves, but that their office may not be censured; and still approve themselves the servants of God,
4 by patience amidst all their tribulations, their necessities, and their pressures; and, so far as their circumstances
require it, by labours, by watchings, and fastings: especially when by an indulgent providence they are not called
5, 6 to do it in stripes, in imprisonments, and in tumults. Still let them cultivate purity and knowledge, long-suffering
and gentleness, with unfeigned love in the Holy Ghost. Aided by him, let them arm themselves with the word of
7 truth, and, in the strength of God, gird on the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Thus
8 fortified they may boldly break their way through honour and infamy, through praise and reproach; as we plainly
see that infamy and reproach may be the portion of the best of men and the most useful members of society. Who
are we, that we should refuse a cup of which the apostles and our Lord drank so deep? But let us be superior to
9 human censures. If any call us deceivers, let us show that we are invariably true to the interests of God and of
goodness. If they affect to overlook us as unknown and beneath their notice, let us endeavour to render ourselves
well known, by the benefits which, by divine grace, we are the instruments of conferring on men's souls. So shall
10 we be always rejoicing in the midst of those sorrows of which nature cannot be entirely insensible; whilst amidst
our poverty we are enriching many, yea, then, though we have nothing that we can call our own, we shall possess
all things; shall appear in the eyes of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, the richest and the happiest of mankind,
even though we were in other respects of all men the most miserable.

While we consider this as the character of the first preachers of christianity, which with so noble a plainness and simplicity they profess, let us adore the divine grace, by which such a spirit was raised in the world, and by which it hath in some measure been maintained, even to this day. And let it encourage our most earnest and affectionate prayers, that God would raise up in every age (and especially in our own, in which they seem so ready to fail) a generation of evangelical ministers; who, fired with such generous principles of action, and emulating so noble a character, may commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and roll away that reproach which unworthy men have brought on the most excellent of all offices. Thus armed, may they extend their happy conquests; thus animated, may they see of the travail of their soul, to their abundant, their everlasting satisfaction and delight.

e *Armour of righteousness, on the right hand and the left.*] Some unnaturally think this alludes to the *soldiers*, who were taught to wield their swords with the *left hand* as well as the *right*; and others, that it refers to the christian's being armed against the temptations of prosperity and adversity. That may well be included; but the armour spoken of seems of the *defensive* kind, on the arms or breast, or both.

f *Possessing all things.*] This is certainly one of the sublimest passages that was ever written. Compare Phil. iv. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Eph. i. 3; Rev. xxi. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

SECTION XI.

The apostle urges the Corinthians to avoid those alliances with idolaters, which might tend to ensnare them; and pleads the gracious promises God had made to his people, as an engagement to them to be upon their guard in this respect; and in general, to aim at the sublimest attainments in religion. 2 Cor. vi. 11, *to the end;* vii. 1.

2 Cor. vi. 11.

SECT. 11.

2 Cor. vi. 11. O YE Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

YOU see, *O ye Corinthians*, my dear brethren, my beloved children, with how much freedom of address *our mouth is opened to you:* but words flow freely on an occasion on which *our heart is* so much *enlarged*, in a tenderness which neither words nor tears can sufficiently express. Sure I am that *ye are not straitened in us;* all that we can do for your comfort and happiness you may securely promise yourselves: *but* I fear *ye are straitened in your own bowels*, and have not all of you that affection for us, nor readiness to receive our communications, which the relation between us might challenge, and my tenderness for you ought to excite. And *therefore, for that very recompense* which we most of all desire, which is so just and reasonable, and which indeed, in its consequences, would be yet more beneficial to you than delightful to us, *I speak* to you *as to* [*my*] own *children*, with all the genuine overflowings of paternal love: *be ye also* thus *enlarged*[a] towards me, and let this confidence with which I am pouring forth, as it were, all my heart into your bosom, strike strongly on your minds, to raise some correspondent emotion.

2 Cor. vi. 12. 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

2 Cor. vi. 13. 13 Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye enlarged.

2 Cor. vi. 14. 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2 Cor. vi. 15. 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2 Cor. vi. 16. 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in *them;* and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Cor. vi. 17. 17 Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you:

2 Cor. vi. 18. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having, therefore, these promises, (dearly beloved,) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

And how shall that love be expressed? Truly by no method can it more effectually be manifested, than by taking all the care you possibly can for your own security and happiness. In which view I must particularly urge it, that ye *be not unequally yoked* either in marriage, or any other intimate friendship, *with unbelievers: for what participation hath* that strict *righteousness* to the practice of which the gospel calls you, its sincere votaries, *with* that *unrighteousness* in which they are so generally plunged? *Or what communion hath* the *light*, into which you by the divine mercy are brought, *with* that deplorable *darkness* of ignorance and vice in which they continue to be lost? *Or what concord* [*is there,*] or can there be, *between Christ*, to whom ye are united, *and Belial*, who reigneth in the children of disobedience? *Or what part hath a believer with an infidel;* or an infidel with a believer? The union is surely, at the first view of it, too unnatural to be either easy, safe, or lasting. *And* indeed I may say, *what consistence has the temple of God*[b] *with* those detestable *idols*, which would by this means be, as it were, erected in it; or at least placed so near, that it must be polluted by them? It is a proper question, and a just view in which to state the point; *for ye are the temple of the living God, as God* himself *hath said, I will*, in the most intimate manner, *dwell in them*[c] *and walk among* [*them,*] *and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (Lev. xxvi. 12.) Now though this immediately refers to God's extraordinary presence among the Jews, yet, when we consider the constitution of the christian church, we cannot possibly imagine that God is less favourably present with it than he was with the Jewish. We may *therefore* consider the exhortation so naturally grounded on such a promise, and may, as it were, hear God calling to us, and saying, as to Israel with respect to idolaters of old, (Isa. lii. 11.) *Come out from among them, and be ye separate,*[d] *saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and* if ye behave in a manner thus worthy your professed relation to me, *I will* then *receive you*, which till then I cannot do: *And will be a father unto you,*[e] *and ye shall be to me for sons and for daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Now surely if the Almighty God will say thus unto us, we ought to be much affected with it, and neglect nothing that is necessary to insure so great and invaluable a privilege. *Having therefore*, my *beloved* brethren, *such* gracious *promises* of God's abode among us, his dwelling in us, and his adopting us into the number of his children, let us act worthy so high a relation, and as God is perfectly holy, *let us* labour to the utmost to *purify ourselves from all pollution*, both *of the flesh and of the spirit*, from every impurity of life, and from every sensual affection which might defile our hearts, and render them displeasing to him. Nor let us rest merely in this negative view of religion; but let us endeavour to be *perfecting holiness*, and lay the foundation of it *in the fear of God*, in whose presence we always are, and by whom all our actions are examined, and to whom our hearts are open; well knowing that we cannot

a *Be ye also enlarged.*] Perhaps the apostle's meaning may be this: "Give me that pleasure which my paternal tenderness towards you will find, in having it in my power to do you abundance of good, through your readiness to receive what we are so ready to impart, and to fall in with my attempts of usefulness among you."

b *Temple of God.*] There seems a peculiar *strength* in this *interrogation*. If God would not endure *idols* in any part of the land in which he dwelt, how much less would he endure them under his own roof.

c In the most intimate manner *dwell in them.*] No words I know in our language can equal the force of the original, ενοικησω εν αυτοις, *I will take up my indwelling in them.* This was a promise made to the Jews on their being converted, and consequently refers to their privileges as members of the christian church; which shows the propriety of the application. Jer. xxxi. 33; xxxii. 37, 38.

d *Be ye separate.*] As God's promise of dwelling in a peculiar manner among the Jews obliged them to separate themselves from the converse of their heathen neighbours, that they might not be ensnared with their superstitions; much more are christians obliged by that peculiar gracious presence of God which they enjoy, to separate themselves from all impure and idolatrous worship. Exod. xxix. 45, 46; Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.

e *I will be a father, &c.*] It is queried where God says this? Some answer, Jer. xxxi. 1. But that does not sufficiently express the paternal relation. Others refer to 2 Sam. vii. 8, 14. which may be applied to Christ, and in him to believers. Compare Heb. i. 4, 5. Some think it is not expressly to be found any where, and that it refers to all the scriptures where God calls his people by the title of children

SECT. 11. secure to ourselves these blessings without such a care; and that it is what gratitude most powerfully dictates, where we have the highest hopes that we are interested in them.

2 COR. VI.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11 THUS may cordial love open the mouth of christian ministers when addressing their people; and thus may the love of christians to each other in every station of life express itself, and produce for a recompense a mutual en-
12 largement. This is one of the sweetest pleasures and richest blessings of friendship, when wisely and happily contracted. Let us therefore cultivate such friendships, and be very careful that we do not form others which may
14, 16 properly be called, being unequally yoked. We profess to be pursuing righteousness, to be light in the Lord, to be united to Christ, to be consecrated to God: let us not then have an intimate converse with the slaves of unrighteousness, the children of darkness, the sons of Belial, the votaries of idols. Far from subjecting ourselves to such dangerous snares, let us rather be earnestly seeking every advantage for making the noblest improvements in
VII. 1 religion. Let us examine our lives and our hearts, that we may be cleansed from all pollutions of the spirit as well as of the flesh. Let us labour after sublime ideas of the perfection of holiness, and after a temper of mind correspondent to those ideas. In order to attain which, let us often be surveying our high and glorious privileges,
VI. 17, 18 and those exceeding rich and precious promises which God by his gospel is making to us: separating ourselves from all evil, that he may receive us, that he may dwell with us and walk among us, that he may consecrate us a holy temple to himself; yea, that the Lord Almighty may become a Father to us, and own us for his sons and his daughters. To us is the word of his promise sent, this is the hope of our calling: let us make it sure, let us daily survey it, that it may produce and cherish a correspondent sanctity and zeal. Amen.

SECTION XII.

The apostle farther expresses his affection to the Corinthians, as illustrated by the pleasure with which he received good tidings from them by Titus, and by the part he took in the sorrows which his necessary reproofs had occasioned, and his present joy in that these sorrows had issued in their reformation. 2 Cor. vii. 2, *to the end.*

2 COR. vii. 2.

SECT. 12. BUT to return from this digression to the attempt I was making to remove some prejudices which, much to your own detriment, I know that some of you have imbibed against my person and ministry. Give me leave, my brethren, to entreat you that ye *re-*
2 COR. VII. *ceive us* with that affection which is due to the faithful servants of Christ, and to those who have been instruments in your conversion and edification: for whatever may have
2 been insinuated by ill-designing persons to the contrary, *we have injured no man* in his person, *we have corrupted no man* in his morals, *we have defrauded no man*[a] in his property, by any of those artifices which covetousness sometimes practises under very
3 solemn forms. *I speak not* [*this*] *to condemn* [*you*] of ingratitude or infidelity, though I have been obliged to find some fault with you; *for I have told you before, that ye are in our hearts* with such tenderness, that, if it were the will of God, we could be glad both *to live and to die with* [*you*;] to spend the remainder of our lives at Corinth, or to end them there, did not the purposes of our Master's glory call to other, and many of them less grateful and agreeable, scenes.

4 *Great*, as you see, [*is*] *my freedom of speech to you* upon this subject, *and great* is also *my boasting concerning you*, as to the assurance which I have of your regards for me; and, on this account, *I am filled with consolation* in the remembrance of you; *I* do *exceedingly abound*[b] *in joy, in* the midst of *all our affliction*, when I think how well you behave, and how happy an alteration is prevailing among you.

5 An instance of this affectionate regard I have lately had an opportunity deeply to feel, and very naturally to manifest: *for when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every* [*place*] and circumstance, through the rage and malice of our enemies; yet these alarms could not cause us to forget you; but while *without* there [*were*] continued *fightings*, with the most furious and cruel opposition, *within* there [*were*]
6 *fears* and anxieties on your account. *But* the blessed *God, who* is pleased to wear it among his other titles, that he *is the Comforter of those who are brought low* by affliction and distress, and owns it as his prerogative to bear up the human heart, *comforted us by the coming of Titus*, who arrived so seasonably at Macedonia, at a time when both our circumstances and frame of spirit needed all the assistance that so pious and delightful
7 a friend could give. *And* indeed it was *not merely by his coming* that I was thus comforted, *but with the consolation with which he was comforted by you, when he told us* particularly *of your earnest desire* to rectify whatever was amiss, and of *your grief* for what had been matter of offence to God and sorrow to me, and of *your* affectionate *zeal for me, so that I rejoiced much more* than in other circumstances I could have done.
8 *Because* now I can take the liberty to say, that *if I grieved you in the Epistle* which I formerly wrote, in which indeed I was obliged to treat some subjects with greater severity than I could have wished, *I do not repent* of it, *however anxious I might before have been*:[c] for the regret I at first felt on that account is now swallowed up in that superior

2 COR. vii. 2.
RECEIVE us: we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not this to condemn *you*; for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that

a *Defrauded no man.*] The word επλεονεκτησαμεν signifies, to indulge a *covetous* temper, and make a *prey* of others by it; and perhaps intimates that the false teachers, of whom he had so much reason to complain, had done it.

b *Exceedingly abound.*] The word υπερπερισσευομαι has an inexpressible energy; and is, if I mistake not, a word of the apostle's own making.

c *However anxious I might before have been*: ει και μετεμελομην.

the same epistle made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, *what* clearing of yourselves; yea, *what* indignation; yea, *what* fear; yea, *what* vehement desire; yea, *what* zeal; yea, *what* revenge! in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

pleasure with which I see the happy effects of it; *for I* now have the satisfaction to *find that this Epistle, however for a little while* it might have *grieved you*, hath by the blessing of God been productive of great good. And *now I rejoice not that ye were grieved*, for that will always give me concern when I reflect upon it, *but that ye grieved* to such happy purpose, and were by that means brought *to* true *repentance*, to a change of mind; *for* this was indeed the case, *as ye were grieved* with a penitential and humble *regard to* the honour of the blessed *God*, which is so immediately and peculiarly affected by the irregularities of those that profess themselves his people. *So that*, on the whole, *ye were not in any degree endamaged by us;* but, on the contrary, received, as we intended, great benefit by the severity we were compelled to use. *For* this is indeed the natural effect of a sorrow like yours; that *grief which regards* the honour of *God*, and takes its rise from such tender and grateful views of him as we before hinted, *worketh a repentance* which leads *to salvation* and issues in it, and therefore is *never* afterwards *to be repented of: whereas the sorrow* that arises merely from a regard to the things *of the world*, is often a foolish excess, productive of fatal consequences, and sometimes *worketh death;* either breaking the heart, arming men against their own lives, or otherwise producing that rebellion against God, by which the soul is finally destroyed. But it is pleasant to trace the happy effects of that better principle which hath influenced you: *for behold, this same thing*, that is, *your being grieved* for your sins *out of* a pious *respect to God* and the dishonour it brought upon him, *what diligence it wrought in you* to reform what had been amiss; *yea*, [*what*] a solicitous care to make the best *apology* you could for what you had done; and of the sounder part, to make their innocence appear; *yea*, [*what*] *indignation* did it produce against those who had given the offence; *yea*, [*what*] *fear* lest any thing of that sort should be encouraged and repeated; *yea*, [*what*] *earnest desire* of seeing me again, and confirming our friendship in surer bonds; *yea*, [*what*] *zeal* in every method that could be subservient to these views; *yea*, indeed, if I may so express myself, [*what*] *revenge*[d] against yourselves for those things which, all circumstances considered, you could not but condemn; against sin as your great enemy: so that *upon the whole*, considering you as a society, *you have approved yourselves to be pure in this matter*, and there is no farther stain remaining on the church, where I was so much afraid of lasting infamy and reproach. Let it not *therefore* be the cause of any farther distress; but assure yourselves, that *if I have written* [*any thing*] *to you* different from what I could wish to write and you to receive, [*it was*] *not* so much with any personal views *on his account who had done, or his who had received, the injury*,[e] *but for the sake of manifesting our diligence* and care *for you*, which through the divine goodness hath now been made apparent, though by so severe and painful a trial, *before God*, [*and*] *unto you. Therefore we were* greatly *comforted in your consolation, and we rejoiced more exceedingly in the joy of* good *Titus*, which gave me a pleasure yet greater than he himself could derive from it; *because* we find your temper and state so good, *that his spirit was refreshed by you all. So that*, on the whole, *if I had boasted any thing of you to him*, that I was confident my Corinthian friends would approve themselves worthy of the figure they had formerly made in religion, *I was not ashamed* of that boasting; *but as we have always spoken in the* exactest regard to *truth* when addressing ourselves *to you, so also our boasting* [*concerning you*] *to Titus*, that all would be well again at Corinth, *has been verified* greatly to our satisfaction: *So that his tenderest affections are* now *engaged towards you exceedingly;* which he expresses in the most genuine manner *whenever he* mentions or *recollects the obedience of you all* in general to those apostolical injunctions which I sent you by him: [*and*] *how you received him* as my messenger and the minister of Christ, *with fear and trembling*, expressing always the most solicitous concern that he might see nothing which it might grieve him to observe, or me to hear reported by him. *I rejoice, therefore, that in every respect I have confidence in you*,[f] and am encouraged to renew that honourable testimony which it has always been my pleasure to bear to your character, and which, I assure myself, you will continue more and more to deserve.

SECT. 12.

2 COR. VII.

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IMPROVEMENT.

How great is the boldness of a good conscience! and how much does it promote that freedom, that authority, with which the ministers of Christ address themselves to their hearers, when they can thus appeal to them as to the uprightness, integrity, and disinterestedness of their conduct! Frequently do we in some degree share the trials of the apostle: and while we may be surrounded with fightings without, are exercised with fears within; but we have a God who assumeth it to himself as one of his titles, that he comforteth those that are cast down and brought low. May every sincere lover of Christ and of souls be filled with consolation from him, and amidst all

Ver. 3

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So I chose to render the word, as μετεμελεια strictly expresses an *after-care* and anxiety for any thing that has been done; whereas the word *repent* always signifies a wish it had not been done. Now, as what St. Paul did, in writing the former Epistle, was *proper*, and done under the direction of the Divine Spirit, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that he *really repented* of it. It may also signify a kind of *misgiving* of heart, natural when the reproof, however necessary, is given to a person one tenderly loves, where the event is dubious, as in this instance it might be.

d *Yea*, [*what*] *revenge.*] Mr. Gataker has very well observed here, that Calvin and Reynolds, and some other divines of note, have been misled, by taking it for granted that these verses contain seven distinct marks of true repentance, to be found in every sincere penitent; whereas indeed these are not characters of the temper of each, but of different persons in different circumstances, according to the part they respectively acted in the affair in question.

e *Received the injury.*] Hence some infer, and it seems reasonable, that the father of the incestuous person was still living, which must be a great aggravation of his crime.

f *Confidence in you.*] The address of all this part of the Epistle is wonderful. This in particular finely introduces what he had to say in the following chapter, and is strongly illustrated by chap. ix. 2—4.

SECT. 12. 2 COR. VII. 11 9 10 14, 16 13

his tribulations, whatever they are, be made to rejoice exceedingly in the joy of his christian friends and converts! May he trace in them the marks of that true repentance which is never to be repented of, and which is represented in such genuine language as no heart could have dictated but one that had felt what is here described. And since there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, and consequently none who needeth not repentance, may we all know by experience that diligence, that indignation, that fear, that zeal, that desire, that revenge, which the apostle saw in his Corinthian brethren, and which he rejoiced so much to see! There is not a surer office of friendship than to endeavour to promote this godly sorrow. And oh how blessed, how divine a principle is religion, whose most painful operation is productive of so much inward and substantial happiness! whereas the sorrow of this world, to which they who fondly love the world, and eagerly pursue it, are most exposed, is attended with such fatal consequences, as even to work death.

Let us observe with pleasure the address of St. Paul to make the Corinthians what they ought to be, by representing to them that pleasing confidence he reposed in them, the manner in which he had even boasted of them, and the satisfaction he found in all their first tendencies towards a reformation of remaining defects. And let us earnestly pray for the spirit of wisdom, that our hearts may be happily attempered to such due mixtures of faithful inspection, resolute sincerity, and endearing tenderness with respect to all who are committed to our care, whether in offices of a public or private nature, as may most effectually promote their advancement in the divine life, and our own abundant joy.

SECTION XIII.

The apostle enters on the subject of the contribution he was setting forward for the relief of the poor christians of Judea, recommends to the Corinthians the example of the Macedonians, reminds them of the great grace of our blessed Redeemer, and gives some advice as to the manner of collecting and transmitting their bounty. 2 Cor. viii. 1—15.

2 COR. viii. 1.

SECT. 13. 2 COR. VIII. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

NOW we think it proper, *brethren*, to *inform you* of the happy and honourable effects of that abundant communication *of the grace of God*,[a] which has been mercifully *bestowed upon the churches* planted here *in Macedonia*, at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, and other places in this province: which has engaged them to exert themselves in a most liberal and generous contribution for the relief of the poor saints in Judea. And here it would be a pleasure to me more particularly to tell you, *how in a great* and extraordinary *trial of affliction*, which they met with from their persecuting enemies, who were always so ready to harass and plunder them, (compare Acts xvi. and xvii.) *their overflowing joy* for receiving the christian religion, *and* with it, if I may so speak, *the depth of their poverty* amidst these distresses of their own, *hath* so *abounded* and furnished such supplies *to the riches of their liberality*, that, indigent as they are, they have done wonders for the relief of their yet poorer brethren. *So that I* can *testify* for them, and I do attest it with pleasure, *that to* the utmost extent of [*their*] *power, yea, and beyond* what could have been expected, or, on the usual principles of computation, judged to have been in [*their*] *power*,[b] [*they have been*] *willing of themselves*, without my solicitation, to do the most generous things for the public service: At the same time *intreating us with much importunity, that we would receive the gift* which their bounty had prepared, *and* [*take*] *a part of the ministration of the saints*, as one of their commissioners to convey it to Jerusalem. *And* [*this they did,*] *not* merely *as we* expected and *hoped, but* even beyond all we could have imagined; for *they first gave themselves* and all they had entirely *to* the honour and service of *the Lord; and* having thus surrendered all they were, and all they possessed, to Christ and his cause, they in effect resigned themselves *to us by the will of God*, putting themselves in this respect under my direction, to do what I should in conscience think most advisable in present circumstances. *Insomuch that*, unable to withstand their pressing solicitation, *we desired Titus, that as he had begun* to do in other places, *so he would also complete this* instance of *grace* and liberality *among you*,[c] and finish what yet remains to be done as to collecting the intended contribution.

Therefore, my brethren, *as ye abound in every* other [*gift,*] (1 Cor. i. 4—7; xii. 8—10.) and particularly [*in*] *faith*, which rises to the fullest persuasion of the truth of the gospel, and *in* all *utterance* and ability to instruct others, *and in* the clearest *knowledge* of divine things, *and* [*in*] *all* active *diligence, and* [*in*] *your* affectionate *love to us;* so [*we exhort*] and intreat [*you,*] that ye would take this opportunity of showing *that ye abound also in this grace* of christian liberality. And here you will observe that *I speak not by* way of *command*, so as to take upon me to determine how much or in what proportion ye shall give; *but that I may prove by* what I have just been saying of *the diligence of others*, that is, the Macedonians, *the* genuine *sincerity of your love* in its most substantial effects.

2 COR. viii. 1.
MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to *their* power, (I bear record,) yea, and beyond *their* power, *they were* willing of themselves:

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their ownselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God:

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing, in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us; *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

a *Grace of God.*] As χαρις sometimes signifies a *gift*, and things excellent and extraordinary in their kind are in Hebrew often said to be *things of God*, or *divine*; as *trees of God* are great and flourishing trees; *cities of God*, great cities; (compare Psal. lxxx. 10; Acts vii. 20.) some have explained χαριν τ̃ Θεȣ, as if it signified the *great* or *liberal gift* which has been given in or by the Macedonian churches; and Dr. Whitby very sufficiently proves that χαρις sometimes is put for *gift*. But considering what is the general sense of the word in St. Paul's writings, and what his sentiments evidently are as to the doctrine of divine influences on the heart, I chose to follow the plainest and most obvious and common interpretation, which indeed I generally think the best, and take this verse to be in sense much equivalent to that pious acknowledgment of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. *Who are we, that we should be able to offer so willingly? &c.*

b *To their power, yea, and beyond that.*] This is a noble hyperbole, like that of Demosthenes, "I have performed all, even with an "industry beyond my power."

c *Complete this grace among you.*] I doubt not that χαριν here signifies *gift*, or present, or liberality; but I thought that retaining the word *grace* here might make the English reader more sensible of the ambiguity and emphasis of the word usually rendered *grace*

SECT. 13.

2 COR. VIII.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and you burdened:

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want, that there may be equality.

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over: and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

And I may well expect that you should exert yourselves on such an occasion, in consequence of your acquaintance with the great and most fundamental principles of the gospel, in which you have been so faithfully instructed. *For you know* in some measure, though it is impossible for you fully to know and distinctly to conceive in its utmost extent, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich* in the glories of the heavenly world, and in supreme dominion and authority there, *yet for your sakes he became poor, that you, through* this *his* voluntary *poverty, might* not only be discharged from that dreadful debt you had contracted to the divine justice, by which you were become obnoxious to everlasting ruin and condemnation; but that you might also *become rich* in the favour of God, and in the graces of the Holy Spirit now, and at length for ever rich in the treasures and glories of the heavenly world: *And* as I cannot but desire that the servants of so excellent a Master may *herein* imitate his example, and take the most effectual methods to advance his honour and interest in the world, *I give* [*my*] *advice* to you in general to despatch this affair vigorously; *for this is* evidently *expedient for you*, and consistent with what you have already in a manner bound yourselves to, *as you have begun not only to do something, but* also *to exert yourselves*[d] resolutely and determinately *a year ago*. I *now therefore* entreat you not to be offended if I urge you to *complete your undertaking, that according to the readiness* which you expressed *to determine* and resolve upon this good scheme, *there may also be the accomplishment* of that determination *in proportion to what you have*. The smallest contribution from such a principle will be pleasing to God, and most assuredly draw its reward after it; *for if there be first a readiness of mind according to what a man hath*, [*he is*] *accepted* of God, [*and*] *not according to what he hath not:* a little in proportion to his abilities is pleasing to God; yea, more pleasing than it would be if this proportion were less prudently observed. [*I say this,*] *not* by any means *that* [*there should be*] *a rest to others and affliction to you*, that they should be eased and you overburdened; *But that of an equality*, on just and equitable principles, *your abundance* [*may be,*] *at this time*, wisely and happily employed, as [*a supply*] *to their want; that* at some other time, if providence give the occasion and opportunity, *their abundance also may be* [*so*] *to your want;*[e] *that there may be* such *an equality* in the distribution of the good things of this life, as our mutual relation to each other may require. For the bountiful providence of God hath furnished them out in such an abundance, and given to some of you such a superfluity, that there is room for a liberal distribution, without injuring the original possessor; and if such a distribution be made, we shall find that, *as it is written* concerning the manna, (Exod. xvi. 18.) *He that* [*had*] *much did not abound* when all came to be divided, *and he that* [*had*] *little did not lack;*[f] so he that has the greatest abundance of this world, may find necessitous objects enough, and he that is most destitute, will be competently supplied, if his richer brethren do their duty in this respect.

9 10 11 12 13 14 15

IMPROVEMENT.

How peculiarly amiable does the christian liberality of these Macedonians appear, when considered as abounding in a great trial of affliction, and in the depth of their poverty; yet a poverty mingled with an abundance of joy, on account of that rich and happy state into which the gospel had brought them, and the first-fruits of that glorious inheritance to which they were entitled by the tenor of it. They were willing of themselves to contribute, even beyond their power, as persons of common generosity would have estimated it. Nor did they on their dying beds repent such a use of their property, or wish that it had been spent in gratifying their appetites, or hoarded for those they were to leave behind them. Nor do they now regret these liberalities, nor complain that their expected harvest is perished. Ver. 1 2 3

Let us remember their example for imitation; nor let any who have a mite to spare, be wholly deficient, how low soever their circumstances may be; remembering that gracious complacency, with which, where there is a willing mind, the smallest tribute to the treasury of God is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. To animate us to the most generous efforts of overflowing benevolence, may we ever bear in our mind that grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which we all know something, but which it is impossible we should ever fully know, because it passeth knowledge: that grace which engaged him, when rich, for our sakes to become poor, that we might be enriched by his poverty. What have we that deserves to be called a possession, which we do not hold by an act of divine bounty and grace? 12 9

Let us consider ourselves as under indispensable engagements, in consequence of it, to consecrate our all to him, conscious that our all is but a low return for the infinite obligations under which he has laid us. He hath contrived and determined, that the poor in some form or another we should have with us always, that we may do them good, as a token of our gratitude to him. Let us faithfully aim to supply their need, and he who hath most will have no superfluity to throw away upon the lusts or vanities of life; and he who hath least will have no unsupplied lack: but the poor will rejoice in the relief of their necessities; and the rich, in the happiest and most delightful use of their abundance. 15

d *To exert yourselves.*] It is evident that το θελειν is an advance upon προηρασθε. So that it must signify a *resolute* and *vigorous determination*. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

e *That their abundance, &c.*] It might seem obvious to object, that the Corinthians were rich and prosperous, the Jews poor and oppressed; so that there was no room to expect that this should happen. But it might be replied, "All human affairs are uncertain; Corinth itself, from great prosperity, had been utterly undone in the Roman war by Memmius some time before: or particular persons might be distressed, or the whole body of christians there reduced by persecutions, though their city continued to flourish."

f *He that had much, &c.*] Perhaps nothing could more illustrate the powerful agency of the Divine Providence, in events which seem most contingent, than this, that though such different quantities of *manna* were gathered by different persons, yet on an average there should be an *omer* for each.

SECTION XIV.

The apostle expresses his joy for the readiness of Titus to assist in finishing the collection; and speaks of the honourable character of other christian brethren, whom he had joined with him in the same commission. 2 Cor. viii. 16, *to the end.*

2 COR. viii. 16.

SECT. 14. — 2 COR. VIII.

16 *BUT* while I speak of this collection, which I am desirous of promoting, [*I*] would [*return*] my humble *thanks to God, who gave that* same *diligent care for you in the heart of Titus*, and formed him to these generous and christian sentiments. 17 *For indeed he* not only cheerfully accepted and *complied with the exhortation* I gave him; *but being more forward* than I thought to have found him, *he went to you* freely *of his own accord*, though he must see that some pressing and peculiar difficulties would attend the undertaking.

18 *And we have* also *sent* together *with him that* excellent christian *brother*[a] and friend, Luke, *whose praise in the gospel* [*is*] *in all the churches*, on account of the various and eminent services that he has done for the interests of christianity, wherever his influ-
19 ence has extended, both by his writing and exhortations. *And not only* is he *so*[b] much esteemed on these accounts, *but he was also ordained* and appointed *by* the stretching forth of the hand, in token of the common consent of *the churches*, whom we consulted on this occasion, particularly in Macedonia, *to be our fellow-traveller with this grace which is* now *administered* and undertaken *by us*, purely *for the glory of the same Lord, and* for [*the declaration of*] *your ready mind*, in which I was desirous to let you know how heartily I concur.

20 And we now send him to you, and I have determined to join a man of his excellent character with me; carefully *avoiding this, that any one should blame* or throw any reflection upon *us*, for the part we may take *in* the management of *this abundance* of your bounty, which is *administered by us;* lest any should be so unjust and cruel as to insinuate that I have appropriated any part of it to my own use, or to any purpose
21 whatsoever different from that for which it was originally given: Therein *providing things* decent, *honest*, and honourable, *not only before the Lord*, to whom it is our first and chief care to approve ourselves, *but also before men;* that we may guard as much as
22 possible against any suspicion of our character, which might hinder our usefulness. *And we have sent with them*, that is, with Luke and Titus, *our* other friend, and well-beloved *brother*, Apollos, *whom we have often proved in many* other *affairs to be* in a very extraordinary degree *diligent; but* who will *now*, I doubt not, approve himself *much more diligent*, and exert himself to the utmost in carrying on this collection, *on account of the great confidence* [*I have*] *in you*, as to your goodness and liberality: on which consideration he has changed his resolution against making you a visit; which, while he had any apprehension you might make him an occasion of quarrelling and contending, he would by no means be persuaded to do.

23 *And if* [*there be any question*] *concerning Titus*, [*he is*] *my partner and* my *fellow-labourer with respect to you;* one who sincerely shares my care for you, and is always ready to act in concert with me, in any attempt to correct what is amiss among you, and to promote your improvement in real christianity. *Or* if the question be [*concerning*] any other of *our brethren* whom I have mentioned above, [*they are*] *the messengers of the churches*,[c] whom several christian societies have chosen to send about this business; and they are persons of so valuable a character, [*and*] do so great a credit to their profession, that I may not improperly call them *the glory of Christ* in the world.

24 *Show therefore to them*, I entreat you, *even in the sight of* all *the churches*, to which they are related, and to whom they will undoubtedly make their report concerning you, *the demonstration of your love, and* the reasonableness of *our boasting over you;* that it may appear to be as well founded as I assuredly believe that it is.

2 COR. viii. 16.

16 BUT thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel, throughout all the churches:

19 (And not *that* only, but was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind:)

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us;

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of, they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE tenderness of ministers in all points where the comfort and edification of the church is concerned, is indeed
Ver. 16 matter of the highest moment; and where it is remarkable in its degree, it affords just cause of thanksgivings to

a *That brother*, &c.] Some suppose this anonymous, though excellent person, to have been Mark, or Silas, or Barnabas; but I rather, with most commentators, suppose it to have been Luke, who certainly attended St. Paul in this journey to Jerusalem. Some object, that the brother here spoken of was sent by St. Paul to Corinth, in company with Titus; whereas Luke went with St. Paul to Troas, and from thence to Corinth. (Acts xx. 4, 6.) But Dr. Whitby replies, I think with some considerable weight, that it is possible St. Paul might go from Philippi to Corinth, and from thence to Troas, and so persons sent before to prepare his way might come and bring word to St. Paul, that the collection was ready, and go back with him to receive it. See Whitby, on chap. ii. 12. Many ancient christians thought that expression, *whose praise in the gospel is in all the churches*, refers to the universal applause with which St. Luke's gospel was every where received; and I have paraphrased it so as to include that, though I think the apostle's meaning more extensive. See Gurdon, *At Boyle's Lect.* p. 482.

b *And not only so.*] This 19th verse is to be included in a parenthesis, and the continued sense of verses 18 and 20 will be, *we have sent that brother—to avoid blame, &c.*

c *The messengers of the churches.*] I can think of nothing more unreasonable than to translate this word, *apostles;* as the English word *apostles* is now by long use appropriated to what is only a part of the signification of the original. As an *apostle of Jesus Christ* is one *sent forth by him*, so *an apostle of any church* must surely signify one *sent forth by that society.* And if I believed that there was so early as this time a minister in every church, superior to a common pastor, which the most able advocates for diocesan episcopacy seem not generally to think, I could not imagine it consistent with the dignity and importance of their office, that they should be parted with on such an errand, which any common deacon might with sufficient propriety have performed. It is indeed true that St. Paul was charged with this trust; but then it seems to have been after he had determined on this journey to Jerusalem, and not to have been the occasion of that journey.

God: for it is he who puts into their hearts that earnest care, who excites and maintains every sentiment of benevolence, when they offer themselves willingly to any generous and charitable service. It is grace that has communicated whatever good is done; and it ought to be ascribed to the glory of the same Lord from whom it comes; and it loses much of its value, if it be not directed to this ultimate, this supreme end. SECT. 14. 2 COR. VIII. 20

When the Corinthians desired to deposit their alms in the hands of St. Paul, they certainly acted a very wise part; as no man living could have rendered them more secure as to the fidelity or the discretion of the distribution. Yet we see, that high as the apostle's character stood, and though he had so often given, and was daily renewing, such striking demonstrations both of his wisdom and integrity; yet he would not undertake the trust alone, but used all proper methods to approve his exactness in the management thereof, even to strangers; providing things honest and laudable, not only in the sight of God, but of all men. 21

May ministers be often thus employed, as the almoners of persons richer than themselves; (as their readiness to help the poor in their temporal affairs may greatly promote their usefulness in spirituals;) and may they be found to manage their trust with the like conscious and delicate honour. May they show a disposition, like that of St. Paul, to assist in establishing and advancing the characters of their younger brethren, and introducing them into esteem and confidence. Thus will they indeed most effectually strengthen their own hands, and edify and comfort the churches; will prove the glory of Christ themselves in the present age, and be the means of raising up others who may eminently deserve that illustrious title, in succeeding generations. 23

SECTION XV.

The apostle goes on, with admirable address, farther to urge their liberal contribution; and in the full expectation of it, affectionately recommends them to the divine blessing. 2 Cor. ix. 1, *throughout.*

2 COR. ix. 1.

2 COR ix. 1.

FOR as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

NOW concerning the ministration intended *to* relieve the necessities of *the saints* or believing brethren in Judea, *it is superfluous that I should write* largely *to you*, in order to persuade you to the thing itself; it is sufficient that I give you a transient hint concerning the time and manner of doing what is necessary or proper on this occasion. SECT. 15. 2 COR. IX. 1

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

For I have known in former instances, and have now again learnt from Titus, *your* extraordinary *readiness* on this head; *which I* indeed *boast concerning you to the Macedonians, that* all the region of *Achaia*, and particularly your church in its capital city, *has been prepared a year ago; and your zeal* in this respect *hath quickened many* others to imitate your example, and do more generously than perhaps they might otherwise have done. 2

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf: that, as I said, ye may be ready:

Nevertheless, I have sent unto you *the brethren* I mentioned before; *lest our boasting of you on this head, that, as I said, ye were prepared* before, having made up your sum, *should*, by any accident which might have prevented your accomplishing the whole of your design, in any degree *be made vain*, and appear ill-grounded: 3

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Lest if any of *the Macedonians happen to come with me, and* after all *find you unprepared*, the money which has been subscribed not being actually collected, *we may be ashamed, not to say you also, in this confident boasting* we have used concerning you, and which may recoil in a very unhappy manner, if it be not answered. 4

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.

Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren I have mentioned, *that they should come to you* some time *before* my arrival, *and should first complete your bounty which had been spoken of before*[a] so largely to them; *that* so, on the whole, *it may be* entirely *ready*, and may appear, *as* what I doubt not but it is, the effect of free and cheerful *bounty, and not* look *like* a sort of *extortion*, wrung from you by mere dint of importunity. 5

6 But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

And as to this, it is an important maxim, which I could wish that christians might always keep in mind, That *he who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully:* God will bestow rewards proportionable to what is given, and to the temper from which it proceeds. With this hint, I leave it to every one to judge for himself what he shall give, and how much seed he shall throw into this grateful and fruitful soil. 6

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give;* not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Whatever it be, more or less, let it be given with a good will and a good grace; *every man as he chuseth in his own heart, not as* proceeding *from grief or necessity*, as if he were sorry to part with his money, and were laid under a kind of constraint to do it; *for God loveth a cheerful giver:* and nothing that is contributed can possibly be acceptable to him without that truly liberal disposition. 7

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

And lest you should fear that your charity should bring you into wants and straits, I entreat you to consider, that *God* [*is*] *able to make all grace* and bounty of every kind *to abound towards you*,[b] so that all your liberality shall accrue to your advantage, and you shall be supplied with abundant matter for future charity; *that having always all sufficiency in all things, ye may* go on with new enlargement and vigour of generous resolution, to *abound to every good work*, without finding your circumstances straitened. 8

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

As it is written of the truly liberal and charitable man, (Psal. cxii. 9.) *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*, and in consequence of this, *his righteousness endureth for ever:* he shall always have something to bestow. 9

10 Now he that minister-

We observe in the course of Divine Providence, that God blesseth the increase of the 10

a *Your bounty which had been spoken of before.*] We render προκατηγγελμενην, *whereof ye had notice before.* But I suppose it refers to St. Paul's having spoken of it to the Macedonian christians, ver. 2.—I think πλεονεξιαν here signifies a kind of *extortion*, by which money is, as it were, wrung from covetousness, by such *obstinacy* as covetous people themselves use where their own gain is concerned; and thus it is opposed to ευλογιαν, what is *readily* given, and comes, as it were, with a blessing.

b *All grace to abound, &c.*] Some by χαριν understand such liberal, providential *supplies* as should furnish out matter of future

SECT. 15. 2 COR. IX.

earth so largely, as to suffice for the plentiful nourishment of men, with a remainder of seed sufficient to furnish the harvests of future years. *And may he, who* thus *supplieth seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply your sowing,*[c] *and* largely *increase the productions of your righteousness:* may he so prosper you in all your affairs, that you may have future capacity to exercise that liberal disposition which at present appears in this contribution. And I heartily wish and pray that you may go on in this laudable and exemplary course, *being in every thing enriched to all* future bounty, to be distributed in the *simplicity* of your hearts, with a single eye to the glory of God and the good of your brethren; *which*, in the instance wherein it has already prevailed, *worketh by our means thanksgivings towards God*, both in us who are your almoners to distribute it, and in those indigent christians who receive it. *For the ministration* and management *of this service*,[d] which we have undertaken, and in which we do, as it were, officiate for you in the presentation of this acceptable offering, *doth not only supply the necessities of the saints, but aboundeth, through the thanksgivings of many* which it occasions, *to* the glory of *God:* Of many, I say, *who by the experience of this ministration*, this generous contribution, *are glorifying God on account of that subjection to the gospel of Christ which you profess*,[e] *and the simplicity* and liberality *of your communication towards them, and towards all* others who are in necessity, and whom you have an opportunity of relieving. *And* while they thus glorify God on your account, they are constant and fervent *in their prayers for you, who long after you*,[f] and wish earnestly to see and know you, *on account of the exceeding grace of God which is in you*, and which produces fruits so highly ornamental to christianity.

When I think of these things, I desire sincerely to bless God on your account, for all the grace he hath given you, and for all the usefulness with which he is pleased to honour you. But I would trace up all to what is indeed the fountain of all his other mercies to us, his having bestowed upon us his dear and only-begotten Son. *Thanks*, daily and everlasting thanks, [*be*] ascribed *to* our Father and our *God*, *for* that *his unutterable gift*,[g] of the excellence, importance, and grace of which, neither men nor angels can worthily speak or conceive.

eth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the wants of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

13 (While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;)

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15 HAPPY shall we be if we learn this pious and evangelical turn of thought; if by all the other gifts of God we are thus led up to the first and greatest gift of his love and mercy. From that surely we may encourage our hopes of whatever else is necessary and desirable; for he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how is it possible that he should not be ready, with him, freely to give us all things that are truly good for us!

2 Let us observe with pleasure the happy address of the apostle; a felicity not the result of craft, but of that amiable temper that was so natural to him. He pleads the high opinion he had entertained of his Corinthian 5 friends, the honourable things he had said of them; expressing his persuasion of their readiness to give as matter of bounty, not of constraint. He leads them to the inexhaustible store of the divine liberality, from which they had received their present all, from which he wishes they may receive more and more; and this not that these supplies 7, 8 might be ignobly consumed in self-gratifications, but employed in acts of the noblest beneficence. He represents to 9—12 them the thanksgivings it had already occasioned to God, the refreshment it administered to the saints, the honour 13 it did to their character and profession, and the esteem and friendship for them which it excited in the minds of those who, though unacquainted with them, were well affected towards their happiness, in consequence of this honourable specimen of their character. Who could withstand the force of such oratory? No doubt it was effectual to cultivate the temper it applauded, and to add a rich abundance to the fruits of their righteousness.

Let us apply the thoughts suggested for our own instruction, to excite us to abound in acts of liberality, and to 7 present them to God with that cheerfulness which he loves. To him let us continually look to make all grace 8 abound unto us; and seek a sufficiency in all things relating to the present life, chiefly that we may be ready to 9 every good work; that our liberality may still endure, and that the multiplication of our seed sown may increase 10 the fruits of our righteousness. To God be the praise of all ascribed! He ministers seed to the sower; he supplies bread for food; he calls up the blessings of harvest; he insures the advantage of commerce. May we praise him 11 ourselves; and by the ready communication of the good things which he hath given to those that want, not only supply their necessities, but give them cause to abound in thanksgiving to God, as well as in prayer for us, while they

liberalities; but the more extensive sense I have given it, prevents that appearance of a tautology in the following clause, which might on that limited interpretation be apprehended.

c *He who supplieth—bread for food, supply and multiply, &c.*] This translation is exactly literal, and gives an easier sense than our English version. There should be a *comma*, as Beza justly observes, after εις βρωσιν, agreeably to the rendering of the Syriac and Arabic. See Beza, *in loc.* and Wolf. who refers to Isa. lv. 10.

d *This service.*] This use of the word λειτουργια intimates, that it was to be considered, not merely as an act of *humanity*, but of *religion*, most pleasing to God, and suitable to the nature of the *gospel-dispensation*. Compare Heb. xiii. 16.

e *That subjection to the gospel of Christ which you profess.*] Επι τη υποταγη της ομολογιας υμων εις το ευαγγελιον, expresses not merely *a professed subjection to the gospel*, but a *real* subjection to the *gospel* which was *professed*; which sense I thought it necessary to preserve by a change in the version.

f *And in their prayers, &c.*] The construction of the original is something perplexed here; and indeed I hardly know any text in the Greek Testament which is more so. But on the whole, I am ready to prefer the reading of δοξαζοντων, instead of δοξαζοντες, (which Chrysostom followed,) and suppose both δοξαζοντων and επιποθουντων to agree with πολλων, and then the sentence might be rendered, *this ministration produces an abundance of thanksgiving to God from many who glorify him for your subjection to the gospel, &c. and in their prayer*, that is, while they are praying *for you, earnestly desire to see you, &c.* But the paraphrase here, as in several other places, hath obliged me to break the sentence; which I more readily did, as amidst this perplexity of grammar the design of the sentence is perfectly plain.

g *Unutterable gift.*] If we understand this with Dr. Whitby in the following sense: "I adore God for this *charitable temper* in you "and other sincere christians, by which God is glorified, the gospel "adorned, the poor saints are refreshed, and you fitted for an ex-"ceeding great reward,"—it will be as *remarkable* a text as most in the Bible, to show that *every* good affection in the human heart is to be ascribed to a *divine* influence. I have therefore included this in the paraphrase; but am ready to think the apostle's mind, to which the idea of the invaluable *gift* of Christ was so familiar, rather by a strong and natural transition, glanced on *that*.

see and acknowledge that exceeding grace which is the spring of every generous motion in the human heart, and to which therefore be the glory of all. SECT. 15.

SECTION XVI.

Some reflections having been thrown on the apostle for the mildness of his conduct, as if it proceeded from fear, he here proceeds to assert his apostolical power and authority; cautioning his opponents, that they should not urge him to give too sensible demonstrations of it upon themselves. 2 Cor. x. 1, *throughout.*

2 COR. x. 1.

2 Cor. x. 1. NOW I Paul myself, beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

I HAVE just *now* been expressing my confidence and joy in your church in general, as well as my affection to it; but I am sensible there are some among you to whom I cannot speak in such a manner; and with regard to such *I Paul myself*, the very man whom they have so often spoken of with contempt and defiance, injured as I am, do yet condescend to *entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, our condescending and compassionate Saviour, that meekness and gentleness which I have learned from his example, and desire to exercise towards the most unreasonable of my enemies; even I, *who* [*am*,] according to your representation, and with respect to my person, *when present, humble among you*,[a] and despised for the meanness of my appearance, *but, being absent, am bold towards you*, and use so much freedom and authority in my letters; *However* I may be reflected upon and even insulted on this account; *I beseech you*, I say, as you love yourselves, and tender your own comfort and happiness, *that I may not, when I am* next *present*, be obliged by your continued irregularity to *be bold, with that confidence on which* truly *I think to presume with respect to some who account of us as* persons *walking in the flesh*, and affect at least to talk, though they have so little excuse for doing it, as if we governed ourselves by low and mercenary views. *For* we are conscious to ourselves, that *though we* do indeed *walk in the flesh*, though we inhabit mortal bodies, and are obliged in some respects to stoop to the care of them, and to do many things for their subsistence, which take up the time we could much more agreeably spend another way; yet, God knows, *we do not* manage that important *war* in which we are engaged, *according to the flesh*, by carnal methods, or with worldly and interested views.[b] This you may easily perceive by the manner in which we are armed; *for the weapons of our warfare* [*are*] *not carnal:* as we depend not on military force, so neither on beauty, stature, eloquence, or philosophy, or, in a word, on any thing which might recommend us to human regard; but *though* destitute of these, we are furnished with others much more valuable, by that divine power, which would never exert itself for the secular advantage of persons professing, as we do, to despise the world, and seek for something so much above it, if we were not sincere in our profession, and authorized by him to maintain it. Yes, my brethren, God hath armed us for our warfare, by the miraculous powers of his Holy Spirit; and they are *mighty through God to the demolishing fortifications*, prejudices and difficulties, that like so many impregnable castles lie in our way, and yet are battered down and laid in ruins by these our spiritual weapons. And thus we go on in our conquest; for we are continually *casting down* the fallacious and sophistical *reasonings* by which vain men are endeavouring to expose our doctrine to contempt, *and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God*, all the proud imaginations which men have entertained of themselves with regard to their natural or moral excellences, in consequence of which they neglect the gospel, and are indeed ready to live without God in the world. *And* thus we are enabled *to bring every thought*, every proud, haughty notion which men have entertained, *into* an humble and willing *captivity*[c] *to the obedience of Christ*, the great Captain of our salvation. *And* as God is pleased thus to cause us to triumph in Christ, with regard to the opposition made by the professed enemies of the gospel, so let men regard us as persons *having it in readiness*, by miraculous powers and penalties inflicted by them, *to avenge all disobedience*, to chastise and punish the obstinacy of those who under a christian profession pretend to oppose us; *now your obedience is fulfilled*, and the sounder part of your church recovered to its due order and subjection.

SECT. 16.

2 COR. x. 1

2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

This is indeed the case, and I beseech you to consider it as it is. *Do you look at the outward appearance of things?* Do you judge of a man by his person or address, or by any one particular of this life? Surely you ought not to do it. *If any man be confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him again bethink himself of this*, which he will see evident reason to acknowledge, if he candidly and seriously examine, *that as he* [*is*] *Christ's, so we also* [*are*] *Christ's;* nor can any one produce more convincing proofs of Christ's calling him to the ministry, and approving his discharge of it, than myself. *For*

7 Do ye look at things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

a *When present, am humble among you.*] Probably they had upbraided and reflected upon him in some such language as this; but there was a sense in which he was indeed lowly among them, his presence probably having nothing majestic.

b *Though we walk in the flesh,* &c.] Mr. Cradock explains this something differently, "Though we are not free from a mixture of "human infirmities, yet I do not exercise my apostolical power in "a weak manner, as either fearing or flattering men; but use such "spiritual weapons as christian fortitude, zeal, freedom in speaking "the truths of God, and courage in administering the censures of "the church, which, through divine concurrence, are very effectual."

c *Every thought into captivity.*] The soul, seeing its fortifications demolished, submits to the conqueror; and then every thought, every reasoning, takes law from him. Nothing is admitted that contradicts the gospel; Christ being acknowledged as absolute Master. The former clause shows how ready men are to fortify themselves against it, and to raise, as it were, one barrier behind another, to obstruct his entrance into the soul. Compare Rom. xv. 18, 19.

SECT. 16. 2 COR. X.

if I should boast something yet more, abundantly more, than I have ever yet done, *concerning our* apostolical *authority, which* I am sensible *the Lord hath given us for the edification* of the church, *and not for your destruction* or the injury of any particular person, *I should not* have any reason to *be ashamed*, having already used it in a manner agreeable to its design.

9 And this I say, *that I may not seem as if I would* by any means *terrify you with* my *Epistles*, threatening more than I can perform; on the contrary, I might pretend to much more than I have done, and to execute, if need should require it, much greater severities in
10 a way of miraculous punishment.[d] And the hint is necessary; *for* I know there are some among you that would represent matters quite in a different light. [*His*] *Epistles, say they*, [*are*] *indeed weighty and strong, but* [*his*] *bodily presence* [*is*] *weak, and* [*his*] *speech despicable*;[e] for which indeed they have some excuse, as to my person, and the
11 disadvantages attending my utterance. But *let such an one*, whoever he be, *reckon upon this* as a certain fact, *that such as we are in word by* our *letters, when absent, such* [*shall we be*] *also when present, in action*; our deeds will fully correspond to our words, and we shall do something to vindicate these pretences, if their speedy reformation do not prevent.

12 *For we presume not to number or to compare ourselves with some who recommend themselves* in very high terms; *but they* thus *measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves*,[f] while they proudly overlook the greatly superior characters and furniture of others, *are not wise*, nor do they indeed take the most effectual measures to raise their own character; but, on the contrary, in consequence of this, fall into many absurdities of behaviour from which greater impartiality and modesty, and a
13 better knowledge of men and things, would secure them. *But we* are always careful that we *glory not* of a distinguished zeal for the gospel carrying us *beyond* [*our*] *bounds, but* only *according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us* under the character of apostle of the Gentiles, *a measure to come even unto you*; and accordingly we have regularly and gradually advanced towards you, taking intermediate places in our
14 way. *For we do not extend ourselves excessively, as not* regularly *coming to you*; like some who run abruptly from one church to another, leaving their work unfinished behind them, when they think they have discovered a place where they can meet with a more pleasant and agreeable reception. *For*, as I observed before, *we are*, by a regular progress, *come even unto you in the gospel of Christ*, having faithfully preached in the
15 other places that lay in our way: *Not* like those whom I have had so much reason to complain of, *boasting unmeasurably*, or *in* things beyond my proper measure, not intruding into churches planted by *the labours of others*, where we have no natural and proper call; *but having* an agreeable *hope*, [*that*] *when your faith is increased*, as we trust it will abundantly be, even by the experience of what has lately happened, *we shall, according to our rule*, and the constant maxim we lay down to ourselves, *be magnified by you, so as to abound* yet more, that is, shall by your countenance and assistance be enabled to keep on our courses beyond your country into Arcadia and Lacedæmon, or
16 whithersoever else Providence may lead us. For this is greatly in our hearts, if God shall smile upon our purposes, *to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you*,[g] [*and*] *not to boast in another man's* province[h] or *rule, in things made ready to our hand*; as some
17 who are very solicitous about their own ease affect to do, and then pride themselves in sowing the ground which others have cleared. *But* after all, *he that boasteth*, whether it be of planting or watering churches, *let him boast* not in himself; but *in* the power and assistance of *the Lord* alone, let every minister remember it is to Christ that he owes all
18 his ability for his work, and all his success in it. *For not he that commendeth* himself with the greatest confidence, and in the most florid manner, *is* truly and justly *approved*; *but* he *whom the Lord commendeth* by the gifts of his Spirit, and by a blessing on his ministry. Let those therefore who are so ready to applaud themselves and each other,

8 For though I should boast somewhat of our authority, (which the Lord hath given us for edification and not for your destruction,) I should not be ashamed:

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For *his* letters (say they) *are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

11 Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also, in *preaching* the gospel of Christ;

15 Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

d Miraculous punishment.] It is to be remembered it was before this time that the apostle had smitten Elymas with blindness; and it is highly probable from this text, and others of the like nature, that some other miracles of this awful kind had been wrought by him, though they are not recorded in scripture.

e *Speech despicable.*] Chrysostom, Nicephorus, and Lucian, or rather the author of the *Philopatris*, relate of St. Paul, that his stature was low, his body crooked, and his head bald, which seem to be the infirmities here referred to. Some think he had also an *impediment* in his speech; but I do not recollect any ancient testimony to *that*; though it is not improbable. Compare chap. xii. 7. and the note there.

f *Measuring themselves by themselves*: εν εαυτοις εαυτους μετρουντες.] Dr. Whitby would render it, *measuring themselves by one another*; as if they compared themselves with their false apostles and grew proud on the degree in which they resembled them in acuteness and eloquence, or other things on which those deceitful teachers valued themselves. But it is more natural to think that the meaning is, "They looked continually *on themselves*, surveying their "own great imaginary furniture, but not considering the vastly "superior abilities of many others: and so formed a disproportion-"ate opinion of themselves." And this is every where one of the greatest sources of pride. Bos has taken great pains to prove, that *to measure oneself by oneself*, is a phrase which expresses *modesty*, and making a right estimate of ourselves and others; and taking συνιασιν not for a verb, but for the dative of a participle, would render it, *we measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves with ourselves, not with the wise*, that is, *ironically*, not with such wise men as these. But though this sense be ingeniously defended by that great critic, the other seems most natural.

g *In the regions beyond you.*] It would certainly have been a great pleasure to the apostle to have gone on to Arcadia and Lacedæmon, and to have proselyted those to the gospel who had been so long celebrated in the latter of these places for their valour and magnanimity, and in the former for their wit and poetry in those agreeable and rural retreats. But we do not read any thing in the New Testament of planting christian churches in these parts of the Peloponnesus.

h *Another man's* province, &c.] The apostle did indeed go to places *already* converted, to confirm and establish his brethren in the faith; but this was chiefly where he had himself planted churches, though he might take some others in his way; which it would have been affectation and disrespect, rather than modesty, to have avoided. But he did not boast in churches thus visited as if he were the founder of them, as his opposers probably did, pouring contempt on St. Paul's labours, as if they were hardly to be called christian churches which he had left, as they pretended, in so unformed and unfinished a state.

think of this, and learn to be more solicitous than they are about approving their fidelity to their great Master, whether they be more or less regarded by their fellow-servants. SECT. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

2 COR. X. Ver. 1

MAY the meekness and gentleness of Christ ever be remembered by all his servants, and especially by his ministers, to whom, both under their public and private characters, it will be of so great importance to imitate it. Their calling is indeed high and holy; let their behaviour in it be so much the more humble. And let it be their great 3 care, that while they walk in the flesh they do not war after it. Still, though disarmed of that miraculous power with which the apostles were endowed, are the weapons of their warfare mighty. They have the scripture-magazine ever 4 at hand, from whence they may be furnished with them; and may humbly hope that the Spirit of God will render them effectual to the pulling down strong holds, and abasing every proud imagination which exalteth itself against the obedience of God. May every thought of their own hearts be in the first place thus subdued, and brought into 5 a sweet and willing captivity! So shall these their captives, thus conquered, prove as so many faithful soldiers to fight for him, against whom they once were foolishly rebelling. And may they succeed in this holy war, till the empire of our Divine Master become universal, and the happiness of mankind universal with it!

To promote this, let us pray that ministers may always remember, that whatever authority they have given them, 7—11 is for edification and not for destruction; and may learn from that moderation with which the apostle used his miraculous powers, in how gentle and candid a manner they should behave themselves in their far inferior stations, never making their pre-eminence in the church the instrument of their own resentment, or of any other sinful or selfish passion; but ever solicitous to subserve the interest of our great Lord in all, and desirous to keep up their own character and influence chiefly for his sake.

May they in no instance boast beyond their proper measure; and while they are ready, like St. Paul, to meet all 12—16 the most laborious scenes of service, let them glory not in themselves, but in the Lord. This is a lesson we are all to learn. And whatever our stations in life are, let us resolutely and constantly guard against that self-flattery by 17 which we may be ready to commend ourselves, in instances in which we may be least approved by him whose 18 favour alone is worthy of our ambition, and by whose judgment, in the day of final account, we must stand or fall.

SECTION XVII.

The apostle farther vindicates himself from the perverse insinuations of them that opposed him at Corinth; particularly on the head of his having declined to receive a contribution from this church for his maintenance. 2 Cor. xi. 1—15.

2 COR. xi. 1.

WOULD to God you could bear with me a little in *my* folly, and indeed bear with me.

2 COR. xi. 1.

I WOULD advise every man, as I have hinted, to be sparing in his own commendation, and to study above all to approve himself to Christ; and yet, in present circumstances, *I wish you would bear with a little of* [*my*] *folly*, that you would permit a little of that boasting which I know generally to be foolish; *and indeed* I must entreat you to *bear with me* in what may look this way, considering the manner in which I am urged to it, and brought under an unwilling necessity. *For I am jealous over you with* what I trust I may call *a godly jealousy*, and feel the warmest and most zealous desires, *that I may present* [*you as*] *a chaste virgin to Christ;*[a] *for I have* by successfully preaching the gospel to you, and bringing you into the engagements of the christian covenant, in effect *espoused you to one husband*,[b] even to him, under the character of his servant and ambassador, I have led you into a holy contract with him, which hath been mutually sealed. I am therefore exceedingly concerned that you may maintain a pure and loyal heart to him who has condescended to take you into so dear and intimate a relation. SECT. 17. 2 COR. XI. 2

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

And I am the more solicitous about this, as I know what insinuating enemies are endeavouring to corrupt you: *for I fear lest by any means, as* in the first seduction and ruin of mankind, *the serpent deceived Eve*,[c] our common mother, *by his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from* that *simplicity* which should always be in us *towards Christ*,[d] and which the adulterous mixtures which some are endeavouring to introduce among you would greatly injure. 3

3 But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

For if he that cometh among you with such extraordinary pretences, *preach another Jesus* as a Saviour, *whom we have not preached;* if he can point out another Christ who shall equally deserve your attention and regard: *or* [*if*] *ye receive* by his preaching *another Spirit, which ye have not yet received*, which can bestow upon you gifts superior to those which we have imparted; *or another gospel which ye have not accepted*, the 4

4 For if he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another Spirit which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted,

a *That I may present you, &c.*] This is much illustrated by recollecting, that there was an officer among the Greeks, whose business it was to educate and form young women, especially those of rank and figure, designed for *marriage*, and then to *present* them to those who were to be their *husbands;* and if this officer permitted them, through negligence, to be corrupted between the espousals and consummation of the marriage, great blame would naturally fall upon him.

b *For I have espoused you.*] This clause ηρμοσαμην γαρ υμας ενι ανδρι, may be considered as a *parenthesis;* and therefore in the paraphrase I have transposed it, that the construction may appear; ζηλω υμας παρεστησαι, *I am jealous, &c.—that I may present you, &c.*

c *Lest as the serpent deceived Eve*, &c.] From the instance to which this is applied, viz. that of the false apostles, whose subtilty did not consist so much in crafty arguments, as in false *appearances*, by which they put on the outward forms of the apostles of Christ; Mr. Rymer infers, (especially comparing ver. 14.) that the subtilty of Satan, when he deceived Eve, consisted in putting on the appearance of an *angel of light*, or pretending to be one of the Seraphim that attended on the Shechinah. (Rymer, *On Rev.* p. 79.) But I think that if it had been ever so expressly said by Moses, that the *deception* lay, as it very probably might, in pretending to have received the faculty of reason and speech, though a brute, by eating the fruit he proposed to her, it might be said in the general, that the false apostles deceived their followers, as Satan deceived Eve, that is, by false pretences and insinuations.

d *Simplicity towards Christ;* απλοτητος της εις τον Χριστον.] This implies an entire, undivided *devotedness* to Christ, as the great husband christians should desire to please, and from whom they are to receive law; and is with peculiar propriety opposed to that mixture of Judaism which some were endeavouring to bring in among the Corinthians.

SECT. 17. 2 COR. XI.

tidings of which shall be equally happy, evident, and important, *ye might well bear with* [*him,*] and there would be some excuse for your conduct; but how far this is from being, or so much as seeming to be, the case, I need not say at large. Nor will you, I am sure, maintain any such thing; *for I reckon* upon most certain knowledge, that I was so far from being inferior in my discourses or miracles to these your favourite teachers, *that I did* 5 *not in any respect fall short of the greatest of the apostles;* but gave you as evident and convincing proofs of a divine mission as any church has ever received from any one of 6 them. *For if* [*I am*] *unskilful in speech,* using plain and unpolished language like that of a man of the most ordinary education;[e] *nevertheless* [*I am*] *not so in knowledge* of the gospel of Christ, and the divine dispensations which were introductory to it. *But in every respect we have been manifest to you in all things,* every one of you has had a proof of this, as you received the gospel from me, and therefore ought not to question my abilities, nor to prefer another in opposition to me.

7 Nothing can be more ungenerous and unreasonable than to insinuate that I have renounced my claim to being an apostle, by declining that maintenance which my brethren generally think it reasonable to take from the people among whom they labour, and which while employed for them they may indeed reasonably expect. *Have I* then *committed an offence, in humbling myself* to the daily cares and toils of a tent-maker, *that you may* more effectually *be exalted* to the dignity of those who know and believe in Christ? Is this, after all, the crime, *that I have preached the gospel of God to you at free cost?*

8 *I* may almost, in this sense, be said to *have robbed other churches:* so freely have I received from them, at least *taken wages,* as it were, [*of them,*] *for waiting upon you;* for indeed I received a kind of stipend from them while I abode at Corinth. (Phil. iv. 15.) 9 *And when I was in want while present* with you, *I was chargeable to no* one *man*[f] of your society, when incapable of maintaining myself, as before: *for what was deficient to me* in this respect, *the* christian *brethren who came from Macedonia supplied:* (Phil. iv. 10.) *and in all things I have kept, and,* so long as God shall enable me, *I will keep* 10 *myself from being burdensome to you.* And this in some measure I value myself upon; so that *as the truth of Christ is in me, this boast shall not be violated,* nor this rule broke in upon *with respect to me,* at Corinth, or *in* all *the regions of Achaia.*

11 And *why* is it that I insist upon this? Is it *because I love you not,* and therefore am unwilling to be under any obligation to you? *God knows* the contrary, that you have a large share in my tenderest affections and cares; yea, that it was my desire of serving you more effectually, that subjected me to these mortifications and self-denials; for such they 12 undoubtedly were. *But what I do* in this respect, *I will* continue to *do, that I may cut off occasion from them who* greatly *desire* an *occasion* to reflect upon me, *that in* [*the thing of*] *which they* are so ready to *boast, they may be found even as we.*[g] I would teach them by my example, instead of boasting, that they have such an influence over you, as procures them a plentiful and perhaps splendid maintenance, that they rather emulate my disinterested conduct, and subsist on their own labours. But I know they 13 have no inward principle to bear them through such hardships. *For such,* whatever they pretend, [*are*] *false apostles,* destitute of that divine mission which animates our spirits to do, or to bear, whatever we meet in the course of our duty; and indeed they are *deceitful workers,* whatever pains they may seem to take in their employment; *transforming themselves* artfully *into* the appearance of *apostles of Christ* by counterfeit forms, which they may put on for a while, but which they can with no consistency long 14 support. *And* [*it is*] *no wonder* they assume them for a time; *for Satan himself,* in subordination to whom they act, can put on such deceitful appearances, and wear upon occasion such a mask of sanctity and religion in his attempts, that he *is,* as it were, *transformed into an angel of light,* and one would imagine his suggestions to be of a 15 celestial and divine original. *Therefore* [*it is*] *no great thing if his ministers also,* under his influence, *be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end* nevertheless *shall be,* not according to their specious pretences, but *according to their works:* for they will find that God, upon whose judgment their final state depends, is not to be imposed upon by any of their artifices.

ye might well bear with *him.*

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

6 But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself, that you might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them,* to do you service.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself.*

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2 How adorable is the condescension of the blessed Jesus, who, amidst all the exalted glories of his heavenly kingdom, is so graciously uniting souls to himself; espousing them in bonds of everlasting love, that they may be for ever near him, and receive the most endearing communications of his favour. Much should we all be con-

e *Unskilful in speech.*] Ἰδιώτης properly signifies a *private man,* one that can speak no better than the generality of his neighbours, being unformed by the rules of eloquence. And this is consistent with that great natural pathos which we find in the apostle's writings; so that there is no need of recurring, as Dr. Whitby here does, to the supposed impediment in his speech, which, allowing it ever so certain a fact, could not properly be expressed by this phrase. The good Archbishop of Cambray hath a very pertinent observation on this expression, in his excellent *Dialogues of Eloquence,* (p. 136.) viz. that this might well be the case, though St. Paul shared so largely in the gift of tongues; as when he was at Tarsus, he probably learnt a corrupt kind of Greek, spoken by the inhabitants of this place; for we have reason to believe, that as for any of the languages which the apostles had learnt in a natural way, the Spirit left them to speak as before.

f *Chargeable to no man: οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐδενός.*] Beza would render it, *I was not idle at any man's expense.* The word νάρκη implies a *benumbed, inactive state,* a kind of *torpor,* to which no man seems to be less obnoxious than St. Paul.

g *They might be found,* &c.] The Jews had a maxim among them, "that it was better for their wise men to skin beasts, for a "living, than to ask a maintenance from the generosity of those "whom they taught." But it plainly appears, that whatever the false apostles might boast upon this head, there was no foundation for it. Compare ver. 20. and 1 Cor. ix. 12.

cerned that we may have the honour and blessings of such an alliance; that being by profession solemnly espoused to him, we may in the day of the marriage of the Lamb be presented chaste and spotless. How vigilant should they be who are intrusted by him to treat with souls about these espousals! How solicitous that they may succeed, and may so present them to Christ! SECT. 17. 2 COR. XI.

Still is that crafty serpent, whose malignant breath so soon tainted our common mother and all our happiness by his subtilty, labouring to corrupt our minds from the simplicity of true christianity. Let us be incessantly watchful against the artful deceiver, remembering that his works and designs of darkness may sometimes be veiled as under the robes of an angel of light, and his ministers transformed as ministers of righteousness. Be therefore sober and vigilant, since your adversary the devil adds the wiliness of the old serpent to the rage and cruelty of the roaring lion, and by both subserves his purposes of betraying or devouring the souls of men. 3 14, 15

Let us therefore with a godly jealousy be jealous over each other, and especially over ourselves; and after the example of the apostle, be peculiarly so when we are compelled to say any thing to our own advantage. Let us endeavour to arm ourselves against every surrounding danger, by a growing regard to the writings of this excellent man, who, though rude in speech, was so far from being in any degree deficient in christian knowledge, that he was not behind the very chief of the apostles. There are those that preach another gospel: but can they point out another Jesus, another all-sufficient Saviour? Can they direct us to another Spirit? Let us hold fast the doctrine we learn from his faithful pen: let us follow the exhortations we receive from his experienced heart, and be ever ready to imitate him in that resolute self-denial which he exercised, and that glorious superiority to every other interest which he always showed, where the interests of Christ and of souls were concerned. So shall we cut off occasion from them that seek occasion against us, and secure a far greater happiness, in the conscious reflection of our own minds, as well as the expectation of a future reward, than the greatest abundance of this world could have given us, or any present advantage to which we could have sacrificed the views of conscience and honour. 2 6 5 4 9 12

SECTION XVIII.

Farther to assert his right as an apostle, St. Paul commemorates his labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ; yet in such a manner as plainly to show how disagreeable it was to him, so much as to seem to applaud himself on the most necessary occasion. 2 Cor. xi. 16, *to the end.*

2 COR. xi. 16.

2 Cor. xi. 16.

I SAY again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

I HAVE said some things which may seem more to the advantage of my character, than a man would wish any thing which comes from his own lips or pen should appear. But *again I* must *say, Let no man think me* to be so *foolish* in this boasting, as to take any pleasure in commending myself. Let the provocation I have received be considered; let the necessity of the circumstance, and the importance of my character, be duly weighed; and you will surely excuse it. *But if* it must be *otherwise* censured, I will run the risk, and beseech you, if you think me foolish in it, *as foolish, however*, to *receive* and bear with *me* as well as others, *that I may* in my turn at least *boast some small matter. What* 17 *I speak* on this head, *I speak not after the Lord*, not by any immediate direction or inspiration from Christ; nor is it so evidently in his Spirit as I could wish, or so apparently conformable to that example of modesty and humility which he hath set us: *but* I speak it, *as it were, foolishly in this confidence of boasting*;[a] on which account I return to this subject again with some sensible regret. Yet lest my silence should be attended with still worse consequences, I think myself obliged, though with strong reluctance, to say, *seeing many boast according to the flesh*, in circumcision and Jewish extraction, *I also will boast* as well as they; and truly were I disposed to do it on these topics, you well know that no man could say more than I. SECT. 18. 2 COR. XI. 16 17 That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

And by the way, *you may well bear with foolish people, since you* [*yourselves*] *are* so wondrous *wise*, and in that abundant wisdom can cherish that arrogant temper in others, and second it with your high applause. Nay, indeed, you go farther than that, and not only endure to hear your admired teachers make very indecent encomiums upon themselves, but tamely submit to them while they invade your property, and tyrannize over you in a most arbitrary and scandalous manner. *For* by what I can learn of the temper of some among you in that respect, and of your fond infatuation in their favour, it seems that *you bear it* patiently *if a man enslave you*, and even trample upon your liberty, *if he devour* [*you*] by his exorbitant demands, *if he* take and *seize* [*on your possessions,*] *if he exalt himself* as if he were your supreme and absolute sovereign, *if* his mad passion were to transport him even to blows, and *he* were to *smite you on the face*,[b] your fondness for him would prevent your calling him to a just account, and you would find some way of excusing or accommodating the affair, rather than come to a breach with him. 19 20 19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise. 20 For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

Do I speak this by way of dishonour, from an envious desire to derogate from my superiors, and so bring them down to my own level: *as if we ourselves were weak* in comparison with them, and therefore have not the courage to attempt such freedoms as they take? There can *surely* be no reason to suspect that; for be they ever so puffed up with their external privileges, I would have them to know, that *in whatever any one else may be confident* in these respects, though *I speak it* indeed *in folly, I* 21 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

a *Foolishly in this confidence of boasting.*] It seems indeed not very just and natural to interpret this as spoken by immediate suggestion; yet it being in present circumstances very proper the apostle should speak *thus*, the Holy Spirit might, by a general, though unperceived influence, lead him into this track of thought and expression; and though such apologies might seem beneath the dignity of an apostle's character, yet that very condescension is an excellent and most useful example of humility to all christians, and especially to ministers.

b *Smite you on the face.*] As one can hardly imagine that the false apostles would run all these lengths, (though Dr. Whitby well observes, that the high conceit which the Jews had of their

SECT. 18. 2 COR. XI.

also am confident, and on their own terms could match or even exceed them. *Are they*, for instance, *Hebrews* by language, capable of consulting the scriptures in the original, with all the advantage which a familiar acquaintance with that tongue from their childhood can give them? *so* [*am*] *I*. *Are they Israelites* by birth, not descended from Esau or any other branch of the family but that on which the blessing was entailed? *so* [*am*] *I*, likewise. *Are they of the seed of Abraham*, both by the father's and mother's side, not proselytes or of mingled descent? *so* [*am*] *I*; and can trace up as fair and clear a genealogy, through the tribe of Benjamin, to the father of the faithful. Or if they would boast in a manner more peculiarly referring to the gospel; *are they ministers of Christ? I* may seem to *speak foolishly* in this boasting manner, which is so unnatural to me; I cannot forbear repeated apologies for it; but I will venture to say here, that *I* [*am*] *more* so than they: so far more than an ordinary minister, that I am a chosen apostle, dignified and distinguished from many of my brethren by more eminent services; *more abundant in labours* now for a long series of years; *exceeding* them *in* the frequent *stripes* I have received on account of my singular zeal; *more abundant in imprisonments*, cheerfully resigning my liberty for the sake of Christ and his gospel; and *often in deaths*, which are continually surrounding me in the most horrible forms, but which, by divine grace, I have learnt to meet and to vanquish in all their terrors, animated by love to my Divine Leader.

22 Are they Hebrews, so *am* I: are they Israelites? so *am* I: are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

I certainly have endured more blows than any of them in his cause; for *of the Jews I have five times received*, in their synagogues and before their courts of judgment, *forty* [*stripes*] *save one*, according to the precautions which they use that they may not transgress the precept of their law, which limits them to that number. (Deut. xxv. 3.) And *thrice was I beaten with rods* by the Roman lictors or beadles, at the command of their superior magistrates. I have reason to say I have been in greater danger of death than any of them; for *once* at Lystra *I was stoned*, and left for dead in the place; nor had I been recovered but by miracle. (Acts xiv. 19.) *Thrice have I been shipwrecked*,[c] and escaped with the utmost difficulty from the rage of the waves; at one of which times I was reduced to such extremity, that *I passed a day and a night in the deep*,[d] floating on the remainders of the wreck, and just on the point of being washed away and sunk every moment. On the whole, I have been *in journies often*, where I have not only been exposed to fatigues, but to great hazard from wild beasts, as well as from unreasonable and wicked men. I have also been *in* frequent *dangers from* the depths and rapidity of several *rivers*[e] which I have been obliged to pass; I have also been *in danger from* the assaults of *robbers*, who have lain in wait for me with a design to plunder and murder me. I have often been *in dangers from* [*my own*] *countrymen* the Jews; who, forgetting the mutual ties of relation by blood, birth, and religion, have attempted my life with insatiable rage, cruelly hunting me from place to place, as if I had been some beast of prey: *in dangers from the heathen*, who have often been stirred up by the Jews, as well as offended by the testimony I have been obliged to bear against their idolatries. Every place through which I have passed has indeed been a scene of perils, and often of great extremities; so that I have been *in dangers in the city* of Jerusalem and other cities; *in dangers in the wilderness*, while laboriously traversing many dreary and inhospitable deserts in pursuit of my apostolical work: *in dangers of the sea*, where I have encountered many a storm, besides those in which, as I observed before, I suffered shipwreck, and where I have sometimes been beset by pirates: And though it be shameful to say it, yet it is most certainly true, that I have frequently been *in* very formidable *dangers among false brethren*,[f] who, amidst all the most specious pretensions of love and affection, have been secretly watching for opportunities to expose, and, if possible, to destroy me; or at least to ruin my usefulness, still dearer to me than my life.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep.

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by *mine own* countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

I have been for a long series of years engaged *in strenuous labour and* fatiguing *toil*,[g] almost incessant; so that the end of one has presently been the beginning of another: I have been, *in watchings*, *often* obliged to add the fatigues of the night to those of the day, either in extraordinary devotion, which hath kept mine eyes waking while others have slept; or in preaching to those who have pressed in upon me to hear the gospel as privately as possible; or by corresponding with christian churches who needed my advice, by which I have lost the rest of many nights in my long journies, or *in* other circumstances into which Providence hath called me. I have often known what *hunger and thirst* mean, have been *in fastings often*, not having had even the necessaries of life at hand. And at the same time I have frequently been exposed to the severity of rigorous seasons, *in cold*

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

superiority over the Gentiles might lead them to great insolence of behaviour,) I chose to paraphrase the words in such a latitude as might wave the severity of the most literal interpretation.

c *Thrice have I been shipwrecked.*] The wreck at Malta happened long after, and therefore must at least have been the *fourth*; and had the inhabitants known it to be so, they would have been confirmed in their suspicions of his being a very bad man; but this remarkably shows us that a series of what the world calls misfortunes from the hand of providence, may befall the best and worthiest of mankind.

d *Passed a day and a night in the deep.*] Νυχθημερον (rendered, *a day* and *a night*) signifies a *natural day*, including the hours of light and darkness. Βυθος, the word here used, and rendered, *in the deep*, was indeed the name of a deep *dungeon* at Cyzicum, in the Propontis; and Dr. Hammond conjectures that St. Paul was cast into it as he passed from Troas to that city; but I think the other interpretation most easy and natural.

e *In dangers from rivers.*] To render ποταμων, *waters*, as we do, is confounding *these hazards* with those he endured in the *sea*, in a very improper manner.

f *False brethren.*] Perhaps he mentions these *last*, as apprehending peculiar danger from their efforts among the Corinthians.

g *In labour and toil.*] The latter of the words here used, μοχθος, is more expressive than the former, κοπος. It signifies not only strenuous labour, but such as proceeds to a degree of *fatigue*.

and even *nakedness* too;[h] not having convenient clothing to cover me, or comfortable habitation to repose myself in. All this, *beside foreign affairs*, that daily combination that does, as it were, make up an assembly, *the care of all the churches* abroad, whose concerns are *rushing in upon me every day*[i] with such impetuosity, that they sometimes are ready not only to confound, but to overbear me. Nor am I concerned only for whole communities, but for particular persons too, as soon as their circumstances are known to me; so that I may say, *Who is weak, and I am not weak* too? Like a tenderly compassionate friend, I feel my own spirits ready to fail, when I see my brethren sink around me. *Who is offended*, so as to be led into sin by the rashness and uncharitableness of others, *and I am not*, as it were, *fired* with grief and indignation to see such a dishonour brought upon religion, and with zeal, if possible, to redress the grievance?[k]

SECT. 18. — 2 COR. XI.

28 Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.
29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

If it is necessary to boast, and I am heartily sorry that it is, *I will*, however, *boast of* those *things which relate to my infirmities;* as I know this tenderness of temper, that so often weeps and trembles, and glows with such strong emotions, on what some may think trivial occasions, will be esteemed by them; yet of these only, and of those sufferings which show the weakness of human nature, and my need of support from Christ; of these alone have I hitherto presumed to speak: nor do I feign or aggravate any thing. Far from that, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, even he, the Eternal Majesty of heaven and earth, *who is ever blessed, knoweth that I do not lie*, or in any degree transgress the strictest boundaries of truth.

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.
31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

And I cannot forbear adding one circumstance more, to illustrate the early dangers to which I was exposed as soon as I engaged in the christian cause, and the remarkable interposition of Providence in my favour, which I would never forget. I mean, that when I was *in Damascus*[l] about three years after my conversion, *the governor*, or ethnarch, *under King Aretas, set a guard at* every gate of *the city of the Damascenes, being determined*, if possible, *to seize me;* in compliance with the solicitations of the Jews, who endeavoured by any means to make me odious to the government, and to crush my usefulness in the bud, if not immediately to destroy my life itself. *And I was let down, through a window, in a basket*, from a house which stood *by the wall* of the city, *and* happily *escaped from his hands;* and by the continued care of the same Providence remain unto this day, and see the many contrivances of my enemies for my destruction turned into disappointment and shame.

32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the King, kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:
33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY we have reason to be thankful, in some degree, for that providential permission to which it was owing that this blessed apostle was brought under the unwilling necessity of boasting, to which his modesty submits with such genuine and becoming regret: we had otherwise lost some very valuable fragments of sacred history, which it becomes us to gather up with respect. We are indeed elsewhere informed concerning several of his labours, stripes, and imprisonments; but how frequent and above measure they were, we had never known, if he had not been urged thus to plead them with the Corinthians, and so to represent them to us. What a life was St. Paul's amidst so many injuries and hardships! Land and sea, every country, every city, almost every society of men, seemed to be in a combination against him, to make his life wretched; and, amidst all the rigours and severities of toils and watchings, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, he felt and particularly complained of the treatment he received from false brethren. Yet thus surrounded, and, as we should from the detail be ready to say, thus overwhelmed with so many and so various miseries, he was yet happy in the favour of God, in the presence of Christ: unspeakably happy in the cheerful views of approaching glory, and in all that abundant usefulness with which a gracious God was pleased to honour him. Whilst his benevolent heart was pained, it was also comforted; and with the care of all the churches pressing upon him, and with all that he felt from particular persons, still was his voice in tune for praise; and he hardly ever begins an Epistle without such a burst of it in some of his first lines, as looks like one of the songs of heaven. O glorious effect of real christianity, which every inferior minister, yea, and every private christian, to this day feels, in proportion to the degree in which his character resembles that of this holy champion of our divine faith!

Ver. 16, 18 — 23 — 26 — 28

But O! how unlike his hath been the character of many who have borne themselves highest on their pretended claims to the most extraordinary powers, by a succession from him and his brethren! What tyrannical insults! What exorbitant oppressions! What base methods to enslave the conscience, the properties, and the persons of men, whom they should have respected and loved as their brethren, whom they should have cherished even as children! So that one would imagine they had taken the picture which St. Paul here draws of the false apostles, as a model of their own conduct; while they have perhaps denied the title of ministers of Christ to those who have much more resembled the dispositions and circumstances of this his most faithful ambassador. Oh that this might only be the infamy of the Popish clergy, with whose cruel and usurping practices such censures may seem best to suit! Or rather would to God it were no longer even theirs. May the God and Father of our Lord

21 — 33

h *Cold and nakedness.*] What an idea does this give us of the *apostle's fidelity and zeal!* It is to die warm in a good and noble cause. How hard was it for a man of a genteel and liberal education, as St. Paul was, to bear such rigours, and to wander about like a vagabond, hungry and almost naked, yet coming into the presence of persons in high life, and speaking in large and various assemblies, on matters of the utmost importance!

i *Rushing in upon me every day.*] The original phrase is very emphatical, η επισυστασις μου η καθ' ημεραν. Επισυστασις properly signifies, a *tumult* or crowd of people rising up against a man at once, and ready to bear him down. This the version I have given hints at better than our own, which neither expresses *number* nor *violence*. But there is still an imperfection which I endeavoured, as well as I could, to supply by the paraphrase. M. Saurin would render it, *what besieges me daily.* Saur. *Serm.* Vol. X. p. 163. Edit. 1749.

k *Who is offended, and I am not fired?*] So πυρουμαι properly signifies. It may perhaps, in this connexion, allude to the sudden *hurry of spirits* into which a man is put by the dangerous fall of a person he tenderly loves, especially when occasioned by the carelessness and folly of another.

l *In Damascus*, &c.] This probably happened, not when he was first converted, but when he had preached about three years in Arabia. Compare Acts ix. 23—26. with Gal. i. 16—18.

SECT. 18. Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, pour out a better spirit upon all who profess themselves the servants of his Son! That they whose business it is to call others to Christ, may themselves first come, and learn of him, who is meek and lowly of heart; whose yoke is so easy and his burden so light, that it is astonishing that any who have themselves felt it, should ever think of binding on others burdens heavy and hard to be borne.

SECTION XIX.

The apostle goes on with great plainness and freedom, yet at the same time with great modesty, to give an account of some extraordinary revelations which he had received from God, and of those experiences which taught him to glory even in his infirmities. 2 Cor. xii. 1—10.

2 Cor. xii. 1.

SECT. 19. I HAVE spoken with some freedom in the preceding discourse of my labours and sufferings in the christian cause; but whatever they have been, *I well know* that *it is not expedient for me to boast*, nor would I by any means indulge myself in such a practice; 2 COR. XII. *nevertheless*,[a] with the precautions I have already advanced, and with those good purposes continually in view, that have led me so far out of my common manner of speaking, 1 *I will* now *come to* say something of those *visions and revelations of the Lord* with which 2 his unworthy servant has, by his astonishing grace and condescension, been favoured. I hardly indeed know how to mention a name so undeserving as my own in this connexion; but I will venture in the general to say, that *I* well *knew a* certain *man in Christ*,[b] one who esteems it his highest honour to belong to such a Master; who, though he hath hitherto thought proper to conceal it, was remarkably indulged in this respect, *above fourteen years ago. Whether* he was then *in the body*, during that extraordinary ecstacy, *I know not; or* for a time taken *out of the body*, so that only the principle of animal life remained in it, *I know not*.[c] *God* only *knows* how that was; nor is it of any importance too curiously to search into such a circumstance. He had at least no consciousness of any thing that passed about him at that time, and all his sensations were as entirely ceased as if his union with the body had been broken. *Such an one*, I say, I did most intimately know, *who was snatched up even into the third heaven*, the seat of the divine glory, and the place where Christ dwelleth at the Father's right hand, having all the celestial 3 principalities and powers in humble subjection to him. *Yea, I* say, I even *knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body*, I now say not, because *I know not; God knoweth;* and let him have the glory of supporting his life in so extraordinary a cir- 4 cumstance, whichever might be the case. And I know, *that* having been thus entertained with these visions of the third heavens, on which good men are to enter after the resurrection, lest he should be impatient under the delay of his part of the glory there, *he was* also *caught up into paradise*,[d] that garden of God which is the seat of happy spirits in the intermediate state, and during their separation from the body; where he had the pleasure of an interview with many of the pious dead, *and heard* among them *unutterable words*, expressive of their sublime ideas, which he was there taught to understand. But the language was *such as it is not* lawful or *possible*[e] *for man to utter;* we have no terms of speech fit to express such conceptions, nor would it be consistent with the schemes of Providence, which require that we should be conducted by faith, rather than by sight, 5 to suffer such circumstances as these to be revealed to the inhabitants of mortal flesh. *In such an one*, therefore, whoever he be, *I will* venture to *boast*, so far as to say, that he received a peculiar honour from our great Lord, and for the time was made, as it were, another man by it. *But in myself I will not boast, unless it be in my infirmities*, in those things which carry the marks of weakness, which yet in a certain connexion will 6 appear honourable too. *For if I should resolve to boast* a little on the occasion I have mentioned, *I shall not* upon the whole *be foolish:* though it be generally so, considering the particular circumstances in which I am: *for I speak* nothing but *the* strictest *truth*, how strange soever it may seem. *But I forbear* to insist largely upon it, *lest any*

2 Cor. xii. 1.

1 IT is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but *now* I forbear,

a *Nevertheless.*] The apostle's speaking of his visions and revelations, which indeed did him the highest honour, could not be a proof that he was determined not to *boast*. It is evident, therefore, that γαρ cannot have its usual signification, and be rendered, *for*. Our translators take it for a mere *expletive*, and therefore omit it. I have ventured to render it, *nevertheless*, as it is certain it has often various significations, and must have this signification here, if it express any thing. The force of *but* in this connexion would be the same with *nevertheless*.

b *A certain man in Christ.*] He must undoubtedly mean himself, or the whole article had been quite foreign to his purpose. It appears from hence that the apostle had concealed this extraordinary event fourteen years; and if this Epistle was written about the year 58, as we suppose it was, this vision must have fallen out in the year 44, which was so long after his conversion, as to prove it quite different from the *trance* mentioned, Acts ix. 9. with which some have confounded it. Dr. Benson thinks this glorious representation was made to him while he was praying in the temple, in that journey, (Acts xi. 30; xxii. 17.) and intended to encourage him against the difficulties he was to encounter in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Bens. *Prop.* Vol. II. p. 7. See Vol. III. § 50. note a.

c *Whether in the body*, &c.] As St. Paul must know his body was not actually dead during this *trance*, but that the animal motion of his *heart and lungs* continued, it would lead one to imagine that he really apprehended the principle of *animal* life to be something *distinct* from the *rational* soul, which he calls *himself*. It appears at least that he lost all consciousness of any thing about him at that time; and what the presence of an *immaterial* soul in a body can be, distinct from the capacity of perceiving by it and acting upon it, I am yet to learn.

d Also *caught up into paradise.*] I have followed Bishop Bull's interpretation of these words, in the distinction he makes between the *third heavens* and *paradise*. See his *Works*, Vol. I. Serm. 3. p. 89. To which Dr. Whitby agrees, who also supposes this not merely a vision, as I think it was, but a *reality;* which if St. Paul had thought it, he must surely have concluded that he was not then *in the body*.

e Lawful or *possible.*] I think, with Witsius, that εξον may comprehend both.—Different divines have conjectured very differently concerning these things; of which I suppose they know nothing. But Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that he was instructed in the doctrine of the *first resurrection*, and Mr. Whiston's, that he was instructed in the grand secrets contained in the *apostolical constitutions* revealed to the *eleven* in the chamber on Sion, and not to be publicly disclosed till many ages after, may serve as specimens of the rest.—Whist. *Prim. Christianity*, Vol. III. p 32.

lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

one should esteem me above what he sees to be in me, or, having a fair opportunity of learning my true character, *hears of me;* for instead of arrogating to myself any undeserved regards, I would rather decline them, and should be secretly grieved and ashamed if they were paid to me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

I have indeed had my peculiar privileges: but alas, I have my infirmities, and my temptations too. *And lest I should be too much elevated with the abundance of* those extraordinary *revelations* of which I have been speaking, *there was given me*, that is, it pleased God to appoint to me, an affliction, which was so painful, that it was like *a* pointed *thorn in the flesh*,[f] continually piercing and wounding me: and this in such circumstances, that one would think it had been intended on purpose *that the messenger* and apostle *of Satan*, the false teachers whom I have been describing (chap. xi. 13—15.) under that character, *might* from thence take occasion to *buffet* and upbraid *me; that I*, being subject to such disorders, though naturally resulting from the manner in which my nerves were impressed by this ecstasy, *might not be excessively exalted;* but might bear away, like Jacob, when he had been so successfully wrestling with the angel, an infirmity in my animal frame, from which ungenerous and cruel enemies might profanely take an occasion to insult me. (Gen. xxxii. 25.) 7

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

This was indeed at first so very grievous and mortifying to me, and seemed to have so unhappy an aspect upon my acceptance and usefulness as a preacher of the gospel, that *I* was very importunate in my petitions that it might be removed, and *besought the Lord* Jesus Christ *thrice on the occasion*, entreating him *that*, if it were his blessed will, *it might* totally *depart from me*, or at least be moderated in some considerable degree. *And* my prayer was not in vain; for though he did not entirely and fully indulge my request, *he said to me*, in great condescension, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, to support thee under these trials, though I permit them to continue, which I now chuse; *for my strength is made perfect*, and illustrated so much the more, *in* the *weakness* of the instrument by which I work; and this general maxim will take place with respect to thee. *With the greatest pleasure therefore will I boast in my weaknesses*, various as they are, *that the strength of Christ may*, as it were, *pitch its tent upon me*,[g] and surround me on every side. *And therefore I feel a* secret *complacency*, rather than anxiety and terror, *in* these *infirmities*, *in* all the *injuries* I sustain, *in* all the *necessities* I endure, *in* all the *persecutions* with which I am assaulted, and *in* all the *straits* which *for Christ's sake* press me on every part; *for when I am weak, then am I strong:* never do I feel larger inward communications of strength from him, than when I am most conscious of my own weakness. Nor do I esteem any thing a greater honour to me, than that Christ should take occasion to glorify himself by those things whereby I am humbled and abased. 8 9 10

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

IMPROVEMENT.

WELL might the apostle say, that when he was weak, then was he strong; for it is difficult to tell when he expresses a greater strength of genius or of grace, than while thus discoursing of his own infirmities. How glorious were those scars in his body which were the marks of his sufferings for Christ; and those tremblings and distortions of his nerves which were the results of those bright visions of the Lord which brought down heaven to earth, and had for the time equalled a mortal man with the spirits of just men made perfect; yea, almost with the angels of God! Ver. 10 1 7

Transported with the sacred impulse, he could scarcely tell whether he were in the body or out of it; but he testified that the things which he saw and heard were unutterable. Let us not repine that he recollected and recorded nothing more particular concerning what passed before the eye of his mind, when that of the body was closed. These celestial raptures were intended to confirm his faith, and consequently likewise to confirm ours; but not to amuse our curiosity. If the earth be full of the goodness of the Lord, how much more the third heavens, where he holds his highest court! Nor shall the intermediate state of souls want its proper enjoyments and blessings. Assuredly, therefore, believing these things, let us wait God's time for a more particular knowledge of them; and when called of him to go forth and receive this inheritance, like genuine children of Abraham, obey, though we know not particularly whither we go. (Heb. xi. 8.) 3 4 2

We see the danger of spiritual pride, from which even St. Paul himself was not secure. One would have imagined that such a view of the celestial world should in itself have been sufficient to have humbled him, during all the remainder of the longest life; and yet it is evident that God saw there was some danger, lest pride should be cherished by that which seemed so proper to destroy it: therefore was there given him a thorn in the flesh. And by how many thorns are the most distinguished christians often pierced! Let them bless God if thereby they are humbled too, even though the messengers and instruments of Satan should from thence take occasion to buffet them. 7

In all our exigences, extremities, and complaints, let us apply to the throne of grace, and that blessed Redeemer who intercedes before it, for proper assistance and relief. Nor let us be discouraged though the first or second 8

[f] *A thorn in the flesh.*] How much this *thorn* in St. Paul's *flesh* has perplexed and disquieted commentators, they who have conversed much with them know but too well. Many have understood it of *bodily pains;* and Mr. Baxter, being himself subject to a *nephritic* disorder, supposes it might be the *stone* or *gravel*. The conjectures of some of the ancients are much grosser. I rather acquiesce in that interpretation of Dr. Whitby, (which the author of *Miscel Sacra* has adopted, and taken pains to illustrate, Essay iii. p. 22—24.) That the view he had of celestial glories, affected the system of his *nerves* in such a manner as to occasion some *paralytic* symptoms, and particularly a *stammering* in his speech, and perhaps some ridiculous *distortion* in his countenance, referred to elsewhere, in the phrase of the *infirmity in his flesh*. See Gal. iv. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii. 3. Compare Dan. viii. 27. As this might threaten both his acceptance and usefulness, it is no wonder he was so importunate for its being removed; yet being the attendant and effect of so great a favour, he might with peculiar propriety speak of *glorying* in it.

[g] *Pitch its tent, &c.*] That seems the strong emphasis of the original word επισκηνωση.

SECT. 19. 2 COR. XII. address should seem to be disregarded, the third or fourth may be successful. And what if we do not succeed to our wish in the immediate answer? Let it content us, that we may be assured by Christ of the sufficiency of his grace. In our weakness he can illustrate his strength. And in that view too may we glory in our infirmities. For surely the honour of our Divine Master, in our deepest humiliation, ought to give us much more joy, than to see ourselves ever so much admired and extolled. "But, O blessed Jesus, how much of thy strength must be manifested in us, to teach our vain and selfish hearts a lesson which at the very first proposal appears so reasonable, if considered in speculation alone! Lord, increase our faith! increase our humility! So shalt thou have the glory in all thou givest and in all thou deniest us, and in all the struggles and trials to which thou mayest appoint us; and in which, for thy sake, we will take pleasure."

SECTION XX.

The apostle vindicates the frankness, sincerity, and tenderness of his conduct, and his visible superiority to all secular considerations, in all his dealings with the church at Corinth. 2 Cor. xii. 11, *to the end.*

2 COR. xii. 11.

SECT. 20. 2 COR. XII.

IT may be indeed, my brethren, that *I am become foolish in boasting* as I have done above; but if it be so, you will consider where the blame lies. For you, by the manner in which some of *you*, to whom I am now speaking, have behaved yourselves, may be said to *have compelled me* to do it, even against my will. In which you are peculiarly inexcusable; *for I ought* indeed *to have been commended by you*, rather than to have found

11 any necessity of pleading with you in the manner I have done; *for I have in no respect* whatsoever *failed to equal the most excellent of the apostles, though I am* myself *nothing* in the account of some; nor indeed am I any thing in reality without the aids of divine grace and assistance, nor would I assume to myself any glory from what that hath

12 made me. Yet *truly* God has been pleased to communicate of his bounties to me in such a degree, that *the signs of an apostle were produced among you* in a variety of most convincing miracles; miracles by which I was not puffed up, but which were wrought *in all patience, in* the midst of this unreasonable opposition I met with, notwithstanding those *signs and wonders, and powers*, which awakened the amazement of all that beheld. Nor did I exert these miraculous powers in chastising the irregular, but chose rather, if it were possible, to conquer by love and by benefits.

13 And you know that I conferred many benefits: *for in what* one *respect were ye inferior to the rest of the churches* planted by the other apostles, *unless* [*it were in this,*] *that I myself was not burdensome to you*, by taking any acknowledgment for my labours? No, not so much as a subsistence among you at your expense. *Forgive me*, I beseech you, *this* great *injury;* for I think I hardly need to ask you forgiveness on any other account.

14 *Behold* now, this is *the third time I am ready to come to you*, having been disappointed twice before. (1 Cor. xvi. 5; 2 Cor. i. 15, 16.) *Nevertheless, I will not* now *be*, in the sense I have mentioned, *burdensome to you; for*, God knows, *I seek not your possessions but yourselves.* If I can but be instrumental in promoting your salvation, and at the same time secure your filial love and affection, I shall think myself happy, though I reap not the least personal advantage from your property, where it is most abundant. *For it is not fit that the children should lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children.* I therefore, being your spiritual father, will communicate to you

15 such treasures as I have, and will not desire to share yours. *For I will with the greatest pleasure spend and be spent for your souls:* I will gladly exhaust my strength, and put myself to any expense too, in order to promote this; *though* the consequence of all should be, that *the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved* by you. How unkind soever your returns may be, if you should treat me like those perverse creatures who take a pleasure in tormenting them that love them best, yet shall you still find me a sincere friend to your best interests. (Compare 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 8.)

16 *But* I know some will be ready to object to all this; as what will not envy and falsehood suggest, where there is any interest in fixing an odium? *Let it be so: I did not* indeed myself *burden you*, nor demand subsistence among you as my right; *but* perhaps it will be insinuated, that *being subtle I took you in by an artifice*, making others the instruments of my mercenary principles, while I appeared myself so disinterested.

17 I answer by appealing to plain fact: *Did I make a prey of you by any one whom I sent to you* with any message from me, or who came to me about any business while I was resident among you? Name the man, if you can, on whom there is reason to fix any such suspicion. I defy the boldest of mine enemies to allege what must recoil on himself with

18 so much infamy. I know that *I entreated Titus* to make you a visit, *and with* [*him*] *I sent a brother*, to keep him company on the journey. *Did Titus* then *make a gain of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit* [*and*] *in the same steps?* Did not all his actions resemble mine, as formed upon the same principles of strict integrity and generous friendship?

19 *Again, do you think that we make any apology to you*, and endeavour to amuse you with mere words, mentioning Titus's coming to excuse my own absence? *In the sight of God we speak* as those who know he is Witness to every action and word; yea, that he knows the secret springs of affection which actuate our hearts; and we speak as those that

2 COR. xii. 11.

I AM become a fool in glorifying: ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

13 For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burthensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and will not be burthensome to you: but I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you; nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother: Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 Again, think you that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all

things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20 For I fear, lest when I come I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I should be found unto you such as ye would not; lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

21 *And* lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed.

are *in Christ* by a solemn profession of his religion, and should abhor any thing which might bring a reflection upon it. *And all things* that we say when we are endeavouring to reconcile your minds to us are not for our own sake; but [*we speak,*] *beloved, for your edification;* that by removing your prejudices against us, we may be capable of being more serviceable to you in your most important interests. *For I* am really distressed on this account, and sadly *fear, lest* by any means *when I come* unto you with an heart full of christian tenderness, and with all imaginable readiness to do my utmost to comfort and refresh your spirits, *I should not find you such as I could wish, and* that *I should be found by you such as ye would not wish* I should be. I fear I shall have some work before me of a very ungrateful kind, and which I would by all means desire, if possible, by this admonition to prevent. For I am very apprehensive *lest* [*there should be*] *contentions,* arising from secret and very unbecoming *emulations,*[x] and growing up to transports of *wraths, strifes,* where there is a clashing either of opinions or secular interests; which will tend to produce open *reproaches* or secret *whisperings,* to the manifest prejudice of each other's character; the inward *swellings* of pride and ambition, or perhaps the open confusion of riots and *tumults,* by which your cause in general will be exposed to public contempt: [*And*] indeed, on the whole, I am very apprehensive *lest my God should humble* and mortify *me when I come among you again;* so that my spirit should be even dejected and broken on account of the sad change which hath passed since I left Corinth; *and lest I should* find cause to *mourn over many who have sinned already, and* who, though several others have been wrought upon by my admonitions, *have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed;* against whom, therefore, I fear I shall find myself obliged, in virtue of my office, to pass such censures as it pains and pierces my heart so much as to think of.

SECT. 20. — 2 COR. XII. 20 — 21

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable was the goodness of the apostle, in adding all patience to those signs of his divine mission which were with so much splendour given among the Corinthians, when there were so many things to have excused, or rather to have vindicated, his severity. Such meekness had he learned of Christ, such does he teach to succeeding ministers and private christians. How disinterested was his behaviour in every part of it; not seeking their substance, but their souls! And indeed, what is the greatest gain which avarice, in its most artful and successful forms, can make of the ministry, when compared with winning souls to Christ, and bringing them into the way of salvation? Who that deserves the name of a minister, would not gladly sacrifice the views of worldly interest to this, and rejoice in an opportunity of spending and of being spent for this?

Ver. 12 — 14 — 15

Yet we see that even this cannot always command the returns of love; but the love as well as the praise of men is, in comparison, a matter of small importance. It will surely engage the approbation of God: and all the slights and injuries over which this benevolent disposition triumphs, will be remembered by him with proportionable tokens of his gracious acceptance.

Happy was that prudence which made the proof of integrity so clear, and the appeal to the whole world so confident, as it here appears. So may we avoid every appearance of any thing which might beget a suspicion of sinister designs, that we may vindicate ourselves from every such insinuation, with the noble freedom of those who are approved to God and the consciences of men. To preserve this, may we always speak and act as before God in Christ, and do all things, not for the gratification of our own humour, or advancement of our secular interest, but for the edification of others.

16—18 — 19

The ministers of the gospel cannot but be humbled when any thing contrary to the rules and genius of it is to be found among the people of their care and charge, whether they be pollutions of the flesh or of the spirit: and they may be in some instances as effectually mortified and distressed by debates, envyings, strifes, backbitings, and whisperings, as by uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness. But when any of these things occur, as it is to be feared that in most christian societies, or at least in such as are considerable for their numbers, they sometimes will; let it be remembered that they happen by the permission of Providence. God hath his wise ends in suffering what is indeed so lamentable: thus humbling the shepherd, that the flock may be farther edified; that he may approve his fidelity in more vigorous efforts for reformation: and may not be excessively exalted by that better success wherewith, in other instances, God may crown his endeavours.

20 — 21

SECTION XXI.

The apostle concludes his Epistle with assuring the Corinthians very tenderly how much it would grieve him to be obliged to show his apostolic power, by inflicting any miraculous punishment on those who continued to oppose him; subjoining, at the end of all, proper salutations and his solemn benediction. 2 Cor. xiii. 1, *throughout.*

2 COR. xiii. 1.

SECT. 21.

2 COR. xiii. 1.

THIS *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the

BUT I will return now from that digression which hath carried me away from what I was entering upon before. [*It is*] *now,* as I said, (chap. xii. 14.) *the third time that* I tell you *I am coming to you;*[a] and as several cases will come before me on which it will

2 COR. XIII. 1

x *Contentions, emulations,* &c.] All these were the natural consequences of those debates which had arisen among them; and therefore he, in a very artful manner, gives this solemn warning with relation to them.

a *The third time* I tell you *I am coming:* τριτον τουτο ερχομαι.] So the words may be taken, though I own them ambiguous. Perhaps this may intimate that this was the *third Epistle* he had written to them, in which he had mentioned his purpose of coming, but we cannot certainly infer it. He seems here to resume the sentence he had begun, chap. xii. 14. Such interruptions are frequent in St. Paul, and in many other writers who have not a regard to an artificial dress, and do not stand to correct every little inaccuracy, but abound in quickness and variety of thought, as Mr. Locke justly observes.

SECT. 21. 2 COR. XIII.

be necessary to give my judgment, I assure you I shall think myself obliged to proceed on that reasonable maxim in the Jewish constitution, (Num. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6; and xix. 15.) that *every word* or thing admitted for evidence in the decision, *shall be established by* the concurrence of what cometh from *the mouth of two or three* credible *witnesses*. And you will remember that *I have* formerly *foretold* you, *and do foretell it* now again, *as if I were present the second time* in person; *and being absent* in body, but not in spirit, *I now write to those that have sinned already* in any scandalous and aggravated manner, *and to all the rest*, that they may take notice of it, and be filled with a sacred awe, *that if I come again, I will not spare* you,[b] as I have hitherto done; but am determined, by the divine permission, to animadvert upon notorious offenders, by the exertion of that miraculous power with which God hath endowed me. *Since*, after all the evidence you have already had, some of *you* are so strangely unreasonable as to *seek a* farther *proof of Christ's speaking* by his Spirit *in me*, even of the authority of that glorious and Almighty Saviour, *who is not weak towards you, but powerful among you* by what he has already wrought,[c] you may at length have such demonstrations of it as may perhaps cost some of you dear. *For though he was* once *crucified* as *through* a state of *weakness*, submitting to those infirmities of mortal flesh which put him into the hands of his enemies, and waving the exertion of that miraculous energy by which he could so soon have rescued himself and destroyed them; *nevertheless, he* now *liveth by the power of God* the Father, whereby he obtained a glorious resurrection, and is now ascended to a seat of uncontrolled and universal authority. *And* thus *we* his apostles, though we *are also weak in him*, and to them who regard only external appearances may seem contemptible, *nevertheless, shall live with him by the power of God* manifested *to you* in our favour, to give a kind of resurrection to that apostolical authority which may have seemed for a while dormant and dead.

mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

2 I told you before, and foretell you as if I were present the second time, and being absent, now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, I will not spare:

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

You examine and try me; but let me admonish you to turn the search inward, and to *examine* and try *yourselves*, that ye may certainly know *whether ye are in the faith*, whether ye be true christians or not. For if you on a strict enquiry find that you are, you will therein find a proof of my being a true apostle; as it is by means of my extraordinary gift that you are become so. *Prove yourselves*,[d] my brethren, whether you can or cannot stand the test. *Do you not know yourselves*, when the subject of knowledge lies so near you, and is always before your eye? Are you not sensible *that Jesus Christ is* dwelling *in you* by the sanctifying and transforming influences of his Spirit, *unless ye are* mere nominal christians, and such as, whatever your gifts be, will finally be *disapproved*[e] and rejected, as reprobate silver that will not stand the touchstone? *But* whatever be the case of any of you, *I hope ye shall* soon *know that we are not disapproved*, and have not lost[f] our evidence of the divine presence and approbation. *But* I am far from desiring to produce such evidences of it as would be grievous to you; and can truly say, that *I wish to God ye may do no evil* in any respect, *and not that we may be manifested* [*as*] *approved* by such awful methods as those to which I refer: *but* on the contrary, *that ye may do what is* good, *beautiful*, and amiable, that which will adorn your profession in the most effectual manner; *though we should be as* if we were *disapproved*, and upon a level with those who have no testimonials of an extraordinary mission to produce. *For we are not able to do any thing against the* interest of that important system of *truth* which God hath intrusted us with; *but* must strenuously act *for the* service of the *truth* and support of the gospel, and not act by personal inclinations and affections, of resentment on the one hand, or tenderness on the other.

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, *how* that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do not evil: not that we should appear approved, but that ye shall do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth; but for the truth.

I wish the regularity of your behaviour at all events, as I declared above; *for we rejoice when we are weak*, or seem so by not exerting any miraculous powers to the purposes we have hinted; *and* when *ye*, our dear converts and brethren, *are strong* in gifts and graces, in faith and good works: *and this also we wish*, [*even*] *your being set in perfect* good *order*.[g] Your entire reformation would give us the greatest pleasure imaginable, a pleasure far beyond what we could derive from the most astonishing interpositions of God to chastise those that rebel against us. *Therefore*, upon the whole, *I write these things* thus largely, *being absent, that when* I am *present I may not* be obliged to *act severely, according to the* divine and extraordinary *power which the Lord* Jesus Christ *hath given me for* the *edification* of the several members of his church, *and not for* the *destruction* of men's lives and comforts. And therefore it is that I give you this warning, in order to prevent what would otherwise be grievous to myself as well as to you.

9 For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

b *I will not spare* you.] It is (as Bishop Burnet very justly observes) a great confirmation of the veracity of the apostles, that when factions were raised against them, they used none of the arts of flattery, however necessary they might seem, but depended on the force of a miraculous power to reduce offenders; which it would have been a most absurd thing to have pretended to, if they had not really been conscious to themselves that it was engaged in their favour. Burnet, *On the Art.* p. 62. See 1 Cor. iv. 21. note *f*.

c Already wrought.] This may, as Mr. Cradock and others observe, very probably refer to some miraculous punishment inflicted lately on the incestuous Corinthian.

d *Examine yourselves—prove yourselves.*] Whether you be δοκιμοι, *such as can stand the test*; or αδοκιμοι, *such as cannot*; for that is the proper import of the word which we render *reprobates*. The difference between πειραζετε and δοκιμαζετε seems to be gradual; examine and *thoroughly* prove.

e *Unless ye are disapproved.*] Dr. Guyse paraphrases the words, ει μη τι αδοκιμοι εστε, "unless there be something very disapprovable "in you;" and it certainly expresses the sense with great propriety; but as the apostle supposes this to be something which would prove that Christ was not dwelling with and among them, it seems that it must be extended to the sense given in the paraphrase.

f Have not lost, &c.] It seems that the *possibility* of losing extraordinary gifts by the *abuse* of them, is finely insinuated in this *oblique* manner; and it might, if rightly understood, have its weight with many of them.

g *Being set in perfect* good *order.*] This I think the import of κατηρτισιν, that *perfect reformation* which was not yet wrought, though something considerable had been done towards it.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

As for what remains, my dear *brethren*, *farewell*; and may all joy and happiness ever attend you. And that this may be the case, let it *be* your great care that ye may be *perfect*, that ye may arrive at the highest degrees of goodness. May you all *be comforted* with those strong consolations which true christianity suggests, and exhorted and animated by the instructions it inculcates. *Attend to the same thing*,[h] pursue with the greatest unanimity of heart and intenseness of affection, that which ought to be the great end of all our schemes and designs, the care of glorifying God and adorning the gospel. And as you have, in some instances, seemed to have forgotten how essential it is to true christianity that its professors should abstain from mutual injuries and cultivate unfeigned friendship, let me urge it upon you, that ye *be peaceful*, candid, and affectionate in your sentiments; *and the God of love and peace will* graciously own you as his children, and *be* favourably *with you*, and fix his residence among you. And in token of this entire harmony and endeared affection, *salute each other*, according to the custom of your assemblies, *with an holy kiss*, as a proper expression of the purest and most ardent love. *All the saints*, that is, the christians here in the place from whence I now write, *salute you* with the sincerest affection, and will always rejoice to hear of your peace, prosperity, and edification.

SECT. 21. 2 COR. XIII. 11

12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.
13 All the saints salute you.

12

13

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

I conclude all with my most affectionate good wishes for you; even that *the* perpetual *favour of the Lord Jesus Christ*,[i] the great Head of the church, in whom all the fulness of grace dwells; *and the* constant and peculiar *love of God* the Father, *and the* most abundant *communion* and fellowship *of the Holy Ghost*, in the richest anointings of his gifts and graces, may [*be*] *with you*, and rest upon you *all* continually, henceforth and for ever. *Amen:* may God ratify the important wish, so as to answer and exceed your most exalted hopes.

14

IMPROVEMENT.

ADORED be the name of that compassionate Redeemer who was once crucified as through weakness; and when he could have commanded more than twelve legions of angels to his rescue, voluntarily submitted to be seized and bound, like an helpless mortal subject to superior force, and thus led away to torture and death! He lives for ever by the power of God, by a life derived from him: may we, weak as we are in ourselves, live through him to all the purposes of the christian life! Ver. 4

And that this life may flourish abundantly, let us be often engaged to examine ourselves; since it will be so great a scandal and so great a snare to be strangers at home. Do we not indeed, after all, know ourselves? Let us search whether Jesus Christ be in us; whether he be formed in our hearts, whether he live and act in us by his Holy Spirit: else shall we be treated as reprobate silver, shall be justly rejected of God, and no gifts or privileges will avail us. Having gained the sure evidences of sincere goodness in ourselves, we may with the greater cheerfulness and confidence pray for our brethren; and let us offer the apostle's petition for them, that they may do no evil; but every thing that is just and honourable, beautiful and lovely: never desiring to exalt ourselves on the mistakes and follies of others; but, on the contrary, wishing their perfection, and labouring to the utmost to promote it. 5 6 7 9

How charming a spirit breathes in those sentences in which the apostle takes his leave of the Corinthians! So much wisdom and goodness, that one is almost grieved that he who bids farewell in such an engaging manner, does it so soon. Let us, however, bear his parting words in mind. When ministers are leaving those among whom they have laboured, when christian friends are separated from each other, let this be their common petition and care, that they may be improved and comforted; that unanimity and peace may prevail and increase; and that the God of peace may be with them all: that he may be with them in those happy effects and blessed operations which will be the result of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. 11, 12

How often hath this comprehensive benediction been pronounced! Let us study it more and more, that we may value it proportionably; that we set ourselves to deliver or to receive it with a becoming solemnity, with eyes and hearts lifted up to God, who when out of Zion he commandeth the blessing, bestows in it life for evermore. Amen. 13

h *Attend to the same thing.*] So τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε should undoubtedly be rendered, rather than, *be of one mind*; which in some respects might have been impossible. See my *Sermon on Candour and Unanimity*, p. 8; and Phil. ii. 2. and note there.

i *Favour of the Lord Jesus Christ.*] I express χάρις by *favour* here; for if *grace* be taken for sanctifying influences communicated from Christ, (which to be sure makes a great part of the idea,) it may be less easy to distinguish it from the *communion of the Spirit*. It is with great reason that this comprehensive and instructive benediction is pronounced just before our assemblies for public worship are dismissed; and it is a very indecent thing to see so many quitting them, or getting into postures of remove, before this short sentence can be ended. Compare Numb. vi. 26, 27.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE churches of Galatia, which was a province of the Lesser Asia, were first converted to the christian faith by the apostle Paul, about the latter end of the year 50, when, passing through the region of Galatia, he was received with great affection, and made the instrument of planting several churches there; which, when he visited those parts again, in his next progress in the year 54, he had an opportunity of confirming in the doctrine that he before had taught them. (Compare Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23; and Gal. iv. 13—15.)

From the contents of this Epistle it appears that, after he had preached the gospel to the Galatians, some judaizing zealots had endeavoured to degrade the character of St. Paul among them, as one not immediately commissioned by Christ, as the other apostles were, and to subvert his doctrine in the grand article of justification, by insisting on the observation of the Jewish ceremonies, and so attempting to incorporate the law with christianity. And as St. Paul expresses here to the Galatians his concern and wonder that they were so soon perverted from the doctrine he had preached, (chap. i. 6.) he therefore must have written this Epistle not long after he had been among them; and as no hint is given through the whole of it, that he had been with them more than once, it is most reasonable to conclude that it was written before his second journey to Galatia, and consequently not later than the year of our Lord 53, which was the 13th of the emperor Claudian. (See note i, on Acts xviii. 11. p. 528.)

And though by the subscription, which is commonly placed at the end of it, this Epistle is said to be written from Rome, yet if the latest date which some have given it should be allowed, which fixes it to the year 58, this could not be the place from whence it was written, as St. Paul then had never been at Rome, and none suppose him to have come there till after the year 60; which manifestly shows that the subscription ought to be rejected as a spurious addition, though it has been the means of leading many into a palpable mistake. (See Acts xix. 21. p. 534. note a.) But dating it as above, in the year 53, it appears to be written from Corinth, where the apostle had sufficient time to write it (as he did) with his own hand, as he continued in that city nearly two years. (Compare Acts xviii. 3, 11.)

The principal design of the apostle Paul in this Epistle, was, "to assert and vindicate his apostolical authority and doc-
"trine, and to establish and confirm the churches of Galatia in the faith of Christ, especially with respect to the important
"point of justification; to expose the errors that were introduced among them; and to revive those principles of christi-
"anity that he had taught them when he first preached the gospel to them." And to this purpose,

FIRST, He begins with an address adapted to his main design, in which he asserts his own apostleship, and hints at the provision made for our justification by Christ, expressing at the same time his most affectionate regard for the Galatian churches; (chap. i. 1—5.) And then,

SECONDLY, He enters upon what he principally had in view,—to vindicate the authority of his doctrine and mission,—to prove that justification only can be had by faith in Christ, without the works of the law,—and to expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly, in hearkening to false teachers, and being persuaded by them to become subject to the law. Where,

I. In vindication of the authority of his doctrine and mission,—after declaring his astonishment that the Galatians had so soon been led aside, under the influence of seducing teachers, from the simplicity of that gospel he had preached among them with the greatest faithfulness, (ver. 6—10.) he shows them,

1. That he received his mission and his doctrine not from men, but by immediate revelation from Christ himself, who, when he was a persecuting zealot for the law, had called him by his grace to preach the gospel; in which he had immediately engaged, without consulting any man, or making any application to the other apostles for instruction in his work, or for authority to perform it. (Ver. 11, *to the end.*)

2. That in this interview with the apostles at Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, he had maintained the liberty of christians from the yoke of the law; and having communicated to the chief of them an account of his ministry, they were so far from disapproving either his doctrine or his practice, that they acknowledged the authority of his mission; and cordially embracing him as a brother-apostle, encouraged him to prosecute the work he was engaged in, and to continue preaching to the Gentiles. (Chap. ii. 1—10.) To which he adds,

3. That however some had represented him as inferior to the other apostles, and as a favourer of the ceremonial law, he had given sufficient proof of the contrary; in that when Peter came to Antioch, the character of that apostle did not prevent his openly reproving him, for withdrawing from the conversation of the Gentile converts for fear of displeasing the Jews, and undermining by this means the liberty of the christian church from Jewish impositions; expostulating with him, how very inconsistent and absurd it was, that when they who were Jews had thought it necessary, from a full conviction of the insufficiency of the law to justify them, to embrace the gospel, and to believe in Christ for justification, they should endeavour after this to bring the Gentiles into subjection to the law, as if the dispensation introduced by Christ would leave them under sin without it. He was determined, for his own part, that no such inconsistency should be found either in his doctrine or his practice; and, having renounced all expectations from the law, his whole dependence was upon Christ alone for righteousness and life, (ver. 11, *to the end.*) Having thus entered on the main point he had in view, the apostle proceeds,

II. To prove that justification only can be had by faith in Christ, without the works of the law. And this he introduces with reproving the Galatians for their instability with regard to this important doctrine; which having been established by the death of Christ, and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, nothing could be more senseless than to turn from it to the carnal ordinances of the law, and so to lose the benefit of all their sufferings for the gospel, unmindful of the attestations that were given to the truth of it. (Chap. iii. 1—5.) And then, in confirmation of the doctrine he had reproved them for rejecting, he offers several arguments, and shows,

1. That as it was by faith Abraham was justified, so it is by faith that we become his children, and are partakers of the blessing with him. (Ver. 6—9.)

2. That the law pronounces a curse on every one who is in any instance guilty of transgressing it; and therefore that it is not by the law we can be justified, but by faith. (Ver. 10—12.)

3. That Christ hath set us free from the condemning sentence of the law; and as it is by him that we escape the curse, so we obtain the blessing only through faith in him. (Ver. 13, 14.)

4. That the stability of the covenant of promise to Abraham and his seed is such, that it could not be vacated by the law, which was given long after the promise was made, under the mediation of Moses, and between different parties; and therefore that it is not by the observance of the law, but only by faith in the promise, the benefit of justification and a title to eternal life can be obtained. (Ver. 15—18.)

5. That the design of God in giving the law was, not to justify, but to convince of sin, as well as to restrain from the commission of it; and being intended only for a temporary institution, instead of vacating the promise, it was designed to be subservient to it, by showing the necessity of a better righteousness than that of the law, and so to lead the awakened soul to Christ, that, being justified by faith in him, we might obtain the benefit of the promise. (Ver. 19—24.) And therefore,

6. That such is the advantage of the gospel-dispensation, that christians are no longer under the discipline of the law; but being united unto Christ by faith, and so become the sons of God, both Jews and Gentiles are all one in him; and the distinctions which the law had made being done away, all true believers are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the blessing with him, by virtue of the promise, and not by any title which the law could give. (Ver. 25, *to the end.*) But as the heir to an estate is in subjection, like a servant, under the government of guardians, during his minority: so were the Jews, before the gospel was revealed, like children under age, kept in subjection to the law; till at the time appointed for their entering on possession of the promised inheritance, as sons that were come to maturity, Christ was sent forth to answer all that the law demanded, and to redeem his people from their bondage to it; that being received by faith in him into the number of the sons of God, both Jews and Gentiles might be brought into a glorious liberty, and, being enabled by the Spirit to approach to God as their Father, they might enjoy the privilege and freedom of heirs of God through Christ, and be no more as servants under subjection to the law. (Chap. iv. 1—7.) And hence the apostle takes occasion,

III. To expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly, in being so deluded by false teachers as to give up the liberty of the gospel, and be persuaded to become subject to the law. And, to convince them how unreasonable and absurd their conduct was,

1. He observes, that they were formerly, as Gentiles, in bondage to the superstitions of the heathen worship, and now that they were brought into a state of liberty, it was a strange infatuation they should be willing to submit again to another servitude, and to come under bondage to the unprofitable rites and ceremonies of the law: which gave him ground to fear his labour would be found in a great measure to have been lost upon them. (Ver. 8—11.)

2. He reminds them of the great affection and regard they had expressed for him and his ministry when he first preached the gospel to them; and argues with them, what occasion he had given for the alteration of their disposition towards him, or how they could account for it, unless he was become their enemy by telling them the truth. (Ver. 12—16.)

3. He cautions them against the base design of their false teachers, who would alienate their hearts from him, to engross them to themselves; and intimates how fit it was they should retain the same regard to him and to the truth, now he was absent, as they had shown when he was present; assuring them that he had still the same affectionate concern for them, and would be glad of coming to them, and finding matters better with them than he feared. (Ver. 17—20.)

4. He illustrates the advantage of believers under the gospel, as to their privilege and freedom, above that of those under the law, by an allegory taken from the two sons of Abraham by Hagar and Sarah, as typical of the difference between the two dispensations of the law and gospel; of which the former was a state of bondage, and all that seek for justification by it are excluded like Ishmael from inheriting the promise; whereas the latter is a state of freedom, and those who come into this new and better dispensation, like Isaac, are the children of the promise, and are by faith entitled to the blessings of it; (ver. 21, *to the end.*)—This was the freedom they were brought into by Christ; and he exhorts them to be stedfast in it, and to beware of coming under a servile yoke by a subjection to the law. (Chap. v. 1.) And to prevent their having any farther thought of it,

5. He assures them that, by submitting to be circumcised, they became subject to the whole burden of the law, and could receive no benefit by Christ, but were cut off from all advantage they might have by the grace of the gospel, by seeking to be justified by their obedience to the law; while he and all true christians looked for justification only by the righteousness of Christ, with reference to which it made no difference whether they were circumcised or not, if they had such a faith as operates by love. (Ver. 2—6.) And therefore,

6. He calls them to consider whence it was that, after they had set out well, they were drawn off from that regard which they once had for the truth and liberty of the gospel; and shows them it was owing to the ill impression made upon them by their false teachers, by whom he was unjustly charged with preaching up circumcision, of which his sufferings for the doctrine of the cross were a plain confutation; expressing at the same time his hope concerning them, that they would come to be of the same mind with him, and wishing those who had endeavoured to corrupt them were cast out of the church, that they might do no farther mischief. (Ver. 7—12.) And now, as he was drawing to a close of his Epistle, according to his usual method,

THIRDLY, He offers several practical directions to them, and exhorts them to a behaviour answerable to their christian calling, and to the institution of the gospel, as a doctrine according to godliness. Where,

1. He takes occasion, from his mentioning their christian liberty, to caution them against abusing it to an indulgence of the flesh, and to the breach of christian charity; and urges them to mutual love, as what they were obliged to both by the law and gospel, and which if they neglected, and gave way to animosities and contentions, they would be exposed to ruin and destruction. (Ver. 13—15.)

2. He exhorts them to a conversation suitable to the dispensation of grace they had received, by a compliance with the influences of the Spirit, in opposition to the workings of the flesh; and, giving a description of the different fruits of each, shows, that as christians, they were obliged to crucify the flesh with its corrupt affections, and to obey the dictates of the Spirit, in a continual exercise of all the graces of it; and warns them, in particular, against pride and vain-glory. (Ver. 16, *to the end.*)

3. He recommends it to them to deal tenderly with those who are overtaken in a fault, endeavouring to restore them, with a compassionate regard to their infirmities, by a meek and gentle treatment, as those who would fulfil the law of Christ; and cautions them, instead of entertaining a conceited notion of their own sufficiency, as if they were not liable to fall as well as others, or being pleased with the high sentiments that others have of them, to examine their own work, whether it be such as may afford them ground of rejoicing, since every one must be accountable for his own behaviour, and shall at last be dealt with, not according to the vain imagination he has of himself, or the good opinion of others concerning him, but according to what he really is, and the true character that he is found to bear. (Chap. vi. 1—5.)

4. He presses it upon them as their duty, to be free and liberal in contributing to the support and maintenance of their ministers, assuring them that plausible excuses in a point of duty would fatally deceive those that made use of them, and every one should reap according as he sowed; and therefore urges them not to be weary in well-doing, but to lay hold of every opportunity for doing good to all, especially to their fellow-christians. (Ver. 6—10.)

And now, the apostle having written this Epistle with his own hand, and given this testimony of his affectionate regard to the Galatians, sums up the main design of it as the close of all, (ver. 11, *to the end.*) and shows, that as to their false teachers it was for selfish ends, and not from any veneration for the law, they pressed them to be circumcised, that by this means they might keep up their reputation with the Jews, and might not only save themselves from persecution, but glory also in the number of their proselytes; while, for his own part, he had no worldly views, and would not glory but in the cross of Christ, by whom alone it is that justification can be had. This was the doctrine that he preached, nor should the fear of persecution make him to disguise it, for it was only in this way that any could be justified and saved; and, whether they were circumcised or not, if they were made new creatures, and acted by this principle, mercy and peace should be upon them, as the true Israel of God. No one should therefore trouble him any more with urging the necessity of circumcision, or with suggesting he himself was for it, when he had shown his zeal for the pure doctrine of the gospel by his sufferings for it; the marks of which were a plain evidence of his regard to Christ, and such a proof of his sincerity, as might well serve to vindicate his character, and to confirm the truth of what he had taught them.—And, having thus reminded them of the main view he had in writing this Epistle, he concludes it with a solemn apostolical benediction.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul, after a general and proper salutation, expresses his surprise and concern that the Galatian christians had so soon suffered themselves to be led aside from the simplicity of that gospel which he had first planted amongst them. Gal. i. 1—10.

GALATIANS i. 1.

PAUL an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead;)

GALATIANS i. 1.

YOU receive this Epistle from *Paul,* who hath the honour to stand in the character of *an apostle* of the christian church; an important office, which he did *not* presumptuously arrogate to himself, nor receive *from* the appointment or authority of *men* as the original, *nor by* the choice or intervention of any *man* upon earth as the instrument, of his mission; whatever the factious teachers, who are endeavouring to disturb you, may have represented: *but* I am capable of giving you the most convincing evidence, that I had an immediate call to this honourable charge *by Jesus Christ* the great Head of the church, who did himself in person appear to me again and again, (Acts ix. 4; xxii. 18.) *and* sent me forth to be his witness unto all men, according to the sovereign choice of *God the Father,* (Acts xxii. 14, 15.) *who hath raised him from* among *the dead,*[a] and therein laid the great foundation of our faith in him for righteousness and life, and our reliance on him as the Son of God and the only Saviour of men. *And* while I am thus addressing myself to you, *all the* christian *brethren,* especially the ministers[b] *who are with me* here at Corinth, join with me in the sentiments I am going to propose, and in the most friendly and affectionate salutations *unto the churches of Galatia,* whom they cordially love, notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion which at present may subsist among them.[c] It is our most unfeigned, ardent prayer, that the richest communications of divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] imparted *to you,* with all the blessings of prosperity, *and peace* of every kind, *from God the Father,* the great Original and Fountain of all good, *and* [*from*] *our Lord Jesus Christ,* the Purchaser and Dispenser of it; *Who* graciously and compassionately *gave himself* up to the severest sufferings, as an atoning Sacrifice *for our sins, that he might* thus *deliver us* by the efficacy of his death *from* the destructive snares and condemnation that attend *this present evil world,*[d] from the predominant vices of the age, and from the ruin they will bring on all who shall continue in the practice of them, whether Jews or Gentiles; which glorious design he generously undertook *according to the* merciful and saving *will of God, even our Father,* who chose this wisest and happiest method of recovering us to himself: *To whom* therefore, for this

SECT. 1.

GAL. 1.

1

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia;

2

3 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

3

4

a *Who hath raised him from the dead.*] M. L'Enfant thinks these words are added to obviate an objection which might be raised against Paul's mission, from his not having received a commission from Christ, like the other apostles, while he was here on earth. But the minds of the apostles appear to be always full of the joyful idea of *Christ's resurrection,* and therefore it is no wonder that out of the fulness of their hearts they should seize every opportunity of speaking of it. Compare Rom. i. 4; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; and a multitude of other texts.—To which it may be added, that it is with great propriety the apostle mentions here, that *God hath raised him from the dead,* as agreeable to the main point he had in view, which was to assert the doctrine of *justification by faith in Christ:* since God declared, by *raising him from the dead,* that he accepted the atonement Christ had made, and gave him a discharge from any farther claim upon him for the satisfaction of his justice; and as it is this that is the great foundation of our *faith in Christ,* so the apostle says elsewhere, that he *was raised again for our justification:* Rom. ix. 25.

b *The brethren,* especially the ministers.] As the titles of *brethren* and *saints* are applied to different persons, and *ministers* seem to be distinguished by being called *brethren,* Phil. iv. 21, 22. they are probably here intended.

c Notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion, &c.] Though the christians at Corinth were most of them *converted Gentiles,* and these of Galatia were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Jewish ceremonies; yet the apostle expresses their *affection* towards these their brethren, and that with great propriety, that he might thereby invite them to a suitable return of love. On the same principle he reminds them (ver. 4.) of the blessings which as christians they shared in common, that he might endear them the more to those who were joined with them in such happy bands.

d *From this present evil world.*] The words εκ του ενεστωτος αιωνος πονηρου are ambiguous, and some would render them, *from the evil of this present world;* which makes a very good sense; but had it been intended by the apostle, I think the article του would have been repeated. (Compare John xvii. 15.) Mr. Locke argues, from 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8. that αιων ουτος signifies, the Jewish nation under the Mosaic constitution; and supposes these words to contain an intimation, that God intended to take the Jews themselves out of it, so far was he from any purpose of bringing the Gentiles under it. But as it is certain that αιων often signifies the same with κοσμος, that is, *the world,* (see Matt. xiii. 39, 40; 2 Cor. iv. 4; and Tit. ii. 12; which last place seems exactly parallel to this,) I think it would be very unreasonable to limit so noble and expressive a clause by so narrow an interpretation.

SECT. 1. adorable and matchless grace to sinful creatures, [*be*] *glory* and praise *for ever and ever. Amen.*

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Since this then is the only way of being justified and saved, it gives me great concern,

GAL. I. and *I am* quite *astonished*, my beloved brethren, *that* after ye have been instructed in it, and seemed to have received the truth in the love of it, *ye are so soon removed*[e] *from* a

6 due regard to *him that called you* into this method of salvation *by* and through *the grace of Christ*,[f] and who continues still in the same sentiments as when he was at first the happy instrument of bringing you to an acquaintance with it; that ye are so soon removed, I say, *unto* what may almost be called *another gospel*,[g] as being so entirely inconsistent with the very fundamentals of that which you were originally taught concerning our free justification by divine grace on our believing, without the works of the Mosaic

7 law. But indeed, to speak more exactly, that system of doctrines *which* you have so rashly and unhappily received, *is not* in strict propriety *another* gospel, nor worthy the name of gospel at all: *but* this in short is the case, that *there are some* seducing and Pharisaical teachers, *who*, for their own unworthy ends, have gone about to *trouble you* with false insinuations, and *are desirous* to do their utmost *to subvert* and overthrow *the gospel of Christ*, which hath been preached to you in so pure and powerful a manner.

6 I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 You know the doctrine that was first delivered to you under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and whatsoever may have been suggested, as if Peter and the other apostles, and even I myself, do sometimes preach up the works of the law, as necessary to be joined with faith in Christ for justification, let no such principles be admitted by you: *but though we*, or any other apostle, not excepting the most honourable and illustrious names, *or* even *an angel from heaven*,[h] if that were possible, should *preach any other gospel among you than that which we have* already *preached unto you*, and confirmed by such apparent and uncontrolled miracles, *let him* not only *be* rejected, but pronounced an *anathema*, and be devoted to a perpetual and most dreadful curse.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 Nor is it by any sudden flight of zeal that I express myself thus; but *as we have said* but just *before*, *so say I now again*, and solemnly repeat it as my deliberate judgment, *If any one* whatever, whether man or angel, *preach any other gospel to you than that which ye have received* already from our lips, and which indeed ye have been taught by us from Christ himself, *let him be anathema*, and look upon him with as much detestation as you would on the most execrable creature in the universe.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 I speak with all this freedom, from the sure consciousness of my own integrity: *for* after all that I have done and suffered for the truth, *do I now solicit the favour of men or of God?*[i] Do I endeavour in my ministry to ingratiate myself with men, or to approve myself to God? *Or do I*, in the general course of my conduct, *seek to please men* by a compliance with their prejudices or designs? I have no party-views, as I had formerly before I was converted, (Acts ix. 1, 2.) nor any intention to pursue the schemes and serve the purposes of men; for *if indeed*[k] *I yet pleased men*, by soothing their humour and flattering their vanity, *I should not be the servant of Christ*; I should not deserve the name of a christian, and much less that of a minister and an apostle, and must indeed change the whole system of my doctrine, if I would render it agreeable to human prejudices.

10 For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4 LET us adore the name of that blessed Redeemer who gave himself a Sacrifice for our sins; and may the consideration of his gracious purpose in doing it have its efficacy, to deliver us from this present evil world,
1 and to raise our hearts to that to which the Father hath exalted him, by whom he was raised from the dead: to
5 whom, for all the purposes of his grace in the whole scheme of our redemption, be glory for ever and ever.

Let the remembrance of this compassionate Saviour, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, engage us to be stedfast in the profession of his religion, and to be upon our guard against all who would pervert the gospel. May his ministers especially be exceeding cautious how they do any thing that looks like corrupting it; since such
8, 9 a dreadful anathema is pronounced against an apostle, or an angel, who should attempt it!

Who can be superior to every alarm on this head, that considers the case of the Galatians, who, though they
6 received the gospel from the lips of such an apostle as Paul, could be so soon removed and drawn aside to a quite different system? But God made a gracious provision for their being recovered, and confirmed in the primitive

e *That ye are so soon removed.*] It appears from the beginning of the General Introduction to this Epistle, that Paul had preached the gospel first to the Galatians, and planted several churches in that country, in his passing through it, (Acts xvi. 6.) about the latter end of the year 50. He visited them again (Acts xviii. 23.) in the year 54; and he seems to have written this Epistle before that visit. He had reason therefore to wonder that their sentiments were *so quickly* changed, and that such warm affections as they then bore him (chap. iv. 14, 15.) were *so soon* and so greatly alienated.

f *From him that called you by the grace of Christ.*] If it be here considered that the expression in the original is εν χαριτι, that is, *by* or *through the grace of Christ*, (as our translation renders it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 16.) and not *into the grace*; there is no difficulty in admitting that the apostle Paul points out *himself* by him *that called them*, (as he may likewise afterwards, chap. v. 8.) nor is there any thing more assuming in it than in his speaking of *himself*, as *he that ministered the Spirit to them.* Chap. iii. 5.

g *Unto another gospel.*] Mons. Saurin observes (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 46.) that the Galatians were a colony of the Gauls, that is, of the ancient inhabitants of France: who, says he, have been always reproached with taking impressions easily, and as easily suffering them to be effaced.

h *Or an angel from heaven.*] Some have imagined that the apostle here refers to the pretences which Cerinthus is said to have made to his receiving a revelation from the hand of *an angel*; but I see no proof that this pretension was made *so early*, if indeed it were made at all.

i *Solicit the favour of men or of God:* Ανθρωπους πειθω, η τον Θεον.] It is by a great latitude that the Prussian version renders this, "The "doctrine which I would here persuade, is it that of men or of God?" The connexion seems to demonstrate that πειθω here signifies, *seek to persuade* or *to ingratiate himself with* the one or the other, though it be acknowledged to be a less common sense. Compare Acts xii. 20; xiv. 19; xix. 26.

k *Indeed.*] That γαρ is often used to signify *indeed*, see note q, on Acts xix. 40. p. 537.

faith, by this Epistle; which was intended also to be a security to us, that we might learn from hence the purity and simplicity of the christian doctrine, and be established in the truth as it is in Jesus. SECT. 1.

Let the ministers of Christ faithfully preach it, not as seeking to please men, but that God who trieth the hearts; and who can only be pleased by an entire surrender of the soul to that system of truth and duty which he hath condescended to teach, and by a faithful care to spread its genuine and salutary maxims as widely as they can, without any addition or diminution. To solicit the favour of men, and to endeavour to oblige them, by sacrificing such sacred considerations to any of their prejudices and follies, is to act in a manner utterly unbecoming a servant of Christ; and so unworthy a conduct in such as bear the character of ministers, may justly provoke the indignation of their Divine Master to make them as contemptible as they suffer themselves to become unfaithful. GAL. I. 10

SECTION II.

To vindicate his doctrine to the Galatians, and to remove the prejudices that were raised against it, Paul shows them it was not received from men; and as a proof of the divine authority of his mission, gives some account of facts which immediately succeeded his conversion from a persecuting zeal against christianity to the profession of it. Gal. i. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. i. 11.

GAL. i. 11.

BUT I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.

SOME have indeed attempted to reflect upon my doctrine, and to depreciate the authority of my commission as an apostle; *but I certify you, brethren,* and declare in the most determinate language I am capable of using, *that* whatever my enemies, who herein are yours likewise, may insinuate to the contrary, *the gospel which has* every where *been preached by me, is not according to* the tradition or invention of *man,* nor in any way adulterated and debased to suit the relish, or to favour the prejudices, of those to whom it was to be delivered. SECT. 2. GAL. I. 11

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it* but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For I neither received my commission to preach *it from* the authority or interposition of any *man* whatever, *nor was I taught* [*it*] by any written memoirs, or any other human method of instruction,[a] *but* in a most extraordinary and miraculous way I was enlightened in it, and authorized to preach it, *by the* immediate *revelation of Jesus Christ* himself, who communicated to me by inspiration the knowledge of salvation by faith in him, and sent me forth to publish the glad tidings of the gospel. 12

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, *how* that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

This you already know, though I touch upon it again as a truth of so great importance; *for* you undoubtedly *have heard of my conversation* and character *in time past,* particularly in my youthful days, and to the happy time when I became acquainted with the gospel; that I was such a violent bigot *in* the profession of *Judaism,*[b] and so implacable an enemy to the followers of Christ, *that I unmeasurably persecuted* with the most insatiable rage *the church of God,* which I now esteem it my greatest honour to edify and serve, though I was then intent upon its ruin, *and ravaged it* with all the fury of a beast of prey. 13

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And such was my regard for all the Jewish rites and customs, that *I made proficiency in* the knowledge and practice of *Judaism, beyond many of my own nation,* [*who were*] *my equals* in age, and of the same standing with myself in the study of the law; *being more abundantly* and passionately *zealous for the* hereditary maxims and *traditions of my fathers,* on which the Pharisaic sect lays so much stress. 14

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

But when at length *it pleased God, who* in the secret purposes of his mercy had set apart and *separated me* to this office *from my mother's womb,* (as he did Jeremiah to that of a prophet, Jer. i. 5.) having determined to employ me as a minister of his gospel; *and* who afterwards *called* [*me*] *by* such an astonishing display and energy of *his grace,* while I was actually engaged in opposition to his cause and interest: 15

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

When it pleased him, I say, *to reveal* by vision and inspiration *his Son* Christ Jesus *in me,* and thus to give me a discovery of the glories of his person, and of his righteousness and grace, *that I might* not only know him for my own salvation, but also in due time, when Providence should open a convenient way, might *preach him among the Gentiles*[c] as well as among the Jews, to whom my addresses were at first confined; *immediately* my heart was overpowered, and all my prejudices so entirely removed, that *I conferred not with flesh and blood,*[d] and stood not to 16

a *Nor was I taught* [*it,*] &c.] If it should be objected here, that Ananias would undoubtedly instruct Paul in the principles of the gospel before he baptized him, it may be replied, not only that Ananias was no such considerable person that Paul should be suspected by the Galatians to have been modelled by him; but that it seems when Ananias first came to him, Paul was so well acquainted with the principles of christianity, which he had been instructed in by revelation during the three days of his blindness, that Ananias could not judge it necessary to instruct him as a catechumen; which is the more probable, as it appears the Lord had told him Paul was before acquainted by a vision with the purpose of his coming to him. See Acts ix. 12.

b *In Judaism.*] M. L'Enfant well observes, that this does not signify the religion originally taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the traditions of the elders.

c *That I might preach him among the Gentiles.*] This was undoubtedly the scheme of Providence concerning Paul, who was accordingly distinguished by the character of the Apostle of the Gentiles; but if his conversion happened, as we suppose, about the year 35, and Peter's preaching to Cornelius in the year 39, then, since it is incontestably evident that the Gentiles first heard the gospel by the mouth of Peter, it will follow that Paul did not at first understand the full extent of his commission, and therefore when he first began to preach, confined his labours to the synagogues at Damascus, which is indeed intimated, Acts ix. 20—22.

d *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*] Dr. Wells and some others understand this as if the apostle had said, "*Immediately* after the recovery of my sight, without conferring with "any man in the world, or so much as applying to Ananias himself "for advice, I retired by divine direction into the desert of Arabia; "where, after some time spent in devotion, I had a *full revelation* "made to me of the most important facts and doctrines of christianity, [which some suppose to be *the rapture* referred to, 2 Cor. "xii. 3.] and then, after my return from thence, preached at Damascus for the first time." (See Wells' *Geog.* Vol. III. p. 275.) And Mr. Locke insists that ευθεως here does not refer to his *immediately* engaging in the work of the ministry without applying for advice to any man, but to his going into Arabia.—But the same word is used by Luke in his History of the Acts, who, without taking any notice of Paul's departure into Arabia, says, that after he recovered strength he tarried certain days at Damascus, and (ευθεως)

SECT. 2. GAL. I.

consider what would be most subservient to my worldly interest, or to consult with any mortal man about engaging in the work to which I had so clear a call. *Nor did I* at that time *go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me*, to be instructed more particularly in the doctrines I should preach, that there might be no inconsistencies between us, or to apply to them for a commission to perform my office; *but* having entered
17 on my ministry, and preached the word at Damascus, (Acts ix. 20.) *I went* for a while *into Arabia*, where I could have no opportunity of being taught by any man, as none of the apostles had been there before me; *and* from thence I *returned again to Damascus*, where I boldly declared the necessity of believing in Christ for salvation, even in the presence of those Jews whom I knew to be most strongly prejudiced against that important doctrine.

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 *Then* at length, *after three years* from the time of my conversion, *I went up to Jerusalem, to visit* and converse with *Peter*, by whom, when he had heard from Barnabas an account of my conversion and my preaching at Damascus, I was cordially received as one whom the Lord had called; *and I abode* there *with him* at his house but *fifteen days*, to have the pleasure of discoursing with him on the mutual success of our ministry,
19 and not with the least view of receiving any farther authority from him. *But I saw no one of the apostles* then *besides, except* it were *James, the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus;[e] for all the rest of that sacred society were absent at that time on their respective missions.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20 *Now* with respect to all these circumstances, [*as to*] *the things which I write unto you*, you may give the most entire credit to them, how little soever they may consist with some reports that have been artfully spread abroad concerning me; for *behold*, I solemnly profess to you *before God*, that *I do not lie* or falsify in the least degree,[f] but with all possible frankness and sincerity speak what I assuredly know to be the most certain truth.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21 *Afterwards* departing from Jerusalem, *I came into the regions of Syria, and* from thence I passed into my native country of *Cilicia*, to exercise my ministry there, and to bring, if possible, those among whom I was born to the knowledge of Christ and of the
22 doctrine of salvation by him. *And* during all this time, as I had only just passed through their country in my way, *I was unknown by face to the* several *churches of Christ which were in Judea*, as well as to the greater part of my brethren the apostles; so that I could
23 learn nothing of the contents of the gospel from any of them; *But only they had heard* this wonderful account in general, which might well spread through all the land, *that he who* so cruelly *persecuted us in times past* to imprisonment and death, was become a convert to the victorious truth and grace of the gospel, so that he *now preached the* same divine *faith which he formerly ravaged* and laid waste to the utmost of his power, and
24 would, if possible, have totally destroyed and extirpated: *And they glorified God on my account*, as they well might, beholding in me so illustrious an instance of the power and sovereignty of his grace.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ.

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 24 Let us also, at this distance of time and country, join with them in glorifying God in the apostle; in adoring
23 the grace that engaged him to preach the faith he would once have destroyed, and at length to add his own blood to that of the martyrs of Christ which he had shed. Still hath the great Head of the church the same omnipotent efficacy, the same ability to influence the heart, to overcome the strongest prejudices, and to turn bigots into true believers; and, rather than his church shall want its servants and its ornaments, he will find them among its most cruel enemies.

17, 18 Had the gospel been taught St. Paul by Ananias or Peter, or any of the apostles, his readiness to receive it from
19 such teachers, and to preach it at the certain expense of his reputation, his interest, and his life, would no doubt have
11, 12 ranked him among the most illustrious witnesses to the truth of christianity. But this additional fact of an original revelation of the whole system of it to him independent of human teaching, deserves our admiration and demands our praise.

15 God herein wrought according to the secret counsel of his divine will, and that purpose by which he had sepa-
13, 14 rated Paul from the womb. In vain was it opposed by the prevailing prejudices of his education, or by the violence of his zeal for Judaism, and that proficiency in it by which he had eclipsed so many of his cotemporaries and those of his own nation. All his zeal for the traditions of his fathers gave way to a yet greater zeal for a nobler object;
21, 22 a zeal which carried him through Arabia and Syria, through Judea and Cilicia, and prevented him, in one sense as
16 well as another, from consulting with flesh and blood, from being influenced by any selfish, worldly views, or giving heed to any man's opinion.

immediately preached Christ in the synagogues. Acts ix. 19, 20. So that it seems most probable to me, that after his conversion, Paul was so well instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by the *revelation* that was then made to him, that he *immediately* began, without consulting any man, to preach the word at Damascus, before he went from thence into Arabia; which is most suitable to the natural order of the words, and best agrees with the account of his first entering on his ministry in the Acts. See p. 475. note h.

e *James, the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus.] He was the son of Alpheus and Mary, the sister of the *virgin*; so that James was cousin-german to Jesus. See p. 350. note e.—This visit to Jerusalem, (which is mentioned, Acts ix. 26. *et seq.*) as it was three years after his conversion, appears to have been in the year 38; and, after Paul had preached so long before, it cannot be supposed he was instructed how to preach the gospel in the short stay he now made at Jerusalem, where he saw only two of the apostles.

f *Before God, I do not lie.*] A revelation of the facts and doctrines of christianity immediately from Jesus Christ himself, without the assistance of any human teacher, so wonderfully agreeing in all its branches with that which Christ had taught on earth both before and after his resurrection, was so extraordinary an event, and of so great importance to those whom St. Paul visited, and to whom he wrote, that one cannot wonder he should think proper to assert it in so solemn a manner. We have great reason, while we read the attestation he has given to the truth of what he says, to acknowledge that it is of a piece with the many signs and wonders attending both his conversion and his ministry; which Mr. Lyttleton has so admirably illustrated in his *Observations on the Conversion, &c. of St. Paul.*

Adored be the grace that animated and supported him in overcoming every difficulty; and having so miraculously furnished him for the great work that he was called to, made him so gloriously successful in it. So may we be enabled to surmount every obstacle! and so may we be taught, as to those things which we have most highly esteemed, to count them all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and to grudge no labour, self-denial, or suffering, by which the gospel may be any way promoted or adorned, and a testimony given of our faithful subjection to it! SECT. 2.

SECTION III.

The apostle, in prosecution of that design on which he entered in the preceding section, informs the Galatians of his journey from Antioch to Jerusalem, and of his interview with the apostles there, fourteen years after his conversion. Gal. ii. 1—10.

GAL. ii. 1.

GAL. ii. 1. THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

I HAVE just been telling you, that quickly after my journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, I traversed the regions of Syria and Cilicia, being *then* in a great measure unknown to the churches in Judea, otherwise than by my general character, and what they had heard of the surprising change wrought in me: I am now to add, that about *fourteen years after* my conversion,[a] when I had preached the word some time at Antioch, *I went again up to Jerusalem with Barnabas*, to consult with the church there upon the grand question of the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law, (Acts xv. 2.) *and* I *took Titus also with me*,[b] though he was uncircumcised, that I might therein show my christian liberty, and assert that of my Gentile brethren against those who were so zealous in their attempts to invade it. *But I* then *went up*, not to receive instructions in my work from any of the apostles there, or to be confirmed in my office by them, but *by* the appointment of a special *revelation*,[c] and to subserve a very different and important purpose, in which the peace and liberty of the church were much concerned. *And* when I was arrived there, and had the pleasure of meeting my brethren, I explained at large and freely *laid before them*, the contents of *that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles*, not only so far as it relates to the exemption of the Gentile converts from any obligation to observe the Mosaic law, but likewise with respect to the deliverance of the Jews themselves from the bondage of it; which gave them an opportunity of seeing how fully I was instructed in the mind of Christ, and how little I needed any farther teachings from them. But this account however I gave, not in a public assembly, *but privately*,[d] *to those who were of* greatest *note* and reputation in the church; *lest* some should have been found who would have cavilled at it, and by abusing some of the particulars, would have represented us as differing from each other; in consequence of which it might be feared *I should* hereafter *run, or* hitherto *had run, in vain*, as the good effects of my future or past labours would have been lessened or obstructed by the increase of their prejudices; and in particular, the intent of my journey to Jerusalem might have been hindered, had I then opened my thoughts too fully in the presence of a large and promiscuous assembly.

But though I did not think myself obliged in sincerity to make a public declaration of all that was in my breast on that subject, yet I did not take any step that looked like giving up the liberty of my Gentile brethren: for *neither Titus, who was* then *with me, being a Greek*, and still continuing in a state of uncircumcision, *was compelled* to submit to that rite,[e] though so many maintained that it was absolutely necessary *to be circumcised* in order to salvation. (Acts xv. 1, 5.) *And* I was more averse to *that*, and rather favoured

SECT. 3.

GAL. II. 1

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.

2

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

3

4 And that because of

4

a *Fourteen years after.*] As it is certain that Paul saw both Peter and James in that journey to Jerusalem of which we have an account, Acts xv. 4. *et seq.* it is very natural to suppose he would mention it here, and that this is the journey which he now refers to, (compare p. 507. note a; and ver. 9. of this chapter,) and as we have found reason to believe that the council then held at Jerusalem did not happen later than the year 49, it seems reasonable to reckon the *fourteen years* here mentioned from his conversion, and not from the conclusion of those travels through Syria and Cilicia which he had mentioned, ver. 21. of the foregoing chapter; for as we cannot suppose him to have finished his tour through those countries in much less than four years after his conversion, such a computation will bring back that ever-memorable event to the year 31, which was two years before Christ's death.—He does not here mention his going up to Jerusalem in the year 43, with what had been collected at Antioch for the poor brethren in Judea, (of which we read, Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25.) because he then saw none of the apostles; and the question here was about the opportunities he might have had of conversing with them.

b *Took Titus also with me.*] This is the earliest mention that we meet with of Titus; for he is no where mentioned by St. Luke in the Acts; and what we read of him in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6, 14; viii. 6.) as well as in that to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 10.) was later by some years. He is here said to have been a Greek, (ver. 3.) and being born of Gentile parents, was not circumcised; but where or when he was converted is uncertain; only we may conclude he was converted by St. Paul, from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4.) and as he now took Titus with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, so he employed him afterwards on several occasions, and appears to have regarded him with great affection and endearment.

c *Went up by revelation.*] Dr. Whitby supposes, in his note upon this place, that as St. Paul had said before that he received the gospel which he preached *by the revelation of Jesus Christ*, (chap. i. 12.) he only means, by what he now declares, that he went up according to the revelation which he then received, and in this journey acted suitably to that revelation which had constituted him the apostle of the Gentiles, telling the church at Jerusalem what things he had done among the Gentiles in pursuance of it. But it seems rather to be here implied, (as I have observed elsewhere, (p. 507. note a,) that in their sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, the church at Antioch were directed by a revelation made either immediately to Paul himself, or to some other of the prophets there, relating to the important business they were sent upon.

d *But privately.*] I have elsewhere shown at large, that the *secret* here referred to was not, as has been so confidently asserted, "his preaching the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles," which was a fact it cannot be supposed he should endeavour to conceal from any; but the point which he communicated thus *in private*, was "the exemption, not of the Gentile converts only, but of the Jews "themselves, from the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies, as "what they were no longer bound to under the gospel, any further "than as the peace and edification of others were concerned." On this (as I have shown) there were sufficient reasons why he should chuse to be on the reserve at present; yet when the purpose of his journey had been answered, and he had left Jerusalem, he used great freedom afterwards in publicly declaring his opinion. See p. 507. note d. and p. 562. note a.

e *Neither Titus—was compelled*, &c.] This conduct of Paul with respect to Titus, in not submitting to his being circumcised, when it was insisted on as necessary to salvation, is very well consistent with what he afterwards did without constraint, to promote the circumcision of Timothy in different circumstances, (Acts xvi. 3.) as is shown in the note on that text, p. 513. note a.

SECT. 3. GAL. II.

the disinclination of Titus to it, *because of the false brethren*[f] [*that were*] *artfully introduced*, not only into the church but the ministry, upon a general apprehension of their piety, without being sufficiently informed of their principles and tempers; *who had* before *slipped* in among us at Antioch, *to spy out* and make their ill-natured remarks upon *our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus* with regard to these things, *that* by imposing on 4 the church there, which consisted chiefly of Gentile converts, *they might* find means to *bring us into* a servile *bondage* to the law of Moses, by urging the necessity of submitting 5 to the grievous and painful yoke of its ceremonies: *To whom*, whatever court some thought proper to make to them, or whatever personal condescensions even I myself might sometimes yield to, (1 Cor. ix. 19, 20.) *we did not*, either at Antioch or at Jerusalem, *give place by* any compliance or *subjection* to their insolent demands *for so much as an hour*; but always entered our open protest against their principles, *that the truth of the gospel might continue with you*, and you might rest assured, by all the proofs we could give, that the christian religion was sufficient for justification and salvation, without the superaddition of the Jewish rituals.

false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6 This was my conduct at Jerusalem on this grand occasion; nor was it upon the whole disapproved by those of my brethren for whom I had the greatest regard. *But* even *of those who* indeed *appeared to be* the most *considerable* and of the greatest note and eminence,[g] however some would set them up above me, as having conversed with Christ here on earth, and been apostles long before me, I must needs say, that whatsoever advantage they had, or *how great soever they formerly were* as to any personal privileges, *it makes no difference as to me*, nor does at all affect my character, or set me upon this account beneath them as to my knowledge in the gospel; (since *God*, who called me as well as them to the apostleship, *accepteth no man's person*, so as out of partial favour to constitute him supreme in his church and lord of his brethren, but employs whom he will to be apostles, and qualifies them for it in what way he pleases; as it is manifest he hath done with reference to me:) *for they who were of* greatest *note* and reputation when I engaged in conference with them, *added nothing further to me*, nor were capable of informing me of any thing which I had not before fully learned by immediate revelation from Christ. 7 *But, on the contrary*, far from pretending to give me any new instructions, or to invest me with any new powers, they recognized my full title to the apostleship in all its extent; and plainly *seeing that I was intrusted with* the chief management and direction of *the gospel of the uncircumcision*, or of the mission to the Gentiles, *as Peter was* [*with that*] 8 which was especially directed to those *of the circumcision: (For* indeed it was very apparent, that *he who wrought* so *effectually in Peter*, to qualify him *for the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought effectually also*, by the same miraculous powers and 9 endowments *in me*, to fit me *for* my mission to *the Gentiles.)* My worthy associates in this high office seeing this, *and knowing the grace that was given to me*, and how remarkably I was furnished for the great work in which I was engaged by the extraordinary favour I had received from Christ, *James, and Cephas, and John, who appeared to be*, and were indeed, the *pillars* of the church, on which that at Jerusalem especially rested, as the great ornament and support of it under Christ, and on whose pious labours and wise conduct so much of the interest of the gospel in general depended, willingly *gave to me and Barnabas*, my companion, *the right hands*, in token *of* receiving us into full *fellowship* and apostleship with them; *that we* [*might go*] and preach, as we had done before, *to the Gentiles*, wherever it should please the great Head of the church to direct us, *and* that *they* for the present would continue their endeavours *to* promote christianity among those of *the circumcision*,[h] till the whole harvest of the Jews in those parts should be 10 gathered in. *Only* [*they proposed*] *that we should be mindful of the poor* christians in Judea, so as to make collections in their favour, as we proceeded in our progress through the Gentile churches; *which very thing I also* of my own accord *was forward to do* with all the diligence I could, from the sincere affection I had for them, and the concern I had for their encouragement and support under the frequent sufferings they endured from their oppressive and rapacious enemies.

6 But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed *to be somewhat*, in conference added nothing to me;

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter:

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

f *Because of the false brethren.*] I know not how far so late a writer as Epiphanius is to be credited in affirming (as he does, *Hær.* xxviii.) that Cerinthus the heretic insisted absolutely on the Jewish observances, and having raised up several Jews into a most violent opposition against St. Peter, on his first going to the Gentiles, (Acts xi. 2, 3.) contended afterwards at Antioch and Jerusalem for the necessity of circumcision. (Acts xv. 1, 5.)

g *But of those who appeared to be considerable.*] The apostle had before declared what was his conduct with respect to the false brethren, and now proceeds to those who were of real note and reputation: and there is no such difficulty in the construction here, as that there should be a necessity of supplying any thing to complete the sense, or of supposing an ellipsis of the article οι at the beginning of the verse, which, instead of removing a difficulty, would only involve the construction, which is obvious enough as it stands, if the parenthesis be rightly placed, so as only to include *God accepteth no man's person*; and without any supplement or transposition, the sense of the whole verse is easy.—And as there is no doubt but οι δοκουντες in this verse, as well as in ver. 2. and 9. is to be understood of those who really were men of note and eminence, and does indeed refer to the apostles themselves, (who are expressly named in ver. 9.) however it may be a literal translation, it carries in it, to an English ear, (as Mr. Locke observes,) too diminishing a sense to render it as if St. Paul had only spoken of them as those who *seemed to be somewhat*, and who *seemed to be pillars*. I have therefore rendered it as expressive of the character of those who indeed *appeared to be considerable*, and were confessedly of the first rank, and *pillars* of the church.

h *They* for the present would continue, &c.] I express it with this caution, because there is no reason to believe that the labours of Peter, James, and John were entirely appropriated to those of the circumcision; as, on the other hand, we are assured that those of the apostle Paul were not confined to the uncircumcised Gentiles; for we often find him preaching to the Jews, and indeed, wherever he came, he proposed the gospel in the first place to them.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 3. GAL. II. Ver. 2

WARM and eager as the temper of St. Paul naturally was, it must certainly give us great pleasure to observe in how prudent and steady a manner he conducted himself when once engaged in the sacred work of the christian ministry and apostleship. With what integrity and resolution did he behave on the one hand, that he would not give place for an hour to the false brethren, who had slipped in among his converts to spy out and subvert their liberty! And on the other, with what caution that he might not frustrate the purposes of his own ministry, by carrying that which was in general the cause of truth, of liberty and justice, to an excess! Thus also let us act, holding the truth in love and in prudence, and labouring to do all the good we can with as little offence as possible.

6

While we are contending for the liberty of christians, against the imposition of things which at best are indifferent, we may possibly be obliged to dispute the point with some who are persons of worth and eminence; but God accepteth no man's person. We may give them all the honour that is due to their wisdom, their piety, and their station, without yielding up what ought to be dearer to us than any human approbation or friendship, the dictates of our conscience as in the sight of God.

7—9

Persons of true steadiness and candour, such as deserve to be esteemed pillars of the church, will not suffer themselves to be so borne down by popular prejudices as to disown their brethren, whom God hath honoured with the ministry as well as themselves, because they exercise it in some diversity of forms; but will be willing (so far as they can) to give them the right hand of fellowship, and will perhaps wish to be able to do it more entirely and openly than some human constitutions will admit.

10

In this however may we all agree, after the example of this blessed apostle, ever to do what we can to promote mutual charity among different denominations of christians; to be expressed by a readiness to bear one another's burdens, and to afford liberal relief as Providence gives opportunity. And we shall find, that as a disunion of hearts adds weight to the least cause of division, so fervent and unfeigned love will by mutual condescension and indulgence heal the breach, or happily prevent its most fatal consequences.

SECTION IV.

The apostle gives an account of his opposing Peter publicly at Antioch, and standing up in defence of the liberty of the church from the Jewish impositions. Gal. ii. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. ii. 11.

BUT when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

GAL. ii. 11.

SECT. 4. GAL. II. 11

I HAVE been telling you how entirely I agreed with the chief apostles of the circumcision, in the interview which I had with them at Jerusalem, when that decree was made in favour of the converted Gentiles, by which they were declared free from any obligation to observe the rituals of the Mosaic law. *But when Peter was come to Antioch,*[a] after Barnabas and I were returned thither, (Acts xv. 30.) *I opposed him to the face, because* indeed *he was* so far left to his own spirit as to behave in such a manner, that he very much deserved *to be blamed. For before some* Jewish zealots, who were strict in the observation of those rituals, *came from* the apostle *James*, who was then at Jerusalem, *he did* upon all occasions *eat* and converse freely *with the Gentiles* there who had embraced the gospel and had not submitted to circumcision; *but when they were come, he withdrew* from that freedom of converse, *and separated himself* from them, as if he had thought them unclean, though the Lord had so expressly taught him the contrary: (see Acts x. 28.) and this he did, not from any change in his sentiments and apprehension of things, but purely as *fearing them of the circumcision*, and being unwilling to displease them, thinking their censures of much greater importance than they really were.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

And I thought it the more necessary to take public notice of it, as *the other* converted *Jews*, who had before used the like freedom, *dissembled* their true sentiments *also*, by a weak conformity *with him*, in this scrupulous avoiding their brethren; *so that even Barnabas* too, though so honest and worthy a man, and one of the messengers who had passed with me between Antioch and Jerusalem, and been acknowledged there as an apostle of the Gentiles, *was* himself in some measure *carried away with their dissimulation;* which could not but give great grief and offence to the Gentile christians, who had been so particularly committed to his care as well as mine. *But when I saw that they did not* in this affair *walk uprightly, according to the truth* and design *of the gospel*, which indeed taught the contrary, *I said to Peter in the presence of* [*them*] *all,*[b] when a numerous assembly was met together,

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all,—

—If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of

I must speak to thee, Peter, with the freedom of a christian brother and fellow-apostle, on a particular of thy conduct which hath given public offence: let me then ask thee, *If thou, being a Jew,* and having been brought by circumcision under the strongest engage-

a *When Peter was come to Antioch.*] It is a just remark of Mons. Saurin, (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 49.) that Father Hardouin seems to have been solicitous to increase the number of his chimeras as much as possible, (and more I never met with in any learned author than in him,) by adopting the pious frauds of some of the ancients, who, to defend themselves from Porphyry's objection against christianity, from this error in the conduct of Peter, denied it to be Peter the apostle who was here spoken of, and interpreted it of another Cephas, whom they pretended to be one of the Seventy: an hypothesis as unnecessary as it is improbable. See Hard. *Diss. in loc.*

b *I said to Peter in the presence of* [*them*] *all.*] Had this been matter only of *private offence*, to be sure Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with Peter *privately* upon it before he had brought it before such an *assembly*: but as it was a *public affair*, in which great numbers were so sensibly affected, this method was most proper. Probably this happened after public worship; and it would seem the less surprising, considering the conferences which used to be held in the Jewish synagogues before the assembly was broke up; of which many instances still occur to those excellent persons in Germany and the neighbouring regions, who are engaged in a mission to the Jews, which may divine grace succeed!—It is a very just observation of Mr. Jeffery here, that had any imposture been carried on, the contention of these two great managers would probably have been an occasion of discovering it.—That no objection against the authority of Peter, as an apostle and inspired writer, can be derived from this dispute, will follow on the principles laid down in our *Essay on Inspiration*, at the close of the Volume. See also note f, on Acts xv. 7. p. 507.

SECT. 4. GAL. II.

ments to fulfil the whole law, *livest* frequently (as we have many of us seen) *after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews*, making no scruple to converse freely with the Gentiles without conforming to the ceremonial customs of the Jews; *why dost thou* now, by a change in thy conduct, as it were *compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Is it not at least as lawful for them to neglect the Jewish observances as it was for thee to
15 do it but a few days ago? *We*, [*who are*] *by nature*, that is, by birth and education, *Jews*, and so entitled to many peculiar privileges,[c] *and* who are *not* unclean, profligate, and abandoned *sinners of the Gentiles*, that walk in idolatry and all kinds of wickedness;
16 We, I say, *knowing* in our own hearts, and having been effectually convinced, *that a man is not justified by the works of the* Mosaic *law, but* only *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, and cannot be accepted in the sight of God but by cordially and truly believing in him; *even we* ourselves have taken refuge here, and giving up all confidence in the law for justification, *have believed in Jesus Christ* to this great purpose, *that we might* thus *be justified*, as I said before, *by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law:* this is the method we that are Jews have taken, as being thoroughly made sensible that it was absolutely necessary we should do so; *wherefore* it must be evident that *no flesh* living, whether he be Jew or Gentile, *shall* or can *be justified by the works of the law*, since none is capable of fully answering its demands, or can pretend to have paid an universal and unerring obedience to it. Judge then how absurd it would be to urge those who never were, like us, under such obligations to the law, to come under them, when we ourselves have been obliged to give up our expectations from hence, and to have recourse to some-
17 thing so much higher and nobler. *But*, after all, *if seeking to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners*, if we are still in an unpardoned state under the guilt and power of sin, and notwithstanding all that Christ has done, his gospel and grace be not sufficient to justify us, unless there be something superadded to it by the law of Moses, *what*, [*is*] *Christ then the Minister of sin* and not of justification? Must it not follow that he is so, if he hath introduced an imperfect dispensation which will not sufficiently ensure the happiness of those that follow it? Yea, doth he not indeed teach sin, if justification cannot be obtained without the law, in teaching men to renounce all dependence upon it, as it is certain by his gospel he doth? But *God forbid* that any thing should ever be insinuated so much to the dishonour of God and of our glorious Redeemer!
18 Thus I addressed myself to Peter on this public occasion, and showed that the observance of the ceremonial law was not to be imposed on christians. *Now if I build again the things which I* then *destroyed*, and insist (as some would charge me) on the necessity of the works of the law for justification, I in effect condemn what I then did, and, setting up the very principles which I opposed, *I acknowledge myself* to have been *a transgressor* in attempting to pull them down:[d] but I am so far from acting such an inconsistent part, that I declare myself entirely in the same sentiments which I then
19 publicly professed. *For* though I was once so zealous a bigot for the rites of the law, yet now, upon the whole, *I through the law am dead to the law;* the more I consider its nature and tenor, the more I am convinced that it is absolutely impossible that I or any man living should be justified by it, and therefore I give up all such expectations: and yet the effect of it is, not my being a lawless, licentious creature, but quite the contrary; it is, *that I might live to God* in a state of favour and acceptance with him, animated by nobler views and hopes than the law could give, and therefore engaged to a more generous,
20 sublime, and extensive obedience than it was capable of producing. For *I am crucified with Christ*, and have such a sense of his dying love upon my heart, and of the excellency of that method of justification and salvation which he hath accomplished on the cross, that I am in consequence of it dead to all the allurements of the world, and to all views of obtaining righteousness and life by the law: *nevertheless, I live* a new and spiritual life, in a conformity to the will of God, and feel the comforts of it in my heart; *yet*, to speak properly, it is *not I* that live, not I, my former or my present self, by any strength or power of my own, *but* it is *Christ* that by the energy of his word and Spirit *liveth in me*, and continually influences and quickens my soul to every good action and affection: *and the life which I now live in the flesh*, while surrounded with the snares and sorrows of mortality, *I live in the* continual exercise of that *faith which* [*is*] established in, and centred upon, the perfect righteousness *of the Son of God;* on whom alone it is that I depend for justification, and am daily deriving new influences from him, by realizing and affectionate views of that gracious and condescending Saviour, *who loved me, and* that to such an astonishing degree, that he *delivered himself up* to torments and death *for me*, that he might procure my redemption and salvation.

Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We, *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me

c *We, who are by nature Jews*, &c.] M. L'Enfant thinks Paul speaks of *himself* in the *plural number*, and rests the matter on his own practice: but to me it appears evident he meant to include the Jewish believers in general, and to argue from the virtual confession they had all made of the insufficiency of their own obedience to the law, if considered as a ground of justification.

d *I acknowledge myself a transgressor.*] M. L'Enfant seems to consider this verse as a continuation of Paul's speech at Antioch. He would render and connect it thus; "On the contrary, so far are "we from being *made sinners* by neglecting *justification* by the *law*, "that, if we taught the necessity of its works, we should *become* "*transgressors* in building again the things that we have destroyed." But if this interpretation was to be admitted, we should not only find it hard to clear up the argument, but must, I think, suppose the following verses likewise a part of the speech to Peter: which would make them much less pertinent and natural than if we suppose them the overflowings of Paul's devout heart in addressing the Galatians.—His speech to Peter rather seems to have gone no farther than the foregoing verse; and γαρ is often used with such a latitude, that we may take it at the beginning of this verse to signify *now*, and so consider Paul as showing here, that whatsoever some insinuated to his prejudice, there was no inconsistency in his doctrine and practice with what he had then so openly declared.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

So that you see upon the whole, when you consider all the tenor of my conduct, as well as my conference with Peter at Antioch, that *I do not*, like many others, *frustrate the grace of God* in Christ, and render void that method of salvation which the gospel hath revealed, which a behaviour like that which I reproved, if pursued into all its consequences, must appear to do; *for if righteousness* [*come*] *by the law*, and that made a sufficient provision for our being justified and accepted in the sight of God, *then* there was no necessity of the grace of God in giving his Son for us, and *Christ is dead in vain*, since he died to redeem us from the curse of the law, as being utterly hopeless and irrecoverable by that dispensation alone. SECT. 4. GAL. II. 21

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a most generous and worthy spirit that was shown by the apostle Paul on this occasion, in his being so ready to stand up for christian liberty, and to reprove even Peter himself, though so honoured and beloved a brother, when he acted a cowardly and inconsistent part. He did not meanly censure him to others, and endeavour by private insinuations to lessen his character; but by his openly rebuking him he showed himself a sincere friend, and took the most effectual method to prevent the ill consequences of his dissimulation, and at the same time to recover his brother to a more worthy and consistent conduct. Ver. 11 14

How little there is in all this passage that looks like any peculiar authority assumed on the part of St. Peter, or acknowledged by St. Paul, every unprejudiced reader will easily observe: and perhaps God might suffer this great apostle of the circumcision thus to fall, and to be thus corrected by the apostle of the Gentiles, the more effectually to discountenance those arrogant and groundless claims of the pretended successors of St. Peter to supremacy and infallibility, which have introduced so much confusion and infamy into the church. 12 *et seq.*

We may well rejoice in the review of a passage which so strongly asserts christian liberty on the one hand, and exemplifies the very life of christian grace on the other. Let it ever be retained in our memories, that we are justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; and may our conduct be agreeable to the doctrine we profess, giving up all expectations inconsistent with this decision, yet ever remembering that Christ is not the Minister of sin. Let faith in him engage us, whilst dead to the law as a covenant of works, to be observant of it as a rule of life, and so to live to God as those who are still under a law to Christ; (1 Cor. ix. 21.) and animated by the influences of his grace, may our souls feel more and more of the efficacy of his death, who loved us and gave himself for us. 16 17 19

Strongly indeed will the affecting consideration of the death of Christ impress our hearts, when we are conscious of our interest and concern in it. May the impression last through life, and may we remember that we are not merely to make one solemn address to our adorable Redeemer, committing by an act of faith our souls into his hands; but that our faith is daily to be renewing its views of him, that so the life which we now live in the flesh, in the midst of so many vanities and dangers, may be conducted by the continual influence of this principle. May we therefore daily regard him as our Instructor and Governor, our Atonement and Intercessor, our Example and Strength, our Guardian and Forerunner: and in proportion to the degree in which such views as these prevail, the grace of God, instead of being frustrated, will be the more admired and esteemed; and as it was impossible that righteousness should be attainable by the law, it will appear Christ hath not died in vain, but that his death was necessary to procure our justification, and is the only sure foundation of our faith and hope. 20 21

SECTION V.

The apostle reproves the Galatians for their instability with regard to the important doctrine of justification by faith; which he farther confirms from the instance of Abraham, who was thus justified, and in whose blessing we share, through the redemption Christ has wrought out for us. Gal. iii. 1—14.

GAL. iii. 1.

O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

GAL. iii. 1.

THESE are the real sentiments of my heart which I have now laid before you, and you were formerly taught them at large. But *O* ye *thoughtless Galatians*, after all the instructions I have given you, how little do they prevail in your breasts! May I not even ask you, *Who hath* by some fallacious, fatal charm *enchanted you*,[a] and as it were dazzled the eyes of your mind with the vain glitterings of sophistry and delusive arts of evasion, *that you should not* go on to *obey the truth* so solemnly inculcated upon you; even you, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified hath been* so *evidently set forth* and strongly delineated *among you*,[b] in the most affectionate representations of his word and ordinances? One would have imagined these lively views should for ever have secured your fidelity to him, and have fortified your hearts against every insinuation injurious to the honour of his cross. SECT. 5. GAL. III. 1

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

But methinks even now the matter might be brought to a short issue: and to this purpose there is *this only I would learn of you, Did ye receive the Spirit*, in its extraordinary operations in and upon you, *by* a regard to *the works of the* Mosaic *law*, or any other law on which you might depend for justification as a matter of legal claim? *or* were you made partakers of it *by the hearing of* the gospel, proposing the method of justification by *faith* in the righteousness and grace of the Redeemer?[c] If any of the new teachers 2

a *Who hath enchanted you?*] I know some would render ἐβάσκανε, *Who hath envied your happiness?* But as the Jewish zealots could not have any sense of the happiness of those christians they endeavoured to disturb, it is not, I think, so natural to refer their attempts to envy; and it is well known the word also signifies, *to enchant*. It strongly expresses the *unreasonable turn* their minds had taken, so that one would imagine they had been deprived of the *regular use* even of their natural faculties.

b *Before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified, &c.*] There is no room to *object* that this is merely an *argument to the passions*: for in proportion to the affecting sense they had of the love of Christ in submitting to crucifixion for them, would be the rational sense of the obligations they were under to him to preserve his gospel pure and his church free and happy.

c *Did ye receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*] There is no doubt but that it was on their becoming christians that they *received the Spirit*; and therefore that it could not be ascribed to *the law*, which they were strangers to till after-

SECT. 5. GAL. III.

that are come among you can work such miracles in proof of their tenets, and confer such gifts on their followers, you will be more excusable in hearkening to them than in present circumstances you can possibly be.

But *are you* indeed *so inconsiderate* as to need being reminded in this manner? Where is the benefit you can propose by turning to the law? *Having begun in the* 3 *Spirit*, having known the spirituality, power, and energy of the glorious gospel, *are ye now* seeking to be *made perfect by the flesh?* or have you any expectation of attaining to a superior degree of perfection and excellency, by a submission to those carnal ordinances of the law which at first view appear to be so much beneath it, and to be altogether insufficient for it? If you are tempted to so great a fall as this, let me remind you of 4 the difficulties you have already borne for christianity; many of which have been brought upon you by the instigation of the Jews, whose hatred is so violent against it. Say then, my brethren, *have ye suffered so many things in vain?*[d] Will you give up the benefit of all these sufferings, and lose, in a great measure at least, the reward of them, by relinquishing what is so material in that scheme of doctrine you have been suffering for? Shall all that you have endured be thus in vain? *if* indeed [*it be*] *yet in vain*, which I am willing to hope it is not entirely, and that however your principles may have been shaken, yet God will not permit them to be quite overthrown.

I know that your favourite teachers have many arts of address with which they endeavour 5 to soothe you, and to conciliate your regards to themselves, while they would alienate them from me; but when you come to the most solid and authentic proofs of a divine mission, have you not seen them wrought among you, in confirmation of the doctrine I delivered to you? *He therefore that ministereth to you* an extraordinary supply of *the Spirit* by the laying on of his hands, *and* that *worketh* other evident and uncontrolled *miracles among you*,[e] [*doth he it*] *by the works of the law*, and in virtue of any commission he had received from God to inculcate the observation of the Mosaic precepts? *or* is it *by the hearing of faith* that he doth it? Is it not evidently by that gospel which you have heard me preach, and which exhorts you to seek justification and salvation by faith? And will you then forsake a doctrine which has been so signally attested, and exchange it for one, the teachers of which have no such attestations to produce?

And this method which the gospel proposeth is agreeable to the example which you 6 have in the great father of the faithful; for *even as* you read of *Abraham*, (Gen. xv. 6.) long before he was circumcised, "that he *believed God*, relying on the promise that he "made him, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness*;" it was set down to his 7 account as an evidence of his being a righteous person: *Know ye therefore*, and infer from hence, *that* as faith was the brightest part of the character of this illustrious patriarch, so all *they who* [*are*] *of faith*, all that have the same principle working in their hearts, and engaging them to receive the gospel-dispensation, *the same are*, and show themselves by a like disposition to be, *the children of Abraham*, and may expect to inherit the same blessings with him, as by embracing the gospel they manifest the same principle and temper.

And again the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration *the scripture* was written, *foreseeing* 8 *that God would justify the Gentiles*, when he should call them by his grace, in the same manner as he justified Abraham, only *through faith*, *did* in effect, *before* the revelation of it to the world, *preach* the glad tidings of *the gospel unto Abraham* himself, [*saying*] once and again, (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.) "*In thee shall all nations* of the "earth *be blessed*;"[f] that is to say, By their faith in that glorious Person who is to descend from thee, all persons whatsoever shall be blessed, of whatever nation they be, who learn to resemble thee, in their readiness to receive every message from God with an entire submis- 9 sion and obedience. *So then* it appears, that *they who are* really partakers of the grace *of faith*, and seek to be justified by it; they who have an unfeigned principle of faith in their hearts, and show it by giving due credit to this great and indubitable testimony which God hath borne to his Son; they *are blessed with believing Abraham*, and shall

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore, that they which *are* of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

wards, but must be owing to that *faith* in which they were instructed by the gospel on their embracing christianity. Nor can it justly be objected, that they still retained the christianity by which the Spirit was received; for they were now perverted to a different system by their new teachers, and that which Paul had preached at first among them, when they received the Spirit, was a christianity of which Judaism made no part.

d *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?*] Should it be said, "that, notwithstanding the Galatians were for adding the observa- "tion of the law to the gospel, it would not necessarily destroy "their hopes as christians, nor deprive them of the reward of that "courage they had hitherto shown in its defence:" yet it must be allowed that some degree of their reward might be lost, as it might derogate from their future glory to have been, through inconsideration, and prejudices rashly admitted, accessary to the corruption and consequent obstruction of the gospel: and also, that as much persecution might be declined by admitting this mixture of Judaism, there was reason to fear that it was a regard to their own present ease and convenience that led them to it, (compare chap. v. 11; and vi. 12.) which was in a manner cancelling the good effect of their former resolution; and indeed any thing that looked like a sinful temporizing in those who had before been confessors for the truth, might occasion peculiar scandal, and endanger many more.

e *Worketh miracles among you.*] It is a just and important observation of Mr. Baxter here, that it was a great display of divine wisdom to suffer such *contentions* to arise thus *early* in the church as should make it necessary for the apostles to appeal to the *miracles* wrought *before*, and *upon* those who were afterwards in some degree alienated from them; that future ages might be convinced of the *certainty* of these *miracles* as matters of fact beyond all possibility of contradiction. See Baxter's *Practical Works*, Vol. II. p. 118.

f *In thee shall all nations* of the earth *be blessed.*] It may perhaps be asked, "what evidence there is that *this promise* meant "the converting Jews and Gentiles to christianity, rather than con- "verting the Gentiles to Judaism, and so blessing them with a par- "ticipation of the *privileges* originally granted to the natural seed "of Abraham?" But besides what the apostle afterwards says for clearing up this point, it may be answered, that the Mosaic economy was so constituted that it never could be an universal thing; and that when it was considered what sort of a Person Christ in fact was, there would appear reason to believe that *this promise* referred to him, even separate from the authority of the apostle in asserting it, and how dubious soever the sense of the oracle might appear till it was illustrated by the event.

SECT. 5.

GAL. III.

inherit the promises made to him, though they are, as he was when he first received these promises, in a state of uncircumcision.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.

Now it is evident that this blessing must be received by the gospel: *for as many as are of* that covenant, which relates only to *the works of the law*, and have no higher views and expectations than a legal dispensation could give, *are* indeed *under a curse*,[g] and by every breach of that law become obnoxious to it. And of this, with respect to the Mosaic law, we have as express a proof as can be imagined; *for it is written* with regard to all that are under it, (Deut. xxvii. 26.) "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one who* confirmeth "not all the words of this law, that is, who *continueth not in all things which are* "*written in the book of the law, to do them.*" It is therefore a perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to every one of its injunctions, which the law requires; and as every man's conscience must tell him that he hath not performed this, he must see the dreadful denunciation levelled at himself, and dooming him to death and misery. 10

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

And that no man is justified in the sight of God by the performance of *the law*, or by his own obedience to it, [*is*] farther *evident* from God's appointment of another way of justification; *for* (as the prophet saith, Habak. ii. 4.) "*The just* or righteous man, that "is, he who shall finally be treated by God as such, *shall live by faith*:"[h] he shall be justified and saved by trusting in the mercy of an Almighty God through Christ, and resting on the promise he hath graciously made of pardon and salvation even to sinful creatures, who shall by faith apply to him for righteousness and life. *Now* it is manifest that *the law is not of faith*, nor doth it allow of such a way of justification; *but* puts it on another and most rigorous footing, insisting on exact obedience to all its commands, and declaring, (Lev. xviii. 5.) "that *the man that doeth them shall live in* or by *them*:" he who perfectly conforms himself to these precepts, shall have a right to happiness in consequence of them; but he that breaks them must bear the penalty, without any farther assistance from a law which, being in one instance violated, must for ever condemn the transgressor. 11

12 And the law is not of faith; but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.

But ever adored be the riches of divine grace, *Christ hath redeemed us* who believe in his name *from the* terrible *curse of the law*,[i] and bought us off from that servitude and misery to which it inexorably doomed us, by *being* himself *made a curse for us*, and enduring the penalty which our sins had deserved: for such was the death which he bore in our stead; not only when considered as a capital punishment, which universally implies something of this, but as thus stigmatized by the express declaration of the law against every one in such a particular circumstance; *for it is written*, (Deut. xxi. 23.) "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one that hangeth on a tree.*" Now Christ, as you well know, was hung upon a tree; he expired on the cross, and his dead body hung for some time upon it. And this, in his adorable condescension, he submitted to for us and our salvation; 13

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

that the curse having been borne by him in our room, *the blessing of Abraham*, in all its extent of spiritual benefits, and that adoption which was given in him, *might come*, not only on believing Jews, but *on the Gentiles* also, *through Christ Jesus* the great anointed Saviour; and particularly *that we*, even the whole church of christian converts, *might, through* the exercise of a living and sincere *faith* in him, *receive the promise of the Spirit* as the seal of our adoption,[k] both in the effusion of its miraculous gifts, so far as they may conduce to the edification of the church, and in the rich abundance of its saving graces. 14

IMPROVEMENT.

THROUGH the amazing goodness of God to us, we share with the Galatians in this great privilege, that Jesus Christ crucified is evidently set forth among us. Let us make the object familiar to our view, to our hearts; and oh that we may all feel its powerful influence to engage us to obey the truth, and to comply with the practical design of the gospel! Oh that none of the enchantments of this vain world may be able to draw us aside from a becoming regard to it! May those especially who have begun in the Spirit, and perhaps have suffered many difficulties already in the cause of religion, be concerned that they may not suffer so many things in vain, and after all their pretensions and hopes, make an end in the flesh, by forsaking that excellent cause! Ver. 1 3, 4

g *Are under a curse.*] Dr. Whitby proves (in his *note* on ver. 13.) that the *law* of Adam was attended with *a curse* as well as that of Moses; and that it is *the more general curse* which is here intended, as illustrated by what Moses expressed as the sanction of his institutions.

h *The just shall live by faith.*] As the apostle shows, in the next verse, that there was no obtaining life by the *law* without a perfect personal obedience, *faith*, which stands here in opposition to it, must signify a firm belief of the promise of God, and acting according to it in a dependence upon Christ for righteousness, which is the way of *justification* that the gospel has revealed. Compare note d, on Rom. i. 17. p. 586.

i *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*] The *curse of the law* from which Christ has redeemed us, was that which doomed us to *eternal misery*; from whence it hath been very plausibly inferred, that the *law of Moses* was established on the sanction of *future punishments*. But perhaps it may be solidly answered, that the apostle, arguing concerning the *law of God in general*, the breach of which did certainly render obnoxious to *future punishments*, may mention the circumstance of the Mosaic law leaving every presumptuous offender to die *under a curse*, as an intimation of those melancholy prospects with respect to *futurity* which we must grant it certainly gave, even though we should not suppose that it contained an *express* threatening of *such punishments*: which I do not see that it any where does, and which I think the learned Mr. Warburton has fully proved that it doth not. And it is evident that the course of the apostle's argument here implies that *all* true believers *are redeemed from the curse*; and, consequently, that he speaks of a *curse* to which *all*, as *sinners*, were liable; whereas the Gentiles, being under no obligation to the *Mosaic* law at all, could not possibly be *directly* affected by *its curse*, nor could indeed be *at all* affected by it, otherwise than in the latitude in which we have explained this passage.

k *That we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*] It is justly observed by the learned Diodati here, that the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit of God had been so frequently promised by the prophets as the great blessing of the latter day, that it is here used as *synonimous* to the *blessing of Abraham*. And Mr. Howe very properly argues from hence the great importance of the Spirit, since the imparting it is represented as the great blessing by which the curse is removed; from whence (says he) it follows, that the withdrawing and withholding it is the great calamity which falls upon men by their apostasy from God. See Howe's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 237.

SECT. 5. GAL. III.

That we may be deemed the children of Abraham, let us have the same faith with him; that believing in God as he did, and trusting in the promised Messiah, we may attain that righteousness which it is impossible to obtain by the deeds of the law, which insists upon perfect obedience, and passes sentence upon every one that has transgressed it. Nothing can be more important than to endeavour to impress our souls with this great and fundamental truth, that if we are of the works of the law, and trust in these for justification, we are under a curse. Oh that
Ver. 10 God may graciously thunder that curse in the ears of sleeping sinners, and make them sensible of their guilt and danger; that as prisoners of justice, yet in some measure prisoners of hope, (Zech. ix. 12.) they may *flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel!* (Heb. vi. 18.)

13 We need not go far for help. No sooner are we wounded (as it were) in one verse, than we find provision for our healing in another. For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, and this in a method never sufficiently to be admired, even by making himself a ransom, yea, and becoming a curse, for us; submitting not only to great infamy and wretchedness in his life, but to an ignominious and accursed death, being slain and hung upon a tree. (Acts v. 30; x. 39.)

To him let us apply, that the curse may be removed; and with humble confidence in him, let us lift up our eyes
14 in cheerful expectation, that though by birth we are Gentiles, the blessing of Abraham will come upon us, and that through faith we shall receive the promise of the Spirit. And what promise can be more valuable than this? what blessing more desirable than to be enlightened, to be quickened, to be sanctified, to be comforted by the
11 Spirit? As the just, may we live by faith; and make it our daily request at the throne of grace, that God will implant and increase that divine principle in our hearts, even such a faith as shall work by love, and prove a genuine principle of sincere and universal obedience!

SECTION VI.

The apostle farther illustrates the stability and importance of the covenant made with Abraham as the father of believers, which the Mosaic covenant could not infringe, and to an application to which its greatest severities were intended to lead. Gal. iii. 15, *to the end.*

Gal. iii. 15.

SECT. 6. GAL. III.

I HAVE been speaking, *brethren,* of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and have shown that, according to the original tenor of it, all his believing seed, whether they be or be not circumcised, must be entitled to many very valuable privileges. And herein *I*
15 *speak after the manner of men,* and reason on the principles of common equity, according to what is the allowed rule of all human compacts; for *though it be but the covenant of a man* with his fellow-creature, *yet if it be* once legally *confirmed* by mutual promise and seal, *no* honest *man* concerned afterwards *cancelleth* what was agreed to by it, *or addeth* any thing *to it* which should alter the terms of it, without the consent of the other stipulating party.

Gal. iii. 15.
BRETHREN, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.

16 *Now,* to apply this to the case before us: *the promises* relating to the justification of believers *were spoken* by God at first *to Abraham and to his seed,* who are expressly mentioned as making a party with him in the covenant. And here by the way you will observe, that *he saith not,* "*And to seeds,*" in the plural number, *as* speaking *of many; but* in the singular number, *as of one,* "*And to thy seed;*" not extending it to a variety of seeds which might descend from him, but limiting what he says to one,[a] *which is* all to centre in *Christ;* out of regard to whom, that branch of Abraham's family from which he was to spring was in so remarkable a manner separated from the rest.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 *And this I say* further, on the principles laid down above, [*that*] *the covenant which was* long *before confirmed by* the promise of *God with respect to Christ,* as the illustrious Seed referred to, and the great universal Blessing exhibited in the promise, *the law which was* given at Mount Sinai *four hundred and thirty years after* the date of it[b] *cannot disannul* [*so*] *that it should make the promise* void and *ineffectual;* which it must have done if the observation of that law had been for the future the necessary means
18 of justification and happiness. *For if the inheritance* of Abraham's blessing [*be*] suspended on such a condition as not to be obtained but by the observation *of the law,* it must then follow that [*it is*] *no more* the effect *of the promise,* which is indeed quite abrogated by such a clog: *but* it is evident that *God* freely *gave* [*it*] *to Abraham by promise;* and therefore it must be left in such a state as that the honour of the promise may be secure, which otherwise would be abolished and disgraced. (Rom. iv. 13, 14.)

17 And this I say, *that* the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 But it may be objected: If justification and eternal life cannot be obtained by this means, *to what purpose then* [*serveth*] *the law,* or what significancy hath it? I answer,

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added be-

a *He saith not, "And to seeds," as of many, &c.*] One would not easily allow that the apostle founds his argument on a presumption, that *seed* cannot signify a *plurality* of persons; since (not to mention a thousand other texts) in that very *covenant with Abraham* to which he refers, God said, (Gen. xv. 5.) *So shall thy seed be;* that is, It shall be as numerous *as the stars of heaven.* Nor can any instance be produced in which the greatest number of persons to descend from any one are called *his seeds.* Therefore, with Bishop Burnet, (in his *Four Discourses,* p. 66.) I take it to be only the apostle's saying, in *bad Greek,* I confess, but with good sense and reason, that the *promises* made to Abraham are *not only* appropriated to *one* line of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac; but centre in *one* illustrious *Person,* with regard to whom the rest are made partakers of the great blessing exhibited in the *Abrahamic covenant.* And this interpretation I greatly prefer to theirs who suppose that *Christ* here signifies the *mystical body of Christ,* or the *aggregate of all believers;* which interpretation will no more afford an argument from these words than the preceding. And if we suppose it merely a remark by way of illustration, I think no sense so easy as this, which is favoured by ver. 19.

b *Four hundred and thirty years after.*] To make out this computation, Dr. Whitby and several other commentators proceed thus. The first celebrated *promise* was made to Abraham when he was *seventy-five* years old, (Gen. xii. 3, 4.) and from this date of it to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was an *hundred* years old, (Gen. xxi. 5.) was 26 years; Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born. (Gen. xxv. 26.) Jacob went into Egypt at 130. (Gen. xlvii. 9.) And the Israelites sojourned there, according to the Septuagint, (Exod. xii. 40.) 215 years, which completes the number. Compare note f, on Acts vii. 6. p. 456.

cause of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

That *it was added* after the promise was made, *because of transgressions*;[c] that the Jews might either be preserved from idolatry and other crimes, or that they might be convicted of their guilt in committing them, and so be taught to seek after a more effectual method of obtaining pardon, with an earnestness proportionable to the discovery it made of the malignity of their guilt: and with this view it was to continue *till the* illustrious *Seed should come*, even the Messiah, *to whom the promise was made;* into whom both Jews and Gentiles being ingrafted by faith, when the gospel-dispensation took place, should become without distinction the spiritual seed of Abraham, and be entitled to the blessings of the promise. Accordingly the law was given in a way agreeable to this design of it; [*and it was*] *ordained* and promulgated *by* the ministration of *angels* at Mount Sinai,[d] and put *in the hand of* Moses, who was then appointed by God to act the part of *a mediator* between him and the people of Israel,[e] and was authorized to attest (as it were) their mutual and reciprocal obligations to each other; whereas the promise needed no mediator, but was immediately deposited by God in the hand of Abraham, to whom it was made. *Now* we know that *a mediator is not* merely [*the mediator*] *of one* party, but at least of two, between which he must pass, and by the nature of his office is to transact for both: *but God is* only *one* party in that covenant made with Abraham of which we have been speaking,[f] and Abraham and his seed, including all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are the other. As Moses therefore, when the law was given, stood at that time between the Lord and Israel, (Deut. v. 5.) and did not pass between the whole collective body of Abraham's seed and the blessed God; so nothing was transacted by him with relation to those for whom he did not appear; and consequently nothing in that covenant wherein he did mediate could disannul the promise, or affect the rights accruing to any from a prior engagement, in which the Gentiles were concerned as well as the Israelites: for no covenant can be altered but by the mutual consent of both parties; and in what was done at Mount Sinai by the mediation of Moses, there was none to appear for the Gentiles; so that this transaction between God and the Israelites could have no force to abrogate the promise, which extended likewise to the Gentiles, or to vacate a covenant that was made between parties of which one only was there.

19

20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one: but God is one.

20

21 *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

And shall it now be said, [*Is*] *the law then against the promises of God?* And so far as the law takes place with regard to those who are under it, doth it not seem at least to implead in some measure, and to infringe upon that better state in which they who are brought into subjection to it, would otherwise have been? *God forbid* that we should insinuate any thing of that kind! On the contrary, it was intended to be subservient to the promise; and the design of it in its remoter consequences, if rightly attended to and applied, was to lead the thoughts and hearts of those who are under it to an higher and better dispensation. *For if* indeed *there had been a law given which could have given life;* if any law, considered in itself alone, could have been to sinful creatures a sufficient means of justification and eternal happiness, then *assuredly righteousness should have been by the* Mosaic *law*,[g] than which there is not any law more holy, excellent, and good.

21

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

But so far is the law from introducing any justifying righteousness, that *the scripture* revealing it *hath* plainly *shut up all*, both Jews and Gentiles, *under sin*, as so many condemned malefactors; for it hath stated the rule of duty in such a manner, that every man's conscience must, on considering and understanding that rule, certainly charge himself with sin. And it is wisely ordered in this manner, that they who are so convinced of guilt and misery might look beyond it to be delivered from their lost condition, and *that the promise* of righteousness and life *by faith in Jesus Christ*, as the only means of justification, *might*

22

c *It was added because of transgressions.*] As the *law* that was given by Moses neither did nor could *disannul the covenant* made with Abraham, to which the Jews undoubtedly had a claim, the design of *that-law* must therefore have been to engage those of his descendants that came under it to see their need of *that covenant*, and more effectually to recommend *the promise* to them. And as the writing of the book of Genesis gave them a farther account of it than tradition had preserved, the law might be said to be added to that account because of transgressions; as their transgressions, not only of the ceremonial but of the moral precepts, would appear more exceedingly sinful and dangerous, in proportion to the perspicuity of these precepts, and the awful solemnity with which they were delivered.

d *By* the ministration of *angels* at Mount Sinai.] That the *law* was given *by the ministration of angels*, is apparent from many passages of scripture, (compare Psal. lxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; and Heb. ii. 2.) though the Logos did undoubtedly *preside* among them, and it was *in his name* that the proclamation was made by *angels*, as his heralds and attendants.

e *In the hand of a mediator.*] It is a singular notion of Mr. Pierce, on Heb. vii. 22. that *the mediator* here spoken of is *the order of Jewish high-priests*, who, succeeding one another, were by virtue of their office *mediators* between God and the people. He pleads, that "the *law* is here represented as left in the hands of a mediator "*till the promised seed should come.*" But the clause, ἀχρις ἑ ἐλθῃ το σπερμα, *till the seed should come*, will make very good sense if it be taken in connexion with the preceding word, προσετεθη, and referred to what is said immediately before, of *the law* being *added;* as appears in the paraphrase. And the apostle's argument will be much better supported by referring this to Moses, who was particularly authorized by the Jewish people, as well as constituted by God, to *mediate* in the affair of receiving the *law*, which he transacted once for all.—It is so unusual and unnatural a manner of speaking, to call a *succession* of men *a mediator*, that one would not willingly be forced on such an inconvenient interpretation.

f *A mediator is not* [*the mediator*] *of one, but God is one.*] I have followed Mr. Locke's interpretation of this difficult passage, not without attentively comparing a variety of others. The learned Dr. Jenkins (in his *Remarks on Four Books*, p. 136.) interprets it, "This "mediator is *not a mediator of one and the same covenant* with the former; *but God is still one and the same*, an unchangeable Being, who "will therefore adhere faithfully to his prior engagements." But this changing the sense of the word *one*, and putting so unusual an interpretation upon it, is a difficulty one would chuse, if possible, to avoid.—Nor can it be understood as if it were said, "Where "*a mediator* is appointed to interpose his office, it is a sign *the parties are at variance:*" but God is now *reconciled;* for neither does it appear that there was any controversy between God and Israel when Moses was appointed *a mediator;* nor does God's *being one* properly signify *being at peace.* I shall mention but one other explication, which makes the sense of it as if it had been said, "Moses is *not a mediator*, ενος, *of the seed*, to whom the promise was "made; and therefore could not act so as to give up *his right*, or "that of the persons whose guardian and representative he was." But this would suppose a very unwarrantable change in the signification of *one* when applied to God, and takes it for granted, I think very unreasonably, that Christ was not concerned in giving the *law* from Mount Sinai.

g *Righteousness should have been by the* Mosaic *law.*] This was *the law*, by way of eminence, to which therefore God would have done that honour, if he would have done it to any.

SECT. 6. GAL. III.

be given and appropriated *to them that* truly *believe* in him for pardon and salvation; and thus the seeming severity of the sentence was intended so much the more to illustrate the grace of the promise.

The law, then, which condemns every transgression, was designed to be preparatory for the discovery which the gospel makes of the way of being justified by faith: *but before* 23 this *faith came* to be exhibited as the method of acceptance with God, *we* that were under the law stood on the foot of our own obedience before him; and having become obnoxious to divine justice, and liable to death the punishment of sin, *were kept under* the bond of *the law*, as condemned malefactors are guarded in close custody, *shut up* as prisoners under sentence,[h] *unto the faith which* in due time *should afterwards be revealed*; there being no possibility of escape till the Messiah came and brought the happy tidings of a way 24 to be justified and accepted, though we were before most justly condemned. *So that the law*, while it continued its authority over us, and held us under the rigour of its discipline, *was* as it were *our schoolmaster*, or the instructor of our childhood, to teach us our own sinfulness and the necessity of a better righteousness than our own; and so [*to lead us*] *unto Christ*, and to engage us, as condemned by the law, to have recourse to him who is the End of the law for righteousness, (Rom. x. 4.) *that we might* thus *be justified by faith* in him, and so obtain the benefit of the promise.

25 *But when* this *faith* once *came* to be fully revealed by the gospel-dispensation, we then passed over to a more liberal and happy state; and being instructed in the knowledge of Christ, *we are no longer under* the discipline of *a schoolmaster*, as children in a state of 26 minority, and have no such need of the law as we had formerly to direct us to him. *For* having believed in Christ as he is discovered in the gospel, *ye are all*, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews, *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*,[i] and are now, as it were, brought into an adult state, in which you have a claim to higher privileges and to 27 greater freedom than you had before. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ*, and so have taken upon you the solemn profession of his religion, may thus be said to *have put on Christ*,[k] and to be clothed with his character and covered with his righteousness; and by the interest you have in him by faith, are so united to him as to 28 appear one with him in his state of liberty and felicity. So that now the distinctions which were before so much regarded are in a manner done away, and have an end put to them by this happy union; and *there is neither Jew nor Greek*, but the latter has the same privileges with the former, and the former may, without offending God, use the same freedom in approaching to him with the latter: *there is neither bond nor free*, but slaves are now the Lord's freemen, and freemen the Lord's servants; and this consideration makes the free humble and the slave cheerful, and swallows up in a great measure the sense of his servitude: *there is neither male nor female*, but all are now admitted to that initiatory ordinance of baptism which comes in the place of circumcision, that was appropriated to the males; and this happy state of equality into which, with respect to spiritual privileges, both sexes are brought, may justly prevent that tyranny over the weaker which in some places hath so shamefully prevailed; *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*, and are all equally accepted in him; and being made one body in him, believers, of whatever nation, or sex, or condition they be, are all cemented in the bonds of holy friendship, and animated with the 29 views of the same happiness. *And if ye* [*be*] *Christ's*, and are by faith united to him, who is the promised Seed in whom all nations shall be blessed, *then are ye the* true *seed of Abraham*, and equally are so whether ye are circumcised or not; and in consequence of this, ye are *heirs in virtue of the promise*, and may look upon the best blessings promised to that holy patriarch as your own, though you have no inheritance in the land of Canaan, and pretend to claim nothing by virtue of a natural descent.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our school-master *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 26 LET us rejoice in those spiritual privileges to which all true christians are now equally entitled, and charge our 29 souls with those obligations which necessarily attend them. Let us look upon ourselves as the children of Abraham, as entitled to the noblest of those promises which God made to that excellent saint; even to that great and comprehensive promise, (which is all the salvation and all the desire of every true child of Abraham,) namely, that God will be a God to us. (Gen. xvii. 7, 8.) Let us approve ourselves his genuine offspring by imitating his faith; 27 and always remember, that having been baptized into Christ, we have so put on Christ as to be obliged to resemble him in his temper and character.

28 If we desire to share the blessings and glories of that one body of which Christ is the great and glorious Head, let us not lay a disproportionate stress upon any thing by which one christian may be distinguished from another;

h *Shut up* as prisoners under sentence.] The apostle having shown in the preceding verse that *all* were *shut up under sin*, what he now adds of the Jews being *shut up* does not so much refer to the *fatigue* of *ceremonies* (though some have explained it so) as to the *condemnation* under which the violation of *the law* brought the transgressors of it; according to the grand argument so largely insisted upon by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. iii. 9—23.

i *The sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*] It may perhaps be *objected*, "We might have been the *children* or the *sons of God*, "though we had still continued under a *schoolmaster*;" but we should not then have appeared under the character of such, as the apostle argues in the beginning of the next chapter. But perhaps the particle γαρ may here signify, *now*: and so it may introduce the following application of the premises laid down before in more general terms.—It seems that παιδαγωγος here signifies such a *master* or *governor* as hath a power of restraining and correcting children in a manner that suits only an infant state, or that of early childhood

k *Have put on Christ.*] Mr. Locke here observes, that by their *putting on Christ* it is implied, "that to God, now looking on them, "there appears *nothing but Christ*. They are, as it were, covered "all over with him, as a man is with the clothes he has put on. "And hence in the next verse it is said, they *are all one in Christ* "*Jesus*, as if they were but that *one person*."

but endeavour, as one in Christ Jesus, to be one in affection and friendship to each other; and let those who seem to have the greatest advantages condescend to them that seem most their inferiors. SECT. 6.

Giving up all expectations of life from any law, since that of Moses could not give it, let us look for glory, honour, and immortality by the gospel, and be very thankful for the knowledge we have of the Mediator of a better covenant than that in which Moses was appointed to mediate. And as the law was given not to disannul the covenant of promise, but with a view to be subservient to it, and to point out Christ, let us apply to him for righteousness and life; and in him, as that one Seed of Abraham in whom all the families, all the nations, of believers, were to be blessed, let us centre our hopes, and be very solicitous that we by faith may be united to him, and so may have a claim to all the privileges of the promise under him. GAL. III. 17 16

Thus let us continue to make use of the law, not as the foundation of our hope towards God, but as our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, by the discovery it has given of our need of him; and being sensible that it hath shut up all under sin, from which we cannot be delivered but by the faith the gospel hath revealed, may we be led to seek the benefit of the promise, that being the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we may be heirs of eternal life and blessedness. 24 22, 23

SECTION VII.

The apostle illustrates the superior excellency and freedom of the state into which believers as the sons of God are brought by the gospel, above the state which they were in before under the law, when they were only as minors under a rigorous tutor: and at the same time he reproves the Galatians, that they were no more resolute in adhering to that better dispensation, the first tidings of which they had received from him with so much affection. Gal. iv. 1—20.

GAL. iv. 1.

NOW I say, *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son;

GAL. iv. 1.

I OBSERVED to you, my friends, a little before, that while we were under the law, we were as in a state of minority: (chap. iii. 24, 25.) *Now*, for the further illustration of that thought, by what is known to be the usual method of dealing with children, *I say*, [*that*] *so long as the heir* of the most plentiful estate *is a child* in his nonage, *he*, with respect to the possession and free use of it, and to the right of managing it in his own person, *differeth nothing from a servant* or bondman, *though he be* in title and by right of inheritance *lord of all: But* during his minority he *is under* the authority and restraint of *governors and guardians*, to whose tutorage and management he is committed *till the time appointed by the father*, when he shall be deemed of age and be at liberty to manage his affairs himself. *So likewise we*, who having been Jews before have now embraced the faith of the gospel, *when we were* but as *children* in minority, though we had the promise and hope of the Messiah, *were* held *in bondage under* the discipline of the law; in which we were employed in a way suited to the imperfect circumstances of an infant-state, about *worldly elements*,[a] or about those inferior things which are but like the letters of the alphabet when compared with that sublime sense which they may be the means of teaching, when their power is duly understood, and the use of them become familiar to the mind: *But when the fulness of the time* which had been marked out by the prophets for the accomplishment of this great event *was come*, and we were arrived at the age appointed by our Father for entering upon our adult state, *God sent forth his* own *Son* to give us the inheritance of the promise he had made of pardon and salvation, and bring us to a state of liberty and happiness. For to this end it was that the Messiah came; and that he might effect this grand design, he was pleased indeed to appear in a most humble form, taking upon him mortal flesh, *made* of the substance *of a woman*, according to the great original promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) and was thus *made under the* discipline of the Mosaic *law* in all its rigour; *That* so by his submitting, not only to the precepts of the law, but likewise to the penalty and curse of it, *he might redeem them who were under* the yoke and curse of *the law*, and bring us into an happy liberty, both from the sentence of it, and from any future obligation to obey the cerēmonial part of it; *that*, instead of that servile spirit which the law breathed, *we might* all, as believers in Christ, *receive the adoption of sons*, and see and know the happy privilege to which we are advanced in consequence of it. For unto all who are partakers of it, it is attended with the most joyful and beneficial effects, *and because ye are* thus admitted by the gospel to the full character and dignity of his *sons*, *God hath* graciously *sent forth* an abundant effusion of *the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, O ye believing Galatians, as well as into the hearts of the Jewish converts, *crying*, *Abba, Father*;[b] giving us all, both Jews and Gentiles, in our different languages, an equal freedom in addressing ourselves to him with the overflowings of filial confidence and love.

So that now, O christian, whatever be thy rank or station, or whether thou be Jew or Gentile, *thou art no longer* to look upon thyself as *a servant* or bondman, or as standing SECT. 7. GAL. IV. 2 3 4 5 6 7

a *Worldly elements.*] The Jewish rituals might be so called, not only on account of the relation which they had to *worldly things*, by which they were adapted to the low conceptions of children, who are most affected with sensible objects, and have no taste for spiritual and heavenly things; but also because the same kind of things had before obtained in the world, and were in use among the heathens, though under the Mosaic law they were directed to a better object and end.—Some would consider it as referring to the unfitness of the Israelites, in the infancy of their commonwealth, for receiving a more rational and sublime plan of religion, having been used in Egypt to so many pompous ceremonies.

b *Crying, Abba, Father.*] The learned Mr. Selden (*De Succ. in Bona Def. cap.* iv.) hath brought a very pertinent quotation from the Babylonian *Gemara*, to prove that it was not allowed to *slaves* to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the *master* of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *Imma*, or *mother*, when speaking to the *mistress* of it.

SECT. 7. GAL. IV.

on a level with such an one in point of present enjoyment; *but*, on the contrary, as admitted to the liberty and freedom of *a son* at age: *and if* thou art indeed *a son* in such circumstances, *then* it follows by an happy consequence that thou art *an heir* of all the promises *of God through Christ*, and hast a claim to God himself, as to thy Father and thy Portion.

and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

8 But if this was the case with the Jewish converts, that they were in a state of servitude while they continued under the law, the bondage of the Gentiles in their unregenerate state must have been greatly worse; and it is still more absurd and unreasonable as to you Gentile converts, that when you have been called into a glorious liberty by the gospel, you should not entertain such liberal sentiments as are suited to it, but should be willing to submit to another servitude: *for then indeed, when ye knew not* the only true *God* and the way of being accepted with him, *ye were in bondage to those* stupid idols *which by nature are no gods*;[c] and greatly were your rational natures debased by so ignoble and
9 absurd a service. *But now, after that ye have known* the mind and will of *God, or rather are* so happy as to be *known of God*, and he has shown his favour to you, and brought you to the knowledge of himself by the instruction of his word and by the influence of his Spirit, *how turn ye again* into another kind of servitude *to the weak and poor elements* of the Mosaic ceremonies,[d] which are so far beneath that glorious and happy state into which ye are called? Elements *to which ye* unaccountably *desire again to be in bondage anew*,[e] changing indeed the form and object of your ceremonies, but retaining
10 many of the same low, perplexing, and unprofitable observances. For as under heathenism you had your frequent feasts in honour of imaginary deities, so now *ye observe* the Jewish solemnities with as scrupulous an exactness; even your sabbath-*days, and* the beginning of your *months* or new moons, *and* your *times* of grand festivals, *and* your
11 sabbatical *years*, and those of jubilee. Indeed, my brethren, when I think of these things, *I am afraid of you, lest* it should be found that *I have bestowed upon you* so much affectionate *labour in vain*,[f] while, after all the pains that I have taken to instruct you in the faith and liberty of the gospel, you appear to act as if you had forgotten what I taught you, and would be seeking justification from the law.

8 Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Give me leave, *brethren*, while *I* am thus expostulating with you and reproving you, most earnestly to *beseech you* with all tenderness, that ye *be as I* [*am*;] that ye maintain the same affectionate regard for me as I bear towards you; and that ye candidly receive those sentiments which I, to whose authority in the church ye can be no strangers, have been inculcating upon you. And this I may the rather expect, from what I have experienced in myself; *for* it is well known there was a time when *I* [*was*] *as ye* [*are*,] as much bigoted to the Mosaic rituals and Pharisaic traditions as any of you all can be:[g] but God hath now taught me better; and that your hearts may also feel the power of his grace, and every prejudice may be subdued and rooted out, I am solicitous that the purity of that truth which I have learnt in so extraordinary a manner, and which I have faithfully preached among you, may continue with you. Remember too, that I am Paul your apostle and your friend, for whom you have formerly expressed the highest affection; and as, whatever instability you may have shown as to some important doctrines which I taught you, *ye have not* personally *injured me at all*, I can have no ill-will to you, nor any inclination to find fault with you on my own account.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*; ye have not injured me at all.

13 *But* whatever change may be in you, I still retain the same affectionate regard I manifested for you at my first coming to you, when I was treated by you with the greatest respect, and you esteemed yourselves happy under my ministry, notwithstanding all the disadvantages that attended it: for *ye* well *know that I preached the gospel among you at first*, when ye were entire strangers to the happy contents of it, *in the infirmity of the flesh*, and indeed with a great mixture of weakness in my manner of expressing myself; which was the consequence of that disorder in the whole system of my nerves, that was occasioned by the revelations I had the honour to receive some time before I came among
14 you: *And* yet with respect to this *my temptation that was* seated *in my flesh*,[h] (for a

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first:

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye

c *Ye were in bondage to those which by nature are no gods.*] It is evident here, that though these christians had before their conversion been idolatrous Gentiles, the judaizing teachers were desirous of subjecting them to the Mosaic ceremonies: from whence it appears how much those learned writers are mistaken who think the Jews only imposed these ceremonies on those who were already, as they affect to call them, *Proselytes of the gate*, or worshippers of the true God; and how vain is the attempt to prove from hence, that the injunction of abstaining from blood is to be considered as peculiar to them.

d *Weak and poor elements.*] The ceremonies of the law were *weak*, as they had no sufficient power to cleanse the soul from sin, and justify the sinner in the sight of God; and *poor*, as they could not confer the spiritual riches of the gospel, pardon and peace, and the assurance of enjoying life and happiness. Besides which it is to be remembered, that those who were most zealous for imposing the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies on the Gentile converts, were of the sect of the Pharisees, (Acts xv. 5.) who therefore would not fail to impose a great many additional observances, taught only by the tradition of the elders; which may sufficiently account for the low terms which the apostle uses upon this occasion. Compare Rom. viii. 3; and Heb. vii. 18.

e *Ye desire again to be in bondage anew.*] It is certain they could not be said *to be in bondage* to the Jewish ceremonies *anew* who had never been acquainted with them; but it was *a bondage* in some measure *of the same kind*; and that is all that can be intended here.—I cannot think ανωθεν should be rendered, *from above*; as if the meaning were, they had received such notice or demands from Jerusalem.

f *I am afraid of you, &c.*] Some have observed there was the greater reason for this apprehension, as the fixing the time of the Jewish feasts depended upon the grand sanhedrim; so that their observing them would bring them into such an intercourse with and dependence upon that court as might be greatly to the hazard of their christianity.

g *I* [*was*] *as ye* [*are*,] &c.] The words εγω ως υμεις are ambiguous, and may either signify, *I was*, or *I am, as ye are*. Our translation takes them in the latter sense; and then it must express *his unanimity* with them, which he urges as an argument for *their unanimity* with him and affection to him. And as this suits the connexion with the latter part of the verse, I have expressed that sense in the paraphrase; though the former seems preferable, as more weighty, copious, and striking, and indeed I think more natural too; for it is certain many of them were much prejudiced against him, (chap. i. 6; iv. 16.) while he was most tenderly affected towards them.

h *My temptation that was in my flesh.*] What the apostle here

despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

temptation indeed it was, and sometimes threw me into greater anxiety than I ought to have occasioned,) I had however the consolation to see that *you did not despise* it, *or reject* [*me*] *with scorn* on account of it; *but*, on the contrary, struck with the importance of my message and those evident proofs of a divine co-operation that attended it, ye *received me as* if I had been *an angel of God* come down from heaven to you, [*yea,*] with *as* much affection and submission as it can be supposed you would have shown to our Divine Master *Christ Jesus* himself, if, instead of sending me as his messenger and ambassador, he had visited you in person. *What was then your felicity,*[i] and how great was the sense you had of your happiness, upon your first receiving the glad tidings of the gospel from me, when such a change was made in your state, and your hearts were under the impulse of such holy affections, as that you could not but congratulate yourselves and me upon it? You cannot surely have forgot it; *for I bear you witness, that if* [*it had been*] *possible* you could have done it, and I could have received any benefit by it, *you would* even *have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me,* as a convincing proof of your affection for me. And why should there now be such a change in your disposition towards me? *Am I therefore become your enemy,* or have you any reason to account me such, unless it be *because I tell you the truth,* and bear a faithful testimony to the uncorrupted gospel, which I desire to maintain among you in all the purity in which I planted it.

14 15 16

15 Where is then the blessedness you spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

I do not indeed impute this alienation of affection wholly to yourselves; for I know that a great many dishonest artifices have been used to prejudice your minds against me, and there are those among you who would endeavour to persuade you that *they zealously affect you,* and have an extraordinary concern for your welfare, [*but*] are not upright and sincere, and what they aim at is *not well,* as they are seeking to subvert the truth, and to seduce and draw you off to their own sentiments; *yea, they would* quite exclude and *shut us out* from any share in your regards,[k] *that ye may zealously affect* and be attached to *them,* and, having engrossed you to themselves, they may thus have an opportunity of promoting their own secular views at your expense. *But* it is fit you should remember that [*it is*] *good* for you *to be zealously affected always in that which is good*:[l] for as the beauty and the excellence of zeal is to be estimated, not by the degree of it considered in itself, but by the object to which it is directed; so too the warmth of your affection towards an object truly worthy of it should be at all times equally maintained; *and* the same fervent zeal which you have formerly expressed, ought to be manifested by you, *not only when I am present with you,* but in my absence too, if you really think me to deserve your regards, and have indeed received the truth in the love of it.

17 18

17 They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

What shall I say to you, *my* dear *little children, of whom* I hoped I had begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel? (1 Cor. iv. 15.) I am in great anxiety of heart concerning you, and am so earnestly solicitous you may be found to have received the grace of God in truth, that I declare, with all the undissembled tenderness of a most affectionate parent, *I travail* as it were *in birth again,* and am in pangs about you, *till Christ be* fully *formed in you,* and I have the happiness to see clear evidences of the prevalence of true christianity in all its branches in you, by which it may appear you are renewed after the image of Christ, and are really brought to a life of faith in him. But since I find you have lost so much by my absence, and have unhappily been set upon by those who have taken the opportunity of it to practise upon you, *I could* heartily *wish to be present with you* even *now, and* to see cause *to change my voice* towards you, so as to speak to you in terms of greater confidence, assurance, and complacency than I now can; *for* indeed *I am in* great *doubt* and in much perplexity *about you;* and though I do not absolutely despair of your recovery and establishment, yet I am not without very discouraging apprehensions lest, after all the pains that I have taken with you, the good effects of my labours among you should in a great measure be lost.

19 20

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice: for I stand in doubt of you.

refers to must have been so well known to the Galatians, that it was needless he should give a particular description of it in his writing to them.—Dr. Hammond and others explain it of the persecutions which he suffered for preaching the gospel; but these could be no cause why the Galatians should despise him, and were so far from making him contemptible, that they must rather be an inducement to their receiving him with more respect, when he could bear such sufferings in vindication of the doctrine he delivered.—The apostle speaks of it as an *infirmity* and *temptation* seated *in his flesh,* which by the effect it had upon him might render both his person and his speech obnoxious to contempt, and have a tendency to make him despicable in the eyes of others; agreeable to which he elsewhere mentions it as objected to him, that *his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible,* (2 Cor. x. 10.) and, on the whole, there seems to be so manifest a resemblance between his representing *this temptation as in his flesh,* and what he says of *the thorn in the flesh,* that was given to *humble him* after *the abundance of his revelations,* (2 Cor. xii. 7.) that I can see no room to scruple why we may not take it for an effect of that memorable circumstance which must have happened some time before his preaching first to the Galatians, and was attended with such consequences as might still be discernible in him, since it was *not removed* on his desire to be delivered from it. See note f, on 2 Cor. xii. 7. p. 757.

i *What was then your felicity?*] Some think that St. Paul here refers to the high things which they spake of *himself,* and to their *blessing him* for what he taught them; and Mr. Locke would have it, that the sense of this clause must be, "What benedictions did "you then pour out upon me?" But howsoever this would be the consequence of their *accounting themselves happy* in having him for their apostle, and being instructed in the gospel by him, that upon this they would be *heaping blessings on him* in testimony of the high regard which they had for him; it does not suit so well with the original, which rather is expressive of the sense [they had of *their own happiness* in being enlightened by him in the knowledge of the gospel; for such appears to be the proper meaning of the words μακαρισμος υμων. Compare Rom. iv. 6, 9.

k *They would shut us out.*] Though most copies read it, εκκλεισαι υμας, the sense appears more natural and easy if we read *us,* rather than *you;* and as there is no doubt but the apostle here refers to the endeavours used by their false teachers to alienate their affections from himself, it may induce us to prefer this reading, which has the countenance of some copies, and upon this account is put by our translators in the margin.

l *To be zealously affected always in that which is good.*] Εν καλω either may refer to a *good person* or a *good thing,* and may be understood of their continuing *zealous* in their affection, either to *himself,* or to *the truth* that he had preached. But as the apostle had been speaking of himself in the foregoing verses, he likewise seems to speak still in view the warmth of their affection to him when he was present with them; though he expresses it in a graceful way, with such a latitude as may include their zeal for his doctrine, as well as for his person; and I have chosen therefore not to limit it to either in the translation.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 7. GAL. IV. As the church in general was in its minority till the full revelation of the gospel came, so is every true member of it a minor while he continues in this world, and is in many instances inferior to some who have no part in the inheritance; but the time will come when, as an heir who is deemed of age, he shall be admitted into full possession, and it will amply and immediately repay all the abasements and mortifications of that state in which the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father hath at present placed us.

Ver. 4, 5 The grand foundation of this hope is that infinite love which we can never sufficiently acknowledge and admire, even the love of God our Father, in sending forth his Son at the appointed time, made of a woman, and made under the law, subject at once both to its precepts and its penalty, to redeem us when we were under its condemning sentence, and to introduce us to all the privileges of that divine adoption which we receive from him. May each of us, in consequence of it, receive more and more of that spirit of adoption whereby we may be enabled to raise our souls to God, with all the holy overflowings of genuine filial affection, while we daily cry, Abba, Father!

6 7 " Send forth, O God, this Spirit of thy Son in our hearts, whatever worldly benefits and delights thou mayst deny " us; that we may thus rejoice in the assurance that we are heirs of God through Christ, and may be able to " glory in this, that the Lord is our inheritance."

9 If we thus know God, being delivered from the bondage of corruption, and from those idolatrous regards to the creature to which our hearts are naturally so inclined, let us acknowledge that it is because we rather have been known of him, and being apprehended by his grace, he hath received us into the number of his sons, and given us the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us act suitably to such a character, and be solicitous to maintain the purity of that religion by which we are brought to such exalted dignities and hopes. And let our hearts be

14 always open to receive the truth in the love of it; not despising the infirmities of those that preach the gospel to us in faithfulness, nor allowing ourselves at any time to look upon them as our enemies, for the plainness with which

16 they may tell us the truth; which is sometimes the case with regard to those who might once have been ready, in

15 the forwardness of their zeal and affection, almost to have plucked out their own eyes for ministers whom they afterwards slight and forsake.

18 Let us labour after a steadiness in our temper and conduct, and take heed that our zeal be so guided as that it may centre upon objects truly good, and may continue to act in proportion to their excellency, always suspecting those

17 principles and those persons who would alienate our hearts from any of the faithful servants of Christ, because they do not agree with our sentiments about the circumstantials of religion.

19, 20 Such as the apostle Paul expresses here with so much tenderness will be the desires of every faithful minister for the spiritual children which God hath given him; and where he sees reason to stand in doubt of any of whom he

11 had once good hopes through grace, lest perhaps he should have bestowed upon them labour in vain, it will give him a deep and a tender distress, and he will, as it were, travail in birth again till Christ be formed in them. His very heart will be in pain for this: and what can be a greater or more worthy object of desire? Oh that it might appear that Christ is formed in the very souls of all that are called by his name! So would ministers have a firm foundation of joy in them, and they of hope towards God for that eternal happiness which can only be built upon Christ; upon Christ formed in them, as the only well-grounded hope of glory. (Col. i. 27.)

SECTION VIII.

The apostle illustrates the subject of his foregoing discourse by an allegory borrowed from what is written of Sarah and Hagar, and their respective seed. Gal. iv. 21, *to the end;* v. 1.

GAL. iv. 21.

SECT. 8. GAL. IV. I HAVE been saying a great deal to take you off from any farther thoughts of becoming subject to the Mosaic law: but if you still have any inclination to it, *tell me* now, *ye who are desirous of being under the law, do ye not hear* and call to mind what is said in the book of *the law* itself, which is so often read in your assemblies? There is a passage even in the first book of that sacred volume which is very capable of being improved to your

22 instruction, if you rightly enter into it. *For it is written* there, (Gen. xvi. 15; and xxi. 2, 3.) *that Abraham*, the great patriarch, in a descent from whom so many are ready to glory, *had two sons*, who, though equally related to him, were by no means equal with regard to the blessings which they were to inherit: *the one* of these he had *by* Hagar *a bondwoman, and the other by* Sarah *a free woman*, whose name signifies a Lady or

23 Princess, and so may be understood as importing not only liberty but authority. *But* there was a great difference between them; for *he* [*who was born*] *of* Hagar *the bondwoman*, that is, Ishmael, *was born* only *according to the flesh*, and produced in the common order of nature, without any particular promise of God, or any unusual interposition of his power and providence; *whereas he* [*who was born*] *of* Sarah, *the free woman*, that is, Isaac, [*was born*] *by virtue of the promise*, when his parents were in the course of nature absolutely incapable of producing a child; and upon him the peculiar blessings of the divine promise were entailed.

24 Now I would lead you to an evangelical improvement of this remarkable and mystical fact, *which* contains many concurrent circumstances so nearly resembling what we now observe with regard to the Jewish and christian religion, and the professors of both, that I cannot but propose them to you as *things* that *may be* profitably *allegorized*. *For these* two persons (Hagar and Sarah) *are*, that is, may well be, considered as representing *the two* celebrated *covenants*, or the two dispensations of the law and gospel, the tenor of which is so different; *the one* that was delivered *from Mount Sinai* is that *which bringeth forth her children to bondage, which is Hagar*, whose servile disposition and state

GAL. iv. 21. TELL me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.

23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman *was* by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

may be considered as an emblem of that less ingenuous dispensation. *This Hagar, I say*, whose name signifies a Rock, *is a* representation of those who are under the law given from *mount Sinai in Arabia*,[a] in the deserts of which the Hagarenes who descended from Ishmael were settled; *and* it *answers* in the allegory *to the present* state of the earthly *Jerusalem, which with her children is in* a state of *bondage*, as being in subjection to so many ritual observances, and under a sentence of wrath on the commission of the least wilful offence, which hath the greatest tendency to produce a mean and disingenuous fear. 25

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children:

But the Jerusalem above, or that celestial society to which all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are come, and are united under the new and better dispensation of the gospel-covenant, *is the free woman*, answering to Sarah in the superior character and state to *which* it introduces us, and *is* indeed *the mother of us all*;[b] to whom we as christians do all belong, and by virtue of our relation to whom we not only are at present in a more liberal and happy condition, but become heirs, as Isaac was, of the promises which God was pleased to make to our father Abraham. 26

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

And there is a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which may naturally suggest such a thought: *for it is written* there,[c] with reference to the greater freedom and enlargement of the church in the times of the Messiah, (Isa. liv. 1.) "*Rejoice*, and be exceeding "glad, [*thou*] *barren, who* for a long time *didst not bear; break forth* into singing, *and* "*cry* aloud for joy, *thou who didst not travail in birth: for* such is now thy happy "state, *that many more are the children of the desolate than of her who had an* "*husband*." The children of the christian church, the spiritual Seed of the true Sarah, shall (as the prophet there suggests) be abundantly more numerous than those of the Jewish ever were; and what we see at present of its enlargement and prosperity may encourage our faith in the promises relating to its yet more universal spread and brighter glory in the latter day. 27

27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

Now, to apply what I have been saying to ourselves: *we, brethren, like Isaac, are the children* of Abraham, not according to the flesh, but as born of the Spirit in virtue *of the promise*; and so are heirs of the blessings of the covenant, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, in consequence of our believing in Christ, and being united to him, as the Seed in which it was declared that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. *But* indeed the parallel holds farther still, in this respect; that *as then he who was born after the flesh*, that is, Ishmael, in whose production there was nothing beyond the common course of nature, mocked and derided, and so *persecuted him* [*who was born*] *after the Spirit*, that is, Isaac, who was produced as the spiritual seed by the special energy of God's miraculous power, *even so* [*it is*] *now*; the carnal Jews, who are the seed of Abraham after the flesh, abuse and persecute us christians, who are Abraham's seed after the Spirit. *But what saith the scripture* in regard to this? The oracle is correspondent to the case before us; for it there follows, (Gen. xxi. 10.) "*Cast out the bondwoman and her* insolent "*son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with* Isaac, *the son of the free* "*woman*;" which, howsoever grievous it might seem to Abraham, when it was said by Sarah, yet God himself confirmed the sentence, and directed that it should be done: and in like manner also shall the rebellious Jews be treated, who, notwithstanding their boasted descent from Abraham, shall be cast out of the church and family of God, and shall be visibly expelled and (as it were) turned out of doors by him, as the mocking Ishmael was, for insulting those whom God hath chosen for his covenant-children, and shall not be permitted to be heirs of the promise with them. 28 29 30

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

30 Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

So then, upon the whole, my *brethren, we* that believe in Christ *are not children of the bondwoman*, under subjection to the servile dispensation of the law; *but* we are children *of the free woman*, and have the privilege of being called into a state of liberty 31

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

a *This Hagar, I say*, &c.] The particle γαρ cannot here have its *illative* force, since it would be very injurious to the apostle to suppose he meant to argue thus; *Mount Sinai is Hagar—for this Hagar is mount Sinai*. It must therefore here signify the same with *I say*, and only introduce the repetition of a thought which the apostle was desirous to inculcate; as it often does elsewhere. Compare Rom. iii. 2; and xv. 27.

b *Jerusalem above is the free woman, which is the mother of us all*.] Some have thought the apostle here suggests an argument to prove the *liberty* of the *christian church* from the *great number* of its *converts*, which would have rendered the observation of many of the Mosaic precepts impossible: but that intimation, if intended, must have been very obscure. It is more reasonable to conclude that he refers to the *free genius* of christianity, which, when compared with Judaism, is extremely obvious, and made it evidently fit, in the illustration of this allegory, to consider *the free woman*, that is, Sarah, as representing the *church* under this nobler form.

c *For it is written*.] Mr. Pierce has a learned and ingenious dissertation (at the end of his *Paraphrase on the Philippians*) to prove that the apostle here asserts that Isaiah, in the passage he quotes from his prophecy, points out the allegorical correspondence between the christian church and Sarah, on which he had been insisting in this section: and accordingly this critic renders those words in ver. 24. ατινα εστιν αλληγορουμενα, *which things are allegorized*, that is, are actually turned to this sense by the prophet, who (as he says) calls out in this livth chapter to some *woman* celebrated for *having children* after long *barrenness*, to show that something *like this* should happen after the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, which had been foretold in the liiid. And having observed that no person mentioned in the Old Testament can so properly be addressed in such language as Sarah, who in respect of *children* might be called *desolate*, whereas Hagar was *the married wife* and *mother*, he thinks it reasonable to conclude from hence that she was referred to by Isaiah, as St. Paul, according to him, asserts in this text.—But not to insist on the impropriety of giving Hagar, who was only a *slave* and a *concubine*, the character and title of *the married wife*, in opposition to Sarah, the principal *wife* and undoubted *mistress* of the family, I think the context in Isaiah plainly shows that the prophet refers to the *future conversion* of the Jews, and the increase and prosperity of that happy nation after its long rejection, as far exceeding what it had known before in its most favoured state. (Isa. liv. 6. *et seq*.) And therefore I would chuse to explain this passage in St. Paul as an *allusion*, rather than an *argument*: which frees it from many objections and embarrassments to which it would otherwise have appeared liable.—If any should urge that *such glosses* are of little importance, it may be sufficient to reply, that they were much in the Jewish taste, and that we may assure ourselves that the apostles were preserved from any thing in them which was not perfectly agreeable to *the mind of the Spirit*.—On the whole, I entirely agree with Mr. Chandler, that this part of the Epistle was not intended to *prove* christianity, but to *illustrate* the different genius of *that* and Judaism, and to show that not all the *carnal* descendants of Abraham, but the *spiritual* offspring only, were *heirs*, even according to the principles which the Jews themselves readily admitted. See Chandler, *Of Miracles*, p. 345, 346. And Dr. Sykes's interpretation agrees with this. Compare Sykes, *On the Truth of Christianity*, p. 198, 199.

SECT. 8. GAL. V. under the spiritual covenant of the gospel. See to it, *therefore*, that you strenuously maintain the privilege and freedom you are called to, and, without yielding in the least to those who are endeavouring to seduce you to a subjection to the law, let me exhort you to
1 *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free:*[d] contend earnestly for the purity and honour of that religion which he hath established, *and be not* persuaded to be *entangled again with the yoke of bondage;* of which you appear to be in danger, from what I hear of your circumstances, and am informed of the temper of some among you.

Gal. v. 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

IMPROVEMENT.

GAL. IV. 21 *et seq.* LET us not allow ourselves to cavil at a passage like this that we have now been reading, but submit to the authority of this divinely-inspired interpreter, who we are sure was enabled to explain and improve scripture in such a manner, as he by whose Spirit it was dictated knew to be most agreeable to its spiritual design.

31 Let us bless God that we are children of the free woman; that we are so happy as to be called to so liberal and ingenuous a dispensation, and are not fettered with that yoke of bondage, or doomed to those servile terrors, which would have been so grievous, had we been left to them unsupported by the grace of the gospel, and which would so much have abated our comforts, had they been incorporated with the christian dispensation.

27 Well may we rejoice to hear in prophecy of the glorious increase here promised to the church: let us be thankful that it hath in part been accomplished; and let it invigorate our prayers for the hastening that happy time when the desolate shall enlarge the place of her tents, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations; when she shall lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes; and though long afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, she shall see her pavement of fair colours, and her foundations of sapphires; her windows shall be made of agates, and her gates of carbuncles. (Isa. liv. 1, 2, 11, 12.)

29 In the mean time, let us guard against the disingenuous temper of the son of the bondwoman, against every thing that may look like persecuting our brethren. It is much better, if such be the will of God, that we should suffer ill usage from them; staying our souls upon the promises of God, which shall all be assuredly accomplished in their season. Yet may all this meekness and gentleness be exercised in full consistency with that generous care to stand
V. 1 fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, which we owe to ourselves, our brethren, and our children; and indeed owe to the honour of our common christianity, and to the regard we should express to him who hath broken the yoke from our shoulders; who cannot be pleased to see us voluntarily entangling ourselves with it anew, or meanly lying down under the oppressive hands of those who, in the abuse of his sacred name, would presume again to bind it upon us.

SECTION IX.

The apostle urges them more resolutely to retain the doctrine of justification by divine grace; and renews his caution against the efforts of those seducing teachers who had done so much to alienate their minds from it. Gal. v. 2—15.

GAL. v. 2.

SECT. 9. GAL. V. I HAVE exhorted you, as children of the promise, and born not of the bondwoman but the free, to maintain your christian liberty, and guard against the encroachments of those who would break in upon it. And I now plainly tell you, that I particularly mean those judaizing teachers with whom the church is at present so much infested; in reference to
2 whose tenets, *behold, I Paul*, whatever may have falsely been suggested of my favouring their sentiments, and sometimes preaching circumcision, expressly *say unto you, That if ye*, who are by birth and education Gentiles, submit to *be circumcised*, with a dependence on the observation of those Jewish rites to which ye are thereby obliged for your justification before God,[a] *Christ shall profit you nothing*, and all that he hath done and suffered will be of no advantage to you: for if the whole confidence of the soul do not rest upon him for salvation, he will reject those divided regards which are offered to him, and interpret them as an affront rather than an acceptable homage.

GAL. v. 2 BEHOLD, I Paul say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 *And I* repeat it as a point of the highest importance, which is agreeable to what I have always preached and do now *testify again to every* particular *man* among you *who is circumcised*, in the view I have just been mentioning, with a dependence on that rite for justification, *that he is* thereby become *a debtor to do the whole law:* for as circumcision binds a man fully to observe all the other rituals of the Mosaic dispensation, so will the tenet which I now oppose leave you under the rigour of that covenant which required perfect and sinless obedience, and left every wilful transgressor under a curse, from which
4 by the law he could never be delivered. It is therefore evident that *Christ is become of none effect to* such of *you*, but must have appeared and died in vain as to any benefit you would have by him, *whosoever of you are* seeking to be *justified by* the works of *the law;* yea, by this means, whatever your profession may have been of a regard to Christ, *ye are* indeed *fallen from* the *grace* of the gospel, and have in effect renounced your expec-
5 tations from it. *For we* who are true christians, and have been savingly enlightened in

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we, through the

[d] *Therefore stand fast in the liberty, &c.*] This exhortation is so evidently grounded on what the apostle had been saying just before, that it seems best to be connected with it, and I have therefore placed it at the end of this section. It is made the close of the fourth chapter in three of Stephens' copies; which seems to be more proper than to make it, as we generally do, the beginning of another chapter.

[a] *If ye be circumcised*, with a dependence on the observation, &c.] Common sense plainly requires to take the assertion with such limits; which is also necessary to reconcile it with the hopes of all Jewish believers, and with the conduct of St. Paul himself in circumcising Timothy. (Acts xvi. 3.) And this accounts for the indifference with which he elsewhere speaks of circumcision as availing nothing. See chap. v. 6; vi. 15; and 1 Cor. vii. 12.

Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

the knowledge of the truth, do, *through* the influences of *the Spirit*, whose gifts and graces are so glorious a seal of the gospel, *wait for the hope of righteousness* and life, not on account of any claim or title we have to it by our obedience to the law, but *by* a sincere and operative *faith*, casting our souls on Christ as condemned creatures who have no hope in themselves, and trusting in the grace of God for justification through the redemption he has wrought. And herein we act according to the true tenor of the gospel; *for in* the dispensation of grace by *Christ Jesus* to those who would obtain salvation by him, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, and no man will either be saved or condemned for being or not being circumcised; *but* our interest in the blessings of the gospel depends upon a sincere *faith* in Christ, *which operates by* an unfeigned *love* to God and man,[b] and so engages us, from a principle of holy gratitude, to yield a sincere obedience to all the known will of God, renouncing any dependence on that obedience, how complete soever it may seem, as the meritorious cause of our acceptance with him. SECT. 9. GAL. V. 6

6 For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

This is true, genuine christianity, and you once received it as such, and appeared to be under the influence of it: in regard to which I may say, *Ye did* once *run well* at your first setting out in the christian race, and seemed to exert yourselves in a very happy manner; *who* then of late *has hindered you*[c] *from obeying the truth*, with that readiness and perseverance which might reasonably have been expected from so hopeful a beginning, and has turned you out of the way in which you were making so fair a progress? Of *this* I am sure, that the *persuasion* you now seem to have entertained of the necessity of mixing Judaism with christianity, and seeking justification, in part at least, by Mosaical observances, [*comes*] *not from him that called you* into the profession of the gospel;[d] nor did I teach you any such lesson when I was made the happy instrument of bringing you to the christian faith, but have largely and earnestly inculcated the contrary. 7

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

There were, indeed, some secret workings of this pernicious principle which I now oppose that early became visible among you; and I find they have spread in such a manner as to show that *a little leaven*, if it be suffered to continue, operates unseen till it diffuses itself on every side, and *leaveneth the whole mass*. But having laid the matter thus before you, and warned you of the danger of this leaven with that fidelity and zeal which love to our souls and a regard to the honour of Christ requires, *I have* this *confidence in you through* the grace of *the Lord* Jesus, on whom I humbly depend for the influences of his Spirit, and to whose blessing I commit all my endeavours, *that ye will be no otherwise minded*, and entertain no other sentiments as to what is necessary to your justification, than ye have been taught by me: *but he that troubleth you*, and would pervert your minds from the purity of the faith, *shall* certainly *bear* [*his*] *judgment* of deserved censure here, and, if he persist in his evil, of weighty condemnation hereafter, *whosoever he be*;[e] God will judge him at last for a conduct like this, and in the mean time he has reason to apprehend my animadverting upon him with that apostolical authority which some of my adversaries have found to their cost they were unable to resist. (Compare Acts xiii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. x. 6, 8; xiii. 10; and 1 Tim. i. 20.) 8 9 10

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear *his* judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

I know there are some who have insinuated as if I myself favoured the very principles elsewhere which I so much oppose among you; *but I* leave it to you, my *brethren*, when you consider the treatment I have met with from these zealots, to judge if the contrary do not evidently appear. For *if I yet preach* the necessity of *circumcision*, and insist upon submitting to it in order to salvation, *why do I still suffer* such grievous *persecution* as it is evident to the whole world I endure by the malice of the Jews, who are every where endeavouring to raise not only prejudices but tumults against me? *Then* surely, if it be true that I agree with them on this head, *the offence* taken at the doctrine *of* salvation by *the cross* of Christ *is ceased;* and in effect I give up that which I have been so long contending for, and they have as eagerly been struggling against. But I am so far from agreeing with them, that *I could wish they were even cut off* entirely from the communion of the christian church, and cast out of it as unworthy members, *who* thus unsettle your minds, and *disturb you*[f] by so many false suggestions and irregular methods as do indeed well deserve such a censure. 11 12

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

b *Faith which operates by love.*] There is some degree of ambiguity in the original expression, δι' αγαπης ενεργουμενη, which is capable of being differently rendered, and may signify either *which operates* and works *by love*, or *which is wrought*, inspired, and perfected *by love;* which latter sense some have preferred, and have taken occasion from hence to show how much *charity* tends to establish and perfect *faith*. But I prefer the more usual sense, which I think to be authorized by the use of the same word. Eph. iii. 20; and Col. i. 29.

c *Who has hindered you.*] It hath been observed that ενεκοψε is an Olympic expression answerable to ετρεχετε: and it properly signifies, *coming across the course* while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to *jostle*, and throw him out of the way.

d *From him that called you.*] This expression of *him that called* or *calleth you*, agrees with what he had used before, (chap. i. 6.) and in both places it would seem he means *himself*. See note f, on that passage, p. 768.

e *He that troubleth you shall bear* [*his*] *judgment, whosoever he be.*] Some think that the apostle here refers to *one particular man* who was more forward than the rest, and had been chiefly instrumental in corrupting them; but by his adding at the close, *whosoever he be*, he seems to intend it as a *general* declaration; which best agrees with what follows in ver. 12. and what he elsewhere says in this Epistle, where he speaks always of their *seducing teachers* in the *plural* number. (See chap. i. 7; iv. 17; vi. 12, 13.) And when he thus declares that *whosoever he be* that troubleth them, he *shall bear his judgment*, though some would understand this only of the *censure* which the *church* should pass upon him, or of the *punishment* he should suffer when St. Paul came to exert his *apostolical authority*, of which we have several instances elsewhere, (see note f, on 1 Cor. iv. 21. p. 668.) yet it is reasonable to extend it to the solemn *account* he should give to God, and to the *condemnation* he should certainly receive, if he persisted in the endeavours he was using to subvert the truth.

f *I could wish they were even cut off who disturb you.*] It by no means agrees with the gentle genius of christianity to suppose that the apostle (who understood it so well, and cultivated it so much) should mean by this to intimate that he wished them *dead*, or wished that any *bodily evil* were inflicted upon them by *human* violence. All arguments therefore which are drawn from this text in favour of *persecuting principles* must be very inconclusive. But when we consider the particular circumstances in which these seducing teachers opposed the apostle, it will appear that they very well deserved that *ecclesiastical censure* which, according to the paraphrase, he here wishes to be pronounced against them.

SECT. 9. GAL. V.

This might be a means of restoring to the church that peace which is so agreeable to the principles of our common religion and calling; *for* it is manifest, my *brethren*, *ye have been called* by the gospel *to liberty* and freedom from the bondage of the Mosaic ceremonies; *only* see to it, that ye [*abuse*] *not* this *liberty for an occasion* of unwarrantable indulgence *to* any irregular appetites of *the flesh*, as if we were set free from the observance of the moral precepts of the law; and remember that it is not only consistent with that liberty, *but* greatly subservient to it, that ye should look upon yourselves as bound *by* the exercise of the most cordial mutual *love* to *serve one another*. *For all the law* with which we christians have any concern, so far as it relates to our fellow-creatures, *is fulfilled in* the observation of *one word* or precept, [*even*] *in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, and treat him as in a change of circumstances thou wouldst reasonably expect and desire to be treated by him. *But if*, instead of cultivating these christian and humane sentiments, *ye* indulge a fierce and savage disposition, so as to *bite and devour one another*, it will be necessary to *take heed that ye be not destroyed by one another*, as wild beasts sometimes worry one another till both are slain: at least, it is certain that by these mutual contentions you take the readiest way to disgrace, and, so far as in you lies, to overthrow the religion to which you profess a regard.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

IMPROVEMENT.

How awful is the supposition which the apostle makes, even with regard to those who had distinguished themselves by so zealous a profession; to those before whose eyes Christ had been evidently set forth as crucified, (chap. iii. 1.) and who would once have been ready to have plucked out their own eyes for the minister that preached him to them, (chap. iv. 15.) that he should speak of it with regard to such as a possible case, that on Ver. 2 the whole Christ might profit them nothing! Let our souls dread the thought of being in the number of those to whom he shall be thus unprofitable.

How heavy will our account be, and how dearly shall we pay for the amusements of the sublimest knowledge or the most sanguine hopes we entertain, if this be the end of all! That we may none of us be so unhappy, let us 4 be very careful that we do not think of seeking justification by the law in such a manner as to fall from grace; 5 but as no right or title to it can be obtained but by an interest in Christ, let us through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness and life, by faith in him. May the blessed Spirit of God form and support in our minds 7 such an hope; which, if it be thus formed, will never make us ashamed. (Rom. v. 5.) Let us be therefore animated by it: and if at first we have run well, let us always consider the despatch we may have made already in our christian race, as an excitement to farther vigour rather than an encouragement to indolence and sloth.

6 Let the Spirit which these and so many other parts of the New Testament breathe, teach us to moderate our zeal about circumcision and uncircumcision, about the rituals and externals of religion, and to cultivate more and more that faith which operates by love, and therefore will express itself by keeping the commandments of God. 13 This will engage us, by the best and most generous principles, to serve one another in our truest interests, and 14 to fulfil that royal law which is comprehended in this one important word, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Surely we have not as yet attained to perfection in this excellent grace; Sure there is room for new attainments even in the best. But oh how lamentably deficient are the generality of christians! yea rather, how scandalously and how fatally hath the opposite principle prevailed! so that, instead of that mutual love of which 15 our gracious Redeemer was the great Teacher and Example, the contrary principle of hatred and malignity hath triumphed to such a degree as to turn the church into a camp of warriors, or rather (as it may be called) into a theatre of wild beasts, where they have been worrying one another almost to death, yea, in many instances biting and devouring one another, till they have actually been destroyed one by another. Let us take heed, after all the christian and the protestant interest hath suffered by these fatal divisions, that we do not catch the contagion, and bear our part in so common, yet so pernicious a mischief. It is a spreading evil, and a little of this leaven often 9 diffuses itself over the whole mass; but nothing is more manifest than that it is a persuasion which is so far from 8 coming of him that called us, that it is indeed the most direct violation of his distinguishing precept.

10 Let us remember that the time will come when he that troubleth the church, either in one way, by unscriptural impositions, to which the apostle here refers, or in another, by an unreasonable stiffness about things indifferent, 11 will certainly bear his judgment, whosoever he be. Let us therefore rather chuse to suffer persecution than to share in such guilt; and be continually praying for that divine wisdom which may teach us so to bear afflictions 13 as not to increase the offence of the cross, and to stand fast in our liberty as not to abuse it for an occasion to gratify those irregular passions, which, to whatever high original they may pretend, are indeed to be traced no higher than a carnal principle, and to be numbered among the works of the flesh.

SECTION X.

He exhorts the Galatians to a conversation suitable to the dispensation of grace which they had received, and warning them against the several vices of the flesh, recommends to them the habitual practice of the graces of the Spirit, and presses them in particular to purity, spirituality, and mutual love. Gal. v. 16. *to the end.*

GAL. v. 16.

SECT. 10. GAL. V.

I HAVE been cautioning you against that contentious temper which is so great a reproach to the professors of christianity, and tends so much to the detriment of our common faith. *But*, that I may effectually guard you against this and every other evil, I have a charge to give you, and in one word *I say*, *Walk in the Spirit*, and at all times endeavour to 16 conduct yourselves as under the influences of that blessed Agent, and in a way agreeable

GAL. v. 16.

THIS I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

to the new nature he hath given you, *and* then *ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh;* but notwithstanding the remainders of corruption in you, yet by his powerful suggestions, and by the gracious aids that you receive from him, you will be happily preserved from the predominancy of carnal and irregular appetites, so that the work of mortification, and all the exercises of true godliness, will daily become more and more easy and familiar to you.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

And this precaution is absolutely necessary in present circumstances, by reason of the continual contest that there is between the flesh and Spirit in the renewed soul: *for* while you are here in the body, *the flesh* is lusting on the one hand, and *hath desires contrary to* the motions and dictates of *the Spirit*,[a] or of that gracious principle which is communicated by the Holy Spirit in his regenerating operations on the heart; *and*, on the other hand, *the Spirit* [*hath desires*] *contrary to* the appetites and inclinations of *the flesh*, or of that principle of corruption which is introduced by sin, and the remains of which are ready to exert their influence in the regenerate: *and these* two principles *are* directly *opposite to each other* both in their nature and their tendency; *so that*, upon the whole, *ye do not the things that ye would*, and are indeed incapable of doing them without your overbearing, either the desires of animal nature, or the nobler dictates of an enlightened and sanctified Spirit. Now surely you may easily judge, since one of these must be opposed, and one only can be pleased and pursued, to which of them the preference is to be given. *But* for your encouragement to a wise and happy choice, you will, I hope, always remember, that *if ye be led by the Spirit* of God in the paths of evangelical holiness and obedience, and act according to that new and spiritual nature he has formed in you, in the prevailing bent and tenor of your lives, *ye are not* then *under* the condemning sentence of *the law*, but are in consequence of this entitled to every benefit and privilege of the gospel. 17

18 But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 18

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these:* Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

And a farther argument will arise from considering the different tendency of these principles, and the effects or fruits of which they are productive, on the one hand and the other. *Now*, as to the former part of the view, *the works of the flesh are* very obvious and *manifest*,[b] *which are* such as [*these:*] *Adultery*, a crime to be considered as in the first rank of enormities, as tending so directly to embitter conjugal life, and to introduce confusion and ruin into families; *fornication*, which, how light soever heathens may make of it, is in the sight of God a very grievous offence; as all *uncleanness* and immodesty of behaviour, and all *lasciviousness* in every kind and act of it, must also be, though fools who make a mock at sin mention these things in sport rather than with detestation. 19

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Idolatry likewise proceeds from this corrupt principle, as it inclines men to chuse some sensible object for their devotions, and often such an one as may patronize their most irregular passions. From hence is also *witchcraft*[c], whereby desperate wretches are led to attempt an express association with infernal spirits, in order to gratify that malignant disposition of mind which excites and arms them against those who are regarded by them with an evil eye: and to the same original are owing implacable and bitter *enmities*, outrageous *strifes* and quarrels, inordinate *transports* of ill-placed and ill-proportioned *zeal*, deep *resentments* treasured up in the mind, clamorous *contentions* vented with eagerness, and obstinately carried on, together with the keen *divisions of a party-spirit*,[d] among those who ought to be united in one interest and affection: yea, sometimes these ill principles proceed so far as to produce seditions in the state, and *heresies* also in religious communities,[e] by 20

a *The flesh hath desires contrary to the Spirit.*] As it is plain that by the *flesh*, which is the same with what the apostle elsewhere calls *the body of sin*, and *the old man*, (Rom. vi. 6.) we are to understand that *natural corruption* and depravity which is the ruling principle in a state of nature, and has so far infected all the faculties of man, that even the regenerate are troubled still with the remainders of it, and find it working in the motions of *indwelling sin* within them: so by *the Spirit*, which is here set in opposition to it, and is elsewhere expressed by *the new man* that is put on by such as are *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, (Eph. iv. 23, 24.) we are to understand that *supernatural principle of grace* which is imparted from above to the renewed soul, to overcome the passions of the carnal mind, to set us free from the dominion of our lusts, and to inspire us with a love to holiness; which divine and heavenly principle being communicated to us by *the Holy Spirit*, has frequently the title of *the Spirit* given to it, as it is plainly the effect and fruit of it; for *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* (John iii. 6.) And there is such a contrariety in these two principles, that they are continually opposing one another in their desires and tendency, so that (as the apostle adds) *ye do not the things that ye would,* (for so it is expressed in the original, and not, *ye cannot do*, &c.) ye do them not without doing violence to the opposite principle that would be drawing you another way; which is agreeable to what the apostle elsewhere says, (Rom. vii. 19.) *For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

b *The works of the flesh are manifest.*] As some of the fruits which are here specified seem to consist in errors of the *mind*, and others are the product of an evil disposition of *spirit*, it has been thought not easy to perceive with what propriety they are called *works of the flesh;* and Dr. Whitby offers several considerations to account for it. But if *the flesh* be taken (as it appears from hence it should be) for that *natural corruption* which in the note before is said to have infected all the faculties of man, and so extends to all the powers of the *mind*, as well as to the appetites of the *body*, there is no difficulty in ascribing each of the particulars here enumerated to *the flesh*, as it is evident they all proceed from *that corruption* by means of which *even the mind and conscience is defiled.* Tit. i. 15.

c *Witchcraft.*] I know some would render the word φαρμακεια, *poisoning;* but I think it is with justice Mr. Leigh has observed, that this is comprehended under the word, *murders;* nor is there any reason to believe *the flesh* so particularly inclined to this *one kind of murder*, as to give reason for specifying it rather than any other. It is certain that, on account of the drugs made use of in some supposed magical compositions, this word is often used to express those practices in which *combinations with invisible, malignant powers* were believed and intended, to which (whether they had or had not that real foundation which has generally been believed) it is well known the Gentiles, even in the most learned nations, were very much addicted; as Mr. Weston has shown at large in the 7th chapter of his late learned *Treatise on the Rejection of Christian Miracles.*

d *Divisions of a party-spirit.*] We render διχοστασιαι, *seditions;* but as that rather expresses a *state crime*, and the original word seems more general, I chuse to express it by a *periphrasis*, sufficiently distinguishable from the other evils here mentioned, and tending naturally towards those heresies mentioned in the next article, as I understand it: yet as *seditions* in the state are great evils, and the word διχοστασιαι may express dispositions leading to them, I introduce the mention of them into the paraphrase.

e *Heresies.*] The proper signification of *heresies* here seems to be what I have briefly expressed in the paraphrase, and I must beg leave to refer to what Mr. Hallet has written upon this subject, as containing the reasons which have determined me to prefer it: for this is by no means a proper place to discuss a subject so much controverted. Yet I doubt not but *heresies*, in the *ecclesiastical* sense, as distinguished from what I take to be the scriptural, may generally be said to be *works of the flesh;* as bad inclinations of mind naturally lead to bad opinions, and to a haughty and factious manner of obtruding them upon others.

SECT. 10. GAL. V.

which professing christians are induced to separate from each other, and to form sects, who, instead of maintaining true candour and benevolence, renounce and condemn each other. To this corrupt source we are also to trace the many *envyings* which are so commonly to be seen against the prosperity and success of others; and sometimes *murders* too, contrived and perpetrated by those whose passions and interests clash to such a degree, that
21 nothing less than the destruction of the antagonist can appease the rage; and, to complete the catalogue, all kinds of irregular self-indulgence, and particularly *drunkenness*, that sinks a man into a beast, and those disorderly and gluttonous *revellings*,[f] by which the rational powers are in a great measure extinguished, or at least rendered incapable of performing their offices in a proper manner. These, *and such like*, are the works of the flesh; *concerning which I* now solemnly *forewarn you, as I have also formerly declared* for your security when I was present with you, *that they who practise such things*, whatever zeal they may pretend for the externals of religion in any of the forms of it, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*, or be admitted to the possession of it; and are indeed so far from having any title to be numbered among christians, that they shall soon be disowned, and turned out of that place which they have no right to hold in the church, with just infamy and detestation.

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 Such, I say, are the fruits and tendencies of the flesh: *but the* blessed *fruit of the Spirit*, in those who are governed by that gracious principle which is derived from him, *is* something quite of a different nature; for this, wherever it hath impregnated the mind, produces the amiable dispositions of undissembled *love* and holy *joy*, of universal benevolence of heart, and of that cheerful temper which is naturally connected with it: it engages us to cultivate *peace* with all men; and where we meet with injuries and provocations from any, to bear them with much *long-suffering*, before we enter into any contentions about them: it forms us to *gentleness* in the whole of our conduct, and inspires a tender care that we may not, by any thing rough and overbearing, grieve and injure before we are aware: it excites us to such acts of generous *goodness* as our own circumstances may afford and those of our neighbour require: it is also the Spirit of truth as well as of love, and leads us most strictly to observe *fidelity*,[g] or good faith and uprightness, in all our dealings, neither in any instance imposing upon others, nor failing in any of those engagements
23 which it is in our power to fulfil: It teaches us *meekness*, even when we are obliged to reprove others, or otherwise to animadvert upon them for their faults: and, with regard to the government of our corporeal appetites, it dictates the strictest *temperance*, that we may neither exceed in the quantity nor the kind of our food, or in any other indulgence of animal nature. These, as you plainly see, are most excellent dispositions, and *against such* [*things*] as these *there is no law;* they have so manifest and evident a goodness in them, that they never were forbidden by any human institutions; and those who in the general course of their lives practise them, under the influence of this Spirit, shall by the grace of the gospel be delivered from the condemning sentence of the divine law.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 *And* this is now, upon the whole, the character of all true christians; for *they who* indeed *are Christ's*, they who have received his Spirit, and whom he will finally own as belonging to him, *have crucified the flesh, with* all [*its*] irregular *passions and desires*, and doomed it to a slow and painful, but to a certain death: as if, like one that is crucified, the body of sin were fastened to the cross, and left to expire upon it: and this they do out of love to the memory of their crucified Lord, by a continual regard to whom they are animated strenuously to persevere in so self-denying a resolution.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

25 *If*, therefore, *we* profess to *live in the Spirit*,[h] if we profess to be members of the christian church, and to have that inward principle of divine life which is produced by the Spirit, and continually subsists on communications from him, *let us also* make it our constant care, in consistency with such a profession, to *walk in the Spirit* in a regular and
26 orderly manner, taking every step according to rule and under his influence. And after all our care, as it is only by his grace that we are what we are, *let us not be vain-glorious* or conceited of our own endowments or performances; *provoking one another* to mutual ill-usage by a contemptuous carriage towards any whom we consider as beneath us, or secretly *envying one another* for any imagined or real advantage which our brother may possess and we desire; but rather, with an unaffected humility and true benevolence of heart, let us rejoice in the happiness of others, and endeavour to promote it to the utmost of our power.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

f *Revellings.*] Κωμοι, or *revellings*, among the Greeks, (as Mr. Locke observes,) were "a disorderly spending of the night in "feasting, with a licentious indulging to wine, good cheer, music, "dancing, &c." and in this sense the word is explained by Hesychius and Suidas. We meet with it but twice elsewhere, (Rom. xiii. 13; and 1 Pet. iv. 3.) and in both places it is joined, as here, with other riotous excesses. But though the heathens were notoriously addicted to them, it is a sad evidence of the prevailing power of *corruption*, and it were well the consequences of it were more laid to heart, that among those who bear the name of christians, any should make it a diversion to resemble them in such indulgences, and not be ashamed of running to the *same excess of riot*.

g *Fidelity.*] It is observed in note a, on Matt. xxiii. 23. p. 316. that the word πιστις has undoubtedly this signification in many places. So we may understand it of the *faithfulness* of God, or his *fidelity* to his promises, Rom. iii. 3; and where it is applied to *servants*, we expressly render it, *fidelity*. Tit. ii. 10. And though it generally signifies the grace of *faith*, or *the confidence reposed in another:* yet where we find it joined, as in the place before us, with other *moral virtues*, it may be rather taken to denote *fidelity*. See Matt. xxiii. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 12; vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 10; and Rev. ii. 19.

h *If we live in the Spirit.*] Mr. Howe insists largely on the energy of this phrase, *living in the Spirit*, as expressing in terms nearly resembling those in Acts xvii. 28. our *continual dependence on its influences;* and also illustrates the significancy of the word στοιχωμεν, in the latter clause of the verse, as explained in the paraphrase. See Howe, *On the Spirit*, Vol. I. p. 237.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn to consider this our mortal life as a state of warfare in which we are to be always struggling with enemies, with whom we are never to make either peace or truce; and since while we dwell in the body we shall still find the flesh lusting against the Spirit, let it be our constant concern that the desires of the flesh may be opposed and mortified, and that the interests of the Spirit may be more and more advanced. And though the contrariety is such between them that we cannot completely and continually do the things which we would, let us in the main be led by the Spirit, and give up our rational and governing powers more and more to its holy dictates, that we may not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; and though it still continues to solicit and disturb us, sin shall be kept from reigning in us. SECT. 10. GAL. V. Ver. 18 16

We see what the works of the flesh are, which, if we really belong to Christ, we shall resolutely bind and crucify, with its affections and lusts. Let us endeavour more and more to subdue them, and learn (as it were) to use the instruments of his death most effectually to accomplish the death of sin; bringing the old man to be crucified with him, (Rom. vi. 6.) and nailing it to that cross to which he hath nailed that decree of death which in consequence of sin lay against us. (Col. ii. 14.) 24

In opposition to that cursed train of irregular and malignant affections which are here described as the *works of the flesh*, (the continued indulgence of which is absolutely inconsistent with our hope of inheriting the kingdom of God,) let us cultivate those amiable dispositions of mind against which there is no law: and may the Spirit of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, the spirit of faith, meekness, and temperance, work them more and more in our souls! 19, 20 21 22, 23

How vain are the cares of the generality of men to adorn their bodies, to improve their estates, to advance their rank, while their minds remain neglected! Yea, how vain are all cares to cultivate the mind with science, when compared with the infinitely more important care of improving it in such habits of goodness whereby we shall be brought to resemble God, and be fitted for ever to enjoy him! Let this be all our emulation, and in this let us place our glory; nor let us go about to provoke one another to any thing but this. 26

We profess to live in the Spirit of God, whose gracious influences are indeed the very life of our souls: let us make it our care also to walk in the Spirit, to regulate every action of our lives, every sentiment of our hearts, by a becoming regard to him; guarding solicitously against any thing that would grieve him, and encouraging those friendly offices of his, whereby we may be trained up in a growing meetness for the society of the blessed spirits above, and for that world where the flesh shall be laid aside till all the seeds of corruption are worn out of its composition, and it be raised as pure as it shall be glorious in the image of that Saviour whose discipline has taught us to seek the victory over it, and whose grace enables us to obtain it. 25

SECTION XI.

The apostle pursues his practical exhortations, especially enforcing mutual love, and a care of each other, with a zeal in doing good; and cautions the Galatians against thinking too favourably of their own spiritual state. Gal. vi. 1—10.

GAL. vi. 1.

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

GAL. vi. 1.

I HAVE cautioned you against envy and mutual provocation: but, my *brethren*, rest not merely in a freedom from such unkind affections towards each other, but labour to be mutually useful, and that in your best interests; and *if a man be overtaken in any fault* through his own frailty, or the surprise of a temptation, *do ye who are spiritual*,[a] and, having received the Spirit of God yourselves, are best fitted for such an office, endeavour to *restore such an one*, and to reduce (as it were) that disjointed member, not with a rigorous severity, but *in the spirit of meekness*, gentleness, and love; *considering thyself*,[b] whosoever thou art, *lest thou also* being still in the body, and liable to the like assaults, *shouldst be tempted*, and fall as thy brother hath done, so as on this account to stand in need of the same kind office from him which thou art now called to render to him. SECT. 11. GAL. VI. 1

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Be ready then in this and all other respects to *bear one another's burdens:* and let it be your care with mutual tenderness to comfort and support the weak; (compare Rom. xv. 1. and 1 Thess. v. 14.) accommodating yourselves to each other in the most engaging and obliging manner, that you may thus make all about you as easy and happy as you can; *and so*, instead of seeking to impose the heavy burden of the Mosaic law on others, you will *fulfil* that which is especially *the law of Christ*, even that law of love which was enjoined by him as his command, and will esteem it as your highest honour to wear that badge of mutual love by which he requires his disciples to be known. (John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12.) And surely we may willingly receive that law from one who was himself such an unequalled example of love, and who with so gracious a sympathy bore our burdens of sorrow, and carried away the load of our guilt. 2

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Remember, too, the caution I have given you against vain-glory, (chap. v. 26.) and take heed of an overweening opinion of yourselves: *for if any one think himself to be something* considerable, *when* indeed *he is nothing* like what he apprehends; and in particular, if he be so conceited of his own sufficiency as to imagine he is wise and good 3

a *Ye who are spiritual.*] Dr. Whitby, and some others, understand this as a charge addressed to *ministers*, who, by the extraordinary gifts they had received, were best fitted for this work. But we know that the word *spiritual* is in the writings of St. Paul sometimes opposed to *carnal*, (Rom. vii. 14; viii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 1.) and if it should be allowed here to signify such as were endowed with some *supernatural gifts*, it would not support the limitation proposed, since the apostle speaks of the Galatians in general as having *received the Spirit:* (chap. iii. 2.) I must therefore think, with Mr. Locke, that the expression here signifies such as were *eminent* for *gifts* or *graces*.

b *Considering thyself.*] It is justly observed by Mr. Blackwall, (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 133, 134.) that this sudden transition from the *plural* number to the *singular* adds a great deal of beauty and force to the caution; for it is as if the apostle should have said, "Let every particular person among you remember that he may

SECT. 11. GAL. VI.

enough to resist any temptation that may arise, and please himself that he may glory in the applause of others as secure from danger, *he deceiveth himself*, and the worst part of the fraud falls on his own head: so that instead of gaining from others, or securing to himself, that honour which he expects and aims at, he only makes himself so much the more contemptible, and his danger is proportionable to the high conceit which he hath
4 of himself. *But* to prevent so great an evil, *let every one try* and examine *his own work* by the word of God, the great rule to which all our actions and thoughts should be adjusted, and take care that it be such as God and his own conscience may approve; *and then he shall have* matter of *rejoicing* in what he finds *in himself alone, and not in* the applause he receives from *another*:[c] he shall then have a solid foundation of delight in reflecting upon the state of his own soul, and what the grace of God has wrought in him and by him, instead of subsisting precariously and meanly on the good opinion or applause of others, who so frequently know not what it is that they commend, and are imposed upon by false appearances, so that their testimony can give but very little solid
5 satisfaction to a mind that thinks justly and seriously. *For every one shall* finally *bear his own burden*, and shall be accountable to God, in the great day when he appears before him, for his own behaviour; so that there is but little room to be solicitous about the sentiments of others, in comparison of that care which we ought to take of our own temper and conduct.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

6 A farther advice which I would give you is, *Let him that is taught* and instructed *in the word* and doctrine of christianity, liberally *communicate in all good things*, according to the ability that God hath given him, *to* the support and maintenance of *him that teacheth* him; that so the mind of the teacher may not be kept in an anxious state about his own subsistence, but may with greater composure and cheerfulness attend to the cares of his sacred office.

6 Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 It is indeed an easy thing for interested men to find excuses for the neglect of this and other liberalities which are required by the gospel of Christ; but *be not deceived*, in this or any other respect, by the treachery of your own hearts, which may more fatally impose upon yourselves than upon any others; for though men know not what to answer to some artful pleas which may be invented as an excuse from duty, the blessed *God*, who penetrates all hearts, as well as sees all external circumstances, *is not* to be *mocked* by these vain pretences: *for whatsoever a man soweth*, whether it be good or bad, whether he be liberal or sparing in it, *that shall he also reap*,[d] and the return shall be answerable to it,
8 both with respect to the kind and degree of it. *So that* on the other hand, *he that soweth to his flesh*, he that employs his substance, time, and thoughts, merely or chiefly in gratifying and indulging the flesh, or for the satisfaction of his own bodily necessities, conveniences, or pleasures, *shall of the flesh reap* nothing better than *corruption*; and as the flesh itself shall soon corrupt in the grave, so will he utterly lose all the fruits of his labour and expense in its service: *but*, on the other hand, *he that soweth to the Spirit*, he that under the influences of the Spirit of God employs his capacities, abilities, and possessions, to promote the interests of religion in his own mind and in the world about him, *shall*, as the fruit of what is thus sown, by the continued assistance and grace *of the Spirit, reap life everlasting*; when he shall leave the world, his immortal spirit shall inherit eternal glory, and whatsoever be his portion now, he shall be fully recompensed at the resurrection of the just, (Luke xiv. 14.) when all the hope of the sinner is perished.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 *And* having such a prospect then before us, *let us not be weary* or discouraged *in* all the labour and fatigue, in all the expense and difficulty, of *well-doing; for in due season*, or in that proper time which the wisdom and goodness of God hath appointed, (even when the harvest is come, for which it is best that we should now wait,) *we shall reap* an abundant and ample reward, *if we do not faint*, and suffer our hands to hang down either
10 through sloth or fear. As long *therefore as we have opportunity*, as long as life continues, and Providence puts power in our hands, *let us* endeavour to *do good to all men*, to strangers and enemies as well as brethren and friends, *but especially to them who are of the household of faith*, to them who are united to us in the bonds of christian faith and love, and who, on that account, as belonging to one family, and heirs of the same hope, have a peculiar claim to our regard.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

" also be in danger through his own frailty; and by thus *looking to* " *himself*, he will be induced to carry it with greater tenderness to " others, and will be more disposed to pity and assist them."

c *He shall have* matter of *rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*] Mr. Locke thinks that the apostle hints here at the same thing which he expresses afterwards more fully, concerning the *false teachers*, (ver. 13.) that what they had in view was to *glory in others*, whom they prevailed with to be *circumcised*; and so would have καυχημα to be rendered, *glorying*, (which is indeed the common meaning of the word,) and would consider it as a caution to them to be careful of their own particular actions, that they were such as would afford them *matter of glorying in themselves*, and not vainly *in others*. But the word also signifies *rejoicing*, as our translators often render it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. v. 26; ii. 16; Heb. iii. 6. which seems sufficiently to express the sense of it as I have explained it in the paraphrase, and evidently suits the apostle's way of writing.

d *Be not deceived*, &c.] The apostle here, with great propriety and force, exposes the evasions some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of *liberality*; by which, however they might impose on others, they would egregiously *deceive themselves*, as every circumstance lies open to an all-seeing God, and they assuredly should *reap* according as they *sowed*; a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite to liberality, (2 Cor. ix. 6.) the thought of which must silence every vain pretence that may be brought against so plain a duty, and is most admirably suited to regulate and heighten the proportion as well as to enforce the practice of it.

IMPROVEMENT.

THESE exhortations of the apostle cannot be expressed in more lively terms, and it is scarce possible to represent them in clearer and plainer language. The great difficulty here, and in other such instances, is to bring our hearts to submit to what our understanding must so readily apprehend and approve. Let us earnestly pray that God would diffuse more of his Spirit on all professing christians, that beholding each other with undissembled and fervent love, every one may affectionately endeavour to advance the happiness of all; and instead of severely censuring one another, let us endeavour mutual reformation, by such exhortations and advices as different circumstances may require; doing all in the spirit of christian meekness, and in an humble sense of our own infirmities. Let us pray that the law of Christ, the new commandment he has given us to love one another, may, in all its extent, be ever sacred to us; and that in consequence of the regard we owe to so benevolent a Master, there may be a constant readiness in us to assist each other under every burden, to relieve according to our ability every want, and to do good to all as we have opportunity, but especially to those of the household of faith, who, as belonging to that household, whatever their station or circumstance in life may be, ought to be dear to every member of the family. SECT. 11. GAL. VI. Ver. 1 2 10

Let us remember that there is as certain a connexion between our conduct here and our state hereafter, as there is between the kind of grain sown and the harvest to be reaped from it. The generality, alas! are sowing to the flesh, and the harvest to such will be shame and corruption: but for our parts, let us sow to the Spirit liberally and largely, and have our fruit unto holiness, that we may thus inherit everlasting life. (Rom. vi. 22.) And when we are ready to faint, let us encourage ourselves and each other with the prospect of that blessed day when, though the seed-time may be attended with tears, we shall come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves of honour and joy with us. (Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6.) It is in due season, it is at the time God has wisely appointed, that we shall receive this reward of grace; let us wait for it, as we well may, with patience and humility. 7 8 9

The day is coming when every one shall bear his own burden, and each of us shall answer for himself; that awful day, when every one shall reap the fruit of his own way, and shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Cor. v. 10.) Let us see to it, therefore, not to deceive ourselves with a vain imagination that we are something when we are nothing; and not be satisfied to rest in the good opinion which others have of us, so as to have our rejoicing in them. And whatsoever duty be required of us, let us not amuse ourselves with trifling excuses, which never can deceive that God who is not to be mocked; but let us set ourselves in earnest ever to cultivate true inward religion, even that of the heart, in the sight of him who searcheth it; then will the testimony of our conscience be a source of joy, and we shall find that joy solid and permanent. 5 3 4 7

And if God bless the ministers of his gospel as the instruments of bringing this joy to the soul, it will be attended with that readiness which the apostle requires to communicate to them in all good things; while, if they understand their character and office, there will be in them that moderation of desire on the one hand, and that zeal and love for souls on the other, which will make it a thousand times more pleasant to communicate spirituals than to receive temporals, even from those who give with the most willing mind, and so double the gift, whether it be greater or less. 6

SECTION XII.

The apostle concludes his Epistle with cautioning them against the attacks of judaizing teachers, declaring the indifference of circumcision or uncircumcision, and pressing them strictly to adhere to that gospel for which he had himself suffered so much. Gal. vi. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. vi. 11.

GAL. vi. 11.
YE see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

YOU see, my brethren, *with what large letters*[a] *I have written* this Epistle *to you with my own hand,*[b] not being willing to omit this opportunity of testifying the affection and concern which I have for you, nor chusing, as I mostly do on such occasions, to employ the pen of another who might be more used to the Greek character than myself. SECT. 12. GAL. VI. 11

12 As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

The sum of all is this; that *as many as desire to make a fair appearance in the flesh,* and to set themselves off by standing up for the observance of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, *these* would *constrain you* Gentile converts *to be circumcised,* and to be subject with them to the carnal ordinances of the law, *only lest they should suffer persecution,*[c] which the profession of the christian faith would otherwise bring upon them, *for* owning their dependence for salvation, not on the law, but on *the cross of Christ;*[d] as it is plainly a

a *You see with what large letters.*] Dr. Whitby remarks in his note on this place, "that St. Paul never uses the word γραμμασι "when he speaks of his *Epistles;* and that πηλικοις γραμμασι may "therefore refer not to the *largeness* or the length of *this Epistle,* "but to the *largeness* or inelegancy of *the characters* in which it "was written." So too Theophylact and some others understand it of the apostle's urging it as a proof of his affection for them, as it must show he was *no ready writer,* to see *in what kind of letters* he had written to them. He might not be well versed in the Greek characters; or this inaccuracy of his writing might perhaps be owing to the infirmity or weakness of his nerves, which he had hinted at before. See note h, on Gal. iv. 14. p. 783, 784. I have therefore altered the translation here, and given what appears to be the literal sense.

b *I have written to you with my own hand.*] This might be well considered as an argument of his more than ordinary concern for them; for it was usual with St. Paul, as we have observed elsewhere, to dictate his Epistles, and to employ a person as an amanuensis, to write them from his mouth: (see note c, on Rom. xvi. 22. p. 647.) And perhaps his own *inaccuracy* in forming the *Greek characters,* which he refers to in the words before, may suggest one reason among several others for his doing it. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17. and see the note on this last text.

c *Only lest they should suffer persecution.*] This seems to open the main secret spring of that zeal for the Jewish ceremonies in some that professed themselves christians which occasioned so much uneasiness in the apostolic churches. The persecuting edicts of the Jewish sanhedrim, the influence of which extended to remote synagogues, had induced many who *secretly believed in Christ,* to decline an *open* acknowledgment of him, (John ix. 22; xii. 42; xix. 38.) which yet our Lord himself had so expressly required, that their consciences, during this state of *dissimulation,* must be in great anxiety. (See Mark viii. 38.) But afterwards when a scheme arose of blending Judaism with christianity, it may be supposed that this would abate the edge of *persecution* against those who fell in with it, and especially against those who urged the Gentile converts to such complete proselytism, though it might sharpen it against other christians: and this might perhaps weigh more with some than they themselves were aware, in concurrence with the desire of making disciples, and the prejudices of education, which must naturally be supposed to have their share. Compare chap. v. 11

d *For the cross of Christ.*] It is observed by Jerome on this text,

SECT. 12. GAL. VI.

regard to this which so much incenses the unbelieving Jews, and engages them to raise so many tumults against us, wherever they have an opportunity of doing it; and these half christians aim at appeasing them by a zeal to spread the Mosaic institutions among the Gentiles. This is the point they have in view, and whatsoever they pretend, it is not any real veneration for the law that prompts them to be zealous for it; *for neither they themselves who are circumcised*, and so are solemnly obliged to observe the whole of it, show a concern to *keep the law*, or manifest a true esteem for it as a spiritual and divine institution; nor is it from any truly religious principle that they labour to proselyte you to it; *but they desire to have you circumcised*, to make their boast of you among the Jews; *that they may glory* in this mark fixed *in your flesh*, and may avail themselves of the many converts to Judaism which they have the interest and address to make.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 *But*, for my part, I have no such selfish, worldly views, and *God forbid that I should glory*, either in my descent or circumcision, in my abilities or interest in making converts, or indeed in any thing else, *unless it be in* the regard I have been brought to pay to *the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and the reliance which I have for justification on his death and sufferings; *by* the believing views of *which* I am made indifferent to all things here, and *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;* so that I view the world as little impressed by all its charms as a spectator would be by any thing which had been graceful in the countenance of a crucified person when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death; and am no more affected by the objects round me than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended. And well indeed it may be expected that it should be so; *for* as to those who have truly believed *in Christ Jesus*, all things are counted loss and dung for him, the whole dependence of the soul for righteousness and life is built on him, and the whole heart centres in him: and where this is the case, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, neither can the one profit nor the other hurt, *but* [*there is*] actually *a new creation;* old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are introduced under the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God, in consequence of which believers are (as it were) brought into a new world, and being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, are formed to a life of holiness, and quickened to the exercise of that faith which operates by love. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 19; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. v. 6; Eph. ii. 10; and Phil. iii. 8.) *And as many as shall walk according to this rule*, and govern themselves by such maxims, [*may*] *peace and mercy* [*be*] *upon them!* May that peace which arises from a sense of the pardoning mercy and free grace of God ever rest upon them, *even upon the* whole *Israel of God* every where; for persons of such a character, and not the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the true Israelites.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 Now therefore, *for the future, let no man trouble me* with reflections on my character, or with disputes concerning the necessity of circumcision, and grieve my heart with additional sorrows, *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*;[e] marks of far more importance than circumcision, and on which, whatever your judaizing teachers may think, I value myself much more; even the scars which I have received, by stripes and chains and other means, in the service of Christ, amidst the various hardships which I have borne for him, and which ought to render me venerable in the eyes of all who have a due regard to him.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 And thus, *brethren*, I conclude with my sincere and earnest prayer for you, that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in all its sanctifying and comforting influences, may [*be*] *with your spirit*, to direct you into the ways of truth and peace, of holiness and comfort. *Amen.*

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12, 13

What meanness is there in those views and objects in which the generality of mankind are so apt to glory! How little satisfaction can there be in making proselytes to a party, and spreading forms and notions, when compared with the joy of promoting true religion in the hearts of men, and thereby advancing the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls! And of what service will it be to make a fair appearance, and to be zealous for the externals of religion, so as to gain the applause of men and to have many followers, if at the same time we have so little veneration for the cross of Christ as to be afraid or ashamed of owning the necessity of relying on his right-

"That Tiberius and Caius Cæsar made laws to authorize the Jews "who were dispersed throughout the Roman empire, to follow the "rites of their religion and the ceremonies which had been trans-"mitted to them from their fathers:" To which he adds, "that "*circumcised christians* were by the pagans looked upon as Jews, "while those who made profession of the gospel and were *uncir-*"*cumcised* were violently *persecuted* both by the Jews and pagans; "on which account some early *teachers* of the church, to be deli-"vered from the fear of *persecution*, submitted to be *circumcised* "themselves, and also recommended it to their *disciples*." Both Archbishop Tillotson (Vol. II. p. 367.) and Mons. Saurin (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 49, 50.) agree in expounding this text with a reference to these edicts: but I think it best illustrated by the observation in the preceding note, as the apostle seems to speak of an attempt to *escape persecution*, not by *receiving circumcision*, but by *imposing* or *urging* it.

e *I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*] Dr. Potter thinks (*Gr. Antiq.* Vol. II. p. 7.) that the apostle here alludes to the Στιγματα, or *brands*, with which the Greeks used to mark those that were appointed to serve in the *wars*, lest they should attempt to make their escape (See Lipsius, *De Milit. Rom. lib.* i. *dial.* 9.) But perhaps the reference may be to those *marks* by which the *votaries* of particular *deities* were distinguished. See my *Sermons to Young Persons*, No. IV. at the beginning.—Mr. Blackwall (in his *Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p. 66, 67.) considers it as an allusion to an Egyptian custom, according to which any man's servant who fled to the temple of Hercules, and had the sacred *brands* or marks of that *deity* impressed upon him, was supposed to be under his immediate care and protection, and by that to be privileged from all violence and harsh treatment. And in this view he forms a large and beautiful paraphrase on this verse.

cousness alone for justification, lest we should suffer persecution upon that account, or be exposed to the reproaches of the world about us! SECT. 12.

May divine grace teach us to esteem the cross of Christ more highly, and to glory in nothing but our knowledge of it, and our hopes and expectations from it! May we all feel its vital efficacy, to crucify us to the world, and the world to us; that we may look upon the world but as a dead and worthless thing, which neither can afford us any advantage nor yield us any pleasure, to engage our hearts to chuse it for our portion; and being crucified and dead to all things in it, may we be so entirely weaned from all affection to it, as not to make it any more our principal design and study to pursue it; but being indifferent both to its smiles and frowns, as to the influence which once they had upon us, may we be neither moved by any prospect of self-interest on the one hand, nor terrified by the fear of persecution on the other! GAL. VI. 14 26

Let us not lay the stress of our religion on the name we bear, or ground the hope of our acceptance on being of this or that denomination of christians: but let it be our chief concern to have experience of a thorough change of heart and life, and to obtain that renovation of soul, that new creation, without which neither circumcision nor uncircumcision can avail any thing, and with which the one as well as the other will be accepted of God. 15

It is the written word of God that is the rule we are to go by, both in the doctrines and the precepts of it; let us be careful that we walk according to it, and regulate our principles and conduct by it: then will God own us as his true Israel, and then shall peace and mercy be upon us. And surely, how diligently soever we observe this rule, how exactly soever we conform to it, and how much soever we may suffer for our adherence to it, we depend upon mercy for the communication of peace, and must ascribe all our hopes of happiness to pardoning clemency and free grace. May that grace ever be with our spirit, to sanctify, to quicken, and to cheer us! and may we always be ready to maintain the honour of that which is indeed our very life! Amen. 16 17 18

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE apostle Paul is universally allowed to be the author of this excellent Epistle; but Dr. Mill and others have contended that it was written, not to the church of Ephesus, but to that of Laodicea. This they would argue from some passages of this Epistle, (chap. i. 15; iii. 2; and iv. 21.) which seem more suitable to persons whom he had never seen, which was the case of them at Laodicea, (Col. ii. 1.) than to the Ephesians, with whom he had been conversant about three years; Acts xx. 31. See note m, on that text. p. 542. But what is principally urged for this opinion is, the direction given by the apostle at the close of his Epistle to the Colossians, (Col. iv. 16.) "that they should cause the Epistle which he wrote to "them to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and they should likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea." From whence it is inferred, that the Epistle now before us must be that which is intended there, and was originally written to the Laodiceans.

These several objections will be obviated in the notes upon those places on which they are grounded, and can be no sufficient warrant in opposition to the first verse of this Epistle, in which it is addressed expressly *to the saints at Ephesus*, to introduce an alteration in the text which hath not the authority of any single manuscript in being, or any ancient version, to support it.

We are told, indeed, it was affirmed by Marcion, an early heretic of the second century, that what is called the Epistle to the Ephesians was inscribed to the Laodiceans: but he is censured upon this account by Tertullian,* (who wrote against him in the beginning of the third century,) as setting up an interpolation of his own in opposition to the true testimony of the church. And though Basil† and Jerome,‡ in the latter part of the fourth century, speak of some copies in which the words, εν Εφεσω, were omitted, yet they allow at the same time that this Epistle was written *to the saints at Ephesus*; whom, by a strange interpretation, in allusion to the name by which the Lord revealed himself, Exod. iii. 14. some would suppose, "the apostle calls in a peculiar sense *the saints who are*, as being united unto *Him who is*." But this omission evidently makes but a very odd reading, unless we admit of the conjecture of Archbishop Usher,‖ that a void space was left after *the saints who are*—, and this might be intended for a circular Epistle to any of the churches of the Lesser Asia, whose name might be occasionally inserted to fill up the blank.

There is, however, no sufficient reason for departing from the common and established reading, which inscribes this Epistle *to the saints at Ephesus*; especially when we find in the most early times that Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers, (who lived at the time when this Epistle was written,) in the smaller copy of his own Epistle to the Ephesians, sect. xii. speaks to them of St. Paul, "as making mention of them in a whole Epistle," which Cotelerius says it is in vain to understand of any other Epistle than this, and Dr. Lardner observes, must plainly mean the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.§ And in the larger copy of the same Epistle, sect. vi. he declares to the Ephesians, "Ye are, as Paul wrote to you, *one body and* "*one spirit*;" where it is manifest there is a reference to the very words of St. Paul in this Epistle, chap. iv. 4. So that the testimony of Ignatius is express in both the copies, whichever be received as genuine, to which indeed the smaller has apparently the better title. The same is also still more clear with respect to Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, who were both fathers of the second century, and have both quoted this Epistle in express terms under the title of the Epistle to the Ephesians.** No farther testimony therefore can be needful to make it manifest that this Epistle was received in the first ages of the church, as written by St. Paul to the Ephesians.

It is well known that Ephesus was the chief city of the Proconsular Asia, which was a part of what was called the Lesser

* Tertull. *Contra Marcion, lib.* v. *cap.* 11, 17.
† Basil. *Adv. Eunom. lib.* ii. p. 733.
‡ Hieron. *Comment. in Ephes. init.*
‖ Usher, *Annal. ad.* A. C. LXIV. p. 686.
§ Lardn. *Credibil* part ii. Vol. I. p. 157.
** Iren. *Lib.* v. *cap.* 2. § 3. *et* Clem. Alex. *Strom. lib.* iv. p. 409.

Asia. It was particularly famous for the temple of Diana, a most magnificent and stately structure, which was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world; and its inhabitants were noted in their Gentile state for their idolatry and skill in magic, and for their luxury and lasciviousness. The apostle Paul, at his first coming to them in the year of our Lord 54, according to his usual custom, preached to the Jews there in their synagogue, many of whom were settled in that city and the neighbouring parts; but as he then was hastening to the passover at Jerusalem, he only spent one sabbath there, and left them with a promise to return to them again. (Acts xviii. 19—21.) Accordingly he came again to Ephesus the following year, (Acts xix. 1. *et seq.*) and preached the word with such success, and wrought such extraordinary miracles among them, that a numerous church was formed there, chiefly made up of Gentile converts, whose piety and zeal were so remarkable, that many of them, in abhorrence of the curious arts which they had used, burnt their magical books to a great value. (Acts xix. 19.) And such was the concern of the apostle for their spiritual advantage, that he did not leave them till the year 57, when he had been about three years among them. (Acts xx. 31.) After this he spent some time in Macedonia and Achaia, and in his return to Jerusalem in the year 58, he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus to Miletus, and most affectionately took his leave of them, as one that should *see them no more:* appealing to them with what faithfulness he had discharged his ministry among them, and solemnly exhorting them to look well to the flock committed to their care, lest they should be corrupted by seducing teachers who would arise among themselves and artfully endeavour to pervert them. (Acts xx. 17, *to the end.*) And we see afterwards, from the coolness and declension they are charged with in the Epistle to the angel of the church of Ephesus, (Rev. ii. 4, 5.) how just and seasonable was this caution that he gave them at his parting from them.

From what the apostle says of himself in this Epistle, it appears that it was written by him while he was a prisoner, (chap. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20.) as he was likewise when he wrote to the Colossians. (Col. iv. 18.) And there is such a manifest correspondence between these two Epistles, both in their subject-matter and in the very form of the expressions, that it may justly be concluded they were written at the same time, and sent together by Tychicus; who was intrusted with the care of both, (Eph. vi. 21, 22; and Col. iv. 7, 8.) but was attended by Onesimus when he delivered that to the Colossians. (Col. iv. 9.) Now, as it is not to be thought the apostle Paul would have employed Onesimus in such a service till after he had been with his master Philemon, it appears highly probable from hence that the apostle sent him first with his Epistle to Philemon, by whom he was received (agreeably to his request) not as a servant, but as a brother, (Philem. ver. 16.) and had his freedom given him; and from the confidence the apostle had in the obedience of Philemon, and in his readiness to do even more than he said, (ver. 21.) he might well take this opportunity of his going with Tychicus to recommend Onesimus to the Colossians, by joining him in his message to that church. Since, then, the apostle was in expectation of being soon released from his confinement when he wrote to Philemon, and, trusting he should shortly visit him, desires him to prepare a lodging for him, (ver. 22.) this may induce us to conclude that he wrote that Epistle towards the close of his first imprisonment at Rome; and as the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians appear to have been sent at the same time with that to Philemon, it may be inferred that he wrote these not long before, and sent them all together in the year of our Lord 63, which was the ninth of the Emperor Nero. (See note g, p. 578, 579.)

The design of the apostle Paul in this Epistle (the former part of which is doctrinal, and the latter practical) was, "to "establish the Ephesians in the faith; and to this end to give them more exalted views of the eternal love of God, "and of the glorious excellence and dignity of Christ; to show them they were saved by grace, and howsoever wretched "they were once, the Gentiles now have equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them, by declaring with what "stedfastness he suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it; "and finally, in consequence of their profession, to engage them to the practice of those duties that became their character "as christians."

The doctrinal part of this Epistle is contained in the three first chapters: in which the apostle introduces several important truths for the instruction of the Ephesians in the great doctrines of the gospel, that they might be well grounded in the faith; and for the encouragement of the Gentile converts, acquaints them with the christian privileges to which they were entitled. And here,

I. After saluting the Ephesians with an acknowledgment of their faith, (chap. i. 1, 2.) the apostle testifies his thankfulness to God for his distinguishing love and favour to them, in calling them to be partakers of the blessings of the gospel, in consequence of his eternal purpose to glorify his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of his Son and the communication of his Spirit. (Ver. 3—14.)

II. He assures them of the fervency of his prayers for them, that they might have a clearer knowledge of the great objects of their hope and expectation; and, from an experimental sense of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, might have a fixed regard to the supreme authority and dignity of Christ, who by that power is raised from the dead, and exalted to be Head over all things to the church. (Ver. 15, *to the end.*)

III. To magnify the riches of divine grace, and to affect them with a more grateful sense of their obligations to it, the apostle leads them to reflect upon that wretched state of moral death in which the gospel found them; and shows them it was owing to the rich mercy and the great love of God that they were raised in Christ from death to life, and in the whole of their salvation it was evident that they were saved by grace, and not by works, or any righteousness of their own. (Chap. ii. 1—10.)

IV. He represents the happy change that was thus made in their condition; that they who once were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and afar off from God, were now received into his church, and had an equal right to all the privileges of it with the Jewish converts; the middle wall of partition having been broken down by Christ in favour of the believing Gentiles, who, being reconciled to God, were no more strangers as they had been formerly, but were united in one body under Christ the common Head of all believers, and, being animated by one Spirit, and built upon the same foundation, were made an holy temple in the Lord. (Ver. 11, *to the end.*)

V. To encourage and confirm the Gentile converts in their adherence to the gospel, and recommend it more to their regard, the apostle in the strongest terms expresses the sense he had of the divine goodness in appointing him to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and authorizing him to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ; and declares how great an honour he esteemed it to be employed in making known the calling of the Gentiles to be joint-heirs with the Jews in all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, though he had suffered greatly for it, and was now in bonds on this account. (Chap. iii. 1—12.) And then,

VI. He entreats them not to be discouraged at the sufferings he underwent for his regard to the Gentiles, but rather to consider it as an honour to them, that in the stedfastness with which he suffered, they had such a confirmation of the truth of his doctrine, and of the sincerity of his concern for their spiritual advantage; in proof of which he closes this part of his Epistle with a most affectionate and earnest prayer for their establishment in the christian faith, and their advancement in the knowledge and experience of the love of Christ, of which he speaks in the most lofty and exalted terms, as far surpassing all conception, concluding in the warmth of his devotion with a grand and suitable doxology. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*) And now,

The other part of this Epistle, which is practical, is contained in the three remaining chapters: in which the apostle gives them several weighty exhortations and advices, for the direction of their lives and manners, that they might be regular in their practice; and tells them of the christian duties that were required of them, to which the consideration of their privileges should engage them, pointing out to them the means and motives that were proper to promote the observance of them, and urging the great care and caution they should use to behave suitably to the profession which they made, and to the character they bore. And here,

I. The apostle, from the consideration of his own sufferings, as well as of the many important respects in which all true christians are united, after a general exhortation to them to walk worthy of the excellency of their calling, particularly urges them to mutual forbearance and unity of spirit, as being joined together in one church, and called to partake of the same privileges in Christ, without distinction either of Jew or Gentile: and, as a powerful inducement to their cultivating such a disposition, he represents the glorious foundation which Christ as the great Head of the church has laid for it in the variety of gifts and graces he has bestowed, and in the sacred offices he has appointed; which being all derived from the same Spirit, and designed for the same end, were all to be employed for the advancement of his interest and kingdom, and for the better edification of the whole church, till in the unity of the faith they should grow up into one perfect body under Christ their Head; and so must have a tendency to promote their present union, and to inspire them with the most endearing affection to each other. (Chap. iv. 1—16.)

II. He presses them, as having learned Christ and been enlightened by the gospel, to show the difference there was between them and the unconverted Gentiles, by an unspotted purity and holiness of behaviour, and not to walk like those from whom they were so happily distinguished by knowledge and grace; and cautions them in particular against lying, excess of anger, and stealing, and that corrupt communication to which the heathens were notoriously addicted, but which were inconsistent with the character of christians, and grievous to the Holy Spirit. (Ver. 17—30.)

III. He further cautions them against all malice, and urges them to mutual love and readiness to forgive, in consideration of the divine compassions manifested in the gospel; and then pursues his exhortations to abstain from all inordinate desires, and from all manner of uncleanness and immodesty, as well in words as actions; in which, however they had shamefully indulged themselves in the darkness of heathenism, the light of christianity displayed them in such odious colours as plainly showed them to be unbecoming their profession, and no way reconcilable with the obligation they were under to walk as children of the light. (Ver. 31, *to the end;* and chap. v. 1—14.)

IV. He recommends it to them, in consideration of their character and circumstances, to be prudent and circumspect in their whole conversation, as those who were instructed in the will of God; and not to seek for pleasure in a dissolute excess, but guarding against all intemperance, to make it the delightful business of their lives to express their gratitude to God, under the influences of his Spirit, by praising him for all his mercies in pious and devout thanksgivings; and while they were thus careful of their duty to God, he also urges them not to be negligent of the duties which they owed to one another as members of society, but to behave with due submission to each other in their several stations. (Ver. 15—21.) And then,

V. Having hinted at the relative duties of society in general, he descends to particulars, and beginning with the duties of husbands and wives, he recommends it to husbands to love their wives, in imitation of the love which Christ bears to the church, and presses upon wives the correspondent duty of conjugal subjection, in imitation of the subjection which the church pays to Christ the Head of it. (Ver 22, *to the end.*) From whence he passes on to the mutual duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters, giving suitable admonitions to each, and adding proper arguments to enforce them. (Chap. vi. 1—9.) And after this, for a conclusion of the whole,

VI. He gives a general exhortation to them all, of whatever condition or relation in life, to prepare for a strenuous combat with their spiritual enemies, by putting on the whole armour of God, and living in the exercise of those christian graces that were necessary for their defence and safety: and having among other things exhorted them to fervency in prayer, he particularly recommends himself to their remembrance at the throne of grace, that he might carry on the important work in which he was engaged with freedom and fidelity, whatever he might suffer for it; and leaving it to Tychicus (by whom he sent this Epistle) more fully to inform them of every circumstance relating to him, he closes his Epistle with an apostolical benediction, not only to themselves, but to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. (Ver. 10, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul begins the Epistle with testifying in the strongest terms his joy that the believing Ephesians were called to the participation of christian privileges, in consequence of God's eternal purpose of glorifying his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of his Son and the communication of his Spirit. Eph. i. 1—14.

EPHESIANS i. 1.

EPHESIANS i. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

PAUL, who hath the honour to be *an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ*, sent forth with a special commission from him to publish his gospel and attest his resurrection to the world, and set apart to this important office *by the* sovereign and gracious *will of God*, who hath interposed in so extraordinary a manner to form him for it and to employ him in it, addresseth this Epistle *to the saints who are at Ephesus, even to the faithful in Christ Jesus*,[a] who believe in him as the only Saviour, and in consequence of their persuasion of the truth of his gospel, are solemnly and truly devoted to the service of God. This is the character in which he looks upon you, and with the most affectionate concern and value for you, it is his ardent wish and most sincere and hearty prayer, that the richest abundance of divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] communicated *to you*, with all the happiness *and peace* attending it, *from God our Father*, who is the great Original of all desirable blessings, *and* [*from*] *the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom they flow down to us sinful creatures.

SECT. 1. EPH. 1. 1 2

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

At the first turning of my thoughts towards you as converts to the gospel, when I set myself to think of the happy state into which you are brought, as true believers in the Son of God, by this glorious dispensation of divine grace, with whatever personal sorrows and afflictions I may be pressed, I cannot forbear bursting out into songs of praise. Join with me, therefore, my dear christian brethren, and let us all say from our hearts, *Blessed* [*be*] *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[b] *who* is now through him become our God and Father, and *hath blessed us*,[c] even all that are partakers of his grace, whether Jews or Gentiles, *with every spiritual blessing in heavenly* [*things*] *in Christ*,[d] having graciously bestowed upon us, in him, and for his sake, by the operation of his Holy Spirit, whatever may conduce to the happiness of our souls now, whatever may prepare them for eternal glory, and may seal to us the joyful hope and expectation of it. 3

4 According as he hath chosen us in him, before

Now this is all to be considered, not as what we can pretend to have deserved, but as the result of his free grace, and the accomplishment of his eternal purpose of love concerning 4

a *To the faithful in Christ Jesus.*] Some have understood this as an intimation that the christians at Ephesus were remarkably *faithful to Christ* in relying on him alone for salvation, without that attachment to the *Mosaic law* which was to be found in some other churches, and particularly among the Galatians. But as he uses the same title when addressing the Colossians, (Col. i. 2.) whom yet he reproves on this very account, (Col. ii. 16, 20.) I can lay no stress upon that criticism.

b *Blessed be the God and Father, &c.*] The length of periods frequently occurring in the writings of St. Paul is one thing in his style that contributes much to the obscurity of it; of which this sentence, which runs on through twelve verses to the end of this section, is a remarkable instance. But in the paraphrase it is absolutely necessary to break it into many, or otherwise the period would be drawn out to a much more inconvenient length, and the words added to illustrate particular clauses would encumber, deform, and obscure the whole.—I have been obliged to take the same method in many other places, and hope I need make no farther apology for doing it.

c *Hath blessed us.*] It is evident that the apostle means in the word [*us*] to include the Ephesians to whom he wrote, the greatest part of whom were Gentile converts, as sharing with him and the Jewish christians in their evangelical privileges; and by thus beginning his Epistle with ascribing thanks to God for his mercies to them, he at once declares his firm persuasion of the *calling of the Gentiles*, and his hearty joy in it.

d *With every spiritual blessing in heavenly* [*things*] *in Christ.*] The apostle everywhere represents the *graces of the Spirit* as so much preferable to its *gifts*, that it appears very surprising that Dr. Whitby should expound the blessings here intended as referring entirely to those gifts. They manifestly take in *every spiritual blessing*, (for so it is expressed in the original, εν πασῃ ευλογιᾳ πνευματικῃ,) and principally must refer, not to extraordinary and miraculous *gifts*, but to the sanctifying and saving *graces* of the Spirit; such as effectual calling, justification by grace, the adoption of children, the illumination of the Spirit, and all the graces of the christian life, which are common unto all believers, and are communicated to them in all their several branches. And these are blessings *in the heavenlies*, εν τοις επουρανιοις, or *in heavenly things*, (as I would chuse to render it, rather than *places*,) as they are things that have a manifest relation and respect to heaven, and have a tendency to fit us for it, and to lead us not to seek after the enjoyments of this present world, but to be conversant about, and to be waiting for, those of the heavenly state.

SECT. 1. EPH. I.

us, *according as he hath chosen us in him*,[e] even in his well-beloved Son, *before the foundation of the world* was laid; always intending *that we should be* in all respects *holy and unblamable before him*, and especially that we should walk *in love*,[f] that, by the exercise of this sacred affection to God and each other, we might be preserved from the evils which abound in the world, and animated to the most worthy, honourable, and useful behaviour. To this we know God hath appointed us; let us therefore, in proportion to the degree in which we find this temper prevailing in us, look back with delight to those gracious purposes which the blessed God formed in his own all-comprehending mind concerning us long before we had a being; and let us contemplate and rejoice in him, as *having predestinated us to the adoption of children*, and fore-ordained us to be received into his family *by Jesus Christ*, in whom he has chosen us for a peculiar people *unto himself*, and thereby entitled us, not only to the most valuable privileges by which his church on earth is distinguished, but to an inheritance of eternal glory. And surely when we compare so happy a state and hope with our own temper, character, and deserts, we must acknowledge our appointment to it to have been *according to the good pleasure of his will*, and ascribe it entirely to the overflowings of his mercy.

May we therefore ever acknowledge it *to the praise of his glorious grace*, which we can never sufficiently admire, and which the whole world should concur to magnify and adore; even that grace *wherein he hath made us accepted*, and hath regarded us as the object of his favour and complacency, *in the* Lord Jesus Christ, as his first and best-*beloved* Son; through whom, though in ourselves we are so unworthy of it, we have received the adoption: And *in whom we have redemption* from the power of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and the final wrath and displeasure of God, *through* the pouring forth of *his blood* upon the cross, when he undertook the great and awful work of making an atonement for us by the sacrifice of himself: for by this precious stream it is, as flowing from his wounded side, *the* full and free *remission of* all our most numerous and aggravated *sins* is happily conveyed unto us on our believing in him, *according to the* inexhaustible *riches of his grace*, which reaches even beyond the extent of all our most heinous transgressions, and where our guilt had risen to the most fearful height, hath its superior triumphs. *In* the displays of *which* grace we must also acknowledge that *he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*;[g] having with infinite wisdom contrived a way to glorify all his attributes in the salvation of men, even those which seemed to have the most different claims, dispensing mercy in a way of judgment, and awakening an humble awe and reverence in the soul by the very method which is used for granting pardon and peace.

All these admirable and gracious purposes hath God been pleased to unite and to discover in the way of our salvation; *having made known unto us*, by the revelation of that gospel of which I have the honour and happiness of being an apostle, *the* long-concealed *mystery of his will*,[h] *according to his* own sovereign *good pleasure* and free grace *which he had before purposed in himself*, even the important design of gathering to himself out of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, one holy and glorious church. This was his grand design, which all his other dispensations of providence and grace in former ages were intended more properly to introduce; *that in the economy of the fulness of the times*, or when that time was fully come which he in his wise appointment and distribution of things had judged most suitable and eligible, *he might reunite under one head all things in Christ*, whom he hath constituted Sovereign of angels and men, and of all his dominions and subjects, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*,[i] that for his

the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved:

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:

8 Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, *even* in him,

[e] *Hath chosen us in him.*] I think the apostle here cannot be understood to intimate that *every one* of the persons who belonged to the church of the Ephesians (or elsewhere to other christian societies) in the bonds of external communion, was by a particular decree of God *personally chosen* to eternal life, and to persevering holiness as the way to it. For he could have no evidence that this was the case with regard to each, without such a revelation as I think none have pretended, and as would very ill agree with other passages relating to the apostasy of some who once made a very forward profession, and with the many exhortations and cautions which every where occur in his writings, or with the declarations Christ had made concerning the final ruin that would in fact attend many who called themselves christians, and some who bore the highest offices in the church, and wrought the most extraordinary works. (Compare Mat. vii. 22, 23; and Luke xiii. 26, 27.) I conclude therefore that he speaks of whole societies in general, as consisting of saints and believers, because this was the predominant character, and he had reason in the judgment of charity to believe the greater part were such. (Compare Phil. i. 7.) Nor did he always judge it necessary to make exceptions in reference to a few hypocrites who crept in among them, any more than Christ judged it so to speak of Judas as excluded, when he mentions the twelve thrones of judgment on which the apostles should sit. (Mat. xix. 28.) In this view he says of them in general, that whether they were Jews or Gentiles they were indiscriminately *chosen*, not only to those present privileges which they all as professing christians enjoyed, but to real holiness and everlasting glory. And as we are sure there were at Ephesus many Jewish converts who were in full communion with the church, I can see no reason at all, with some commentators of great name, to limit what the apostle says here to the Gentiles. An address to them alone in this Epistle would very little suit that candour and love so prevalent in the heart of St. Paul, and [illegible] true christian. The pious Professor Franckius thinks the apostle speaks only of the Jews, till he comes to the 13th verse; but from note h, below, on ver. 9. it will appear that he must be mistaken in this singularity of interpretation.

[f] *In love.*] This is often insisted upon; and perhaps the rather to intimate that now *the middle wall of partition was broken down*, it was of the highest importance to cultivate *mutual affection* without any regard to the singularity of the Jewish or Gentile character.

[g] *In all wisdom and prudence.*] To understand this, as a very celebrated commentator does, of *their own prudent returns* to be made to the divine goodness, seems a sense much below the apostle's meaning.

[h] *The mystery of his will.*] It is so called, as *having long been kept a secret*, of which neither Jews nor Gentiles had any conception till it was revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles. I think this plainly proves that Professor Franckius is mistaken in referring the word *us* to the Jews; *for the mystery* of *calling the Gentiles* was not for a considerable time *made known* to the converted Jews; and when it was declared by the apostles, it was difficult for them fully to submit to it.

[i] *Both in heaven and on earth.*] This is considered by some as a Jewish phrase to express, *the whole world*; and Mr. Locke thinks it may be equivalent to Jews and Gentiles. (Compare Dan. viii. 10.) But it seems more reasonable to understand it of bringing *angels* as well as *men* under the government of Christ. (Compare Col. i. 16, 20; Eph. iii. 10; Phil. ii. 10.) The word ανακεφαλαιωσθαι must, in its most literal signification, express *uniting again under one head*. Both *angels* and *men* were at first in sweet and harmonious *subjection* to the *Son of God*, the great Creator of both; but *man* having broken himself off from the society, the *Son of man* by his humiliation and sufferings *recovers all* who believe in him, and in his human nature *presides over the kingdom* to which, in the world of glory, they and his angels belong. This interpretation presents so noble a view, that no other will bear a comparison.

glory and the good of the whole society he should with supreme authority preside over all. And thus in Christ hath he united all things, [*even*] *in him* who is the Head of all; *in whom also we have obtained an inheritance*,[k] and the hope of complete and everlasting felicity; *having been* graciously *predestinated* to it *according to the purpose of him who*, by an efficacious, though gentle and often imperceptible, influence, *worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will*;[l] and having formed all his schemes with infinite wisdom, takes the most sure and suitable means to execute them, and to subdue in the minds of men, as he has subdued in mine, the strongest prejudices against them. And not I alone, but all who of Jews are become believers in Christ, must acknowledge this to have been the case, and must consider it as laying us under the highest obligations, *that we should be* entirely devoted *to the praise of his glory*, and to the purposes of his service for ever: even we *who first trusted in* the power and promise of *Christ*[m] for salvation, and many of us ventured our souls upon him when his name was unknown to the Gentile nations, and to most of our own countrymen was the object of contempt and abhorrence.

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

The powerful efficacy of the same grace hath likewise been displayed in you, and hath given you a title to the same inheritance in Christ; *in whom ye also*, who were once sinners of the Gentiles, even ye Ephesians, who were particularly devoted to idolatry and superstition, (compare Acts xix. 19, 35.) to a degree which distinguished you from many of your heathen neighbours, [*trusted*] and believed as we had done, *when ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*, which brings the good tidings of salvation to you as well as others, and gives the most convincing demonstration of your being called to share in all the blessings that are bestowed in Christ; *in whom also, having believed* and made profession of your faith, *ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, descending upon you not only in miraculous gifts, but in its sanctifying graces, to attest that you belong to the family of God, and are heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed. I speak of that blessed and gracious Spirit *who is the Earnest of our inheritance*,[n] in whom you have a certain pledge and token of your being by special adoption entitled to it, to encourage and animate you under all the difficulties of your way, while you continue waiting *till* you receive *the* complete *redemption of the* people he hath so dearly *purchased* for his *possession*;[o] to them he hath promised everlasting life and happiness, and he will certainly bestow it upon them in the day of his final appearance, which will at length open with a lustre that shall fully repay so long an expectation, and will abundantly conduce *to the praise of his glory*, or to the illustration of that wisdom and love which hath wrought in every previous dispensation, to lead on by the properest degrees towards that most illustrious one which was to close the whole.

13 In whom ye also *trusted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

IMPROVEMENT

ARE we not by divine grace and mercy partakers of those blessings which Paul here celebrates with so much delight, and in the review of which, familiar as they were to his thoughts and discourses, he breaks forth as it were into a rapturous anthem in the very beginning of this Epistle, as he likewise does in so many others? Ought not our hearts to be as warm in such devout acknowledgments? Are spiritual blessings in heavenly things or places in Christ Jesus less valuable now than they were seventeen hundred years ago? Are not the necessities of our souls the same? Is not their immortality the same? Let us then join with the most grateful sentiments in the acclamation; and, in proportion to the degree in which we feel the importance of what God hath already done and is doing for our souls, let us go back with unutterable pleasure to the gracious purpose which he was pleased to form in his own compassionate breast, when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, when he predestinated us through him to the adoption of children. Let us acknowledge the freedom of his grace in it, that we are thus predestinated according to the purpose of him who, with proper regard to the nature of his intelligent and free creatures, worketh all things agreeably to the good pleasure of his will, and maketh us accepted in the Beloved, that we may be to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Ver. 3 4 5 11 6

Let these united displays of wisdom and love affect our hearts; for he hath indeed abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. And let that holiness which mingles its glories in the whole scheme, be also remembered.

8

k *We have obtained an inheritance.*] Mr. Locke would render εκληρωθημεν, *are become his inheritance*, (alluding to Deut. xxxii. 9. *The Lord's portion is his people Jacob; is the lot of his inheritance*,) and interprets it as referring to the admission of the Gentiles into the *church*, which is *God's heritage*: but as *we* in this and the next verse seems opposed to *you* in the thirteenth, it must signify the Jews who *first trusted in Christ*, or the body of the *christian church*, who were incorporated long before the Ephesians were brought into it.

l *Who worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will.*] This does indeed express God's taking such methods to answer his purposes as he knows will in fact be successful. But it does not prove any thing like an overbearing impulse on men's minds to determine them in such a manner as to destroy the natural freedom of their volitions, and so to prevent their being justly accountable to God for such actions.

m *Who first trusted in Christ.*] I think it strange that Mr. Locke should urge this as an argument to prove that the apostle speaks of the Gentiles; since it is so evident that the grand harvest of believing Jews was gathered into the church before Christ was preached to any of the Gentiles. To interpret the word προηλπικοτας as signifying that they *first began to hope in Christ*, or had *first entertained hope* through him, whereas before they had *no hope*, (Eph. ii. 12.) loses the force of the expression, and sinks the sense of the Greek language.

n *The earnest of our inheritance.*] It seems very unnatural to explain this, as Mr. Locke does, of *our being God's inheritance*; for the *earnest* must certainly refer to *future blessings*, and be intended as a pledge and token of our right and title to them.

o *Till the redemption of the purchased possession.*] Dr Whithy would render this clause, εις απολυτρωσιν της περιποιησεως, *till the redemption of life*; and brings many texts out of the Septuagint, where περιποιεω signifies, to *save alive*. To illustrate this, he observes there are two *redemptions* or grand *deliverances*; (for that is plainly his idea of *redemption*;) the one, that of *justification*, consequent upon believing: the other, that by which we are delivered from *death* and all the other penal consequences of sin, in *the redemption of the body* from corruption, that it may partake of eternal life. (Compare Rom. viii. 23.) This nearly coincides with Beza's interpretation, who would translate it, *till the redemption of vindication*, that is, till we are set entirely at liberty, and receive complete deliverance and salvation. But I rather conclude that περιποιησις here signifies *the people* whom Christ has *purchased* to be *his peculiar property*; which is very agreeable to the signification of the word elsewhere. Compare Mal. iii. 17. *Septuag.* (where it answers to סגלה, *Segullah*.) Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 13; and 1 Pet. ii. 9.

SECT. 1. Let it never be forgotten, that we are predestinated to be holy and without blame before him in love, that we might attain to that blameless temper which love alone can inspire and support.

For this purpose the mystery of his will is made known to us, and that grand, illustrious plan is displayed,

EPH. I. which is so well worthy of all the perfections of a God; even his design to gather together in one all things in Christ, to unite all good and happy spirits under him as the common Head, and to make him the bond of their 10 eternal union to God and to each other. What are we sinful creatures, that we should be received into such an association? Let us never forget it on earth, as we shall for ever commemorate it in heaven, that it is through his 7 blood that we have redemption, eternal redemption, which he who has begun the happy work will certainly com- 14 plete in favour of those whom he hath purchased to be an everlasting possession unto himself.

15 In the mean time, may his Spirit be given us as the Seal of the promises, and the Earnest of our inheritance! And by more abundant communications of his sanctifying influences, may he raise our souls to a blessed anticipation of those enjoyments which will endure for ever, and will be for ever new and delightful.

SECTION II.

The apostle assures the Ephesians of the fervency with which he was offering his prayers to God on their account, that they might have still higher and worthier conceptions of the gospel, and of its glorious Author as raised from the dead, and exalted to supreme dominion in the heavenly world. Eph. i. 15, *to the end.*

EPH. i. 15.

SECT. 2. I HAVE mentioned the invaluable blessings of which as christians we have the privilege to be partakers, whether Jews or Gentiles; and *for this cause*, knowing the extensive views on which the christian church is formed, in the affectionate remembrance which I

EPH. I 15 have of all the faithful, *I also* bear you on my heart, both in the praises and the prayers which I offer up to God; *having* in this my confinement *heard of* your stedfastness in *the faith you have in the Lord Jesus*,[a] whom we adore as our common Saviour, *and of* 16 *the love* [*you bear*] *to all the saints*, whether circumcised or uncircumcised: On which account I *cease not* daily *to give thanks for you*, that you are brought by divine grace into this happy state, and am *making mention of you* always *in my prayers*, which I am continually presenting to heaven for my brethren in every place.

17 And it is my constant request for you, *that the God* and Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is also *the Father of glory*, of which he is eternally and immutably possessed, from whom all glory proceeds, and to whom it returns, *would give you* more abundant supplies of *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*, to fill you with a more enlarged knowledge of his will, and animate you to the further exercise of every grace *in the* 18 *acknowledgment of him:* And in particular, that by his influence and teaching he [*would give you*] to have *the eyes of your understanding enlightened* still more and more;[b] *that*, being thus illuminated, *ye may know*, in a more comprehensive manner than you now do, *what is the* great and important *hope of his calling*, what are the high conceptions you should have of that excellent Object which the gospel proposes to your pursuit, and with what certainty and delight you should look forward to it, and may discern more fully what are the inexpressible advantages *and what the glorious riches* and inestimable treasures *of his inheritance in the saints*, which he distributes with so liberal a hand among them in the blessings of his grace at present, in consequence of having adopted them to himself, and which hereafter they shall possess in perfect happiness and 19 glory, and shall for ever enjoy with him and with each other: *And* that you may be thus more thoroughly sensible *what* [*is*] *the exceeding greatness of his power* which he hath manifested in the operations of his grace *towards us who* cordially *believe* his gospel, *according to the energy of the power of his might*,[c] influencing our hearts in such a manner as effectually to conquer all our prejudices against christianity, and against true religion in every form.

20 This is indeed a power, like that which is the confirmation of our faith, as being the authentic seal of the gospel, set to it by that energy *which he exerted in* his Son Jesus *Christ*, when he lay a cold and mangled corpse in the sepulchre, *in raising him from the dead*, and thus declaring him to be the Son of God with power, (Rom. i. 4.) *and* by which too he *seated* [*him*] *at his own right hand in heavenly* [*places*,] in the possession of the 21 highest dignity and glory; Having exalted him *far above all* the ranks in the angelic world, even above every *principality, and power, and might, and dominion*, however they are distinguished in the celestial hierarchy, *and* above *every name*, how honourable

EPH. i. 15.

WHEREFORE I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power;

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named,

a *Having heard of the faith you have, &c.* ακηκοας την καθ' υμας πιστιν.] Some have argued from hence, that this Epistle, if directed to the Ephesians, must have been written before Paul's long abode at Ephesus, since he would not have spoken of *their faith* as only known *by report*, if he had for two years and an half been conversant with them, and seen the effects of it. To this some have answered, by pleading that ακουω signifies not only *to hear* but *to understand*, by whatever means the knowledge be attained; and others have said that this Epistle was intended, not only for the church of Ephesus, but for other Asian churches in the neighbourhood. But perhaps the easiest and most solid answer is, that as it was now five or six years since Paul quitted Ephesus, he might judge it proper thus to express his complacency on *hearing* that they *continued*, in the midst of so many circumstances of temptation, to behave in a manner so worthy what he had personally observed among them. In this sense Mr. Locke understands these words; and it is illustrated by comparing Phil. i. 3, 27; and 1 Thess. i. 5, 6; iii. 6.

b *The eyes of your understanding enlightened.*] Our translation here, though it express the sense, departs from the construction of the original, in which these words are in the *accusative case*, πεφωτισμενους, &c. and appear to be governed by the verb δωη in the preceding verse. And therefore, to preserve the same construction, I have repeated here the words, *would give you*, which are inserted as a supplement.

c *The exceeding greatness of his power*, &c.] The admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong emphasis and force of the expressions in the original, are well set forth by Bishop Pearson (*On the Creed*, p. 519.) as scarcely to be paralleled in any other, and superior to what our language can reach. See also Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 307.

not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him *to be* the Head over all things to the church:

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

soever, *that is named* or had in any account, *not only in this world, but also in that which* SECT. *is to come;* so that there never has been, and never shall be, among all the inhabitants of 2. heaven or earth, any one so dear and excellent, so high and honourable, in the sight of God as he is. And it is delightful to pursue the meditation; reflecting farther that the EPH. divine power hath not only invested our ascended Saviour with supreme dignity, but like- I. wise with universal authority; *and hath subjected all things* whatsoever *under his feet,* 22 that he may overrule and manage them as he will, *and given him* [*to be*] supreme *Head over all things to the church,* for its protection, benefit, and advantage: Even that church 23 *which is his body,* and which as such is ever dear and precious to him, and, being made complete in him, is regarded as *the fulness of him who filleth all* persons *in all* places[d] with all kind of good things which they possess, and yet delights in this as his chosen dwelling, even as an holy temple which he hath consecrated to himself.

IMPROVEMENT.

FAITH in Christ, and love to all the saints, are here with great propriety put by the apostle for the whole of a Ver. 15 christian temper. May they be more apparent and operative in all who call themselves by the christian name! Even a firm and active faith, a warm and unbounded love, which shall forget every thing that would alienate our hearts from our brethren; and only remember that they are saints, consecrated to God, and sanctified by him; that they are believers in Christ Jesus, and therefore one with him, who is our Head and our All; whose love hath 22 given to us, and to them, whatever is lovely in either; who will save the whole body, and make it so happy together, that the very thought of that happiness should cause our hearts to overflow with every benevolent affection, as well as with perpetual gratitude to our Divine Deliverer, who is the Source of it.

Let us learn by this excellent and pathetic prayer of the apostle what are the most important petitions we can offer for ourselves and our christian friends. Surely this must be numbered among them, that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened more and more, that so we may more clearly and affectionately know what is the great 18 and glorious hope which our christian calling sets before us. Alas, as yet we know but little of it! but little of that great and glorious inheritance which God will divide among his saints, and in the enjoyment of which he will for ever unite them all. But adored be his grace, if we so know it as deliberately to make choice of it, as to give up every interest and hope inconsistent with it, and determinately to say, *This is our rest, we have desired it.* (Psal. cxxxii. 14.)

He who hath wrought us to the self-same thing is God. (2 Cor. v. 5.) It is indeed an exertion of a divine 19, 20 power, that quickened these dead souls of ours; the same that quickened the dead body of our Redeemer, quickened, exalted, and glorified him. Let our souls, like that of the apostle, presently take the hint, and soar upward, as with an eagle's or rather an angel's wing; soar to those glorious abodes, where he sits at the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. There he reigns, not only 21 as the sovereign Guardian of the universe, but in the more endearing character of the Head of the church, bearing the same tender affection to it, exerting the same care over it, as the head over the members; calling the church, 22, 23 narrow as its boundaries seem, his fulness, though he fills all in all.

"Blessed Lord! fill our souls more and more with all the graces of thy Spirit, and extend the boundaries of the "church all abroad! Unite us in these dearest bonds; and give us always to act worthy of that honour which thou "conferrest upon us, when thou callest us *thy body, thy flesh, and thy bones!*" (Eph. v. 30.)

SECTION III.

Farther to excite the gratitude of the Ephesians, the apostle leads them back to that state of moral death in which the gospel found them, and reminds them how entirely they were saved by divine grace. Eph. ii. 1—10.

EPH. ii. 1.

AND you *hath he quickened,* who were dead in trespasses and sins.

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, accord-

EPH. ii. 1.

UNSPEAKABLE, my brethren, is the happiness of the body of Christ, which I have just SECT. been mentioning, the happiness of all who are related to him as their glorious Head: *and* 3. through divine grace this happiness is yours; for *you,* though once sinners of the Gentiles, EPH. [*hath he*] who raised up Christ from the dead [*quickened*] and raised to life,[a] by the II. effectual working of that mighty power which I have shown you to have wrought in 1 Christ: even you, *who* will (as I persuade myself) most readily acknowledge that you long *were dead in trespasses and sins,* incapable of any sensations and actions arising from that spiritual and divine life to which his grace has now awakened you, and liable, as the just desert and consequence of your sins, to a sentence of eternal death. Such, it is 2 manifest, was your wretched state while you continued in the paths of vanity and guilt, *in which ye formerly walked* with pleasure,[b] *according to the course* and manner *of this*

d *The fulness of him who filleth all in all.*] Mr. Locke understands this as if it were said, *which is completed,* or completely filled *by him, &c.* and I think the texts he refers to in confirmation of this sense are of great weight, and have paraphrased the text accordingly; though it is certain that the word πληρωμα has sometimes another sense; as when we are said to *receive from Christ's fulness,* John i. 16. and Christ is declared to have *all the fulness of Deity dwelling in him.* Col. ii. 9.

a *You* [*hath he quickened*].] Some observe, that the connexion here is harsh, the words [*hath he quickened*] not being in the original, and would therefore suppose the accusative case υμας (as the grammarians call it) to be governed by the verb πεπληρωκε understood, answering to the close of the preceding chapter; and thus would take the sense to be, "He who *filleth all his members* "with all gifts and virtues, hath also *filled you* among the rest." But the words υμας οντας νεκρους in this first verse so directly answer to ημας οντας νε κρους in the fifth, that I think it very plain both must refer to συνεζωοποιησε, *he hath quickened together with Christ.*—This is one instance, among others, of Paul's beginning a sentence and then throwing in a very long parenthesis, and taking up again at a considerable distance the words with which he began, or nearly the same. Compare Eph. iii. 1, 14. with chap. iv. 1; and 1 Tim. i. 3. with ver. 18.

b *In which ye formerly walked.*] Dr. Goodwin very pertinently observes here, that the Ephesians were remarkable, in the midst of all their learning, for a most abandoned character. They banished Hermodorus merely for his virtue, thereby in effect making a law that every modest and temperate man should leave them. See Dr. Goodwin's *Works,* Vol. I. p. 7.

SECT. 3. EPH. II.

present *world*, in a conformity to the common usage of the age in which you live, and to the fashionable enormities of your heathen neighbours; a course so detestably evil, that I may properly say of it, that it was just *according to* the desire, instigation, and will of *the prince of the power of the air*,[c] that wicked spirit who commands the legions of fallen angels, that by divine permission range in the air, and fly from place to place in pursuit of their pernicious purpose of corrupting and destroying mankind. I say it again, your course was formerly according to the dictates and suggestions of that cursed and malignant spirit, who by his influence on the hearts of men has in effect the management, however unseen and unapprehended, *of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience*,[d] and prejudices their darkened minds against admitting the evidence and authority of the gospel.

ing to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

3 *Amongst whom also we all had formerly*, at least in some degree, *our* course of life and *conversation*,[e] whatever our education or religious profession might have been; walking in many instances *in the* unbridled *lusts of our flesh*, to the base appetites of which we were enslaved, so as to forget the true dignity and happiness of a rational and immortal spirit. Thus we went on, *fulfilling the dictates of the flesh, and of the* inordinate *passions*[f] of the carnal mind, as if we had been altogether destitute of any superior power to control them; *and* howsoever we might pride ourselves in any distinction of birth, or separation by peculiar privileges from the rest of the world, we *were* indeed *by nature*, and according to the bias we were naturally under, *the children of wrath*,[g] and heirs of the curse denounced on sin, *even as others* round us are: we too, as well as they, were born in sin, and in consequence of that innate corruption, were early plunged in actual transgressions, and so brought under a sentence of death and destruction by that law which every soul of us had in various instances violated.

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 This was the common calamity in which we were all involved; *but* the blessed *God being rich in mercy*, and finding the motives of it in himself, when there was nothing in us but misery to move him to it, *according to his great* and free *love wherewith he hath loved us*, hath been pleased to look upon us with pity, and to contrive a most astonishing

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 and effectual way for our recovery from this deplorable state: And in prosecution of it, *even when we were*, as I had before observed, *dead in trespasses* and sins,[h] he *hath quickened* and enlivened *us together with Christ*,[i] having constituted by his grace such a near relation between us, that his renewed life should be the source of ours; for it is *by*

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,)

6 that *grace* which is bestowed in him that *ye are saved*, and made partakers of these invaluable privileges. *And* in consequence of this, I may farther say, that he *hath raised* [*us*] *up together* in him as our Head and Representative; *and* by admitting him into heaven as a Forerunner, to take possession of those glorious mansions for us, he hath *made* [*us*] *sit together in* those *heavenly* [*places*] to which he is exalted, and into which we also may be said to be admitted *in Christ Jesus:* for by means of that relation between him and us which divine grace hath established, we may look upon his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God as the certain pledge and security of ours: and regarding him under the character of a public Person who is thus raised and exalted in our name, we may be said to share in those felicities and dignities which are conferred on him.

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus;

7 And this God hath done, *that he might show in the ages to come* under the dispensation of the gospel, and might display to all succeeding generations *the exceeding riches of his* free and unmerited *grace*, as manifested both to Jews and Gentiles *in* [*his*] *kindness*

7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindness to-

c *The prince of the power of the air.*] This refers to a Jewish tradition that the *air* was inhabited by *evil spirits;* a notion which, as Mr. Mede observes, (*Diat. on* 2 Pet. ii. 4.) the apostle Paul seems to approve.

d *Of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience.*] I render it, *of the spirit*, as this agrees better with the construction of the original, κατα τον αρχοντα—του πνευματος, &c. which leads us to refer this latter clause to the prevailing influence of Satan over the *vicious spirit* or *corrupt disposition* that is so powerful in sinners, which is thus represented as *subject to his management*, and actuated by him.—The phrase ενεργουντος εν τοις υιοις της απειθειας is very strong and emphatical, both in the denomination it gives to the *heathen* as *children of rebellion* and obstinacy, who would *yield to no persuasion* that would urge them to a better course of life, as the etymology of απειθεια imports, and in the forcible manner in which it expresses the influence of Satan over them, as if they were inspired and possessed by him; for it is well known the word ενεργουμενοι among the ancients signified the same with *demoniacs*.

e *We all had formerly our conversation.*] The apostle, changing the expression from [*ye*] *Ephesians* to [*we,*] seems plainly to declare that he meant to include *himself* and *all other christians* in what he here says: and it is so professedly the design of the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans to prove that the Jews had not, in point of justification, any advantage above the Gentiles, (Rom. iii. 9.) that it is surprising to me that some very learned and ingenious writers, and Mr. Locke in particular, should contend so strongly for the contrary. As to the argument from Eph. iv. 17—20. see the paraphrase and notes there, in the beginning of § 8.

f *The dictates of the flesh and of the passions.*] The word θελημασι, here made use of, expresses a kind of *dictatorial* power: and the plural διανοιων, which we render *mind*, as it cannot here signify its *intellectual powers*, must, I think, denote the various passions according to the prevalence of which our minds take as it were different colours and forms, and become strangely different from themselves.

g *Were by nature the children of wrath.*] Some think the meaning of this phrase is only that we were so *truly and indeed*. Compare Gal. iv. 8. (See Limborch. *Theol. lib.* iii. *cap.* 4. § 17.) But on the whole, I think it much more reasonable to refer it to the original apostasy and corruption in consequence of which men do, according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt, and so become obnoxious to the divine displeasure. And [*we all,*] in the beginning of this verse, is so plainly opposed to [*ye*] in the verse before, that it is astonishing Dr. Whitby should maintain that [*we*] and [*ye*] are used promiscuously throughout this whole discourse. Monsieur Le Clerc (*Ars. Crit.* p. 104.) brings many instances from ancient writers to prove that φυσει signifies *genius* or *disposition;* but I think I may venture to say that every one of them signifies a *natural* disposition, and not merely an *acquired* habit.

h *When we were dead in trespasses* and sins.] What is said in Col. ii. 13. does indeed show that this was eminently the case of the Gentiles; but I have given my reasons above why I think it here to be spoken of what all in general were till the grace of God wrought for their recovery.

i *Hath quickened us together with Christ.*] This does not merely signify our being raised to the hope of pardon and glory by the resurrection and ascension of Christ; but seems to refer to that union which there is between him and all true believers, by virtue of which they may look on his resurrection, ascension, and glory, as a pledge and security of something quite of a similar nature to be accomplished in due time in and upon them. Thus we are taught to consider Christ as a public person, the elder Brother of the family, and the Guardian of the younger branches of it, who may, by a very easy and beautiful figure, be said to have *received their inheritance in him.*—It is justly observed by Mr. Locke, that chap. i. 20. and ii. 5, 6. answer to each other; but the apostle's mind being filled with these grand ideas, and transported with love to

wards us, through Christ Jesus:

towards us in Christ Jesus; for we have received it all by him, and are partakers of it as connected with him, whom God hath appointed a Head and Saviour to us, and taught us to regard him as our great Representative. I repeat it again and again, that I may properly inculcate a doctrine of so great importance; *for* I would never have any of you forget, that it is *by* this free *grace* which I have so frequently celebrated, and would for ever celebrate, that *ye are* brought into the happy number of the *saved* ones, and are delivered from that ruin into which sin had plunged you, and raised to these glorious hopes of eternal felicity; which inestimable privileges we receive *through* such a cordial *faith* in Christ as is productive of unfeigned love and obedience: *and* the grace of God appears, not only in constituting this method of salvation through faith, but also in producing this great and divine principle in our souls; for *this* very faith is *not of yourselves,*[k] it is not of your own production, there being such a natural averseness to it in the heart, as that we neither can be said to have wrought it, nor is any praise resulting from it, or any excellence in it, to be ultimately ascribed to us; but [*it is*] really *the gift of God,* who by the gracious influence of his Spirit fixes our attention to the great objects of it, subdues our prejudices against it, awakens holy affections in our souls, and, on the whole, enables us to believe, and to persevere in believing, till we receive the great end of our faith in the complete salvation of our souls.

SECT. 3. EPH. II. 8

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast:

And God hath appointed that salvation should be thus obtained by that faith which he produces in the heart, and *not by works* of the Mosaic law, or any other obedience of our own, *lest any one should boast* as if he had by his own righteousness obtained salvation, and so should ascribe the glory of it to himself rather than to God. But it cannot be so now; *for* as all acts of acceptable obedience proceed from faith, and this faith is wrought in our hearts by the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit, it is most evident that *we are* to acknowledge ourselves to be *his workmanship,* so far as there is any thing in us agreeable to the nature and will of God; being *created in Christ Jesus unto good works,* and made able, not only to perform them, but to delight in them; even those works of evangelical obedience, *to* the performance of *which* (though we obtain the forgiveness of our sins previous to our performing them, on our accepting Christ and believing the grace of the gospel) *God hath before prepared* [*us*] by the influences of his Spirit;[l] having fore-ordained and appointed in his eternal counsels, and in the declarations of his word, *that we should* diligently and constantly *walk in them,* as ever we would approve ourselves his people, and stand entitled to the promised blessings of the future state, which indeed we can no otherwise in the nature of things be prepared to receive. 9

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.

10

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us behold with a becoming attention, and with all those emotions of heart which an attentive review of it is capable of exciting, the amazing diversity of these states as represented by the apostle; and remember that they are states in the one or the other of which we all are. We see what nature and the first Adam have made us, and we see what grace and an interest in the second would make us.

Daily observation, and, in too many instances, our own experience, may have convinced us that it is not the character of the Gentiles alone to be dead in trespasses and sins. It shows us, that to walk according to the general course of this apostate world, is to walk according to the prince of the power of the air; who, when he is most set on our ruin, is most importunate in persuading us to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Ver. 1, 2

Still, alas! till the gospel reaches and renews the heart, doth the same evil spirit, by means of the corrupt and vicious spirit dwelling in them, work in the children of disobedience and wrath, in which number we must acknowledge ourselves by nature to have been. But blessed be God that grace has its superior triumph over depraved nature; and where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound. (Rom. v. 20.) 3

The mercy of God is rich and his love is great; and his powerful grace, to which we must ascribe all our hope of salvation, hath quickened us when we were dead in sins, and hath enlivened us with Christ, to whom by faith we are united, and so incorporated with him, that in consequence of it we may not only consider his resurrection and ascension to glory as an emblem, but in some degree as an anticipation, of our own, and may think and speak of ourselves as raised, and exalted, and glorified, with him. 4, 5, 6

O how blessed and joyful a view is this! and how powerfully ought it to operate upon us, to elevate our minds above this low world, and to animate us to every great and generous sentiment and pursuit! Surely this must illustrate, if any thing can do it, the riches and freedom of that grace by which we are saved, and must engage the generations to come to celebrate his exceeding kindness towards us. Let all boasting in ourselves therefore be entirely given up: let salvation by faith be acknowledged to be of grace; and that faith itself be acknowledged as the gift of God, whose workmanship we are, and by whom we are created to that noble and only acceptable prin- 7, 8, 9, 10

Christ, lets his pen run loose to enlarge upon them, though with some interruption to the natural construction.

k *By grace ye are saved, through faith; and this not of yourselves.*] It is observable that the apostle speaks of these christians, not only as in the way to salvation, but as already *saved,* (σεσωσμενοι,) by a strong and lively figure expressing their happy security.—Some explain the following clause, [*and this not of yourselves,*] as if it were only a repetition of what was said before, that the constitution that made faith the way to salvation was not of their own appointment, but God's. But this is making the apostle guilty of a flat tautology, for which there is no occasion. Taking the clause as we explain it, that is, as asserting the *agency* of divine *grace* in the production of *faith,* as well as in the constitution of the method of *salvation by it,* the thought rises with great spirit. As for the apostle's using the word τουτο in the neuter gender to signify, *faith,* the thing he had just before been speaking of, there are so many similar instances to be found in scripture, that one would wonder how it were possible for any judicious critics to have laid so much on this as they do, in rejecting what seems beyond all comparison the weightiest and most natural interpretation. Compare the original of the following texts: Phil. i. 28; Eph. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 17; iv. 19. And for the like construction in other Greek authors of undoubted credit, see Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 128; and Raphel. *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 186.

l *To which God hath before prepared us.*] This is plainly the sense of the original, οις προητοιμασεν, which shows that as we are *chosen to be holy,* (chap. i. 4.) and called to perform *good works,* (Tit. iii. 8.) so also God *prepares us for* and enables us to it by his grace

SECT. 3. ciple of good works. Let not this grace be received in vain; but let us answer the purposes of this new nature and new life which God hath graciously given us, and show forth the praises of him from whom it is derived, and in whom, in a spiritual as well as a natural sense, we live, and move, and exist.

SECTION IV.

The apostle further pursues the argument begun in the last section, representing the happy state into which they were now brought, as united to the church of God, and partakers of all its privileges; the middle wall of partition being now removed in favour of believing Gentiles. Eph. ii. 11, *to the end.*

EPH. ii. 11.

SECT. 4. YOU have heard of the glorious privileges to which, as christians, you are exalted out of that wretched state of moral death in which the gospel found you: *wherefore* let me seriously urge it upon you, that you would always *remember* and bear it in mind how happy a change God hath been pleased by his sovereign grace to make in your state, and would consider what you now are in comparison with what you formerly were. Oh let it never be forgotten, *that ye* [*were*] *formerly* ignorant, vicious, and idolatrous *Gentiles*, and *in* a state wherein *the flesh* was continually leading you captive, and drawing you to gratify and fulfil its lusts; *who* being thus abandoned to your own ways, without any sign or token of an interest in God, [*were*] *called*, by way of contempt, *the uncircumcision*, uncircumcised abominable sinners, *by that* body of men *which is called the circumcision*,[a] on account of their having received that rite which is *performed with hands*, and imprints a mark *in the flesh*, of which as you were destitute, they who had received and gloried in it avoided you as unclean. But I am sensible your chief misery did not consist in the want of that ceremony, which can by no means avail to the salvation of the soul, or render it, while the heart continues uncircumcised, in any degree acceptable to God: Your wretchedness was, (and see that you remember it with the greatest humility, and with the most affecting sense of the acknowledgments you owe to that free grace which has delivered you from that deplorable condition,) *that ye were at that time*, while you were unregenerate Gentiles, *without* any knowledge of *Christ* or any interest in him, and thus were destitute of all those blessings which he brings to his believing and obedient people: and indeed were without any expectations of the Messiah, and had not those advantages for enquiring after him and embracing him which the Jews had by virtue of their prophecies, and of the various means ordained to point him out; ye were then *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and had no part in any of the favours granted to them, no claim to their peculiar privileges, nor any right of citizenship with them; not so much as knowing that polity which God had established among his own chosen people, in order to direct their views to the gospel, and to prepare them for the reception of it: and having no communion with the church, ye were then unacquainted with the divine engagements to it, *and strangers to the covenants of promise*,[b] not having any knowledge of the covenant made with Israel by Moses, or of those better promises on which the covenant with Abraham was established, and assurance given of the Messiah's coming, and of eternal life through him: so that, in consequence of this, ye were then wholly taken up in the pursuit of earthly things, without any prospect of good things to come, *having no* well-grounded *hope* with regard to a future state,[c] no hope of spiritual and eternal blessings, about which, immersed as you were in the cares and pleasures of this lower world, you had indeed but very little thought: *and* though you had such an infamous herd of imaginary deities, and were so eager in the worship of them, and particularly of your great goddess Diana, and of Jupiter, whose daughter she was supposed to be, (Acts xix. 35.) yet in reality ye were *atheists in the world*,[d] for ye lived and conversed in the world, ignorant of the one living and true God, its great Original and Support; and worshipping only such as by nature are no gods, (Gal.

EPH. II. 11

12

EPH. ii. 11.
WHEREFORE remember that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

a *Called the uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision.*] The terms of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* in the abstract are here plainly put for *circumcised* and *uncircumcised*; as they are likewise, Rom. ii. 26; iii. 30; and iv. 9. Thus also to be made *the righteousness of God* is put for being made *righteous by God.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

b *The covenants of promise.*] Though the *covenant* for substance was one and the same, the apostle here speaks of it in the *plural* number, (as he does also, Rom. ix. 4.) as it was given out at several times, with various explications and enlargements, not only to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, (Gen. xii. 2, 3; xvii. 7, 8; xxii. 17, 18; xxvi. 3, 4; xxviii. 13, 14.) but afterwards to the whole church of Israel. (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; xxix. 12, 13; and xxx. 5, 6.) And as the promises it contained centred in the great promise of the Messiah, and of salvation by him, he therefore speaks of them in the *singular* number, but as one promise, which is agreeable to the scripture style in other places. Compare Acts ii. 39; xiii. 32; xxvi. 6, 7; Rom. iv. 14, 16; Gal. iii. 17, 22; Eph. iii. 6; and Heb. vi. 17.

c *Having no hope.*] That the heathens had among them the doctrine of a *future state*, and that it was popularly taught and generally believed by the common people, must, I think, appear incontestable to any who are at all acquainted with antiquity. But it is as apparent that they reasoned very weakly upon the subject, that they had *no well-grounded hope* of future *happiness*, and that they were but very little impressed with it; so that they had *no deity* to which they *prayed for eternal life*, as the fathers often remonstrate. And by far the greater part of their most learned philosophers either expressly *denied*, in private lectures to their pupils, the doctrine of *future rewards and punishments*, or taught *principles* quite *inconsistent* with it; as must, I think, plainly appear to any one who will impartially peruse what Mr. Warburton has written upon the subject, so judiciously defended in the Critical Review.

d *Atheists in the world.*] Both the christians and heathens, as Dr. Whitby well observes here, called each other atheists, though both worshipped *some deity*, real or imaginary; because each supposed the other to reject that which was the *true object* of adoration. But I cannot conceive that the apostle would have given to the heathens the character of atheists, if the worship of the *one living and true God* had really prevailed among them to that degree which some christian divines have incautiously maintained that it did. The truth of the matter seems to have been, that though several of them speak of their Jupiter in terms properly applicable to the one self-existent and eternal Deity only, yet they taught and believed other things of him quite inconsistent with such perfections: and those who had some knowledge of one supreme, eternal Cause, yet practically disregarded him; and, however they might reconcile it with the dictates of their consciences, worshipped inferior deities, and many of them such as were represented under the most scandalous characters, to the neglect of the Supreme Being, and the destruction of all true religion. Compare Rom. i. 20—26; and consult the notes on those verses, p. 587.

iv. 8.) ye had no conception of any being that was truly worthy to be spoken of by any divine title.

13 But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

But let your hearts reflect with joy and thankfulness on that blessed change which the divine goodness hath *now* made in your condition, by bringing you to faith *in Christ Jesus;* for having cordially embraced him as exhibited in the gospel, *ye who were formerly afar off* from God and from all the hopes and privileges of his people, *are* now *brought near* to God and to each other *by the* atoning *blood of Christ*,[e] whereby he hath expiated your guilt, and made a free and honourable way for your approach to God, and partaking in all the benefits of his church. 13

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us;*

For he is the Procurer of *our peace*,[f] *who* hath reconciled us, whether Jews or Gentiles, to God and to each other, and hath so incorporated us into one church, that it may properly be said he *hath made both one*, as to an interest in the favour of God and in the privileges of his people; *and* that no difference might remain between us, he *hath thrown down the middle wall of separation* which divided us from each other, as the wall which runs between the court of the Gentiles and that of Israel in the temple at Jerusalem divided the Gentile worshippers from the Jewish.[g] 14

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, *so* making peace;

This happy union between us the Lord Jesus Christ hath accomplished, *having abolished*, by those sufferings which he endured *in his flesh*, what was the grand occasion of *the enmity* and mutual alienation which had so long prevailed; [*even*] *the law of* positive *commandments* and ceremonies [*contained*] *in* the Mosaic *ordinances*, to which the Jews were so much attached, and to the bondage of which the Gentiles were so irreconcilably averse: but this Christ hath now abrogated and taken out of the way, *that* so *he might form the two* opposite parties, by virtue of their union with each other *in himself, into one new man*, uniting them together as new creatures in one church, under a dispensation very different from the former, in which they both should equally partake of the same privileges; [*so*] *making* an entire *peace* between them, and laying a foundation not only for peace but for mutual love, by removing the ground of those prejudices they had entertained against each other, and joining them in bonds of such tenderness as became the members of one living body: 15

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

And that he might complete this blessed work of making peace, and *reconcile* them *both*, as thus united *in one body* and animated by one spirit, not merely unto one another, but *unto God*, he hath taken away the guilt of sin, and made atonement for it *by the* blood of his *cross*, removing by this means what was the cause of enmity between God and them, as they were all transgressors of his holy law; so that he may be properly considered, on account of what he suffered on the cross, as *having slain the enmity by it*, as he hath thus made up the breach which sin had made between God and his offending creatures, by means of the atoning sacrifice of himself. (Compare Col. i. 20.) 16

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

And having procured this reconciliation by his death, *he came* to both after his resurrection and ascension, in the person of his authorized ambassadors, to whom he hath committed the important trust of speaking in his name and stead, (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) *and preached* the glad tidings of *peace* and reconciliation *to you that* [*were*] as Gentiles *afar off* from God, *and to them* also of the Jewish nation, *that* [*were*] of old regarded as a people *near* unto him;[h] declaring the foundation he has laid, not only for a sincere reciprocal affection, but for all other most important benefits and blessings. 17

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

For, as the happy fruit and consequence of the peace procured *by him* as well for the believing Gentiles as the Jews, *we both* are introduced into the divine presence, and *have* an equal title to the liberty of a free *access to* God, as *the* common *Father* of the whole family,[i] and may draw near to him with acceptance *in* the aids of *one Spirit*, under whose gracious influences we are fitted for the sacred pleasure of conversing with God, and filled with all filial confidence towards him, and brotherly affection to each other. (Rom. viii. 15.) 18

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citi-

Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners,[k] like those who came from distant nations to make a short abode among the Jews without a share in any of their privileges, *but fellow-citizens with the saints*, entitled to all their glorious immunities, *and* 19

e *Are brought near by the blood of Christ.*] There seems to be an evident allusion here to the privilege of those Israelites who were not under any ceremonial pollution, or who were cleansed from their guilt by the blood of atonement, and so had free liberty of entering the temple and conversing with God; upon which account they are called, *a people near unto him.* Psal. cxlviii. 14. Compare Exod. xix. 4, 6; Lev. x. 3; and Psal. lxv. 4.

f *He is our peace.*] This Mr. Locke would have to be the same with *your peace*, and to be meant of the Gentile converts, of whom the apostle had been speaking just before; but it is evident the reconciliation as well as the enmity was mutual, and the Jews were at least as strongly prejudiced against the Gentiles as the Gentiles against the Jews: the apostle, therefore, with consummate propriety, goes on to speak in terms which were intended to include all true believers, whether originally belonging to the one or the other.

g Divided the Gentile worshippers from the Jewish.] This is that *wall* which was called the *chell*, which separated the court of the Gentiles from that into which the Jews only were allowed to enter; of which we have the most authentic account in Josephus. (*Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5. [al. vi. 6.] § 2.) Compare note l, on Acts xxi. 28. p. 547.

h *To you that were afar off, and to them that were near.*] It is so natural to refer this to what had been said of the different states of Jews and Gentiles, that one would wonder any should have thought of explaining both these characters of the Jews as signifying those who lived in distant countries, as well as those who dwelt in or near Jerusalem, where our Lord suffered.

i *Access to* God *the Father.*] The word προσαγωγην, which we render *access*, does properly refer to the custom of *introducing persons into the presence of some prince*, or of any other greatly their superior; in which case it is necessary they should be ushered in by one appointed for that purpose, to preserve a becoming decorum.

k *Strangers and foreigners.*] I know not how far there is room to distinguish nicely between the signification of these two words, ξενοι and παροικοι. If there be, the latter signifies something *more* than the former; and I doubt not but it alludes to the case of *sojourning strangers* among the Jews, who were not incorporated by complete proselytism into the body of the Jewish people, and made, as such proselytes were, συμπολιται, *fellow-citizens*, with equal privileges. And perhaps when οικειοι τω Θεω, *domestics of God*, is added, it may have some relation to that peculiar *nearness to God* in which the Jewish priests were, and refer to that great intimacy of unrestrained converse with God, to which we as christians are admitted; in which respect our privileges seem to resemble not only those of the people praying in the common court of Israel, but of the priests worshipping in the house itself. Nay, it is elsewhere added, by a figure which seems beautifully to rise even on this, that we *have confidence to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.* Heb. x. 19

SECT. 4. EPH. II.

even the *domestics of God*, admitted to dwell in his house, and to partake of the honours and blessings of his family; *Being built on the foundation*[l] *of the apostles and prophets*,[m] who in their respective places, by their miraculous works and predictions, as well as by their several ministrations, have testified the kind regard of God to his people, and made provision for the establishment of the church; *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-*[*stone*,] who holds the several parts together, and supports the whole stress of the edifice: *In whom the whole building, harmoniously cemented* in such a manner as to add beauty, strength, and unity to the whole, *groweth* by the continual accession of new converts, and the advancing graces of those already converted, *into an holy temple in the Lord*, fitly consecrated to him, as being raised and supported by him: *In whom you also*, my dear brethren, believing in him as the great Lord of the church, *are built up together* with all true believers *for an habitation of God*, who *by the Spirit* of his grace takes up his residence among you, and publicly owns his relation to you in consequence of your union with his beloved Son.

19 zens with the saints, and of the household of God;
20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-*stone*;
21 In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let the apostle's remonstrance to these Ephesians remind us of our obligations to the divine goodness, that we are not left in the sad state of our heathen ancestors; that we are not without the knowledge of Christ, in all the darkness of the Gentile world; that we are not aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the cove-
Ver. 12 nants of promise; that we are not destitute of any well-grounded foundation of future hope, and without God in the world. But how unhappy is the case of many, who, though they are called christians, yet have no saving interest in that Redeemer whose name they bear, in consequence of their being strangers to the obedience of faith and a vital subjection of heart to his gospel! Let all that name the name of Christ, all that profess to know him,
13 acknowledge, with a view to his atoning sacrifice, that if they are brought near to God, it is by his blood. To this we owe the external privilege of a people nigh unto God; and to the effectual application of it we owe the blessings of that nearness which the heart feels as the earnest of its eternal happiness.
14, 16 If Christ, according to the principles of the apostle's reasoning, hath made peace by the blood of his cross between Jews and Gentiles, whose manner of living was so widely different from each other; if he hath broken down the middle wall of partition between them, and of two made one new man,—how much more apparently reasonable is it that smaller differences should give way to the engagements of so endearing a band! Have we not all one Father?
18 And have we not all access to him through one Saviour, by one Spirit? Let us then consider ourselves as fellow-
19 citizens with the saints, and maintain that most cordial affection to all of this household, which becomes those that are of one family, and are named from one Lord.
20 And as a great security of this union, let us be concerned to maintain a due regard to the apostles and prophets on whom we are built, whose writings, if perused with diligence and attention, subserve so much to the purposes of christian edification. But above all, let us fix our regards upon Christ as the chief corner-stone; by a union with whom we are united to each other, and the whole stress of our eternal hopes is supported. In him the whole build-
21 ing is fitly framed together; and it is by his operative influence that it groweth up to a holy temple in the Lord.
22 Let us consider ourselves as designed for this use, to be an habitation of God through the Spirit; and be concerned to cultivate that purity and sanctity which suits so excellent a relation and so high a dignity. Let us lift up the everlasting gates of our souls to admit that blessed Inhabitant, that he may come and dwell in us, and consecrate us more and more unto himself.

SECTION V.

Farther to recommend the gospel to the regard of these Gentile converts, the apostle strongly expresses the sense he had of the divine goodness in committing it to his trust, though he was called to sacrifice his liberty in its defence. Eph. iii. 1—12.

Eph. iii. 1.

SECT. 5. EPH. III. 1

FOR this cause, and for my faithful testimony to this glorious gospel, the plan of which is so extensive, so wise, and so benevolent, how little soever it may suit the narrow minds of my bigoted countrymen, *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner of Jesus Christ*;[a] being brought under this calamity, the loss of my liberty, *for the sake of you Gentiles*, and in consequence of that firm attachment which I am known to have to your cause and interest. For this

Eph. iii. 1.
FOR this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

1 *Being built on the foundation.*] It is observed by Lord Shaftesbury, that the apostle accommodates himself to the taste of the Ephesians, who were extremely fond of *architecture*, by frequent allusions to *building*, and to the majesty, order, and beauty of which, their *temple* consecrated to Diana was so celebrated a masterpiece. (Compare chap. iii. 17, 18; and iv. 16, 29.) But it is certain many allusions of this kind are to be met with in other Epistles, particularly 1 Cor. iii. 9—17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1; vi. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 4—8.

m *Of the apostles and prophets.*] I have often wondered that such sensible writers as the late Lord Barrington and Mr. Jeffery should conclude that the prophets here spoken of are those of the New Testament. Compare Eph iii. 5; iv. 11. with Matt. xvi. 18. See *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay ii. p. 44; and Jeffery's *Review*, p. 80. Their chief argument is, that the Gentile church here spoken of *was not built upon the foundation* of the *Old Testament prophets*. But not to insist upon it, that when the converted Gentiles came to consult the Jewish writings, they might derive from them great encouragement in their faith, it is to be considered that the apostle is now speaking, not of the Ephesian or Gentile church in particular, but of the whole christian church, consisting of the aggregate body of converted Gentiles and Jews, as appears farther from what is said in the close of this verse, of Christ's being the chief Corner-stone.

a *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner*, &c.] This is often alleged as an instance of an extraordinary length of sentence in the original, supposing that what begins the first verse of this chapter is resumed again at ver. 14. and not ended till the close of chap. iv. 3; so that the sense runs, "*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ for "you Gentiles,—for this cause,* [*I say,*] *I bow my knees*, &c.—[*even*] "*I the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you therefore that ye walk wor-"thy*," &c. Yet as the easy supposition that εἰμι is understood, would make the construction much more obvious and plain, I have therefore inserted the word *am*. But if I were sure the sentence in the original was of the utmost length that any have maintained, I should think the division of it in any translation very pardonable, especially in a paraphrase. I have often broken one period into many, as being much more concerned to give the true sense as intelligibly as possible, than to preserve the grammatical construction of every word in the version where this might occasion obscurity; and it will not be easy for any who have not been exer-

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words:

4 Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery which from

I am persuaded you will consider as the occasion of my bonds, *since* I well know *you have heard* and are acquainted with *the dispensation of the* adorable *grace of God*,[b] *which*, by his special favour to myself and those to whom I am the herald of it, *hath been given to me in your behalf:* my zeal for which has been the means of stirring up the malice of the Jews against me: and I am confident you cannot forget what you have often heard, *that* to prepare and furnish me for this important work to which the Lord hath called me, *he made known to me by* immediate *revelation*, and not by the instrumentality of any human testimony, *the* great mystery which had so long been concealed: *as I have briefly wrote before*, and hinted more than once in this Epistle, (chap. i. 9, 10; ii. 11. *et seq.*) in passages which, though they contain not a full illustration of the matter, yet suggest some material hints with regard to it; *By which when you read*[c] what I have laid before you, and attentively consider and review [*it*,] *you may observe* and form some notion of *my understanding in the mystery of Christ*,[d] which so many still remain ignorant of, and so many others are unwilling to acknowledge and admit.

This I with great propriety call a mystery, it being a most astonishing and glorious system of divine truth, *which in other* preceding *generations was not made known to the sons of men:*[e] having neither been discovered to the Gentiles, who were wholly strangers to it, nor manifested under any former dispensation to those whom God had taken for his people, with any such perspicuity *as* that with which *it is now revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets* of the New Testament dispensation, who have the word of wisdom and of knowledge given to them. (1 Cor. xii. 8.) And what I chiefly have in view as one very material part of it, is this, *that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs* with the Jews in spiritual privileges, *and* should be members *of the same body* with them, *and partakers together of his promise in Christ;* particularly of the communication of the Holy Spirit, in token of their sharing in all the other blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, which the Jews have fondly imagined to be peculiar to themselves, but which are now freely proposed to the Gentile nations *by the gospel*, which we are commissioned every where to preach.

This is the gospel *of which I was made a minister*, not of my own motion or seeking, nor at all on account of any worthiness in me, but *according to the* free *gift of the grace of God, which* in so extraordinary and remarkable a manner *was given to me*, calling me forth to the apostleship *by the energy of his power*, which wrought so great a change in me as to prepare and qualify me for that high and holy office, to the purposes of which no man living can be more averse than I once was. And when I think of this I am covered with confusion, and know not how to speak of myself in any terms of sufficient abasement: for such was the astonishing condescension of the great God, and such his favour to a worthless creature, that *unto me, who am* so unworthy of the honour of being called an apostle, that I am *less than the least of all saints*,[f] and look upon myself, on account of what I formerly was, as below the very meanest among them, *this grace was given*, that I should be employed *to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;* which while I am endeavouring to trace out in their particular contents, I am quite lost in rapturous amazement, and all my most elevated conceptions are swallowed up in that unfathomable fulness which can never be exhausted. Yet to this honourable and important office am I graciously appointed to enlighten and instruct as well the Gentiles as the Jews, (Acts xxvi. 18.) *and to make all men see*, in some affecting measure and degree, *what* [*is*] *the* happiness arising from the *communication of the mystery* of the calling of the Gentiles

cised in works of this kind, to imagine the difficulty which this precaution has often brought upon me. Compare note b, on chap. i. 3. § 1. p. 801.

b *Since* I well know *you have heard*, &c.] So I translate the words, εἰγε ἠκούσατε, for I think it cannot be imagined that they had *never heard*, during his long abode at Ephesus, from him and from many others, an account of the extraordinary revelation of the gospel which he had received. As for the inference that some would draw from hence, that this Epistle (if it was not written to some other church where he had never preached) was written before Paul came to live at Ephesus, I think it absolutely inconclusive; not only considering that the particle εἰγε has often the signification of *forasmuch as*, or *since*, or *seeing that;* but because it is certain he was now a prisoner at Rome, which he never was till long after that abode at Ephesus. (Acts xix. 10, 11.) I may add, that the words, ἠκούσατε τὴν οἰκονομίαν are not so properly rendered, *Ye have heard* [*of*] *the dispensation*, &c. which determines the sense to what they might have learned by report from others; they may as well express their having heard this dispensation from his own mouth.

c *By which when you read.*] Dr. Whitby would render the phrase, πρὸς ὃ ἀναγινώσκοντες, *by attending to which:* but as ἀναγινώσκω signifies, to *read* and *review*, or (as we vulgarly speak) to *con* a thing over in the mind, to root it there, which must suppose *frequent reading*, I chose to retain the common translation.

d *You may observe my understanding in the mystery of Christ.*] This Dr. Goodwin thinks to be the highest encomium made by the apostle on any of his own writings; whence he concludes that this is the *richest* and *noblest* of all the Epistles, and thinks it was peculiarly intended to be so, to reward the generous zeal of the Ephesians in burning their *curious books*, by a book of *divine knowledge*, incomparably more valuable than any or all of them. (See Acts xix. 19.) I pretend not absolutely to decide on the comparative excellency of his Epistles, but could not forbear mentioning so remarkable and ingenious a thought. See Goodwin's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 2.

e *Which in other generations was not made known*, &c.] The following verse so plainly determines this passage to *the calling of the Gentiles* into the church, that I think there can be no controversy as to the general sense of it; though it seemed to me, that the apostle's explaining it in the manner he presently does, rendered it improper to anticipate that explication in the paraphrase. It was indeed *known long before* that the Gentiles should be added to the church; but it was *not known* that they should be *heirs of the same inheritance*, and *partakers of the promise of the Spirit*. The Jews rather thought of their being *slaves to them;* and least of all did they imagine that *the middle wall* of their *ceremonies* should be *broken down*, and the Gentiles admitted to the *full privileges* of God's people, without *circumcision* and obedience to the *Mosaic law;* which the christian converts among them heard of at first with great amazement. Acts x. 45; xi. 18.

f *Less than the least of all saints.*] It has often been observed here, that the apostle makes a new word, which, as grammarians would speak, is the comparative degree of the superlative, ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ, which I think no translation can fully equal, or very happily express. No doubt he refers to what he had been formerly, when he *persecuted the church of God*. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 9; and 1 Tim. i. 13.) But whether there be, as Dr. Goodwin thinks, Vol. I. p. 3., any reference to his name Paulus, which in the Roman language signified, *little*, and at the same time to the *lowness* of his *stature*, which occasioned Chrysostom's calling him πυγμαῖον ἀνδρα, *a man three cubits high*, I do not pretend to say; and only hint at what Sygonius says, that Æmilius Paulus obtained his additional name from his *low stature*.

SECT. 5. EPH. III.

to be joint-heirs with the Jews, *which from eternal ages was hid*, being concealed *in* the secret counsels of the ever-blessed and incomprehensible *God*,[g] *who*, as he at first *created all things by Jesus Christ*, his Divine Son, (John i. 3.) hath new-created also all that are in him by a lively faith, and by him raised them to the prospect of complete holiness and happiness.[h] And this is now revealed and set in a new light, after the more imperfect intimations of it that were given before, *that the manifold wisdom of God*, discovering itself in such a beautiful and well-ordered variety of dispensations, *might now* more fully *be made known*, and be displayed in all its brightness *to the principalities and powers in heavenly* [*places*,] even to all the various orders of angelic beings, *by means of* what is done for *the church*,[i] which is the happy object of a love that hath produced effects beyond what the spirits of heaven could otherwise have conceived or apprehended; and in the contemplation of it they are furnished with new motives to adore that grace, which by the manifestations of it to the church displays new glories unparalleled in all the history of heaven, in the surprising methods taken to complete the number of its blessed inhabitants.

the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places*, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

11 All which gracious operations proceed in perfect harmony with the original plan adjusted in the divine mind, *according to the eternal purpose which he formed* before all ages *in Christ Jesus our Lord*,[k] both to be executed by him, and to terminate in him; which as his well-beloved Son he was appointed to effect, and all the benefits of which he has secured

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 to be communicated to the church: Even that blessed Mediator *through whom we have freedom of speech* in our approaches to the throne of grace, *and* have *access with confidence* of being heard, as being assured of audience and acceptance *by the faith of him*; in a reliance upon whom we may address ourselves to God with the humble, cheerful liberty of children whom he hath adopted into his family, and united to himself in the dearest and most indissoluble bonds.

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4 St. Paul's understanding in the mystery of Christ is just matter of perpetual joy to the whole christian world, and especially to the Gentile churches, which have derived from thence so much of their knowledge and of their hope. Let us congratulate ourselves and each other on the propagation of so glorious a system of divine truth,
5 which had so long been concealed from ages and generations. The apostles and prophets were raised up by God to receive and reveal it, and we are entered on the blessed fruit of their labours. (John iv. 38.) Let us learn from
6 them to set a due value on our participation in that inheritance, on our union to that body to which by the gospel we are called.

8 May it particularly teach us that humility which was so conspicuous, so amiable, so admirable, in St. Paul. This excellent man, this distinguished favourite of heaven, who stood in the foremost rank of christians, of ministers, of apostles, yet labours for words to express the sense he had of his own meanness and unworthiness, and commits a kind of solecism in language, that he might lay himself as low as possible; using the most diminutive term that could be, to describe himself as one who in his own esteem was less than the least of all saints! And shall we then exalt ourselves, and be proud of the trifling distinctions that raise our obscure heads a little above some of our brethren?

Let those in particular who have the honour of being called to the sacred office of the ministry, consider how reasonable it is, that instead of being puffed up with it they should rather be humbled, when they reflect how unworthy the best of men are of it, and in how defective a manner the most faithful discharge it; while yet the
8 grace is given them to preach the riches of Christ, his unsearchable riches. Let these be made the frequent subject of their preaching; and let all the course of it be directed, in a proper manner, to the illustration of that subject. Let the well-chosen phrase which the apostle uses here, teach them and all christians to search more and more into this unfathomable abyss; as still sure to discover new wonders in the variety and fulness of its inexhaustible contents beyond what they have known before, and to find new pleasures in tracing again those already known.

10 This glorious theme is worthy of the contemplation of angels; and we are elsewhere told that these celestial spirits desire to look into it, (1 Pet. i. 12.) and to learn new displays of the divine attributes from the church. Let us then hear and worship as under their inspection; and let not our hearts be cold to these sacred truths, which are our own salvation, while they rejoice in them only on the general principles of piety and benevolence.

11 All that is done in the prosecution of the glorious design of our redemption now, is the result of those counsels

g *What is the communication of the mystery, &c.*] Some would translate the following clause, (τη αποκεκρυμμενη απο των αιωνων,) *which has been hid from the ages*, that is, from the *former* ages of the world; but as in ver. 11. it is called, προθεσιν των αιωνων, *an eternal purpose*, and is here said to be *hid in God*, I apprehend no need of varying the translation where the phrase is the same, though to be sure this interpretation includes the sense of the other. It is evident that here is an allusion to the burying a treasure in some secret place, (compare Josh. vii. 21; and Matt. xiii. 44. where the same word is used,) as there may also be in the word ανεξιχνιαστον, ver. 8. which properly signifies, *what cannot be traced out:* and it is certain that though something is now *known* concerning this *glorious mystery*, yet there is an incomparably greater part, concerning which we only know in the general that it is *a rich treasure*, without particularly knowing either *what, how much*, or *where* it is.

h *Created all things by Jesus Christ.*] Mr. Locke pleads, as Diodati had done before, that this refers, not to the *creation* of the world, but to the *renovation of it*; and so may be considered as an intimation that God always intended Christ should have the honour of *forming all things anew*, and therefore concealed *the mystery* in himself till after he was come. But the words, if taken in the most extensive sense, contain both a certain and a pertinent truth.

i *Be made known, to the principalities and powers in heavenly [places,]* &c.] The prophecies of the Old Testament gave strong intimations, at least, of the intended *calling of the Gentiles* into the church; and the angels seem expressly to refer to it in what they said to the shepherds, and in their anthem at the nativity of Christ. (Luke ii. 10, 14.) I apprehend, therefore, that the apostle here would lead the thoughts of his readers to the series of divine dispensations as gradually opening this great discovery, and not merely to what he preached concerning it; though to be sure that greatly illustrated the scheme.—It is strangely unnatural to explain this clause, as Mr. Locke would do, of *the Jewish principalities and powers*; by which he is driven to the hard shift of connecting εν τοις επουρανιοις with *the wisdom of God*, which the first reading of the words in the original will show how little they will bear.

k *According to the eternal purpose, &c.*] Mr. Locke would render κατα προθεσιν των αιωνων, &c. *according to that predisposition of the ages*, or several dispensations *which he made in Christ Jesus*, which by the pre-ordination of God's purpose were all regulated and constituted in him; and Dr. Whitby, taking it in the same sense, explains it of his being promised in the first age to Adam, typified in the second to the Jews, and in the last age preached to *all the world*. But perhaps this interpretation may coincide more with a sense they are so solicitous to avoid, than either of these learned authors was aware.

of peace which God from eternal ages formed in his own compassionate mind. To that source, after the example of the apostle, let us frequently trace all with the most exalted gratitude; recollecting that we receive this adoption in Christ, who is the great Mediator of our access unto God. Let us therefore, on the one hand, take all our encouragements in prayer from views to him; and on the other, having such a foundation for it, let us come with an holy boldness to the divine throne, that so we may obtain the mercy and grace which we daily and hourly need. SECT. 5.

SECTION VI.

The apostle represents the earnestness with which he prayed for their establishment in christianity, as the best wish the most fervent affection could dictate for them. Eph. iii. 13, *to the end.*

EPH. iii. 13.

WHEREFORE I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

SUCH and so great are the privileges to which the gospel raises us; *wherefore*, as I have been the happy instrument of bringing it among you, though (as I said before, ver. 1.) I am now a prisoner for you Gentiles, yet *I desire*, my dear brethren, *that ye faint not*, or be in any degree discouraged *at my affliction for you, which*, when it is thoroughly considered upon what account I endure these sufferings, must be acknowledged to be so far from any reason to dishearten you, that it may rather serve for the encouragement and confirmation of your faith, and *is* indeed *your glory:* for it is really an honour that God does you, in employing his faithful servant to lay out his time and strength and even to sacrifice his liberty in your cause; and that courage and cheerfulness in which God is pleased to support me in the midst of all these hardships, shows his farther regard for you, and may justly be esteemed as intended by him, not for my comfort only, but for an additional honour to you. SECT. 6. EPH. III. 13

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

For this cause, that the great work in which I am engaged may more successfully be carried on, and that the purposes of these my sufferings may be answered in your consolation and the divine glory, while I am here in the retirements of my prison, I am daily pouring out my soul to God on your account, and, with the most affectionate concern for your establishment, *I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:* Even of that great and glorious Redeemer, *of whom the whole family* both *in heaven and on earth is named*,[a] by whom angels and men are incorporated into one society, and as well those who are gone before to the possession of the heavenly inheritance, as those who are here on earth, receive a more excellent name than that of children of Abraham, and are united in one happy family, of which he is the Head. And the great petition I am addressing to his Father and ours, is this: *that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory*, out of those redundant stores of goodness in his gracious heart which can never be exhausted, *to be mightily strengthened by* the effectual operation of *his Spirit*, invigorating and increasing every grace, and carrying on his work with abundant success *in the inner man*, that is, in all the various powers of your souls; so as thereby to fortify you under every trial, and animate you more and more to every good work: And as it is from Christ as our common Head that all these blessings of the Holy Spirit are imparted, I am daily importunate with God, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts*, that he may take up his stated residence in your souls *by* the continual exercise of a lively *faith*, by means of which a constant intercourse with him will be maintained, and an assurance given you of your interest in him; *being* also *rooted and grounded in love*, stedfastly fixed and settled, not only in the knowledge of his love to you, but in the exercise of a fervent love to him and to each other, which will so greatly tend both to nourish and establish the soul: *That*, under the influence of these united principles of faith and love, *ye may be enabled with all saints* in every place, to whom, whether known or unknown, I wish this as the most invaluable blessing, *to apprehend* with greater clearness *what* [*is*] *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*[b] of the great mystery of redeeming love, and to survey with a becoming astonishment and with some suitable conceptions, the vast dimensions of that glorious plan; that in some measure you may see how wide it extends, even to all nations and ages; how far it reaches, even from everlasting to everlasting; from what an abyss of misery it delivers us, and to what a summit of felicity and glory it exalts us. 14

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth

This is my earnest and importunate prayer for you, and for all the rest of my christian brethren; that ye may thus be enabled with greater admiration to contemplate *and* more abundantly *to know the love of Christ, which*, after all we can say or think of it, *surpasses* 15 16 17 18 19

a *Of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.*] As Christ is the Person last mentioned immediately before the words ἐξ οὗ, *of whom*, it seems most reasonable to interpret this clause as referring to *him;* though others rather chuse to understand it *of the Father*, who is indeed the principal Subject of the foregoing sentence, nor would I insist upon the sense here given. Both Mr. Locke and Diodati explain it of *God the Father*, the Lord of the whole family, including all believers who are jointly with Christ, who is already in heaven, *the sons of God;* in confirmation of which sense M. L'Enfant observes, that we are said to be ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, and διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ: and it is certain christians are said to belong to *the family of God:* (chap. ii. 19.)—Mr. Boyse also goes into the same interpretations, (in his *Four Last Things*, p. 588.) and argues from hence, that *departed saints* are *in heaven* before the resurrection, or otherwise, according to this distribution, as they are not *on earth*, they would not belong to *God's family*. But heaven may here be taken in a great latitude for all the regions of happiness in the invisible world, though the place in which separate spirits dwell should be different from that which they are to inhabit with Christ after the resurrection. The Jewish writers call *heaven* the upper and *earth* the lower family of God.

b *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*] It has often and very justly been observed, that this *text* is *wonderfully emphatical*. Bodies are well known to have only *three* dimensions, *length*, and *breadth*, and *thickness;* but the apostle Paul divides this last into its *depth* downwards and its *height* upwards, measuring from the middle point; and so makes use of it to express the *depth of misery* from which the love of Christ delivers us, as well as the *height of glory* to which it exalts us. See Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 350.

SECT. 6. EPH. III.

by infinite degrees the most advanced *knowledge*,[c] even of the angels themselves, and how much more of mortal men in this imperfect state: but I wish you more enlarged apprehensions of it, *that* so *ye may be filled with all the fulness of God*,[d] that your expanded hearts, being dilated more and more, may be rendered capable of admitting larger degrees than ever of divine love, and more ample indwellings of divine consolation, till at length ye arrive at that happy state in which ye shall attain to a full perfection in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, where that which is perfect shall come, and ye shall know even as also ye are known.

knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

With these prayers am I softening the sorrows of my own imprisonment, and endeavouring to do what I can towards supplying to you and other christians the deficiency of those public services which my present confinement forbids; and I doubt not but these humble petitions will come up in remembrance before God. Methinks I see them even *now* descending in blessings on my head and on yours, from the adorable Source of all good; and therefore I cannot forbear adding, *To-him that is able to do* all things for us, not only to the utmost extent of our petitions, but *abundantly exceeding all that we* [*can*] *ask or conceive, according to the power which* is already so illustriously displayed, and *worketh* so efficaciously *in us*: *To him* [*be*] *glory in the* whole *church* both of Jews and Gentiles, the happy society which he hath so wonderfully redeemed and so bountifully enriched *by Christ Jesus* its glorious Head, through whom all his blessings descend to us, and our praises ascend to him; and may they ascend *throughout all* the most distant ages and periods, while earth with its successive *generations* continues; and may they resound from all his redeemed in the mansions of glory, far beyond the limits of time, even *for ever and ever*.[e] *Amen*. Let your hearts with mine consent to it; and in that consent anticipate something of that pleasure with which we hope for ever to render these praises.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14 Let our eyes be frequently directed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our knees be frequently
15 bowed before him, invoking him under this amiable and delightful character as the great Father of that one family which he hath been pleased in infinite mercy to form to himself; a family consisting not only of those who were originally the inhabitants of heaven, who were born in his house and have never offended him, but of many who have been and many who are the inhabitants of earth, once the children of the curse, and the heirs of death and destruction.

15 Let us all remember it is now the family of Christ, our great elder Brother, who, though the Lord of heaven, disdains not to own that humble relation while the angels are adoring him as standing at the head of the society, and esteem it their honour to be related to him. Let us be more affected with the grace extended to us, and consider our relation to him as a bond of union among ourselves. While we are of this family, let not the different garbs we wear, or the different apartments in which we are lodged, alienate our affections from each other; but let us often be thinking of that blessed day when the whole family shall meet above, and let us in the mean time endeavour to behave as worthy members of it, and have its common interests at heart.

And from that eminently faithful and honourable branch of the family, the blessed apostle whose words we have been reading, let us learn what to wish for ourselves and our brethren; even that God, according to the
16 riches of his grace, would strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that we may attain great degrees of vigour and confirmation in religion, by the vital and powerful operations of the Holy Spirit of God upon our hearts; that we may be strong to discharge every duty, to resist temptations, to conquer our enemies, to
17 assist our brethren, and to glorify our Father and our Saviour. Let us earnestly desire that Christ may not only now and then visit our hearts, but by the habitual and lively exercises of faith may even dwell in them: that we may be thus continually conversant with him as our most honoured and beloved Guest, and that love may take deep root in our hearts, and be solidly grounded there. Let us earnestly pray that, under divine illuminations, we may be enabled to form more exalted and suitable conceptions than we have ever yet attained, of the breadth, and
18 length, and depth, and height of this unfathomable, this inconceivable love of Christ, which surpasses the perfect
19 knowledge even of saints in glory. And oh that by these contemplations we may find ourselves daily filled with all the fulness of God, so that our hearts may even overflow with the abundant communication of his gifts and graces!

What shall we say in return for the knowledge he hath already given us, for the love which he hath already wrought in our hearts, if we are so happy as to know the grace of God in truth? What! but that believing his
20 power to outdo all it hath already wrought for us, yea, to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, we will still confide in him and call upon him; and will humbly endeavour to bear our part with the whole
21 church in ascribing to our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, and our Father, glory throughout all ages, and even world without end. Amen.

c *To know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge.*] I can conceive no imaginable reason, with Mr. Locke, to confine the interpretation of this text merely to *the love of Christ* in *calling the Gentiles*. Well may we recollect on this occasion all that love which Christ has displayed in redeeming his church out of every nation and kingdom under heaven, Gentiles as well as Jews, from final misery, and exalting it to eternal glory. And this is so remarkable and admirable, that the most extensive explication of this text must certainly be the most proper.—Nor can the phrase of *its surpassing knowledge* merely signify its exceeding the Jewish dispensation, (which is seldom, if ever, called *knowledge*,) but its exceeding *our most elevated conceptions*. The *catachresis* here used greatly enhances the beauty of the expression on this explication, whereas otherwise it must appear very dry and jejune.

d *That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*] It is rightly observed by the learned and pious Professor Frankius, (*Manud. ad Sac. Script. legend.* p. 191.) that there is in these two verses an allusion to the *temple*; expressing his wish that the *foundation* might be so extensively and *deeply* laid, that a *superstructure* may be raised extending itself to such a magnificent *length*, and *breadth*, and *height*, as to be fitted to receive and lodge the *sacred Guest*, that he might *dwell* as it were *uncrowded* in their hearts. And in this view it will indeed appear a noble train of thought.

e *Throughout all generations for ever and ever.*] This is one of St. Paul's self-invented and most expressive phrases, εις πασας τας γενεας του αιωνος των αιωνων, which a learned critic justly defies any version whatsoever fully to express. (See Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 83.) *Through all the successions of an endless eternity* may come something near it; but even this, emphatical as it may seem, falls vastly short of the sublimity and spirit of the original.

SECTION VII.

From the consideration of his own sufferings, as well as of the many important respects in which all true christians are united, the apostle pathetically exhorts them to mutual love and to steadiness in religion, by representing to them the glorious foundation which Christ as the great Head of the church hath laid for it. Eph. iv. 1—16.

Eph. iv. 1.

Eph. iv. 1.
1 THEREFORE the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

I HAVE mentioned my bonds but a little while ago, and I shall mention them now again; for nothing can tend so much to soften them as to find them the occasion of honour to Christ and good to his church; and nothing surely can more powerfully move you to regard the exhortations I would offer to you. *I therefore* call upon you to consider me while you read this as in confinement, not for any crime that hath deserved such treatment, but as *the prisoner of the Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] in bonds for my fidelity to that gospel he hath committed to my charge. And I *beseech you* by the memory of my chains, *that ye* make it your great care and daily labour to *walk worthy of the* high and holy *calling wherewith ye are called:* let there be nothing in your temper and conduct beneath the dignity to which you are raised, and the illustrious hopes which are set before you: but show that the crown of glory is ever in your eye, and that your hearts are duly impressed with it: And particularly as you have received the pardon of your sins, and are adopted into the family of God, let the remembrance of it engage you to behave *with all humility* and lowliness of heart, under a sense of your former guilt and misery, and your unworthiness of that mercy which God hath magnified towards you; *and* thus to carry it with *meekness* towards those who may have troubled you by their frowardness, tenderly passing over their infirmities and indiscretions, as sensible what great offences have been forgiven to yourselves. And should you meet with injuries from any of your brethren, as it is to be feared that even among professing christians this will sometimes happen, do not think much to bear with them; but let me entreat you, that ye endure them *with long-suffering* and patience, without seeking revenge, and *forbear one another* in such circumstances, *in* the unfeigned exercise of mutual *love*:[b] And not on this occasion only, but with respect to your whole carriage to each other, how different soever your sentiments and practices may be in matters of an indifferent nature, be still *endeavouring*, so far as in you lies, *to keep the unity of the Spirit*, that unity of heart and affection which becomes those who are regenerated by one Spirit acting on them all, and forming them into one body; joining them thus together *in the bond of peace*,[c] and sweetly engaging them, not only to the most pacific, but to the most affectionate, conduct to each other.

SECT. 7.

EPH. IV.

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

For this is indeed the case with regard to all that have truly and cordially embraced the gospel, and nothing can be stronger than the motives to this union, when it is considered, that with respect to the whole church [*there is*] only *one body*, of which ye all are members, and should as such have the same care for one another, (1 Cor. xii. 25.) *and* in this body there is *one Spirit* that enlivens, actuates, and fills it, under whose influence it should be your concern to act in such a way as to resemble him who is the Spirit of love and peace; and there is one inheritance that ye are waiting for, *as ye are also called in one* blessed *hope of your calling*, and should live therefore as inspired with the same joyful expectation of being all brought to the same blessed end, to one glorious abode in the heavenly world: There is also *one Lord* and Head of all, even Jesus Christ, who hath come down from heaven and died for our salvation; that he might incorporate us all into one society; that he might instruct us all in *one faith*, and might unite us all in *one baptism*,[d] in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: And thus he introduces us all into the knowledge and favour of the *one God and Father of all* true believers, *who*, in the infinite perfections of his essence, [*is*] *above all*, governing all without exception as the supreme Ruler of universal nature; who animates *and* operates *through all*, by the diffusive influence of his vital presence; *and* who is particularly *in you all*, by that special residence which he holds in those that are the temples of his grace.

4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Such are the great engagements we are under to the strictest and most affectionate union; and howsoever we may be distinguished from each other by the variety of our gifts or by the difference of our stations, these several distinctions ought to be regarded by us, not as

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according

a *The prisoner of the Lord.*] Some have observed of this Epistle, and of the others which were written by the apostle Paul in his *imprisonment*, (namely, those to the Colossians and the Philippians, as well as that to Philemon and the Second to Timothy,) that they are more especially remarkable for their excellence, and discover a peculiar *savour* of the *things of God*; by which it may be seen that while *his sufferings* did abound, *his consolations* also did abound much more. It is however manifest that this Epistle, as it sets forth in the preceding part of it the gracious design of God in the gospel-dispensation, and represents the benefits and privileges that belong to *all the faithful in Christ Jesus*, as well to Gentiles as to Jews, is cast into a strain of thanksgivings and prayers, and written (as it were) all in a rapture, in a sublime and elevated style, as flowing from a mind transported with the consideration of the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God in the work of redemption, and of the amazing love displayed in Christ towards the Gentile world. And the *remaining part of it* is no less admirable for the engaging manner in which he improves what he had before delivered, urging the duties which became their character with the greatest tenderness, in expressions full of love and endearment, adding the strongest arguments to enforce them, and making mention of his bonds to recommend the exhortations that he offered to them.

b *With long-suffering, forbear one another in love.*] As there is no *copulative* between *meekness* and *long-suffering*, it seems most natural to connect the latter with the following clause: and if the exhortation be thus rendered, it will prevent the *solecism* which would arise from connecting ἀνεχόμενοι with ὑμᾶς in the verse before, to which we should be led by our translation. See Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 98.

c *To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*] See an excellent discourse on these words, in Mr. Baxter's *Practical Work*, Vol. IV. p. 628, *et seq.*

d *One baptism.*] It is mere *trifling* to object from hence against *water baptism*, since there can be no room to oppose that to the *baptism of the Spirit*; and it is very plain that the apostle, while he declared that there was but *one baptism*, practised that of water.

SECT. 7. EPH. IV.

matter of emulation and contention, *but* rather as an additional obligation to love, when we consider the great source and design of all: for *grace is given* and dispensed in different degrees *to every one of us* in particular, not for the merit of one above another, but *according to the measure of the* free *gift of Christ*,[e] in such a measure as seems best to him, the great Sovereign of the church, to bestow it; whose distributions we always know to be
7 guided by consummate wisdom and goodness, so that we all have the highest reason
8 entirely to acquiesce in them. For we receive whatever gifts we have from Christ, and they are all bestowed by him; *wherefore* the words of David may be considered as applicable to this,[f] where *he says*, (Psal. lxviii. 18.) "*When he ascended on high, he led "captivity captive,*[g] *and gave gifts unto men*;" for naturally may our devout meditations rise from that glorious pomp with which God went up from Mount Sinai, when he had triumphed over the Egyptians, and poured down blessings on his people, to that illustrious ascension of our blessed Redeemer, when he had vanquished our enemies on the cross, and returning to his Father, poured down his royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror[h] upon his faithful subjects, yea, gifts, in which those who had long been rebellious,
9 and had but lately laid down their weapons, were to share. *Now this* [*expression*] that *he ascended, what is it*, or what does it imply, *but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth*;[i] having come down from heaven and dwelt in this earth of ours, yea, and submitted even to lie in the caverns of it for a while under the power of death? For to this low humiliation our thoughts may naturally be conducted, the subject being so familiar to our mind, and the phrase so capable of suggesting these ideas to us.
10 And on the other hand, it leads us to reflect, that *he who descended* to such forms of humble abasement *is also the* very *same* glorious and triumphant Person *who ascended far above all heavens*, beyond the regions of the air, into the heaven of heavens; going up, as the Psalmist elsewhere speaks, with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet, (Psal. xlvii. 5.) received with the acclamations of all the hierarchy of heaven, and seated on a throne of glory, *that he might fill all things* with his influence, and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power.

1 Accordingly he hath shed down a rich variety of gifts and graces from his triumphal seat at the right hand of the Father, to qualify and endow his servants for those various offices in the church which he hath wisely and graciously instituted for the advancement of his interest and kingdom: *and* thus, among the gifts which he bestowed to be employed for the advantage of his people in their respective situations, *he gave some* to be *apostles*, whose office should be personal, but should extend in its effects to the remotest generations, sending them forth to preach the gospel unto every creature as his special witnesses, and forming them, under the plenary and most abundant influences of his Spirit, to the fullest knowledge of that scheme they were to publish to the world; (compare Mark. xvi. 15; and 1 Cor. xii. 28.) *and some* he gave to be *prophets*, who were to explain the mysteries of faith, and to foretell future events, by virtue of the extraordinary revelations made to them; *and some* to be *evangelists*, who were to travel from place to place, and to fulfil such particular commissions as the apostles should give, in settling and establishing the churches they had planted, (Acts xix. 22.) being furnished with such miraculous powers as were necessary for that purpose: *and*, besides these extraordinary offices, he also gave *some* to be settled *pastors and teachers*,[k] who were to be of standing use, to preside in

to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers:

e *Grace is given to every one of us*, &c.] That their differing in some respects, though united in so many, might not be urged as any plea for self-esteem, or neglect of others who wanted such distinguishing advantages, the apostle properly insists upon it, that all is communicated to us by way of free gift and sovereign liberality.

f The words of David may be considered as applicable to this.] I cannot undertake to prove that the passage here referred to is, strictly speaking, a *prediction of Christ's ascension*, and of his *shedding down* the gifts and graces of the *Spirit*. The Psalmist, celebrating a late victory, goes back in rapturous meditation to God's victory over the Egyptians, and the spoils with which he enriched the Israelites, ungrateful and rebellious as they had been, and by which he prepared for himself in the course of his providence a dwelling among them; for the tabernacle was built principally with those spoils. And the apostle beautifully accommodates the words to the triumph of an ascending Saviour, and to the royal donative of the Spirit; which he shed down on his church, into which many who had been once most rebellious were admitted, and whereby it was fitted to be his habitation. We render the clause quoted, *Thou hast received gifts for men*; but the Hebrew word signifies, *Thou hast taken*, and may either express taking from the enemy, or taking out of his own royal treasuries.

g *He led captivity captive.*] This is a phrase that signifies the leading on *a train of captives*, but may with greater emphasis be applied to those who of *conquerors* and *oppressors* are made *captives*: (Compare Judg. v. 12.) And thus it may be properly understood of the *triumph of Christ* over *sin*, *Satan*, the *world*, and *death*, by whom such multitudes were conquered and enslaved. Mr. Pierce indeed has taken great pains to prove that these words are to be interpreted of the *good angels*; as if the meaning were, "that "Christ led in triumph the *angels* who voluntarily subjected themselves to him, after having been before his *fellow-guardians* in "presiding over other countries, as he was God's *Vicegerent* in "Israel." And to establish this, he largely pleads, that neither the devils, nor the souls of departed saints, ascended with Christ into heaven, and consequently that these words must refer to the train of attendant angels. But Christ might poetically be said *to lead captivity captive*, when he triumphed over those that had subdued his people, and acquired such a power over the infernal spirits, as a conqueror has over a captive that he drags at his chariot-wheels. In this view it may also be observed, that the Egyptians, over whom God is represented as triumphing in the passage quoted from the lxviiith Psalm, though they might seem to be taken prisoners in the Red sea, (Exod. xiv. 23—28.) were not, in strictness of speech, *led in triumphal procession*, but *immediately destroyed* by the divine vengeance.

h His royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror.] Many have observed that here is an allusion to the custom of conquerors, who used to give largesses to their soldiers after a triumph. (See Limborch. *Theolog. lib.* iii. *cap.* 25. § 2.) And though the Roman instances of this custom are perhaps most familiar to our minds, yet all who are acquainted with antiquity know that it was not peculiar to them. Compare Judg. v. 28—30.

i *Into the lower parts of the earth.*] Bishop Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 229. has shown how very precariously this is urged as a proof of *Christ's descent into hell*; the phrase being such as other scriptures plainly lead us to refer, either to his *incarnation*, (Psal. cxxxix. 15.) or his descent into the *grave*. Compare Psal. lxiii. 9; and Matt. xii. 40.

k *And some, pastors and teachers.*] I shall not take upon me to determine whether *two different offices* are intended here, of which *the former* were intrusted with the care and oversight of particular churches, whereas *the latter* only were employed in instructing the people by way of exhortation, without being called to the *pastoral office*; though, if this were the case, it seems most probable they would have been expressed *distinctly* as the others are, *and some, pastors, and some, teachers.*—But I cannot forbear saying it has been justly observed, that if diocesan bishops were the very remedy by which the Holy Ghost designed to prevent or to heal those schisms,

the several congregations of the saints, taking the stated oversight of them in the Lord, and to instruct them both in public and private, as their respective circumstances should require; nor were these left destitute of proper assistances, though not distinguished by such eminent endowments as the former. Now the intent of all these institutions, offices, and gifts, was *for the perfecting of saints*, or finishing the character of holy men who should be destined *to the work of the ministry*,[l] in subordination *to the* great view that is still to be maintained, of building up and *edifying of* the church, which is *the body of Christ*, that its numbers may be increased, and each member advanced in knowledge and in grace; *Till we all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge* or acknowledgment *of the Son of God*, in such entire harmony and agreement as will cement us together in still dearer bonds; and getting above that infant-state in which so many of us now are, we shall grow up *to* the maturity of *a perfect man*, even *to the* full *measure of the* spiritual *stature*, so as to reach what may be called the standard *of the fulness of Christ*,[m] attaining to those eminent degrees of grace and goodness which will fit us to become his stated, everlasting residence, and to be filled with the most glorious tokens of his presence and favour.

SECT. 7.

EPH. IV.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, *even* Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

In the mean time, it is the design of God by these means to give us greater firmness and establishment in religion, *that we may be no longer* like little *children, tossed to and fro* as waves of the sea, *and borne about* as a vapour in the air, *with every wind of doctrine*, and every vain puff of breath uttered with violence and eagerness, and as it were mechanically managed *by the cheating sleight of* designing and interested *men*, [*and*] *by* their various *subtilty in every method of deceit*,[n] which some insinuating teachers will not fail to exercise upon you, though I hope you will be able to discern and defeat it: *But maintaining the truth in love*,[o] or stedfastly adhering to the doctrines of the gospel with that candid and charitable temper which it inculcates, and without which our clearest and most extensive knowledge will do us but little good, *may* we *grow up in all things*, from an infant to an adult state, *into him who is the Head*, [*even*] the Lord Jesus *Christ*, the great Centre of union, as well as the original Source of life and motion: And by the constant exercise of mutual affection may we be more and more united to him, *from whom*, as from the head, conveying influence and nourishment to every member, *the whole body* of christians *being harmoniously joined, and* strongly *cemented together* in the closest union, *by the supply of every joint* through proper channels of communication, (as by the veins and arteries, the nerves and sinews, in the natural body,) *according to the energy* which is *proportionable to* the necessity of *every part*, and properly adapted to its respective place and function, *makes an* uniform and happy *increase of the* whole *body*, by the regular growth and nourishment of each member, *to the edifying of itself in love:* or, in plainer terms, the whole church, by the exercise of faith in Christ as its glorious Head, is edified and supported, and each part of it grows in mutual love in proportion to the degree of its regard to him.

14

15

16

IMPROVEMENT.

If divine grace have taught us to know the hope of our calling, it will surely add great weight to these pathetic exhortations of this faithful servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, to walk worthy of it; to walk as it becomes those to do who have been favoured with a call from God, who have received the honour of a call to the blessings of his gospel, to the privileges and hopes of his children. It will teach us that humility, meekness, and long-suffering, of which our Divine Saviour was so glorious an example, which will engage us to the exercise of mutual forbearance, and which so well suits those whom he hath brought into so happy a state. Ver. 1 2

May we all experimentally know the sweetness which attends a constant care to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that we may labour earnestly to maintain it, and with the utmost diligence may guard against those things which might lead us in any degree to violate it! 3

To engage us to this, let those arguments which the apostle suggests be familiar to our mind. Do we not all indeed belong to one body, however called by different denominations? Have we not all, so far as we are truly christians, received one Spirit? Is there not one hope of our common calling, even that of dwelling together in one and the same blissful world, with God and with each other? Have we not one Lord, even Jesus Christ, to whom we all equally profess subjection? who hath taught us one faith, who hath instituted one baptism, and who hath 4 5

of which the Ephesian church was in such apparent danger, (Acts xx. 29, 30.) it is very strange there should be no mention of them amidst all these ecclesiastics which are here enumerated, though some of them inferior to the supposed bishop in dignity.

l *For the perfecting of saints to the work of the ministry.*] Bishop Burnet understands the former clause, of their being *initiated into the church* by the holy ordinance of *baptism*. (See Burnet, *On the Articles*, p. 232.) Others would render προς τον καταρτισμον, *for the compacting, &c.* as if it signified their being *brought together* and united into one society, whether they had been formerly Jews or Gentiles. But I rather think, with Dr. Marshall, the clauses are to be connected, and may more properly be rendered, (as in Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. II. p. 174.) *For the fitting of holy men to the work of the ministry*; which strongly implies by the way, that *no unholy man* should be employed in it. And thus there can be no necessity to suppose a transposition of the words, with Grotius, as if the meaning were, *For the work of the ministry*, which is *to perfect the saints, and to edify the body of Christ.*

m *To the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*] The sense given in the paraphrase is so obvious, and suits and illustrates the peculiarity of the phrase so well, that I cannot but wonder at the impertinence of those who (as Dr. Lightfoot tells us in his *Remains*, p. 289.) have inferred from this text, that the *saints* should be *raised* at the last day exactly of the *age of Christ* when he died, and that their *stature* should be just the *same* with his; referring to the ambiguity of the word, ηλικια, as signifying both *stature* and *age.*

n *By the cheating sleight of men,* [*and*] *by their subtilty in every method of deceit.*] The word κυβεια, as many critics have observed, properly signifies the *artifice* of those infamous gamesters who know how *to cog the dice.* Some would render the last words, εν πανουργια προς την μεθοδειαν της πλανης, *by craft and doubling, according to the subtle method of imposture*; but I think the rendering above is more literal, and am in part obliged to Mr. Blackwall for the version and paraphrase here. See his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 305.

o *Maintaining the truth in love.*] It is to be hoped that no reader, and especially none of the sacred order, will fail to observe what the apostle here so plainly asserts, namely, that it was the design of the ministry to preserve *peace* and *charity*, as well as *orthodoxy, regularity*, and *discipline*, in the church.

SECT. 7. introduced and consecrated us to one God and Father of all? And what are the considerations which should prevail so far as to divide us, when compared with such bonds as these?

EPH. IV. 16 Let us all therefore, in the name of this God who is over all, who operates through all and in us all, in the name of this one Saviour and one Spirit, (awful and endearing names, into which we were all baptized,) charge it upon our own souls, that we not only do nothing by a factious and uncharitable temper to divide his church, but that we study what we can do to heal its breaches, and to promote its growth and edification. And let us pray that God would guide and succeed our endeavours for that purpose, and preserve our hearts in such a situation and temper, that we may stand continually willing to give up every temporal interest that may interfere with such a design; yea, and even to make our own blood, if such were the will of God, the cement of those wounds, at which a body so intimately united to Christ has so long been bleeding almost to death.

Were we actually to give such a proof of our regard to it, we could but very imperfectly repay the condescension 9 and love of that Saviour, who for us descended to these low regions of the earth, and dwelt for a while among 8 the dead; and then triumphantly rising and ascending on high, led those enemies that had before held us in captivity themselves captive, as at his chariot-wheels; and having received gifts for men, scattered them down with 10 such royal munificence, that he might fill all things, and fit his ministers for the offices to which he had destined them.

11 These his ministers we are taught by this passage to regard as the special gift of his love to the church, and as such let us adore him for them; not only for apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but also for pastors and 12 teachers. And let us earnestly pray, that through the continued influences of that Spirit which he hath sent down from on high, holy men may in every succeeding age be so perfectly and completely fitted for the work of the 13 ministry, that the body of Christ may be edified; that by this means we may all come to that union, to that strength, to that full maturity, to which, by calling us into the fellowship of the gospel, he intended to raise us.

14 In the mean time, while we are advancing towards it, may we rise above that childish weakness which would make us the sport of every wind of doctrine, and a prey to every artifice of designing men. Let us ever maintain a 15 due regard to the united interests of truth and love, that our union with Christ may be secured, and our growth in him more happily and abundantly advanced.

SECTION VIII.

The apostle urges the converted Ephesians to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles by the holiness of their behaviour, as they were so much distinguished from them by knowledge and grace; and particularly presses upon them the duties of veracity, meekness, and purity, Eph. iv. 17—30.

Eph. iv. 17.

SECT. 8. *THIS I say, therefore,* for your farther instruction how to walk worthy of your calling, *and* most earnestly and affectionately *testify* it to you *in the* name of the *Lord, that* now ye are so happily brought into the christian church, and made partakers of such privileges

EPH. IV. 17 and advantages, *ye no longer walk,* as alas! ye have so long done, and *as the rest of the Gentiles* who remain unconverted still continue to *walk, in* such a course as plainly shows *the vanity of their mind,* amused with the poor empty trifles of this world, and en-

18 slaved to low and mean pursuits, utterly unworthy of their rational nature: *Having the understanding darkened* with respect to spiritual things, by the influence of the prince of darkness upon them, and *being alienated* in affection as well as in their practice *from the life of God,*[a] from that noble principle of true religion which is indeed the divine life in the soul, forming it to the service and imitation of him by whom it is implanted; to which they are wholly strangers, and have indeed an utter aversion to it, *by reason of the ignorance* of truth and goodness *that is in them;* yea, *because of the* absolute *blindness* and obstinacy *of their heart,*[b] the evil passions of which turn it into a kind of chaos, which will not admit the rays of divine truth shining around them in the works of creation and providence, by the observation of which they would be formed to much better notions,

19 even on natural principles, if they would but do justice to themselves. But, alas! what can be expected from wretches who have debauched their consciences with such a course of profligate immoralities as to have lost all sense of shame? *who being grown* quite callous (as it were) and *insensible* to all goodness, *have abandoned themselves* to every kind of enormity, and especially *to* the grossest *lewdness,* so as *to work all uncleanness with* insatiable *greediness;* transgressing the bounds, not only of virtue and decency, but even of natural appetite, and shamefully soliciting their own lusts, under a sad incapacity of nobler and more rational enjoyments.

20 Into such profligate and brutal sensualities as these the heathen world are sunk; *but ye have not so learned Christ,*[c] as if his religion were a mere system of speculation, that

Eph. iv. 17.

THIS I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind:

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ.

a *The life of God.*] I apprehend this does not merely signify *a life prescribed by God* to his people, as Mr. Locke understands it, but that it intimates *a life* consisting in a righteous and holy *imitation* of his perfections, and a constant *devotedness* to his service; and perhaps it may also intimate its being originally *derived* from him. Compare ver. 24.

b *Because of the blindness of their heart.*] This is explained by Chrysostom, Dr. Whitby, and other commentators of note, both ancient and modern, as referring to their Gentile state; but though there is no doubt but it refers to that, yet I see no reason to limit such a description only to the dark and ignorant heathens: it is, as Dr. Owen observes, too just a representation of the *natural blindness* of men in their unregenerate state.—How the words νους, διανοιαι, and καρδια, which all come into this description, are to be distinguished, is matter of much debate. It is certain they are used in different senses, not only by different writers, but by the same writers in different places: but on the whole, it seems most probable to me that νους here signifies *the mind* in general, comprehending διανοιαι, *the intellectual faculties,* and καρδια, the *affections* and *passions;* by the irregularity and obstinacy of which *the understanding* is often obscured, and led into the falsest and most irrational judgments. See below, note h, on ver. 23.

c *Ye have not so learned Christ.*] This may perhaps intimate that there was a *manner* of *learning Christ,* which might seem more consistent with such irregularities, and may glance on some teachers who called themselves christians, and yet took very little care to inculcate practical religion. Many passages in the apostle's writings show this to have been actually the case, though it seems these teachers had not much footing at Ephesus. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 3.

might leave you practically attached to such abominable vices. Its precepts inculcate upon you lessons of the strictest purity, and I am persuaded that you feel the genuine tendency and design of it in your hearts, powerfully inclining you to act upon them; *seeing ye have* in effect *heard him*,[d] even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, speaking to you in his word by us his authorized ambassadors, *and have been instructed in him* and his religion, *as the* uncorrupted *truth is in Jesus*, and not in that imperfect and adulterated form in which some presume to deliver what they call his gospel.

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Give me leave therefore to urge and entreat you, according to the many good instructions you have already received, *to put off* and entirely to lay aside, *with respect to the former conversation*,[e] or to those sinful habits and practices which were the scandal and dishonour of your Gentile days, *the old man*,[f] *which is* depraved and *corrupt* in every part of it, and whose actions are directed, not by the rules of reason and a regard to the will of God, but *according to* those *deceitful lusts*[g] which generally prevail in the world, and once prevailed in you likewise, and sunk you into so degenerate a state; lusts which could lead you to no rational and solid happiness, but deluded you by vain appearances and fallacious hopes, which always ended in your disappointment and shame: *And* labour more and more, by cultivating every motion of the good Spirit of God upon your hearts, *to be renewed in the spirit of your mind*,[h] that your rational powers, being duly directed by his illumination, may maintain a proper command over all the inferior faculties of your nature, and unite them in the prosecution of that great end which you ought continually to be proposing to yourselves. *And* thus let it be your care *to put on the new man*, to clothe yourselves with every habit of virtue and goodness, with every pious principle and disposition belonging to the character of such as are renewed; even that new man *which is created* by divine grace, *according to* [*the image of*] *God*, the great Standard of perfection, and is so formed as to resemble him *in* universal *righteousness and true* evangelical *holiness*, which, so far as it prevails in the human soul, is indeed the likeness of God drawn upon it in the most amiable lineaments. (Compare Col. iii. 10.)

22 That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Wherefore, on these great principles, beware of every vice to which you have been formerly addicted; and, in particular, *putting away every lie*,[k] whatever any of the heathens may have taught or practised, *speak every one* of you, with the greatest simplicity and strictness, the exact *truth to his neighbour; for we are* all, (as I observed above,) by virtue of our union to Christ our common Head, *members one of another*, and therefore it would be very indecent and improper, for the sake of any little separate advantage of our own, to injure or deceive a fellow-member, which indeed the common bond of humanity might lead us to detest, if the peculiar engagements of our holy profession were not considered.

25 Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.

If any occasion arises which obliges you to *be angry*, which indeed may and often will be the case, let not your anger discompose your spirits, *and sin not* in the excessive indulgence of that turbulent and dangerous passion;[l] but see that there be a justifiable cause for the resentment you express, and that your anger do not then rise beyond its proper degree, nor err in its continuance: and in this view, *let not the sun*, however, *go down upon your wrath*,[m] lest it grow into inveterate malice and habitual spleen: *Neither* in this respect *give place to the devil*, who labours as much as possible to possess and inflame the spirits of men with mutual enmity, and to induce them to give ear to

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

d *Seeing ye have heard him.*] That the particle ειγε may be thus rendered, has been observed before in note b, on Eph. iii. 2. p. 811. So that no conclusion can be drawn from hence that this Epistle was not written to the Ephesians, with whom he had long been conversant, but to some other church that he had never seen, and with whose circumstances he was not so well acquainted.

e *To put off*, &c.] As the verbs αποθεσθαι, ανανεουσθαι, and ενδυσασθαι, are all in the *infinitive mood*, it shows how they are connected with the preceding words, and that the sense of them is, "*Ye have been instructed—to put off the old man, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man*:" accordingly I have preserved this connexion in the version; but to avoid such an excessive length in the paraphrase as would have made it both disagreeable and obscure, I have here, as in many other places, broken one sentence into several.

f *The old man.*] As particular *dispositions of mind* are sometimes expressed by particular *garments* when a man appears in them, so the whole of a good or bad character may be represented by *a complete dress*, yea, by the *body* in which he appears; and *vice*, alas! being too *natural*, and getting the first possession, whereas *goodness*, if it ever succeeds at all, is adventitious, the former may well be called *the old* and the latter the *new man*.

g *According to deceitful lusts.*] Some have explained this of the lusts into which they were led by the artifices of the heathen priests, who represented them as not disagreeable to their established deities; or by the sophistry of their philosophers, who found out so many fallacious excuses for the grossest vices. But the sense given in the paraphrase seems most certain, and of the most general importance; considerations which I have always endeavoured to keep in view in the whole of this work.

h *In the spirit of your mind.*] The word νους seems here to be put for *the whole soul*, and πνευμα, *the spirit*, for its *intellectual* and leading *faculty*, on which the *Spirit of God* might chiefly operate, yet not exclusive of some influence on the *inferior* powers. See 1 Thess. v. 23. and compare note b above, on ver. 18.

i *True holiness.*] As οσιοτης της αληθειας stands in a beautiful opposition to επιθυμιαι της απατης, *deceitful lusts*, I have chosen, therefore, with our translation, to render it in a similar manner. But Archbishop Tillotson would translate this clause, *the holiness of truth*, (Vol. II. p. 349.) and Dr. Owen also prefers this rendering, *by truth*, understanding the gospel, and so explaining it of evangelical holiness, in opposition to such mere moral virtues as might be found in an heathen. See Dr. Owen, *On the Spirit*, p. 325.

k *Every lie.*] This το ψευδος seems to express: and *lying* is so opposite to that *sincerity* which becomes a christian, that what is said against it may be best taken in the most extensive sense.—Dr. Whitby has well shown, in his note on this passage, that several of the best of the heathen moralists thought *lying* might in many cases be *justified*; and I wish that none but heathens had ever taught so loose and dangerous a doctrine.

l *Be angry, and sin not.*] It is evident that this is not *a command* to *be angry*, but a *concession* only, with a *caution* to beware of *sinning* in it. (Compare Isa. viii. 9, 10; and Nah. iii. 14, 15.) It must however imply the thing to be possible: for to imagine, as a celebrated divine does, that it is as if it were said, *Do if you can be angry without sin*, seems beneath the dignity which the apostle always preserves in his writings.

m *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*] Many have observed that this was agreeable to the Pythagorean practice, who used always, if the members of their particular society had any difference with each other, to give *tokens of reconciliation* before *the sun went down*. (See Dr. Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 326; and Dr. Whitby's note on this place.) Were family prayer always practised in the evening, it might have an happy tendency to promote the observation of this excellent precept, intended (no doubt) to prevent persons going to sleep in anger, or being kept wakeful by such thoughts as continued quarrels, especially between near relations and friends, will be apt to occasion. Gloomy meditations in the silence of the night inflame the sense of the supposed injury, and cherish fiercer resentments, till perhaps at length purposes and counsels of revenge succeed. See Limborch. *Theol. lib.* v. *cap.* 45. § 6.

SECT. 8. slanderous reports and accusations, that he may make their characters deformed and their state miserable like his own.

EPH. IV. *Let him that*, while he was in his heathen condition of ignorance and vice, *stole* from others what was their just property, or in any other method defrauded his neighbour, 28 *steal* and defraud *no more*,[n] knowing that God is the Avenger of all such injuries: (Compare 1 Thess. iv. 6.) *But rather let him labour* diligently, *working with* [*his*] *hands* in some honest employment *that which is good* and creditable; that he may not only support himself, without trespassing upon society, or being in any respect a burden to it, but *that he may have* [*something*] *to impart to the necessitous*, and may be capable of sparing somewhat out of what he gains by industry in his calling, for the relief of such as stand in need of it.

28 Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 *Let* me exhort you also to take heed that *no corrupt discourse*, no putrid, filthy, and offensive speech, *proceed out of your mouth*,[o] to debauch the minds of those that are about you, and to irritate those irregular dispositions of the heart which it may, in many instances, even without such incentives, be so difficult to restrain: *but* embrace every opportunity that may conveniently be taken of introducing *any thing that is good*,[p] and which may tend *to useful edification, that* you may thus by your discourse promote the spiritual benefit of those that you converse with, and *it may* rather serve to *minister grace to the hearers*, than to check any good, or encourage any evil and irregular, thoughts.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 *And* on the whole, be very careful that you *do not*, by any such immoralities as I have cautioned you against, *grieve that Holy Spirit of God*, and provoke him to withdraw his gracious and comfortable influences from your minds; seeing it is the Spirit *by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*.[q] His operations are the mark of God set upon you, by which you may be known to be his property, and may be assured that he will remember you as such in that great day when he makes up his jewels; even then, when he completely redeems and delivers all his people: till which blessed time you are preserved in your adherence to religion by this Spirit, in the midst of all the dangers and difficulties which surround you; and consequently are obliged always to conduct yourselves toward him with the greatest respect and veneration.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 THAT we are all naturally so much alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us, that our minds are naturally so dark, and our hearts so hard, is indeed matter of the justest lamentation. But since we have 20 learned Christ, since the light of his blessed gospel hath been imparted to us, and we are no longer numbered among the heathen nations, let us not abandon ourselves to those irregularities of temper and life, for which even their ignorance will not be a sufficient excuse; since even natural light might teach them to condemn and to abhor such courses.

22 There are deceitful lusts, according to which the old man is corrupt: let us be always on our guard against them, and labour after such a renovation as becomes our profession; and in order to its being effectual, let us be 23 earnestly solicitous to obtain it in the spirit of our mind; that we may show its influence upon us, not merely by 24 ceasing to do evil, but by learning to the utmost of our power to do good. Thus let it be our care to put on the new man, to be partakers of a new and holy nature, and to be brought to the whole of that temper, in all its branches, by which we shall resemble the blessed God, the bright Original of universal righteousness and holiness, and the great Model of perfection.

25 In consequence of this, remembering our relation to each other, let us speak the truth from our hearts, and upon all occasions let us treat others with the same candour and integrity with which we would ourselves desire to be 26 treated.—If anger rise, let it be on just occasions, and in due proportion; and let us take care that it rest not in our 27 bosoms, lest by indulging it we give place to the devil, and become like that malignant spirit.—Let us be upright 28 in our dealings, and conscientiously avoiding the iniquitous practice of defrauding others, let generous and charitable sentiments always possess us; nor let those whose circumstances in life may constrain them to maintain them- 29 selves by their own labour, think they may violate the strictest rules of honesty, or are dispensed with from all obligations to relieve others more necessitous than themselves.—In short, whenever we engage in conversation, let us avoid every thing that may have the remotest tendency to corrupt discourse, and let us study what may improve and edify the minds of our hearers; embracing every opportunity of suggesting any thing that is good, and that

n *Let him that stole, steal no more.*] *Stealing* (as Dr. Whitby has well shown here) was a very common vice among the heathens; but how justifiable soever the Lacedæmonian law relating to it might be in a political view, (of which see Rollin, *Man. de Etudier*, Vol. III. p. 341. *et seq.*) I fear it tended to abate the horror persons should have of invading, in any respect, the property of each other, and to corrupt the minds of young people, by forming them to a subtle and knavish turn, which, however it might fit them for plundering their enemies in war, (to which the genius of that commonwealth was too much directed,) would certainly tend to make them bad children, servants, and citizens.

o *Let no corrupt discourse*, &c.] This undoubtedly refers to *obscene talk*, which is with great propriety called *corrupt* or *putrid*, as the word σαπρος signifies, in direct opposition to that which is *seasoned with salt*, and is recommended (Col. iv. 6.) as tending to preserve from such putrefaction and rottenness. It is strange that such indecencies as are here censured should ever prevail, especially among persons whose rank in life requires a politeness of behaviour which would engage them to guard against this, much more than against any thing offensive in their person or dress.

p *Any thing that is good.*] This seems the proper import of ει τις αγαθος, which is literally, *if any thing be good;* intimating that if any *useful thought* arise, or an occasion may be fitly taken to graft an edifying remark on any thing that passes in conversation, there should be a readiness to improve it; that so every one may furnish out his quota, without unprofitable and disagreeable chasms of silence, or the necessity of having recourse to any thing that is ill to prevent them; which, alas, is too often the case.

q *By whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*] This term of *sealing* seems to be a metaphor taken from merchants' putting some *seal* or *mark* upon their commodities by which they may be known to be *theirs*. One of the ancients somewhere says, "*Delicata "res est Spiritus Dei.*" *There is*, if we may so express it, *a certain delicacy in the Spirit of God*, which should engage those who desire his influences solicitously to guard against every approach to what might be grossly offensive to him.—*The day of redemption* in this connexion must signify *the resurrection*, (compare Rom. viii. 23.) which is here mentioned with the greatest propriety as the time when they who, in consequence of this *sealing*, should be finally owned as *the property of God*, shall be gathered *into his treasury*.—To Πνευμα το αγιον του Θεου is so emphatical, that it seemed best to render it *that Holy Spirit of God.*

may tend to minister grace, or to promote the more abundant exercise of it in the minds of those in whom it is already implanted. SECT. 8.

Thus will the Spirit of God, that sacred Agent by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption, be delighted instead of being grieved, as he so frequently is by the vain and foolish discourses of those who would be thought his temples, of those who indeed are so. For his influences let us look, to dispose us to every good word and work, and seasonably to remind us of these plain but weighty admonitions, which, alas! are so little remembered by the generality of christians, that one would imagine they had scarce ever read them. EPH. IV. 30

SECTION IX.

The apostle pursues the practical exhortations given in the two former sections, and especially insists on those to mutual love, which he enforces by the consideration of the divine compassions as displayed in the gospel, and strongly cautions them against the gross impurities of the heathen. Eph. iv. 31, *to the end;* v. 1—14.

Eph. iv. 31.

LET all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Eph. iv. 31.

AS I have been exhorting you to take heed that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, I cannot but particularly caution you against those malignant passions which do most directly oppose his benign influences. And therefore *let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking*, and all contentious and ungovernable passions, *be put away from you*, and removed to the greatest distance, together *with all malice*:[a] do not passionately resent every trifle, nor bitterly inveigh with all the licentiousness and keenness of satire against those who have greatly injured you; nor let your anger be noisy in its language, venting itself in clamorous reproaches and abusive railings, or be deeply treasured up in the mind to wait for opportunities of revenge; for all these things are most contrary to the nature of God, the genius of christianity, and the character of its great Founder. *But*, on the contrary, *be* courteous and *obliging to each other* in your daily deportment, and *tenderly compassionate* towards those that are in any affliction and distress; *freely forgiving one another* whatever imagined or real injury may be in question, *even as God in Christ*, and for his sake, *hath freely forgiven you*[b] such inexcusable and heinous injuries and affronts, as are infinitely greater than any which it is possible for you to receive from your fellow-creatures. SECT. 9. EPH. IV. 31 32

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

Be ye therefore, in the exercise of kindness and forgiveness towards one another, *imitators of* that *God*[c] to whom ye are under such unspeakable obligations, *as* his *beloved children*, whom he hath not only forgiven after so many and great offences, but adopted into his family, and raised to such glorious privileges. *And*, as a demonstration of your readiness to please and honour so gracious a Father, see that ye *walk in love*, and steadily pursue the paths of benevolence and goodness, which ye are under additional engagements to do, *as Christ also hath loved us* in so wonderful a degree, *and* hath manifested his love to us at so expensive a rate, that he *hath* even *given himself up for us*, voluntarily surrendering himself to those cruel enemies whom he could with infinite ease have destroyed; (compare John xviii. 6.) and having submitted to become their Captive, he yielded up his life upon the cross, and was there made *an Offering and Sacrifice to God*;[d] for it is evident that in this view his death was intended by himself, and was regarded also by the Father, who was well pleased, not only with the variety of virtues and graces which he exercised in it, but with the atonement that was made by it, and gratefully accepted it *for a sweet-smelling savour*, or as a fragrant odour that was far more delightful than any of the victims or any of the perfumes which had been offered of old, whether on the brazen or the golden altar: and through him also will your acts of liberality, beneficence, and goodness come up before God as a grateful memorial, and draw down upon you the most valuable blessings. EPH. V. 1 2

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetous-

But as you expect this, you must make it your care to maintain a due consistency of character, avoiding not only all malignant passions, but every kind and degree of impurity and licentiousness; and therefore *let not fornication, nor any kind of uncleanness*,[e] *or* 3

a *Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, &c.*] If each different word that is here made use of is to have a different idea annexed to it, I suppose the explication given in the paraphrase may illustrate its signification. But perhaps, after all, it might only be the apostle's design, in amassing so many almost synonymous expressions together, to show that he would have them be upon their guard against *all the malevolent passions*, and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce. The like remark may be applied to many other passages of scripture, and particularly to those where all kinds of lewdness are forbidden in such a variety of phrase and language.

b *Even as God in Christ hath freely forgiven you.*] This plainly teaches us that the great doctrine of the *atonement* or *satisfaction* of our blessed Redeemer is always to be explained *in such a manner* as may leave room for the honour of *God's free grace and mercy*, in the pardon of our offences consequent upon it.

c *Be ye therefore imitators of God.*] This, as it is an inference from the last verse of the preceding chapter, ought by no means to have been separated from it; and as the apostle is pursuing here the exhortation, which he there began, to *mutual love and forgiveness*, and does not finish it till the end of the next verse, it had been much more proper that the two first verses of this chapter should have been connected with what goes before, and that this chapter should have begun with ver. 31. of the former.

d *An offering and sacrifice to God.*] Dr. Bates (in his *Harmony of the Divine Attributes*, p. 254.) thinks that the different words, προσφορα and θυσια, are used in reference to *the peace-offering* and *the sin-offering*, as the truth of both is in the *sacrifice of Christ*, which appeased God, and obtains the blessings consequent upon his favour. But I cannot lay much stress on this distinction, as προσφερω is used in a multitude of places in the Septuagint for presenting any *victim* before God, as it is likewise in the New Testament, (Matt. v. 23, 24.) for *bringing a gift* and *offering it* on the altar; and when distinguished from θυσια, (Psal. xl. 6. *Septuag.*) it answers to מנחה, the *mincha*, or offering of *fine flour*, with a proper quantity of *wine, oil*, and *frankincense*, with which the sacrifices of animals were to be attended, and thus to be presented as *an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord.* (See Lev. ii. 1—9; and Num. xv. 3—14.) —It may here be used in conjunction with the former, to signify the *completeness* of the sacrifice.

e *Nor any kind of uncleanness.*] This is beyond all controversy the meaning of και πασα ακαθαρσια· and had I been more literal, and rendered it, *let not all sorts of uncleanness be mentioned*, the sense had not been given so exactly, and occasion might be taken for grounding an evasion on it, for which the different genius of the Greek language lays no just foundation. See the original of Acts xx. 25; and note f, on that text, p. 541.

SECT. 9. EPH. V.

insatiable desire of sensual gratifications, or of the means of procuring them,[f] *be so much as named* or heard of *among you;* but abstain from these evils, and whatever might lead to them, *as it becometh saints* who are conscious of the sanctity of their name and profession, and dread the thoughts of debasing it. And in this view let there be *neither filthiness* or any shameful indecency in conversation found among you, *nor foolishness of* 4 *speech, nor those lewd turns* and ambiguities of expression,[g] *which* though they are practised by the heathens, and may not seem so evidently criminal, yet *are by no means convenient* for christian converts: *but rather* abound in the language of *thanksgiving* and devotion, to which we have so many obligations in every circumstance, and which would give a pleasure so much more sublime than any animal indulgences and delights.

5 See then that you be cautiously and resolutely on your guard against all such enormities; *for ye* well *know*, and have been taught *this*, as ye have learned Christ, *that no fornicator nor unclean person*, who habitually gives himself up to any kind of pollution, *nor* any *covetous man*, who is greedy of those things which minister to his sensual appetite, and *who is* therefore *an idolater*[h] of the worst kind, deifying as it were the vilest idols, *hath* or 6 can have *any inheritance in the* holy and happy *kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one* then, in this respect, amuse and *deceive you with vain words* and sophistical arguments, by which it is well known that many, and especially some that call themselves philosophers, attempt to vindicate some of these things, or at least to extenuate the evil of them; *for* I am divinely commissioned to assure you, that *on account of these things*, and such as these, *the wrath of God cometh* even *on* the Gentiles, *the children of disobedience* and infidelity: now if heathens are punished for them, much less can we suppose that professing christians, who have so much greater advantages for purity and virtue in all its branches, and are under such peculiar engagements to cultivate it, shall escape with impu- 7 nity in these shameful practices. *Be ye not therefore partakers with them* in these abominations now, if ye would not finally partake in that dreadful condemnation and misery which they are bringing on themselves by them.

8 *For ye were once* indeed in a state of gross and heathenish *darkness*, in which it is no wonder you were abandoned to such practices, as you had no just discernment of the sinfulness and danger of them; *but now* [*ye are*] *light in the Lord*, and are brought into a clear evangelical day, as being instructed by the word of God, and savingly illuminated by his Spirit: see therefore that you *walk* in such a manner *as* becomes those who are *children of light*, and desire to do an honour to that light of which they are born, and to that 9 celestial family to which they now belong. *For* ye cannot pretend to be ignorant of the duties becoming such a birth and relation, as *the fruit of the* Holy *Spirit*,[i] by which you are regenerated, [*is*] most evidently manifested *in* the practice of *all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;* the operations of it on the soul being attended with such light and influence, as to teach men of all ranks, orders, and conditions in life, invariably to observe the strictest rules of benevolence in their tempers, integrity in their dealings, and sincerity 10 and veracity in their words. Be careful therefore to cultivate these dispositions, *proving* thereby *what is well pleasing to the Lord*, and making the experiment how happy they are who in all things govern themselves according to his injunctions.

11 Walk then, as I have said, in such a manner as becomes children of light, *and be not joint partakers* with any about you *in the unfruitful works of darkness;*[k] works which, far from being in any respect profitable or advantageous, are in their consequences most pernicious, tending to involve the soul in the gloom of guilt, and to lead it down to everlasting darkness: and therefore how excusable soever these things might be accounted in your heathen state, they are apparently most unbecoming in the midst of christian knowledge and privileges; and as you would not practise them yourselves, see to it that you do not countenance or encourage others in them, or by any means make yourselves accessary to the evil they occasion, *but rather reprove them* with plainness, though at the same time with all meekness and humility, and more especially express your detestation of them by 12 your good conversation in Christ. There is indeed a great deal you will meet with to reprove, and in some instances the reproof is better given by actions than by words: *for it is* really *a shame even to speak* particularly *of those things which are done by them in secret*, and sometimes in what they call their religious mysteries too,[l] many of them being

ness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints:

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, That no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

f *Or insatiable desire*, &c.] This is certainly a very literal rendering of the Greek word πλεονεξια, which plainly signifies, *the desire of having more* of any thing, whatsoever it be. And as there was nothing indecent in the mention of covetousness, in the usual sense of it, as expressing a greedy desire of riches and gain, many good commentators suppose it refers to that inordinate desire of *unnatural lust* for which the Gentiles were so infamous, and to which the Ephesians were so much addicted, as being in consequence of their riches a very luxurious and debauched people. Compare Ezek. xvi. 28, 29.

g *Nor those lewd turns*, &c.] This seems the natural import of the word ευτραπελια, on which many might value themselves as what they apprehended *a delicate turn* given to some ambiguous expression; and Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, using this very word, recommends it as what renders conversation agreeable.—Dr. Lucas thinks it included wantonness, profaneness, and keenness of satire. See his *Inquiry after Happiness*, Vol. III. p. 207.

h *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.*] In whatever sense *covetousness* is used, (see note f, above,) it may be called *idolatry;* as it is setting up something else, and (be it what it will) something comparatively very base and contemptible, and pursuing it as if it were something that could be to us, as in the place of God, a supreme happiness.

i *The fruit of the Spirit.*] It may be sufficient briefly to observe, that for πνευματος some copies read φωτος, *the fruit of the light.* The sense is the same, but the number of varying manuscripts seems not sufficient to confirm that reading. Yet I have had some regard to it in the paraphrase, as in some other instances of a like nature.

k *The unfruitful works of darkness.*] It is well known that ακαρπος, in Greek, and *inutilis*, in Latin, are sometimes used to express not only *unprofitable*, but *mischievous* things; and this is undoubtedly the meaning of the original word here. Compare Rom. i. 28; and vi. 21.

l *A shame to speak of those things which are done by them, &c.*] See Dr. Whitby's note on this text, concerning the impure and abominable nature of some religious nocturnal *mysteries* of the heathen.

of such a nature, that the very mention of them has a tendency to taint the mind, as well as to shock all chaste and modest ears. SECT. 9.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light.

But to you that are light in the Lord, the vileness of these works of darkness is abundantly discovered, as *all things which are* such as ought to be *reproved*, have their iniquity laid open, and *are made manifest by the light;* since where the light of the gospel comes, even though they are not particularly mentioned and described, yet they are exposed and condemned, and the soul which receives it is inspired with an abhorrence for what might any way lead to them; *for whatsoever doth make* objects *manifest* in their proper forms and colours, *is light;* and therefore the gospel well deserves that name, as teaching those who are instructed in it to judge rightly concerning the moral nature of actions, and inculcating such general principles as will be of use to them in every particular case that can possibly arise. EPH. V. 13

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Wherefore, when God is speaking in the prophecies of the Old Testament of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the light which they should have by Christ, *he says* in effect to those who are yet in darkness, though not exactly in these words, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*;[m] and this particularly is the most natural import of those well-known words in Isaiah, (chap. lx. 1.) "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is "risen upon thee;" that is to say, The Messiah, represented by the glory of the Lord, shines in his church, shines upon the souls of particular persons, and then they arise as from the dead, and shake off their deep sleep; they rejoice in the light, they walk in it, and reflect it all around them, so that many others are awakened and transformed by it. 14

IMPROVEMENT.

THE obligations which as christians we lie under, to cultivate benevolence and purity, are common to all countries and to all ages. Let us therefore frequently read over these plain exhortations, and solemnly charge our souls with their divine authority and importance.

Let it not be enough to us that we carefully avoid all bitterness and wrath, clamour and evil-speaking; but let us cherish all the kind affections of mutual love and tenderness, and practise even the most difficult duties of charity, freely forgiving those that have injured us, as sensible how much greater offences God has forgiven us; always remembering whose children we are, and what engagements we are under to imitate our heavenly Father; and always setting before our eyes the love of Christ, who gave himself for us, and thereby offered a most pleasing sacrifice to God. Through him shall our sacrifices, proceeding from the same principle, be acceptable also to him, even the sacrifices of alms, of prayer, and of praise. EPH. IV. 31, 32 — V. 1, 2

Let us not only abstain from the grossest sensual indulgences, but from every thing indecent in our words and actions; and that we may do so, let us make a covenant, not only with our eyes, (Job xxxi. 1.) but with our hearts; remembering that it is idolatry in the sight of God to set our hearts upon the gross delights of animal nature, to the neglect and forgetfulness of his blessed Majesty; remembering also, that the kingdom of Christ and of God is intended only for those who by purity of heart are qualified to see and enjoy him. 3, 4 — 5

Many false and sophistical reasons men have invented to palliate and excuse their vices; but if the wrath of God fall upon the heathen for these things, let us not imagine that we can practise them with impunity; and upon no account let us presume to be partakers with them in their sins, that so we may not share with them in their punishment. 6 — 7

We are called from darkness into light, from the darkness of sin into the light of grace; let us remember then the happy state into which we are brought, and walk as children of light, having our conversation such as may be suitable to the character we bear, and to the obligations we are under by the advantages we enjoy: and searching diligently what is acceptable to the Lord, let us discover and make known to all that we approve it upon trial, by our conforming to it, and bringing forth the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth, under the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, as those who have been savingly enlightened by him. 8 — 10 — 9

Let us avoid the works of darkness, not as unfruitful only, but as mischievous and destructive; and be careful that we do in no degree partake of them, not even so much as by a sinful silence, when Providence calls us to reprove them: but let us earnestly pray for wisdom and grace to order these reproofs in the wisest and happiest manner; that so we may, like that light of which we are the children, not only continue ourselves unsullied in the midst of pollution, but make things manifest in their proper colours, and discountenance those indecencies, the shame of which will make the very mention of them odious to the renewed soul, while those that practise them are so far conscious of their vileness, as to endeavour to conceal them from the light, and draw a veil of darkness over them. 11 — 13 — 12

And oh that the almighty voice of God may rouse up and awaken sinners from their sleep, and engage them to arise from the dead, that Christ may give them light! He is the great and only Source of light to sinful creatures, by whom it is sprung up on those who deserved to be consigned over to chains of everlasting darkness. Let 14

The quotations there brought, with many others which might be added to them, plainly prove, that if (as the learned Mr. Warburton supposes) the lower sort of *mysteries* among them were first intended by the magistrates to impress the minds of the people with the belief and sense of *future* rewards and punishments, and the higher sort of them to instruct persons of more reflection and penetration than the rest in the *knowledge* of the true God, and the other great principles of *natural religion*, they were long before the apostle's time greatly corrupted and degraded to the most detestable purposes; so that some persons in public characters, by no means remarkable for the purity of their own morals, thought it absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the most scandalous and profligate disorders, to prohibit the celebration of them.—Monsieur Saurin has observed a sarcasm in this clause seldom attended to, as if it were insinuated here, They are called *απόῤῥητα*, *things not to be spoken of;* true, says the apostle, they are properly so; things not too sacred, but too *infamous* to be mentioned. See his *Sermons*, Vol. VIII. p. 198.

m *Awake, thou that sleepest, &c.*] Some think this passage is taken from an apocryphal book ascribed to Jeremiah, which, says the learned and eloquent Mons. Saurin, might really contain some prophecies delivered by him, and so by the way be quoted by Matthew, (chap. xxvii. 9.) who might know that the prophecy recorded by Zechariah, (chap. xi. 12) was originally spoken or written by the elder prophet. Saurin, *Serm.* Vol. X. p. 286. But the sense of the passage before us is so fairly deducible from the words of Isaiah quoted in the paraphrase, that I do not see any necessity of having recourse to this supposition.

SECT. 9. us hail the rays of the Sun of righteousness: let us reflect them to his glory: and let it be our concern, that being raised by him from the sleep of sin, we may spring up to his service with vigour, and prosecute it through all the remainder of our days with becoming gratitude and zeal.

SECTION X.

The apostle further pursues his exhortations to a life of circumspection and usefulness, and to the constant exercise of temperance and devotion. Eph. v. 15—21.

Eph. v. 15

SECT. 10. I HAVE been urging you to consider yourselves as children of light, and upon this account to have your conversation such as becomes those who have been happily awakened from the sleep of sin by Christ: and to pursue the exhortation, as ye thus are brought from

EPH. V. darkness unto light, *see* to it *therefore that ye walk as accurately* and circumspectly as

15 possible, taking the most attentive heed to every step, and conducting yourselves, *not as fools*, who consider not what they are doing, *but as wise men*, who know that they have

16 pressing dangers to avoid, and most important ends to secure. And in particular, let your wisdom be discovered in *redeeming the time*,[a] endeavouring to recover and buy back as far as possible what has been lost, by diligently making use of what remains, and studying to improve it to the best and most valuable purposes; for which you should be careful to embrace the present opportunity, *because the days* we live in *are evil*, in which we are on every side surrounded with persecutions and perils, and God only knows how soon our liberty or our life

17 may be taken away. *Wherefore* while these precarious blessings are continued, employ them for the honour of God and the good of mankind: and *be not inconsiderate* and thoughtless, as you formerly were, *but* be concerned to have a right discernment of your duty, and to be *understanding what* [*is*] *the will of the* great *Lord* to whom you are devoted: endeavour to know your duty in all its extent, and, knowing it, to act agreeably to the obligations of it; declining those unnecessary dangers to which it is not his will that you should expose yourselves, (Mat. x. 22.) and diligently laying hold on every opportunity of service.

18 *And* that you may neither be insensible of the calls of duty, nor negligent of a due compliance with them, be continually careful that ye *be not*, even before you are aware, *drunk with wine*,[b] *in which there is* so much danger of a dissolute *excess*,[c] considering how grossly many abuse it, and abuse themselves by it, so as to run into all manner of extravagance and outrage, and into all that wild disorder and debauchery for which the heathens are notorious at their idolatrous festivals; *but be ye filled*, as becomes your character, *with the Spirit* of God, and make it your concern to invite the quickening and the cheering influences of his grace, which are of so great moment in your christian course; but which you will, by an excess of liquor, or any other gross sensualities, drive away from you, as he may be justly displeased with what is so directly opposite to his own pure and holy nature.

19 Let it be your endeavour therefore to engage the gracious visits of the Holy Spirit by the exercise of social devotion, in which he will delight to find you employed, and for which he will render you more and more fit, while in your cheerful moments you are *speaking to yourselves* and to each other *in* the *psalms* with which David and other inspired writers have furnished us, *and* in those new-composed *hymns* of praise, *and* other *spiritual songs*, that is, songs on spiritual subjects, which the Spirit of God dictates and animates, with a variety adapted to the several occasions of the christian life: and let it be your great care, that while you are thus tuning your voices, you be also *singing and chanting in your hearts to the Lord*, without which no external melody, be it ever so exact and harmonious, can be pleasing to his ear.

20 Yea, let there be a constant disposition for this duty, not only when you engage in social worship, but through the whole course of your lives; and let the mental songs, if I may so express it, that issue from the grateful sentiments of your hearts, be perpetual and uninterrupted; maintain a most affecting sense of the abundant matter which you have for praise, that as new mercies are every hour descending upon you, ye may be *always giving thanks for all things*,[d] for all the favours of God imparted to yourselves and others;

EPH. V. 15.
SEE then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise:

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit.

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord:

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and

a *Redeeming the time.*] Grotius and many other commentators explain this of the *caution* to be used in *avoiding persecution*, that so they might *draw out their time* as long as possibly they could, and not provoke their enemies to cut them off. Compare Dan. ii. 8. —This to be sure was their duty, and it had been well if the zeal of some primitive christians had regarded the precept in this sense. But I am persuaded this interpretation expresses only a part of that christian diligence and prudence to which the apostle meant to direct and exhort us.—Mons. Saurin observes, with his usual accuracy, that the word εξαγοραζομενοι has a peculiar force, and implies (as the French word *racheter* and the English *redeem* also does) the *recovering what has been lost.* (Compare Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5.) And he apprehends there is an allusion to the enormities of their heathen life, in which so much former time had most unhappily been lost and thrown away. See his *Sermons*, Vol. VIII. p. 196, 197.

b *Be not drunk with wine.*] It is highly probable that here may be a particular reference to those dissolute ceremonies called the *Bacchanalia*, that were celebrated by the heathens in honour of him whom they called, *the god of wine.* While these rites continued, men and women made it a point of religion to intoxicate themselves, and ran about the streets, fields, and vineyards, singing and shouting in a wild and tumultuous manner; in opposition to which extravagant vociferations the use of devout psalmody is with great propriety recommended. Plato somewhere tells us that there was hardly a sober person to be found in the whole Attican territories during the continuance of these detestable solemnities.

c *In which there is excess.*] The word ασωτια implies not only *exceeding the bounds of temperance*, which is the direct import of the English word, but that madness of *licentious riot* which is often the attendant of drunkenness. Wine is so frequently the cause of this, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of Providence in giving it, that the enormity is represented by a very strong and beautiful *figure*, as contained in the *very liquor.*

d *Giving thanks for all things.*] Dr. Barrow has given another important sense to these words, rendering them, *for all persons*; as if the meaning were, "Consider yourselves as appointed to return "to God the tribute of *praise* due from the *whole human race*, and "address your daily thanksgivings to him for those blessings he is "continually scattering down on your *fellow-christians* and *fellow-*"*creatures* in general." (See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 257.) I have

the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

and make it your employment at all times, not excepting your most afflicted moments, but filling even these with praise, and taking occasion from the tribulations and distresses with which a wise and gracious Providence may exercise you, to acknowledge the divine goodness, which directs all these painful dispensations by views to your truest advantage: and, on the whole, let all your praises, in order to their being acceptable, be offered *in the* prevailing *name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God, even the Father;* who hath appointed him to sustain the character of the great Mediator, and is ready to receive the services we perform only in and through him. SECT. 10. EPH. V. 20

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

And while you are thus careful in the duties of devotion to God, be not negligent in those which you owe to your fellow-creatures; but in all the various relations in which you stand, and the respective stations in which you are placed, *be subject to each other in the fear of God:*[e] let every one of you, whether he be a superior or an inferior, endeavour to accommodate himself to the infirmities of those that are about him in a kind and a respectful manner, so that if he be a superior, he may not oppress, or if an inferior, he may not rebel. This I shall farther illustrate by descending more particularly to the duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants; upon a regular attention to which, so much of the order and comfort of society, and so much of the credit of christianity with respect to its professors, apparently depends. 21

IMPROVEMENT.

Who can read the exhortation which we first meet with in this short but important section, without seeing cause for the deepest humiliation on account of his own careless and inconsiderate behaviour? Alas, the wisest have their intervals of folly; and they who walk the most accurately are not without their heedless steps. In how many instances are our thoughts dissipated, and how frequently are we quite forgetful of ourselves and our God! neither watching for opportunities of doing good, nor guarding against temptations to sin; but suffering the one to pass by us unimproved, and the other to seize us unprovided for resistance. Ver. 15

That precious time on the right management of which eternity depends, and in the improvement of every day and hour of which, it is manifest, that at least the degree of our everlasting happiness is interested; that time which thousands on a dying bed, or in the invisible state, would gladly redeem at the price of the whole world; how little do we think of the value of it, and to what trifles are we daily sacrificing it! Yea, to what trifles do we not sacrifice it! In the several divisions of it, when we come seriously to reflect on the morning,—the forenoon,—the afternoon, —and the evening,—how remiss are we in the proper business of each! So that if the great business for which we were sent into the world, to understand what is the will of the Lord, and to act according to it, be not, as there is reason to conclude in many instances it is, entirely neglected, it is performed in a manner shamefully remiss and indifferent. 16 17

If we are not drunk with wine, in which there is an excess, (from which, to the shame of christianity, the followers of Mahomet totally abstain with resolute self-denial, far more easily than christians keep themselves within the limits of sober temperance,) yet how frequently are we quite intoxicated with pleasure, in which we forget the dignity of our nature, and the rules of our profession! And how seldom are we breathing after that quickening Spirit which alone can effectually remedy these disorders! 18

If our voices are employed in singing the praises of God in our public assemblies, (where, nevertheless, so many are constantly silent,) or if we practise it in our families, how little are our hearts engaged!—How seldom doth God receive any cheerful sacrifice of praise from us, even in our most prosperous circumstances! And how much less in every thing!—Where is the person that can say, "In the night is my song unto thee: amidst the darkness "and distress of affliction I still praise thee, though thou correctest me, yea, because thou correctest me with such "paternal wisdom and love?" 19 20

And to conclude these melancholy reflections: How little subjection is there to each other in the various relations of human life! and where there is any of it, how much more frequently doth it proceed from other considerations than from the fear of God, and a religious regard to his injunctions! Yet these that have been mentioned are commands established by a divine authority; and there is not a christian in any age, country, or station, who is not by his profession solemnly obliged to observe them. 21

What shall we say then on the whole, but this: *We lie down in our shame, and confusion covers us, because we have sinned against the Lord our God.* (Jer. iii. 25.) And what counsel can be given to remedy these things, but this: *If any man lack wisdom,* of which these are some of the most important precepts, *let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth none* with those instances of former folly which they sincerely lament, and which they labour to amend. (James i. 5.)

therefore in a few words hinted at this generous and noble thought, which is strongly expressed in that excellent form of general thanksgiving in the English liturgy.

e *Be subject to each other in the fear of God.*] The apostle offers here a *general exhortation* to the conscientious discharge of *relative duties,* from which he afterwards proceeds to the particular consideration of the several relations of husbands and wives, of parents and children, and of masters and servants; which he might rather chuse to insist on, as some were ready to imagine that christian converts were released from any farther obligations to those who still continued in a state of heathenism, and might consider the relation as dissolved between them. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 10—24; and 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.) The apostle therefore presses it upon them, in whatever station they were placed, to show a due regard to *relative duties,* and to remember that christian privileges did by no means excuse them from the duties resulting from *natural* and *civil* relations of life, but rather did enforce the obligation they were under to observe them. And if these duties were incumbent upon christians towards relations of all kinds, even though they bore the character of unbelievers, much more were they engaged to practise them towards such as were related to them, not only by the ties of nature or of civil institution, but by the more endearing bonds of grace.

SECTION XI.

The apostle recommends it to husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ's love to the church, and presses upon wives the correspondent duty of conjugal subjection. Eph. v. 22, *to the end.*

EPH. v. 22.

SECT. 11. EPH. V. 22

I HAVE been recommending to you a mutual subjection to each other in the several relations of life, as a general precept of that holy religion in which you are instructed by the gospel; and I shall now proceed to illustrate it by descending to some particulars. And to begin with the relation between husbands and wives, I would first exhort you that are *wives*,[a] that ye *be subject* with all humility and gentleness of submission *unto your own husbands*, not only from a principle of love and respect to them, but *as* a proof of your fidelity and regard *unto the Lord*, who has seen fit to place you in a state of subordination, and commanded you to be under obedience. (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) *For the husband is* by divine constitution *the head of the wife*, and so is invested with the superior character, *even as* the Lord Jesus *Christ is the Head of the church*, which is committed to his care and government: *and*, standing in this near relation to it, *he* has shown the greatest concern and affection for it, and *is* become *the Saviour of the body*, employing his authority for the most important and benevolent purposes, not only to deliver us from evil, but to supply us with all good in such a manner as to make it manifest that our salvation and happiness depend upon our union with him and subjection to him. And this may hint at the kind purposes to which the superiority of the husband over the wife should be improved, in manifesting a concern for the defence and safety, and for the benefit and comfort, of the wife: but I now mention it in the former view, and *therefore as the church is subject unto Christ*, and with a cheerful willingness submits to his authority, *so also* [*let*] *wives* [*be*] subject *to their own husbands in every thing* in which their commands are not inconsistent with those of Christ, who is the Head of both.

EPH. V.
22 WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord;

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

Yet far be it from me to insinuate any thing that should encourage tyranny and usurpation in the husband; that equitably kind and generous Lord, who ought to be considered as a perfect Model, hath by his own example taught a very different lesson. And therefore, on the other hand, I would exhort you that are *husbands*, that ye be sure to *love your wives* with constant tenderness and fidelity, *even as Christ also hath loved the church*; and oh how astonishing is that love, and how delightful is it to reflect upon it! For such is the affectionate regard that he hath manifested to the church, that he hath been pleased, when it was in a state of slavery and misery, to purchase it to himself at the most expensive price, *and hath* even *given himself* as a ransom *for it*; *That*, having paid the price of its redemption by his blood, *he might sanctify* it by his Spirit, *and cleanse it with the washing of water* in baptism, and so having purged it from the guilt and pollution of sin, might form it for himself, and train it up in the exercise of every grace, *by the* discipline of his *word*:[b] *That*, being thus purified, educated, and adorned, as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband, (Rev. xxi. 2.) *he might* in due time receive it up to glory, and *place it in his* own immediate *presence, a glorious church*, arrayed in perfect righteousness, and free from all remains of sin, *not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature*[c] which could be called a blemish; *but that*, in every part and member of it, *it should be holy and without blame*, and he might thus survey it completely pure, beautiful, and resplendent, in that great day when the whole number of his elect shall be gathered together, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated amidst the acclamations of the heavenly legions, to whose blissful world his bride shall be conducted in triumph.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word:

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

But to return to the subject from which this pleasing digression hath led me: such is the nearness of the relation I am speaking of, that *husbands ought so to love their wives as* they love *their own bodies*: and when we consider that the bond of marriage makes them both one, and remember what an inseparable community of interests it establishes, we may truly say, That *he that loveth his wife loveth himself*, and he that permits his affections to be alienated from her, knows little of his own true happiness. And this must surely have its weight with every considerate person: *for no man* in his senses *ever yet hated his own flesh*, whatever its infirmities or imperfections were, *but nourisheth and cherisheth it*, providing not only for the sustenance of it, but for its comfortable accommodation; *even as the Lord* nourisheth and cherisheth *the church*, supplying it with all things that may conduce to its welfare and happiness, with a tender concern for its infirmities, looking upon

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

a I would first exhort you that are *wives*.] It is observable that in the several exhortations given here to the practice of *relative duties*, (as likewise in Col. iii. 18, to the end; and iv. 1.) the apostle first begins with the lower relations of *wives*, and *children*, and *servants*, before he proceeds in each of these instances to those of *husbands*, and *parents*, and *masters*; which it is probable he might do, because the duties of inferiors are commonly most apt to be objected to, as what are thought most difficult to be complied with; and where these are well and faithfully performed, the correspondent duties of superiors will be more readily attended to, and more effectually secured.

b *With the washing of water by the word.*] I apprehend here is an allusion to the methods taken in eastern countries to purify the virgins that were to be presented to the royal embrace. (Compare Esth. ii. 3, 9, 12; and Ezek. xvi. 7—14.) And no doubt proper care was also taken to *cultivate their minds*, and form them to such knowledge as might render them more fit to become the dignity intended for them; which was the more necessary, as some of those who appeared as candidates on such occasions were of low birth and education.

c *Not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature.*] How bright an idea does this give us of the grand plan and design of christianity, to bring all the *millions* of which the *church* consists to such a state of *perfect virtue* and *glory*, that when the penetrating eye of Christ, its great and holy *Bridegroom*, shall survey it, there shall not be one *spot* or *wrinkle*, or *any thing like it*, in the least to impair its beauty or offend his sight! Where is such a scheme or thought to be found in the world, but in the New Testament, and those who have been taught by it?

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

it as one with himself? *For* it is a most certain as well as delightful truth, that he regards it in this view, and that *we are* esteemed by him as *members of his body*, united to him by one spirit, and therefore considered like Eve, when just taken out of Adam's side, (Gen. ii. 23.) as making a part *of his flesh and of his bones;* whom therefore he would no more permit to be separated from him, than a man would be willing to lose a vital part of himself. Now *answerably to this*,[d] it is undoubtedly fit, that (as Adam was divinely inspired to declare[e] on the first view of that delightful relation of which I now speak) all other ties should yield to this; so that, according as it follows there, (Gen. ii. 24.) "*A man shall leave* "*his father and mother, and be* inseparably *joined to his wife, and they*, though originally and naturally *two* persons, *shall* for the future *be one flesh;* shall be considered as "one person, and, as it were, one soul in two bodies."

This is indeed *a great mystery*,[f] which was long unknown, and now it is in some measure discovered, is a matter of much admiration; *but* you will easily perceive, that in saying this *I speak* not of the union between a man and his wife, but *of* that between *Christ and the church:* for that the Son of God should unite himself to a society of mortal men, and regard them as making a part of himself, on account of the intimacy with which they are joined to him in a community of spirit and of interest, can indeed never be sufficiently admired. *Nevertheless*, you will not, I hope, forget the occasion which led me to touch upon this pleasing subject: I therefore renew the exhortation, and say, *Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself*, with such a cordial and sincere affection as he bears to himself; *and* let *the wife* [*see*] *that she reverence* [*her*] *husband*, and be subject to him, not only as a necessary duty, but as led to it by affectionate choice, regarding him with inward respect and esteem, as well as paying him the honour of external obedience.

31 32 33

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the love of our blessed Redeemer to his church be daily celebrated with the most cordial gratitude, and that infinite condescension adored, by which he hath been pleased to unite us to himself in such dear and inseparable bonds. He is the Saviour of the body; and oh in how wonderful a manner is he become so! He hath given himself for us, hath brought us from servitude and misery, at the expense of his own life, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, as well as cleansed us in the laver of baptismal water; and intending us for the eternal displays of his love as well as for the participation of his glory, he hath sanctified us by his Spirit, and formed us for it by his word; and thus is preparing us for that blessed day when the whole body of his elect shall be brought forth, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, to those public espousals which shall have their consummation in complete and everlasting happiness. O what a noble and illustrious day, when the eye of Christ shall survey all the millions of his people, and placing them in his presence as one with himself, shall look with full complacency and delight on all the various members of that glorious church, and behold neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but all comely, fair, and lovely, all answering that perfect idea which he had formed, and that scheme which he had laid for raising them by perfect holiness to perfect felicity!—In the mean time, let us think with delight on the proofs that he gives of his constant love. He nourishes and cherishes his church; and, with the most affectionate regard, is tender of it, as we are of the members of our own body, of our flesh, and of our bones. Oh that we may have a more sensible communion with him as our great Head, and may derive more continual influences from him!

Ver. 23 25 26 27 29 30

For his sake let us love one another; and let those who are joined in the conjugal relation often consider it in the view in which it is here represented. Let husbands see to it, that their love to their wives bear some resemblance to that which Christ avows to the church: let wives pay a reverence to their husbands like that which the church is to pay to Christ; and let both take care to maintain that wisdom and sanctity in the whole of their behaviour, which may suit the relation which they bear to each other in their common Head, as well as render their intimate alliance happy, which it can never be but by an union of hearts as well as of hands.—Vain will it be to think of dividing their interests when their persons are thus joined in such a manner as to become one flesh. And can there be a stronger argument to the most tender love? He that loveth his wife loveth himself: she that loveth her husband, and from love obeys him, loveth herself too: and every instance of unkindness on the one hand or the other, is but arming the members with weapons against the head, or employing the head in contrivances against the members.

25 33 24 31 28

d *Answerably to this.*] This is the exact import of the phrase, *αντι τουτου*, which might also be rendered, *on the other hand*, that is, taking the matter in a different but correspondent view.

e Adam was divinely inspired to declare.] See note d, on Matt. xix. 5. p. 266. as to the reason there is to conclude that Adam spake this in consequence of some extraordinary *divine illumination*.

f *This is a great mystery.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this refers to a tradition among the Jews, that the marriage of Adam with Eve was a type of the union between the Messiah and the *church;* and several remarkable passages of that kind have been produced.—Bishop Burnet interprets this expression as if it were designed to signify that this was *a mystical argument* of the main point the apostle was intent upon proving, that is, the *union* of the Jews and Gentiles in one church, since otherwise Christ, being espoused to each, might seem in a state of polygamy. (See Burnet, *On the Articles*, p. 264.) But this conceit is so far-fetched, and the interpretation given in the paraphrase is so easy, that one would wonder so many difficulties should be raised on so obvious a point. The *mystery* certainly was, that the eternal *Son of God*, receiving the degenerate race of men into an *union with himself*, should have *loved* them with an affection *exceeding* that which is to be found among the most intimate *human relations*. This sublime doctrine had long been concealed, and cannot now be perfectly comprehended; and therefore may, with the greatest propriety, be called *a mystery* in every sense of the word.

SECTION XII.

The apostle urges the mutual duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters, enforcing each of them with proper arguments. Eph. vi. 1—9

Eph. vi. 1.

SECT. 12. EPH. VI. 1

HAVING spoken of the relative duties of husbands and wives, I now proceed to mention other relations arising from them, and particularly that between parents and children. And here I would exhort you that are *children*, that with becoming duty and respect ye *obey your parents*, attending to the instructions of your father, and not forsaking the law of your mother, (Prov. i. 8.) out of regard to the subjection that you owe them *in the Lord*, and in compliance with the authority of Christ: *for this is right* and reasonable in itself, as a just debt to those who are the instruments of your being, and to whose care and kindness you are so much obliged; and will be also beneficial in its consequences, as it is certain that parents in general are more capable of directing their children than they are of governing themselves. And as it is proper and expedient in itself, so it was also expressly commanded by God in that short summary of moral precepts which he uttered on mount Sinai, and engraved with his own finger on the tables of stone, where you know it was said, *Honour thy father and* [*thy*] *mother*, enjoining you to regard them as your superiors, with all duty and obedience, and cheerfully to afford them relief and maintenance if they should stand in need of it; *which*, by the way, you may observe, *is the first commandment* that is attended *with* a special *promise*:[a] For it is added there, *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst be long-lived upon the earth*;[b] which words express the peculiar care of the divine providence for the continuance and comfort of the lives of those who should observe this precept, the benefit of which those children might generally expect who were dutiful to their parents: and though under the gospel the promise of temporal blessings be not so express and peremptory, yet even now it may be cheerfully expected that God will bless such children in a very visible manner; and he assuredly will do it, so far as temporal prosperity may on the whole be subservient to their truest and highest interest.

And, on the other hand, ye parents, and more especially *ye fathers*, let me beseech you that ye *provoke not your children* by a rigorous severity, and be particularly careful not to exasperate their angry passions by an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour, lest by this means you should excite them to such a secret indignation as may make it difficult for them *to* restrain those expressions of *wrath* which in such a relation would be very indecent; and, among other ill consequences of such a conduct, there is great reason also to conclude that it would naturally prejudice them against christianity, and thus would bring upon yourselves a share in the guilt of their disobedience and their ruin; *but*, on the contrary, let me exhort you to *educate them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*,[c] under such discipline and instruction as may lead them to the knowledge of the religion of Christ, and most effectually dispose them to profess and practise it; which it is certainly of great importance that you should attend to in their earliest years, and before ill habits render them stubborn and intractable.

There is yet another relation between masters and servants, concerning which I shall proceed to advise you: and as I would not neglect those of the lowest character in life, on whose conduct much of the credit of religion may depend; I would exhort you therefore who are *servants*, whether of the meanest rank, such as bondmen and slaves, or in the station only of hired servants, that ye *be subject* and obedient *to* those who are [*your*] *masters* and proprietors, though they be only so *according to the flesh*; while there is still a superior Lord of your spirits, whose authority is to set bounds to theirs, and never must in any case be violated to please them, or even to preserve your own lives, when most in their power: but in all lawful things whatever, see that you maintain a becoming subjection to them, performing what they order you *with fear and trembling*, as those who would be cautious of giving offence, or of bringing a reproach on your profession by any unfaithfulness or negligence in their affairs; discharging your duty to them *in the simplicity* and uprightness *of your heart, as unto Christ*, with that sincerity and uniformity of conduct which a regard to Christ will require and produce: Acting in all things, *not with eye-service* only, without attending to their business any farther than while their eye is

Eph. vi. 1.
CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as

a *Which is the first commandment with promise.*] The church of Rome would from hence argue, that *the second commandment*, which forbids the worship of *images*, having a promise added to it of God's *showing mercy to thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments*, can be no longer obligatory under the gospel, since *this*, which relates to *honouring parents*, is said to be *the first commandment with promise*. But it is easy to discern the fallacy and weakness of this argument, as what is annexed to *the second commandment* apparently relates to the whole law, and is *a general declaration* of the mercy God would show to those who kept not only *that*, but all his commandments; while *this* of which the apostle speaks is really *the first* and only precept of the decalogue that has *a particular promise* annexed to it, peculiar to itself.

b *That thou mayst be long-lived upon the earth.*] It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that the apostle does not say,—*upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, that he might not encourage a vain hope in the Jews, of continuing in the land of Canaan. But when it is considered that those to whom he was writing were chiefly Gentile converts, the clause would very properly be omitted in this view, as it must better suit the case of the whole church to express the promise in a general way.

c *In the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*] By the word παιδεια, which we render *nurture*, as distinguished from νουθεσια Κυριου, *the admonition of the Lord*, some think may be intended such a *knowledge* of books, men, and things, as may fit them to appear in life with honour and usefulness. But as they stand connected, and the word Κυριου may refer to both, it seems more reasonable to explain these terms of such a course of *discipline and instruction* as properly belongs to a *religious education*, which ought to be employed in forming them for *the Lord*, by laying a restraint upon the first appearances of every vicious passion, and *nourishing them up in the words of faith and of good doctrine*, (1 Tim. iv. 6.) in which respect I cannot but take this occasion to say, catechising has been found to be of excellent use, though it be now so much neglected.

the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

upon you, *as* if it were your only aim to be *men-pleasers*,[d] and to secure the favour of your masters; *but as* those who are *the servants of Christ* by your christian profession, and required by him to serve your masters with fidelity, *doing the will of God from the soul*, with a sincere desire above all things of approving yourselves to his all-seeing eye.

7 With good-will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men:

7 And thus let it appear that you make conscience of your duty, and apply to it with a willing mind; performing all the business of your station *with* a cheerful readiness and *good will*, and *doing service* with a benevolent alacrity, in such a manner as to show that you respect and love your masters, and have their interest at heart, *as* being ultimately influenced by a view *to* the approbation and honour of *the Lord, and not* by a regard *to* those tokens of favour you may receive from *men: Knowing* assuredly, and making it the governing maxim of your lives, *that whatsoever good any man doeth*, in one station of life or another, *he shall receive* a proportionable though infinitely gracious reward for *the same*, from the hand *of the Lord* as his final Judge; and this *whether* [*he be*] *a slave or a free man*, whether he be the meanest servant or the greatest prince: for he is the universal Guardian and Protector of his people, and esteems men, not according to their stations in the world, but according to their behaviour in those stations, whether high or low.

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

8

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

And, on the other hand, *ye* that are lords and *masters*, let me exhort you that ye *do the same to them*, and always act on the same equitable principles, not only with respect to those who are your hired servants, but even to them that are your slaves, and belong to you as your absolute property, so that according to human laws you may dispose of their persons and their lives as you please: but howsoever mean and low their station be, remember the common bond of humanity, by which you are united to them; remember the peculiar obligations of christians to distinguished benevolence and goodness, to all with whom you have to do; and therefore govern them with moderation and gentleness of temper, *forbearing*, not only cruel and dangerous blows, but all severe and rigorous *threatening*,[e] and every thing of an over-hasty and tyrannical conduct; and treat them in the same generous and upright manner as you would have them act towards you, as *knowing that ye yourselves also have a* superior Lord and *Master in the heavens*, whose authority over you is much greater and more absolute than yours over any of your fellow-creatures: *and* whatsoever difference there may be in your stations, *there is no respect of persons with him*; but he will administer the most strict and impartial justice, and show that he remembers the cry of the oppressed, though men may consider them, on account of the inferiority of their circumstances, as below their regards.

9

IMPROVEMENT.

It is matter of thankful acknowledgment that God condescends in his word to give us particular instructions suited to the circumstances in which we are respectively placed. Children and servants are not forgotten. Let them attend to those gracious lessons which are here given by the Supreme Parent and Master, who, while he teaches them, pleads their cause, and interposes his high authority to vindicate them from oppression and abuse.

Much of the happiness of society evidently depends on the temper and conduct of those who are placed in these lower relations. Let children therefore learn to be subject to their parents with all dutiful and humble respect, from a sense of the reasonableness of the command, and of the goodness which has annexed such a promise to it: a promise which shall still be efficacious, so far as long life would be indeed a blessing to a pious child. Ver. 1, 2, 3

Let servants with all godly simplicity and uprightness of heart revere the authority of Christ in them that are their masters according to the flesh, and exercise a good conscience towards them upon all occasions, not only when under their eye, but in their absence; well knowing that God is always present, and always attentive to the conduct of every rational creature, in whatsoever rank. Let them cherish that inward good will and benevolence of heart which renders every act of service uniform and steady, and makes it in a degree obliging, even when performed by those from whom authority might have extorted it. And let the certain and important reward that will assuredly follow every good action, whether great or small, and whether performed by persons in more elevated or inferior stations of life, animate us all to a zealous diligence in well-doing, whatever discouragement may at present attend us. 5, 6, 7, 8

And as to those who bear the superior relations in life, let them remember that the command of a much higher Parent and Lord requires also of them a tender regard to their inferiors. Let parents therefore govern their own passions, that they may not terrify and oppress the tender spirits of their children; or if they are otherwise than tender, may not teach them an evil lesson against themselves, and by their own example strengthen them in those excesses which may be a disgrace and detriment to the family, and may, when age has broken all the vigour of the parents, bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. A conscientious care to educate and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if duly attended to, will teach a better conduct, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ will have an happy influence on both. 4

And finally, let the thoughts of that great impartial Master in heaven, awe masters on earth; and the expectation, the certain expectation of giving an account to him, engage them to make the yoke of servitude, which God has been pleased to lay on those who are nevertheless their brethren, as light and easy as they can; chusing, even when they might command with authority, rather with love to entreat; not doing or saying any thing unneces- 9

d *Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers.*] Grotius takes notice of the elegance of the *compound words* made use of here in the *original*, (μη κατ' οφθαλμοδουλειαν, ως ανθρωπαρεσκοι,) which our translators have endeavoured to imitate. But as the Greek abounds more in such compound words than any other language, so the apostle Paul has frequently introduced them in his writings with a peculiar elegance and beauty, of which it is apparent that the best translation must in many instances fall very short. Compare Rom. ii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Col. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6; ii. 15; Gr. and see Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 239.

e *Forbearing threatening.*] To explain this, as some have done, as if it only signified, *remitting the evil threatened*, falls far short of the apostle's meaning, if I at all understand it; as a charge given to *forbear* all passionate and *menacing expressions* towards *servants*,

SECT. 12. sarily rigorous or severe, not threatening, reviling, or reproaching, but treating their servants as those whom they consider as partakers with them in the same hope, or whom they earnestly desire by all prudent condescension and tenderness to lead into the way of salvation.

SECTION XIII.

The apostle concludes the Epistle with urging them to prepare for a strenuous combat with their spiritual enemies, by putting on the whole armour of God; and earnestly exhorting them to fervency in prayer, he recommends himself to their remembrance at the throne of grace. Eph. vi. 10, *to the end.*

Eph. vi. 10.

SECT. 13. I HAVE been exhorting you to a faithful performance of relative duties; and *as to what remains, my brethren*, since every relation in life brings along with it correspondent duties, and will require vigour and resolution in the discharge of them, whatever therefore be the

EPH. VI. 10 circumstance or situation you are in, let me beseech you not to rely on your own strength, but *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;* confide in his omnipotent protection, and fix your dependence on the grace he is so ready to communicate to us, to

11 support us in every service and struggle to which we are called. And since it is a strenuous warfare in which you are engaged, *put on the complete armour of God*,[a] that glorious dress so necessary for you, and so conducive to your ornament and safety; *that ye may*, in consequence of it, *be able to stand against* all *the* subtle methods and *artifices of the devil*, against all the ambushes he may lay for you, and all the rage and fury with which he may attack you.

12 *For* in the warfare we are carrying on, *our struggle* and contention *is not with flesh and blood* alone; not merely with human adversaries, however powerful, subtle, and cruel; not only with the remaining corruptions of animal nature, which often give us such painful exercise; *but* we are called to wrestle and contend *with* sagacious and mighty spirits, once ranked among celestial *principalities*, though now degraded by their apostasy to be chiefs in hell; and *with powers* that employ their utmost strength to ruin us, and that still keep their regular subordination, that their efforts of mischief may be more effectual: we contend *with* those who are *the rulers of the darkness of this* age and *world*,[b] who have long usurped a dominion over it, and who in the present age hold men in the chains of hereditary superstition and destructive errors, which have been delivered down to them through many succeeding generations; and *with spirits*, who became authors and abettors *of wickedness* even while they abode *in heavenly* [*places*,][c] where they rebelled against the God of heaven, and drew in multitudes, who were before holy and happy spirits, to take part with them in their ungrateful and impious revolt. With these are we struggling for that great celestial prize which they have for ever lost: and their nature, experience, and situation gave them most formidable advantages against the weak children of men, sur-

13 rounded with so many examples of evil, and with such powerful temptations to it. *On this account*, then, let me pursue my exhortation that ye would *take unto you the complete armour of God, that* so *ye may be able to withstand* all these strong and malicious enemies *in the evil day* of extremest danger; *and having done all*, having exerted yourselves to the utmost, which indeed it will be absolutely necessary for you to do, ye may be found at last, when your warfare is accomplished, *to stand* victorious and triumphant.

14 *Stand, therefore*, in a constant readiness for the encounter, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, *having your loins girded about with* the strictest *truth*,[d] uprightness, and sincerity of heart, which will give a steadiness and uniformity to your conduct, and serve, as a girdle does, to brace on the other parts of your armour, and keep them all in their proper places; *and putting on the breast-plate of* universal *righteousness*, or a constant regard to the practice of holiness in the sight of God, and of justice and integrity in the whole of your dealings with your fellow-creatures, which, like a breast-plate, will defend your vitals

15 against many a dangerous thrust of the enemy; *and having your feet shod with the pre-*

Eph. vi. 10. FINALLY, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13 Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth; and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod

is of a more extensive nature, and calls for greater generosity and mildness, than *not to punish them* so severely as they before had threatened them.

a *The complete armour of God.*] The word in the original is πανοπλιαν, which includes *all sorts of armour*, whether offensive or defensive; consisting in the exercise of all those christian graces which we are furnished with by God, to be made use of in his strength, as well to annoy the enemy as to defend ourselves; and it appears by the particular description which the apostle here proceeds to give of it, to be a *suit of armour* every way *complete*, and properly adapted to the defence of *every part;* though, as some observe, none is provided for the back, as we must always face the enemy, or we shall presently lie open and have no defence from danger.

b *The rulers of the darkness of this world.*] This and the following clause Dr. Whitby explains in his paraphrase, "of those *evil* "*spirits* that *rule* in the heathen nations which are yet in *darkness*," and "of those that have *their stations in the* regions of the *air*." But I do not see any foundation for such a distinction, and therefore have not intimated it in the paraphrase.

c *Spirits of wickedness in heavenly* [*places*].] There is somewhat peculiar in the form of the expression in the original, τα πνευματικα της πονηριας εν τοις επουρανιοις, which Mr. Locke has paraphrased, "the "spiritual managers of the opposition to the kingdom of God." There is no doubt but it refers to those revolted *wicked spirits* who are continually employed in propagating *wickedness*. But Dr. Goodwin would render the last words, εν τοις επουρανιοις, *about heavenly things*, as signifying that we *wrestle with them* to secure to ourselves those spiritual and eternal blessings of which they would endeavour to deprive us. See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 45. I have hinted at this, but cannot think it a proper translation; the connexion and version I have followed seems much more natural and easy: "They were "*wicked in heaven*, and by that *wickedness* fell from thence."

d *Having your loins girded about with truth.*] It has often been observed that the military girdle was not only an ornament but a defence; as it hid the gaping joints of the armour, and kept them close and steady, as well as fortified the loins of those that wore it, and rendered them more vigorous and fit for action. The chief difficulty here is to know whether *truth* refers to the *true principles* of religion, or to *integrity* in our conduct; and how, on the latter interpretation, to keep it distinct from the *breast-plate of righteousness*, or on the former, from *the shield of faith*. But it seems probable to me, that it may rather signify some *virtue of the mind*, as all the other parts of the armour enumerated do; and then it must refer to that *uprightness* and sincerity of intention which produces *righteousness*, or an holy and equitable conduct, as its proper fruit.

with the preparation of the gospel of peace:

paration of the gospel of peace,[e] with that peaceful and benevolent temper which is so much recommended by the gospel as an essential part of the christian character, and which, like the boots worn by soldiers, will bear you unhurt through the many difficulties and trials which, like sharp-pointed thorns, may lie in your way, and dangerously obstruct your progress: And *upon all* [*these*] *taking* to yourselves *the* impenetrable *shield of* a steady *faith* in the great promises and principles of the gospel,[f] *whereby,* if it be kept in lively exercise, *ye shall be able* effectually *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one,*[g] those furious suggestions which he may sometimes discharge into the mind, like so many envenomed arrows or darts, which kindle by the swiftness of their passage: *And take* also *the helmet of salvation,* that cheerful hope of complete deliverance and eternal happiness, which will cover your head in the day of battle, and give you a well-grounded boldness and confidence, which will greatly conduce to your success: *and* brandish in your hands *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,* those declarations of his word and gospel which his Spirit has inspired, and by a firm confidence in which you will be able, not only to defend yourselves, but to repel your adversaries.

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked:

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

And finally, to add efficacy to all these, be *continually praying;* make it a constant part of your daily work, and be frequently amidst all your labours and cares lifting up your hearts to God in holy ejaculations, joined *with all* kind of *prayer and supplication in the* fervency of your own spirits, under the influences of that Divine *Spirit* which resides in you, to quicken your hearts, and which will engage you never to rest contented in outward forms of unmeaning and hypocritical devotion; *and* as you desire it may be effectual, be still *watching thereunto with all perseverance*[h] and importunate ardour of mind, joining to these petitions such earnest intercession *and* affectionate *supplication for all the saints,* as the principles of our religion dictate, and as may suit the relations in which we respectively stand.

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;

And *particularly* let me entreat your prayers *for me,*[i] your faithful minister and apostle, *that,* being loosed from my bonds, a door of *utterance may be* opened, and free liberty of expression *given to me,*[k] *that I may open my mouth with* all confidence and *boldness* in that important cause wherein I am engaged, so as *to make known* in the most effectual manner *the mystery of the gospel,* by going on to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and stedfastly maintaining what I before have taught, of the Gentiles being called to all the privileges of the gospel-covenant: *For which,* through the resentment of the Jewish zealots, I am now a prisoner at Rome, where *I discharge my embassy in a chain;*[l] *that,* howsoever I may seem to be entirely in the power of my enemies, and have already suffered so much for my zeal for the truth, *I may* have farther opportunity to *speak boldly therein, as I ought to speak,* in order to approve my fidelity to God, and my sincere affection to the souls of men. (Compare Col. iv. 3, 4.)

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel:

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

But I will not insist largely on my own personal concerns; for *that ye also may know the things that relate to me,* [*and*] *what I am doing* here at Rome, *Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister* and fellow-servant *in* the work of *the Lord,*[m] *shall* by my direction *fully inform you: Whom* indeed *I have sent* with this Epistle *to you for this very purpose, that ye might* more particularly *know* from him *what relates to us, and that,* by the report which through the divine goodness he will be able to make, *he may comfort your hearts* as to the grief and trouble you are under for me, and may encourage you to stedfastness in the gospel.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

I conclude with my most affectionate and ardent prayers, that *peace* and all prosperity

23 Peace *be* to the bre-

e *The preparation of the gospel of peace.*] Mr. Locke understands by this, "an habitual *readiness* to walk in the way of the gospel of "peace," as if it were intended as a general injunction to obey all its precepts. But to me it evidently appears to be designed in a *particular* manner to point out the *preparation* which the *gospel* makes for our defence, by that *peaceful temper* which it so often teaches and inculcates; of which, as I take it to be the sense of the place, I have explained in the paraphrase; though others chuse to understand it of that *confidence* which is inspired by the *gospel,* in consequence of the *peace* it establishes between God and the soul.

f *Upon all* [*these*] *taking the shield of faith.*] Our translators render it, *above all;* but as *upon* answers best to the particle επι, here used, so it best expresses the allusion to the situation of *the shield,* as covering the other pieces of *armour;* which has here a beautiful propriety, as *truth, righteousness,* and *peace* are sheltered (as it were) by *faith,* from the assaults which otherwise might overbear them.

g *To quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*] Dr. Goodwin, and many others, suppose that the apostle here refers to an ancient custom still prevailing among the Indians and other barbarous nations, to dip their *arrows* in the blood or gall of *asps* and *vipers,* or other *poisonous* preparations, which fire the blood of those who are wounded with them, occasion exquisite pain, and make the least wound mortal: and some Greek writers tell us, that it was usual for soldiers to have shields made of raw hides, which immediately quenched them. (See Goodwin's *Child of Light,* p. 101.)—It is also certain that some arrows were discharged with so great a velocity, that they fired in their passage: but though in common cases this could seldom happen, nor would there thus be much probability of their reaching the mark, yet I have hinted at it in the paraphrase, in allusion to the sudden and surprising violence of satanical suggestions.—Missile weapons, with burning flax wrapped about them, were likewise sometimes used, (see Raphel. *Ex Herod. in loc.*) but this was chiefly to fire places, and not in the attack of persons alone.

h *Watching thereunto with all perseverance.*] Bishop Wilkins explains this (in his *Treatise on Prayer,* p. 39.) of improving *the gift of prayer* by continual exercise, and gathering up fit materials for addresses to God by reading, conversation, meditation, &c.—Compare note d, on Phil. iv. 6.

i And *particularly for me.*] Mr. Blackwall observes, that the particle και sometimes signifies, *particularly* or *especially;* and he produces passages to this purpose from proper authorities. *Sacred Classics,* Vol. I. p. 145.

k *That utterance may be given to me.*] This may perhaps refer to some *impediment* in his speech, or other *imperfection* in the manner of his address, which might be a discouragement to Paul in his preaching, and seem to have an ill aspect on the success of it. Compare note f, on 2 Cor. xii. 7. p. 757, and note h, on Gal. iv. 14. p. 782.

l *I discharge my embassy in a chain.*] Some would render πρεσβευω εν αλυσει, *I grow old in a chain,* (compare Philem. ver. 9. where Παυλος πρεσβυτης signifies *Paul the aged;*) but it is certain that the common version of this passage may be justified.—Few need to be told that it was usual among the Romans to chain the prisoner's right arm to the left arm of the soldier that guarded him: but as the persons of ambassadors were always sacred, the apostle seems to refer to the outrage that was done to his Divine Master in this violation of his liberty.

m *Tychicus, a beloved brother, &c.*] He was one of Paul's friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview he had with the elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. See Acts xx. 4, 17. and note d, on ver. 4. p. 538.

SECT. 13. EPH. VI. 24

in soul and body may [*be*] *with* all *the brethren* that are with you; *and* that the *love* of God in Christ, attended with a fervent love to one another, may be shed abroad in your hearts, together *with* a plentiful increase and confirmation of *faith* and every other grace *from God the Father and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*. And may this *grace*, with all the blessed fruits of it, not only [*be*] *with* you, but may it richly abound to *all* in every place *that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity* and incorruption of heart,[n] that are inspired with a true affection to him, and from that love desire faithfully to serve him. *Amen*.

thren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let the heart of every christian soldier be at once awakened and animated by the important charge which the apostle here is (as it were) still sounding in our ears. He knew the weakness of the christian, and the dangers of
Ver. 10 his way; how insufficient for the spiritual warfare we are in ourselves, and that our only strength is in the Lord, and in the power of his might, by whom alone we can be kept in safety, and may be made even more than conquerors in all things; and therefore pointing us to this, at the same time that he sets forth the difficulty of the combat, and sounds a charge to the battle, he shows us the provision made for our defence, and calls us to put on the complete
11, 12 armour of God; an armour that will serve for every part, that will supply us both with offensive and defensive weapons, and help us to withstand and even to surmount the greatest opposition. Let us see to it then that we put on, and that we use it all.

And have we not enough to engage us to it, when we consider that our enemies are great and many, that they are restless and unwearied in their malice, and that their subtilty is inconceivable? Flesh and blood have too fre-
12 quently worsted us: how then shall we stand against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spirits of wickedness, who make it still their business to draw others into that spiritual wickedness which they were first so daring as to show in heavenly places? It will be impossible we should at any time be safe from danger, if every direction here given be not diligently attended to; and having such a numerous and
14 mighty host of enemies combined against us, we never shall be able to withstand and overcome them, if the girdle of truth be loosened, if the breast-plate of righteousness be not put on, if the preparation of the gospel of peace do
17 not secure our steps, if the helmet of salvation do not guard our head, if the shield of faith be not our shelter, and the sword of the Spirit our weapon. And vainly shall we labour to obtain this armour by any other method, if
18 fervent prayer and supplication in the Spirit, under the aids and influences of his grace, be not addressed to the God of heaven, whose work and whose gift this celestial armour is: so that if ever we would have it, and would use it right, let us persist in seeking it with holy importunity and perseverance, and the desired answer shall not always be denied.

20 To conclude: Let us often think of the apostle Paul as discharging his embassy in a chain, that we may learn to submit to whatever affronts and injuries, whatever hardships and sufferings we may be called to endure on the
23, 24 account of religion; concerned about nothing so much as that we may approve our fidelity in the sight of God, and loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, may be partakers of the blessings of his grace, with all that have a true affection to him. All that appear to be of such a character let us ever most affectionately love, whatever their particular sentiments or forms of worship may be; and a share of this mercy and favour, with all the blessed fruits of peace and prosperity, of love and faith, shall be infallibly our own, and be communicated in a rich abundance to us from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

n *That love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*] Mr. Locke explains the word ἀφθαρσία, of such a *love* as would prevent men's *mixing* any thing with the gospel which was not genuine, and might render it ineffectual. (Compare Gal. v. 2, 4.) But it seems rather to express that *uprightness of heart* which is opposed to putting on false pretences; and may with great propriety be understood as a general description of a true christian. And it is manifest indeed, that wheresoever this *unfeigned love to Christ* prevails, there will of course be all the other essential parts of the christian character.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE christian religion was first planted at Philippi by the Apostle Paul, about the year of our Lord 51; who having (as the history of the Acts informs us, chap. xvi.) made a progress through Galatia and Phrygia, and intending to pursue his tour through Bithynia, was admonished in a vision to go over to Macedonia. And being arrived at Philippi, which was a city in the first part of that province, and a Roman colony, (see notes g and h, p. 514.) he, with his companions, Timothy, Luke, and Silas, spent some days there in preaching the gospel. During his stay here he converted Lydia, and cast out a spirit of divination from a damsel; which so enraged her masters, who made a considerable advantage of it, that they stirred up the inhabitants, and threw Paul and Silas into prison; from whence, however, they were miraculously delivered, and the jailer, with all his house, converted to the christian faith. Though the apostle soon after left the city, Luke and Timothy continued there some time longer, to carry on the work he had so successfully begun: and this, no doubt, was one reason that induced him to fix upon the latter as the most proper person to visit the Philippians in his absence; of whose affection for them, and concern for their interests, he takes particular notice. (Chap. ii. 19—22.)

That the apostle himself made these christians a second visit is plain from Acts xx. 6. though we are not informed of any particulars relating to it; and it is at least highly probable (for reasons to be given below) that he saw them again after this Epistle was sent: indeed the peculiar affection and respect they seem to have discovered for the apostle, as well as the sufferings to which they had been exposed by their faithful adherence to the gospel, (chap. i. 28—30.) entitled them to some distinguished regard; for besides the present he acknowledges to have received from them by the hands of Epaphroditus, (chap. iv. 18.) they had more than once before generously contributed to his support, even during his residence amongst larger and richer societies. (*Ib.* v. 15, 16.) And from some hints that are dropt in this Epistle, we may gather that they had taken an opportunity of expressing, in the strongest and most affectionate terms, their sympathy with the apostle under his confinement, and their concern lest it should affect the interest of religion, and prevent the spread of the gospel. It is no wonder if such proofs of the sincerest friendship, and the discovery of so excellent a temper, should deeply affect so pious and benevolent a heart as St. Paul's; and accordingly his Epistle breathes throughout the warmest gratitude and most disinterested affection.

As to the date of this Epistle, it appears from the apostle's own words, (chap. i. 7, 13; iv. 22.) that it was written while he was a prisoner at Rome; and from the expectation he discovers (chap. ii. 24. of being shortly released and restored to them again, compared with Philem. ver. 22; and Heb. xiii. 23.) where he expresses a like expectation in yet stronger terms, it is extremely probable that this Epistle was written towards the close of his first imprisonment, and sent about the same time with the Epistles to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and Philemon, which (as has been already shown in the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 798.) was in the year of our Lord 63, and the ninth of the Emperor Nero. (See also note g, p. 578, 579.)

The apostle's design in this Epistle (which is quite of the practical kind) seems to be, "to comfort the Philippians under "the concern they had expressed at the news of his imprisonment; to check a party-spirit that appears to have broken out "among them, and to promote, on the contrary, an entire union and harmony of affection; to guard them against being "seduced from the purity of the christian faith by *judaizing teachers;* to support them under the trials with which they "struggled; and, above all, to inspire them with a concern to adorn their profession by the most eminent attainments in the "divine life."

The apostle, after his usual salutation, (in which he joins Timothy's name with his own,) begins with assuring the Philippians, in the most expressive language, of his affectionate regard for them, and solicitous concern for their religious interests;

acknowledging, with the utmost gratitude, the goodness of God in calling them to partake with him in the blessings of the gospel, and praying for their farther improvement in knowledge and holiness. (Chap. i. 1—11.) And to remove the apprehensions they were under from the news of his imprisonment at Rome, which seemed to wear so fatal an aspect on the interest of religion, he informs them, that even this event had, under the direction of Providence, been overruled for the service of the gospel; while the honest zeal of some, and the envious, contentious spirit of others, both concurred in advancing the same cause: and, notwithstanding all the opposition that was made to him, he declares his cheerful hope and confidence, that in every situation of life, and even in death itself, he should still be honoured as the instrument of promoting this great object of his wishes. (Ver. 12—20.) In this connexion it was natural for him to express the strong desire he felt of being with Christ in that better world, where he should receive the blessed fruits of his labours: and after describing the struggle he found within himself, between his earnest longing after that felicity, and his solicitude for their farther establishment in religion, he declares his readiness to continue here for the service of his Master, and their spiritual advantage; and entreats them, that while he did so, he might have the joy to hear that, though he was absent, they maintained the honour of their christian character, both for piety and courage. (Ver. 21—30.)

The apostle, having given the Philippians these general admonitions to maintain a conduct worthy of the gospel, proceeds to exhort them, in the most solemn and pathetic manner, to the particular exercises of unanimity and candour, and a tender care for the interests of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer; on whose humiliation and exalted state he expatiates with great warmth and energy, urging them to a due improvement of these sublime discoveries by a holy caution and circumspection in their whole deportment, and a life of the most exemplary virtue; which, as it would most evidently conduce to their own happiness and the honour of their religion, would also make a glorious addition to his joy and triumph at the great day, by affording so convincing a proof of the success of his labours. (Chap. ii. 1—16.) And, as a farther instance of the strength of his affection and concern for their happiness, he assures them that he should even rejoice in the view of sacrificing his life for their advantage: and since for the present his circumstances would not allow him to gratify the earnest desire he felt of administering personal consolation and instruction to them, he promises to send Timothy very soon to supply his place; who, on account of the particular affection he had discovered for that church, and the assiduity with which he assisted the apostle in his first preaching the gospel there, was of all others the most proper to be employed in such an office. Yet he intimates a strong persuasion that he should himself be soon released from his imprisonment, and have the pleasure of seeing them once again: however, as they stood in need of present support, and Timothy could not immediately undertake the journey, he tells them he had commissioned Epaphroditus, by whom he sent this letter, to assure them of his kind remembrance; and to induce them to pay the greater regard to his messenger, he gives an affecting account of his late sickness, and ardent love to the brethren. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*)

Having thus sufficiently testified the sincerity of his regards for them, the apostle goes on to guard them against the influence of some factious, turbulent persons, who had disturbed the peace of the church by their furious zeal for the observance of the Jewish ritual; and exhorts them, in opposition to all such pretences, to fix their whole dependence on Christ and his gospel; which he assures them he himself had done, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages than most of those who valued themselves so highly upon them; animating them, from his own example, continually to aspire after higher attainments in piety and virtue, as the only means of securing that complete felicity which the gospel promises to all its sincere votaries. (Chap. iii. 1—14.) And as they had not yet attained to the perfection of the christian character, he urges upon them, from the glorious hope of the resurrection, a holy and blameless temper and heavenly conversation; cautioning them against the bad example even of some professing christians, who brought destruction on themselves, and reproach on religion, by the unsuitable manner in which they acted. (Ver. 15, *to the end;* chap. iv. 1.)

The apostle, having in the former part of the Epistle recommended mutual forbearance, peace, and concord, now descends to some particular charges relating to the same subject; and then proceeds to give more general exhortations to christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable and praiseworthy, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to set before them. (Ver. 2—9.)

Towards the close of the Epistle, he makes his acknowledgments to the Philippians for the seasonable and liberal supply they had sent him; which he declares he rejoiced in principally on their account, as it was so convincing a proof of their affection for him, and their concern for the support of the gospel, which he preferred far above any private, secular interest of his own; expressly disclaiming all selfish, mercenary views, and assuring them, with a noble simplicity, that he was able upon all occasions to accommodate his temper to his circumstances, and had learnt under the teachings of divine grace, in whatever station Providence might see fit to place him, therewith to be content. After which, the apostle, having encouraged them to expect a rich supply of all their wants from their God and Father, to whom he devoutly ascribes the honour of all, concludes with salutations from himself and his friends at Rome to the whole church, and a solemn benediction. (Ver. 10, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

SECTION I.

The introduction, with the general salutation, suited to the views with which the apostle wrote. Phil. i. 1—11.

PHILIPPIANS i. 1.

PAUL and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons;

PHILIPPIANS i. 1.

PAUL and Timothy,[a] being now providentially together at Rome, both through divine grace *the* faithful *servants of Jesus Christ*,[b] and desirous to promote his interest by their writings, where their other labours cannot reach, do hereby send their most affectionate christian salutations *to all the saints*, their holy brethren *in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi*, whom God hath united to them in the bonds of one common faith. And they greet *with* particular respect *the bishops and deacons* of the society,[c] to whom the oversight of it in the Lord is so peculiarly committed; wishing abundant success to their labours in their respective and important offices: And wishing to every private christian under their care, whether personally known or unknown, *grace* even *to you* all, *and* perpetual *peace*, with every attendant blessing *from God*, who is now become *our* covenant God and reconciled *Father*, *and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whose blood, righteousness, and intercession, we are brought into so happy a relation to him.

SECT. 1. PHIL. 1.

1 2

2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

When I Paul am addressing a church dear to me by so many bonds, and to whom I am under so many distinguished obligations, it is fit I should assure you that *I give thanks unto my God*, for such he is, and I recollect it with unspeakable delight *in every mention of you;* whether before the throne of grace, or when conversing with my fellow-christians. And the former occasion of mentioning you often occurs: for I am *always in every prayer of mine making* humble *supplication for you all*, and mingling those intercessions *with joy* and praise, when I reflect on that honourable profession which you make, and that steady and exemplary conduct by which you support and adorn it.

3 4

4 (Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy,)

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now:

Yes, my brethren, though several years are since passed, I think myself obliged to bless God, with all the united powers of my soul, *for your participation in* the blessings of *the gospel*,[d] *from the first day* of my preaching it among you, though soon attended with menaces and insults, scourging and imprisonment; and to praise him for that establishment and increase which he hath been pleased to give to the seed that was sown, and which his grace maintains even *until now*. And he will still maintain it; for [*I am*] *confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in* and upon *you*, and which I have now the pleasure of seeing so far advanced, will not finally forsake the production of his own grace, but *will finish* [*it*] in your souls, *until* he raise it to full perfection in *the day of Jesus Christ*, when he shall appear in all his glory.

5 6

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all,

Such are the sentiments of my heart with respect to you, and such the concern I have upon your account; *as it is* indeed *just in me to be thus affected towards you all, be-*

7

a *Paul and Timothy.*] Paul might here chuse to join Timothy with him, as he not only had attended the apostle in his general travels into these parts, but had assisted in preaching the gospel at Philippi. Compare Acts xvi. 1, 3, 12.

b *The servants of Jesus Christ.*] Some have enquired why Paul does not style himself *an apostle* here, and in his two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to Philemon, as he does in all the other Epistles that bear his name; and have accounted for it, by observing that no objection had been made to his character at Thessalonica or Philippi; and that, having received a *present* from them, he might not seem to be *burdensome* as an *apostle of Christ*. Perhaps it rather was because Timothy or Silas, who were neither of them *apostles*, are joined with him here and in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. But I think the question seems to have its foundation in curiosity rather than use. See Pierce, *in loc.*

c *The bishops and deacons.*] As this proves there must have been more than *one bishop* at Philippi, it has been apprehended, by many pious and learned men, to be an intimation that there was then no difference between bishops and presbyters; all the presbyters of this church having (as they suppose) the title given them here of bishops, overseers, or superintendants; for this is what the word επισκοποις, beyond all controversy, imports. Dr. Whitby (in his note on this place) solidly asserts this interpretation, and confutes that which would give the words a contrary and, I think, a very unnatural turn. Some think the deacons are mentioned as having been particularly concerned in the liberal supply that was sent from this church to the apostle, which had been probably collected by them.

d *Participation in the gospel.*] Some by κοινωνια εις το ευαγγελιον understand their *communicating something for the support of the gospel*, and particularly to the supply of the apostle's necessities, referred to chap. iv. 16; and 2 Cor. xi. 9. but to *partake*, and to *communicate*, are words of different signification, and it is evident that the original word generally signifies the former rather than the latter. Compare 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Cor. viii. 4; xiii. 13; Phil. iii. 10; Philem. ver. 6; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7.

SECT. 1. PHIL. 1

cause I know *you have me in your hearts, both in* these *my bonds* for the sake of Christ, *and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel*, while I am pleading its cause in the midst of so much opposition and danger; *as you are all partakers with me in the grace* of that gospel,[e] which establishes a community of interests between us; and as you so tenderly and faithfully show your sense of it, I cannot but return it. Thus I say it ought 8 to be, and thus it is; *for God*, who discerns all the secret recesses of my heart, *is my witness, how earnestly I long for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.* He knows that I long to see you, with that peculiar tenderness of affection which nothing but these bonds of mutual faith and love, centring in him, can be capable of producing, and which greatly resembles the compassion which Christ himself feels for those whom his grace has made 9 the members of his body. *And*, in the mean time, *this I* continue to *pray* for in your behalf, as the best blessing I can ask of God for you, *that your love* to one another, and to all the saints, *may abound yet more and more;* and that it may be a rational and truly christian affection, founded *in* a thorough *knowledge* of the principles which tend so much to endear us to each other, *and in all* that inward feeling and *perception* of these 10 sacred ties which nothing but true experimental religion can give:[f] *So as to prove* by experience *things which differ*,[g] and know by trial, how incomparably excellent the christian character is beyond any other: *that ye may be* found not only *sincere and* cordial, but altogether *inoffensive* through the whole of your christian course, even *until* 11 *the* great *day of Christ; Being filled with* all *the* genuine *fruits* and effects *of righteousness*,[h] *which are* produced *by* virtue of a vital faith in *Jesus Christ*, and by strength and influence derived from him, *to the glory and praise of God;* for that great end of the gospel-revelation is never more effectually answered, than when the temper and con- 4 duct of those who profess it is agreeable to its sacred dictates.

because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and *in* all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 AMIDST the numberless mercies with which, through the indulgence of our heavenly Father, we are daily 5 surrounded, what can demand our humble and grateful acknowledgments more than our participation in the gospel? To whatever afflictions it may expose us, or whatever we may be called to sacrifice to its interests, every day in 3 which we share its comforts and supports, calls aloud for our praises, both in the enjoyment and in the recollection. And whilst we look back with these sentiments of gratitude, let us look forwards with cheerful confidence. It is to God's having begun a good work in us that we are to ascribe it, that the glorious gospel of his Son is our joy and 6 our wonder, rather than our aversion and our scorn. We may therefore be humbly confident that he will not forsake the work of his own hands, but will finish it, so that it shall appear worthy of himself in the great day of the Lord.

No wonder that, where this blessed work is begun, there is a great affection between those who were the instru- 4, 9 ments of producing it, and those in whom it is produced. No wonder if Paul made mention of these his christian converts at Philippi in every prayer of his, offering up requests for them, and praying for the increase of their hope and love. No wonder, on the other side, if their hearts were tenderly set upon him, and that, distant as he was, 7 he seemed to lodge there, and their tender care followed him through every circumstance of his bonds and apology; 8 so that his sufferings and dangers were even more painful to them than their own, while he on his part longed for them all in the bowels of the Lord, and could conceive of no greater charm in liberty itself, than that it might give him an opportunity of cultivating so endearing a friendship by personal converse.

The increase of love founded on knowledge, and attended with other sentiments of experimental religion, is to 9, 10 be numbered among the best of apostolic blessings. Every experience of these things will confirm our resolution of maintaining that godly sincerity which will render our conversation unblamable, and our account in the day of 11 the Lord comfortable. To glorify God by the fruits of righteousness, is the great end for which these rational natures were given us; and it is by the exercise of lively faith in Christ that these dispositions are cultivated, and these fruits rendered most abundant.

SECTION II.

The apostle informs the Philippians how his imprisonment at Rome had been providentially overruled for the service of the gospel; and strongly declares his cheerful hope and confidence that this great object of his wishes should still be promoted, whatever events might be allotted to him. Phil. i. 12—20.

SECT. 2. PHIL. I. 12

PHIL. i. 12.

MY dear friends, I am fully convinced of the tenderness of your affection for me; and as I have declared above, I do you the justice to believe that you have me in your heart while I continue under this confinement for the testimony of Jesus. *But I would have you to*

PHIL. i. 12.

BUT I would ye should understand, brethren, that

e *As you are all partakers with me.*] Perhaps the grammar of this sentence would have been better expressed if I had rendered it, pretty agreeably to what Dr Whitby would propose: "*You, who "are all partakers of grace with me in my bonds, for the defence "and confirmation of the gospel.*" But the sense is nearly the same, and the order in which the words lie in the original is much more convenient for paraphrasing than that to which they would be reduced by such a transposition.

f *All knowledge and perception.*] We render it *knowledge* and *judgment*, and the former is explained of *speculative*, and the latter of *practical*, knowledge; but I think the distinction between the idea suggested by the original is much better preserved by rendering the word *αισθησει*, *perception*, or inward sensation. He wishes they might not only know the principles which recommend candour and benevolence, but feel their influence on their hearts; which a daily experience and observation show us, in some great pretenders to this kind of knowledge, is a very different thing.

g *Things which differ.*] Mr. Howe justly asserts this translation, as well as that preferred in the preceding note, and introduces this text to show that we need *the light of the Spirit* to help us to apprehend, to consider, to judge, and determine our actions agreeably to that judgment. Howe, *On the Spirit*, Vol. I. p. 271.

h *Fruits of righteousness.*] If this have, as some imagine, a more peculiar reference to *liberality*, yet I see no reason for confining it to that interpretation; nor do I think it can properly be said that every liberal and generous man is *filled with all the fruits of righteousness*, unless there be a prevailing uniformity of character, which is not always to be found.

the things *which happened* unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel:

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18 What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

20 According to my earnest expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also, Christ shall be magnified, in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

know, my much-beloved *brethren, that the things relating to me*, some of which have given you so much concern, on the most friendly and generous principles, have been so overruled by the divine wisdom and goodness, that indeed they *have fallen out rather to the advancement* than hinderance *of the gospel*, which ye were ready to fear. *So that my bonds in Christ are manifested*[a] and taken notice of *in all the palace* of Cæsar, *and all other* [*places*] in and about the city, and have seemed so remarkable that many have been excited to enquire, much to their own satisfaction and advantage, what there was in this new and unknown religion that could animate me so cheerfully to endure so much hardship and persecution in its defence; for they soon traced up my sufferings to this as their only cause. *And* this had so happy an effect, that *many of the brethren in the Lord*, instead of being discouraged, *were emboldened by my bonds*, when they saw my firmness and constancy under them, so as *to venture with much more undaunted courage to preach the* word of the gospel, which our enemies thought, by their persecution of me, to have discountenanced and silenced.

Indeed I cannot say that all who have engaged in this work have acted upon the noblest principles: for *some preach Christ even from envy and contention*, desirous to maintain in the church a party that shall oppose me, and willing to add as many abettors to it as they possibly can, *while others* do it *out of* [*sincere*] *affection*, faithfully intending the honour of God, the interest of the Redeemer, and the advancement of human happiness, which is so inseparably connected with the success of christianity in the world. *The first indeed preach Christ out of strife*, and *not with* purity and *simplicity* of intention, but, on the contrary, from the unkindest and unworthiest motive, as *desirous to add* yet more *affliction to my bonds*, by strengthening the cause of those who, while they call themselves christians, seem to place a point of honour and conscience in hurting my reputation, and abetting unreasonable prejudices, which have been so eagerly raised and propagated, to the disadvantage of my character. *Whereas others* [*preach*] him out *of* cordial *love*, and amidst the many other noble and benevolent views on which they act, have some regard to that comfort which they are sure it will administer to me, *as they know that I am* raised up and *set*[b] in the place in which I appear *for the defence of the gospel;* and that nothing can make my sorrows and distresses sit so light upon me as to see that this blessed cause is in some measure promoted by them. *What then* is the result of these attempts, proceeding from such different principles? It is, that I am, in one view or another, pleased with them both: for though I could indeed wish that all engaged in so honourable a work were pursuing it from the most worthy and generous motives, *yet every way, whether* it be only *in pretence* of pious zeal, *or in* the *truth* of it, *Christ is* however *preached*, and the great doctrine of salvation by him has something of a wider spread. *And in this I* heartily *rejoice, yea, and I will* continue to *rejoice:* for I had much rather that some, who are converted to christianity by my enemies, should think as ill of me as they themselves do, than that they should remain ignorant of those fundamental truths on the knowledge of which their eternal happiness depends. Nor do I much regard the opposition which may arise against me from the ill-designing teachers, or their misguided followers: *for I* well *know that*, disagreeable as its present effects are, even *this shall issue in* promoting *my salvation*,[c] *by your* continued *prayer* to God for me, *and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, which shall be liberally dealt out in answer to it: *According to my earnest expectation and* cheerful *hope, that I shall in nothing be ashamed*, whatever injurious reflections may be made upon my conduct; *but* [*that,*] *by all* the *freedom of speech* which I am still determined to use, *as* it hath *always* been hitherto, [*so*] *now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by* its liberty or confinement, whether in *life or* in *death*. When I consider all possible contingencies that can arise in this view, I find my heart most cheerfully reconciled to them all, and, instead of trembling at the thought of martyrdom itself, I rather rejoice in it.

IMPROVEMENT.

How admirable is the conduct of Divine Providence! and in how beautiful a manner does it often work the purposes it wisely and graciously determines, by events which seem to have the most contrary tendency! Who could have imagined that the imprisonment of St. Paul should have been effectual to the advancement of christianity? Thus can God animate and encourage his servants by the extremity which their brethren suffer in his cause; so that they shall wax confident by their bonds and their martyrdom. Let this then reconcile us to all the allotments of Providence, and establish us in an earnest expectation and hope that Christ will be glorified in all things by us, whether by our life or death: and who that knows the grace of God in truth, would not rejoice even in death itself, if the gracious Redeemer, who gave his own life for us, may thereby be magnified?

How execrable the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and managed a ministry which should have breathed nothing but love, in a view of adding affliction to those bonds that oppressed this

a *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *so that it is manifest, both in the prætorium and elsewhere, that my bonds are for Christ*, i. e. that I suffer *only* for the sake of christianity, and not for any real crime; and he argues from the order of the words, φανερους εν Χριστῳ γενεσθαι· but I think this interpretation would require γενεσθαι to be read twice, which would be a much greater difficulty in the construction than the latter translation he would avoid. Nevertheless in the close of the paraphrase I have included this thought.

b *I am set.*] Some would render κειμαι, *I lie*, i. e. in bonds for the gospel, in order to make an apology for it.

c *My salvation.*] Mr. Pierce explains σωτηρια as signifying *deliverance from prison*, and thinks, that as they that preached Christ out of love made more friends for the apostle, so they that preached him out of envy gave his friends an opportunity of representing his *persecutors* as proceeding upon principles of malice. But to wave other *remarks*, I cannot think that such an event could be said to proceed from the *supply of the Spirit of Christ*.

SECT. 2. PHIL. I.

best of men! But how generous and amiable the disposition which the apostle expresses when he rejoices in this, that Christ was preached, though the purposes with regard to him were so unkind! These are the wonders which the love of Jesus produces in the soul; thus doth it empty us of every malignant passion, and reconcile us to the most disagreeable events that may advance his interests. Where such principles inspire the breast, the faithful servants of Jesus will find their own account, while they are wholly intent on his honour. All these events shall turn to their salvation; but let it be remembered, that it is through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which 19 sanctifies to us every circumstance through which we pass. That these supplies may be imparted, let us unite our prayers in favour of all who love our common Lord in sincerity. (Eph. vi. 24.)

SECTION III.

Paul freely lays open to the Philippians the sentiments of his heart as to life and death, declaring his desire to be with Christ in a better world, but his readiness to continue here for his Lord's service; and entreats them that while he did so, he might have the joy to hear that, though he were absent, they maintained the honour of their christian character, both for piety and courage. Phil. i. 21—30.

PHIL. i. 21.

SECT. 3. PHIL. I.

I HAVE expressed my expectation and my hope that Christ will be glorified in me, whether by life or by death, and it is a hope which I am encouraged to form by a consciousness of the temper I feel in my heart. *For to me to live* [*is*] *Christ*;[a] he is the supreme End of my life, and I value it only as it is capable of being referred to the purposes of his honour. *And* in consequence of this, *to die* [*is*] *gain:* for as this temper 21 argues my interest in the friendship of that Redeemer who is the Lord of the invisible as well as the visible world, I am well satisfied that he will make ample provision for my happiness when I quit this transitory life, and surround me with far more important bless- 22 ings than any which I must then resign. *And if* he determines that *I live* longer *in the* infirmities and sorrows of mortal *flesh*, I desire to acquiesce; for *this* [*is*] what I esteem *the* great *fruit of my* life and *labour*, and an ample equivalent for all its fatigues, that I may be capable in some measure of promoting the great end which engaged him for a while to make his abode here in this humble form of human nature. *And* thus, on the 23 whole, *which I should chuse* if it were entirely referred to myself, *I know not: For I am*, as it were, *borne two different ways*;[b] *having*, on the one hand, *a* more earnest *desire*, out of regard to my own immediate happiness, *to be unbound;* to weigh anchor, as it were, *and* quitting these mortal shores, set sail for that happy world where I shall *be* immediately *with Christ*,[c] *which is better beyond all* comparison and *expression*, than a longer abode here would be, were I to regard only my own immediate comfort and 24 happiness: *But to abide in the flesh* [*is*,] I know, *more expedient* and necessary *for* 25 *you* and my fellow-christians, who need my farther assistance. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide*,[d] and I am heartily willing, though my own personal glory be delayed, to *continue with you all, in order to the advancement of your faith,* 26 *and* of that *joy* which is supported by it:[e] *That your* boasting and *rejoicing in me may in* and through *Christ Jesus be more abundant*, and your christian consolation greatly increased *by my coming among you again* to make you another visit when I am enlarged from my present confinement; as, when it has answered the schemes of Providence with respect to it, I hope I shall be.

27 *Only let* me always urge this upon you, that *your conversation*[f] may *be* such *as becomes the gospel of Christ*, and may do an honour to your profession of his religion; *that* so, *whether I come to visit you, or be* long *absent* from you, *I may* see and *hear concerning you, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, striving together* as *with one soul*, and in the most vigorous united efforts, *for the faith of the gospel;* which it will be your interest to contend for, how violently soever your mightiest adversaries may attempt to wrest 28 it out of your hands. *And* indeed I hope it will appear that you are *not in any* degree *terrified*[g] *by* all the rage and fury of *your enemies, which*, when duly considered, *is to them an*

PHIL. i. 21.

FOR to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall chuse I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better:

24 Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel:

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident

a *To me to live is Christ*, &c.] Mr. Pierce would translate this clause, *Christ is gain to me, living or dying.* But the paraphrase shows how it stands connected on admitting our version. Nor can I think the other version natural, as it quite destroys the *antithesis* in those members of the sentence which are opposed to each other.

b *Borne two different ways:* συνεχομαι εκ των δυο.] The original is very emphatical; and it seems (according to the turn I have given it in the paraphrase) to be an allusion to a ship stationed at a particular place, and riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds; which presents us with a lively representation of the apostle's attachment to his situation in the christian church, and the vehemence of his desire *to be unbound*, as I have rendered αναλυσαι, that is, to weigh anchor and set sail for the heavenly country.

c *Be* immediately *with Christ.*] This plainly proves that the separate spirits of good men are *with Christ* in such a manner as that their state is *far better* than while they continue in this present world; which a state of insensibility cannot possibly be. But Mr. Fleming very justly observes, that it will not at all disprove that large *accession* of happiness after the resurrection, which other scriptures plainly declare. Flem. *Christ.* Vol. III. p. 530. Compare 2 Cor. v. 5—10. The original phrase, πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον, which we render, *far better*, is so very emphatical, that I cannot translate it literally, and I know not how better to imitate the sense than by rendering it, *better beyond all expression;* for indeed the apostle seems to labour for expression here as much as in any part of his writings.

d *I know I shall abide.*] Probably, as Mr. Howe conjectures, (Vol. II. p. 89.) he had some *particular revelation* to ground this confidence upon. I can by no means think he refers to any intimation from the palace how it was likely to go with him. He must have known little of princes and courtiers, (especially in Nero's reign,) to build so confidently on such a foundation.

e *The advancement of your faith and joy.*] *Your furtherance and joy of faith* is a more literal translation; but as it expresses nothing more than that here given, which is rather plainer and easier to be understood, I hope I need make no apology for such a liberty here and in several other places.

f *Let your conversation.*] The learned Professor Franckius thinks a parenthesis begins with these words, which is continued to the end of the 16th verse of the next chapter; but it appears to me neither necessary nor natural to allow it. The word πολιτευεσθε signifies most literally to behave as *denizens* of some city or corporation; but to render it, as Dr. Scott proposes, (*Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 42.) *citizen it* as becomes, &c. is making a great deal too free with the English language.

g *Not in any degree terrified, &c.*] It evidently appears from hence, and from several other passages in this Epistle, that the

token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

evident token of surely and quickly approaching *destruction*;[h] as nothing can be a more certain sign that they are ripe for it, than the prevalency of such a persecuting spirit among them: *but to you* it is a sure evidence *of* complete *salvation*, quickly to be revealed, *and that from God* himself, who will reward your pious fortitude with blessings proportionably distinguished. And in this view I would have you to look upon these trials, and, instead of dreading them, to be thankful for them. *For it is granted to you as a favour on the part of Christ*, our great Lord, *not only to believe in him, but also* that you should have the distinguished honour *to suffer for his sake*;[i] in consequence of which you will be entitled to the peculiar rewards of those who have been martyrs and confessors in the cause of his truth. (Compare Acts v. 41.) *Having* in a great measure *the same struggle* with the adversaries of the gospel, who labour to overbear it by brutal violence, *as ye saw* to be *in me*[k] when I was among you at Philippi, and was stripped and scourged, and laid in a dungeon and in the stocks, *and* which you *now hear* [*to be*] *in me* at Rome; whither you know I was sent in bonds as an evil-doer, having been obliged to appeal to Cæsar for the preservation of my life, when attempted by enemies who would be contented with nothing less than my blood, which they had solemnly bound themselves to shed.

SECT. 3. PHIL. 1. 29 30

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy must that man be who can truly say, that to him to live is Christ and to die gain! What a blessed alternative is before him, and how cheerfully may he leave it to Providence to decide which of the two shall be appointed for him! And yet how vain must life be, and how miserable death, to that man who cannot say it! *He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad:* (Mat. xii. 30.) and when death comes to such an one, it is the loss of all, attended with the final, and, alas! the eternal loss of himself. While the good man pronounces it better beyond all comparison to depart, that he may be with Christ, and submits only to continue in life, as the part in which self-denying duty requires him to acquiesce. But, O! how unworthy the christian character, to be averse to so advantageous a remove! To be unwilling, and that even on such terms, to depart and to be with Christ! As if any converse, any friendship, any enjoyment, any hope here, were comparable, yea, as if it were preferable, to serving him in his immediate presence, under the everlasting tokens of his acceptance and delight. Ver. 21 23 24, 25 22

But if that Master whom we have the honour to serve, determine to us an abode here for months and years to come, and his church may receive advantage by it, ill shall we requite his love who quitted heaven for this sinful and wretched earth of ours, if we are unwilling for a while to wait till he shall call us up to himself. Very deficient shall we be in that gratitude and zeal which we owe him, if we find not something of a heaven begun even below, in doing what may be pleasing to him, in managing his interest, with such degrees of ability as he shall be pleased to honour us with, and so training up others to a meetness for those enjoyments which he hath taught us by his grace to expect and pursue. 25

Whatever our stations may be, whether in public or private life, let it be our care, in every circumstance and relation, that our conversation may be as becometh the gospel; that we may adorn so holy a profession, and answer so glorious a hope. If opposition arise, let it not terrify us. It will, if well supported, be a token of salvation, and that of God. Let us account it an honour, and the gift of the divine favour to us, to be called and strengthened to suffer for his sake. So were the prophets, so were the apostles, dignified. We have heard of their noble contentions, that we might emulate them; and well may we do it, since we have the same Author, Finisher, and Support of our faith, and hope to partake of the same *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. (2 Cor. iv. 17.) 27 28 29, 30

SECTION IV.

The apostle exhorts the Philippians to unanimity and candour, and a tender care for the interest of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer; of whose humiliation and exalted estate he discourses in a very affectionate manner; pressing them to a due improvement of it, as what would most highly conduce to their own happiness and his comfort. Phil. ii. 1—16.

PHIL. ii. 1.

IF *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies:

PHIL. ii. 1.

I HAVE been expressing my concern, that your conversation might be worthy of the gospel; and as nothing can conduce more to it than the exercise of mutual love, permit me, my dear brethren, to enforce it farther upon you, by every pathetic consideration which our common faith and most holy religion can suggest: and particularly by the affectionate remembrance of my sufferings and your own. (Compare chap. i. 30.) *If therefore* [*there be*] *any consolation in Christ* himself, the great Source of all our enjoyments and hopes, for whose sake we have endured so many extremities; *if* there be *any comfort* and delight in the exercise *of* the most tender and endeared *love; if* there be *any* communion

SECT. 4. PHIL. II. 1

Philippians were now in a suffering state, which is a circumstance to be borne in mind as we go on, as it illustrates several masterly strokes in the apostle's address to them.

h *Evident token of destruction.*] Mr. Pierce, by interpreting it, "they think it a proof of your being obstinately bent on your own "ruin," loses the true sense and spirit of the passage.

i *Suffer for his sake.*] From this text and some parallel passages, such as 1 Thess. xi. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. x. 32; 1 Pet. i. 6; some may object to what Dr. Lardner has asserted when he says, that most of the first *persecutions* which the christians suffered came from the Jews. It is no wonder if that obstinate and cruel people were peculiarly enraged against the disciples of Jesus, who so expressly contradicted many of their favourite maxims and tenets. And though, to be sure, their greatest influence was in Judea, yet it is well known that in other places they had a power of imprisoning and scourging in the synagogues, and it is highly probable that many of the severities inflicted by Gentile magistrates on the first preachers of the gospel, were at the instigation of the Jews who dwelt in the cities over which these magistrates presided. Compare Acts xii. 3; xiii. 50; xiv. 19; xvii. 5, 13, xviii. 12; xix. 9. See Dr. Lardner's *Cred.* Vol. I. p. 417, &c.

k *Saw* to be *in me.*] I see not why this should be explained as referring only or chiefly to his conflicts with judaizing teachers, concerning which at Philippi we read nothing. This seems one of the many texts which may be expounded in a greater latitude than that in which some late learned commentators and critics have taken it. It would be tedious to mark all instances of a like kind.

SECT. 4. PHIL. II.

of hearts, founded upon the *communication of* one and *the* same *Spirit*, working in all our souls; *if* there be on the whole *any bowels* in human nature, *and* any *compassions* either manifested by God to us, or wrought into the constitution of our being by the great Author of it: In a word, if there be any affectionate bond by which you are united to me, who have been by divine grace made your spiritual father, and by whose ministry
2 you have been made acquainted with these engaging views; *complete ye my joy*, and endeavour to fill my heart with the most exalted pleasure, while I lie in these bonds for my fidelity to God and to you. Now in this view I am desirous beyond expression, *that ye may* all *be unanimous*,[a] *maintaining the same love*, however your sentiments, and in some instances your practice, may be divided, still *having your souls joined together*, and all their ardour combined *in attending to the one* great *thing*, which ought to be the leading concern of every christian, the advancement of vital, practical holiness; by attending diligently to which, you will be diverted from those undue attachments to smaller matters which so often divide the affection of christians, and take them off from the pursuit of the noblest objects.

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3 And in this view especially guard against pride, and [*let*] *nothing* [*be done*] or said *out of* a spirit of contradiction and *contention, or from vain-glory*, to draw the eyes of others upon you, and make yourselves the subjects of discourse and admiration; *but in* unaffected simplicity and *lowliness of mind, esteeming others as more excellent than yourselves:* which, on one account or another, you may know almost every one to
4 be. *Do not every one aim at his own* separate *interests*, profits, and conveniences, *but* aim *each of you also at* promoting *the interests of others:* be always ready to deny yourselves for the general good, and to condescend to one another, as the happiness of every particular brother and friend may require.

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 In this respect, and in every other, *let the same mind be in* every one of *you which was also in* so eminent and amiable a degree in *Christ Jesus*, whom we call our Master
6 and our Lord: Even in that illustrious and adorable Person, *who being*, long before his appearance in human flesh, *in the form of God*,[b] and having been from eternal ages possessed of divine perfections and glories, when manifesting himself to the patriarchs and prophets of old, *thought it not robbery* and usurpation *to be* and appear *as God*,[c] assuming the highest divine names, titles, and attributes, by which the Supreme Being has made
7 himself known, and receiving from his servants divine honours and adorations: *Nevertheless*, in his infinite condescension and compassion to us miserable sinners, *emptied himself* of all this glory, *taking* [*upon him*,] instead of the splendours which he had been used to wear as the Sovereign of angels, *the* humble *form* not only of a common man, but even *of a servant, when made in the likeness of men*, which itself had been a most astonishing
8 stoop, even though he had appeared in the pomp of the greatest monarch. *And* yet even this condescension to the rank of low life among sinful mortals, wonderful as it was, did not content him: for *being found in fashion* and appearance *as a man*, and having put on all the innocent infirmities of our nature, *he humbled himself* still farther, *becoming obedient even unto death;* and indeed to no common and gentle form of dissolution, but to *the* ignominious as well as painful *death of the cross*, on which he expired, as you well know, like one of the vilest and most accursed of mankind.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 *Therefore God* his Father, to whom such a course of filial obedience, proceeding from such noble principles of piety and charity, could not but be most acceptable, *hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity*,[d] *and granted him a name*, the honours of which are
10 *superior to* those of *every* other *name* that can come in comparison with it. *So that in the name of Jesus*, in humble subjection to his authority and command, *every knee*

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name;
10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should

a *Unanimous, &c.*] It is difficult to translate or paraphrase these words so as to avoid some appearance of tautology. In my *Third Letter* to the author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 43. I had given a translation in the main the same with this; but on farther examination, whereas I had there united the second and third clause as an explication of the first, *let your souls be joined together in the same love*, I here (as in my *Sermon on Christian Candour*, p. 8.) join the two former and two latter clauses, το αυτο φρονητε, την αυτην αγαπην εχοντες, *be unanimous, maintaining the same love;* συμψυχοι το εν φρονουντες, *having your souls joined together in attending to the one thing.* An improvement for which I am obliged to my learned, accurate, and worthy friend, Dr. Daniel Scott.

b *Who being in the form of God.*] Few of my readers can be ignorant of the pains learned men have taken to establish two very different translations and senses of this important text, and of the contrary uses which have been made of it in the controversy relating to the deity of our ever-blessed Redeemer. The critics, who would render ουκ αρπαγμον ηγησατο, &c. *did not eagerly catch at a likeness to* or *equality with God*, built a great deal of their argument on the opposition of the two clauses, and the force of the particle αλλα. *He did not affect this equality*, but *humbled himself.* I have often wondered at the stress laid on this, since every one must know that αλλα often signifies, *nevertheless*, and accordingly it is frequently rendered so in our version, particularly Mark xiv. 36; John xi. 15; I Cor. ix. 12; Gal. iv. 30; 2 Tim. i. 12. And, which is especially to the present purpose, it is sometimes thus rendered when preceded by the particle ουκ. See Rom. v. 13, 14; 2 Cor. xii. 16. I have given such an interpretation of the passage as appeared to me, on mature deliberation, most agreeable to the text itself, in comparison with other scriptures; and the learned reader cannot be at a loss to find the opinion of the most celebrated writers on each side of the question relating to it. I hardly recollect any that have discussed it with more accuracy than Bos, in his *Exercit.* 2d Edit. p. 196—203; and Sir Richard Ellys, in his *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 178—228. Bishop Burnet well observes, that the Socinian interpretation is extremely cold and insipid, as if it were a mighty argument of humility that, though Christ wrought miracles, which they strangely think signified by the phrase of *being in the form of God*, yet he did not set up for Supreme Deity. See Burnet, *On the Art.* p. 46.

c *To be* and appear *as God.*] So ισα Θεω is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of ισα in many places in the Septuagint, which Dr. Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is, ισως τω Θεω, which is used, John v. 18. Mr. Pierce thus paraphrases the clause before us, "He was not "eager in retaining that likeness to God," of which he was before possessed; and he observes, that, had it referred to what was considered as future, the expression would have been εσεσθαι, not ειναι, and farther pleads, that the apostle's design here is not to caution the Philippians against coveting what they had no claim to, but to engage them, after the example of Christ, to give up their *own right* for the advantage of others.

d *God hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity.*] This seems a more natural translation of the word υπερυψωσε than what Mr. Pierce proposes, who would render it, *exalted him higher than before.* I think nothing can be more evident than that he who was exalted was humbled, and consequently, that there was a proper change made in the state and condition of Christ, by that emptying himself spoken of, ver. 7.

bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth:

should bow, and every spirit submit, *of celestial* [*beings*,] in their various orders of dignity *and* glory, as well as of *those upon and under the earth*:[e] angels and men, the living and the dead, yea, devils themselves shall do him homage; and he be ever adored as the Saviour of his redeemed people, as the Head of all holy and happy spirits, and the sovereign and uncontrollable Lord of all those whose rebellion against him and his heavenly Father hath made them the worthy objects of perpetual displeasure and punishment. *And* thus

SECT. 4.

PHIL. II.

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

11 hath God taken effectual measures, that *every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ*, his anointed Son, [*is*] indeed *Lord* of all, *to the glory of God the Father*, in whose name he administers his mediatorial kingdom, and to whose honour he professedly refers it.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Therefore, my beloved christian brethren, as God hath, in the person of his Son, so 12 gloriously rewarded that bright assemblage of virtue for which he was so incomparably illustrious, and particularly that condescension, humility, and benevolence, which I have so earnestly been recommending to you; let it be considered by you as an engagement to tread in his steps with diligence and resolution, so far as the feeble powers of human nature may admit. And *as* justice requires me to acknowledge that *ye have always been obedient* to my instructions and exhortations, while I have had the pleasure of being with you, be solicitous, that *not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence*,[f] (which, though it deprives you of some advantages, yet, as it is owing to my bonds in your cause, ought to increase the tenderness of your concern for my comfort,) you may *work out your own salvation*[g] with great earnestness and assiduity; yea, considering its infinite importance, *with* holy *fear and trembling*. I say your own salvation, for that will be most effectually secured and promoted by the temper I have now been recommending. Seize that happy opportunity of doing it which divine grace affords; *for God is he who worketh*

13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

in you,[h] *both to will and to perform of* [*his own*] *good pleasure*. You ought therefore 13 to consider every good affection and purpose which arises in your heart, as suggested by his grace, which waits upon you, to enable you to bring it into perfection. And remember that he operates with such sovereign freedom, that if these condescending favours be slighted, they may in righteous displeasure be withdrawn; and I leave you, my dear brethren, to reflect how fatal the consequence would then be.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Go on therefore resolutely in your whole christian course, and *let all things be done* 14 *without* those *murmurings and disputings* which so ill become the relation in which you stand to each other, and that community of interest in which, as the servants of this compassionate Saviour, you are united.

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

On the whole, let me, by every most affecting consideration, urge it upon you again and 15 again, *that ye may be blameless and inoffensive*, and act up to the dignity of your relation as *the children of God*, maintaining an *unexceptionable* character, *in the midst of* all the malignity which you must expect to encounter from *a perverse and crooked generation*, with which you are surrounded: *amongst whom* be concerned that ye may *shine as* elevated *lights*[i] *in the* dark *world* about you; that you may direct those that sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks which

16 Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

every where lie in their way. Thus must you, as you tender the lives and the souls of 16 your fellow-creatures, be continually *holding out* to them, for their guidance and instruction, *the word of life*, by which you have been directed to steer safely for the blessed haven of glory and immortality, and whereby they may receive the same benefit. A variety of important considerations concur to inspire you with so happy a resolution, and I doubt not but you will allow some weight to this among the rest, that it will greatly tend to promote *my rejoicing in the day of Christ, that* it may appear *I have not run* through the course of my apostolic office *in vain, nor laboured* in the duties of it *in vain;* but that the great end of it has been at least in part answered, in the glory of God, by your salvation and usefulness.

e *Those upon and under the earth.*] There can be no doubt but the former clause relates to Christ's being made Sovereign over the angelic spirits. Eph. i. 10. But whether this latter phrase, *things upon and under the earth*, may not relate to the *living* and the *dead*, rather than *men* and *devils*, some have queried; compare Rev. i. 18; Rom. xiv. 9. and it is certain that the word καταχθονιων sometimes in the Greek classics signifies the *dead*. But on the whole, as the expression is ambiguous, I have, as I usually do in such cases, included both in the paraphrase.

f *Much more in my absence.*] Though there be an ambiguity in the connexion of this clause, if the grammar only be considered, I think the sense obliges us to join it with the following rather than with the preceding words. The paraphrase suggests the reasons why his absence should make them more eagerly solicitous in *working out their salvation:* but I know no reason to apprehend that they were less obedient to Paul when he was with them, than to any messages they might have received in his absence; and the word *now*, in this view, seems decisive.

g *Work out your own salvation.*] Mr. Pierce has advanced a very peculiar interpretation of this text: for he would render it, "*promote* "*the welfare of each other*," urging that εαυτων sometimes signifies the same with αλληλων. Compare Eph. iv. 32. But not to insist on the expression, *with fear and trembling*, as greatly favouring the common interpretation, it is obvious that εαυτων is three times in this chapter put for *our own* things, ver. 3, 4, 21. And whereas it is pleaded on the other side, that the sense given above is most agreeable to the connexion, it seems to me that this turn in the expression farther suggests, that by following those generous maxims the apostle had been recommending, they would also most effectually secure their own salvation; which, instead of detracting any thing from the force of the argument as the words are usually understood, greatly increases it.

h *He who worketh in you.*] The original is very emphatical, as Mr. Howe beautifully observes; (Howe's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 21.) for it asserts, on the one hand, that God is actually or continually operating, and, on the other, that thus to work in the heart for such noble purposes, is the *prerogative of God*, and an effect worthy his divine attributes and perfections. I can by no means think with Dr. Clarke, that this merely signifies, that God hath given us a *power* to chuse and to act, (*Post. Serm.* Vol. VI. p. 69.) but that it refers to the operation of *divine grace*, as is strongly intimated by the concluding clause, *of his own good pleasure;* which Mr. Howe finely explains, not so much of his *goodness* in general, as of his *sovereign freedom* in these operations; he works υπερ της ευδοκιας, *freely*. Compare Matt. xi. 26. which suggests the caution expressed in the paraphrase.

i *Shine as* elevated *lights, &c.*] I am indebted to the learned and eloquent Mons. Saurin for this version and paraphrase. He has justly and beautifully observed that the word φωστηρ has this energy, and alludes to the buildings which we call *light-houses;* the most illustrious of which was raised in the island of Pharos, when Ptolemy Philadelphus built that celebrated tower on which a bright flame was always kept burning in the night, that mariners might perfectly see their way, and be in no danger of suffering shipwreck upon the rocks which they were to pass in their entrance into the haven at Alexandria. Saur. *Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 460.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 4. PHIL. II. Ver. 7

We know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Few christians are unacquainted with the remarkable phrases in which it is here expressed. But how few seriously pause upon it, and labour to affect their hearts with its important meaning! Who can conceive the dignity and glory of Christ, when in the form of God, and accounting it no robbery or usurpation to be as God? Who can conceive of that mysterious act; of that (if we may be allowed to say it) more than mysterious love, by which he emptied himself of this glory, that he might assume the humble form of a servant, being found in fashion like a man, and then might stoop yet lower, so as to become obedient 8 to death, even the death of the cross? Often let us contemplate this amazing object; often let us represent to our admiring, to our dissolving hearts, the Man Christ Jesus extended there, and pouring forth his soul in agony and blood. As often let us remember his high original, his divine glories, the bosom of the Father, the throne of God. With pleasure let us reflect that he is returned to it, and that, having ennobled this low nature of ours by so intimate an union with the divine, God his Father hath in that nature exalted him, and given him a name above every 9 name, human or angelic, in the visible, or in all the distant and different regions of the invisible, world. Let our 10 knees gladly bow to so amiable a Sovereign, and let us with pleasure view the approaching day, when every knee 11 shall submissively own his authority, and every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the mean time, let us never forget the purposes for which the apostle hath here called our meditations to these wonderful and instructive truths. It is to inculcate upon us, (O may we ever inculcate it upon ourselves!) that 5 the same mind may always be in us that was also in him. That, if there be any consolation in such a Saviour, 1, 2 any comfort in such love as he teaches, any bowels of tenderness in human nature, any endearing fellowship in the one Spirit which we derive from him, we may with united hearts and hands be carrying on the one great 12 business of his servants, working out our salvation with fear and trembling; avoiding every thing that may grieve and injure others, every thing that may discredit our holy profession. And being now made by him the children 15 of God, may we shine with a bright, steady flame, as lights in the world, and hold out, for the benefit of all 16 around us, the word of life, as the gospel which redeems us from the second death, and raises us to eternal life, may properly be called. May we spread its lustre through as wide a circle as possible, and with it that happiness which nothing but a cordial belief of it and subjection to it can bring to the human heart.

To conclude: let us learn, from these wise and pious exhortations of the apostle, at once our duty and our dependence; our duty, to work out our own salvation; our dependence on the grace of him, who worketh in us 13 both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. And therefore let us so seek divine grace, and rest upon it, as to 12 exert with vigour and resolution the faculties which are to co-operate with it; and let us so endeavour to exert the faculties which God hath given us, as to confide in divine grace, and rest continually upon it; without which we shall neither will nor do any thing pleasing to God, or available to our own salvation: for in this sense salvation is of the Lord, and through his blessing, which is upon his people. (Psal. iii. 8.)

SECTION V.

The apostle assures the Philippians of his readiness even to die for their advantage, but expresses his hope of being set at liberty, and restored to them in person: in the mean time he promises them very soon a visit from Timothy, and sends Epaphroditus for their immediate satisfaction; of whose late sickness and ardent love for them he speaks in very affectionate terms. Phil. ii. 17, *to the end.*

PHIL. ii. 17.

SECT. 5. PHIL. II. 17

I HAVE been expressing my hope that your temper and behaviour will be such as would prove my labours among you not to have been in vain, and afford me matter of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. But it is impossible for me fully to express the earnestness with which I desire that it may be so. *For if I should even be,* if I may use such language, *poured forth,* and my blood be shed, *as a* kind of libation or *drink-offering,*[a] *on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith,* while you are presented by my means as an acceptable offering to God, far from lamenting that I should meet with death in such a cause, *I* rather *rejoice and congratulate you all* on that happy circumstance, into which you are 18 brought by that gospel which I have at so great an expense delivered to you. *And on this account do you also rejoice and congratulate with me;*[b] for while suffering the last extremities in a cause like this, I am happy, and ought to be regarded as an object of congratulation rather than of condolence.

19 It will indeed be no surprise to me if my work and testimony as an apostle should end in martyrdom, *but,* as I intimated above, (chap. i. 25.) I do not immediately expect it; and, in the mean time, would omit nothing which may show my endeared affection to my christian brethren, and particularly to you. In pursuance of which, *I hope in the Lord Jesus,* to whose direction and control I desire to submit all my schemes, and in whose hand the life and the ways of his servants are, that I shall *quickly* be able *to send Timothy to you; that* by him, not only you, but *I also, may be refreshed, knowing* from him [*the* 20 *state of*] *your affairs* more particularly than I can otherwise hope to do. My respect for you inclines me to make choice of him on this occasion, though I can ill spare him; *for I*

PHIL. ii. 17.

YEA, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.

20 For I have no man

a *If I should be poured forth,* &c.] This is the proper import of the word σπενδομαι. Almost every reader must know that as oil and wine made a part of the provisions of the table God had ordained in the Jewish ritual, that a proportionable quantity of each should attend every bullock, goat, ram, lamb, or kid, which was presented at his altar. The heathens also used such libations, and sometimes they used blood mingled with wine, in honour of their idol deities. Compare Psal. xvi. 4. The apostle considers the faith of the Philippians as an acceptable sacrifice presented to God; and if he incurred martyrdom for his zeal to promote it, he might speak of his blood as a libation poured out upon occasion of it, with greater beauty and propriety than most commentators have observed.

b *Congratulate with me.*] I cannot read this heroic discourse of the apostle without reflecting on the behaviour of the brave Athenian mentioned by Plutarch, (*Glor. Athen. ap. Op.* p. 347.) who returned to Athens from the victorious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action, and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were as-

like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24 But I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

have none here with me in all respects *of a like disposition, who will* so *naturally*, with such a genuine tenderness and concern, *take the care of your affairs.* SECT. 5.

Indeed a temper like this is too uncommon; *for*, great as our engagements and obligations to a contrary disposition are, I may say it, with very few exceptions, that almost all *seek their own things*,[c] *none the things of Christ Jesus.* It is hard to find, even among those that call themselves his disciples, any who have their Master's interest so affectionately at heart as not to neglect it, in some degree at least, out of regard to their own secular interest and pleasure, ease and safety. *But you know the experience of him*, who was with me as well as Silas, in that memorable visit which I first made you, (Acts xvi. 1, 12.) and you had an opportunity of seeing, *that as a son with a father he served with me in* the work of *the gospel*, and neglected no occasion of doing, in the most affectionate manner, whatever might lighten either my labours or my sufferings. *I hope therefore to send him* very *quickly* to you, *as soon as I see how my affairs will be determined.* And though he be so useful to me, I shall be willing to spare him upon your account. Till they come to a more certain crisis, I conclude it will be most agreeable to you that he should defer his journey. *But I trust in* the providence and care of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whose guardianship I commit the life I have devoted to his service, *that I shall soon* be set at liberty, and *come to you myself.* *Yet* in the mean time, or at least till Timothy can be more conveniently spared, *I thought it necessary* and expedient *to send to you Epaphroditus, my* dear *brother and* diligent *fellow-labourer* in the work, *and fellow-soldier* in the arduous combat and painful sufferings of Christ; *but* who was *your* most welcome *messenger* to me,[d] *and the* ready *minister to* the relief of *my necessities*,[e] by whose faithful hand I received that liberal supply which your pious friendship so cheerfully advanced. Had I only consulted my own convenience and pleasure, I should have been glad to have detained him longer; but I now give him his despatches, *because he was exceedingly desirous of* returning to *you all*, for whom he has a most endeared affection, *and was* much *dejected* and troubled *because* he knew *you had heard that he was sick*, and he feared lest the tidings should grieve you too much, as he could not but know how affectionately you love him. *And indeed* it is very true that *he was sick, and* in all human appearance *near to death*:[f] *but God had mercy upon him*, and recovered him; *and* I must say, in this instance, he had *not* compassion *upon him alone, but also on me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow;* as I certainly should have had, if the loss of such a beloved friend, and of so useful a person, had been added to all the other afflictions I sustain in this imprisonment, and amidst so much perverse and ungrateful opposition. *I have therefore sent him* away to you *with the greater diligence that, seeing him again* in that comfortable state of health and spirit to which, by the divine goodness, he is now restored, *ye might rejoice; and that I might be the less sorrowful*, while I in spirit partake with you in the satisfaction which I know this interview will give on both sides. *Receive him therefore* as *in the Lord* Jesus Christ, as mindful of your mutual relation to him, *with all joy* in the bowels of christian love, as well as the demonstrations of natural friendship: *and hold* persons of *such* a character, whatever their station of life may be, *in high estimation.* *For* it was in a great measure *on account of* that zeal and fervour which he exercised in carrying on *the work of* the Lord Jesus *Christ*, both in preaching the gospel and attending my necessities, that *he was nigh unto death, having disregarded* even *his* [*own*] *life, that he might fill up the deficiency of your service to me*,[g] and might, if it were possible, perform to me in his own person all the kind offices which your whole society could have rendered me had you been with me as he was.

PHIL. II.
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IMPROVEMENT.

To what sublime heights of piety and virtue does the immortal hope of the gospel elevate the mind of mortal man! Behold this holy apostle not only presenting himself as a resolute victim at the altar of God, but speaking of that stroke by which his blood was to be poured out as an occasion of joy, and calling for the congratulation of his friends upon it! Behold him with pleasure resigning the society of those who were dearest and most useful to him, at a time when he seemed most of all to need their assistance; even of that friend who would most naturally care for their estate, when he knew none that were like-minded! And oh that this might be the character of all the

Ver. 17, 18

20

sembled, uttered only these two words, χαιρετε, χαιρωμεν, *Take your share of our joy*, and immediately dropped down dead at their feet.

c *All seek their own things.*] Perhaps the apostle may speak this in reference to the part which some christians, and possibly some ministers, at Rome had acted, to whom he might have proposed this journey; which they might decline through too great a regard to their own ease and conveniency, which laid him under the necessity of parting with Timothy.

d *Your messenger.*] As the word is αποστολον, some would render it, *your apostle*, and they have stooped so low as to draw an argument from hence to prove that he was their bishop in the modern sense of the word, and that such bishops are the immediate successors of the apostles in their extraordinary rank and power. But the ablest patrons of diocesan episcopacy have had the modesty and prudence to spare this argument, as it is so incongruous to suppose that he should be employed as a messenger to carry the churches' alms to Paul, when he must have had such important business at home; nor does what follows by any means agree with such a supposition. See Mr. Pierce's *Vind.* p. 338, &c.

e *He that ministered to my necessities:* Λειτουργον της χρειας μου.] Mr. Pierce follows Castellio in rendering it, "*he who is now to act "for me with you*," supposing the apostle's intention was to appoint Epaphroditus as his representative in the church, who was to supply his place during his absence, and whom therefore he styles αποστολος. But the word χρεια is in other parts of this Epistle, as well as elsewhere, used in such a manner as to favour the interpretation given in our version. Compare chap. iv. 16, 19.

f *Nigh unto death.*] The journey and change of air might contribute to his disorder, as well as the assiduity of his attendance on Paul, and despatching his affairs in all weathers, and perhaps at all hours.

g *Deficiency of your service:* Το υμων υστερημα της προς με λειτουργιας.] Mr. Pierce would render this, *supply the remainder of your beneficence to me*, which in sense is much the same. The apostle considers them as disposed to have rendered him what service they could *in person*: but not having an opportunity to do it in themselves, the good Epaphroditus was in this respect their proxy and *representative.*

SECT. 5. PHIL. II.

ministers of Christ naturally, and with genuine affection to care for the state of those committed to them, taking thought for them and the oversight of them, not by constraint, but from a principle of love, which shall make all necessary labours natural and easy! But, alas! how rare a character is it, and how much reason is there to lament the prevalency of a contrary disposition among all ranks of men, the sacred order itself not excepted; while all seek their own things, none the things of Jesus Christ!

21 What ingratitude does this argue! Yea, what stupid insensibility, that any thing, that every thing, should be dearer to us than the interest of that Saviour who purchased us to himself with his blood! Happy they who are distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal in a time of prevailing apostasy! which we are not to wonder if we discover in these latter ages, when the apostles found cause to speak thus in their own. How beautiful a description 22 does he here give of the piety and humility of young Timothy, while serving with him as a son with a father in the gospel! Thus let young and aged ministers behave to each other as fathers and sons; the young paying the elder such reverend regards, the aged affording to the younger such kind and tender patronage, and showing a solicitous concern to prepare them for filling up their places in the church with increasing advantage.

30 Some obvious instruction arises from what is here said of good Epaphroditus, whose affection to his christian friends was so ardent, and whose zeal for the work of Christ had even endangered his life. Great reason is there to 29 hold such, wherever they are found, in high esteem; tenderly to sympathize with them; earnestly to entreat God 27 for them, if at any time diseases threaten their useful lives; and to own the mercy of God not to them only, but to us, when he is pleased to raise them up and restore them to a capacity of ministering in his church. Let us go back in our memories to the days and weeks of dangerous sickness which any of us have known, and humble ourselves before God, that we have no better improved, for his glory and for the good of his church, his mercy to us in bringing us up from the gates of the grave.

SECTION VI.

Paul exhorts the Philippians to fix their whole dependence on Christ and his gospel, as he assures them he himself did, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages than most who valued themselves so highly upon them. Phil. iii. 1—14.

PHIL. iii. 1.

SECT. 6. PHIL. III.

AS for what remains, my dear brethren, that I may proceed to what I farther design in this Epistle, let me exhort you, whatever may become of me or of yourselves, so far as any worldly interest and prospect is concerned, that ye *rejoice in the* protection and care of the *Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] our blessed Redeemer, and in the promises and hopes given us by him. I have already insisted upon them with pleasure, (chap. i. 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, &c. 1 ii. 5, 11.) and *to write the same things to you,*[b] on such a topic, [*is*] *not grievous to me, and* [*it is*] not only *safe* but necessary *for you;* as nothing can tend more to fortify you against the many temptations and enemies with which you are surrounded.

PHIL. iii. 1.

FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

2 And, in farther prosecution of my great design for your spiritual security and edification, let me urge you to *beware of* those invidious, malignant, contentious persons, whom I cannot forbear calling *dogs;*[c] so much have they of a brutal and canine disposition, snarling and malicious, greedy and fierce. *Beware of evil-workers,* who, while they cry up the law, act in direct contradiction to its most important precepts and grand design. *Beware of the concision,* for such I must call that body of men which proudly usurps the name of the circumcision, whereas the external right they so much contend for is but an unprofitable cutting and mangling of the flesh, when performed from such principles and imposed with such a temper; so that the bloody work of it may seem an emblem of 3 the cruel manner in which they cut and mangle the church. Be on your guard against them, I say it again and again; *for* how unwilling soever they may be to allow it, *we* christians *are* indeed *the circumcision, who worship God,* not with the ritual observance of the Mosaic law, but, *in spirit and* in truth; who *boast* not in Jewish privileges, but *in Christ Jesus,* through whom we obtain divine favour and acceptance, *and have no confidence in the flesh,* though we do in fact wear the mark of circumcision in it, or 4 however else we may be distinguished by birth, education, or any external forms. *And indeed* I say this, not as if I were deficient in any thing wherein another can boast, for it is evident *I have also what might be* [*an occasion of*] *confidence in the flesh;* for *if any other thinks he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I* fear not to say I [*have*] probably 5 *more* than he. I was not only *circumcised,* but that, according to the exactest institution of Moses, *on the eighth day*[d] after I was born; *of the stock of Israel,* God's chosen people, not, as some circumcised families are, descended from Ishmael or Edom; and *of*

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an

a *Rejoice in the Lord.*] Some have apprehended a contrast with chap. ii. 25, 28. where he tells them "he had sent Epaphroditus, "that he might rejoice at his coming;" as if he had said, And now I add, that while you are rejoicing in him, I would have you *rejoice in the Lord,* discerning the interposition of Christ, in his being preserved and restored to you. In this connexion it might have been made the conclusion of the second chapter; but it may so naturally, as in the paraphrase, introduce what follows, that I did not chuse to alter the usual division.

b *To write the same things.*] Diodati thinks this an intimation that he had written a former Epistle to them, which is lost. Compare 1 Cor. v. 9; Col. iv. 16. Mr. Fleming thinks it refers to what he had said to them formerly, and that he only gives some hints at these larger conversations in the following verses, which he thinks makes them something obscure. Flem. *On the First Resur.* p. 4.

c *Beware of dogs.*] This may very possibly be an allusion to Isa. lvi. 10—12. Compare ver. 19; Tit. i. 11, 12; Rom. xvi. 18; Gal. vi. 12, 13. The Jews used to call the Gentiles *dogs,* and perhaps St. Paul may use this language, when speaking of their proud bigots, by way of retaliation. Compare Rev. xxii. 15. L'Enfant tell us of a custom at Rome to chain their dogs at the door of their houses, and to put an inscription over them, *Beware of this dog,* to which he seems to think these words may refer.

d *Circumcised the eighth day.*] It evidently appears that the Jews did not only lay a great deal of stress on the right of *circumcision,* but on the time of performing it, *i. e.* exactly on the *eighth* day. The Septuagint have an addition to Gen. xvii. 11. which is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch: "*The male child which* "*is not circumcised on the eighth day, shall be cut off from among his* "*people.*"

Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee:

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

the tribe of Benjamin, whose lot lay so near the temple of God, and which joined not with the ten tribes in their general revolt, but still adhered to Judah, and to the true worship of God at Jerusalem. Not only by my father's but my mother's side have I been from generation to generation *an Hebrew*, descended from a long line *of Hebrews*,[e] so that I reckon no proselyte of foreign nations in my genealogy; *with respect to the law* I was *a Pharisee*, of a sect which most strictly and vigorously adheres to it, and has adopted that guard which tradition has set around it to secure it from the least degree of violation. *With respect to zeal* for these rituals which they so eagerly enjoin, I myself was once employed with the greatest fury in *persecuting the church* of Christ, and endeavouring if possible, to root it up from the face of the earth: *as to that righteousness which is* placed *in* an exact observation of *the law* in its external precepts, I have been quite *blameless* and unexceptionable, so that those who knew me most intimately could not have accused me of any wilful transgression, or of neglecting any expiatory rites and sacrifices appointed in case of involuntary errors. This was my character and state; and there was a time when I was proud of being able to say all this, and thought myself exceedingly happy. *But* now my views of things are altered, and a very different scene hath opened itself upon me, so that *the things which were* once *gain to me*, and which I most valued myself upon, *I have* now *accounted* but as *loss for Christ*.[f] I look upon them as things most despicable when compared with him, yea, as things which would be extremely mischievous to me if they should in any degree prevent my application to him, or my sharing the benefits of those that believe in him. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things*, how valuable soever, to be [*but*] *loss* and damage, *with respect to the most excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, which so much exceeds every other knowledge or interest that can come in competition with it; *for* the sake of *which I have suffered the loss of all things*,[g] having been expelled with infamy from among the Jews, and deprived of all the towering hopes to which my ambition might once have aspired: *And*, far from repining at it, *I count them* not worth mentioning, for they seem to be [*but*] vile refuse and *dung, that I may gain* that inestimable prize and treasure, *Christ* Jesus, in whom alone I shall be safe, and rich, and happy for ever. Though not only reputation *and* power, ease and plenty, but even life itself, should be sacrificed to this view, I am happy enough, if I may but *be found in him*, vitally united to him by a true faith and love, and so taken under his protection and favour; *not having mine own righteousness, which* [*is*] *of the law*; such a righteousness as only consists in observing the precepts or expiations of the Jewish religion, which I was once so solicitous to establish; nor any confidence in any legal righteousness whatever, as my plea before God, *but that* I may be interested in that *which* [*is*] *by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which* [*is*] *of God through faith*; that which he has appointed we should obtain and secure, by believing in his Son, and making our application to him as creatures condemned and undone, whose only refuge is in his righteousness and grace. (Compare Rom. i. 16; iii. 22; x. 3.) This is my great concern, experimentally *to know him, and* feel *the* efficacious *power of his resurrection* continually working upon my mind, *and* bearing me forward, with the most cheerful resolution, to share in *the fellowship of his sufferings* too, *being made conformable to his death*, in all the tortures of crucifixion itself, should his providence call me to it. *If*, having done and suffered any thing which God lays in my way, *I may* but *by any* possible *means* at length *attain to the resurrection*[h] *from the dead*,[i] and that consummate holiness and blessedness which he will then bestow upon all his people, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and be distinguished with glories proportionable to the vigour with which they have exerted themselves in his service.

This I say, *not as if I had already attained* to all that I wish to be, *or were already perfect*: for I am truly sensible how far I am from that perfection of character, as well as of state, which the gospel teaches me to aspire after; *but I pursue it, if* by any means *I may but* reach and *apprehend that* height of excellence *for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus*, whose condescending hand graciously laid hold on me in my mad career,

SECT. 6. PHIL. III.

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

e *Hebrew of Hebrews.*] If, as some have conjectured, the turbulent person to whom Paul especially refers, were only the son of a proselyte, and not of a native Jew, there was a peculiar propriety in dwelling on these circumstances. But on every interpretation it will appear proper; and I am always cautious of clogging the paraphrase with the supposition of any thing of which there is not some considerable proof.

f *I counted loss for Christ*:] i. e. *I threw them away*, as mariners do their goods on which they before set a value, lest they should endanger their lives; in which sense ζημια is used, Acts xxvii. 21.

g *Have suffered the loss of all things.*] It is not by any means improbable that a sentence of *excommunication* might be pronounced against Paul, or at least that his goods might be *confiscated*, as we know other believing Hebrews, though probably no one of them so obnoxious to their Jewish brethren as himself, were actually treated. Heb. x. 33, 34.

h *Attain to the resurrection.*] Mr. Pierce would render the words ει πως καταντησω, *that any way I may arrive at the resurrection*, &c. supposing it alludes to the ship's arriving at the port it is bound for. But the word *attained* has an ambiguity, which equally answering the original, seems better to suit the 12th verse, in which the apostle certainly means something more than that he had not *yet arrived at the resurrection of the dead.* The particle *if*, in this connexion, implies no *uncertainty* of the resurrection, nor any *doubt* as to Paul's attaining it.

i *The resurrection from the dead.*] Mr. Fleming understands St. Paul as speaking here of a *first resurrection* of martyrs and the most eminent saints, which many good men might fall short of, and of which he thinks the apostle himself might not have an absolute assurance. And he lays great stress upon the peculiarity of the phrase την εξαναστασιν την εκ των νεκρων, for so he would read it, according to the Alexandrian MSS. and would render it, "*that peculiar* "*resurrection which is to be from among the rest of the dead.*" Flem. *On the First Resur.* p. 22, 82. But I thought that reading and version too precarious to be adopted here, especially as it appears to me that εξαναστασις is sometimes used without any such *emphasis*. Compare Mark xii. 19; Luke xx. 28; and that the more emphatical phrase, της αναστασεως της εκ νεκρων, Luke xx. 35. simply signifies that resurrection of which *all* good men are to partake; and indeed the general declaration, that the *dead in Christ are to rise first*, will fully answer any thing implied in these expressions. The editors of the Prussian Testament think the Jewish teachers who opposed Paul with so much eagerness were of the sect of the Sadducees, and that he takes the more frequent notice of the *resurrection*, in opposition to their pernicious tenets in relation to it.

SECT. 6. in so extraordinary a manner as you have often heard, and has introduced me into that blessed race in which I am now engaged.[k]

PHIL. III. 13 *Brethren*, I repeat it again, with all unfeigned humility of heart, that *I count not my self to have attained* already, I have much nobler heights of holiness in view, and am sensible how far I fall short of them. *But one thing*[l] [*I can say,*] that herein I impute the conduct of the racers in your celebrated Grecian games; my thoughts and cares are all fixed upon this great object, and, *forgetting the things which are behind*, not looking back with immoderate self-complacency on the steps already taken, and the way already despatched, *I* am concerned intensely, with all the vigour and agility I can possibly exert,

14 to *stretch forward toward those things which are before:* And so *I pursue the goal for the* glorious *prize* which strikes my sight there; even that which is the ultimate end *of the high calling*[m] *of God*, with which he hath honoured me, by the dispensation of his grace *in Christ Jesus*;[n] and surely no calling can be more noble, or better deserve the most constant attention and most ardent pursuit.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 As it was not grievous to the apostle to repeat the same useful exhortations, when he judged it conducive to the safety and happiness of those to whom he wrote, so neither should it be grievous to us to hear or to speak truths with which in the general we may be well acquainted, but which we may be too ready to forget, in pursuit of things, more amusing indeed, but less advantageous. Such are the truths here inculcated; familiarly known, but 2 not therefore to be disregarded. Let us avoid all approaches to these detestable characters here branded with so 3 just an infamy; and consider what it is that will constitute us the circumcision, the people whom God will avow for his own; and charge it upon our souls, that we worship God in the spirit, that we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and repose not in any sense confidence in the flesh.

We see an example of this excellent temper in the apostle here, who makes his boast in Christ, and for him 4, 5 renounces those advantages on which he was once ready to set the highest value. He accounted those things but loss and damage which once he esteemed his gain and his treasure, especially that eager but blind zeal with which 7 he had once persecuted the church. May it be deeply and constantly impressed upon our minds, that the knowledge of Christ is of all things the most excellent, as the object of it is most sublime and interesting, and the fruits of 8 it most happy and important! This therefore let us pursue, and be truly solicitous that we may gain Christ as our 9 own unalienable property, and that we may be found in him, interested in a better righteousness than we can claim by virtue of our own personal obedience to any law; even that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, prepared, exhibited, and appointed by him, and which is received by faith in his Son.

10 Who would not wish to know him in the power of his resurrection, to feel the views of that great event powerfully operating on his mind, yea, in this connexion to know the fellowship of his sufferings too? Who would not be willing to be made, in the most painful sense, conformable to his death, to feel the scourges, the insults, the nails, the cross, and, what was more dreadful than all, even the desertion of the Father himself, might he thereby 11 attain to a resemblance to Christ in a glorious resurrection from the dead? It shall be the portion of all who die to sin and live to God, and persist in a resolution of sacrificing all to that Redeemer who for us died and rose again.

In the mean time, while we are surrounded with the infirmities of mortality, may we ever keep up an humble 12, 13 sense of the imperfection of our present attainments in religion. May we with holy Paul, so incomparably our superior, forget the progress already made, and strain every nerve in reaching on to what yet remains before us. How far are we from apprehending that for which we were apprehended by Jesus Christ! How far from answering the plan our Lord has drawn, and being completely what he intended his servants should be! "Enkindle in our "breasts, O thou great Author and Finisher of our faith! a more ardent desire of answering it; and for that purpose, "may it please thee so to display before our believing eyes the glorious prize of the high calling with which God "has honoured us through thee, that we may feel all the ardour of our souls awakened to obtain it, and never "slacken our pace till we win that immortal crown, but daily increase our speed as we approach it."

k Hath introduced, &c.] Candidates in the Grecian games, especially when they first presented themselves, were often introduced by some person of established reputation, who, at the same time that he spoke as honourably as might be of his friend, urged him to acquit himself with the utmost vigour and resolution; and it is possible that this clause may allude to that circumstance. But I conclude that, even on this interpretation, it further expresses the sense the apostle had of his obligations to the condescension and grace of Christ, in *pursuing* and *seizing* him while he fled from him, and so engaging him to aspire to this crown of life. Compare 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

l *But* this *one thing* I do.] Mr. Pierce thinks the most exact grammatical construction of these words is this: "I press after "that *one thing* for which I have been apprehended by *Jesus Christ*, "that I may apprehend or attain it, neglecting the things behind, "and stretching forward to those before: *after this one thing*, I say, "I press, according to the aim I have fixed to myself, that I may "obtain the *prize* of the high calling," &c. But I think the construction may be clear enough by supplying the words "*I can say*," without the transposition he would attempt here.

m *I pursue the prize of the high calling.*] Here is all along a beautiful allusion to the Olympic games, and especially the foot-races, which made the most celebrated part of them; where the prize was placed in a very conspicuous situation, so that the competitors might be animated by having it still in their sight. Mr. Dunlope considers the word βραβειον as expressing the *principal* prize, whereas some might come to the *goal*, and receive *lower* rewards: as if he had said, I labour to come in so as to secure the greatest, *i. e.* I aim at being an advanced and exemplary christian. Dunl. *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 331. But I cannot recollect any secondary prize bestowed on the Olympic foot-race, (though in funeral games it was common,) nor can I suppose the apostle to refer to the *pentathletic* crown, *i. e.* the crown given to one who conquered in all the athletic exercises, though that might certainly, by way of eminence, be called το βραβειον, *the grand prize.* See Mr. West's *Dissert. on the Olympic Games*, p. lxiii.

n *Of God in Christ Jesus.*] L'Enfant thinks the apostle compares our Lord to those who stood on an elevated place at the end of the course, calling the racers by their names, and encouraging them, by *holding out the crown*, to exert themselves with vigour. But not to insist on the uncertainty of this, it would seem at all events more rational to interpret *the high calling*, as alluding to the *proclamation* made, by which men were called before the opening of the course to contend for such and such a prize, which answers to the general declaration made in the gospel of the heavenly prize.

SECTION VII.

The apostle urges upon the Philippians a holy and blameless temper and a heavenly conversation, cautioning them against the bad example even of some professing christians, who brought great detriment on themselves and reproach upon religion by the unsuitable manner in which they acted. Phil. iii. 15, *to the end;* iv. 1.

PHIL. iii. 15.

LET us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which are so, as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Phil. iv. 1. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in

PHIL. iii. 15.

SECT. 7.

SUCH is the situation of my own mind, and the ardour of desire with which I am pressing after farther attainments in the divine life. *Let as many of us, therefore, as are perfect* in any degree, that is, all who are sincere christians, and initiated, if I may so express it, into the holy mysteries of our religion, *attend to this*[a] as our great business and aim; *and if any of you are otherwise affected*, if any be unhappily fallen into a remiss and indolent frame, *God shall reveal even this unto you.*[b] I hope that he will, and I pray that he may, give you such views of the crown of glory, the prize of our high calling, as may animate your most vigorous pursuit of it. *Nevertheless,*[c] *(whereunto [I hope] we have* at least *attained,) let us* act as those who are habitually persuaded of the divine authority of the gospel, and accordingly all *walk agreeably to* what we profess to revere as *the same* great authentic *rule* of our conduct; and *let us* especially be taught by it to *attend to the same thing*, to be one in our affections to each other, concerning which our duty is so plainly declared, that the weakest honest inquirer cannot be mistaken.

PHIL. III. 15 16

Thus I exhort you, and I hope I may appeal to all that know me, that my behaviour speaks the same language. So that I may confidently say, *Be ye*, my *brethren, imitators of me, and observe* and endeavour to follow *those that walk as ye have us for an example;* join this company, and learn to speak and act like them. *For* there are *many* who call themselves christians, and yet *walk [in a very different manner,] of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping;* for well indeed may I weep on so sad an occasion, as it is certain [*that,*] whatever they may profess, [*they are*] *enemies of the cross of Christ;*[d] and as they are unwilling to suffer any thing for it, so its cause and honour suffers much by them, for they continually act contrary to the very end and design of their Master's death. Such a set of men there is, *whose* behaviour is scandalous, and their *end* [*is*] utter *destruction.* Whatever they may talk of knowing and serving the true God, they are persons *whose* chief *god* [*is*] *their* own *belly,* (compare Rom. xvi. 18.) which they continually seek to honour with the most luxurious sacrifices: persons whose taste is so mean *and* preposterous, that *they glory in* those things which are indeed *their shame,* having outgrown all the remainders of common modesty, and all sense of deceney. In a word, they are persons *who mind* only *earthly things;* all their thoughts and pursuits are taken up with visible and corporeal objects, the concerns of time and this transitory world. *But we converse as citizens of heaven,* considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem, and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth. We therefore endeavour to promote the interests of that glorious society, to learn its manners, and to behave worthy of our relation to it; *from whence also we expect the* blessed appearance of our *Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour: Who shall transform our vile body,*[e] *that it may be made conformable to his glorious body:* that all the abasement and dishonour of the grave may be shaken off for ever, and we, having borne his image in holiness on earth, may bear it in beauty, glory, and immortality in heaven. It is indeed a vastly surprising, and to sense an incredible, change; but we ought to remember that nothing is too hard for Omnipotence: he will therefore effect it, *according to the energy whereby he is able to subject even all things unto himself,* and which will render him completely victorious over all his enemies, even over death and the grave, the last of them. *Therefore,* let me entreat and charge you all, *my beloved and most amiable brethren, my joy* now, *and* my *crown* of rejoicing in that expected day of the Lord, that as ye have so great and important

16 17 18 19 20 21

PHIL. IV. 1

a *As many of us, as are perfect,* &c.] The use of this phrase, in reference to those *initiated into the mysteries,* is so well known, and the allusion here seems so suitable to the connexion, that I presume I need not largely vindicate the interpretation given. I shall only add, that when this expression is used to intimate that the greatest adepts in christianity should be labouring after higher improvements, it must strongly imply the obligation on those in a lower class to press forwards.

b *God shall reveal, &c.*] Mr. Fleming in pursuance of his peculiar interpretation of ver. 11. paraphrases this verse as if he had said, "If any one of you are not persuaded of that doctrine of a first "resurrection, which is not indeed of the utmost necessity, God may "hereafter reveal it more fully; and in the mean time, let us aim "at that common glory which we all profess to expect at the gene-"ral resurrection." But I think if Paul had declared it as a part of the revelation he had received from Christ, (and he could surely know it no otherwise than by special revelation,) it could not have been left to them as a matter of indifference to judge one way or another of it. Dr. Whitby labours to prove that the apostle here glances on those christians who might be ready to lay a stress on circumcision and Jewish ceremonies, with relation to which he hoped they would be better informed, which at least they would probably be after the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare Gal. v. 10; vi. 15, 16.

c *Nevertheless, &c.*] The construction here has some perplexity; but on the whole, I think δε is to be understood as if he had said, "I could wish to animate you to the greatest ardour in pursuing "the prize;" however, at least, remember to agree in honouring the gospel as your common rule, and bearing a proper affection to each other. And if we suppose the words, εις ο εφθασαμεν, to come in as a *parenthesis,* and to be rendered, *to which I hope we have attained,* a proper distinction will be preserved between this and the preceding verse, which have often been confounded. For the sense of the phrase, φρονειν τινο, see Phil. ii. 2; and Rom. xii. 16.

d *Enemies to the cross of Christ.*] The end and design of *that* being to attract our hearts from earth to heaven, such an expression may be proper in that sense, though some think it refers to their *aversion* to persecution, understanding by the *cross of Christ,* the cross to be borne *for Christ,* I think much less properly. Nor does it seem to refer so much to their contending for Jewish ceremonies, as in general to their *immoral temper* afterwards described. It is to be feared many converts from the Gentiles, as well as from the Jews, answered this character: and if they did so, it was entirely to the apostle's purpose to reprove them.

e *Transform our vile body.*] Το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων, might literally be rendered, *the body of our humiliation, &c.* that is, this body in the form of sinful flesh, humbled and degraded as it at present is, and so different from what the body of Adam originally was.

SECT. 7. a hope, ye improve it to animate you in a vigorous adherence to that religion which inspires it; and *so stand fast in the Lord*,[f] as becomes those who are so dear to him as well as so tenderly *beloved* by me, and who expect by his grace so glorious a change.

the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

IMPROVEMENT.

PHIL. III. Ver. 21 AND do not we also look for Christ as a Saviour? Do we not hope that this vile body shall, by his all-victorious power, be transformed into the likeness of his own glorious body? Is it not with this hope that we commit the dust of our friends to the grave? And is it not in this confidence that we think of our own death with hope and 20 with cheerfulness? Why then is not our conversation more in heaven? Why have we not more frequent, solemn, and affectionate views of that better world to which we profess to be tending? Alas! have we not reason too often to weep for ourselves as well as others, that we mind earthly things so much, and heavenly no more? But wretched 19 indeed are we if we fully answer the sad character which, in professing christians, wherever it is seen, and much more wherever it is experienced, is so justly deplorable! May divine grace ever preserve those on whom the name of Christ is named, those by whom it is known, from making their belly their god, (how infamous a deity!) and from that wretched degeneracy of taste and perverseness of mind which would lead them to glory in their shame! Surely the cross of Christ was intended to teach us lessons so contrary to this, that there can be no greater enmity 18 to it than to indulge such a temper, especially while we profess to plead for that cross, and to glory in it. May we not only abhor such a temper, but bewail it! Yea, may rivers of tears run down our eyes when we see God's law violated and his gospel profaned.

17 Blessed be God for other and better examples in the apostolic age, and that some are likewise to be traced in our own, corrupt as it is; though they are in number less frequent, and in lustre less radiant, than of old! Let us, 16 however, mark those that walk as we have Paul for an example. How different soever our apprehensions in some things may be, may we all unite in a care of practical religion; and whereunto we have already attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. And oh that our rule may be more and more attended to in every step of our way! and that if in any instance we mistake it, or if we fail in those notions we ought to have of any principle of christianity which is to add a sanction to it, God may reveal even this unto us, and teach us to act in a PHIL. IV. more suitable manner! In every sense, what we see not may he teach us; and wherein we have done iniquity, may we do no more, (Job xxxiv. 32.) but stand fast in the Lord, and press forward with greater ardour towards 1 every religious improvement, towards every thing which may increase the beauty of our character, and reflect a brighter honour upon our profession.

SECTION VIII.

After some particular charges relating to a pacific temper, the apostle gives more general exhortations to christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to give them. Phil. iv. 2—9.

PHIL. iv. 2.

SECT. 8. I HAVE been exhorting you all to stand fast in the Lord, being supported by those glorious hopes he has given you. And *I* must now particularly *beseech Euodia, and beseech Syntyche, that*, whatever cause of difference may have arisen between them, *they* PHIL. IV. would sacrifice all to the common engagements of their christian profession, and *would* 2 *attend to the same thing in the Lord:* that they would turn all their thoughts into that one channel, and only consider how they may most effectually promote the great 3 purposes of their common calling. *And I also beseech thee*, [*my*] *genuine associate*,[a] whose intimate friendship supersedes the necessity of naming thee particularly, *that thou wouldst assist those* pious *women who laboured with me in the gospel*,[b] in such services as suited their sex and station, and assisted *with Clemens also, and my other fellow-labourers, whose names*, as I have reason in charity to hope, [*are*] *in the book of life*,[c] and will there appear to their everlasting honour and joy, though I do not stay to enumerate them here.

PHIL. iv. 2.
I BESEECH Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

4 I am now drawing toward a close, and let this be my farewell. Whatever difficulties and persecutions may attend you, *rejoice always in the Lord;* endeavour to maintain an habitual joy in Christ, and in the hopes and privileges you derive from him: And *again I say, Rejoice.* I renew the exhortation, as the honour of our Divine Master and your own comfort so much depends on attending to it.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 *Let your moderation* and gentleness, both in the pursuits of the various enjoyments of life, and in supporting the injuries and indignities you may meet with, *be known unto all*

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

f *So stand fast, &c.*] There is no more reason for making this the beginning of a new chapter, than there would be for disjoining the last verse of 1 Cor. xv. in sense exactly parallel to this, from the preceding discourse on the resurrection, with which it is so beautifully and properly connected.

a *My genuine associate: συζυγε γνησιε.*] Some understand and render συζυγος, as a proper name, *the true Syzygus;* but as I do not remember any instance in which γνησιος is used merely to signify *true* or *honest*, it must, even on that interpretation, refer to the signification of the name. As if he had said, *Thou that art Syzygus indeed*, the literal import of which is undoubtedly, according to our version, *yoke-fellow;* but as that word in English is generally appropriated to *conjugal life*, and yet, as it stands in the original, is *masculine*, and consequently (waving all other arguments) cannot be taken in that sense, I thought it better to render it, *associate.* I think it probable this might be an officer of considerable authority and dignity in the church at Philippi, perhaps husband to one of the pious women here mentioned.

b *Women—who laboured.*] As women's preaching was so expressly forbidden by Paul, we must conclude it was in some other way that these good women were helpful to him in the gospel; not so much by ministering to his person, though that no doubt they were ready to do as they had opportunity, but by such kind of services as I have intimated in the Improvement, and by the intelligence they might give him of the state of religion among their female acquaintance, their children, or other branches of their respective families.

c *Whose names are in the book of life.*] The names of good men are often represented as *registered in heaven.* Compare Matt. iii. 16. Where any thing of such a character appeared, it was reasonable, in the judgment of charity, to hope *this* with respect to the persons in whom it was found; but we have no reason to conclude from this

men, as visible in the whole of your behaviour; for *the Lord* [*is*] *at hand*. He will quickly come to close the scene, and to put an end to all your temporal enjoyments, and all you can suffer from your enemies. In the mean time, whatever necessities or whatever oppressions may arise, *be anxious about nothing*, so as to disquiet or distress your minds; *but in every thing* that occurs, in every condition and on every occasion, *let your petitions be made known*, and breathed out *before God, in* humble *prayer and* fervent *supplication*,[d] to be still mingled *with thanksgiving*, as there is always room for praise, and always occasion for it, even in circumstances of the greatest affliction and distress.

SECT. 8. PHIL. IV. 6

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And if you exercise such a temper, *the peace* which the blessed Spirit *of God* diffuses over the souls of his people, that peace *which far surpasses all understanding*,[e] which none can conceive but he who feels it, and which none can feel but by divine communication, *shall guard* and defend *your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*, so that nothing shall be able to break in upon that sweet and sacred tranquillity. *As for what remains*, my *brethren*, let me despatch it in a few words. Be always intent on raising your characters to the greatest height you possibly can: *whatever things are true* and sincere, *whatever things* [*are*] grave and *venerable*,[f] *whatever things* [*are*] righteous and *equitable*, *whatever things* [*are*] chaste and *pure*, *whatever things* [*are*] *friendly* and kind,[g] *whatever things* [*are*] *reputable* and truly ornamental, *if* [*there be*] *any* real *virtue* in them, *and if* [*there be*] *any* just *praise* resulting from them, *think* frequently *of these things*, consider what they are, how highly you are obliged to regard them, and endeavour more and more to abound in the practice of them. *And* for a farther illustration and confirmation of this advice, I will add, *whatever things ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me*, whatever good lessons I have given you, whatever worthy of imitation you may have observed in my conduct while I abode among you, or may since have been credibly informed of, *these things* be ye ever careful to *practise; and the God of peace shall* always *be with you*: for I have the testimony of my conscience that my conduct has always been pleasing in his sight, and that your imitation of it will be the way to engage the divine presence and blessing, which I most heartily wish you.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely; whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

IMPROVEMENT.

How condescending is this great apostle in the kind notice he takes, not only of his fellow-labourers in the work of the christian ministry, but even of the women who, according to the opportunity which God gave them, lent their assistance for the service of the gospel, whatever that assistance were; whether by their prayers, or their familiar addresses to their friends, or their kind offices to the bodies of those in distress, or that uniform example by which the several virtues of christianity were recommended, and the christian profession adorned! Let none then object the privacy of their stations, as if that must necessarily cut them off from usefulness, but let them endeavour diligently and humbly to do their utmost, and pray for increasing wisdom and grace to guide them in their deliberations and resolves. Ver. 3

It will be very subservient to this happy design, that christians, in whatever stations they are, should be of one mind in the Lord; that they should endeavour to lay aside mutual prejudices, and unite in love, if they cannot perfectly agree in all their sentiments. Then may they rejoice in the Lord; and it is to be urged upon them again and again, that they do so. It is to be urged not only as a privilege but a duty. And surely if we consider what a Saviour he is, and how perfectly accommodated to what our necessities require, and what our hearts could wish, we shall easily enter into the reasonableness of the exhortation. 2 4

Let us often represent it to ourselves as a truth equally important and certain, that the Lord is at hand. By his spiritual presence he is ever near us, and the day of his final and visible appearance is continually approaching. Let our hearts be duly influenced by it, and particularly be taught that holy moderation which becomes those who see the season so nearly advancing when all these things shall be dissolved. And let this abate our anxiety about them. Why should we be solicitous about things which shall so soon be as if they had never been? Let us seek the repose of our minds in prayer. In every thing by humble supplication let us make known our requests unto God. And let us mingle thankful acknowledgments for past favours, with our addresses to the throne of grace for what we farther need. This will establish the serenity of our souls, so that the peace of God, more sweet and delightful than any who have not experienced it can conceive, will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and make our state secure as well as pleasant. 5 6 7

expression that Paul had any *particular* revelation with regard to these friends he here mentions as certainly destined to salvation.

d *Prayer and supplication.*] The particular difference between προσευχη and δεησει cannot I think be ascertained, though some understand by the former, *petition for good*, and by the latter, *deprecation of evil*. Perhaps the latter may be rather more expressive than the former, as implying more earnest importunity; and this sense the word *supplication* seems to carry with it.

e *The peace of God*, &c.] By this expression some understand that *pacific disposition* which the gospel requires, interpreting the following phrase either of its *excelling* all merely *intellectual* endowments, (as if it were parallel to 1 Cor. xiii. 2.) or of its *ruling* the other powers of the soul, as υπερεχω is said to signify, *having dominion*. Dan. vii. 23; ix. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 13. Compare Rom. xiii. 1. But this is only a *branch* of that temper which we are to cultivate, if we desire that sense of peace and reconciliation with God, of which it is most natural to interpret this clause, as that excellent preacher, Mr. Du Mont, has shown at large in his valuable discourse on this text. See his *Serm.* p. 307, &c. Thus *the peace of Christ* (John xiv. 27.) signifies the peace which he gives, or of which he is the Author. For the emphasis of the word φρουρησει, see the note on 1 Pet. i. 5.

f Grave and *venerable.*] The word σεμνος is rendered *grave*, and σεμνοτης *gravity*, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11; Tit. ii. 1, 2, 7. Dr. Lardner has very well expressed the design of the exhortation, when he says, "That it is to recommend to christians a concern for their character, a care so to behave as to secure to themselves some degree of "respect and esteem: that they should avoid unbecoming levity in "word, action, habit, and outward behaviour, which tends to render "men despicable; and makes them appear weak, mean, and of no "consequence in the eyes of others." Lardner's *Serm.* p. 319. And I hope it will be remembered how particularly this gravity is recommended to ministers in the places cited above.

g *Friendly* and kind.] This seems the more exact import of προσφιλη than *lovely*; though there is certainly a *lovely charm* in such *friendly* things.

SECT. 8. PHIL. IV. 9

Let us study the beautiful and the venerable, as well as what is true and just in actions, and pursue every thing which shall, as such, approve itself to our conscience, every thing in which there shall be virtue and praise. Let us always in this view endeavour to keep the moral sense uncorrupted, and pray that God would, if I may be allowed the expression, preserve the delicacy of our mind in this respect, that a holy sensibility of soul may warn and alarm us to guard against every distant appearance of evil. That so, cautious of venturing to the utmost boundaries of what may be innocent, we may be more secure than we could otherwise be, from the danger of passing over to the confines of guilt, and of wandering from one degree of it to another. And while we exhort others to such a care, let us ourselves endeavour to be like this holy apostle, among the brighter examples of it.

SECTION IX.

The apostle concludes with his acknowledgments to the Philippians for the liberal supply they had sent him; at the same time speaking of the independency of temper to which divine grace had brought him; and transmits christian salutations from himself and his friends at Rome. Phil. iv. 10, *to the end.*

PHIL. iv. 10.

SECT. 9. PHIL. IV. 10–18

BUT to return to my own affairs, and your conduct to me: *I have rejoiced greatly in the Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] to whose providence and grace I ultimately ascribe it, *that your* affectionate *care of me has now* sprung up *again* and *flourished*, like vegetables which, after having seemed during the winter to be dead in the earth, sprout up at the returning spring with new beauty and pleasure. *With respect to which, you were indeed careful before*, as I assuredly believe, *but ye wanted* that convenient *opportunity* which the coming of Epaphroditus gave you, of transmitting to me the fruit of your liberality and bounty.

PHIL. iv. 10.

BUT I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 But I would *not* have you think *that I speak with respect to want*, as if I was impatient of that, or meant to extort any thing from you, if future necessities should arise, as by dint 12 of importunity. *For* I bless God, I have no need of betaking myself to such low expedients, as *I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be contented. I know both* [*how*] *to be abased*, when it pleases God to humble me, *and I know* [*how*] *to abound*, when his providence appears for my supply. *In every* [*place*] *and in all* [*conditions*] *I am instructed*, and find myself, as it were, initiated into this great mystery,[b] so needful to the christian, and especially the apostolic life, *both to be fed plentifully* without transgressing the rules of temperance, *and to suffer hunger* without murmuring or discontent. I know how *both to abound*, without too fond an attachment to the world, when my circumstances in it are most easy, *and to fall short* of the agreeable accommodations of life, yea, and to be in necessity, without being greatly disturbed at such a 13 change, or feeling any painful anxiety on account of it. In one word, whatever is to be done, whatever is to be borne, *I am sufficient for all things;* have vigour enough for the one, have patience and fortitude enough for the other: but then I would not be understood to arrogate any thing of this to myself, but would most humbly and affectionately acknowledge that it is all *through Christ who enables me*, and furnishes my spirit with a strength of which it is naturally destitute.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both *how* to be abased, and I know *how* to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 You see by this, that the happiness of my life doth not depend upon any external circumstance, nor any supply I can receive from my most generous friends. *Nevertheless, ye did well in communicating* so liberally *to my* relief, in that *affliction* under which I am now suffering; as it is certain the servants of Christ are not less worthy of being regarded and assisted by you, for those attainments which by his grace they have been enabled to 15 make in the temper which their profession demands. And in this respect, I am under peculiar obligations to you, my dear brethren; *for ye, O Philippians, well know, that in the beginning of* our mission, when we came and preached *the gospel* among you, *as I was departing from Macedonia*,[c] (which is now about twelve years ago,[d]) *no church communicated with me in the affair of giving and receiving*, that is, no christian society, as 16 such, made any collection for my personal support and assistance, *but you only: For*, not contented with ministering to my necessities while I was with you, *even* when I resided *in Thessalonica*, though it was so considerable a city, and the metropolis of your country, and though the gospel so was affectionately received by some there, yet *you sent* thither *once and again to* the relief of *my necessity*.[e]

14 Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 I mention this in so particular a manner, *not because I desire a gift*, or would extort any future favour from you, by the recollection of the past; *but* this *I desire, that* in such ways as may be most for the honour of God, and the credit of your profession, *fruit may* 18 *abound to your* comfortable *account* in the day of the Lord. At present you need not be solicitous about me, *for I have all* I can wish to make my bonds sit easy upon me, *and* do indeed *abound* more than usual in the convenient accommodations of life: *I am*

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound; I am full, having

a *Rejoiced greatly in the Lord.*] This shows the deep sense the apostle entertained of the providential interposition of Christ, in the seasonable supply he had received from the Philippians; and many other traces of this kind appear in the writings of St. Paul.

b Initiated, &c.] This is well known to be the peculiar sense of μεμυημαι, and it has a spirit here which I could not persuade myself to suppress, as the apostle, by the choice of this word, seems to intimate to every Greek reader how much he esteemed these good dispositions of mind here spoken of, beyond all their boasted *initiations*, whatever *mysteries* they might be supposed to contain.

c *As I was departing, &c.*] So I think it best to render εξηλθον, because both Philippi and Thessalonica (ver. 16.) lay in Macedonia; and no translation can be more literal.

d About twelve years ago.] This Epistle (as we have observed in the Introduction) seems to have been written towards the end of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about A. D. 63; and he first preached at Philippi about the year 51.

e *To my necessity.*] It appears by 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 7—9. that it was not to the liberality of the inhabitants of that city, but chiefly to the labour of his own hands, that Paul owed his subsistence during his abode among them.

received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

full, having received by Epaphroditus your present, which I cannot but esteem as *a fragrant odour, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God*, to whose glory it is, I know, ultimately devoted, while for his sake you are so ready to relieve his ministers. And I have the pleasure to think you will not on the whole be losers by such liberalities, *but*

19 But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

that *my God*, graciously smiling upon your tribute of grateful love, *will supply all your wants, according to his* inexhaustible *riches*, which he cannot but possess who is seated *in* supreme *glory* and majesty above, and scatters down not merely the blessings of providence, but of grace, *by Christ Jesus*, which I hope he will largely impart to you. 19

20 Now unto God and our Father, *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Now to our God and Father, to him whom we are encouraged to regard under that endearing character, and in whom, through the great Redeemer, we are daily rejoicing, [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.* 20

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

I will not swell my postscript by a long catalogue of names, but desire you to *salute every saint in Christ Jesus;* and to assure them all, known or unknown, that they are dear to me, and that, in general or particular petitions, I bear them always upon my heart. *The brethren who are with me*, my dear fellow-labourers, with whom I most frequently converse, *salute you*, sincerely wishing your prosperity and peace. 21

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

And not only these brethren who sojourn with me, and bear a part in the ministerial work, but *all the* other *saints* here at Rome, *salute you*,[f] *but especially they of Cæsar's houschold*, who, sensible of the goodness of God to them, in causing his grace to visit them and dwell with them in such a situation, have a particular regard for their brethren every where, and desire to be particularly remembered to you. 22

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

To conclude all with the best wishes my most endeared love can form for you, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the sanctifying and comfortable influences of his Spirit, [*be*] *with you all*, now and at all times, to support you under all your trials, and to animate you to persevere even unto the end! *Amen.* 23

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a noble spirit of generosity and gratitude appears in the apostle! How handsomely does he acknowledge the favour of his friends, still maintaining the dignity of his character, rejoicing in the tokens of their affection to him, chiefly as fruits abounding to their account, and as it would be a sweet savour acceptable to God. And surely the incense which they were presenting at the divine altar, would also by its fragrancy delight them, surely they enjoyed what they had of their own, whether it were more or less, with greater satisfaction, when they were imparting something with filial gratitude to their Father in Christ, to make his bonds and imprisonment the less grievous. Ver. 10, 14 15, 16 17, 18

The apostle freely professes that he received these tokens of their affection with pleasure; but much happier was he in that noble superiority of mind to external circumstances which he so amiably describes. Truly rich and truly great, in knowing how to be content in every circumstance; possessed of the noblest kind of learning, in having learned how to be exalted and to be abased, to abound or to suffer need. This all-sufficiency of which he boasts, is it haughty arrogance? far from it: he is never humbler than when he speaks of himself in this exalted language. It is in the strength of Another that he glories. *I am sufficient for all things through Christ, which strengthens me.* And here the feeblest christian may join issue with him and say, "If Christ will strengthen me, I also am "sufficient for all." His grace, therefore, let us constantly seek, and endeavour to maintain a continual dependence upon it, praying for ourselves and for each other, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be with us. This grace produced and maintained saints, where of all places upon earth we should least have expected to find them, even in the palace of Cæsar, of Nero. Let it encourage us to look to God to supply our spiritual necessities out of the riches of his glory in Christ. And in a cheerful hope that he will do it, let us through him ascribe glory to our God and Father for ever and ever. Amen. 11, 12 13 23 22 19 20

[f] *The brethren*—and *all the saints salute you.*] From this distinction I conclude, with Mr. Pierce, that it is highly probable the *ministers* at Rome were called by the name of *brethren*. Pierce's *Vindic.* p. 358.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE was a large populous city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, and stood not far from Laodicea: but though it appears from this Epistle that a christian church was established in it, we have no account by whom, or at what time, it was founded. Some have concluded, from chap. ii. 1. that St. Paul had never been there himself; but though perhaps nothing can be certainly inferred from that passage in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, that if the apostle had been personally concerned in the first preaching of the gospel there, so important a fact would not have been entirely omitted in the history of the Acts. It is not however at all improbable but they might be converted while Paul resided at Ephesus, especially considering that he spent no less than three years in that city, and preached with so much success, that St. Luke tells us, (Acts xix. 20.) that *all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*

As to the date of this Epistle, little need be added here, after what has been already observed in the Introduction to the Ephesians: (p. 798.) It appears highly probable, for reasons there given, that it was written at the same time with that to the Ephesians, and they were both sent together by Tychicus and Onesimus, towards the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about the year of our Lord 63, or the ninth of the emperor Nero. (Compare chap. iv. 3, 7, 9. See also note g, p. 578, 579.)

The Colossians appear, from several passages in this Epistle, to have borne an honourable character for their piety, and the zeal they discovered for the gospel; but we find, from the cautions the apostle gives them in the second chapter, that they were in some danger of being drawn aside by the subtilties of the heathen philosophers, and the insinuations of some Jewish zealots, who insisted upon the necessity of conforming to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Accordingly the grand design of this Epistle is to excite the Colossians by the most persuasive arguments to a temper and behaviour worthy their sacred character, and to secure them from the influence of those pagan sophists, or Jewish bigots, who would seduce them from the purity of the christian faith.

In pursuance of this general plan, the apostle having joined Timothy's name with his own in the inscription of the Epistle, begins with expressing his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and giving them a share in the important blessings of the gospel; at the same time declaring the great satisfaction with which he heard of their faith and love, and assuring them of his constant prayers, that they might receive larger supplies of divine wisdom and grace, to enable them to walk worthy of their high character and hopes as christians. (Chap. i. 1—14.)—And to make them more sensible of the excellence of this new dispensation into which they were admitted, he represents to them, in very sublime terms, the dignity of our Saviour's person, as the Image of God, the Creator of all things, and the Head of the church; whose death God was pleased to appoint as the means of abolishing the obligation of the Mosaic law, which separated between the Jews and Gentiles, and of reconciling sinners to himself. (Ver. 15—23.)—From this view of the excellency of Christ's person, and the riches of redeeming grace, the apostle takes occasion to express the cheerfulness with which he suffered in the cause of the gospel, and his earnest solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; assuring them that he felt the most tender concern both for them and the other christians in the neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the christian faith. (Ver. 24, *to the end;* chap. ii. 1—7.)

Having given these general exhortations, the apostle proceeds to caution the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel, either by pagan philosophy or Jewish tradition, reminding them of the obligation their baptism laid them under of submitting to Christ as the only Lawgiver and Head of his church, who had totally abolished the ceremonial law, and discharged them from any farther regard to it: (Ver. 8—19.) And since, upon embracing christianity, they were to consider themselves as dead with respect to any other religious profession, he shows

the absurdity of being still subject to the appointments of the Mosaic law; and cautions them against those corrupt additions to christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising. And as the most effectual means for their security, he exhorts them, as they were risen with Christ, to keep their thoughts fixed on him as their Lord and Life, and on that better world whither he was ascended, and to which they had the prospect of being admitted. (Ver. 20, *to the end;* chap. iii. 1—4.)—From this glorious hope, the apostle presses them to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, covetousness, falsehood, and whatever was inconsistent with the purity of that new dispensation into which they were entered: and exhorts them to abound in the practice of meekness, forbearance, humility, and love, and to accustom themselves to those devout exercises and evangelical views which would have the most direct tendency to improve the christian temper. (Ver. 5—17.)

After these general precepts, the apostle proceeds to recommend to the Colossians such a care in discharging the duties correspondent to the several relations of life as would be most honourable to their christian profession, and particularly enumerates those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. And to assist them in the performance of these duties, he exhorts them to be constant in prayer; and, for the credit of their religion, advises them to maintain a prudent, obliging behaviour to their Gentile brethren. (Ver. 18, *to the end;* chap. iv. 1—6.)

The apostle closes his Epistle with recommending to them Tychicus and Onesimus, of whom he speaks in very honourable terms, and to whom he refers them for a more particular account of the state of the church at Rome: and having inserted salutations from Aristarchus, Epaphras their minister, (who was then with Paul,) and others, he gives directions for reading his Epistle at Laodicea, addresses a solemn admonition to Archippus, and concludes with his salutation, written with his own hand. (Ver. 7, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle begins his Epistle to the Colossians with declaring his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and his desire in general, that they might receive an abundance of divine grace, to enable them to walk worthy of so great a privilege. Col. i. 1—14.

COLOSSIANS i. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse, grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you;

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints;

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

COLOSSIANS i. 1.

I *PAUL*,[a] who have the honour to be *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, not having intruded myself into the office, but being called to it *by the will of God*, who was pleased to display the sovereignty of his grace in chusing me, one of the greatest of sinners, to so high *and* holy an office, do now join with *Timothy*, *a* faithful *brother* and fellow-labourer in the gospel-ministry in sending this Epistle, *To the holy and faithful brethren*[b] *in Christ*, who are resident *at Colosse* and the adjacent places; heartily wishing *grace unto you*, *and peace from God our Father*, *and the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom he owns that relation to us, and sends down upon us the blessings of providence and grace. SECT. 1 COL. 1 2

I may say it in my own name, and that of my dear brother Timothy, though not personally acquainted with you, that *we* do unfeignedly *give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*[c] upon your account, and that we are *always praying for you*; very frequently making express mention of you before the throne of divine grace, and habitually wishing your advancement in religion, and your eternal salvation. *Having heard*, with unspeakable pleasure, *of your* sincere *faith in Christ Jesus* our Lord, *and* active, generous *love towards all the saints* who are partakers with you in that holy calling which God hath given us by him, whether they be Jews or Gentiles: On this account we offer our prayers to God, and we are blessing him *for the* better *hope*[d] *which is laid up for you in the heavens*, and which will in due time be accomplished, *of which ye have heard before* to such happy purpose, *in the true* and infallible *word of the gospel*, which was preached among you in all its genuine purity and integrity: Of that gospel *which hath* now, through the singular goodness of God to the Gentiles, whom he seemed so long to have neglected, *appeared unto you*, *even as in all the world*,[e] being intended for an universal religion. *And* accordingly it proceeds in its progress, and *bringeth forth* substantial *fruit* elsewhere, *as also* [*it hath done*] *among you*, *from the day in which ye have heard and known the grace of God*, *in* that saving word of solid *truth*[f] and everlasting life which hath been sent unto you. *As ye have also learnt* it *from Epaphras* *our beloved fellow-servant* in the work of the Lord, *who is the faithful minister of* 3 4 5 6 7

a *Paul.*] It may be as proper here as elsewhere to observe, that many critics have thought this Greek name was taken by the apostle instead of that of *Saul*, though it had been the name of the first Jewish king, who was also a Benjamite, (which might be a farther recommendation of it in this instance,) out of special regard to the Gentiles, to whose service he was so peculiarly devoted.

b *Holy and faithful brethren.*] I cannot think they are called *holy* and *faithful* here, only or chiefly on account of their adhering to the purity of the christian faith, in opposition to those that urged the necessity of observing the Jewish law. This was indeed one instance of their fidelity; but I think it greatly impoverishes and debases the sense of such an extensive phrase to reduce it within such narrow bounds. Many scores of criticisms in some modern commentators of reputation are liable to the same exception; but I rather chuse to leave it to the reader's observation, than stay to point out every example of it. As the Epistle is inscribed to a society by profession separated from the world and consecrated to God, it was reasonably to be hoped, in the judgment of charity, that most of them answered that profession, which sufficiently justifies such an address.

c *To the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c.] Some would render it, to *God even the Father*, which would be much more tolerable than our translation, *to God and the Father*, as if they were different persons. But it may seem that the prefixing the article only *to God*, τω Θεω και Πατρι, not merely warrants but demands this rendering. Franckius has a good observation here, which illustrates the beauty of many scriptures. The order that would seem most *artificial* is transposed to make the sense *plainer*. It is not *having heard of your faith, I bless God*, but *vice versa*. The same observation may be applied to ver. 9—11.

d *For the hope, &c.*] There is an ambiguity in the connexion of this clause; it may either signify that the apostle gives thanks *for this their hope*, supposing the 4th verse to come in as a parenthesis; or it may more directly refer to the immediately preceding words, and intimate that a *partnership* in this blessed *hope cemented* the hearts of these good *men*. In either sense the connexion is instructive, but I prefer the former as more natural.

e *In all the world.*] In all the provinces of the Roman empire, as the phrase often signifies; and it may no doubt be put for many or most of them.

f *The grace of God in truth.*] Some understand *truth* as expressive of *substance*, in opposition to the comparative *shadows* of the Mosaic law.

SECT. I.

Christ for your sakes, whom he has appointed to labour among you, and to preside over you; *Who hath also manifested to us your* christian *love in the* bonds of that one *Spirit* who unites all our hearts. *Therefore we also, from the day that we* first COL. I. *heard* [*of it,*] *cease not to pray for you, and to offer up our* most earnest and affectionate *requests, that ye may be* abundantly *filled with the knowledge of his will, in all* 9 *wisdom and spiritual understanding,*[g] in the right apprehension of spiritual objects, wrought and increased in you by the influence of the Divine Spirit upon your minds: 10 *That* so *you may* be animated to *walk* in a manner *worthy of* that connexion in which you stand with *the Lord* Jesus Christ,[h] and the obligations you are under *to* him, conducting yourselves in *all* respects so as may be well *pleasing* in his sight, *fruitful and increasing* still more and more abundantly *in every good work, to the* practical *acknowledgment* 11 *of God*, in all his attributes and relations to you. *Being* inwardly *strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power*, that you may be formed *to all* the most exemplary degrees of *patience*, under the persecution you meet with in the world, *and long-suffering*[i] under all provocations; which I wish you may be enabled to bear, not only with composure and dignity of spirit, but *with joy* too, while you expect that blessed 12 and exalted hope which the gospel sets before you. Yes, my brethren, I desire that instead of lamenting the calamities to which so holy a profession exposes us, you may be continually *giving thanks to the Father* of all grace and mercy, who hath called us all, whether originally Jews or Gentiles, into the communion of his church, and *who hath*, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Spirit upon our hearts, *made us*, though naturally so much indisposed for it, now to become *fit for a part in the inheritance*[k] which he hath prepared and assigned as the final reward and felicity *of the saints;* who, when they have passed through the dark scenes which Providence has allotted them here, 13 shall remain *in* immortal *light* and glory. Yea, we reckon it our perpetual duty to render these acknowledgments to him *who hath*, by the declarations of his gospel, and the influences of his grace, *rescued us from the power of darkness*,[l] *and transferred* [*us*] from the territories of Satan, the prince of it, *into the* glorious and happy *kingdom of his* 14 *beloved Son: In whom we have* ample *redemption* from the tyranny of all our enemies, and from the destruction with which the divine justice threatened us, *by* the pouring forth of *his blood*, [*even*] *the remission of sins*, for which we were ourselves incapable of making any satisfaction, and which, if they had not been thus expiated, would have sunk us down to final condemnation and despair.

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 WE see in this Epistle, as in all the rest, the most genuine discoveries of the real temper of the apostle. The same views which he had opened upon other churches, the same kind sentiments which he had expressed towards them, does he here discover and express; still glorying in his office as an apostle of Christ; still wishing to his christian 3, 4 brethren grace and peace, as beyond all comparison the best of blessings; still congratulating them on their faith in Christ and love to each other; still making continual mention of them in his prayers, and recommending them to the grace of God, in which we, as they, continue to stand.

5 For ever adored be the divine goodness, that the word of God, which sets before us an hope laid up in the heavens, 6 hath been manifested unto us and to all the world! Let us often examine ourselves as to the fruit it hath brought forth in our own hearts and lives. Let us be solicitous for ourselves and others, that we may in a more spiritual 9 and intelligent manner be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all its compass and extent, so far as he has been pleased to reveal it; and that this knowledge may produce in us the most substantial effects, so as to engage us to 10 walk worthy of the Lord, whose name we bear, and in a manner which he may behold with approbation and pleasure; being fruitful and increasing more and more in every good work, that our barrenness may not reproach our profession, and that the great vital truths of christianity may not seem to be dead or dormant in our hearts.

11 To give them their full energy on our souls, we need the operation of God's glorious and mighty power, by 12 which they may not only be established in all patient long-suffering, but inspired with holy joy. Then shall we breathe forth lively acknowledgments to the Father, who hath revealed unto us that glorious inheritance which he distributes amongst the saints in light, even that kingdom where they all reign in everlasting purity, friendship, and 13 joy. May he prepare us to receive our lot, and take up our abode there! For this end did he rescue us from the power of darkness, and call us to the external privileges of those who constitute the kingdom of his dear Son: for

g *Wisdom and spiritual understanding.*] It is exceedingly difficult to affix any exactly distinct ideas to the words *wisdom, knowledge*, and *understanding*. Some explain *wisdom* as expressing an *acquaintance with gospel-mysteries*, and *understanding* as implying *prudence* in *conduct*, while others invert this interpretation. It is evident to me, that the same idea is not invariably annexed to them in all places; for *knowledge* is sometimes used to express something in degree at least *inferior to wisdom*, (1 Cor. xii. 8.) whereas here it evidently *includes wisdom;* and the clause, *spiritual understanding*, seems to be explicatory of the wisdom here spoken of, and not expressive of any thing different from it.

h *That ye may walk worthy of the Lord.*] The apostle seems here most pathetically to propose the great subject and design of this Epistle, which was chiefly intended to excite them to a temper and behaviour worthy their christian character. And this, indeed, is the leading view, in all the Epistles of this excellent apostle, and the want of regard to so obvious a key has led many into subtilties of interpretation, which have had no foundation but in their own ingenious reveries.

i *Long-suffering.*] See note c, on Rom. ii. 4. p. 589.

k *Part in the inheritance.*] Μερὶς κλήρου is the *proportion of an inheritance* which falls by lot to each of those among whom it is divided; alluding, as Dr. Whitby supposes, to the manner in which the land of Canaan was cantoned out to the tribes. Dr. Scott endeavours to show that the phrase, *saints in light*, particularly refers to the *lustre* of the *glorified body* of the saints, who shall be clothed after the resurrection with a visible lucid glory resembling that of the *Shechinah*. Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 198, 199.

l *Rescued us from the power of darkness.*] Many have thought the apostle speaks of himself as one of the Gentile converts; but we have great reason to believe, that when divine grace made him sensible of what he had been in his pharisaical state, while a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, he saw himself to have been under the *power of darkness*, as Christ represents those of the Jews to have been, who, influenced by the *spirits of darkness*, were combined against him. (Luke xxii. 53.) Yet none can doubt but that the ignorance and sin, confusion and misery, which reigned in the Gentile world, was also in the apostle's thoughts when he used this expression.

this did he set before us that redemption which we have in his blood, even the remission of our sins. And oh how inexcusable shall we be if we make ourselves the slaves of sin, while we have our abode in the visible kingdom of Christ; and, trampling upon his blood and the act of grace which is established in it, seal ourselves up under a guilt never to be removed; a guilt heightened to infinite degrees of provocation and malignity by the very methods which have been taken to expiate it! SECT. 1.

SECTION II.

To promote their thankfulness for their part in the gospel, and engage their adherence to it in its greatest purity, the apostle represents to them the dignity of our blessed Redeemer's person, and the methods he hath taken to make reconciliation for sinners. Col. i. 15—23.

Col. i. 15.

Col. i. 15. WHO is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.

I HAVE just been speaking to you of that redemption which we have in the blood of Christ, even the remission of our sins; and I must now lead you more attentively to reflect *who* he is to whom we are under such immense obligations. And you will find his dignity and glory to be such, that you can never conceive of any thing adequate to them. For he *is* indeed *the* brightest and most express *Image of the invisible* and eternal *God*,[a] whom no man hath seen at any time, nor can see: [*and*] *the First-born of the whole creation*:[b] existing before it, and begotten to inherit it as the great Heir of all. And his nature has a transcendent excellency, infinitely superior to any thing that is made; *for by him were all things created*,[c] *things in heaven and things on earth.* From him were derived the *visible* splendour of the celestial luminaries, the sun, the moon, and the stars, even all the hosts of these lower heavens, *and* from him the yet brighter glories of *invisible* and angelic beings who dwell and reign above, by whatever names and honours distinguished; *whether* [*they be*] *thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;* all the various orders of heavenly spirits, which may be designed by such or the like titles, the import of which is not exactly known to us mortals. Yet these, with *all* other *things* in the celestial as well as terrestrial regions, *were created by him and for him;* they are the productions of his almighty power, and were made that he might be exalted and glorified in them. *And he is before all*, both in the duration and the dignity of his nature, *and in him all things* which constitute this universal system do continually *subsist* in that harmonious order of being which renders it one beautiful whole; whereas, unsupported by him, it would immediately run into confusion, or fall back into its original nothing. SECT. 2. COL. I. 15 16 17

16 For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

And it is worthy of our particular consideration, that *he* who *is* thus *the Head* and Lord of all, is in a peculiar sense the Head *of the church*, [*which*] he [*is*] graciously pleased to own as *the body*, and which he with amazing condescension has united in the strictest bonds to himself, taking it under his peculiar guardianship, government, and care; [*even he*] *who is*, as we before declared, *the Beginning of* the creation of God, and having stooped to assume our nature and to die in it, was also appointed to be *the First-born from the dead*,[d] the first who ever rose to an endless life; *that* so *in all things he might have the pre-eminence* suitable to the infinitely superior dignity of his nature above all created beings. *For in him* his Father is ever well pleased, as he declared by a voice from heaven: and *it was his* sovereign *pleasure*, as dwelling in him, to inhabit the whole fulness of the church: and to qualify him for the high office which he sustains, he hath appointed *that all fulness* of gifts and graces *should* ever *reside* in him,[e] even all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. *And* it hath pleased the Father likewise *by him to reconcile all things to himself*,[f] that is, to the purposes of his own glory, *having made peace by the blood of his cross:* by which the design of the ceremonial law having been answered, the obligations of it were abolished, and the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles broken down. 18 19 20

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

19 For it pleased *the Father*, that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And (having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to recon-

a *The image of the invisible God.*] It is surprising to observe how expressly Philo the Jew, in more places than one, calls the *Logos*, or *word* of which he speaks, *the image of God*. See Dr. Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 559.

b *The first-born of the whole creation.*] Mr. Fleming would render πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, *the first Creator*, or Producer, *of every creature*. Mr. Pierce observes, πρωτοτοκος sometimes signifies, *the dam that produces its first birth*, and then the sense would be, He who, as it were, at the first birth, by the exertion of his creating power, brought forth all things. It is certain that Christ is often called God's *first-born*, his *first-begotten*, and his *only-begotten Son*, (Psal. lxxxix. 27; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. i. 6; John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9.) and therefore I did not think it warrantable to change our translation of that word; though πασης κτισεως so naturally signifies, *the whole creation*, and that version seems to give so much nobler and more determinate a sense than *every creature*, that I could have no doubt as to the reasonableness of preferring it.

c *By him were all things created.*] To interpret this, as the Socinians do, of the *new creation* in a spiritual sense, is so unnatural, that one could hardly believe, if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into it.

d *First-born from the dead.*] Mr. Fleming would render it, the *Efficient*, (or Prince, who is) the *first Raiser of the dead*. (*Christol.* Vol. I. p. 216.) But I have given here, as everywhere else, what appeared to me the easiest, surest, and most natural sense, and the best commentators are agreed in it.

e *That all fulness should reside* in him.] There is undoubtedly an ambiguity in the original phrase, εν αυτω πασν το πληρωμα κατοικησαι. Mr. Pierce would render it, *in or by him to inhabit all fulness*, that is, the whole church or body of Christ; and that rendering would include the sense of ours, referring to God's dwelling in Christ, and so with us. (Compare Rom. xi. 12, 25.) But I was cautious of altering our version of so important a text, without certain and evident necessity. But some critics have observed, that when what grammarians call an infinitive verb is in the New Testament joined with the word ευδοκεω, it signifies, *the action of him who is pleased*, which would indeed make the passage parallel to Eph. ii. 21, 22. (Compare Eph. i. 23. where the *church* is called πληρωμα, that is, *God's fulness*. See Pierce, *in loc.*) As the word *Father* is not in the original, Mr. Reynolds would render it, *he*, that is, *Christ, was pleased that in him* (*i. e.* in himself) *all fulness should dwell*. (Reyn. *Of Angels*, p. 76.) But not to insist on the harshness of the interpretation in other respects, it seems most evident that the whole connexion determines the sense quite another way.

f *By him to reconcile all things, &c.*] Dr. Whitby would render it, "by him to make all things friendly in him, making peace between them by the blood of his cross;" and I apprehend that to be the true sense, and the only sense in which *things in heaven* can be said to be reconciled; for if it were to be granted, according to the assertion of Mr. Reynolds in the fore-cited place, that the *angels* received *confirming grace in Christ*, they could not upon that account be said to be *reconciled:* but when a breach commenced between man and the blessed God, the angels, as faithful subjects, must join with him against the rebellious creature, and be ready to act as enemies to him while he continued the enemy of God.

SECT. 2. Yea, *by him* [*God hath reconciled all things*] to each other, *whether things on earth*, that is, Jews or Gentiles, *or things in heaven*, that is, celestial spirits, who are now reconciled to fallen men, and incorporated with them into one holy and happy society.

COL. 1. *And* the calling of the Gentile nations into the church is one important part of this plan; so that *you who were once alienated, and enemies in* [*your*] *mind* to the blessed God *by* 22 *wicked works, he hath now reconciled to* himself and to the society of his people. And this he hath done *in the body of his flesh*,[g] which he hath assumed, and *by* that *death* which he hath suffered therein, *that* so *he might present you holy and blameless, and* 23 *free from all accusation in his sight.* You will certainly be so presented, *if ye continue established and grounded in the faith* in which you have been instructed, *and* [*be*] *not* by any floods of affliction or tempests of temptation *removed* and carried away *from the* important *hope of* a happy immortality, brought to us by *the* glorious *gospel; which ye have heard*, [*and*] *which hath* not only been published among the Jews, but, by a special commission from God, *been preached to the whole creation under heaven*, as a message which extends to all the species of mankind: by which he commandeth all men every where to repent, and promises salvation to all who believe and obey: *Of which* gospel *I Paul am appointed a minister*, and esteem it my peculiar honour and happiness that I am so.

cile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth or things in heaven.

21 And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,

22 In the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn by this sublime discourse of our holy apostle, how we are to conceive of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose glory he so wisely and happily consecrated the labours of his pen and of his life; and while we com-
Ver. 14, 15 memorate that blood of his in which we have redemption, even the remission of our sins, let us bow to him as the Image of the invisible God, and the First-born of the whole creation. And whatever discoveries we may at any time receive as to the display of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, in the formation of the visible or invisible world, let us remember that by Christ all things in both were created, not excepting thrones and dominions, prin-
16 cipalities and powers. The angels of God worship him, as with and by the Father their great Original and Support, acknowledging with Paul, and with the whole catholic church as taught by him, that in Christ all things subsist. Let us then, with the whole host of heaven, bow down before him, and worship him that sits upon the throne and the Lamb. Let us with all humility adore his condescension, in uniting us to himself in such dear and intimate bonds, and avowing himself the Head of the church, which he disdains not to call his body, though
18 he be the Beginning of the creation of God, as well as the First-born from the dead, and beyond comparison pre-eminent in all.

Important indeed are the consequences of this his condescension. It is by him that God is reconciled to
20 us, and dwells in us. It is the blood of his cross that hath made peace between Jews and Gentiles, between heaven and earth. Justly might the angels have forsaken this earth of ours, and have ascended to heaven, to enter their protest against sinful man, yea, to seek a commission for executing vengeance upon the apostate creature. But now, through Christ, they are become our friends and our brethren. At his command they minister unto the heirs of salvation, and will continue their kind offices, till heaven gives the interview which earth denies, and lays a foundation for the endearments of an everlasting friendship.

23 Oh that this reconciling gospel might be effectually preached to every creature under heaven! But to obtain its
21 effect, it must subdue our hearts to holiness. To be still under the power of sin, to go on in a course of evil works, is to continue the enmity with God, and all his holy and happy creatures. Let us see to it, that we thankfully ac-
22 cept the reconciliation which the gospel proposes. Then shall we at length be presented blameless, irreproachable, and holy in his sight.

23 As we hope for this end, let nothing remove us from our stedfastness, nor from that glorious hope of the gospel for which it is certain nothing can be an equivalent. May divine grace establish and confirm us in it, and make us victorious over every thing that might attempt to supplant our feet and take away our crown!

SECTION III.

The apostle takes occasion from what he had before said of the excellency of Christ's person, and the riches of his redeeming grace, to express his own solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; and lays open his tender concern for the Colossians and other christians in their neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the gospel. Col. i. 24, *to the end;* chap. ii. 1—7.

Col. i. 24.

SECT. 3. *NOW*, my brethren, give me leave to tell you, that I am so far from repenting of the ministry in which I am engaged, on account of any difficulties it brings along with it, that on the contrary *I rejoice* even *in my sufferings for you, and* with great pleasure *fill up*
COL. 1. *whatever is wanting of the afflictions of Christ*[a] in his members, by taking part of them *in my* own *flesh, for* the sake of *his body, which*, as I said before, *is the church*, so dear
25 to him the common Head, and to every member vitally united to him: *Of which*

Col. i. 24.

WHO now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25 Whereof I am made a

g *In the body of his flesh through death.*] Some have understood this as if it had been said, He hath now by his death reconciled you or incorporated you into the body of his church, which is to him as his own flesh. (Compare Ephes. ii. 16; v. 29, 30.) But surely *the body of his flesh* most literally and naturally signifies that body of mortal flesh which he was pleased to assume, that he might be capable of suffering.

a *Fill up whatever is wanting, &c.*] Nothing could be farther from the apostle's intention, (as we may learn from the whole tenor of his writings,) than to intimate that the *sufferings of Christ were imperfect*, as to that fulness of *atonement* which was necessary in order to the *justification* of believers. But he deeply retained in his mind the impression of that first lesson which he had from his Saviour's mouth, viz. that *he* was persecuted in his members; (Acts ix. 4.) he therefore considers it as the plan of Providence, that a certain measure of sufferings should be endured by this body, of which Christ was the Head; and he rejoices to think that what *he* endured in *his own person* was congruous to that wise and gracious scheme.

minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Col. ii. 1. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ:

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him;

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in

church *I was made a minister*, to wait upon it, and serve it in every office of humble love, SECT. 3.
according to the dispensation of God, which was given me in respect of you, that I might thoroughly and faithfully *preach the* whole *word of God* in the gospel. [*Even*] *that* great *mystery, which was hid from* so many preceding *ages and generations, but is now manifested to his saints*, of the Gentile nations as well as of Jewish extraction: *To whom God was* graciously *determined to make known what is the rich glory of this* 27
mystery; to discover it, I say, even *among the Gentiles; which* rich display of divine grace *is* all summed up in [*this*] one word [*that*] *Christ* [*is*] *in you, the hope of* eternal *glory;* being formed by divine grace in your hearts, he brings to you, who were once without hope and without God in the world, (Eph. ii. 12.) the bright beamings of this blessed prospect, even a glorious and holy immortality.

And this is the illustrious Saviour *whom we*, in the midst of all opposition, still continue 28
to *preach, admonishing every man, and instructing every man*, as the respective circumstances of particular persons require. And, in the management of this important ministry, we conduct ourselves *with all* the *wisdom* and discretion we can obtain, that no single soul may be lost by our means; but *that we may*, if possible, *present every man*, in due time, *perfect in Christ Jesus*, when he shall appear to make up his final account.[b] *To which* important [*purpose*] *I also labour* in the sphere allotted me, with 29
diligence and resolution, exerting myself to the utmost, and *striving* with an intenseness like that of one who contends for a crown in your well-known Grecian games. Yet I arrogate nothing to myself herein; for all is carried on *according to his energy, which operates with power in me*, and supports me in the glorious contest, whereas otherwise I should sink, and become the derision of mine enemies.

Nor is it without attending carefully to their full import, that I have made use of those COL. II.
strong terms which you have now been reading, to express the manner in which I exert myself in the great trust committed to me. *For I earnestly wish you to know what a* 1
vigorous *contention*[c] *I have* with a variety of antagonists, *for you, and those of Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*[d] For indeed my struggle for the gospel, while under this painful confinement, is animated, not merely by considerations of personal friendship for those whom I particularly know and love, but by a most benevolent regard to the good of mankind in general, known or unknown, that they may receive and retain this glorious revelation, and have it delivered to them with all possible advantage: *That their hearts may be comforted* by the consolation of the Holy Spirit, 2
and animated to every good resolution,[e] *being knit together* and compacted *in* mutual christian *love* to the whole body, *and* to Christ the great Head of it: and that, being thus cemented, they may attain *the richest and most assured understanding*[f] of the gospel, and being enlightened in the clear and heart-affecting knowledge of it, they may be awakened *to the* most courageous and grateful *acknowledgment of the* sublime and adorable *mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ.* Most heartily do I wish that, however it may be despised as foolishness by a vain world, they may steadily profess it, and live upon the blessings derived from it; Even from the gospel of the blessed Jesus, 3
in whom are hid all the noblest and most desirable *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, himself being the incarnate Wisdom of God.[g] *And this I say* of the perfection of Christ 4
and his gospel, *that no man may deceive you by* the *enticing discourses* of human philosophy, and draw you off from a becoming attachment to him. *For though I be* 5
absent from you *in the flesh, yet in spirit I am with you;* and as my heart interests itself most tenderly in all your concerns, God is pleased, by the revelation of his Spirit, to give me a very particular view of your circumstances, so that the very sight of it could hardly be more distinct and affecting. (1 Cor. v. 3.) [*And*] indeed, in your present situation, it gives me a great deal of pleasure, and *I am* continually *rejoicing, while I* thus *behold your* regular and beautiful *order, and the steadiness of your faith in Christ*, which your enemies are in vain endeavouring to shake. Be concerned *therefore*, as you 6
desire to retain this faith, to act in a manner answerable to it: and *as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord*, to whom you have vowed a most faithful obedience, an obedience indeed to which he has the justest claim, [*so*] let it be your care to *walk in* all holy conformity and subjection to *him;* That it may appear you are deeply *rooted and* solidly *edified in* 7

b *Whom we preach, &c.*] All this discourse centres in the great view of engaging the Colossians to adhere to christianity; and it is pleasant to observe how every verse, and almost every clause suggests more directly or obliquely, some strong argument to that purpose.

c *What a* vigorous *contention.*] The original words, πλικον αγωνα, denote a kind of *agony* into which he was thrown. It grieved the apostle to think how incapable he was rendered of serving them otherwise than by his *letters* and his *prayers*. Oh that such language might inspire every minister who reads it, with a desire to use his *liberty* to the best of purposes, and to exert himself as, under such *confinement*, he would wish he had done!

d *Have not seen my face in the flesh.*] Or, as it might be rendered, *seen me in person.* Hence some have inferred, that he had never seen Colosse or Laodicea; but Theodoret thinks he means, he had not only a conflict for *them* but for *others*, whom he had not so much as *seen*. Possibly he may intend to intimate, that he was not only concerned for those members of these churches whom he personally knew, but likewise for others to whom he was a perfect stranger, and who might have been converted after he left them. Yet I think this Epistle contains no argument from whence it can certainly be inferred that he was personally acquainted with these christians.

e *Be comforted.*] The original word, παρακληθωσιν, signifies not only to have *consolation* administered under affliction, but to be *exhorted* and *quickened, excited* and *animated*, and so recovered from indolence and irresolution, as well as dejection.

f *The richest and most assured understanding.*] Εις παντα πλουτον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως. This is an extremely *emphatical phrase*, more agreeable to the Hebrew than the Greek idiom, and it is one of the many instances of that strong manner of speaking with which the writings of our apostle abound.

g *Treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*] Mr. Howe thinks that the word γνωσεως here has some oblique reference to the *gnostics*, or sect of the *knowing men*, as we might express it in English; (Vol. II. p. 226.) but I see no evidence of their having prevailed so early.

SECT. 3. COL. II. 7 *him*, building all your hopes of pardon and salvation on him and his religion alone; *and confirmed in the* purity of his *faith, as ye have been taught* it, *abounding* more and more *in* the lively exercise of *it, with* the most cordial and cheerful *thanksgiving* to God, who has been pleased to call you to the participation of all the blessings which are inseparably connected with it.

the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

IMPROVEMENT.

COL. I. Ver. 24 II. 1 I. 26 27 To bear sufferings with patience has justly been reckoned an high attainment; and it was the boasted strength and glory of the pagan philosophy to teach men to do it: a glory in which it was often deficient, a strength which often failed them who had the fairest opportunities of being proficients in their schools. But Paul had learnt by the philosophy of Jesus to rejoice in them, when considered as subservient to the honour of Christ and to the good of his church, even of those members of it whom he had never seen in the flesh; rejoicing thereby to fulfil his embassy, and to confirm that important word of God, which taught the mystery concealed from so many ages and generations. And what was that mystery, but the same that is so clearly revealed to us, even that Christ in us is the hope of glory?

To Gentile sinners that were without hope, is hope now preached; the hope not only of felicity, but glory. And this by Christ, not only as proclaimed amongst us, (for to many that hear of his name, and of the scheme of salvation by him, he is a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence,) but by Christ as in us. Highly are they

28 honoured, who have it in charge to preach him. May they learn from the apostle how it is to be done. It is to be attended with practical instructions and admonitions, to be conducted with the greatest prudence and care, and to be addressed to every man, according to his respective character and circumstances in life; that so, if it be by any means possible to prevent it, none of those that are committed to their care and charge may be lost, but every man may at length be presented perfect in Christ in that day when, among all that truly belong to him, there shall be no remaining imperfections.

29 II. 2 Surely this is a cause in which it is worth their while to strive. May the strength of God work powerfully in them for that purpose! Then will all our hearts be comforted, when we have attained to the full assurance of the truth of our religion, when we courageously acknowledge and maintain it, when we improve it to the great end for which it was preached to us, and, having professed to receive Christ Jesus as our Lord, make it our care in a suitable

6 manner to walk in him. For this purpose let us endeavour to be deeply rooted and grounded in him, confirmed in

7 the faith, as the apostles taught it; giving thanks to God for the instructions we receive in it, and numbering it, as we have great reason to do, among the choicest mercies we could receive, even from an Omnipotent hand, not only that we hear the sound of the gospel, but that we have felt its vital influence upon our hearts.

SECTION IV.

The apostle largely cautions the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of christianity, either by pagan philosophy or Jewish tradition, representing to them how complete they were in Christ without the addition of either. Col. ii. 8—19.

COL. ii. 8.

SECT. 4. COL. II. 8 9 10 11 *SEE to it* therefore, my dear brethren, *that*, as you are under such strong engagements to abound in all the fruits of that gospel which you have been taught with so much advantage, *no man make a prey of you, by* pretended *philosophy and vain deceit*,[a] *according to the tradition of men*, of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond:[b] and *according to the elements of* that literature which are so much regarded in *the world*,[c] by persons of different religious persuasions in it, *but* which are *not* by any means *according to Christ*, nor agreeable to the genius and simplicity of his gospel. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead bodily* and substantially, so that his human nature is the temple of the Deity.[d] *And ye are complete in him:* happy enough in such a Master and in such a Saviour, who is able to fill you with all knowledge, grace, and glory, without any such additions to his religion as human philosophy or superstition would make; even in him, *who is the Head of all principality and power*, from whom the angelic world, and creatures of the most exalted rank and dignity in it, to whom some would direct your devotions, derive their light and holiness, their honour and felicity.

Let me therefore exhort you most steadily to adhere to this glorious Redeemer, *in whom*, I may say, *ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision not performed with*

COL. ii. 8. BEWARE, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power.

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without

a *Vain deceit.*] This may include any thing that would encourage a trust it was not able to support; and particularly may refer to superstitious rites and ceremonies, as well as unprofitable speculations. Different tempers lead to different excesses and errors on these heads.

b Of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond.] Mr. Pierce thinks it is improbable that the Gentile philosophers should trouble themselves to dispute with christians, or that they should admit any of their notions, to adulterate christianity with them: and therefore that all the corruptions here referred to were brought in by Jewish leaders. But it appears from Philo and Josephus, that there was such an intercourse between the philosophers and the Jews, to give some tincture to their religious notions; so that I think it much more natural to suppose the apostle intended to guard them against both.

c *Elements of the world.*] Mr. Pierce thinks στοιχεια signifies, *shadows*, as opposed to *substance*. (Compare Gal. iv. 3, 9; Eph. iv. 14—16.) Such the Jewish ceremonies undoubtedly were; but there may be a peculiar spirit in speaking of the boasted dictates of pagan philosophy but as elements or lessons for children, when compared with the sublime instruction to be received in the school of Christ.

d *Dwelleth all the fulness, &c.*] I was unwilling to vary any thing from the common version of so important a text, without more certain reason than I could discern here; else I might perhaps have rendered it, *in whom the whole fulness of Deity substantially dwells.* It is plain that the *Godhead* is an *Anglicism* equivalent to *Deity*. (Compare Acts xvii. 29.) And I cannot think that these wonderful words are intended *merely* to signify, that God hath *lodged* in the hands of Christ a *fulness of gifts* to be conferred upon men; as if the passage were merely parallel to Eph. iii. 19; and John i. 16, 17. as Mr. Pierce explains it; while Socinus sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred to his complete *knowledge* of the divine will. I assuredly believe, that as it contains an evident allusion to the *Shechinah* in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable *mystery* of the union of the *divine* and *human* natures, in the person of the glorious Emmanuel, which makes him such an Object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted *creature* with the most glorious endowments could never *of himself be.*

hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him*, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-*days*;

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things

hands, according to Jewish rites, but with another kind of circumcision, far more noble and excellent, which that was intended symbolically to express, even *by the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, renouncing all the deeds of it. Your engagements to this you have expressed *by* that ordinance which I may call *the circumcision of Christ*; it being that by which he hath appointed that we should be initiated into his church, as the members of it formerly were by circumcision. And to this new and more gentle rite you have conformed yourselves, *being buried with him in baptism*,[e] to express your desire of dying to sin, as he died for it; *in which* ordinance *also ye were* represented as *raised with him*, and in consequence thereof animated to all newness of life, *by* the *belief* you then professed *in* [*that*] wonderful display of the *energy of God*,[f] *who raised him from the dead*, and thereby confirmed his doctrine in general, and in particular confirmed our hopes of a glorious resurrection and immortality, if we continue in a faithful adherence to him.

And you Gentiles, *who were* once *dead in* a course of notorious *trespasses*, *and in the uncircumcision of your flesh*, abandoned to all its sensual and irregular inclinations, *hath he* also *quickened together with him*, making his death and resurrection the means of spiritual life to you; *having freely forgiven all your offences*, and condescended graciously to take you into covenant with himself: And this upon a more easy and agreeable footing than Israel before stood; *having blotted out*, *with respect to us*, *the hand-writing of* Jewish *ordinances* and institutions,[g] *which was contrary to us*, (Acts xv. 10.) and had an evident efficacy either to load us with an heavy burden, or to alienate the hearts of our Jewish brethren from us. *And* therefore he *hath taken it away* from between us, as I may so express it, *nailing it to* [*his*] *cross*, and thereby has cancelled it, as bonds are cancelled by being struck through with a nail; while he has accomplished the purposes of the ceremonial law by that sacrifice of himself, and thereby caused the obligation of it to cease. By that important transaction he hath also made us victorious over all our spiritual enemies, and especially the formidable spirit of darkness; *having spoiled* these *principalities and powers*[h] of the trophies which they had gained by drawing us into the grand original apostasy, and subjecting to themselves this part of God's rational creation; *he hath made them an open spectacle* to the whole world, *triumphing over them by it*, even by that cross whereby they hoped to have triumphed over him. But God turned their counsels against themselves, and ruined their empire by that death of his Son which they had been so eager to accomplish.

Since *therefore* the ceremonial law is now abolished, *let not any* who is in a bigoted manner attached to it, *judge* and condemn any of *you*, Gentile christians, *in* regard to the use of *meat or drink* forbidden by it, *or in respect to a feast* which it appointed, *or to a new-moon or sabbaths*;[i] ordained as times of sacred rest and solemn worship, according to that ritual, but not therefore by any consequence holy to us. *Which things are* indeed, in their original design and constitution, only *a shadow of* good *things to come*, intended to lead the mind to spiritual and evangelical blessings; *but the body* and substance of them [*is*] given us in the gospel *of Christ*, in whom they all centre; and having the latter, we need not be solicitous about the former.

Let no one, therefore, *who may* ever so eagerly *desire it*, or ever so artfully attempt it, *deprive you of your* great *prize*,[k] for which as christians you contend, *by* [*an affected*] *humility, and the worship of angels*, (which some Jewish zealots, as well as heathen philosophers, so eagerly inculcate,[l]) *intruding* officiously and presumptuously *into that*

SECT. 4.

COL. II.

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e *Buried with him in baptism.*] For the import of this phrase, and the validity of some arguments often drawn from it, see Rom. vi. 4. p. 604. note d. Dr. Gale pleads, that as this church at Colosse was planted earlier than that at Rome, and this Epistle was written later than that to the Romans, it more abundantly confirms the perpetuity of *baptism*, as it supposes all to whom it was addressed to have been partakers of that *ordinance*, whether they were or were not descended from christian parents. Gale's *Serm.* Vol. II. No. 7. p. 202, 203.

f *Belief in* [*that*] *energy of God, &c.*] Whatever evidence there may be from other scriptures to prove that *faith* is the effect of a *divine operation* on the mind, of which I am fully persuaded, (compare Eph. ii. 8. and note there,) I think the genius of the Greek language affords an argument which they who understand it must feel on reading this passage, to prove that it is not the sense of this text, διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας. Thus πίστις ἀληθείας is, *belief of truth*, (2 Thess. ii. 13, 15.) and πίστις τοῦ Κυρίου, *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, or believing on him. James ii. 1. Compare Phil. i. 27. where πίστις τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is, *believing the gospel.*

g *Having blotted out, &c.*] I have given what appeared the most easy, natural, and comprehensive sense. Mr. Pierce says the word χειρόγραφον, rendered, *hand-writing*, signifies a sort of a note under a man's hand, whereby he obliges himself to the payment of any debt. The Jews bound themselves to God, by their profession of Judaism, not to worship any other deity, nor to neglect any divine institution, in consequence of which they rejected all communion with the Gentiles; and thus it was *against them*. The word δόγμα has been found to signify a royal *mandate* or *decree*, which shows it refers to the Mosaic law.

h *Having spoiled principalities and powers.*] It is generally known that Mr. Pierce, in his interpretation of this text, gives it a very singular turn, as if the sense were, "That God hath divested "the good *angels* of that authority which they had in the world "before the incarnation of Christ, and caused them to attend his "triumph when he ascended into heaven, and publicly proposed "them as an example (ἐδειγμάτισεν) of cheerful and acceptable obedi-"ence to him." And it is pleaded with considerable plausibility, that ἐξεκέντησε is used in that sense, 2 Cor. ii. 14. This he thinks suits the connexion, as this *spoiling principalities and powers* is ascribed to *God*, and as it is introduced as an argument against *worshipping angels*. But it is certain that *principalities and powers* may indifferently signify, *good or bad angels*. (Compare Ephes. vi 12.) God hath undoubtedly *triumphed* in the *triumph* of his Son, and the sense in which Mr. Pierce takes the word ἐδειγμάτισεν is a very unusual one. Dr. Whitby observes, that Cerinthus and Simon Magus, whose doctrines he imagines the apostle is opposing in this part of his Epistle, pretended to deliver men from the power of *evil spirits*, by whom they said the world was made and governed.

i *Sabbaths.*] Mr. Baxter observes with his usual spirit, that we may well wonder at those good men that can find the prohibition of a *form of prayer*, or a written sermon in the second commandment, and yet cannot find the *abrogation* of the *Jewish law* relating to the sabbath, in these plain words of the apostle. For it is certainly most arbitrary to pretend that these words do not include *a weekly sabbath*, when there was no other solemnity so *generally* signified by that name, though the use of the *plural* number shows that *all* days of *sacred rest* appointed by Moses were to be taken in.

k *Let no man deprive you, &c.*] The original is Μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ, &c. I suppose θέλων to signify a *desire* of any to impose upon them; but Sir Norton Knatchbull connects it with the words immediately following, and renders the whole, "*Let no man deceive you with fallacious arguments, who is delighted* "*with humility and the worship of angels.*" The word ταπεινοφροσύνη undoubtedly signifies *humility* in general; but as the connexion determines it to signify what was *affected*, and at best *fantastic*, if not *counterfeit*, I have added a word in the version.

l *Worship of angels.*] It evidently appears from several passages in Philo, to have been the opinion of that learned Jew, that *angels*

SECT. 4. *which he hath not seen;* while they pretend to tell us wonderful secrets relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. This may render a man the admiration of the ignorant and inconsiderate, but it is indeed the result of his being *vainly puffed up by his* COL. II. 19 corrupt and *fleshly mind*, with the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion. *And* so men wander themselves and mislead others in consequence of their *not holding* and properly adhering to him whom I mentioned above as *the Head*, even the Lord Jesus Christ, *from whom the whole body* of the church *being supplied, and compacted by* the union of various *joints and bands, increases in* grace and holiness continually, and at length attaineth to *the increase of God;* to whom therefore I most earnestly exhort you, my brethren, continually and stedfastly to adhere.

which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us contemplate, with daily pleasure, the glorious effects of the death of our blessed Redeemer, by which the Ver. 14 Mosaic law was abolished, the hand-writing of ordinances blotted out; that death by which so glorious a victory 15 over our spiritual enemies was obtained, by which the infernal principalities and powers were stripped of their trophies, and themselves exposed as an open spectacle. Let us improve this victory to all the glorious purposes for which it was intended. Let us above all consider it as an engagement to a life of exemplary holiness, especially as we 11, 12 are ourselves circumcised with the circumcision of Christ; as by baptism we are solemnly engaged to mortify all 13 irregular affections, and, being buried with Christ in that solemn rite, to rise to all newness of life, having received the forgiveness of our sins, and being raised with Christ to the hope of eternal glory.

Let us be solicitous ever to maintain the strictest union with Christ as our Head, remembering how great an honour 9 it is to be thus related to him, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of godhead bodily. Let us be careful, in virtue of 19 this union, to live in the communion of christian love, with all the members of the body, and ourselves to grow with all the increase of God.

8 And let us guard against all those human traditions, or refinements of philosophical speculation, which are dis- 16, 17 agreeable to these elements of Christ into which we have been initiated; and against every thing which could be an infringement of that liberty which Christ hath granted to his church, and which it is our duty to endeavour to maintain against all encroachments; even though they should be made by any in his name, and under the pretence 18 of authority from him. It may be urged upon us as humility, to submit to such impositions; but it is the truest humility to maintain an exact obedience to the authority of our Divine Master, and to limit even our submission to those of our brethren whom we may most honour and love, by a regard to his command and institution. And if a due care is not taken in this respect, we may be deprived, at least in some degree, of our prize, by the methods 8 whereby some may endeavour to persuade us that we shall most effectually secure it. May divine wisdom preserve us from all those vain deceits whereby our faith might be corrupted, or our conformity to the plan of christian institutions be rendered, in any respect, less beautiful, pure, and complete.

SECTION V.

The apostle further cautions the Colossians against those corrupt additions to christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising; and exhorts them, as the properest method for their security, to be endeavouring to raise their hearts more to Christ, as their ascended Lord and Life. Col. ii. 20, *to the end;* iii. 1—4.

COL. ii. 20.

SECT. 5. I HAVE mentioned the relation in which you stand to Christ as your Head, and I must from hence take occasion farther to plead the obligations you are under to labour after a growing conformity to him in all things. *If therefore ye* are indeed (as by baptism ye COL. II. 20 profess to *be) dead with Christ*[a] *from the elements* and rudiments *of the world*, from those things which among the Gentiles or the Jews men are apt to build so much upon, *why, as if ye were* still *living* as before *in the world*, and stood in that respect on an equal footing with others, *do ye meddle with these appointments*, subjecting yourselves to them; yea, and are ready yourselves to insist on the observation of them, and even to join 21 in imposing them upon others: And particularly those which the Mosaic law inculcates, such as, *Touch not* any thing ceremonially unclean, *taste not* any food which that pro- 22 hibits, *handle not* any thing by which such pollution might be contracted.[b] *All which things tend to* the *corruption* of that excellent religion into which you have the honour to be initiated; *by the abuse* of them *according to the commandments and doctrines of* mistaken and ill-designing *men*, who insist so eagerly upon them, as if they were essential to salvation; though, as I observed before, they have answered their great end, so far as

COL. ii. 20. WHEREFORE, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21 (Touch not, taste not, handle not;

22 Which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

were messengers who presented our prayers to God, as well as brought down his favours to us. He represents this view of the matter as most *humble* and reverential, and there is no doubt but it prevailed among other Jews; (compare Tob. xi. 14; xii. 12, 15.) and that the apostle refers to this, seems much more probable than the interpretation of Tertullian, who would explain it of *worship taught by angels*, or persons pretending to receive revelations from them. Whether the heathen began so early as this to call those celestial spirits *angels*, whom they had formerly called *good demons*, I do not certainly know: but it is evident that very soon after the apostle's days they speak of *angels* and *archangels*, and recommend the worship of them under those names. See Jamblic. *De Myst.* sect. ii. *cap.* 2, 3. It is justly remarked by Bishop Burnet, that had it been the apostle's intention to give the least encouragement to any religious addresses to *saints* and *angels*, this would have been a very natural occasion of introducing the subject, and adjusting its proper boundaries. Burnet, *On the Art.* p. 225.

a *If therefore ye be dead with Christ, &c.*] Some have considered this as the beginning of a new paragraph, addressed to Jewish zealots among them; and plead, in support of this opinion, that the subjection to ordinances which the apostle here reproves, is inconsistent with the applauses he had before bestowed on the Colossians. But it seems most natural to suppose that he addresses the society in general, and leaves it to their own consciences to determine which of them deserved the censure.

b *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*] It has been observed, that the quick succession of these precepts, without any *copulatives* between happily expresses the *eagerness* with which the seducing teachers

SECT. 5.

they were of divine institution, and are now laid aside by the same authority that introduced them, so that all obligation upon the conscience is ceased. Concerning *which things* we may in the general observe, that they *have indeed a pretence of wisdom*, and are in that view gravely insisted upon, especially by the more rigorous sects; but many of them are of such a nature, that even while that Jewish economy continued in force, they made no genuine part of it, but rather taught men to pervert religion, by making it to consist *in will-worship* which they themselves devised, *and* in an affected *humility* of address, *and in* a *severity to the body*, which, rigorous as it seemed, was far from being true mortification, or disposing the mind to it. On the contrary, while it puffed men up with a vain conceit of their own sanctity, it might be said rather to tend *to the dishonourable satisfying of the flesh*,[c] while it seemed most to afflict it: for that self-complacency, ostentation, and contempt of others, with which these severities are often attended, is indeed a carnal principle; nor could the grossest sensualities be more contrary to the will of God and the genius of true religion.

COL. II. 23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

COL. III. 1 Col. iii. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

And let me farther improve the great principle I have laid down and urge, that *since ye are risen with Christ*, ye should *therefore seek things that are above*[d] the sphere of this mortal and animal life; even there *where Christ is sitting* in dignity and felicity, *at the right hand of God*. Yes, my brethren, charge it continually on your consciences, that ye *mind*, prefer, affect, and pursue *the things that are above*, and *not those* [*that are*] here *on* this low *earth*. And this attachment to the great and glorious views of the invisible and eternal world will moderate your regards to many other things about which you are ready to be so much engaged. And surely this may reasonably be expected; *for ye are* by solemn profession, as I pleaded before, *dead* with Christ, *and your* new and better *life* flows from him, and *is*, as it were, *hidden with Christ in God*.[e] A regard to an unseen Saviour is the great principle that animates it, and it centres on that blessed world where he reigns, and where God displays the brightest tokens of his majestic and gracious presence. And you have this farther transporting assurance, that *when Christ* [*who is*] the great Spring of *our* celestial *life*, and highest Object of our desire, *shall appear* in all the pomp and splendour of his final triumph, *then you shall also appear with him in glory*, making a part of that one bright and illustrious assembly which he shall then redeem from the power of the grave, and form to a perfection of soul and lustre of body suitable to the relation in which they all stand to him as the great Conqueror of death and hell, and Sovereign of universal nature. Let us therefore contentedly wait for our supreme felicity till that glorious day shall come.

1 2 3 Col. iii. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 Col. iii. 4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us charge it on our hearts, by all our great and solemn obligations to Jesus, our beloved Saviour and glorified Head, that we study the nature of true religion with greater care, and practise it with greater constancy. Let us not place it in a zeal for ceremonial observances, *according to the doctrines and commandments of men*. Let us ever remember that Christ alone is the Lawgiver of his church, and let us solicitously guard against the abuses in religion which would be the consequence of introducing, and much more of imposing, human ordinances. Too sensibly has the church in all ages seen and felt the unhappy effects of such a temper. Its divisions and its formality may in a great measure be traced up to this source. Will-worship and a voluntary humility have proved its disgrace, and in some countries almost its ruin. Let us labour after sublimer views, and considering ourselves as *risen with Christ*, let us *seek the things that are above*. Let us cultivate greater spirituality of mind, and endeavour to have our hearts there where our Lord is.

Ver. 20—22 20 21 22 23 III. 1

Surely the reflection upon that relation in which we stand to him, in concurrence with that glory in which he is now enthroned, the kind designs he still bears to us, and the prospect we have of sitting down with him ere long in that kingdom, may well raise our thoughts thither, and bear us above all immoderate attachment to these low scenes of mortal life. 2

Let us therefore study more and more the hidden life of the christian; and, considering Christ as our life, be often anticipating in our thoughts the great day of his appearance, and dwelling on the blessed hope of appearing with him in glory. But O how dark are our views of these things! How little do we feel of the sanctifying and elevating influence of this hope! Let us earnestly pray for a more abundant communication of divine grace, that, 3 4

inculcated these things. Dr. Whitby shows that Cerinthus' doctrine and precepts had much of this cast, and some of his quotations are remarkable in this view.

c *Dishonourable satisfying of the flesh:* Ουκ εν τιμη τινι, προς πλησμονην σαρκος.] I suppose the two clauses may be transposed, as if it had been said, It is to such a satisfying of the flesh as does it *no real honour;* which I take to be a *meiosis* to express what is *dishonourable;* whereas the highest *honour* of our bodies is to be the *instruments of our souls* in the service of God. Mr. Howe observes, that τιμη signifies *provision* as well as *honour*, and thinks the sense to be, that though there was no appearance of *providing* for the flesh, yet there was a *carnal* kind of satisfaction in these *affected* severities, when proceeding from the principles of vain-glory and ill-nature, which were as contrary to the genius of true religion as any of the grossest sensualities that could be imagined. Howe's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 375. And this is certainly the true sense in the general, though this explication of τιμη should be disputed. The Prussian Testament renders it, "Which things have indeed some "appearance of wisdom, in that they are a voluntary worship, that "they have an air of humility, that they spare not the body, and "that they have no regard to the satiating the flesh:" which reads roundly, but gives a most unauthorized sense to εκ εν τιμη τινι, and exchanges the spirit of the concluding words for a flat tautology.

d *Things that are above.*] Calvin understands this of the *sublimer parts of christianity*, as opposed to Jewish ceremonies and *rudiments of the world*, mentioned chap. ii. 20. but it cannot properly be said that these are *with Christ in heaven*. I think, therefore, the apostle proceeds, on the principles he had laid down, to graft a most important practical exhortation, different from any he had advanced before, (as he certainly does, ver. 5.) yet nothing could more effectually tend to take them off from those bigoted attachments of which he was solicitous to cure them. A remarkable instance of that happy address which we have so often had opportunity of observing, and which an attentive reader will observe in many other places where we have not had room to point it out.

e *Your life is hid, &c.*] The *life* of the christian is here represented as an invaluable *jewel*, and under a double *security*, reserved *in heaven*, and laid up *with Christ in God;* secure, therefore, as the abode of Christ with the Father, or as the fidelity and immutability of the Father himself could make it.

SECT. 5. deriving more and more of this spiritual life from Christ, we may have more suitable and affectionate apprehensions of that angelic life to which his love has designed us, and to which such a temper tends directly to lead us.

SECTION VI.

The apostle presses the Colossians to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, and falsehood, and to abound in the practice of the opposite virtues, and in those devout exercises and evangelical views by which they might be animated to cultivate them. Col. iii. 5—17.

Col. iii. 5.

SECT. 6. COL. III. YOU have heard of the glorious hope which we entertain as christians; let me *therefore* urge it upon you that you be influenced in a suitable manner by it, and particularly that it engage you to *mortify* those lusts which are so apt to dwell in *your members that are on earth;* such as *fornication, uncleanness,* and every other kind and degree of *inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and an insatiable desire* of any carnal gratification, an object *which is* indeed nothing less than *idolatry,* or paying that regard to the most unworthy things which is due to God alone. *On account of which the wrath of God is coming,* not only on those who profess themselves his people, but even *on the children of disobedience,* on heathens themselves, who bid the most open defiance to what we well know to be the first principles of true religion. *Among whom ye also once walked* and had your conversation, partaking with your neighbours in all their enormities, *when* formerly *ye lived among them,* and made a part of their number. *But now,* being converted to the pure, peaceful, and devout religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, see to it that *ye also put away all these* enormities, and particularly the transports of open *rage,* the secret grudgings of concealed *resentment,* the malignant working of *malice,* the injuries of *evil speaking,*[a] the scandals of *lewd conversation;*[b] and let them all be resolutely banished *out of your mouth* and out of your heart: *Neither lie one to another,* either in trade or common conversation; *having* solemnly professed to *put off the old man with his* iniquitous *deeds,* and entirely renounced all those corrupt affections which were naturally so prevalent in you: *And having* declared it as your design and resolution to *put on the new* [*man,*] all the branches of that contrary temper and disposition which constitute the christian character, and *which is renewed in knowledge* of our true duty and interest, and an universal holiness as the genuine fruit of it; *according to the image of him that created him,* even of God, who is himself the great standard of all moral perfection. Thus you will indeed become genuine members of that blessed society *where there is* no distinction between men of different nations, education, or ranks in life; where *neither* is any man rejected for being a *Greek, nor* accepted merely for being a *Jew;* a society where he can claim nothing by virtue of *circumcision, nor* lose any thing by *uncircumcision;* where no *Barbarian,* or even *Scythian,* is treated with contempt for that want of learning and politeness which is to be found in the most remote nation; or any *slave* trampled upon as unworthy notice, since he shares with others in the possession of that inestimable treasure, an immortal soul, and may have a part in the great Redeemer of souls: [*nor*] is a *freeman* chiefly esteemed or regarded upon account of his boasted liberty; *but* rather in proportion to his subjection to our Divine Master: for this is the great band of union among them all, the matter of their boasting and their joy, that they are related to *Christ,* who is acknowledged to be *all* that is amiable and excellent, *and* who dwells *in all* true believers, without any difference on any of these accounts.

Consider this, my brethren, whatever your external circumstances may be, and *put on therefore, as the chosen* people *of God,*[c] *holy* to him, *and beloved* by him, set apart to his service, and blessed with the tokens of his peculiar favour, *bowels of tender mercy* to all the afflicted and distressed, *gentleness* to all men, *lowliness of mind,* engaging you to condescend even to those in the humblest stations, *meekness* under whatever injuries and provocations ye may receive, and *long-suffering,* when your trials may be in their continuance tedious, as well as violent in their degree: *Forbearing* to break out into any revengeful actions or reproachful speeches against *one another, and* not only so, but cordially *forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against another; even as Christ hath freely forgiven you,* though you have in so many instances injured and provoked him, *so also* do *ye,* in imitation of an example so amiable and so divine. *And above all these things* [*put on*] *love, which is* indeed *the* very *bond of* all *perfection,* and which will keep your minds stedfast, and establish that consistency of sentiments and behaviour which is so honourable in the christian character, and tends so much to its security. *And let the peace of God* always *preside* as the great umpire *in your hearts,*[d] even that placid and

Col. iii. 5.

MORTIFY therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry;

6 For which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7 In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man,* which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

14 And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to

a *Evil speaking.*] The original word properly signifies *blasphemy;* but it includes not only impious speeches with regard to God, which is the highest degree of malignant language, but all railing and reproachful speeches against our brethren, proceeding from the transports of furious passions.

b *Lewd conversation.*] So I understand αισχρολογιαν of *obscene* or *impure words,* which are so scandalously common (if I may credit reports which I cannot suspect) among many whom good breeding, at least, should teach better, if they had no regard to any higher consideration. But Dr. Whitby explains it of *reproachful speeches* that expose others to contempt; which to me seems a very unnatural interpretation.

c *Put on as the chosen of God.*] This is not inconsistent with what was said above, (ver. 10.) of *their having* already *put on the new man,* as the apostle intended here to exhort them to advance more and more in those benevolent dispositions which did in some considerable degree already prevail in their hearts.

d *Let the peace of God preside in your hearts.*] The original word which we render *preside,* is βραβευετω. Let it fill your hearts, says Pasor, with such a joy as victors have when they receive το βραβειον, *the prize,* in the Olympic games. I rather think it signifies, Let it *preside* in your minds, as the master of the games does in those solemnities. And as this is the sense in which I long ago apprehended the word was to be taken, it is a great satisfaction to me to find this

the which also ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

benign temper which so naturally results from a sense of your reconciliation to God. This is the blessed state and disposition *into which you also are called* by the gospel, being happily united *in one body; and be ye thankful* for those privileges which result from it, whatever affliction may for the present be allotted to you. And *let the word of Christ*, the gospel which you have received, *dwell in you richly in all wisdom;* lay it up in your hearts, meditate upon it continually, and endeavour wisely to improve it to the best purpose. And in this view be often *teaching* one another the doctrines of christianity, *and admonishing one another* concerning the duties of it; and let these seasons, whether of public worship or private conference, be in a proper manner diversified *with* the use of David's *psalms, and* other evangelical *hymns and spiritual songs*,[e] which under the influences of the Spirit ye may be enabled to compose. For it will be both pleasant and profitable to be frequently employed in *singing* such pieces of sacred poetry and music, provided it be not merely the language of the lip or the exercise of the voice, but be likewise attended *with* the exercise of *grace in your heart;* which surely it will be, if we rightly consider that they are addressed *to the Lord*, to whom every sentiment of the heart is known, and to whom nothing can be acceptable which is not attended with cordial devotion. *And* upon this great principle you may take it as a general rule, that *whatsoever ye do in word or in deed*, in all your discourses and in all your actions, you [*do*] *all* things *in the name of the Lord Jesus* Christ; all to the purposes of his glory, and all in humble dependence upon him, both for the communication of spiritual strength, and for your acceptance with God. And while you have so dear and acceptable a name to use in your approaches to the Divine Majesty, rejoice in this inestimable privilege; perform the duties incumbent upon you with pleasure, and be continually *giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him*, who will graciously recommend, by his prevailing intercession, your prayers and praises, as well as your other services, to the divine regard.

SECT. 6.

COL. III. 16

17

IMPROVEMENT.

LET christians solemnly charge upon themselves an abstinence from those vices which bring the wrath of God upon heathens; and, though it should be like wounding or cutting off our members, let us put on an holy resolution to mortify them; and, not content with refraining from all degrees of pollution, falsehood, and malignity of heart, let us be more solicitous to put on the new man, which is the creation of God in the soul, and which bears his amiable image. Whatever our nation or rank, our education or our circumstances in life may be, let this be our concern, that we may be in Christ, and Christ in us, for on that depends our everlasting all. Happy the most untaught savage and the most oppressed slave, who is thus related to the incarnate wisdom of God, and the great Lord of all, infinitely beyond the politest Greek, the most ceremonious Jew, the freest subject, or the most despotic prince, who is a stranger to such a blessing!

Ver. 5, 6 8, 9 10 11

If we have any reason to hope that we are the elect of God, holy and beloved by him, let this charm us to entertain the most beneficent sentiments and views with regard to our fellow-creatures, and teach us to put on bowels of mercy, gentleness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering. Let the grace of Christ in freely forgiving us, teach us to rejoice in opportunities of imitating it. Do we desire to feel the peace of God presiding in us, let us exercise charity, the bond of perfectness, and let us study to be more and more thankful, in whatever stations we are placed; observing attentively its advantageous circumstances, reflecting especially how much worse things might have been, and how unworthy we ourselves are of any distinction which God may be pleased to make in our favour.

12 13 14, 15

We have especially great reason most thankfully to acknowledge the divine goodness, in providing us with so many religious advantages, and particularly with those that relate to the most decent and edifying performance of the duty of psalmody. To furnish us for a right discharge of it, let us carefully treasure up the word of Christ in our minds, and let us be ever more solicitous to preserve the melody of the heart than that of the voice. In this, and in every other service, let all be done in the name of Christ, and then we may humbly hope that all shall be accepted through him. And if that prevailing name do not recommend us to acceptance, the divine purity will find something in every one of them which will justify God, not only in rejecting them, but in condemning us.

16 17

SECTION VII.

The apostle recommends to the Colossians a care in performing the duties that answered to the several relations of life in which they stood, whether they were wives or husbands, children or parents, servants or masters. Col. iii. 18, *to the end;* iv. 1—6.

SECT. 7.

COL. iii. 18.

COL. iii. 18.

WIVES, submit yourselves

LET me now remind you, as I frequently do my other christian friends, both in my sermons and Epistles, of how great importance it is to endeavour after such a temper and

COL. III. 18

interpretation confirmed by the authority of so great a critic as Beza.

e *Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.*] Calvin thinks all these words refer to David's poetical pieces, as some of them are called מזמרים, *Mizmarim, psalms*, attended with instruments, some תהלים, *Tehillim*, which he thinks were *prayers*, generally sung, and others שורים, *Shurim, songs* containing not only proper and immediate acts of devotion addressed to God, but also *moral* and *religious instructions*. But I see not the authority of this interpretation, and think it much more reasonable to believe, that by *hymns and spiritual songs*, he means such poetical composures as, under the influence of the Spirit, were written or uttered. For it would be very absurd to suppose that when there was such a gift in the church as we are sure there was, (compare 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 26.) they should be confined to the words of David in all their devotions of this kind. And it would certainly be as reasonable for us, in these latter ages, to explode all kind of prayers in public but liturgies collected from the words of scripture, as all sacred songs in divine worship but literal translations from what is called the Book of Psalms. Numberless passages of the Old and New Testament are equally capable of furnishing us with sacred anthems.

SECT. 7. COL. III.

behaviour, in respect to the relative duties of life, as may adorn a christian profession. And be particularly exhorted, ye *wives*, that ye *be subject to your own husbands*, though they should be Jews or heathens, *as it is becoming in the Lord:* for a modest, respectful, obedient behaviour in this most endearing relation, will make your characters appear beautiful, and so far gain upon those of them who are strangers to christianity, as to give
19 them a good opinion of it upon that account. And, on the other hand, ye *husbands*, be exhorted tenderly to *love* [*your*] *wives, and be not* severe and *bitter against them*, as too many in the world are, who become domestic tyrants, and quarrel with their wives upon every trifling occasion: thus overbearing those whom they should rather guard and comfort, breaking their tender spirits, and perhaps shortening their days.
20 *Children*, see to it that ye *be obedient to* [*your own*] *parents in all* lawful *things; for this is well pleasing to the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, who, when he condescended to dwell in human flesh, was a constant example of filial piety, not only to his real mother,
21 but to him who was only his supposed father. (Luke xi. 51.) And ye *fathers*, see to it that you *do not* so abuse the superiority of the relation, as by a perverse and excessively severe conduct to *provoke your children* [*to wrath,*] *lest they be discouraged* from attempting to please you, when it shall seem to be an impossible task; and be rendered unfit to pass through the world with advantage, when their spirits have been so unreasonably broken under an oppressive yoke in the earliest years of life.
22 Ye *servants, be subject in all things*, so far as duty will permit, *to* [*them that are,*] *with respect to the flesh*, [*your*] *masters*, and whose property Divine Providence has suffered you to become: obey their commands, and take care of their interest, *not* merely *with eye-service, as* those who are solicitous only to be *men-pleasers, but* as *in* the *simplicity of* your *heart, fearing God*, and therefore for his sake attending to the offices of that humble station he has been pleased to assign you; as those who remember that his
23 authority enforces that of your earthly masters. *And whatsoever work ye are employed in, pursue* [*it*] *heartily* and diligently, *as* therein paying a tribute of love and duty *to the Lord*
24 Jesus Christ himself, *and not to men* alone: *Knowing* that, in this case, your diligence in your secular calling shall be accepted with regard to the principle from whence it proceeds, and *that you shall receive from the Lord* Jesus Christ *the* gracious *recompense;* not indeed an estate in this world, like that which your masters may value themselves upon, but, what is infinitely more important, the possession *of an* eternal *inheritance* above. *For ye* herein *serve the Lord Christ*, whose rewards are according to his own majesty,
25 grace, and power, and not according to the meanness of our deserts. *And*, on the other hand, *he that is injurious* to any, in one relation of life or another, *shall receive according to the injury that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons* with God. Nor shall a christian servant be excused because it is an heathen master he hath injured.

COL. IV.

On the same principles, ye *masters* are to be exhorted and charged that ye *render unto*
1 [*your*] *servants justice and equity;* even to those who are most entirely in your power, and who have no human appeal left, whatever wrongs they may receive; *knowing that ye also have a Master in the heavens*, to whom you must give an account, whose power is irresistible, and who, seeing as he does the whole of your conduct, will another day bring you unto judgment for every relation you have sustained, and will not forget your treatment
2 of your very slaves. And that, on the whole, all these different duties may be well discharged, and all these relations in life properly filled up, *persevere in* fervent and earnest *prayer to* God, *watching* against negligence and indolence *in it*, and endeavouring to keep up your hearts and your hopes *with* a mixture of *thanksgiving* for those mercies which you have already received in answer to former petitions, or in which God has prevented you with the blessings of his goodness. And these are so various and so important, that in whatever
3 circumstances you are, you will necessarily have cause for praise. *At the same time also*, in a particular manner be *praying for us*,[a] *that God may open to us a door of utterance*, (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 9.) that I may have an opportunity *to speak* of the gospel in general, and the right of the believing Gentiles to all its privileges, even *the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds;* bonds then most grievous to me, when they prove an obstruction to that great business and joy of my life, the propagation of that sacred scheme and system of truths in which the glory of God and the happiness of men is so highly con-
4 cerned. And pray *that*, when these restraints shall be taken off, *I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak*, and may never be so terrified by the most formidable enemies or dangers, as in any degree to suppress it.
5 As for yourselves, *walk in wisdom towards them that are without* the pale of the church, your heathen neighbours, and particularly your magistrates, doing nothing to disgrace religion in their eyes, or unnecessarily to exasperate them against you; *redeeming the time;* endeavouring to employ it as usefully as you can, and to protract your period of service as long as may be, by prudently declining any dangers to which duty does not require you to expose yourselves.
6 *Let your speech* [*be*] *always with grace*,[b] conducted in the most mild and courteous,

unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Col. iv. 1. Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned

a *Praying for us.*] Dr. Whitby justly observes, that it is very remarkable that Paul, who so often and so earnestly entreats the intercession of his christian friends, should never speak of the intercession of the Virgin Mary, or of departed saints or angels, if he believed it a duty to seek it.

b *Always with grace.*] Dr. Scott thinks that the phrase, εν χαριτι, signifies, *cheerful* and *agreeable*, not whining and melancholy. (Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 285.) I have included this in the paraphrase, but cannot apprehend it was chiefly designed.

with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

the most proper and graceful manner; so that it may appear influenced by a governing principle of divine grace and unfeigned piety in your hearts. Let it in this respect be so *seasoned with* the *salt* of heavenly wisdom, as may render it savoury and edifying. In this view reflect upon things and circumstances before you speak, *that you may* not utter any thing which would be rash and foolish, but may *know how you ought to answer every one* who may question you about your religion and your conduct, in a manner that may most effectually tend to your own security, and to the edification of others. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 15. 6

SECT. 7. COL. IV.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy will particular persons, families, and larger societies be, if these apostolic maxims be carefully pursued! While wives are submissive to their husbands, and husbands affectionate to their wives; children obedient to their parents, and parents tenderly careful of their children; servants revering the commands of their masters, and conscientiously and constantly attending to their interests; and masters concerned to maintain all equity in their behaviour to those of their servants who are most entirely in their power; remembering on all sides the account to be given to the supreme Master in heaven, and humbly looking for the reward of the inheritance. COL. III. 18—24 IV. 1

To engage a steady and uniform care in all these various duties, and to make us truly good in every relation of life, let us be daily drawing down grace from God, by continuing instant in prayer; and as our spirits are so ready to grow cold and indifferent in it, let us watch thereunto, lest by insensible degrees we grow remiss in the performance, and from that remissness come entirely or frequently to neglect it. IV. 2

Let every mercy we receive from God awaken our thankfulness and animate our devotion, and let us not forget in our prayers the ministers of Christ; but ask for them those assistances from on high which may enable them to open their mouth boldly, in declaring that mysterious and important doctrine with which they are charged, and on which the salvation of immortal souls depends. 3, 4

To enforce their labours as much as possible, let us add the influence of a regular and amiable behaviour, conducting ourselves with wisdom towards all, and particularly those who are strangers to religion; and redeeming time, as those that know its infinite importance, because they see eternity connected with it. And that we may not, as is so frequent, lose the time we spend in conversation, let us seek more of the salt of divine grace in our hearts, to correct their innate corruption, and learn the happy art of improving discourse well, and of answering others in such a manner, that, without dictating to them, we may gently lead them to the most useful reflections, and make our lips, like those of the righteous, a fountain of life unto them. (Prov. x. 11.) 5 6

SECTION VIII.

The apostle concludes his Epistle to the Colossians with recommending Tychicus and Onesimus to them; and inserts various salutations, and a solemn admonition to Archippus. Col. iv. 7, *to the end.*

Col iv. 7.

ALL my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord;

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus; who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow-workers

Col. iv. 7.

IT is now time that I should draw towards the close of this Epistle, which I will not enlarge by insisting particularly on *the things which relate to myself;* for *Tychicus,*[a] *a beloved brother, and a faithful deacon* of your church, *and fellow-servant* with me *in the* delightful work of our common *Lord, will make* them *known to you* by word of mouth, in a more particular manner than I can now conveniently write of them. To him I entrust this Epistle, and to him I refer you for an account of my present situation, *whom I have* now *sent to you for this very purpose,* that *he may know your affairs,* and when he returns to me again, (as I hope he quickly will,) I may know them also; *and* that he in the mean time *may comfort your hearts* by his christian counsels and exhortations, as well as by the information he may bring you of what has passed here, and of the state of the churches around, so far as I have been made acquainted with it. And *with* him comes *Onesimus,*[b] *a faithful and beloved brother, who is* [*one*] *of you,* and has resided at Rome some time. *They will* be able more particularly to *inform you of the state of things here.* 8 9

SECT. 8. COL. IV.

Aristarchus, once my companion and fellow-labourer at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 29.) and now *my fellow-captive* for the sake of the gospel, *salutes you* in the Lord: *and* John *Mark,* who is *sister's son to* that great and excellent apostle *Barnabas, concerning whom ye have* formerly *received instructions;* he will quickly leave these parts: I desire therefore that *if he come to you,* ye would *receive him* with all respect and affection, as he is one who, whatever misunderstanding there might once have been between us, is entitled to my sincerest esteem.[c] (Compare Acts xv. 38.) *And* I am also to send you the salutation of *Jesus, who is called Justus,*[d] and well deserves the name, on account of his strict and approved integrity. *These* whom I have named last, *are the only persons who, being* 10 11

a *Tychicus.*] From comparing this verse with Eph. vi. 21, 22. where Tychicus is mentioned as sent by Paul from Rome to Ephesus, a city not very far from Colosse, it may, I think, (as has been already observed in the Introduction to this Epistle, and in that to the Ephesians,) be very probably inferred, that these two Epistles, which contain many passages very nearly resembling one another, were written about the same time, and might be sent together.

b *Onesimus.*] This verse makes it probable that this Epistle, if it was not written, was at least delivered, after that to Philemon, and that the admirable letter to him produced its desired effect. See the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 798.

c My sincerest esteem.] That, notwithstanding the breach mentioned in the text referred to, there had been an entire reconciliation between Paul and Mark, farther appears from 2 Tim iv. 11; and Philem. ver. 24.

d *Jesus, who is called Justus.*] Mr. Fleming thinks that good man changed his name from a principle of conscience, as questioning at least whether it was lawful to wear that which had been divinely appropriated to the great Saviour; which seems to have been his own opinion. (Flem. *Christol.* Vol. III. p. 604.) But I can scarce think he would have exchanged it for that of Justus, which rather seems to be an additional name which the respect of his friends had bestowed upon him.

SECT. 8. *of the circumcision, [have been] fellow-labourers with me in the* service of the *kingdom of God, and who have been a comfort to me* under my sufferings in the defence of its interests, and been ready to concur with me in any endeavours for its advancement.

unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

COL. IV. 12 *Epaphras, who is [one] of your* own *society,* and whom I judge to be *a* most faithful *servant of Christ, salutes you,* and is *always striving* and wrestling with God *for you in [his] prayers, that ye may* attain to the greatest improvements and establishment in christianity, and so *stand* amidst all temptations and dangers, *perfect and complete in the whole will of God,* and may retain the purity of the gospel, unadulterated with those de-

12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

13 basing mixtures which some are so eager to introduce. I am fully persuaded that he is thus mindful of you at the throne of grace; *for I* can *bear witness to him, that he has great zeal for you, and for* all *those* christians that are in your parts, and particularly *in* the neighbouring cities of *Laodicea and Hierapolis.*

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 *Luke, the beloved physician,*[e] who is deservedly dear to you and to me, and to all our fellow-christians, *salutes you; and Demas* likewise, who hitherto continues with me.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 *Salute,* in my name, *the* christian *brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house;* for I know there are several christians who either reside in it, or meet for social worship there.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 *And* as I am desirous that my writings during my confinement may be as useful as possible to my christian friends, I desire that *when this Epistle is read* publicly *to you* in your religious assembly, as (having inscribed it to the whole society) I am assured it will be, you *cause it also to be read to the church of the Laodiceans, and* for that purpose take proper methods for conveying it immediately to them; *that* so *you may also* the more easily have an opportunity to *read that* which I have written to them, and which I doubt not but you may procure *from Laodicea;* as, on your imparting this to them, they will see it is my request that it may be communicated to you.[f]

16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

17 Before I conclude, I must add one word by way of particular caution and exhortation to one person among you, whose character is of great *and* public importance. *Say* therefore *to Archippus,*[g] in my name and in your own, *Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in* the name and by the authority of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, *that thou fulfil it* with diligence and care; for the consequence of neglecting this high and holy office, after having so solemnly undertaken it, will be infinitely dangerous and fatal.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 Thus far have I used the pen of a friend; but now I add *the salutation of me Paul,* written *with mine own hand,* as a token of the genuineness of the Epistle. *Remember my bonds,* and bear me upon your heart with that affection which you owe to an apostle, and to one who is now a confessor for the truth he hath preached. *Grace [be] with you* from Christ, the Fountain of it. *Amen.* You have my repeated and most affectionate prayers for it, and may the God of grace and peace confirm it by his most efficacious Amen.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE friendly disposition of St. Paul fails not to show itself in the close as well as entrance of every Epistle, and indeed runs through all the parts of each. It cannot but give some pleasure to the pious reader, to whom the Ver. 11 memory of such a servant of Christ will always be precious, to find that there were some even of the circumcision 10 that were comforts to him in his affliction; as well as that John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, was so thoroughly reconciled, and made one of his most agreeable and useful friends; though there was a time when Paul thought it inconsistent with prudence and duty to admit him as a companion. *He that reproveth a man shall afterwards find more favour than he who flattereth with the tongue.* (Prov. xxviii. 23.) And if the faithfulness of plain rebukes may be the means of recovering our brethren to a sense of their duty, they will no doubt be sensible of the obligation, and it will add firmness and endearment to future friendship.

e *Luke the beloved physician.*] From comparing this with ver. 11. where Paul says he had no fellow-labourer of the *circumcision* but those whom he had named, the late Lord Barrington concludes that Luke was *a proselyte of the gate* before he was converted to christianity. And I think it may be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew.

f *Read that from Laodicea.*] Commentators are much divided as to the interpretation of these words. The ancients generally thought the Epistle here referred to was that to the Ephesians, which, being inscribed to the chief church in these parts, (and as Archbishop Wake, in his *Preface to the Apostolic Fathers*, p. 94. by a much more modern name, calls it, the Metropolis,) might be communicated to the Laodiceans, and so to the Colossians. But there is no direction of this kind in that Epistle, and it would have been much more natural for Paul to have directed these Colossians to have sent to Ephesus for an Epistle inscribed to that church. There is no ground however to imagine that it refers (as some have thought) to an Epistle written by the apostle Paul from Laodicea, where it is reasonable to conclude, from Col. ii. 1. that he had never been; nor can I think it likely that it means an *Epistle* written to him *from the church of Laodicea,* which the apostle would not have ordered to be read publicly in the church in the same manner with his own Epistle.—Others have much more probably supposed that it was an *Epistle* written *to the Laodiceans* by St. Paul, though the Epistle extant under that name (which may be seen in Fabricius, *Cod. Apocr.* Vol. II. p. 873.) has nothing so remarkable in its contents as to make it at all requisite for this church to send for it; and indeed has not any of the spirit and flame of the apostle Paul, or any thing worthy of him but what is borrowed from his other Epistles, though it be even shorter than that to Philemon. We may rather conclude it to be *now lost,* for all the Epistles which the apostles ever wrote are not preserved, any more than all the *words* and *actions* of our blessed Lord. (Compare John xx. 30; and xxi. 25.) If this be not allowed, we must refer it (as above) to the Epistle to the Ephesians, which might be intended, as some think, to be communicated as *a circular Epistle,* and a copy of it ordered to be sent to Laodicea, from whence, as it lay nearer to them, the Colossians might more easily obtain it than from Ephesus. This has the rather been supposed, as the Epistle to the Ephesians is the only one of all Paul's Epistles that has nothing in it peculiarly adapted to the state of that church to which it is directed, but has much of common concernment to all christians, especially to the Gentile converts. And in this case it is no wonder the apostle should make such a reference, as there is so great a resemblance between this Epistle to the Colossians and that to the Ephesians, and as so many of the sentiments only suggested here are more largely illustrated there. Compare Col. i. 26. with Eph. iii. 9; Col. ii. 13. with Eph. ii. 1, &c.; Col. iii. 11. with Eph. i. 10, &c.; Col. iii. 18, 19. with Eph. v. 22—33. and the like.

g *Say to Archippus.*] This seems an intimation that Archippus, whoever he were, was not so *diligent* and *active* in the prosecution of his *ministry* as could have been wished. But that his fault was entangling himself with Jewish disputations, as some have supposed, is so far from being evident, that I see nothing to make it at all probable.

When Epaphras was at a distance from his brethren at Colosse, he was not only praying for them, but, as the word signifies, wrestling with God in his prayers on their account; an important evidence of his christian affection for them. And how well were his petitions chosen! That they might not only be sincerely good, as they already were, but perfect and complete in all the will of God; that there might be in their hearts and actions a more entire conformity to it. May that be our character and happiness, to have respect to all God's commandments, and to carry our regards to them as far as we possibly can!

Commendable, and perfectly consistent with the strictest modesty, was the concern which the apostle expresses, 16
that his Epistles might be diffused as far as possible, and that christians in different societies might receive the benefit of them. And indeed they turn so much upon matters of universal importance, that they are admirably calculated for the edification of those who may live in the most distant countries and ages. Surely there cannot be a more sacrilegious attempt upon christian liberty and piety than to take them away from the common people, to whom Paul expressly ordered they should be publicly read: nor can there be greater madness than to pretend to guard men from error and heresy, by concealing from them writings which the Holy Spirit himself suggested, to lead them to truth and holiness.

We know not what there might be so particular in the character or circumstances of Archippus as to require 17
the solemn admonition with which the Epistle closes. But, whatever the occasion of it were, it certainly suggests a most useful and important thought to all the ministers of the gospel. It is of the Lord Jesus Christ that they receive their ministry; to him they are quickly to render a strict account of it. May they all therefore take heed to it! May they be sensible of the importance of the trust, and have grace to be faithful in it; that they may give up their account with the joy of that steward, who, having approved his fidelity on earth, shall receive his reward in heaven. Amen!

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS Epistle is addressed to the inhabitants of Thessalonica, a large populous city, the metropolis of Macedonia. It stood upon the Thermaian bay, which was part of the Ægean sea, and was so called from Thermæ, the ancient name of the city.

It appears from the history of the Acts, (chap. xvii. 1.) that the christian religion was planted here by Paul and Silas, soon after they left Philippi, where they had met with such unworthy treatment. (Compare Acts xvi. 24. with 1 Thess. ii. 2.) At their first entrance, they preached with so much success, that great numbers of the Gentiles, and some of the Jews, who were settled in that city, embraced the gospel with the utmost readiness. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 5, 9.) But the unbelieving Jews, animated by the same inveterate spirit with their brethren in Judea, stirred up the idolatrous inhabitants against the apostle and his christian friends, and in a riotous manner assaulted the house where some of them were assembled; but not finding Paul and Silas, as they expected, they carried Jason and some others of the brethren before the magistrate, who took security for their good behaviour, and then dismissed them. In the mean while, the apostle and his companion, having been concealed by their friends till the storm was a little abated, were obliged to leave them abruptly, and go in the night to Berœa; where for some time they met with a very favourable reception, but were soon disturbed by the malice of those restless enemies who pursued them thither; and the apostle had once more the mortification to leave a place that seemed to promise so rich a harvest. (Acts xvii. 1—14.)

But the opposition which these bigots made to the gospel, and which they continued after the apostle's departure, (1 Thess. ii. 14.) was not sufficient to shake the faith of the new converts; who, as appears from this Epistle, (chap. i. 3—10; ii. 13, 14.) distinguished themselves above all the other churches for the zeal and constancy with which they adhered to the christian cause, and the honourable character they maintained. No wonder therefore the apostle should express in such strong terms his esteem and affection for them, and the satisfaction it gave him to see such happy fruits of his labours.

It cannot be certainly determined from the history, what stay the apostle made at Thessalonica. Some have imagined, from Acts xvii. 3. that he was there only three weeks; but as it appears that, during his abode in that city, he not only wrought with his own hands to procure a subsistence, (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.) but also received supplies more than once from Philippi; (compare Phil. iv. 16.) it is much more probable that, after the Jews had discovered such an invincible prejudice against the gospel, he desisted from disputing or teaching in their synagogues after the third sabbath, and then preached for some time among the Gentiles, before he was driven out of the city. (See note a, p. 520.)

However, as it is certain his stay was not very considerable, and as he had left his christian friends there in so much distress, on his as well as their own account, he sent Timothy to them from Athens, (for which place he had sailed immediately upon his leaving Berœa,) to confirm them in their attachment to the gospel, and comfort them under their concern for his sufferings. (Chap. iii. 1—5.) Timothy, at his return, found the apostle at Corinth, (Acts xviii. 5.) where he continued near two years; (Acts xviii. 11.) from whence it has generally been concluded, and with great reason, that this Epistle, in which he takes such particular notice of the agreeable account he had received of their character from Timothy, (chap. iii. 6.) was written from thence not long after his arrival; (compare chap. ii. 17.) which will fix the date of it about the year of our Lord 52, or the twelfth of the emperor Claudius. (See notes i and k, p. 528.)

The apostle's design in this Epistle is, in general, to confirm the Thessalonians in their adherence to the christian faith, and to engage them, from the sufferings they had already endured in that cause, and the extraordinary character they had hitherto maintained, to make still greater advances in religion, and become yet more eminent in every branch of the christian temper.

In pursuance of this design, having in the inscription of the Epistle joined Timothy and Sylvanus (or Silas, who had assisted him in establishing the church at Thessalonica) with himself, the apostle expresses his great satisfaction in the sincerity with which the Thessalonians embraced the gospel when it was first preached to them, and in the exemplary character they had since maintained; to which he assures them all the churches bore an honourable testimony, and by which they had greatly advanced the credit of their christian profession. (Chap. i. *throughout.*)

And in order to preserve his influence with them, and consequently to add the greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the courage and fidelity with which he had preached the gospel at his first entrance among them in spite of all the danger to which his zeal exposed him; and appeals to them for the unexceptionable and disinterested manner in which he had behaved towards them while he continued there, and the tender, affectionate concern he had always shown for their religious interests. (Chap. ii. 1—12.)—The reflection upon the pains he had taken with them, naturally led him to acknowledge, with the utmost thankfulness, the happy success that had attended his labours, in their conversion to the christian faith, which they openly and courageously professed, notwithstanding all the difficulties and dangers they were obliged to encounter. He observes to them, that he himself, and his fellow-christians in Judea, had met with the same ill-treatment from the perverseness of their own countrymen, who opposed his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; and assures them that though he had, by the malice of his enemies, been unwillingly detained from them longer than he intended, he felt the same warmth of affection for them, and rejoiced in them as his glory and his crown. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*)

As a farther proof of his regard, the apostle informs them, that when he came to Athens he was so much concerned lest, being discouraged by his sufferings, they should be tempted to cast off their profession, that he could not forbear sending Timothy to comfort and strengthen them; and expresses in very strong terms the sensible pleasure he felt, in the midst of all his afflictions, from the agreeable account he received of their faith and love; to which he adds, that he was continually praying for their farther establishment in religion, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. (Chap. iii. *throughout.*)

The apostle having thus given the Thessalonians a sufficient testimony of his sincere regard, proceeds to renew the practical exhortations he had given them in the name of Christ while he continued with them; recommending, in particular, chastity, in opposition to all kinds of uncleanness, for which the idolatrous Gentiles were so notorious; justice, in opposition to all manner of fraud and dishonesty; charity, in which he acknowledges they already excelled; and a diligent application to their proper business, joined with a prudent behaviour towards their heathen neighbours. (Chap. iv. 1—12.)—In order to comfort them under the loss of some of their christian friends, of whose death it is probable the apostle might have heard by Timothy, he assures them that those who were fallen asleep in Jesus should be raised again at the last day, and, together with those that remained alive, should be caught up to meet their Lord, and share his triumph. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*)——And having thus laid a solid foundation on which to build their hope, he takes occasion to press upon them the necessity of preparing for so awful an event, that it might not overtake them unawares; and represents the peculiar obligations they were under to sobriety and watchfulness, from the superior light and knowledge they enjoyed, and the hopes they were taught to entertain from the death and resurrection of Christ. (Chap. v. 1—11.)

The apostle, in the conclusion of his Epistle, recommends to them a respectful behaviour to their ministers, and lays down some directions for their conduct towards persons of different tempers and characters in the church, adding other practical precepts of a more general nature; and having offered up a solemn petition for their farther advancement and stedfastness in religion, he closes with his usual benediction. (Ver. 12, *to the end of the Epistle.*)

From this analysis of the Epistle, the reader cannot but have observed what a paternal affection and concern the apostle discovers for these new converts: and it is remarkable with how much address he improves all that influence which his zeal and fidelity in their service must naturally give him to inculcate upon them the precepts of the gospel, and persuade them to act agreeably to their sacred character. This was the grand point he kept always in view, and to which every thing else was made subservient. Nothing appears, in any part of his writings, like a design to establish his own reputation, or to make use of his ascendancy over his christian friends, to answer any secular purposes of his own: on the contrary, in this and in his other Epistles, he discovers a most generous, disinterested regard for their welfare, expressly disclaiming all authority over their consciences, and appealing to them that he had chosen to maintain himself by the labour of his own hands, rather than prove burdensome to the churches, or give the least colour for a suspicion that, under pretence of zeal for the gospel and concern for their improvement, he was carrying on any private sinister views.

The discovery of so excellent a temper, as it tends greatly to raise our idea of the apostle, so it must be allowed to carry with it a strong presumptive argument in favour of the doctrines he taught, and consequently of the truth of christianity itself: for he evidently appears to have been governed by the very same principles he recommends to others, and, by their influence, to have been raised above all regard to his temporal interests, and every motive that could come in competition with the honour of God, and the advancement of religion in the world. And indeed whoever reads over St. Paul's Epistles with attention, and enters into the spirit with which they were written, will discern such intrinsic characters of their genuineness, and the divine authority of the doctrines they contain, as will perhaps produce in him a stronger conviction than all the external evidence with which they are attended. To which we may add, that the exact coincidence observable between the many allusions to particular facts, in this as well as in other Epistles, and the account of the facts themselves, as they are recorded in the history of the Acts, is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of each. (Compare note a, p. 520.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul, after the usual salutations, expresses his joy in the character of the Thessalonians to whom he wrote, and in the credit they did to their christian profession, by a behaviour so worthy of it. 1 Thess. i. 1, *throughout.*

1 THESSALONIANS i. 1.

1 THESSALONIANS i. 1. PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECT. 1. 1 THES. I.

PAUL and Sylvanus, otherwise called Silas, *and Timothy*, all well known as the servants and ministers of Christ, join in this address *to the* beloved and happy *church* which he by his grace hath lately founded among you *of the Thessalonians*, who have now the honour to stand *in* an intimate and dear relation to *God, the Father* of all true believers, *and* to *the Lord Jesus Christ*, our common and adorable Saviour. And we all most sincerely wish *grace and peace unto you*, in the richest abundance, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.* 1

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

We think ourselves obliged to *give thanks to God always* with one accord *for you all*, *making* continual *mention of you in our* daily *prayers. Incessantly remembering*, in every address to the divine throne, *your work of faith*, the readiness with which you embraced the gospel of Christ; the vigour with which you declared your dependence upon it; *and*, in consequence of that dependence, your *labour of love*, the charitable and affectionate zeal with which you embarked in the interests of his persecuted servants; *and* your *patience* in the result *of* that blessed *hope* which was brought unto you *by* the gospel and grace of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, and solemnly professed *before God, even our Father*, who will not suffer the graces which he hath wrought in you by his blessed Spirit to fail of their proper rewards.[a] 2 3

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father:

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

And this we write with all freedom and endearment, *knowing, beloved brethren, your* participation in the *election of God*, and fully persuaded that you are in the number of those whom he will finally own as his chosen people, for whom before the foundation of the world he had prepared a kingdom. Of which, blessed be his name, we have the most important and satisfactory evidence; *because our gospel*, that is, the gospel which we preach, and which was solemnly committed to our charge, *came not to you in word only*, so as to be a mere empty sound, or to convey only amusing ideas to your mind, *but also in power*, so as to make very deep and powerful impressions on your hearts; *and* indeed such impressions as could only be the result of its coming to you *in the* power of the *Holy Ghost*, whose miraculous and gracious influence concurred to add force to it. *And* then it is no wonder that it came *in much assurance*, so that you could not possibly doubt of its truth, when you thus saw its evidence and felt its efficacy. And its success was farther promoted by the good example which we who preached it were enabled to give; *as you well know*, and I am confident will never forget, *what manner of persons we were among you*, what vigour and zeal we exerted for your conversion, and how we conducted ourselves in the whole of our behaviour, with respect to you and all around us, as well as with what fortitude we faced all the persecutions we were called to encounter *for your sakes*. *And* the happy consequence of all was, that *you became imitators of us*, *and* I bless God I may add therein *of the Lord* Jesus Christ too, both in the holiness of your lives and in the courage and patience with which you endured those sufferings which lay in the way of your duty; *having received the word in much affliction* from the rage and fury of your unreasonable enemies, and yet *with joy of the Holy Ghost;* rejoicing under his powerful influences, in the reception of that holy religion to which you were so early called to make such great and important sacrifices. *So that* indeed *ye* soon *became* eminent in the churches of Christ, and *examples to all the believers in Mace-* 4 5 6 7

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

a *Work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope.*] All these are plainly Hebraisms for *active faith, laborious love*, and *patient hope*, and might very properly have been so translated.

SECT. 1. *donia, and in* the more distant province of *Achaia*,[b] where the Corinthian converts, famous as they soon were, (1 Cor. i. 7.) heard of your religious character with pleasure and emulation. *For from you the word of the Lord sounded forth*, and you were eager
1 THES. I by your messengers to spread the joyful tidings of the gospel, *not only in* your own
borders of *Macedonia and* in *Achaia*, with which you had an easy correspondence, *but*
8 *also* wherever providence gave you any access; so that *in every* remoter *place* the fame and effect of *your faith toward God* and the Lord Jesus Christ *came in such a degree as made it* almost *unnecessary for us particularly to recount any thing* of your conver-
9 sion or progress in the truth. *For they themselves* among whom we came, *declare* it to us *concerning* you, and make it the subject of their pleasing conversation with *us* and with one another, *what a* wonderful *kind of entrance we had among you* in our first visit, *and* what a reception you gave us, that is, *how ye turned to God from* those contemptible *idols* in the worship of which ye had been educated, with a firm resolution at all events *to serve the living and true God* with that diligence and zeal which his service so justly
10 demands. *And* you found yourselves disposed, by your growing knowledge of him, *to* lay aside all immoderate attachments to the interests and concerns of this present life, that with fixed faith and cheerful expectation ye might *wait for* the triumphant coming of *his Son from heaven;* of that illustrious Son *whom*, as a proof of his divine mission and designation to the office of universal Judge, *he hath raised from the dead*, and now exalted to his own right hand, [*even*] *Jesus*, the long-expected and ever to be adored Saviour, *who rescues us from the wrath* which is assuredly *to come* upon all impenitent sinners, and makes us, in consequence of our faith in him, not only safe from that flaming ruin, but secure of possessing an happiness complete and eternal.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For they themselves show of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9 WE see here a compendious view of the christian character. It is to turn from idols, from every thing which we have loved and esteemed, from every thing which we have pursued and trusted in an irregular degree, to serve
10 the living and true God, under a real sense of his infinite perfections and glories. It is turning also to Jesus his Son, as saving us from the wrath to come; from a deep conviction of our being justly exposed to wrath by our transgressions against God, to seek rescue and refuge in Christ, as delivering us from it by his atonement and grace, and completing that deliverance by almighty power in the day of his final triumph. It is to look and wait with unshaken faith and with holy joy for Jesus the Son of God from heaven; keeping the eye of our soul habitually directed towards him, the loins of our mind continually girded up, and ourselves as servants who look
3 for their Lord's coming. In the mean time may we maintain the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, even our Father.

If this be the effect of our receiving the gospel, it will evidently prove that it is come to us, not only in word,
4, 5 but in power and in the Holy Ghost; and it may give us abundant assurance of our interest in God, and cause us
6 by the happiest tokens to know our election of him. Whatever afflictions may in that case be allotted to us, while we hereby become followers of the apostles and of Christ, we may rejoice in the Lord. The ministers of
9 Christ will rejoice in such an entrance among their people as shall produce these blessed consequences, and the
8 word of God will be sounded forth with the greatest advantage by those who are pleading for its truth, efficacy,
and importance, by this silent but powerful eloquence. May this character be every where more prevalent among
1 those that call themselves christians, and may grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, be with all in whom it is found!

SECTION II.

The apostle leads the Thessalonians to reflect upon the manner in which he and his brethren in the christian ministry behaved among them when they visited them at first, and laid the foundation of a church in their city. 1 Thess. ii. 1—12.

1 THESS. ii. 1.

SECT. 2. I HAVE been mentioning the encouragement our ministry among you first met with, and the blessed effects that attended it. But I need not insist more largely upon them, *for ye*
1 THES. II. *yourselves know*, my *brethren*, and I am persuaded you can never forget, *the entrance that we had unto you;* with what demonstration of divine agency in and by us it was
1 attended, and what a powerful effect it had upon your minds, so *that it was not in vain.* It was not a transient and trifling amusement, but solemn in itself, and attended with im-
2 portant consequences and effects, which will be everlasting. *But* the recollection is so delightful to my mind, that you must permit me, known as it is, to lead back my own thoughts to the review, and to remind you how, *even when we had* just *before suffered* the greatest indignities, *and* had *been* so *injuriously treated, as you know, at Philippi*, where we were stripped and scourged by the common beadle, and thrust into prison, with our feet set fast in the stocks, (Acts xvi. 22—24.) we no sooner arrived among you, but *we were bold, in* our humble dependence on the powerful support of *our God, to speak unto you* in the neighbouring city *the gospel of God*, and this though we were forced to do it *with* so *much contention*, because of the opposition excited against us by the perverse and un-
3 believing Jews. (Acts xvii. 1—9.) And we were supported in these courageous efforts from a secret consciousness of that integrity with which our ministry was conducted; *for our*

1 THESS. ii. 1.

FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

3 For our exhortation

b *In Macedonia and Achaia.*] The apostle mentions these parts as he had just been travelling through them before he came to Corinth, from whence (as we have shown in the Introduction, p. 871.) he wrote this Epistle. Compare Acts xvii. 14, 15; xviii. 1.

was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile,

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God *is* witness.

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father *doth* his children:)

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

exhortation to persuade you to embrace the gospel [*was*] *not* calculated to corrupt your morals, as being founded on any principles *of deceit or of uncleanness*; we had no mercenary or sensual purposes to serve, as your idolatrous priests often have, *nor* was there *in* our management any thing of guile and *craftiness* which could fear the detection of the strictest scrutiny. *But* all was fair and open, simple and artless; and *as we have been approved by God*, so far as *to be entrusted with the* invaluable treasure of his *gospel*, so we did then address you, and *so we* continue to *speak, not as pleasing men*, and accommodating our doctrine to their tastes and prejudices, *but* as endeavouring always to secure the approbation of that *God who trieth our hearts* with as great care and exactness as gold is proved in the furnace, that it may be separated from dross, or the mixture of any baser metals. *Neither did we at any time deal in flattering words*, to insinuate ourselves into your affections, and soothe you in your sins, *as ye* well *know*; *nor* had we recourse to *a pretence of* piety to promote the schemes of *covetousness*, often artfully conducted under the covert of religious zeal. *God* [*is*] our *witness*, that we were far above every thing of this kind, and made all such views our first sacrifice to the glory of his name and the propagation of his gospel. *Nor did we seek glory* and applause *of men, neither of you nor of* any *others* among whom we laboured and conversed; nor did we press you with regard to any maintenance, *though we might have been* in some degree *burdensome, as the apostles of Christ*,[a] who had authorized us to take a necessary subsistence from our hearers, as we certainly brought you what was far more valuable than any thing which we could in return have received from you. *But we were* still mild, *gentle*, and condescending *in the midst of you, even as a nurse* or mother *cherishes her own children* while hanging on her breast, and feels an inexpressible pleasure in imparting that nourishment to them with which God in his gracious providence has been pleased to furnish her. *So we, being* most *tenderly affectionate towards you, took pleasure to impart to you, not only the gospel of God*, which was lodged with us for the food and life of our fellow-creatures, *but even our own souls* too, *because ye were dear unto us*; so dear, that our heart was in every word while we addressed you, and we could with pleasure even have laid down our lives among you, if that might have promoted the success of our ministry, and have conduced to the increase and edification of the church.

You had many instances of this, which I need not largely rehearse; *for ye remember, brethren*, both *our labour* in the ministerial work, *and* our *toil* in our secular profession likewise; *for night and day working* at it, taking often from the rest of the night the hours which during the day we had spent in our ministry among you, *that we might* be able to maintain ourselves, and might *not be burdensome* and expensive *to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.* And there was a consistency in the whole of our conduct, which abundantly showed the purity of those motives from which we acted in this instance. So that *ye* [*are*] *witnesses, and God* [*also*,] who sees our most secret actions, and all the recesses of our hearts, *how holily, and righteously, and* how *unblamably we behaved ourselves*, not only *to* the heathens around, but in our most intimate converses with *you who believe*; still preserving the same integrity, caution, and care, to avoid every occasion of offence which we maintained among those who were strangers or enemies to our religion, and so might have been most ready to seek for pretences of objecting against it. *As ye also know how*, and with what repeated importunity, *we were exhorting and comforting every one of you* in particular, as God gave us access to you; just *as a father* encourages and instructs *his children*, labouring, by every kind and endearing art of address, to form them to a wise and worthy behaviour. Thus were we animating you, and *testifying* in the most solemn manner, *That ye should walk worthy of God*, and of the relation in which you have the honour to stand to him, *who hath called you* by his gospel *into his kingdom*, even to the views *and* hopes of that *glory* which he hath promised to all the faithful subjects of it.

SECT. 2.

1 THES. II.

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY it is not possible to conceive from any thing but the example of the great Shepherd of the sheep, a more amiable idea of the character of a gospel-minister than that which is here exhibited. With what a frankness and openness of soul does the apostle appeal to their consciences, as to the integrity and benevolence of his behaviour among them, whilst, unterrified by all the indignities and inhumanities he had met with at Philippi, he immediately renewed the same combat at Thessalonica, and contended boldly with all the enemies of the gospel, not esteeming his liberty or his life, on an occasion of so great importance! Ver. 2

With such courage let the ministers of Christ face all danger and oppositions; with such simplicity of heart let them deliver their important message; not with deceit, uncleanness, or guile, but as those who remember that they have been put in trust with the gospel by God himself, and therefore must be solicitous not to please men, but God, who trieth the heart. And may they ever be superior to those views of avarice, ambition, or popular applause, which should lead them to sacrifice truth to the affection or favour of men, or even to the fear of being thought to do it. And let them with all this intrepidity and firmness of soul, put on a gentleness and sweetness of disposition; a gentleness like that with which a nurse cherishes her children. While their people, like *new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.* (1 Pet. ii. 2.) Let ministers, with a natural 3 4 5, 6 7

[a] *Might have been burdensome, &c.*] The apostle evidently refers to the right he had of being *maintained* at their charge. Compare ver. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18; 1 Cor. ix. *throughout.* But he was acting now on the same maxims at Corinth, (from whence he wrote this Epistle,) by which he had governed himself at Thessalonica. See Acts xviii. 3.

SECT. 2 tenderness, draw forth that precious nourishment to them, as imparting even their own souls unto them, and willing to wear out, or, if such should be the will of God, to sacrifice their lives in such a service.

Let them particularly endeavour by all prudent care, suitable to the circumstances in which God has fixed them,
1 THES. II. 6 not to make themselves burdensome to the people in temporal things, nor, under the pretence of a divine mission, to tyrannize over their consciences; but behave with such integrity and such sanctity, that they may be able cheerfully to appeal to God as a Witness of it, and may also have a testimony in the breast of each of their flock.
1 And oh that the entrance of such ministers among their people, and their labours with them, may not be in vain; but that the blessed consequence of all the charges, entreaties, and consolations they are addressing to them
12 may be this, that they may walk worthy of God, worthy of that kingdom and glory to the views and blessings of which he hath condescended to call them! Then will all the fatigues of their office sit light upon them, while they see the blessed purposes of it answered. Then will they finish their course with joy, and bless God with their dying breath that he hath chosen them to an office the most laborious, and perhaps in secular views the least advantageous, of any in which persons of liberal education use to engage.

SECTION III.

The apostle goes on to bless God for the readiness with which the Thessalonians received the gospel, notwithstanding the persecution raised against them by their own countrymen, as well as the perverse opposition of the Jews; and assures them of his continued affection, though he had been hindered from visiting them so soon as he intended. 1 Thess. ii. 13, *to the end.*

1 THESS. ii. 13.

SECT. 3. THUS we laboured and thus we behaved ourselves among you, and we are thankful that we were enabled in so conscientious a manner to discharge our duty. And *for this cause also we give thanks to God incessantly, that when ye received the word of God, which*
1 THES. II. *ye heard from us, ye received* [*it*] *not* with indifference and neglect, not with doubt and uncertainty, [*as*] if it had been merely *the* precarious *word of men*, an artful invention
13 or uncertain scheme of human philosophy, *but (as it is in truth) the* very *word of God* himself, the veracity of which is beyond all dispute or suspicion; of *which* there is this farther proof, that it *worketh* so *efficaciously in you who believe*, and produces
14 such an happy change in your character, as may abundantly attest its divine original. *For you, brethren*, as soon as ever you embraced it, immediately *became imitators* of the heroic behaviour and conduct *of the churches of God which are in Judea, in Christ Jesus*, as being under the influences of the same Spirit with them, though you had not been eye-witnesses of their example *For you also*, with the like intrepidity of resolution, *suffered the same things from those of your own* tribe and *country*, (Acts xvii. 5.)
15 *as they* [*did*] *of* their countrymen *the Jews; Who* treated them so rigorously and cruelly as the vilest of apostates. They call themselves indeed the peculiar people of God, but act in a manner most unworthy that character; for they *both killed the Lord Jesus* Christ *and their own prophets*, who foretold his appearance, and whom God in many distant ages of their commonwealth raised up unto them. *And* on the same principles also they *have persecuted us* when we came among them as divine messengers; *and*, on the whole, *please not God*, though they pretend to know him so well, and boast so loudly of their interest in him; but in consequence of the wrong notions they form of him, greatly offend him, *and are contrary to all men*, full of contempt and malignity against all other nations,
16 and behave towards them in the most perverse and unfriendly manner.[a] Of which morose and odious behaviour this is a remarkable instance, that they are continually *forbidding us*, the apostles and messengers of God, *to speak* and preach the gospel *to the Gentiles, that they might be saved;* and by thus setting themselves against the darling scheme of Divine Providence, and opposing the most important even the eternal interests of mankind, they seem to act as if they desired *to fill up* the measure of *their sins continually. But* divine *wrath is* speedily *coming upon them*, and will be carried *to the greatest extremity*, not at Jerusalem only, but everywhere else in their various settlements in heathen countries.[b]
17 *But we, brethren, though* necessarily *separated from you for a very little season*, and as it were for a few hours,[c] *in person*, but *not in heart, being exceedingly desirous to see*
18 *your face again, endeavoured it to the utmost. Therefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul* in particular, *once and a second time, but Satan*, the great enemy of

1 THESS. ii. 13.
FOR this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews;

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us.

a *Contrary to all men.*] It is well known what invincible prejudices the Jews in general entertained against all other nations; and Elsner has produced several passages from Tacitus and other heathen writers, in which they are represented as *bearing an inveterate hatred against all the rest of mankind.* (Elsner, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 274.) And nothing certainly could afford a stronger proof of this malignant temper than that perverse opposition to so benevolent a scheme as the gospel, for which the apostle passes this severe censure upon them.

b Not only at Jerusalem, &c.] Though the remarkable circumstances which attended the destruction of Jerusalem, so particularly represented by Josephus, who was an eye-witness of them, and so exactly corresponding to our Lord's prediction, (see § 161. p. 322. *et seq.*) have fixed the attention of christians chiefly on that catastrophe; yet it is well known that vast numbers of the Jewish nation were soon after destroyed in other provinces of the Roman Empire, particularly under Trajan and Adrian: under the former 460,000 men in Egypt and Cyprus, and under the latter above 580,000, as Xiphilinus informs us from Dio; and the learned Mr. Lowman supposes these events to be referred to in the second *apocalyptic seal*, Rev. vi. 4. Compare § 161. note m, p. 324.

c *For a very little season*, or for a few hours.] The original is προς καιρον ωρας, *for an hour's time:* which is so figurative an expression, that I chose rather to express the sense in the paraphrase, than to follow the Greek literally, especially as ωρα has a signification rather more extensive than *hour*. It was several years before the apostle returned to them, but his mind was full of the ideas of *eternity*, which did, as it were, annihilate any period of mortal life. Dr. Whitby infers from this expression that this Epistle was writ quickly after Paul's leaving Thessalonica, and consequently at Corinth, the first place where he made any long stay. The word αποςφανιθεντες, in this connexion, strongly expresses the apostle's *affection* for them, (compare John xv. 18. Gr. p. 350. note c.) and *concern* to leave them in an unsettled state. Compare chap. iii. 1.

our usefulness and comfort, *hath* hitherto *hindered us* by the many difficulties he laid in SECT.
our way. But we will be sure to take the first opportunity of doing it; *for what* [*is*] 3.
our hope of appearing another day with comfort before the tribunal of Christ, *or* what our
joy, or what the *crown of rejoicing* which we expect then to wear? [*are*] *not ye also* 1 THES.
among many others whom divine grace has given us as the fruits of our ministry; whom II.
we hope for the honour of presenting *before our Lord Jesus Christ at* the day of *his* 19
final *appearance? For ye are* now one of the most considerable churches which I have 20
been the happy instrument of planting; and I trust ye will then appear as *our glory and*
our *joy*, as the seals God hath been pleased to set to my labours, and as amiable friends in
whose converse and love I hope to be for ever happy.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY divine grace teach our souls ever to distinguish between the authority of the word of men and the word of Ver. 13
God, that we may always set them at a due distance from each other, and may feel that peculiar energy of the divine word with which it operates in all them that believe! May we experience this, whatever be the consequences, yea, though we should be exposed to sufferings severe as those which Jews or heathens at first inflicted on the professors, or even on the preachers, of the gospel! Adored be that power of divine grace that went along with it, so 14
that when the envious disciples of Moses, after having slain the Lord Jesus Christ as well as their own prophets, 15
forbad his messengers to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, these faithful ambassadors of health and life feared none of their threatenings or cruelties, but courageously declared the matter as it was, *testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Acts xx. 21.)

The Jews in the mean time filled up the measure of their sins, till wrath came upon them to the uttermost. And 16
so will all the opposition that is made to the gospel end to those who are implacable and obstinate in it. They who believe not that Christ is he, shall die in their sins. *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder.* (John viii. 24; Matt. xxi. 44.)

Let the ministers of Christ, however Satan may attempt to hinder them, go on faithfully and courageously in their 19
work, and watch over the souls which they have gained. When absent from them in body, let them not be absent 18
in heart; but let them be thinking of their state, and often caring and praying for them: for what is their hope, 17
and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord, but the souls which God shall graciously give them as spiritual children, or to whom he shall render them useful, for training them up in those ways of holiness in which, by the blessing of God upon the labours of others, they might be so happy as to find them? May God give many such to all who serve him with their spirit in the gospel of his Son; and in the views of their increasing piety, may they daily anticipate the glory and the joy with which they hope at last to deliver them to their Divine 20
Master!

SECTION IV.

As a farther illustration of his love, the apostle informs the Thessalonians of his care to send Timothy to them from Athens, and of the great pleasure with which he received the tidings which that Evangelist brought him; he also assures them that he was continually praying for them, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. 1 Thess. iii. *throughout.*

1 THESS. iii. 1.

1 THESS. iii. 1.
WHEREFORE, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone:

SUCH is the affection we feel for you; and *therefore,* as we were by persecution sepa- SECT.
rated from you, while as yet your church was in a very tender and unsettled state, (Acts 4.
xvii. 10.) we could not but be solicitous to be more particularly informed how it fared with
you. And *being able no longer to endure* the uncertainty in which we were with rela- 1 THES.
tion to you, *we acquiesced in* the uncomfortable circumstances of *being left alone*[a] *at* III.
Athens, where we had some peculiar need of the countenance and comfort of an approved 1
companion and friend: *And sent Timothy, our* dear *brother, and a* faithful *servant of* 2
God, and whom we highly esteem, as *our* diligent and affectionate *fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ,* whom you had formerly known under that character;[b] we parted with
him, inconvenient as it was, for your sakes, *that,* by making you a visit at a time when we
concluded you so much needed it, *he might strengthen and comfort you,* exhort and advise you, as occasion required, *concerning* the evidences of *your faith* in general, and any
particular branches of it in which you might need farther instruction: *That no man* 3
might be shaken and discouraged from his adherence to the christian profession and hope, *by* the greatest severity of *these afflictions* with which we are surrounded; *for ye yourselves know that we are appointed to these,* and that one part of the scheme of God in establishing the christian church was, to raise a society of men who should glorify his name, and illustrate the force of true religion, by enduring the greatest extremities in its defence with
fortitude and cheerfulness. *For even when we were with you, we* did not flatter you with 4
any vain hopes of an easy and pleasurable life, but plainly and candidly *told you before* you engaged with us, *that we should* certainly *be afflicted, as it came to pass* in fact; *and ye* well *know,* from the very nature of things, and from comparing the religion you have embraced with the tempers, prejudices, and interests of men, that there was the greatest reason

2 And sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

a *Left alone.*] It seems from this circumstance that Silas was absent from Paul while that apostle was at Athens, though some have been of a different opinion. Compare Acts xviii. 5. which seems farther to confirm that fact.

b *Fellow-labourer.*] It appears from Acts xvii. 14. that Timothy had been in those parts before, as *Paul's fellow-labourer,* and so no doubt but he was known to the Thessalonians, and his coming on this occasion would be the more agreeable to them.

SECT. 4. ——— 1 THES. III.

to expect it. *For this cause also, being* (as I was just saying) *no longer able to endure* the uncertainty I was in with regard to persons that in such circumstances lay so near my heart, *I sent to know* the state of *your faith* under such violent assaults, *lest by any means* *the tempter*, taking the advantage of the weakness of human nature, *might have tempted* *you* to suppress the conviction of your minds, or at least the public profession of your faith, so as to return to idolatry again; *and* so *our labour should*, with respect to you, *have been in vain*, as in such a case it certainly would have been, whatever secret persuasion of the truth of religion might have remained. *But now Timothy, having returned to us from you, and* having *brought to us the good tidings of your* continued *faith and* fervent abounding *love, and* assured us *that ye have always a good* and affectionate *remembrance of us*, as your spiritual father in Christ, *greatly desiring*, if Providence might permit it, speedily *to see us* again, *as we also* assuredly do [*to see*] *you: We were hereby comforted, brethren, concerning you*, and found the happy effects of these heart-reviving consolations *in all our tribulation and necessity*, which grew more supportable to us than it would otherwise have been, *by means of* this happy assurance of *your faith*, which God hath blessed us as the instrument of producing. *For now we* do indeed *live*,[c] we relish and enjoy life, *if ye stand fast in the* gospel and grace of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, retaining strenuously that holy profession and precious faith which ye have embraced: whereas, were ye to be drawn aside to renounce it, our very heart would be wounded, and it would be bitter as death unto us. *For what* sufficient *thanks can we* ever *render to God concerning you, for all the* flow of holy *joy with which we rejoice on your account*, for your conversion and progress in religion, when we have been presenting ourselves *before our God*, and breathing out our hearts at his footstool? *Night and day* enlarging upon this, as a petition which lay nearest to our very souls, and, if I may be allowed such an expression, *superabundantly making it our request to see your face, and to complete the deficiencies of your faith*, by instructing you in any article of religion, which, being so suddenly torn away from you by the storm that was raised, we had not an opportunity of opening to you so clearly as your edification might have required. And we still continue to urge the humble supplication *that God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, to whom the supreme government of the kingdom of providence is committed, *may*, by a secret but powerful interposition, so dispose and overrule all things, as to *clear* and smooth *our way to you*, by removing these obstructions which at present remain: *And* in the mean time, yea, above all, *that the Lord* Jesus Christ, by the powerful operation of his Spirit on your hearts, *may cause you to be enlarged, and to abound in love toward each other, and to all* christians, yea, towards the whole human race, *even as we* do indeed abound in affection *towards you*, and shall always rejoice in any opportunity of manifesting it, by whatever we may be able to do, or may be called to suffer, for your sakes.

May you feel this noble principle of universal goodness more and more active in your minds, *that*, by the experience of its efficacy, *your hearts may be strengthened* in every virtue, [*and you*] may at length [*be*] found *blameless in holiness before God, even our Father, at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints* around him, in that illustrious day when their sanctity and glory shall be completed, and all their labours and sufferings in his cause abundantly recompensed.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we *do* towards you;

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

IMPROVEMENT.

NOT farther to insist on the tender affection of Paul to the Thessalonians, which has already afforded matter for so many profitable remarks, let us recollect that, as christians, we also are appointed to afflictions, by the experience of which our fitness for heaven, and our relish for our everlasting rest, are to be improved. It was faithful and kind in the apostles, after the example of their great Master, to give us such admonitions; but let us not be moved by the apprehension of any sufferings that may await us, for he who hath undertaken to support and defend us can make us more than conquerors; he can, even while we continue in this state of warfare, establish our hearts unblamable in holiness: and how blessed a connexion will that have with our being presented faultless and blameless before the presence of his glory, when Christ shall appear with all his saints, and when the sanctity of each shall be a glory to their common Master, as well as an everlasting blessing to every one of those spotless souls!

Let the ministers of the gospel nobly rise above all attachment to secular views, and make it their great business to advance in their hearers such a temper. Let it be their life to see those christian friends whom God hath committed to their care, standing fast in the Lord. And if they have reason to joy for their sakes before God, let them render their thanks to God for it, and night and day be urgent in their prayers for them, that whatever comfort they have may be continued, and that whatever is wanting in their faith and their love, may be perfected by the divine blessing on ministerial labours.

c Indeed *live*.] It is well known that in the sacred writings *life* is often put for *happiness*, and Dr. Whitby has produced many instances of it in his note here.

SECTION V.

The apostle addresses several practical exhortations to the Thessalonians suitable to their circumstances, and particularly recommends chastity, justice, charity, and prudence. 1 Thess. iv. 1—12.

1 THESS. iv. 1.

1 THESS. iv. 1. FURTHERMORE, then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

AS for what remains, therefore, my *brethren,* in subserviency to this important view of being thus presented with all the saints before the great tribunal, in the perfection of holiness and happiness, *we* now *beseech* you, *and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received* repeated instructions *from us,* while we were among you, *how you ought to walk,*[a] if you desire to adorn your profession, *and to please* and honour *God,* who hath bestowed upon you the favour of being called into it, *so ye would abound more and more,* labouring continually to advance in every amiable quality and every christian grace. I will not largely insist on these things now; *for ye know what commandments we gave you,* in the name and *on the part of the Lord Jesus,* whose servants we all profess ourselves to be, and whose authority we ought always to account sacred. Bear them constantly in your mind, and often charge on your souls the observance of them; *for this is the will of God* concerning you, [*even*] *your sanctification,* that as he hath chosen us from the rest of the world to be a people separate to his honour and service, we should not pollute ourselves with those abominations which are so common among the heathen, and particularly *that ye should abstain from fornication,* and all other kinds of lewdness, so commonly practised among those who are ignorant of the true religion. Whereas it is now the declared pleasure of the great Former of our souls and bodies, *that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel,* this animal frame, in which this immortal soul is lodged, as a rich and invaluable jewel *in sanctification and honour;* using his body as an instrument of service to God, to whom it has been solemnly consecrated; not as if it were intended as an organ to debase the mind by sensuality, which would surely be the most dishonourable view in which it can be considered. Walk *not* therefore any longer *in the lust of concupiscence,* contriving to indulge yourselves in gross and lascivious gratifications, *even as the heathens* do, *who know not God,*[b] and are therefore ignorant of that pure and sublime happiness which arises from contemplating, adoring, and imitating him.

SECT. 5. — 1 THES. IV.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication;

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

We have also told you, and we now repeat it, as an injunction of the greatest importance, that it is the will of God *that no man should,* in these or any other matters, *overreach or defraud his brother in* [*any*] *affair.*[c] *For* though the fraud may be conducted in so artful a manner as to evade human conviction and punishment, yet it is most certain that *the Lord* himself, the final and universal Judge, to whom we are all ere long to render up an account, [*is*] *the Avenger of all such, as we also told you before, and testified* with all possible solemnity. *For God hath not called us,* in so extraordinary a manner, from the rest of the world, merely to a new name or some different rites of external worship, while we are at liberty *to* indulge ourselves in *uncleanness,* as if we were patronized in the practice of it, merely by being numbered among christians; *but,* as he is in himself perfectly holy, he hath called us *to* the love and practice of universal *holiness,* and would raise from among the degenerate children of men a society who, by the purity of their morals, should do an honour to the true religion, and approve themselves to be indeed the offspring of the Most High.

6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

In all these things we have faithfully delivered unto you the charge and message which we received upon the highest authority: *he therefore who despiseth* our testimony and admonitions, *despiseth not man* alone, *but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit,* and caused it to dwell within us, and to guide us in our discourses and writings into the certain and infallible knowledge of his will.[d]

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

I have been large on some of the preceding articles, knowing how much you were addicted, in your heathen state, to some of the vices I have exhorted you to avoid. *But concerning brotherly love,* or that peculiar charity and affection which one christian owes to another, *ye need not that I should* largely *write to you* now, *for ye yourselves are divinely taught to love one another.* God, dwelling in our nature, hath given you the example and the precept with all possible advantage, and his Holy Spirit descending on

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

a *How you ought to walk,* &c.] The French Testament renders the words thus: "We entreat and conjure you by the Lord Jesus "to follow our instructions as to the manner in which you ought "to live, in order to pleasing God, and that you would make conti- "nual progress in it." This is one specimen, among many, of the *paraphrastic* strain of this *version,* which changes the metaphorical expressions for phrases of a plainer nature equivalent to them; but as the version I here give makes a part of a paraphrase, I thought it more convenient to keep nearer the original, though I have not made a point of giving what should be exactly a verbal translation. There is a medium between both, which I have at least attempted, and if I have not hit upon it, I hope it is not for want of diligence and care.

b *The heathens, who know not God.*] Many have proved, by a variety of learned quotations, how much the politest nations among the ancients, and particularly the Greeks, were addicted to the most infamous kinds of *uncleanness;* and Dr. Whitby's note on this place may furnish out a catalogue not to be read without a mixture of commiseration and horror.

c *Go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.*] Many interpret this of *injuring their neighbour's bed,* taking the word, πραγμα, in an *ill* sense, as *facinus* is used in Latin. This, no doubt, is included, but I see no reason for limiting the clause to such a sense. *Clean hands* in the *Old Testament* signifies those unpolluted with *bribes,* and therefore no certain argument against the more extensive signification I have preferred can be drawn from the next clause.

d *He therefore who despiseth,* &c.] I will not here argue at large, how strongly this verse speaks the *inspiration of Paul* in what he wrote, and consequently that of the sacred writers in general; but I wish what I have said on this subject, in the *Essay on the Inspiration of the New Testament,* subjoined to this work, may be seriously considered, and that the important truth established in it may be perpetually borne in mind by all my readers.

SECT. 5. 1 THES. IV. 10 11 12

your hearts, forms and fashions them to this great law of love. *And indeed* I must do you the justice to say, by what I can learn of you, that *ye* actually *do it to all the* christian *brethren which are in all Macedonia*, whether at Philippi, Apollonia, Amphipolis, Berœa, or elsewhere. *But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound* in this benevolent and amiable disposition yet *more and more*, not only to those that are your own countrymen, but to all the children of our heavenly Father, however they may be dispersed in one part or another. *And* while many indulge to an enterprising temper, and are always undertaking some new design, to make themselves talked of, and to draw the eyes and observation of the world upon them, we advise you, *that you make it your ambition to live quietly* in the practice of those peaceful and humble virtues which suit the genius of christianity, *and* particularly that you *do your proper business.*[e] *And* as Providence hath placed most of you in such low circumstances of life, that you are obliged to maintain yourselves by your daily labour, we hope you will go on diligently and cheerfully to *work with your own hands* for that purpose, that you may not as idle drones become the burden of society, but rather may be able to do something for the support of your poorer brethren, *as* ye know *we gave it you in charge*, during the little time we resided amongst you. Attend to it therefore, *that so ye may walk decently towards those that are without* the inclosure of the church, and silence the clamours which the enemies of the gospel would be glad to raise against it, as making men idle and irregular; *and* [*that*] *you may have need of nothing*, but without being under a necessity of asking relief from them or any others, may be preserved from such degrees of extreme poverty as might expose you to their contempt, and into which frugal and industrious persons seldom fall, without some extraordinary providence, which audibly and effectually bespeaks the compassion of their neighbours.

10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you;)

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO would not wish to be instructed in every thing which might conduce to our walking so as to please God? Ver. 1 who would not delight in frequent exhortations to abound in such a conduct more and more, that every day may improve upon the last, till we perfect holiness in his fear? Blessed be God, the rules are plain, and our own con- 2, 3 science must bear witness to the reasonableness and goodness of them. This is the will of God, even our sanctification, that we should be honoured with his amiable image, and, by sharing something of his moral character, may share something of that happiness which in the perfection of holiness he enjoys. He hath indeed given us a compounded nature, and hath appointed us for a time to struggle with its animal powers, that by a victory over them we may approve our duty and obedience, and be fitted for a purer happiness above, than this low state of being will 4 admit. Let christians therefore learn to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, and not be captives to the 5 mean lusts of concupiscence and uncleanness, as the heathens, who, not having the knowledge of God, were more excusable than we in those indulgences for which the knowledge of themselves and of their own nature would nevertheless, in some degree, condemn them.

Let us, as we dread the displeasure and vengeance of God, the supreme Guardian of the rights of his creatures, 6 take heed that we do not allow ourselves, when it is most in our power, to go beyond or defraud our brethren in 9 any matter, but endeavour to show that we have indeed been taught of God to love one another, and that we have received into our very hearts that maxim which our gracious Redeemer has given us, That we should *do unto others as we would they should do unto us.* On this principle likewise, let us diligently employ ourselves in our 11 own proper affairs, that, instead of being the burdens of society, we may in our respective spheres be its supports; and quietly attending to what lies within our own province, let us leave ambitious schemes and projects to others, thinking ourselves happy enough, if we may be approved by him who hath allotted to the inhabitants of earth their several parts, and will another day accept and reward them, not according to the distinction and elevation of their stations, but according to the integrity with which they have behaved themselves in them. So shall we secure a 12 testimony even in the consciences of those that are without, who would perhaps ungenerously and unrighteously rejoice in an occasion of charging upon the gospel of Christ the follies and irregularities of its professors.

They will never be able to charge any thing on the gospel itself, if they take their ideas of it from the writings of 8 these its authentic teachers. And let it be remembered that they gave such abundant evidence of the authority with which they taught, that he who despiseth them despiseth not man but God, from whom they derived the Spirit by which they preached and wrote. His voice let us hear with reverence, his dictates let us humbly obey.

The hour is near in which he will assert the honour of his word, and demonstrate to all the world the wisdom of submitting to its dictates.

SECTION VI.

The apostle particularly sets himself to comfort his christian friends with relation to those that were fallen asleep in Jesus, by an animating view of that glory and happiness on which, at the general resurrection, they should enter in their complete persons. 1 Thess. iv. 13, *to the end.*

SECT. 6. 1 THESS. IV. 13

1 THESS. iv. 13.

I HEAR it with concern, that, since I have been separated from you, it hath pleased God to remove some dear and valuable members of your society, and I wonder not that you are tenderly affected with such a stroke. *But I would not have you ignorant,*[a] my dear

1 THESS. iv. 13.

BUT I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,

e *Do your proper business.*] This exhortation was peculiarly proper to the Thessalonians, as there seems to have been a meddling, pragmatical temper prevailing among some of them, (2 Thess. iii. 11.) which tended much to the reproach of their profession.—As to the emphasis of the word φιλοτιμεισθαι, compare 2 Cor. v. 9. and the note, p. 736.

a *I would not have you ignorant*, &c.] Mons. Saurin, in his long and learned criticism on this text, which he thinks one of the

concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

brethren, concerning the true state of *them that are* thus *fallen asleep* in the faith of Jesus, *that ye may not lament* with such unbounded transports and excessive forms of mourning *as* are practised by *others*, even by your heathen neighbours, *who* are ignorant of God, and *have no* well-grounded *hope*[b] of an happy immortality, like that which in the gospel is imparted to you. *For* surely, *if we* do indeed *believe* those great and important doctrines which that divine dispensation teaches us, *that Jesus*, the Son of God, *died* to expiate our sins, *and* that he *rose again* from the dead, that he might secure our final salvation, we may easily believe that a scheme thus undertaken and prosecuted shall not fail of its effect; but that, *in like manner also, God shall*, by the exertion of that mighty power with which he hath clothed this triumphant Saviour, *bring with him*, in the train of his magnificent retinue, at his final appearance, all *those* of his faithful servants *who sleep in Jesus*.[c] As they died under the direction of his providence, and committing themselves to his care, it shall in due time appear that they are not lost, though they may have waited long for the consummation of their glory. *For this we* now *say to you, by the* express *word of the Lord*,[d] on the authority of an immediate revelation from Christ himself, and not merely on our own conjecture or wish, *that we*, that is, those of us christians *who remain alive*[e] *at the coming of the Lord* to judgment, *shall not* so *prevent those who are asleep*, as to be glorified before them. *For the Lord himself*, our great and blessed Redeemer, arrayed in all his own glory and that of his Father, *shall* in that great day *descend from heaven with a* triumphant *shout*, raised by millions of happy attendant spirits. His appearance shall be proclaimed *with the voice of the* great *archangel*,[f] *even with the trumpet of God*, which shall then sound louder than it did on Mount Sinai when the law was given. *And the dead in Christ shall* all in a moment be awakened by it, and shall *rise* out of their graves in the *first* place,[g] springing forth in forms of glory, to the infinite astonishment of the surviving world. And *afterwards we*, that is, those of us *who are left alive* at the time when this most awful and important day opens, *shall together with them*, by a mighty and instantaneous operation of the divine power, *be snatched up into the clouds*,[h] *in order to* our *meeting the Lord in the* region of the *air*, where his throne shall then be erected; and we, having been openly acknowledged and acquitted by him, shall be assessors with him in that judgment to which wicked men and angels are there to be brought forth, and, when the final sentence is passed upon them, shall return to heaven with our re-ascending Saviour, *and so shall we be with the Lord for ever*, and all share a blissful eternity in the sight and participation of his glory. *Therefore* when your hearts are distressed with grief for the loss of your pious friends, or on any other occasion which can arise in this mortal life, *comfort* yourselves and *one another with these words;* the tenor of which is so important, and the truth contained in them so certain, as being taught by

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

hardest in the New Testament, (Saur. *Serm.* Vol. VI. No. I.) gives it as his opinion, that the desire which prevailed in christians to see Christ, when he should appear to judgment, made them lament those of their brethren who died, as cut off from that hope. In reference to which, he assures them that they should be in that respect entirely on a level with those of their brethren who should *then be found alive*. But it may be queried, even on this hypothesis, why he does not directly tell them that there was no particular room for such lamentations on this account, as they themselves, and many succeeding generations, were to die before the *coming of our Lord*. He acknowledges that the apostle did not urge that, because he did not then exactly know whether Christ's appearance would be in *that* age, or at some much more remote distance of time. And this ignorance was certainly consistent with the knowledge of all that was necessary to the preaching of the gospel. Compare Mark xiii. 32.

b *As others who have no hope.*] Tully says, (*Tusc. Disp.* i. 13.) "Who would lament the death of a friend, unless he supposed him "deprived of all the enjoyments of life, and sensible of the loss "of them?" How forcible a remark in the present connexion! I see no reason at all to imagine, as some have done, that there is a reference to the *notion* of some *Jewish zealots*, that uncircumcised persons had no part in the *resurrection*. The apostle's argument is by no means levelled at such an apprehension, nor do I find any evidence that the church at Thessalonica was yet pestered with such corruptors of christianity.

c *Who sleep in Jesus.*] The words, δια τε Ιησε, which we connect with κοιμηθεντας, and render, *sleep in Jesus*, may be considered as making a separate clause, and may imply, that it is by the *power* and agency *of Christ* that God will bring with him those of his people that are departed out of this life. The phrase to express, *sleeping in Christ*, is κοιμηθεντες εν Χριςω. (Compare ver. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 18.) Archbishop Tillotson explains the expression here used as appropriate to the *martyrs*, and renders δια τε Ιησε, *for Jesus' sake;* but it cannot be proved that the grief to which the apostle refers related only to such, and the force of the argument plainly reaches farther. Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 184.

d *By the word of the Lord.*] I think no words can more plainly assert that, in what follows, he speaks by an *express revelation from Christ*, and consequently there can be no room for any interpretation that can suppose him at all mistaken in any circumstance of the ensuing account.

e *We*, that is, those of us *who remain alive.*] This hath been interpreted by many, as an intimation that the apostle expected to be found *alive at the day of judgment;* and on that interpretation, some have urged it as an instance of his entertaining, at least for a while, *mistaken* notions on that head, as if the *day of the Lord* were nearly approaching. But this is directly contrary to his own explication of the matter, (2 Thess. ii. 1, &c.) as well as to other passages in which he expresses his expectation of death. (Compare Phil. i. 20; and 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 6.) Others have pleaded this passage in favour of that doctrine which teaches the *resurrection* of some *most eminent saints* before the main body of believers, and this, as most of the patrons of this scheme have explained it, in order to share with Christ in the glories and felicities of his personal reign upon earth. But to me it seems most natural to suppose that Paul here speaks as one of the christian body, though he was not one of that particular number concerning whom he directly asserts what is here said. Thus Hosea says, (Hos. xii. 4.) *God spake with* US *in Bethel;* and the Psalmist, lxvi. 6. WE *rejoiced*, that is, at the Red sea when divided; and lxxxi. 5. *I heard a language I understood not*, that is, in Egypt, though neither were in existence at the times when the facts referred to happened. It is very unjust in Orobio to represent this as an artifice of the apostle to invite people to christianity, by the expectation of being taken up alive to heaven in a very little time. (Lim. *Col.* p. 75.) His explication of this matter, in the next Epistle, is abundantly sufficient to absolve him of all such suspicions; and indeed the sincerity that appeared in his whole conduct, evidently shows him to have been incapable of any such design. Compare Lamothe, *Of Insp.* 133—141.

f *With the voice of the archangel.*] I cannot think, with Mr. Pierce, that the *archangel* is *Christ himself*, so called as the great *Ruler of angels*. There seems an evident impropriety in thus varying the expression, if it be only intended to say, that Christ shall shout as he descends; nor are the scriptures to which this learned writer refers, (viz. 1 Sam. iii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.) by any means parallel examples. See Pierce, on Phil. ii. 9.

g *The dead in Christ shall rise first.*] It has generally been inferred from hence, that good men shall rise before the wicked, and 1 Cor. xv. 23. seems to favour it. But this text only asserts their rising before the saints who are found alive shall be changed.

h *Caught up.*] Not, says Dr. John Scott, by the *ministry of angels*, (*Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 1204.) but by the vigorous activity of our glorified body, which Mr. Piggot (*Serm.* ii. p. 67.) supposes shall be refined to such a degree of spirituality as to be able to *tread air;* and Mr. Whiston has a notion analogous to it. (*App. to Boyle's Lect.*) I pretend not to determine on the nicety of questions like these. Only I cannot think the expression of being *caught* or *snatched up* suits the exertion of what shall then be a *natural* power; nor can I suppose that we shall have any thing to do with *air* in the state which is to succeed the great day in which *the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved.* 2 Pet. iii. 12.

SECT. 6. the infallible dictates of the Spirit of God, and revealed to us by him, from whose fidelity, power, and grace, we expect this complete salvation.[i]

1 THES. IV. Ver. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

O WHO can be sufficiently thankful for the strong consolations which these divine words administer! How many drooping hearts have been cheered by them in every age, while successively mourning over the pious dead! How often have we ourselves been driven to them, as to a sacred anchor, when our hearts have been overwhelmed 13 within us; and if God continue us a few years longer, what repeated occasions may arise of flying to them again! Let us charge it upon our hearts that we do honour to our holy profession in every circumstance, and particularly in our sorrows as well as our joys. When Providence is pleased to make such breaches upon us, let us not sorrow as those who have no hope for our deceased friends or for ourselves. Surely we cannot doubt the very first and 14 most fundamental articles of our faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God; and if we do indeed assuredly believe these, what a blessed train of consequences will they draw after them! and this consequence most apparently, that they who sleep in Jesus shall not finally perish, but shall be brought with him to grace his triumph.

And O what a triumph shall that be! Let us now anticipate the joy with which, if true believers, we shall then 15 lift up our heads, and see our complete salvation drawing nigh. What though we die and moulder in the grave? the saints then alive shall not prevent us: though the last memorial of our names may long have perished from the 16 earth, it shall appear that they are written in heaven. And when the Lord himself descends from heaven with that earth-rending shout, when the trump of God shall sound, his dead shall live, like his dead body shall they revive: *they that dwell in the dust shall arise and sing, for his dew is as that falling upon herbs, and the earth shall cast forth its dead.* (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

16 But who can now conceive the rapture with which so many millions shall start up at once from their beds of dust, all arrayed in robes of glory, and, spurning the earth in which they have been so long entombed, and all that is mortal and corruptible, shall soar aloft in one joyful company with those who shall then be found alive, to meet 17 the Lord in the air, forming a mighty host, *bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and awful as an army with banners;* (Cant. vi. 10.) they shall soar to meet their Lord, attracted by divine love, and borne on in their flight by an almighty power. We shall ascend to him, we shall be owned by him, we shall be seated near him; *for Christ, who is our life, shall appear,* therefore shall we *appear with him in glory.* (Col. iii. 4.)

Nor shall it be merely the triumph of one day, or of any limited period, how long soever. It is the promise of 17 his faithfulness, and of his love, that so we shall ever be with the Lord. It is a glory that never shall decay, a meeting secure from all danger, from all possibility of future separation. In what circumstance of affliction shall not 18 these consolations be felt? What torrent of tears shall they not be able to stop? What groans of distressed nature shall they not be sufficient to turn into songs of joy? Thanks, everlasting, ever new, ever growing thanks, be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, in the views of such a felicity! And let the whole choir of saints, the living and the dead, unite in one joyful Amen.

SECTION VII.

The apostle strenuously exhorts the Thessalonians to a diligent preparation for that important day of Christ's appearance, of which he had been discoursing above. 1 Thess. v. 1—11.

1 THESS. v. 1.

SECT. 7. I HAVE told you that the solemn day of universal judgment will certainly come, and have been endeavouring to lead your minds to those views of it which must be most reviving to every true believer: *but concerning the* particular *times and seasons* of this

1 THES. V. grand event, with which the economy of providence in this world is to close, and some very wonderful occurrences which are to precede it, I am satisfied, my *brethren,* that *ye* 2 *have no need of my writing to you* accurately and largely. *For ye yourselves* do already *assuredly know,* as, wherever we come, we make it one of our first doctrines, *that the* great *day of the Lord,* to which our eyes and hearts are so much directed, *comes just like a thief*[a] *in the night,* and will surprise the inhabitants of the world in general by a 3 dreadful alarm, when they are sleeping in the deepest security. *For when they shall* be most ready to *say,* All things about us are in perfect *peace and safety,* and no evil of any kind threatens us, *then sudden destruction shall come upon them,* and seize them as inevitably and painfully *as travail* comes *upon a woman with child,* whose days are accom- 4 plished, *and they shall not* be able by any means to *escape* it. *But* I am persuaded that *you,* my *brethren, are not* sleeping *in darkness;* but *that,* as you have the light of the gospel shining around you, it is your desire to act so agreeably to its dictates, and to maintain such a sense of the great and important prospect it opens upon you, as to have no reason to apprehend but that *the day* of which I speak, or the day of death, which shall consign you to its unalterable doom, *should come upon you as a thief,* or surprise you in 5 an unprepared state. For *ye are all,* by profession, *the children of the light and the children of the day,* as ye call yourselves christians, and I trust are so, not in name only,

1 THESS. v. 1. BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night:

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

[i] As being taught, &c.] The MSS. of New College in Oxford, and the Barbarine Library, (No. 1. of each,) add to λογοις τουτοις, the words τε παρακλησεως, *comfort one another with these words of the Spirit.* And though I see no reason to believe that addition *authentic,* yet, as the sense is just and right, I have expressed it in the paraphrase, as I often do in such cases; that if peradventure any thing that belonged to the original has been omitted in the received copies, (which I hardly suspect,) the reader may one way or another meet with it.

[a] *Comes like a thief.*] Mr. Blackwall justly observes the remarkable emphasis of this passage. A *thief* comes upon people when they are bound in sleep, and they awake in amazement and confusion, being found unarmed and in an helpless posture; *pangs* come upon a *woman* when perhaps she is eating, drinking, or laughing, and thinks of nothing less than that hour. And here it is said, not that the day of the Lord *will come* thus, but that *it is actually coming,* which increases the awfulness of the representation. Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 200.

but in truth. Since *we are not of the night nor of darkness*, if we really answer our profession, by which we are so indispensably obliged to endeavour to resemble the Divine Being in holiness, and to maintain a temper and conduct which should not fear examination and discovery: since this *therefore* is the case, *let us* answer the engagement, and *not sleep as the rest* of mankind [*do*;] *but let us watch and be sober*, that we may not be obnoxious to any unreasonable and unwelcome surprise. *For they who sleep*, generally chuse to *sleep in the night, and they who are drunken*, if they have not quite outgrown all common sense of decency, *are drunken in the night*; whereas the day is the season of wakefulness, sobriety, and labour. Let us not therefore, by our negligent and dissolute behaviour, seem as it were to turn the day into night. *But let us* christians, *who*, as I said before, *are* the children *of the day, be sober*, and keep on our guard against our spiritual enemies, *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*, which will defend us against their mortal attacks; *and* [*for*] *an helmet, the* lively *hope of* that eternal *salvation* which God hath promised, and which, if rightly understood, may be abundantly sufficient to bear us through all the dangers which may lie in our way to it.

SECT. 7.

1 THES. V.

6 Therefore let us not sleep as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.
7 For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.
8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

And, blessed be God, there is room for arming ourselves with such an hope; *for God hath not*, as he justly might have done, *destined us to* bear for ever the final consequence of his *wrath*, to which our disobedience to him had rendered us obnoxious; *but* he hath been pleased to appoint us *to the obtaining of* that great *salvation* set before us in the gospel *by our Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath procured it for all true believers, and will assuredly at length bestow it upon them. Be therefore continually mindful of that compassionate Redeemer, *who* not only subjected himself to the many burdens and inconveniences of mortal life for our sakes, but even *died* in all the ignominy and agony of the cross *for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him*;[b] that while we live, or when we die, the life and happiness of our immortal souls should be secure, in an union to him, which death itself shall never be able to dissolve. *Therefore comfort* yourselves and *one another* with the thoughts of this great salvation, *and edify each* to those continued improvements in the life of holiness, which may correspond to so glorious a hope. This is most apparently your duty, and *as* I know many good and valuable things of you, I am *also* persuaded that *you do* indeed make conscience of it.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ:

10 Who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE we continually see so many around us suddenly surprised into the eternal world, and fixed in that state in which judgment will find them, let us be very careful that the day of the Lord may not overtake us as a thief, but that we maintain a continual watch. How many are at this hour speaking peace and safety to themselves, over whose heads instantaneous destruction is hovering, such a destruction that they shall never be able to escape, never able to recover from it! Ver. 2 4 3

Let us endeavour to awaken ourselves and each other. Are we not indeed all children of the day? Let us rouse ourselves, and use the light, that by it we may despatch our labours, and, favoured by it, be guarded against the most sudden attacks of our spiritual enemies. Let us be sober and vigilant, lest our adversary the devil break in upon us by a surprise, which the unexpected weapons by which he attacks us may render yet more dangerous. 5 6

Our own armour is described and provided, if we seek it from the magazine of God. Let faith and love ever defend our breast. Let the hope of salvation cover our head. Let us adore the divine clemency and mercy, that we are not appointed unto wrath, but enjoy the views of such a salvation, to be obtained by Jesus Christ. As he hath done his part to procure it for us, having died for this important purpose, let us exert ourselves to the utmost in our proper sphere for securing it, that we may lay hold on eternal life. Then may we be happily indifferent to life or death: while we continue in the body, when that is sleeping in the grave, and our souls remain in the invisible world; and when our sleeping dust shall be roused, and both soul and body live in unremitting vigour and energy, beyond the need of that repose which is now so necessary,—still in each of these different states we shall live with him; and he will make the progression of the soul from one state of being to another, its progression to stages of increasing holiness and joy. In the persuasion of this, let us comfort, exhort, and edify each other, and we shall feel the energy of the exhortations we give, and the sweetness of the consolations we administer. 8 9 10 11

SECTION VIII.

The apostle concludes his Epistle with a variety of short practical exhortations and advices. 1 Thess. v. 12, *to the end.*

1 THESS. V. 12.

SECT. 8.

1 THESS. V. 12.
AND we beseech you, brethren, to know them which

I HAVE exhorted you to endeavour to comfort and edify one another; *but* I would not by this be understood as intimating either that the proper work of your ministers is to be taken out of their hands, or that any slight is to be put upon them in the execution of it. On the contrary, *we beseech you, brethren, to know*, to reverence and respect, *those that* 1 THES. V. 12

b *Whether we wake or sleep, &c.*] Some interpret this still more literally than I have done, as if he had said, "Whether Christ "comes in the night, when we are sleeping on our beds, or in the "day, when we are awake, and busy in the pursuit of our common "affairs." But as *sleeping* had just before been put for *death*, it seems more natural to interpret this clause as speaking of the state of *believers*, whether *alive* or *dead*. And then I think it must contain a direct proof of the *life of the soul* while the body is sleeping in the grave. God forbid that any should understand these words as intimating that Christ's death is intended to secure our salvation, whether we take any watchful care of it or not. Yet, alas, the generality of christians live as if that were the genuine and only interpretation!

SECT. 8. 1 THES. V.

labour among you in that important office, *and preside over you in* the name of *the Lord*;[a] whose business it is publicly to instruct you *and* personally to *admonish you*, as occasion shall require. It is in love to his church that Christ hath appointed such officers, and you will find the benefit of their assistance in the whole of your christian course. I would therefore advise *and* charge you to *esteem them exceedingly in love, on the account*

13 *of their work*, in which they are the representatives of him who is the great Shepherd of the sheep. [*And*] for their sakes as well as your own, let me farther press you to *be at peace with one another*, and to guard against the first risings of any thing which might alienate your affections; as it is impossible for you to conceive how much mischief might spring up in the society from causes of this kind, which may seem in their beginnings too

14 inconsiderable to be regarded. *And we* also *exhort you, brethren*, that you would all in a proper manner concur with your pious ministers, overseers, and elders, in all proper acts of christian discipline; and likewise that ye endeavour by private addresses, as Providence gives you an opportunity, to promote the interests of true religion in the hearts of each other. And in this view *admonish them that are disorderly*[b] and unruly, neglecting and proudly refusing to keep the rank which God hath assigned them; *comfort the feeble-minded*, whose courage and resolution is ready to fail them under the many difficulties with which in present circumstances you are surrounded; *succour the weak* and infirm, whether in body or mind, and *be long-suffering toward all*, not ready to drive the

15 justest censure to an excess, till every softer and more gentle method has been tried. And whatever injury any of you may have received, whether from professed friends or from avowed enemies, *see that no one render to any evil for evil, but always pursue that which is good;* endeavouring to the utmost to promote the happiness of all about you. Maintain this temper *both towards each other*, that is, towards all your fellow-christians, *and towards all men*, not excepting your enemies and prosecutors; sure by this means either to mollify their hearts, or at least to approve your own conduct in the sight of God, and to make whatever evil you suffer the occasion of obtaining from him

16 blessings which will infinitely counterbalance it. And in expectation of this, *be always rejoicing*[c] in the midst of your trials and afflictions, knowing that your complete redemption is approaching, and that in the mean time you have always the presence of your God and your Saviour, from which you may derive unutterable satisfaction and delight, suffi-

17 cient to support you under all your sufferings. And in order to maintain and improve this holy joy, *pray incessantly*.[d] Be constant in your stated devotions at their returning seasons, and endeavour to keep your minds habitually prepared for those pious ejaculations which have so happy a tendency to promote the christian temper, or for any sudden call

18 you may have to address yourselves more solemnly to the Divine Majesty. And whatever your circumstances may be, remember not only your dependence on God, but your obligation to him, and *in every thing give thanks;* since it is certain you can never be encompassed with such afflictions as not to have much greater cause of thankfulness than complaint. And this cheerful, grateful spirit you should be concerned to maintain, *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus with regard to you* christians; as by giving you his Son, and with him all the invaluable blessings of his covenant, he has laid a foundation for perpetual thankfulness that may justly support the demand.

19 Moreover, that this temper may be preserved in your minds, take heed that ye *quench not the* sacred flame of the Holy *Spirit*[e] in any of his influences, as you know it is his great office to excite and maintain every pious and devout affection in the soul. Especially be careful that ye do not damp it by indulging in any degree to a sensual or malevolent disposition, which must so naturally provoke him to withdraw both his gifts and his graces.

20 And as a regular attendance on divine ordinances will greatly tend to cherish his influences, and a neglect of public worship proportionably obstruct them, *despise not* the holy exercises of *prophesyings*,[f] in which the ministers of Christ interpret scripture by a singular inspiration, or speak to men by way of exhortation or comfort; but listen to them with

21 reverence, and own the authority of God as speaking in his appointed messengers. Yet be upon your guard that ye are not imposed upon in an affair of so much importance, and take not every forward assertion for an oracle from God; but *try all things* with attention, examine the validity of the pretensions which are made to extraordinary inspiration; and when you have discussed them with impartiality and diligence, then resolutely *hold*

labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves

14 Now, we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

21 Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

a *Preside over you, &c.*] Προϊσταμενους may signify those who *preside over your assemblies and moderate in them.* There were certainly many persons endowed with miraculous gifts in this church, and there might have been danger of great irregularities, such as prevailed in the church at Corinth, (chap. v. 19—21.) if some had not been appointed to preside over the rest during the time of public exercises. Such officers there also were in the Jewish synagogues, as is well known. (Compare 1 Tim. v. 17. See Bar. *Misc.* Vol. I. p. 81—84. and the note on Heb. xiii. 17.) But it is evident that ministers, by virtue of their general office, may be said to preside over christian assemblies, even though there were no such peculiar need of their interposition to moderate or direct the exercise of their gifts who were officiating in public.

b *Are disorderly.*] So ατακτοι is properly rendered. It is well known to be a *military* term, expressing the character of *soldiers* who keep not their *ranks*, and will not know their *colours.*

c *Be always rejoicing.*] The words, παντοτε χαιρετε may express the form of a salutation, as if he had said, *May you always be prosperous and happy!* but as they are put among so many other short exhortations, I think this version much preferable.

d *Pray incessantly.*] That is, *at all proper seasons.* So the burnt-offering presented every morning and evening is called *perpetual*, Lev. vi. 20. Compare Luke xxiv. 53. with Acts ii. 46, 47. See also John xviii. 20.

e *Quench not the Spirit.*] This has generally been expounded as referring to the *gifts of the Spirit*, the exercise of which in themselves or others should not be hindered. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 39.) The phrase here used, according to some, particularly Lord Barrington, (*Miscel. Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 140.) has a reference to the descent of the Spirit as in *flames of fire*, as he supposes there may also be in the word αναζωπυρειν. 2 Tim. i. 6. See the note there.

f *Despise not prophesyings.*] This caution, as explained in the paraphrase, may perhaps intimate that the neglect of a due regard

fast that which is good, and be not prevailed upon to deny or reject it on any considerations.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Remember also, that, in order to preserve your innocence, it will be necessary to guard against circumstances of strong temptation, and things concerning the lawfulness of which you may have just suspicion, though you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal. I exhort you therefore, as you value your safety, to *abstain from all* that has so much as the *appearance of evil*, and from whatever may be likely to prove the occasion of sin. 22

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and *I pray God* your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And while I thus urge you to proper diligence and caution on your part, I join to my counsels my most ardent and affectionate prayers for you: *May the God of peace himself*, that God who hath now reconciled us, and is become the Source of all prosperity and happiness, *sanctify you entirely* in all the parts of your nature; *and* [*I pray God that*] *your whole constitution* or frame, your rational *spirit*, your animal *soul*, *and* your *body*[g] animated by it, *may be* so *kept blameless* by divine grace now, as *to* be presented with the greatest honour and acceptance *at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*, whensoever it shall be. This I desire, and cheerfully hope it; for *faithful* [*is*] *he* *who hath called you* to the christian faith, *who also will do* this; since [*it*] is what he has graciously promised to all true believers whom he hath committed to the care of Christ, as their Shepherd, who will give them eternal life, and will raise them up in the last day. 23

24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*. 24

25 Brethren, pray for us.

This is the glorious gospel we preach; and, that we may be successful in preaching it, I entreat you, *brethren*, to *pray for us*; for we greatly need and greatly value the prayers of our fellow-christians. 25

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

And when ye assemble together, in token of your mutual affection, and agreeably to the custom which hath long prevailed, *salute all the brethren* present *with an holy kiss*; and let the sisters in like manner salute each other, taking care to conduct this action with the strictest modesty and propriety. 26

27 I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

As I write these things not merely for the perusal of this or that particular friend into whose hands they may first fall, but for general use, and as the importance of them is very great, *I adjure you, by the* authority of our *Lord* Jesus Christ committed to me, *that this Epistle be read to all the holy brethren* of your church, at some time when you are all gathered together for divine worship. 27

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

And that you may be sure it is genuine, I add with my own hand my general benediction, *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] always *with you*, to support that principle of true christianity which he hath implanted in your souls, till the purposes of his love be completed in your everlasting salvation! *Amen*. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a variety of excellent instructions does this short section contain! yea, how much is expressed in some of its shortest sentences! But how hard is it for our degenerate hearts to learn these lessons, which so few words are sufficient to express! This habitual joy in God, this constant disposition to prayer, this thankful temper, that upon every call may overflow in thanksgiving, this abstinence from every appearance of evil. "Blessed Lord! we "need a better spirit than our own to teach us these things. May thy grace be with us, and may none of us "quench the Spirit, nor despise those ordinances which by his heavenly communications he so often owns!" Let us endeavour, by the daily importunity of prayer, to engage more of his efficacious and purifying influences, to sanctify the whole frame of our nature, our spirits, our souls, and our bodies; that we may so understand and chuse, so love and delight in, divine things, and maintain so regular and constant a command over our appetites of flesh and blood, and all the irregular propensities of animal nature, that we may be continually fit for the appearance of Christ, and be more like what we hope we shall be when presented before the presence of his glory. Ver. 16 17, 18 22, 28 19, 20

To promote this, let us watch over one another in the Lord. Let christian societies preserve a regular discipline, with a due mixture of zeal and tenderness. Let the friendship of private persons be rendered mutually subservient to religious improvement, and let a due regard be ever paid to those who labour among them and preside over them in the Lord. They will not require a blind submission to their dictates, if they rightly understand the gospel they are to teach. They will allow, they will encourage, they will urge their hearers to prove all things, which even the apostles themselves, with all their plenitude of inspiration, did not think it beneath them to do. But they who thus candidly inquire, and are determined to hold fast what is truly good, knowing how excellent an office the ministry is, knowing how much the edification of the church depends upon it, will esteem those that bear it very highly in love for their work's sake; and in whatever instances they may be constrained, by what they judge to be the evidence of truth, to differ from their brethren, or even from their teachers, will be solicitous to maintain harmony and love in the societies to which they belong, as it becomes them to do who are the disciples of that wisdom from above which hath taught them inseparably to connect their regards to purity and peace. 14 12 21 13

to *prophesyings*, which some were too ready to despise, might be a means of blasting even those more splendid gifts which they might be tempted to prefer to them.

g *Your whole constitution*, &c.] I wish I had known better how to render ολοκληρον υμων, which being followed by το πνευμα, η ψυχη, &c. ought not, as in our version, to be rendered as an *adjective* to the first. It signifies the *whole frame* of nature allotted to you. It is very evident that the apostle, in the following words, refers to a notion which, as the learned Vitringa has very accurately shown, (Vitr. *Obs. lib.* iii. *cap.* 4.) prevailed among the rabbies as well as the philosophers, that the *person* of a man was constituted of *three distinct substances*, the *rational spirit*, the *animal soul*, and the *visible body*. He seems to suppose, from Heb. iv. 12. the two former may be separated; and some have thought that he intimates, (1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15) that *one* may know what the *other* does not. This is not a place to state or examine this notion at large; it certainly derives great weight from this text. My curious readers may consult, besides the commentators, Hallet, *On Script.* Vol. I. p. 39, &c.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

IT has been already observed that the First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth about the year of our Lord 52; and as Timothy and Silas appear, from the inscription of this Second Epistle, to have been still with the apostle, it has generally been concluded that he wrote it while he continued in the same city, and not long after the former. (See note i, p. 528.)

The general design of it is to confirm the Thessalonians in their christian profession, and to comfort them under the sufferings to which they were exposed. Besides which, the apostle sets himself to rectify some mistaken apprehensions they seem to have entertained about the coming of Christ; and to direct them in the exercise of christian discipline towards some irregular members of the society.

This Epistle (which, like the former, bears St. Paul's name, with those of Timothy and Silas, in the inscription) begins with a devout acknowledgment to God for the eminent attainments which the Thessalonians had made in religion, and particularly for the zeal and fidelity with which they adhered to the christian cause in the midst of persecution. To support and animate them under their trials, the apostle reminds them of the distinguished honour that would be conferred on all the saints at the coming of Christ, and the vengeance that would at the same time overtake all the enemies of the gospel, assuring them of his constant prayers for their farther improvement in the christian character, in order to their attaining the felicity that was promised. (Chap. i. *throughout.*)—But lest, by mistaking the meaning of what he had said or wrote to them at any time upon that subject, or by any other means, they should be deceived into an opinion that the judgment-day was near at hand, he informs them that before this awful period there would be a grand apostasy in the church, and an antichristian power, which he calls *the man of sin*, would arise, and greatly obstruct the progress of the gospel, arrogantly assuming to itself the divine authority, and by pretended miracles leading multitudes into the grossest and most fatal delusions. Some beginnings of this spirit, he observes, were already discoverable, and as soon as those restraints which then lay upon it were removed, it would break out in all its force, and continue to spread its malignant influence, till it should be finally destroyed by the coming of Christ. (Chap. ii. 1—12.)——These views led him to express his thankfulness to God, that the Thessalonians had escaped this corruption which began so early to prevail in the church, and had given such proofs of their entering into the true spirit and genius of christianity, by the happy effect their belief had produced upon their lives and characters. But lest they should think themselves secure, he exhorts them to stedfastness and constancy in their profession of the truth, and adds his earnest supplications for their increasing comfort and establishment. At the same time he desires their prayers that his labours might be attended with the same success amongst others as they had been amongst them, and that he might be delivered from the opposition that was made to him by unreasonable men, expressing withal his cheerful confidence in their continued regards to the instructions he had given them. (Ver. 13; chap. iii. 1—5.

The apostle, having borne so honourable a testimony to the character of the Thessalonians in general, proceeds to give them directions for their conduct towards some irregular members of the society, and charges them to withdraw themselves from those that behaved disorderly, and, neglecting the proper business of their calling, busied themselves impertinently in the concerns of others. He exhorts such to attend to their own affairs, and carefully to provide for their own subsistence, that they might not be a burden to others. And, to add greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the example he had set them while at Thessalonica, in maintaining himself by the labour of his own hands, though, considering his character as an apostle, he had certainly a right to have been supported at their expense. If any one, notwithstanding, should refuse to comply with this exhortation, or with those he had given them in his former Epistle, he directs his christian friends to exclude him from their familiarity and friendship, that he might be made sensible of his fault; yet

he advises them to treat him not as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. The apostle having thus sufficiently instructed the Thessalonians in their duty on this important article, concludes with his usual salutation, written with his own hand. (Ver. 6, *to the end.*)

The attentive reader will easily perceive that this, though the shortest of all St. Paul's Epistles to the churches, is not inferior to any of them in the sublimity of the sentiments, and in that excellent spirit by which all the writings of the apostle are distinguished. Besides those marks of its genuineness and divine authority, which it bears in common with the rest of these Epistles, it has one peculiar to itself, from the exact representation it contains of the papal power, under the characters of the *man of sin*, and the *mystery of iniquity*. For, considering how directly opposite the principles here described were to the genius of christianity, it must have appeared, at the time when this Epistle was written, highly improbable to all human apprehension, that they should ever have prevailed in the christian church; and consequently a prediction like this, which answers so exactly in every particular to the event, must be allowed to carry its own evidence along with it, and to prove that the author of it wrote under a divine influence. For a farther illustration of this argument, see Dr. Benson's *Dissertation on the Man of Sin.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle expresses his joy in the constancy with which the Thessalonians adhered to the christian cause, and animates them against the persecutions to which they were still exposed, by the prospect of that glory that would be conferred upon them at the coming of Christ. 2 Thess. i. *throughout.*

2 THESSALONIANS i. 1.

SECT. I. ——— 2 THES. I.

PAUL and Sylvanus or Silas, *and Timothy*, being still continued together, renew the address we formerly made *to the church of the Thessalonians;* which is now by divine goodness *in* a state of union and friendship with *God, our* great and ever-blessed *Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;* having been so happy as some time since to receive the gospel, and still to retain the profession of it. And we must now, as before, express that sincere benevolence which reigns in all our hearts towards you, by wishing, as we then did, the communication of *grace to you, and* abundance of *peace,* tranquillity, and happiness, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We sincerely sympathize with you in all your trials, yet we are sensible that *we ought always to give thanks to God on your account, brethren, as it is fit* and reasonable, *because your faith,* notwithstanding all that is done to blast it and trample it down, *groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all towards one another aboundeth* more and more; your faith drawing new confirmation from your sufferings, and your sense of them engaging you tenderly to pity, and to do your utmost for the relief of those who share in them, and at the same time endearing to you that one body which the world so cruelly hates, and so maliciously endeavours to destroy. And these good dispositions are through the divine grace *so* remarkable in you, *that we do ourselves* indeed *boast of you in* all *the churches of God* to whom we come, *on account of your* unwearied *patience and* lively, unshaken *faith in* the midst of *all your persecutions, and* the various *tribulations* of one kind and another *which you endure:* [*Which shall,*] on the whole, appear to [*be*] so far from proving inconsistent with the honour of the divine government, that, on the contrary, they shall terminate in *a* glorious and advancing *display of the righteous judgment of God,*[a] *that ye may be approved* in some degree *worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer;* that ye may appear by these trials to be possessed of such integrity and patience, of such meekness and superiority to this transitory world, as to be fit for those seats of superior dignity and blessedness on which you are to enter. It shall also be the means of displaying the divine justice, in the punishment to be inflicted on your implacable enemies; *for* [*it is*] *a* most *righteous* and honourable *thing with God to repay tribulation to them who bring tribulation on you,* accounting with them in the great day for all the evils they have inflicted on you unprovoked, and while you were engaged in the most equitable and benevolent cause. *And,* on the other hand, it will appear equally suitable to the honour of the divine government to repay *unto you who suffer* this *tribulation, rest with us,* if not in the present world, where we do not ourselves expect it, yet at last *in the revelation of the Lord Jesus* Christ *from heaven, with his mighty angels,* who shall be the ministers of his power in the execution of his great and awful judgment. And nothing can be more comfortable to the persecuted saint than to think of this illustrious appearance, when Jesus shall descend in his Father's glory and his own, surrounded *with flaming fire, to execute vengeance on those who know not God,* but presumptuously neglect and despise the intimations, yea, and the express declarations, of his will with which he has favoured them; *and* especially to inflict deserved punishment upon *those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,* though they

2 THESSALONIANS i. 1. PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth;

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

a *A display, &c.*] Perhaps ενδειγμα may farther imply, that the sufferings of good men, and the triumphant prosperity of their persecuting enemies, should not only *terminate* in such a *display* of divine vengeance, but that these seeming irregularities do even *now* declare that there shall be such a day of retribution.

SECT. 1. 2 THES. I.

have received it in all its evidence. They *who* add the rejection of that to all their other crimes, can expect neither remedy nor mercy, but *shall* assuredly *be punished* [*with*] *eternal destruction*, which shall, as it were, break forth like lightning upon them, *from the face of the Lord*,[b] *and* drive them *from his* presence, as it will be utterly impossible for them to stand against his *glorious power*, which will be armed for their ruin, and shine forth with irresistible brightness and majesty, *When he shall come to be glorified in* the full assembly of *his saints, and to be admired*[c] *in* the efforts of his almighty power and love, for the complete salvation of *all them who believe*. They shall be accomplished *in that* glorious *day* to which our faith and hope have been so long directed, and in which the promises of his covenant do so remarkably centre. It is the hope and joy of all his people, and it is yours in particular; *because our testimony among you was credited*, and you have given substantial evidences that your faith was cordial and sincere. *In which regard*, as we rejoice in what is already done, and have the tenderest concern that the precious seed we have sown may answer the hope with which we see it springing up, and at length advance to full maturity, *we* continue to *pray always for you, that our God would*, by the working of his grace, *render you* more and more *worthy of* [*this*] high and holy *calling, and* would *fulfil* in you *all the good pleasure of* [*his*] *goodness*,[d] all that amiable and happy temper which his paternal regard to our happiness engages him to recommend and require. *And* to speak all in one word, that he would accomplish and perfect *the work of faith with power*, that is, would powerfully impress upon your hearts the great principles of that religion which he hath revealed to you, and which you have embraced; since nothing can tend more effectually to produce and nourish every good disposition in your mind: *That* so *the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you*, while you act in a manner so suitable to the relation you bear to him: *and* that *you* may also be glorified *in him*, may now have the honour of approving yourselves his faithful servants, the excellent of the earth, and may for ever share in the glory he hath prepared for such, *according to the grace of our* merciful *God, and* of *the Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom it is so plentifully bestowed upon us.

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (because our testimony among you was believed,) in that day;

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 How wisely has the apostle chosen the representation we have now been reading, to promote the glory of our Saviour's name, by strengthening the saints who are already established, and awakening any who might be careless and irregular, by the very same considerations which may so justly awe and intimidate the enemies of the church! How forcible in all these views is the description we here read, of the glorious and triumphant appearance of our Lord! Let it be ever placed before our eyes. He shall surely come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all his 6 enemies. The troublers and persecutors of his people shall have their peculiar share in it, and it is most righteous 8 with God that they should. Yet it is not intended for them alone, but for all who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. How diligently should we examine what our knowledge of God is, and what our 9 obedience to his gospel! whether the one be merely speculative, and the other verbal, or our knowledge practical, and our obedience sincere and universal! Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, is a vengeance dreadful enough, one would imagine, to awaken, even by its distant sound, all who are not sunk into the last and lowest degrees of insensibility. Who can stand in his presence when once he is angry? 10 Who can resist his power? But there are a happy number who shall be glorified by him, and, which should give us peculiar joy, in whom he also shall be admired and glorified in that day and for ever. The holy and blessed creation of God shall see to all eternity, from what ruin Jesus could raise, and to what felicity he could exalt, those who were once the captives of Satan, the slaves of sin, and the heirs of death and hell. May the expectation of it 11 influence our hearts in a suitable manner! May all the good pleasure of God's goodness be fulfilled in us, and the 3 work of faith with power! Then while our faith groweth exceedingly, our mutual love will abound, our patience 4 will be adequate to every trial, and we shall be approved as in some measure, through divine grace, worthy of that 5 kingdom to which God hath called us.

SECTION II.

Paul cautions the Thessalonians against expecting the day of judgment immediately, and foretells the appearance of antichrist that was first to come. 2 Thess. ii. 1—12.

SECT. 2. 2 THES. II.

2 Thess. ii. 1.

I SPOKE in my former letter of the coming of Christ, and I have just been mentioning it to you again; *but* I am afraid you should misunderstand what I have written upon that subject, and therefore *I* must *beseech you, brethren, with respect to the* intended and much 1 desired *appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[a] *and our gathering together unto him*,

2 Thess. ii. 1.

NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

b *From the face of the Lord.*] Bishop Hopkins has justly observed, (Hopkins's *Works*, p. 370.) that this phrase expresses not only that they shall be *expelled* from that joy and glory which reigns in the presence of Christ, but that his *presence* shall appear *active* in the infliction of their punishment, so that they shall, as it were, be blasted by the lightning of his eye.

c *To be admired.*] This strongly implies, not only that the *saints themselves* shall *admire* at what he does for them, so far above all their expectations and conceptions, but that it shall *reflect* an admirable *glory* upon our Redeemer, in the judgment of all who shall be spectators of it.

d *Good pleasure of his goodness.*] Mr. Blackwall would render it, *the benevolence* of his goodness, and says, it is the shortest and most charming representation any where to be found, of that *infinite goodness* which surpasses all expression, but was never so happily and properly expressed as here. (Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 242.) We may add, that ευδοκια seems at once to express, that it is *sovereign pleasure*, and also that he feels, as it were, a *sacred complacency* in the display of it. And for that reason I chose rather to retain, with our received version, *good pleasure*, than to substitute the word *benevolence* in its stead.

a *The appearance of our Lord.*] Cradock would render υπερ της παρουσιας, *concerning the appearances*, as if he had said, with relation to what I wrote in the former Epistle of *Christ's coming*, and our

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

of which I then spoke, *That ye be not soon moved from* [*the steadiness of your*] *mind, nor troubled, either by the* suggestion of any pretended *spirit* of prophecy and revelation in others, *or by* the report of any *word* which we may be said to have dropped, *or by* the sense which any may put upon what we have written in the former *Epistle*, which you have really received, or any other which may be brought to you *as from us, as if the* great *day of Christ were* just *at hand*,[b] and to be continually looked for. *Let no man deceive you* 3 *by any means* which he may use so as to persuade you of this, lest, finding yourselves mistaken in that expectation, you should be brought to doubt of the faith you have received, or, in apprehension of so speedy a dissolution of the world, you should be less attentive to some of its concerns than duty or prudence will require. *For* you may be assured, with respect to this great and important day, that [*it shall not come*] *till there come first an* amazing and shameful *apostasy*[c] in the christian church itself; *and the man of sin be revealed*, that antichristian power which is to raise itself by such enormous mischiefs; yet it is so surely doomed to destruction by the just though long delayed vengeance of God, that I cannot forbear calling him that assumes it, *the son of perdition*, as our Lord himself called Judas the traitor. (John xvii. 12.) I now speak of one *who opposes* himself to the interest 4 of true religion, by arts and enterprises in former generations unknown, *and* as pride often goes before destruction, insolently *exalts himself above all that is called God, or the Object of* religious *worship*,[d] taking upon him to control divine institutions, and to model every thing according to his own arrogant pleasure. *So that he himself, as God, sets himself in* the church, which is *the temple of God, showing himself* with such pompous parade, and such despotic authority assumed over the consciences of men, that, so far as actions can speak, he in effect asserts *that he is God*, nothing human, and indeed nothing created, having a right so to dictate..

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come* except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

This is an event of so great importance, that I have formerly mentioned it. *Remember* 5 *ye not that being yet with you*, though I spent so very little time among you, *I* nevertheless *told you these things*, and gave you such warnings concerning them as I imagined you could not so soon have forgot? *And now*, though it is a tender subject, 6 which it is not convenient to speak of in too explicit a manner, I persuade myself that *ye know what restrains him from being revealed in* (what might otherwise seem) *his own time*. *For the mystery of iniquity*, the hidden design of corrupting and overthrowing 7 Christ's kingdom, which has so many artful ways of insinuating itself into the minds of sinful men, and of introducing its own tyrannical, avaricious, and ambitious schemes into the church, *does already* in some measure *work*,[e] amidst all the peculiar engagements to the most humble, disinterested, and upright conduct which an age and ecclesiastical state like ours brings along with it. *Only there is one that hindereth, till he be taken out of the way*,[f] secular powers at present are a restraint, but when that is taken away, and different scenes in providence open, these iniquitous principles that are secretly fermenting will break out in all their force. *And then the ungodly one shall be revealed*, and appear as 8 it were unveiled in all his native deformity; even he who shall bring the greatest infamy and the greatest misery on the christian world. Nevertheless, though his reign may be of some considerable duration, it shall not be perpetual; for the Spirit teaches us to regard him as sentenced to inevitable ruin, as one *whom the Lord will* certainly at length *destroy;* and how firmly soever he may seem established *by* human policy and power, he shall find himself unable to withstand *the breath of his mouth*, which shall kindle all around him a consuming flame, in which all his pomp and pride shall vanish. *And* in-

5 Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, *will let* until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

being caught up into the air to meet him, (compare 1 Thess. iv. 17.) supposing ὑπερ to be used for περι here, as it certainly is, 1 Cor. viii. 23. and Vitringa (*Observ. lib.* i. *cap.* vi. § 6.) has said so much to vindicate it, that I could not but prefer this rendering. Mr. Howe takes it as we do in our translation, and speaks of it as the most *solemn adjuration* in the Bible; (Howe, *On the Spirit*, Vol. II. p. 70.) and then shows how pernicious the consequences of that error might have been, which the apostle endeavours so solicitously to guard against.

b *The day of Christ were at hand.*] Yet it was what the *primitive christians* confidently expected; and some tell us they were the more desirous of martyrdom, that they might not be spectators of so dreadful a scene as they supposed it would be. (See Reeves's *Apol.* Vol. I. p. 30.) But if it really were so, it was an instance of a double mistake in these good men.

c *An apostasy.*] Dr. Whitby understands this, either of the revolt from the Romans, or the falling away of many christian converts to Judaism, through prejudices in favour of the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, or expectations of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, or the fear of persecution; on each of which topics he enlarges with great propriety. And Vitringa is large in showing, that great apostasy prevailed in the christian church between the days of Nero and Trajan. (*Observ. lib.* iv. *cap.* 7.) Yet I have thought it my duty to explain this difficult but important context as referring to what Mr. Joseph Mede, with so great propriety, calls *the apostasy of the latter times;* and I must refer to his learned and judicious writing on this head, and to Dr. Benson's *Dissertation on the Man of Sin*, to vindicate the reasonableness of an interpretation which I have by no means room to discuss at large.

d *Above all that is called God, &c.*] The usurpation of the papacy in divine things is so unequalled, that if these words are not applicable to it, it is difficult to say who there ever has been or can be to whom they should belong. The manner in which the pope has exalted himself above magistrates, is equally remarkable and detestable; but I do not apprehend it so immediately referred to here, as his taking upon him to control every thing in religion. Σεβασμα has exactly the signification here given it. See Acts xviii. 23.

e *The mystery of iniquity doth already work.*] As Dr. Whitby explains the *man of sin* of the *rebellious* and *unbelieving Jews*, he must of course explain this of the turbulent and seditious principles which evidently prevailed among them; and it is agreeable to his scheme to interpret the impediment spoken of in the next clause, of Claudius Cæsar, whose favours obliged them so, that they could not immediately break out, but who was soon taken away by a violent death, which gave them the opportunity they seemed so much to wish for. (See Whitby, *in loc.*) But it appears much more reasonable to understand the passage before us of the *antichristian spirit* which began to work in the christian church then, in the pride and ambition of some ministers, the factious temper of many christians, the corruption of many christian doctrines, the imposing unauthorized severities, the worship of angels, &c. of all which things the papacy availed itself for acquiring and exercising its iniquitous dominion; and *so he that hindereth* will refer to the *imperial power*, of which we shall presently speak, but of which prudence obliged St. Paul to write with a caution which unavoidably occasioned some obscurity.

f *There is one that hindereth, &c.*] Dr. Geddes very properly explains this of the Roman Emperor, who would not suffer ecclesiastical power to grow to an exorbitant height while he held his seat at Rome. See Geddes's *Tracts*, Vol. II. p. 10. and as many good modern commentators give it the same turn, so it is observable that Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom, all agree in saying that *antichrist* was not to appear till after the fall of the Roman empire. See Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 193.

SECT. 2. deed he will not only in some measure humble and abase, but utterly eradicate and *abolish* him, *by the* resplendent *brightness of his coming*, when truth shall beam in upon men's minds with all its energy, and its most formidable enemies shall fall before it.

2 THES. II. In the mean time, the monster of iniquity shall prevail, [*even he*] *whose coming is according to the energy of Satan*, whose interest he shall re-establish where it seems to be
9 overthrown. That malignant and deceitful spirit shall therefore endeavour to promote this antichristian kingdom to the utmost, *by all lying power, and signs, and wonders*,[g] by a variety of fictitious miracles, so artfully contrived and so strongly supported by an abundance of false testimonies, that many shall be entangled, deceived, and undone by them.

9 *Even him* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,

10 *And in* the conduct of this most iniquitous design, recourse will be had to *all manner of unrighteous deceit*, which shall be managed with the utmost art and address, *among those* wretches, *who shall* many of them finally *perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved* by it, but preferred those secular views which such dishonest practices promoted, to the great prospects of their everlasting happiness in
11 an invisible world. *And for this cause*, when they have for a limited time been permitted to trifle with the message of his mercy and the strivings of his Spirit, *God will* in righteous judgment give them up to a reprobate and insensible mind, and will *send upon them the energy of deceit*;[h] he will suffer them to deceive others, till they are deceived themselves
12 too; *so that they shall believe the lie* which they have so long taught: *That they may all be condemned* at last, *who believed not the truth*, though offered to them with sufficient evidence, *but*, on the contrary, *had pleasure in unrighteousness*[i] and imposture, when it might serve their present interest, to which all considerations of conscience and honour, religion and future hope, were sacrificed. And this I leave upon record, that such as are not entirely incorrigible may be alarmed by this dreadful representation, and that others may be warned to stand at the remotest distance from the tents of these wicked men, and, though it should be at the greatest hazard, to maintain the cause of God and of truth against them.

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold with humble reverence the depths of the divine counsels and judgments: God hath been pleased to suffer the craft of Satan to display itself, in reducing from his allegiance a great part of the christian world, yet
Ver. 3 has he taken the wise in his own craftiness, so far as to make that very apostasy from christianity an additional
7 proof of its divine original. Who that had only examined the genius of that holy religion, could have imagined that such a mystery of iniquity should have arisen in it, and that man of sin have been revealed? Surely, when the particulars of the description come to be compared with the accomplishment, it may seem owing to some judicial infatuation that men of deep policy and great penetration, with this very passage of scripture in their hands, should have suffered the marks of antichrist to be so very apparent, even in many instances beyond what might have seemed absolutely necessary for establishing that secular kingdom which they sought; particularly, that
4 the pope on high days should set himself on a high throne in the temple of God, to be there solemnly adored, and should have permitted his parasites so expressly to boast that he is God, and to give him, in some of their licensed and authorized works,[k] divine titles.

The scandalous and extravagant pretences which the followers of the papacy have made to miracles, exceeding in number, and some of them in marvellous circumstances, those of Christ and his apostles, plainly display the
9 energy of Satan, that father of frauds, pious and impious. And the most incredible lies, which they have, by
11 solemn and irrevocable acts, made essential to their faith, show the strength of delusion beyond what could have been imagined, had not fact led us into the theory. How dreadful is it to think of some of the expressions which the Spirit itself uses when speaking of these artifices in deceit!—that they should be abandoned by God to believe
12 a lie, that they may all be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness,—that they might bring upon themselves eternal aggravated damnation. Who would not tremble, who would not grieve, for so many of our fellow-men, yea, of those who, degenerate as their form of christianity is, we must yet call our fellow-christians, who are thus dishonoured, enslaved, and endangered? The Lord grant that they may not be utterly undone! Let them despise us, let them, by most solemn execrations annually repeated, devote us to destruction, and prepare against us all the instruments of it in their power, yet will we still pray for them. The Lord grant that they may *recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure!* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) Let us recommend to divine compassion the souls drawn after artful and wicked leaders, in the simplicity of their hearts, and take comfort in this thought, that the time will come when *the Lord shall destroy this son of perdition with*
8 *the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.* May the remnant of God's people among them take the alarm, *and come out from them* in time, *and be separate*, that they may not be *partakers with them in their plagues!* (Rev. xviii. 4.)

g *Lying power, signs, and wonders.*] It is certain that the construction will very well allow us to refer ψεύδους to all the preceding words, as well as the last; and nothing seems so natural as to refer the whole to the *fictitious miracles of the church of Rome*, which have grown up to such a degree of extravagance and effrontery, as even to make their own popes ashamed.

h *Energy of deceit.*] Those most ridiculous popish legends, which have yet gained such credit as to be admitted into their public offices, furnish out a most affecting comment upon these words.

i *Had pleasure in unrighteousness.*] I cannot but think this refers to many of the priests and others in the Romish church, who impose on the people known delusions, merely out of regard to secular interest; and it wears so dreadful an aspect on such, and on those who, on the like principles, act the same part in the protestant world, if such there be, that I cannot but hope it may be the means of producing in time some great reformation, when it shall please God powerfully to impress on the professed teachers of others a serious sense of the importance of their own salvation, and to make them feel how contemptible all worldly emoluments are when compared with truth of doctrine and purity of worship and discipline.

k *Divine titles.*] See Mr. Barker's *Sermon at Salter's Hall*, in the *Lecture against Popery*; and Mr. Chandler's *Account of the Conference in Nicholas Lane.*

SECTION III.

Paul returns thanks to God for his mercy to the Thessalonians in supporting them hitherto, and addresses such exhortations to them, and prayers for them, as might most effectually conduce to their continued establishment, desiring also their prayers for him amidst his various labours and dangers. 2 Thess. ii. 13, *to the end;* iii. 1—5.

2 THESS. ii. 13.

2 THESS. ii. 13.

BUT we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:

SECT. 3.

SUCH corruptions as these will at length arise in the church, and we have hinted that something of this spirit is already beginning to work. *But* blessed be God that so little of it appears among you; on the contrary, we are sensible that *we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren,* whom we have great reason to address as *beloved of the Lord, because* that cordial zeal with which you have embraced the gospel, and that resolution with which you retain it in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, give us ground cheerfully to conclude that *God hath,* of his wise counsels and abundant grace, *from the beginning* of his work and plan for the redemption of men, *chosen you to* eternal *salvation;* for a participation of which you are prepared *by* that *sanctification* which is the work *of the* Holy *Spirit* on your hearts, *and* that *belief of the truth* which hath so effectual a tendency to promote it.

2 THES. II. 13

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is God's appointed way of obtaining an interest in this salvation, *to which he hath called you by our gospel,* even *to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;* that glory which his mercy hath prepared, and to which his faithful care shall at length conduct all his obedient followers, in which they shall fully enjoy the rich provisions of his love, and be made like him in holiness and happiness. *Therefore, brethren,* let me exhort you to *stand fast, and* strongly to *retain the instructions which you have learned* of us, *whether by word or by our* former *letter,* as you may be assured you have there a genuine representation of the contents of those important doctrines with which we are intrusted. *And may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us* in so surprising a manner, *and given* [*us,*] by his gospel, such a fund of *everlasting consolation, and* such *good hope through* his overflowing *grace,* when without it we could not have had any glimmering of hope, or prospect of comfort for ever: May he, I say, by the rich communication of his love and mercy, *comfort your hearts, and* may he *strengthen* and confirm *you,* making you ready *for every good word and work,* that his name may be glorified, and your present satisfaction and future reward may abound. *As for what remains,* I shall not enlarge, but must beseech you, *brethren,* that ye would *pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run* a free and unobstructed course every where, *and be* greatly *glorified,*[a] *as* through his grace [*it is*] *among you: And that we,* whom he hath honoured with the office of dispensing it, *may be delivered from unreasonable*[b] *and wicked men,* who are endeavouring as much as possible to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by destroying or confining us. We cannot wonder at it, *for all men have not faith,*[c] and there are so many corruptions opposing its progress, and they are so powerfully abetted by the great enemy of souls, that we have rather reason to admire the divine agency, in making it so successful as it is. *But* whatever difficulties we meet with, this is our comfort, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whom we devote our labours and have committed our souls, *is* invariably *faithful; who will strengthen and keep* both us and *you from the evil one* and all his works. He will indeed preserve us from every thing that would on the whole be hurtful to us, and overrule to our truest good what has the appearance of evil. *And we have* a cheerful *confidence in the* fidelity and grace of our blessed *Lord, with respect to you,* that by his powerful influence you are and will be established in every good resolution, so *that* in every instance *ye both do and will do the things which* in his name *we give you in charge. And* may we have the pleasure of seeing this our confidence happily answered more and more! *May the Lord direct your hearts into* the more vigorous and constant exercise of *the love of God, and into the* exercises of that *patience* under all your trials and afflictions which becomes the disciples *of Christ,*[d] and is agreeable to his example.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

2 Thess. iii. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified even as *it is* with you;

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

2 THES. III. 1

2

3

4

5

IMPROVEMENT.

How wisely and happily does the apostle unite the views of the grace of God and the duties of men, while he represents our choice to salvation in a light so worthy of God, since this salvation is still to be obtained through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth! Our spirits must be sanctified by the operation of the Divine Spirit: the truth must be not only speculatively, but powerfully and practically believed, or all our hopes will be vain. But surely, were it possible that salvation could any other way be obtained, it would be much less desirable, or rather that which did not imply a sanctified spirit, and an heart open to receive and obey the truth, would not deserve the name of salvation. Blessed be God, who in this view hath called us to obtain salvation and glory by

Ver. 13

14

a *May run and be glorified.*] Some think these words allude to the *applause* given to those that made a speedy progress in the races which constituted so important a part of the Grecian games.

b *Unreasonable.*] Bishop Wilkins observes that ατοποι may signify *absurd, contumacious* persons, who are not to be fixed by any principles, and whom no topics can work upon. Wilkins, *Of Nat. Rel.* p. 34. Many such remain among us even to this day.

c *Faith.*] By *faith* some understand a principle of *honesty,* which may encourage a confidence to be reposed in them. Howe, *Of the Spirit,* Vol. II. p. 192. But I rather understand it of that *upright* and *candid* disposition which would engage men to receive the testimony of the apostles.

d *The patience of Christ.*] We render it, *the patient waiting for Christ,* but υπομονην τϖ Χριϛϖ may rather signify, *christian patience,* or that patience with which Christ himself suffered the many injuries and afflictions through which he passed.

SECT. 3. Jesus Christ, even God our Father who hath loved us. From him do these everlasting consolations flow. It is by his blessed and gracious operation we are strengthened and established in every good word and work. His fidelity stands engaged to do it, if we humbly commit ourselves to him, and wait upon him. The prayers of the apostles, dictated no doubt from above, concur with the promises to encourage our hopes that he will direct our hearts into the love of God and the patience of Jesus Christ. On the exercise of that love and that patience doth the happiness of life chiefly depend. Too ready are our weak hearts to wander from it, and to faint under the difficulties that lie in our way. Let us call on him to preserve and maintain the graces he hath implanted, that they may be exerted with growing vigour and constancy, even unto the end.

2 THES. III. 3

2 Unreasonable and wicked men will oppose the progress of the gospel, which has so powerful a tendency to promote holiness and comfort; and as there are those that have not faith, they will be ready to labour its destruction. But when the prayers of christians are frequently engaged, that the word of God may run and be glorified, there is great reason to hope that much of their perverse opposition may be overruled to most contrary purposes, so that the *wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of that wrath be restrained.* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

1

SECTION IV.

The apostle concludes his Epistle with giving some directions as to the strenuous exercise of discipline with respect to some disorderly persons, and with renewed prayers for the prosperity of the church at Thessalonica. 2 Thess. iii. 6, *to the end.*

2 THESS. iii. 6.

SECT. 4. A ZEALOUS regard for the honour of our Divine Master requires me to inculcate on the churches under my inspection, a strict care in the exercise of discipline; and I heartily wish there were nothing in your circumstances which particularly demanded my farther admonitions on that head. *But* as many good men are ready to be too remiss here, from a fear of displeasing others, and making themselves enemies, *we* solemnly *charge you, brethren,* *in the* awful and beloved *name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* the credit and progress of whose religion is so nearly concerned in the matter, *that ye withdraw yourselves from any brother,* whatever his rank, circumstances, or profession may be, *who* in the conduct of his life *walks irregularly, and not agreeably to the instruction which he hath received* *from us,* with regard to the grand rules of christian morality. I speak freely on this head, *for ye yourselves know how it becomes you* in this respect *to imitate us; for we were not* in any instance *irregular among you,* but endeavoured to behave so as to recommend and enforce our doctrine by our example. *Neither did we eat any man's bread at free cost,* when we had an opportunity of subsisting gratis, at the expense of any particular persons or families, *but with* diligent *labour,* and frequently with very tedious *and* wearisome *toil, we wrought* with our own hands, in that profession which we had learned, and this *night and day,*[a] *that we might not be burdensome to any of you,* and give you the least room to suspect that we had any secular views in the doctrine we brought you, or that indolence led us to engage in preaching it. *Not that we are destitute of authority,* from the reason of things, and the express commission of Christ himself, to take a moderate subsistence from the persons in whose instruction we employ our time and strength; for the Lord himself hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; *but* we declined using that liberty, *that we might exhibit ourselves to you* [*as*] *an example, that ye might* *imitate us* in a frugal and industrious life. *And* ye know, that *even when we were* yet *with you,* we were so fearful of any irregularity in this respect, that we expressly *gave this in charge to you, that if any one would not work, neither should he eat;* that no idle drones should consume the common stock, and quarter himself freely on the diligent and laborious, but rather be brought under a necessity of working to relieve his own want, if he would not do it from a sense of social duty and good order.

2 THES. III. 6

6 7 8 9 10

We now insist upon this the more largely, *for we hear that there are some among you who walk irregularly, not* prudently *working at all* for their own honest subsistence, *but* *impertinently busy* in attending to the concerns of others. *They who are of such* a character, *therefore, we* solemnly *charge and* tenderly *entreat, by* the dear and venerable name of *our Lord Jesus Christ, that, working with quietness,* and silently pursuing their proper business, *they eat* what may with justice be called *their own bread,* not supporting themselves with what has been purchased by the labours of others, while they continue unprofitable to society.

11 12

And as for you, my *brethren,* the wiser and sounder part of the church, I would fain animate and exhort you that ye *faint not,* nor be discouraged [*while*] you are engaged in a course of *well-doing*;[b] prosecuting those actions which are fair, beautiful, and honourable, however men may censure you, or whatever difficulties may lie in your way; yea, though some should ungratefully abuse your goodness. *But if any one is not obedient* *to our word,* whether spoken to you during our short abode, or signified *by this* or my former *Epistle, set a mark upon that man,* whoever he be, *and have no* familiar *converse* *with him, that* so, seeing himself shunned by his brethren, whose esteem it is natural for every one to wish, *he may be ashamed,* and by that shame may be recovered[c] from those

13 4

2 THESS. iii. 6.
NOW we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies.

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

a *Night and day.*] This expression seems to intimate, that the apostle was sometimes obliged to sit up a part of the night at his business as a *tent-maker,* that he might have the day at leisure to preach to those that came to him for religious instruction.

b *Faint not while well-doing.*] Diodati gives it this excellent turn: though some may abuse your liberality, be not deterred thereby from works of charity.

c By that shame be recovered.] Some would render ἐντραπῇ, that

SECT. 4. — 2 THES. III.

15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

irregularities which have engaged you to avoid his company, and made his friendship for the present infamous. *Yet account* [*him*] *not as an enemy*, nor do any thing in the least to hurt him in his secular affairs, or to exasperate his irregular passions, *but admonish* [*him*] *as a brother*, and with faithful love to his soul, as well as a tender concern for the edification of the church and credit of religion, labour for his recovery.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

And *now*, to conclude: *May* Jesus, *the* great *Lord of peace*, who hath established concord between heaven and earth, and so effectually provided for uniting the hearts of men in the most pacific and friendly bonds, *himself give you peace at all times by every means!* May all the dispensations of his providence, in every place and circumstance of life, concur to advance the serenity and happiness of your minds; and for this purpose, *may the Lord* continually [*be*] *with you all!* 16

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Thus far I have dictated to the person whose assistance I use in writing this; but now I will take the pen myself, and add *the salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is the token in every Epistle*;[d] for *so*, to prevent counterfeits, *I write*, that the several churches may be secure that what is thus signed is genuine. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] *with you all*, and may you enjoy all the happy consequences that flow from the most plentiful communication of it! To which I am sure you will put your hearty *amen*, as I do mine. 17 18

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, given in a richer abundance to his churches, animate and engage them to maintain that discipline which is so necessary to his honour and to their own comfort and edification. Scarcely can we say which is more to be lamented, the neglect of the thing, or the abuse of the name. It never could be the design of the wise Legislator of the church, that secular terrors should be pressed into his service, that fines, imprisonments, and civil incapacities should be the result of censures passed in his peaceful and benevolent name. Irregularities, in those that call themselves his followers, are indeed to be observed and discountenanced. Offenders are to be admonished, and, if lighter admonitions succeed not, they are to be avoided; but still in a view of recovering them, by an ingenuous shame, (if any remainder of it be left in their hearts,) from those practices which, if connived at, would soon become the shame of the society. Thus far, therefore, let us resolutely carry our censures, separating scandalous persons from our sacramental communion, and declining that familiar converse with those who are so separated, which might lead them to think we privately disregarded those censures which had in public so awful a form; yet at the same time let us not treat them as enemies, or as those of whose recovery we have no hope, but remember the tenderness of brotherly love, amidst all the severest acts of brotherly reproof, and the common tie of humanity, to those whom we are commanded to regard only as heathens or publicans. Ver. 18, 11, 6, 14, 15

May there be in the professed disciples of Jesus, a care to avoid and discourage that sloth and petulance which would make men busy in other people's matters, while they are quite negligent of their own. Let us remember the example of the apostle, and be solicitous to eat our own bread. So shall we be most likely to enjoy inward peace and satisfaction of mind, and find that relish in the possession of a little which the largest supplies would not give to them who are conscious to themselves of sloth or dishonesty. 11, 8, 9, 12

Some worthless people there have always been in every station of life, and under all religious professions, and some idle drones, who are ready to abuse the bounty of others better than themselves. But let us not from hence seek a mean excuse for refusing to such as really stand in need acts of liberality and charity. Let us not be weary in well-doing; the time of rest and reward will come. While we are waiting for it, the presence of the Lord of peace may be expected, if we take care to adorn his religion by the usefulness, as well as the meekness, of our behaviour in this world of misery and provocation, through which he hath appointed us to pass, and through which he has himself condescended to pass before us, to make our way safe and our exit happy. 13

he may be *reclaimed by shame;* but I thought it better to insert the additional words in the paraphrase than the version.

d *The token in every Epistle.*] I think it very evident, from this and several other passages, that Paul, not being very familiarly used to Greek characters, and perhaps to save time, every moment of which he knew how to estimate, used to dictate to some ready scribe, perhaps sometimes while his hands were employed in the labours of his trade. And this may account for some small *inaccuracies* of style at which little minds have been offended, and which some, who seem to carry their scrupulosity to an excess, have been over-solicitous to vindicate, but which they who read with any thing of the temper of the writer, will easily know how to excuse. —What was hinted before in this Epistle, (chap. ii. 2.) may be an intimation that some fictitious letters were early written in his name, by which St. Paul might be induced to add this token with his own hand.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY, to whom this Epistle is addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in the Lesser Asia. His father was a Greek, but his mother (whose name was Eunice) a Jewess, (Acts xvi. 1.) and, as well as his grandmother Lois, a person of an excellent character. (2 Tim. i. 5.) The pious care they took in his education soon appeared to have its desired success, since we are assured by the apostle, that from a child he was well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. It is not certain when he was converted to the christian faith, though it is not improbable but it might be in the first visit that Paul and Barnabas made to Lystra, mentioned, Acts xiv. when the apostle was stoned by the malice of the Jews, and left for dead, to which he refers, 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. However this be, when St. Paul came into those parts again, he had the satisfaction to find not only that Timothy continued stedfast in the profession of christianity, but was in great esteem with the churches at Lystra and Iconium for his distinguished piety and zeal. The discovery of so excellent a temper promised fair for eminent usefulness, and could not fail of recommending him to the peculiar regard of the apostle, who from that time seems to have fixed upon him as his companion and assistant in his labours. But as he was a Jew on the mother's side, he judged it prudent that he should be circumcised before he entered upon his ministerial office; after which he did not scruple to ordain him in a solemn manner by the imposition of hands, (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.) though he was at that time probably not much more than twenty years old. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 12.) From this time we often hear of him as attending the apostle in his travels, and assisting him in preaching the gospel; and from Heb. xiii. 23. we may gather that he shared with him in his sufferings as well as his labours; to which we may add, that St. Paul has thought fit to join his name with his own in the inscription to several of the Epistles, viz. 2 Cor. Philip. Coloss. 1 and 2 Thess. and Philem. He appears in every respect to have been eminently qualified for the important office with which he was invested; and the honourable terms in which the apostle always mentions him to the churches, and the confidence which, notwithstanding his youth, he reposed in him upon all occasions, are sufficient to give us a very high idea of his character. And perhaps there was no one of all his companions and fellow-labourers whose sentiments and views of things so exactly corresponded with his own. He appears, from their first acquaintance with each other, to have been particularly concerned to form him for usefulness; and no doubt his principal view, in taking him at first as the companion of his travels, was, that he might be more immediately under his inspection, and enjoy the advantage of his more free and familiar instructions. No wonder, then, if the apostle looked upon his pupil with peculiar complacency, and even parental affection, when he saw him answer his fondest expectations, and fill up with so much honour the station he had assigned him. No wonder, on the other hand, that Timothy should discover a filial reverence for a person of St. Paul's venerable character, with whom he had been so intimately connected, and from whom he had received so many and such important favours.

It is well known that the date of this Epistle hath been greatly disputed: to enter largely into the controversy would far exceed the limits allotted to these Introductions. However, as in a work of this kind the reader may expect some notice should be taken of a question which is of some importance, and as he may not be furnished with those authors* who have treated it more fully, I shall here give some account of the principal hypotheses relating to it, and state the evidence with which they are respectively attended.

The hypothesis which seems to have prevailed most generally is, That it was written about the year of our Lord 58, when Paul had lately quitted Ephesus on account of the tumult raised there by Demetrius, and was gone into Macedonia, Acts xx. 1. And this is the opinion of many learned critics, ancient and modern; particularly of Athanasius, Theodoret, Baronius, Ludovic, Capellus, Blondel, Hammond, Grotius, Salmasius, Lightfoot, and Benson.—On the other hand, Bishop

* See Pearson, *Op. Post. Diss.* 1. c. ix. § 5. p. 75, &c. Benson's *Propag. of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 167—170. Witsii *Meletem. C.* ix. § 3—5. Boyse's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 292—297.

Pearson endeavours to prove that it could not be written till the year 65, between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome; and L'Enfant, without any hesitation, goes into this hypothesis.

It is universally allowed, that St. Paul must have written this First Epistle to Timothy at some journey which he made from Ephesus to Macedonia, having, in the mean time, left Timothy behind him at Ephesus; for he expressly saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 3. *I besought thee still to abide at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia.* Bishop Pearson accordingly, in order to prove that the date of this Epistle was as late as he supposes, having observed that we read only of three journies of Paul through Macedonia, (viz. Acts xvi. 9, 10; xx. 1; and *ibid.* ver. 3.) endeavours to show that it could not be written in any of these, and must consequently have been written in some fourth journey, not mentioned in the history, which he supposes was about the year 65, after Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome.——That it was not written at the first or third of these journies, is readily allowed, and it appears from the whole series of the context in both places; but it is the second that is generally contended for.

Now the bishop supposes that the Epistle was not written at this second journey, because it appears from Acts xix. 22. that Paul did not leave Timothy then at Ephesus, having sent him before into Macedonia, and appointed him to meet him at Corinth. See 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10.——To this it is answered, that though Paul did indeed send Timothy from Ephesus, yet as we are told that Paul made some stay there after that, (Acts xix. 22.) Timothy might be returned before the tumult, and so the apostle might, notwithstanding, leave him behind at Ephesus, when he himself set out on his journey for Macedonia. (For it should be observed, that he changed his scheme, and, before he went to Corinth, where he had appointed Timothy to meet him, spent some time in Macedonia; from whence he wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians in company with Timothy, who came to him in his return from Corinth, and continued with him while he remained in these parts.) Now that Timothy returned to Ephesus before the apostle departed, will indeed appear very probable, if (as Mr. Boyse argues from Acts xx. 31. compared with chap. xix. 8, 10.) St. Paul spent three years at Ephesus, and in the neighbouring parts, and sent Timothy away nine months before the tumult; which would leave him time enough to perform his commission, and return to Ephesus before the apostle had left it. (See note e, p. 533.)——To which it might be added, that it appears from 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. which Epistle was written from Ephesus, that Paul expected Timothy, after his journey to Macedonia and Corinth, would return to him at that city.

The bishop further objects to the Epistle's being written at this second journey, mentioned Acts xx. 1. that when the apostle set out he proposed to go into Macedonia, and visit the churches there and in Greece, which must necessarily take up a considerable time; whereas in his Epistle to Timothy he speaks of his intention to return very soon. (1 Tim. iii. 14; iv. 13.)—But it is natural to suppose that some unforeseen accident might detain him longer than he designed; and being disappointed of some assistance he expected from Macedonia, he might afterwards send for Timothy to come to him, who, as the passage by sea might be despatched in a few days, might arrive at Macedon before the apostle wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

The bishop further argues, that it appears from the Epistle to Titus, as well as from some passages in his Epistle to the Philippians and to Philemon, that Paul actually made another journey into those parts after his first imprisonment at Rome, in which journey he left Titus behind him at Crete, which lay in his way from Rome. (Tit. i. 5.) Now it must be allowed the bishop, that the supposition which Salmasius makes is not at all likely, that Paul touched at Crete when he was going from Achaia to Macedonia, for then he carried a collection with him, (1 Cor. xvi. 1—5; Acts xxiv. 17.) and therefore it was not probable he would go so much out of his way; and when he was about to sail into Syria, and heard that snares were laid for him, (Acts xx. 3.) it is not to be supposed that he would go into the mouth of them, or that he would take up his time in preaching at Crete when he was in haste to be at Jerusalem; (Acts xx. 16.) or that he would winter at Nicopolis, (Tit. iii. 12.) when winter was past, and he desired to be at Jerusalem before the passover.—But then it hath been observed, that perhaps the Epistle to Titus might be among the first Paul wrote, and his voyage to Crete one of the many events before his going up to the council at Jerusalem, which in the history of the Acts, Luke, not being in company with him when they occurred, hath passed over; and of which there are, notwithstanding, some traces in St. Paul's Epistles, particularly 2 Cor. xi. and Rom. xv. 19. Or if it be allowed that the Epistle to Titus was written by Paul after his first imprisonment, it will not follow from thence that the First Epistle to Timothy must have been written at the same time. This is a brief account of the arguments for Bishop Pearson's hypothesis, that this Epistle was written about the year 65, with their respective answers.

On the other hand, it is pleaded in favour of the first-mentioned hypothesis, namely, its being written in the year 58,

1. That when Paul wrote his First Epistle to him, Timothy was a young man, (1 Tim. iv. 12. *Let no man despise thy youth;)* which is also referred to, 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. Now supposing he were only sixteen years old when he was converted to christianity, which was in the year 46, he would in the year 58 be about twenty-eight years of age; but in 65, the time when Bishop Pearson supposes the Epistle was written, he would be thirty-five, and past a youth, thirty being the age at which the Levites were, according to the law, to enter upon their office. And whereas it hath been objected to this observation, that even in his Second Epistle, which is supposed to be written some years after his First, he is cautioned to flee youthful lusts; it may be replied, that though he were indeed at that time in the meridian of life, yet he was not out of the reach of such temptations, though the season of youth be more peculiarly liable to them. Besides, the admonition might be intended to suggest this thought, that, having outgrown youth, he ought to be so much the more superior to them.

2. It is observed, that the state of things in the church of Ephesus in 58 better suits the contents of the First Epistle than it does in 65. For instance, it appears from chap. i. 3, 4, 6, 7. and other passages, that those corruptions which the apostle speaks of as greatly increased and risen to a considerable height, when he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, and when he wrote his Second Epistle, were just beginning to creep into the church at the time of his writing the First.—To which it may be added, that from the particular instructions Paul in his First Epistle gives Timothy about ordination, it seems as if the church of Ephesus, and those in the neighbourhood, had few or no bishops at the time it was written; from whence it appears extremely probable that the meeting between Paul and the elders or bishops of Ephesus, at Miletus, must have been after the writing of this Epistle. Mr. Drury, on the other hand, hath pleaded, that when Paul addressed the elders at Miletus, he speaks of these things as future; (Acts xx. 29.) which, when he wrote his First Epistle to Timothy, were actually accomplished; such as the trouble they met with from judaizing teachers, &c. which are the persons he supposes we are to understand by grievous or ravening wolves, in the forecited passage of the Acts; and therefore the Epistle must be written after

that interview. But to this it is replied, that the ravening wolves, of which the apostle there speaks, were heathen persecutors, and not such seducers as should arise among themselves.—Some have farther objected, that even in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle does not speak of those evils as having risen to such a height in the church as he does in his First Epistle to Timothy, though the Epistle to the Ephesians was undoubtedly written after the interview at Miletus; therefore the First Epistle to Timothy must be written some length of time after that interview. To this it may be justly replied, that, without supposing the apostle to intimate, in his First Epistle, that the evils referred to had actually prevailed so far, it is certain, from that part of Luke's history which precedes Acts xx. that there was such a bigoted zeal for the Mosaic law among some professing christians, as would justify the caution given to Timothy; especially considering that a great many Jews were always resident in Ephesus. And though, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says nothing of judaizing teachers, (nor of the wolves and perverse men who should arise, against whom it is certain he had, before the date of it, cautioned the elders at Miletus,) yet many of the advices he gives in that Epistle, as well as in this to Timothy, would be of great use in preserving christians from such dangers. But,

3. The argument on which the principal stress hath been laid, in order to prove the date of this Epistle to be about the year 58, is taken from the solemn prophetic declaration which Paul made when he took his leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, that they *would never see his face any more;* (Acts xx. 25.) from whence it is inferred that he must have written his Epistle to Timothy before that interview, since in that he not only expresses a full expectation of returning, but speaks of his having just left Ephesus when he set out upon his journey for Macedonia.—The chief objection to this seems to arise from 2 Tim. iv. 20. where St. Paul acquaints Timothy that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletum, plainly intimating that he had lately been visiting those parts; which, admitting that Epistle to have been written but a short time before his death, will indeed prove that he took another journey into Asia after his first imprisonment: but we cannot certainly infer from thence that he must have been at Ephesus. Dr. Whitby and other critics have observed that the Miletum here mentioned was in Crete, and, consequently, not the same with Miletus near Ephesus, where the apostle had that interview with the elders so often referred to. If it should appear to any most probable, on the whole, that St. Paul did take such a journey after his first imprisonment, and make a visit to Ephesus; in order to reconcile it with Acts xx. 25. he must make this supposition, that most of the ministers or elders of Ephesus, and of the neighbouring parts, were by that time either dead or removed.—From this detail of arguments in favour of both these hypotheses, the reader may determine for himself which bids the fairest for truth. See notes b, c, p. 538. Compare note e, p. 533. and note r, p. 542.

Upon examining the contents of this Epistle, it appears that it was principally intended to direct Timothy in managing the affairs of the church while he abode at Ephesus; and particularly to instruct him in chusing proper persons to be set apart for the ministry and other offices in the church, as well as in the exercise of a regular discipline. Another part of the apostle's design was to caution this young Evangelist against the influence of those judaizing teachers who, by their subtle distinctions and endless controversies, had corrupted the purity and simplicity of the gospel; to press upon him a constant regard, in all his preaching, to the interests of practical religion, and to animate him to the greatest diligence, fidelity, and zeal, in the discharge of his office.

In pursuance of this design, the apostle, after having saluted his beloved pupil with his usual affection, and reminded him of the reasons for which he left him behind at Ephesus, takes occasion, from the idle speculations and Jewish controversies that had been unhappily introduced into the church, to assert the practical nature and tendency of the christian doctrine, and from thence to remonstrate against the absurdity of opposing the gospel, out of a pretended zeal for the law; when in reality the great end of the law was much more effectually answered by the gospel, as it not only restrained men from the more open and notorious acts of vice, against which the law was more immediately levelled, but was calculated to raise its votaries to the most sublime heights of virtue. (Chap. i. 1—11.)—The apostle having mentioned the gospel, cannot forbear digressing, in the fulness of his heart, to express the affectionate sense he had of the divine goodness in calling him, who had been a persecutor, to the christian faith and ministerial office, and observes that this favour was extended to him, though so unworthy, as an encouragement to those that should believe in every future age. (Ver. 12—17.) He then goes on to recommend to Timothy a conscientious care in discharging the duties of that sacred office he had committed to him, and reminds him of the fatal miscarriage of some who had apostatized from the faith. In pursuance of this general exhortation, he directs that prayer should be offered up for all men, and especially for princes and magistrates; as it was the great design of christianity to promote the peace and welfare of communities, and the happiness of the whole human race. And as the prudent behaviour of all the members of the society was of great importance to the credit of religion, he advises the women to maintain the strictest decency in their dress, as well as modesty and reserve in their whole deportment, walking as persons professing godliness; and forbids their teaching in public assemblies, as inconsistent with that due subjection to the other sex which he enforces from the scripture-account of the fall. (Ver. 18, *to the end;* chap. ii. *throughout.*)—As one very important part of Timothy's office was to ordain ministers and officers in the church, the apostle proceeds to instruct him in the qualifications necessary both for bishops and deacons. A bishop, or pastor, he describes as a person of a blameless and exemplary character, distinguished for his temperance, moderation, and charity, the husband of one wife, prudent in the management of his own family, not lately converted to the christian faith, but well furnished with knowledge, and in good repute with his heathen neighbours. His directions for the choice of deacons are nearly the same, which he concludes with representing the advantages that would attend the faithful discharge of that office. (Chap. iii. 1—13.)—And that Timothy might be the more concerned to follow his instructions, he speaks in very high terms of the importance of the charge committed to him, and the sublime and excellent nature of the christian dispensation. Yet he assures him the Spirit had expressly foretold that apostates should arise in the church, who would corrupt the purity and simplicity of the gospel, requiring abstinence from marriage, and from various kinds of meats, which God had left indifferent, and teaching other doctrines equally false and pernicious. (Ver. 14, *to the end;* chap. iv. 1—5.)—As many of the precepts he had given him were of universal concern, he exhorts him to inculcate them upon the society committed to his care, leaving those idle tales, of which the Jewish rabbies were so fond, and confining his discourses to the great truths of practical religion: these, he observes, were the foundation of all their hopes as christians, and the advancement of these was the great end of all his labours and sufferings. And, to render his ministry among them successful, he recommends it to him to maintain such a purity and sanctity of manners as might not only secure him from that contempt to which his youth would otherwise expose him, but render him a worthy example to the flock. With the same view, he exhorts him to use the utmost diligence in exercising and improving the gifts with which God had honoured him, for the edification of

the church and the salvation of souls. (Ver. 6, *to the end.*)—The apostle then proceeds to lay down some directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances of life, advising him to suit his manner of address to their respective ages and standing in the church. This leads him to give some rules in relation to those widows who were intrusted by the society with some peculiar office, and maintained in the discharge of it out of the public stock. None were to be admitted into this number but those who, being advanced in life, were destitute of any other support, and had maintained an exemplary character for piety, charity, and every good work; for, he observes, the many irregularities into which persons in younger life were often betrayed, was a sufficient reason for excluding them from such a trust. (Chap. v. 1—16.) St. Paul further directs that a peculiar honour should be paid to faithful ministers, and no accusation received against them, but on the credit of two or three witnesses. And, as a due care in the exercise of christian discipline was of so much importance to the credit of religion, he gives him a most solemn charge to observe the strictest impartiality in the execution of this difficult part of his office. On the same principles he admonishes him not to engage too hastily in setting apart any to the ministry, lest he should make himself partaker of their guilt; and from the variety of men's characters, intimates the necessity of prudence and caution in his manner of treating them. To all which he adds some advices relating to the behaviour of servants towards their masters, whether they were heathens or christians. (Ver. 17, *to the end;* and chap. vi. 1, 2.)—The apostle having finished his instructions to Timothy in relation to the pastoral office, exhorts him to avoid those false teachers, who, instead of insisting upon the great truths of practical religion, amused their hearers with trifling controversies, which only served to raise a spirit of envy and contention in the church, while at the same time, under a pretended zeal for the truth, they were really carrying on their own mercenary views. This leads him to caution Timothy against all approaches towards a covetous temper, which he represents as the root of all evil, and to press upon him a constant and growing regard to vital, practical godliness, as of the utmost consequence to his own and his people's happiness. (Chap. vi. 3—12.) To give yet greater force to his admonitions, the apostle concludes with a most solemn charge to Timothy, as in the presence of God and Christ, to maintain the purity of the christian faith as he had received it from him, that it might be preserved uncorrupt till the glorious appearance of Christ at the great day.—After which he inserts, by way of postscript, an exhortation to the rich not to be puffed up with their wealth, but to employ it in acts of charity and beneficence, that they might secure to themselves eternal life; and closes all with renewing his earnest request to Timothy to keep that gospel he had intrusted with him, and carefully to avoid those empty speculations and vain sophistries by which some had been ensnared. (Ver. 13, *to the end of the Epistle.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul, after having saluted Timothy with much affection, and mentioned the reasons of his leaving him at Ephesus, remonstrates against the absurdity of opposing the gospel out of pretended zeal for the law of God. 1 Tim. i. 1—11.

1 TIMOTHY i. 1.

1 TIMOTHY i. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;

I *PAUL, an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ, according to the* gracious *appointment* and command *of God our Saviour, and* of *the Lord Jesus Christ,* [*who is*] the Foundation of all *our hope* of true happiness in this world and the next, Send this Epistle *to Timothy,* [*my*] *genuine son*[a] *in the faith;* in whom I see those unfeigned graces of true piety which God hath wrought in his heart by my means, and which I have myself, by his grace, experienced in mine own. May *grace, mercy,* [*and*] *peace* ever be upon thee, *from God, our* almighty and ever-gracious *Father, and* from *Christ Jesus our Lord,* through whom he communicates these blessings to sinful men.

SECT. 1. 1 TIM. 1.

2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I entreated thee to continue at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, (Acts xx. 1.) *that thou mightest charge some* who seemed inclinable to introduce their own corrupt notions into the church, *that they should not teach other doctrine* contrary to the certain truth I had delivered to them, [*so*] I hope thou wilt still be mindful of the exhortations I gave thee, and [*act*] strenuously upon them. In pursuance of these views, I depend upon it that thou wilt caution [*and admonish them*] *not to regard* Jewish *fables*[b] *and endless genealogies,* which, intricate as the investigation of them is, the judaizing teachers are so fond to trace, as thinking so many privileges to depend upon them, *which* indeed *afford matter of* troublesome and angry *debates rather than godly edification in the faith* of Christ, or in any of the duties of an holy life. *But* let it always be remembered and considered, that *the* great *end of the* gospel-*declaration is* to promote in the mind a temper directly opposite to this, even a principle of *love,* and all the genuine expressions of it that can proceed *from a pure heart and a good conscience,* supported *and* animated by *an undissembled faith* in the great doctrines it reveals. But these are noble and generous things, from *which some having* greatly *wandered, have turned aside to vain* and empty *discourse* and harangue, which could have no tendency to edification, but only express their own pride and folly, and feed that of others: *Desiring to be teachers of the law,* and assuming as magisterial airs as any of its professed doctors can do,[c] and yet in the mean time *neither understanding what they say, nor concerning what they* so confidently *affirm,* while they vent these precarious fancies of their own, as if they were indubitable and self-evident truths, the first principles of all science, human or divine.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; *so do.*

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

6 From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

But while I say this, I am very far from having the least design to reflect upon the law of Moses, or upon the precepts of God 's natural law; for *we* well *know that the law* [*is*] good and *excellent,* reasonable in its constitution, and most profitable in its tendency, *if a man use it lawfully,*[d] and according to its original intention. As *knowing this, that*

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully;

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a right-

a [*My*] *genuine son.*] It is not certain from the history that Timothy was at first converted by Paul; compare Acts xvi. 1, 2. It seems, therefore, that he calls him his *son,* chiefly to express the parental affection he had for him, and the complacency he found in that assistance he had received from him in the work of the ministry, and in the *filial* reverence and affection which this excellent young minister expressed to him; nor can we doubt but Timothy had received much confirmation in christianity from the apostle.

b *Jewish fables.*] To what a monstrous degree these fables are brought by the rabbies, few are entirely ignorant, though few are so unhappy as fully to know. It is probable this wild, romantic humour might in some measure prevail as early as the apostle's days, and may be referred to here. By the genealogies afterwards mentioned, I do not, with some commentators, understand the æons of the gnostics, but tables of lineal descent, by which the Jews endeavoured to prove their right as priests and Levites, or their alliance to the house of David, all which were apparently vain in the circumstances in which the Jews then were, and in those to which every christian knew they must quickly be reduced.

c *Teachers of the law.*] The word is here, νομοδιδασκαλοι, which we render in the Evangelists, *doctors of the law;* and though it is not used exactly in that sense here, yet there seems to be some reference to it. This is urged as an argument that the *false teachers* here referred to could not be the gnostics, who declared an aversion to the *law;* not to insist on the agreement of Irenæus, Clement, and Jerome, in placing Valentinus, Carpocrates, and Basilides, the founders of that sect, much lower.

d *If a man use it lawfully.*] This plainly intimates that there were some who abused the *law,* borrowing a pretence from it to

SECT. 1. 1 TIM. I.

a law established, as we know that in question to be, with penal sanction, *is not made in* a direct and immediate *reference to a righteous man*,[e] who will indeed be a law to himself; *but* in order *to* restrain the irregularities and enormities of *the lawless and ungovernable*, and to preserve society from their assaults. Of these it speaks, to these it directs its menacing voice, even to *the impious and* [*profligate*] *sinners*, to *the unholy* 10 *and profane*, who disregard the rights both of God and man, to *murderers of fathers and of mothers*, or other *assassins:* To *fornicators and Sodomites*, to *those who steal men* that they may sell them for slaves. It addresses to *liars* and *perjured persons, and*, in a word, is intended to guard against *whatever is contrary to wholesome doctrine* and good morality, that it may restrain and control the authors of mischief, and mark them out as the objects of 11 universal abhorrence and just punishment. And these things are condemned by every divine revelation, and by that which we teach in the strongest terms, *according to the* known tenor of the *glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I was intrusted*. This guards against the smallest deviation from the strictest rule of rectitude, and the secret abominations of the heart, as well as the grosser scandals of the life: so that for any out of pretended zeal for such a law to oppose the gospel, must certainly argue the greatest ignorance, or the greatest malice and hypocrisy, that can be conceived.

eous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 CHRIST is indeed our Hope, or we have nothing which can deserve to be called hope. For in us he is the Hope of glory. On him therefore let us build, to him let us with the most joyful consent commit our souls, and, dis- 4, 6 missing all vain questionings and endless unprofitable controversies, ever attend to godly edifying, and bear in our me- 5 mories and in our hearts the great end of the commandment. And may the great God of love work that love in our hearts which is so justly represented in that view; love proceeding from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned. 8 We rejoice in the gospel, and let us reverence the law, and endeavour to use it lawfully and properly. Let it regulate our lives, let it awaken our consciences, and lead us to look for a better righteousness than this alone can 9, 10 afford. Blessed be God that it is providentially made the means of restraining many who act on motives merely legal, from much wickedness, which they might otherwise commit. But let the glorious gospel of the blessed 11 God, intrusted to the apostle, be the great foundation on which our souls build. It is glorious indeed: may the great Author of it ever be blessed, and the great end of it answered in our hearts, not only in preserving us free from those gross enormities of which the apostle has given so black a catalogue, and against which the law was more immediately directed, but in forming us to a stricter obedience, a sublimer purity, and more exalted hope, than any other dispensation which God himself has given could inspire.

SECTION II.

The apostle makes a digression to express, in lively terms, the affectionate sense he had of the divine goodness, in calling him, though most undeserving that favour, to the christian faith and ministerial office. 1 Tim. i. 12—17.

1 TIM. i. 12.

SECT. 2. 1 TIM. I.

I HAVE just been mentioning the glorious gospel of the blessed God as committed to my trust; *and* as I always recollect that favour with pleasure, so *I* would now, in a particular manner, *return* my *thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath strengthened me* for the arduous duties of such a calling, *that he accounted me faithful*, and reposed so great 13 a confidence in me, *putting me into the* sacred office of the *ministry: Who was before a* most impious *blasphemer*[a] of his holy name, *and a* cruel *persecutor* of his people, *and an* injurious *oppressor* of them, in contempt of all rights, human and divine. *But I obtained* that *mercy*, which probably would never otherwise have been extended to me, *because*, though I acted in a very rash, savage, and criminal manner, yet *I* did not therein contradict the sentiments of my conscience, but *did* [*it*] *ignorantly*[b] *in unbelief;* whereas if I had

1 TIM. i. 12.

AND I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry:

13 Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

condemn some of the best of men, and to subvert the gospel. And whereas some had represented Paul as an *enemy to the law*, he here denies and disproves the charge. The design of the Mosaic law was to direct the conduct of those to whom it was given, and to humble them under a sense of their sin; but it could not be intended to save them by a perfect conformity to it, which was το αδυνατον, *what the law could not do.* Rom. viii. 3.

e *A law is not made in reference to a righteous man.*] Δικαιῳ νομος ου κειται. Some would render it, *does not lie against a righteous man;* but I do not find that this interpretation of the word κειμαι, in this connexion, can be justified by sufficient authority, nor would it be very easy to clear up the apostle's argument on that interpretation. The thought seems evidently to be this: That *a law* (for there is no article to determine or confine it to the Jewish) is chiefly intended to restrain men from actions injurious to the public. What it says therefore chiefly relates to crimes and their punishments; but the genius of christianity is so sublime, and the character of christians in the general (at that time) so good, that there is no need of insisting on legal sentences denounced against such enormities, in order to keep them in the course of their duty. I can hardly think, with Diodati and L'Enfant, that by the mention of these crimes he intimates that their Jewish teachers were such wretches as those here spoken of, as if he had said, one of the chief uses of the law is to condemn such as themselves. Such monsters could never have maintained a party in religion: but he might chuse these instances, as precepts of the law in particular lay against each of them, and as the discourses of these teachers might be a sort of common-place, almost entirely levelled against the worst of crimes, and so less suited to the edification of believers. To inculcate it so much upon them, and especially to pretend to condemn them out of it, was therefore an irregular and improper use of the law.

a *A blasphemer.*] He had the greater reason to acknowledge this *guilt*, as he had not only spoken evil of *Christ himself*, but encouraged and even compelled *others* to do so. Acts xxvi. 11.

b *Did it ignorantly.*] If Paul had an opportunity of knowing more than some others, (compare Luke xxiii. 34.) yet perhaps, being then a scholar at Gamaliel's feet, he might not have been present on the spot when any of Christ's miracles were performed, as Christ spent but little time at Jerusalem. The popular cry was so strongly against him, and the Pharisees and rulers treated him with so much contempt, and were so full of malignity against him, and so ready to advance the most slanderous reports to the prejudice of his character, that it is the less to be wondered at that this rash, hot youth was borne down by the torrent. Yet we see how far Paul was from thinking *all this*, and whatever could be added to it, a *sufficient* excuse. Instead of insinuating, with some, that the miracle wrought for his conversion to christianity was a reward for his extraordinary integrity and virtue, while a Jewish zealot, he speaks of himself as one of the greatest sinners upon earth; and thereby shows, by the way, how much guilt a man may contract without acting directly contrary to the convictions of his mind, if he has neglected an impartial care in forming his principles of action.

knowingly opposed what I apprehended to be truth, out of regard to secular interest, I should doubtless have been left to perish under a judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart. *But the grace of our* blessed *Lord superabounded* towards me, being attended *with* the exercise of *faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*, and which by the influence of his Spirit and grace was implanted in my heart, thereby giving life and joy to my profession. SECT. 2. 1 TIM. I.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I cannot therefore but mention *this*, as what [*is*] *a* most *faithful*, infallible *saying, and* 15
worthy of all acceptance, of being universally received and admitted by every one who hears it, and of being welcomed to the heart, as well as gaining the assent of the understanding, *that Christ Jesus*, the eternal Son of God, though originally possessed of divine glory with the Father, *came* with infinite condescension *into the world* in which we dwell, *that he might save*, from final condemnation and ruin, miserable *sinners; of whom* it becomes me ever with all humility to confess that *I am chief*. For surely there never was nor ever will be a display of richer and more sovereign grace than that which recovered and transformed me. *But* it was in a great measure *for this cause* that *I obtained* the *mercy* of 16
which I was so unworthy, *that in me, as the chief* of sinners, *Jesus Christ might* display, and, as it were, *exhibit* to the view of the whole world, an example of *all long-suffering, as a pattern for* the encouragement of *those who should afterwards believe on him*, even to the remotest ages of time, in order *to* the obtaining *eternal life*. And *now*, when I con- 17
sider it in this view, I cannot forbear bursting out into a song of praise, and saying, *To the* supreme *King* of universal nature, who reigns through all the unknown extent of boundless ages and immeasurable space; who is possessed of *eternal* glory and *immortal* life, though *invisible* to mortal eyes; even to *the only wise*, living, and true *God*, [*be*] *honour and glory for ever and ever*, for this and every other display of a wisdom unsearchable and a goodness inexhaustible. *Amen.*

15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can wonder that a person of Paul's experience and piety should thus, on the mention of the gospel, digress Ver. 12
to indulge his reflections on that singular and astonishing interposition of divine grace, by which he had been brought to embrace it, and honoured with the charge of it! Who can wonder that such blasphemies and such out- 13
rages as he had uttered and committed, such a zeal for persecution as he had exerted, should leave a deep impression on his heart, and engage him, notwithstanding all his care in the externals of the law, and blameless as he was touching all its righteousness, to call himself the first, the chief of sinners, and to celebrate that as superabundant 14
grace, which had been extended to him.

Well was he who had received it thereby fitted to proclaim it to all the world. Let us gladly receive it from the pen of this once malignant and blasphemous persecutor, but now holy and happy apostle, as a most certain truth, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, hath, in unutterable and inconceivable compas- 15
sion, come into this world of ours to save sinners, even the chief of them. Let us thankfully accept this abridgment of the whole gospel, and apply to the Saviour thus triumphant in mercy, with whatever aggravated guilt our consciences may charge us. Let us also remember, that Paul obtained mercy not on his own account alone, but that the compassions extended to him might be considered as an example of what this gracious Redeemer is ready to 16
extend to all those who, like him, shall believe. Let us pause upon it, till our hearts glow within us in all thankful acknowledgment of his mercy, and then let our lips burst forth in praise to the King eternal, immortal, and invisi- 17
ble, to the only wise God, who hath found out such an admirable way at once to glorify his justice and his grace, in pardoning and accepting the chief of sinners in his Son. May our hearts be more and more disposed to celebrate his power, wisdom, and goodness, and to begin those songs of praise upon earth which we hope will be our everlasting employment in heaven!

SECTION III.

The apostle, after recommending to Timothy a conscientious care in the whole of his behaviour, gives and enforces several directions relating to prayer, and to the conduct of women professing godliness. 1 Tim. i. 18, *to the end;* ii. *throughout.*

1 TIM. i. 18.

1 TIM. i. 18.
THIS charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

THIS charge, which I am now going to give, *I* solemnly *commit unto thee*, my *son* SECT. 3.
Timothy, as a matter of the highest importance to thy usefulness and success in the ministerial office. As indeed there is nothing which I more earnestly desire, than *that thou* 1 TIM. I.
mayst, according to former prophecies concerning thee, with which holy men of God, who knew thee in younger life, were inspired, (being animated *by* a cheerful and believing remembrance of *them,*) *maintain* with a holy alacrity and resolution *a good warfare*, even 18
that noble and glorious struggle in which thou art engaged, under thy christian, and especially thy ministerial, character, against those enemies that oppose the gospel and the salvation of men. Go on, therefore, resolutely, *retaining* the great principles of the christian *faith*,[a] 19
and with it the exercise of *a good conscience; which* last *some having thrust away*, and obstinately opposed its just dictates and remonstrances, *concerning faith have made shipwreck* upon the rocks of surrounding temptations, and so have lost all that precious treasure by which, had it been wisely guarded and improved, they might have been for ever rich and happy. *Of which* [*number,*] among others, *is Hymeneus and Alexander*,[b] with 20

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I

a *Faith.*] As it is here distinguished from a *good conscience*, it is plain that *faith* here signifies *an assent to the truth of christianity*, and consequently all arguments drawn from hence against the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints must be very inconclusive.

b *Hymeneus and Alexander.*] Probably this Alexander is the

SECT. 3. *whom* thou Timothy art not unacquainted, and who once professed a great regard to the gospel; but they are now turned apostates, and have behaved in so outrageous a manner, that *I have*, according to that extraordinary apostolic power with which God hath invested

1 TIM. I. 20 me for such purposes, solemnly *delivered* them both over *unto Satan, that they may learn*, by what they now suffer in their afflicted and diseased bodies, *not to blaspheme* the truths of Christ, or to revile his faithful servants, in such profane and wicked language as they have sometimes used when speaking of them.

have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 TIM. II. 1 But I will proceed in the charge which I proposed to address to thee, that, by a diligent and vigorous performance of thy duty, thou mayst be secure from falling into that miserable state in which thou seest others, who once seemed to set out well. *I exhort* thee *therefore, first*, as it is a duty of great importance in itself, and highly subservient to thy success in every other branch of this office, *that* earnest *supplications*,[c] repeated *prayers*, affectionate *intercessions*, [*and*] cheerful *thanksgivings*, *be made* by thee, and those whose devotions may in any degree fall under thy direction, *for all men*, for the 2 whole human race, whether Jew or Gentile, christian or pagan, friends or enemies: *And* particularly *for kings, and all who are in* any *exalted stations* of life; that their hearts may be so influenced as at least to tolerate the gospel, *that we*, who are by the principles of our religion taught to abhor every thing which would be injurious to them, *may* not be injured by them, but may be permitted to *pass a peaceful and quiet life*, while we are desirous to conduct ourselves not only without offence, but in a useful and exemplary manner, *in all piety and gravity*, attentive to the several duties which we owe both to God 3 and our fellow-creatures. *For this* [*is*] *good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour God*, who is the great Guardian of the rights of society, and never meant to encourage his ministers or people to violate or disturb it out of any pretences of a religious nature: 4 *Who* indeed *wills that all men should be saved*,[d] *and come to the acknowledgment of the truth* of his gospel, which they will be most likely to do, if they see the professors of it behaving in the manner I now recommend, and avoiding all occasions either of public 5 or private offence. Let us therefore accustom ourselves to take proper views, both of God and of mankind; *for* it is the grand fundamental principle of our religion, that [*there is*] *one God*, the Creator of all, the gracious Father of all his creatures, who is no Respecter of persons, *and one Mediator between God and men*, even *the Man Christ Jesus*[e] who hath not undertaken to plead for this or that nation or party of men alone, but whose kind offices in the court of heaven, where he now dwells, extend in some degree to the whole human race, and who refuses not the blessings he has procured to any that with 6 sincerity and humility cast themselves upon him. Let us make his extensive grace familiar to our mind, and live and act as those who remember our relation to that Saviour *who gave himself a Ransom for all*, so that no nation, no rank, no condition of men are excluded from the benefit of his death; *to be attested in due time* to the most distant regions of the world, that they may be called to put in their claim for that pardon and salvation which he hath purchased by his blood for all those who should believe in him.

1 Tim. ii. 1. I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men.

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For *there is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus:

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7 This is the declaration of that glorious gospel *of which I was appointed an herald* to proclaim the grace of it all abroad, *and* was sent forth as *an apostle* to attest that great and essential doctrine of it, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. *(I speak the truth in Christ*,[f] as thou Timothy well knowest. *I lie not* in pretending to such an extraordinary mission;) and I was not only in general ordained to this ministry, but by peculiar destination was appointed to be *a teacher of the Gentiles in* this holy *faith, and* in the whole 8 system of *truth* which it comprehends. *I therefore* give it in charge to them and to thee, with that authority which it becomes one who is so expressly called to this high office; and I *will* in particular, *that*, as prayer is so important a duty, *men pray in every place*, that over all the world, and not only in the temple or synagogues of the Jews, it be performed—in public assemblies, in families, and in secret retirements. And let them not only be taught in the general to perform it, but instructed as to the particular manner of

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lift-

person mentioned, Acts xix. 33. who might become worse and worse after Paul's departure from Ephesus, emboldened by his absence: so that the apostle might now be determined to deliver him up to Satan, to inflict upon him certain pains and evils, which might possibly reclaim him. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 14. and note there. Mr. Reynolds justly and finely observes, (*Letter to a Deist*, p. 256.) that when the apostles mention the names of apostates, and censure them with such freedom and severity, it affords a plain argument that they knew themselves to be entirely out of their power: for if they had been conscious of any thing to be feared from their discovery, they would have endeavoured to manage them more artfully, that they might not provoke them to the uttermost.

c *Supplications be made.*] That any man should ever have understood this phrase as a charge given to Timothy to *compose a liturgy* for the use of the clergy and people of Ephesus, appeared very surprising to me, when I saw it quoted from one Erasmus Warren; by Mr. Pierce; (*Vind.* p. 411.) but that the great and good Bishop Bull should have given so unnatural a turn to the phrase, as I find he has done in his *Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. II. No. 13. p. 543, &c. was such an instance of weak attachment to party prejudices, as is almost ready to make me weep.

d *Will have all men to be saved.*] It is far from being my design, in any of these notes, to enter deep into controversy, but I must confess I have never been satisfied with that interpretation which explains *all men* here, merely as signifying *some* of all sorts and ranks of men; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also *wills all men to be condemned.* On the other hand, if *many* are not saved, it is certain the words must be taken with some limitation, which the following clause, he wills their *coming to the knowledge of the truth*, must also prove. The meaning, therefore, seems to be, that God has made *sufficient* provision for the salvation of *all*, and that it is to be considered as the general declaration of his will, that *all* who know the truth themselves should publish it to all around them, so far as their influence can extend.

e *The Man Christ Jesus.*] Though the union of the *divine* nature with the *human* qualified Christ for the office of Mediator, yet I think this plainly shows that it is in his *human* nature we are to consider him as discharging it.

f *I speak the truth in Christ*, &c.] Paul uses such solemnity in asserting this doctrine, as the Jews were so much averse to it, and were ready to charge his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles either upon the want of a due regard to his own nation, or some view of avarice or ambition: looking on the Gentiles as most detestable creatures, and probably growing more inveterate against them in proportion to the degree in which they were compelled to permit them to dwell in their own holy land, and often to associate themselves with them.

ing up holy hands, without wrath and doubting:

doing it, that they may still be *holding up holy hands*,[g] undefiled with any pollution of cruelty, sensuality, or unrighteous gain. Let it also be performed *without wrath*, with the most placid and composed mind, the most mild and benevolent affection, *and* without *doubting*[h] too; with a lively faith in the power and wisdom, the goodness and faithfulness of God, and a cheerful dependence on all those gracious promises by which he encourages our addresses.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

In like manner[i] [*I would charge*] the *women also*, who are to be considered as comprehended in the former precepts, that they be particularly careful *to adorn themselves*[k] only *with decent apparel, with modesty and sobriety*, neither exceeding in the article of unnecessary and inconvenient expense, nor in the least degree entrenching on the strictest decorum. I have many reasons, both relating to themselves and others, to wish that they may *not* place their ornament so much *in plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or* rich and *costly garments; But in what* is itself infinitely more valuable, and much better *becomes women professing godliness*, and the gospel of Christ as the great rule of it, *in good works*; which will render them amiable in the eyes of God himself, and of all wise and virtuous persons with whom they converse.

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

They will no doubt be diligent in frequenting the public worship of God in your assemblies. And *let the woman* there *learn in silence, with all* becoming *submission* to those who associate, and with the regard due to such a congregation. *But I permit not a woman to teach* publicly, *nor to usurp authority over the man*, which she might seem to do by officiating under the character of a preacher. *But*, on the contrary, I charge her to be in silence at such a time. And indeed this is agreeable to what was intimated at the beginning of the world, and which passed in the earliest scenes of it. *For Adam was formed* the *first*[l] of the human species, from the dust of the earth, being, under God, its acknowledged lord and proprietor, and *then* no suitable companion being found for him among all the creatures which came to pay him their homage, *Eve* was produced from a rib taken out of his side, and presented as one whom God intended for a partner and helper to him. (Gen. ii. 18—22.) *And* it is farther to be recollected, that at the fatal entrance of sin into the world, *Adam was not* immediately *deceived*[m] by the fraud of the serpent, *but* that artful seducer chose to begin his attack on *the woman*, who, *being deceived* by him, *was* first *in the transgression*, and prevailed upon Adam, by her solicitations, to offend. Now it should be an humbling consideration to all her daughters, that their sex was so greatly interested in the introduction of guilt and misery, and make them less forward in attempting to be guides to others after such a miscarriage. *Yet* let them not be despised or upbraided on this account, considering, on the other side, that *she* was also happily instrumental in producing the great promised Seed, (Gen. iii. 15.) who was derived from a woman without any human father; and so they *shall be saved*, as I may say, *by child-birth*,[n] if there be a suitable readiness, not only to profess but to obey the gospel; and *if they continue* constant *in* the exercise of *faith, and love, and holiness, with* that *sobriety* of temper and conduct which I have now been recommending, and which both religion and prudence concur to recommend to all, and to that sex in particular.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

g *Lifting up holy hands.*] The expression of *holy hands* may allude to the custom of *washing their hands* before solemn prayer, which has prevailed not only among the Jews, but among heathens and Mahometans, that they might hereby express their desire of inward *purity*. And the caution against *wrath* might be more suitable, as the many injuries which the christians received from their persecutors might tempt them to some imprecations against them not agreeable to the gentle and benign genius of their religion. And would to God this might always be considered, that they who are to lead the devotions of others in free prayer may not mingle their own angry and irregular passions with their addresses; than which, I assuredly believe, scarce any thing can be more displeasing to God, more reproachful to christian assemblies, or more scandalously offensive to persons of a right temper and disposition.

h *Without doubting.*] Some would render χωρις διαλογισμων, *without debating* or disputing; but I think the more common interpretation preferable, as it suggests another very important thought, that is, the necessity of faith in prayer, according to the account given of it in the paraphrase.

i *In like manner.*] Some explain this as referring to what was to be attended to in *their assemblies*; but I think it evident that it refers to the charge the apostle had given to Timothy with such solemnity, in the beginning of the preceding sentence.

k *Adorn themselves*, &c.] Estius very justly observes, that this discourse concludes with yet stronger force against foppery in men.

l *Adam was formed the first.*] It is plain the apostle does not mean to put the whole of his argument upon the *priority* of the man's creation in point of time, for on that principle the birds and beasts would have the pre-eminence even to Adam. But he refers only to the human species, and to the regard which God expressed for the ease and comfort of man, by making the woman to be his companion and assistant. So that it is the same thought in fewer words, which is expressed more largely, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. *The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man*; and this I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase.

m *Adam was not* immediately *deceived.*] Diodati observes here, that the sacred history does not say that the man was deceived at all, thereby perhaps intimating his apprehension, as Milton long afterward represented it, that Adam, out of an excessive tenderness for his wife, offended against his better knowledge, at her persuasion, without expecting such effects from the *forbidden fruit* as she did. But certainly this is making the matter much worse on the *man's* side than on the *woman's*. I rather think the apostle hereby intimates that the tempter chose to make his first attack on the woman, as in her original and most glorious state the inferior, and consequently less fit in future life to take the lead in important affairs. As it seems in the general reasonable to suppose that much the same proportion of understanding may be observed in the respective sexes, and though there may be some excepted cases, yet that they are not so many as to affect the main force of the argument.

n *Child-birth.*] I have taken what on attentive deliberation seemed the most probable sense of this much controverted and very obscure scripture; and it is that in which the learned and judicious Dr. Wm. Harris acquiesces. (Har. *On Mess.* p. 54.) Mr. Locke (on Rom. vii. 5.) understands it of being *carried safely through child-bearing*, as the like expression, σωθησεται δια τεκνογονιας, seems to signify, 1 Cor. iii. 15. (see the note there,) which sense Dr. Whitby endeavours to illustrate at large; not indeed as an absolute promise, which fact shows it is not; but as a general intimation that pious women might cheerfully commit themselves to God in the hour of nature's distress, if they trusted in God, maintaining charity withal, persevering in chastity, and strictly adhering to the laws of temperance in every other respect. Mr. Pyle, from 1 Tim. iv. 3; v. 10—14. concludes that the apostle refers to some of those false teachers that condemned marriage as unlawful, or at least comparatively unclean. But I can by no means acquiesce in either of these senses; nor suppose, as some others have done, that τεκνογονια signifies, *the education of children*; though I am very sensible a due care in that respect is one of the most important duties and services which can be imagined to come within the verge of female life.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 3. 1 TIM. I. 19 II. May every christian learn by these apostolical dictates to retain faith and a good conscience, and be very solicitous that no exactness in the former be thought sufficient to compensate for a defect in the latter. Soon will that faith itself suffer shipwreck, where a good conscience sits not at the helm; or rather, soon will it serve only as a talent of gold to a man sinking in the sea, to plunge him so much the deeper. It will be a part of the character of one who desires to preserve a good conscience, to maintain a benevolence of heart towards the whole human race, and to breathe out that benevolence in prayer, which at the same time expresses and increases it.
1 And while all men have a share in it, kings and princes, in whose behaviour and temper the happiness of so many
2 thousands are concerned, have a peculiar claim to our devout remembrance. Above all let us pray for our own, that they may continue, as blessed be God his present Majesty hath long been,* and we have reason to hope his successors will be, the ministers of God for good. May our life, under such a government, be in one sense as
4 well as another quiet and peaceable, and may it be conducted in all godliness and honesty. Thus shall we do our part to subserve that gracious will of God, to effect which he hath done all that it was proper for him to do, that all men may be saved, as our walking in the truth may bring many to the knowledge of it. May that know-
5 ledge prevail more and more in the world, that the one God may be universally adored through the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, in whom deity dwells, and whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we worship, as exalted above all adoration and praise.
6 This only-begotten Son of God became a Man, that he might give himself a Ransom for us, a Ransom for all who
7 should believe in him. Blessed be God that we have received this important testimony, received it from Paul the apostle, received it from that faithful herald of such astonishing grace, who was divinely appointed to be a teacher of the Gentiles, and who to this day is teaching us by his writings, and in every section of them giving us lessons of infinite importance.
8 May we learn, from what he teaches here, not only the object to whom our prayers are to be directed, and the persons for whom they are to be offered, but likewise the temper from which they are to proceed. May our hands be holy, and our hearts overflowing with love, and firmly established in faith unfeigned, resting on the promises we plead, and rejoicing in an assured hope, that the eternal JEHOVAH, who so long since styled himself *the Hearer of prayer*, (Psal. lxv. 2.) will not now say to any humble and upright souls, *Seek ye me in vain*. In all our conduct let us remember we are in his presence, and let a concern to please him and to adorn our profession run
9 through every action of our lives. Let it direct our expenses and our dress: Let it engage us to maintain a con-
15 stant decorum in every circumstance, sacred or civil; to be in due subjection to our superiors, and to continue in faith and love, in holiness and sobriety.
13 Let the sex, to whom the concluding instructions of this section are peculiarly addressed, while they are humbled in the remembrance of that original offence in which Eve, our first mother, so unhappily led the way, rejoice in the
15 great victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent. And let the other sex, on which this was bestowed as a gift of so great value, that God judged it necessary to complete the felicity of paradise in its untainted bloom, never manifest the odious effects of the fall, by ungenerously upbraiding the daughters for the mother's fault, at the distance of so many generations; but rather rejoice, that as by woman came transgression, so by her came redemption too.
14 And let us all join in improving so invaluable a favour, and endeavouring to express our gratitude for it, by acting aright, according to the several relations which we sustain in life.

* The *author* had the happiness to write this in the *twenty-fourth year* of King George II. that father of his people, *by whom we enjoy great quietness, and by whose providence very worthy deeds are done unto this nation, which we* should *accept always, and in all places, with all thankfulness.*

SECTION IV.

The apostle instructs Timothy in the qualifications to be attended to in those who were to be set apart to the office of a pastor and deacon in the church. 1 Tim. iii. 1—13.

1 TIM. iii. 1.

SECT. 4. 1 TIM. III. *IT* [*is*] *a faithful saying*, most certain in itself, and worthy of being always acknowledged and attended to, that *if any one earnestly desireth the episcopal* or pastoral *office, he desireth a good work.* To feed the church of Christ, and to take the oversight of it, is indeed a very laborious employment; but it is also very honourable, and greatly tends to advance the glory of God, and to promote the good of mankind, if it be discharged in a
2 proper manner. *A bishop, therefore*, or an overseer of the flock of Christ, *must be blameless* in every respect with regard to his moral character, since any thing which may be amiss in him will tend to bring a reproach upon his office, and greatly to obstruct his usefulness. It is particularly requisite that, if he be a married man, he should be *the husband of* only *one wife*;[a] for if he have more than one at a time, or have divorced a former without sufficient excuse, and taken another during her life, it is an irregularity by no means to be countenanced in a person from whom it is natural to expect such exemplary purity of manners. It is also necessary that he be *watchful*, and not one of a slothful and indolent temper, who would sleep over so high and sacred a charge; that

1 TIM. iii. 1.
THIS *is* a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of

a *The husband of one wife.*] Mr. Hallet and Mr. Whiston both infer from hence, that *second marriages* are unlawful to the *clergy*; and the Muscovites suppose that one wife is so necessary, that no man can become a bishop till he be married, nor continue to exercise that office longer than his wife lives. (Perry's *Russia*, p. 230.) But circumstances may be so adjusted, that there may be as much reason for a second marriage as for the first, and as little inconvenience of any kind may attend it. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems to me most reasonable to believe, that (as there is no express precept in the Bible, requiring a man who had several wives at the time of his embracing christianity, to divorce or dismiss all but one) the divine wisdom might judge that it was a proper medium between encouraging polygamy, and too great a rigour in condemning it, to fix such a brand of infamy on this irregular practice, by prohibiting any man, let his character be ever so extraordinary, to undertake the ministry, while he had more than one wife, and to discourage it in those already converted, by such passages as Matt. xix. 9; and 1 Cor. vii. 2.

SECT 4.

1 TIM. III.

good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

he be *prudent* and steady in his behaviour, regular and *decent*, guarding against those little indecorums which expose men to contempt, even where there is nothing grossly vicious in their conduct. And it is particularly desirable that he be *given to hospitality*;[b] as christians, who travel from one place to another, will naturally go to the minister's house, if they are strangers in the place, and expect, on account of their common profession, to be received there. He must also be a person of such natural abilities, and so instructed in the doctrines of christianity, as that he should be *fit to teach*[c] publicly, as well as to preside in other respects. *Not one that sitteth long over wine*, or any other kind of strong liquor, *or* that has so little government of himself as to be *ready to strike* those that displease him. He must *not* be *attached to* any method of *sordid* and dishonourable *gain*,[d] *but* must be *moderate* in all his desires and passions; *not given to contention, not a lover of money*, so as to take a pleasure in hoarding it up, even if it be justly and properly his own. It is also evidently desirable that he should be *one who presides well over his own house, having his children*, if he be a father, *in subjection, with all gravity*, that their follies may not bring a reproach upon the family, and by consequence in some measure upon himself: *For if any one cannot preside over his own house*, in such a manner as to preserve a due decorum in the family, where he has such a natural authority, *how shall he* be able to *take care of the church of God*,[e] where there will be such a diversity of persons and tempers, over which it will be impossible for him to maintain an equal inspection and influence? A bishop also should *not* be *one newly converted* to christianity, *lest*, not having had a sufficient acquaintance with its principles, nor establishment in the duties it teaches, *he should be lifted up with pride*, in consequence of his distinguished character, and arrogate to himself an authority and dominion which God never intended for him. [*And*] should this be the case, *he* might easily *fall into the condemnation of the devil*, who was intoxicated with self-conceit, and so rose up into mad rebellion against God, that he might obtain that greater exaltation to which he imagined his own excellency gave him a claim.[f] *It is necessary also*, in order to a pastor's filling up this important office with a becoming dignity, *that he have a good report of those that are without, lest he* should otherwise *fall into reproach, and* in consequence of that be taken in *the snare of the devil*,[g] who will easily know how to graft temptations upon that circumstance, to draw him aside, one way or another, from that strictness and correctness of behaviour which suits his distinguished station.

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all gravity:

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover, he must have good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

This may suffice concerning the principal order of ministers in the church of Christ, bishops, pastors, or elders. *In like manner*, [*let*] me now say something relating to *the* other order, I mean that of *deacons*, who are more immediately appointed to serve tables, and especially to take care of the poor. (Acts vi. 2.) Concerning these I would observe, that it is of importance that they likewise [*be*] *grave* in their deportment, that they may avoid that contempt which the excesses of levity are ready to produce. They should *not* by any means be *double-tongued*, deceitful, or inconstant in their words, as they may chance to come into different companies; *nor addicted to much wine*, which will render them utterly unfit for their office; *nor greedy of dishonourable gain*, which may tempt them to violate their engagements to the church, and appropriate its stock lodged in their hands to private uses, rather than those charitable purposes for which it was collected. In one word, let them be persons well instructed in the doctrines of christianity, and *retaining the* sublime and long concealed *mystery of* our holy *faith*, not merely as a point of speculation, but practice; and let it ever be held *in a pure* and undefiled *conscience*, and those only chosen into this office who seem conscientious men in the judgment of charity. *And let even these be first proved* and tried for a while, and *then, if they be* upon trial [*found*] to be *blameless, let them use the office of a deacon.*

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

b *Given to hospitality.*] Let it be observed once for all, that as there were then in the eastern countries few houses of public entertainment, *hospitality* was a virtue more peculiarly seasonable and necessary than among us; I mean so far as it related to the accommodation of entire strangers on their travels.

c *Apt to teach.*] The Bishop of Winchester lays some stress on our not meeting with any directions relating to *ordination* in this enumeration of the offices of a bishop or presbyter: (for so candid and judicious a writer could not but acknowledge they are here words of the same signification.) But it is strange he should not have observed, that nothing is here said of *administering the sacraments*, which concur with many other circumstances to show how far the apostle was from intending a full representation of *all* the pastoral duties. And it may be added, that the directions he afterwards gives to Timothy, on the head of *ordination*, may suggest instruction in this respect to all ministers. And it must be submitted to consideration, whether the omission of any charge to presbyters, enjoining them to obey their bishop as a person of superior authority, does not weigh much more one way, than the omission pleaded above can avail the other. See Hoadly, *Of Episcop.* p. 390.

d *Attached to sordid gain.*] It is remarkable that this phrase is seldom or never used in the New Testament to express *any gain* but that which is made or procured by the *covetousness of christian ministers*; and never surely does an eagerness or greediness in pursuit of money appear more dishonourable and sordid than in persons of that noble, but, alas! too often prostituted, profession.

e *Who presides well over his own house*, &c.] Exactly parallel to this is a wise saying of Confucius, when directing princes to take care of their families: "It is impossible that he who knows not "how to govern and reform his own family, should rightly govern "and reform a people." Conf. *Mor.* p. 38.

f *Condemnation of the devil.*] Many have imagined that the first instance of Satan's pride was an affectation of *equality with God*; but others have thought that improbable, and have concluded it was the breach of some positive law, either relating to the manner in which God required to be worshipped, or the order and station of the angelic squadrons, or refusing some appointed ministry to some lower world, or rejecting the dominion of God's incarnate Son, who might in general be revealed as the future Head of angels as well as men. This last is the scheme which Milton prefers, and it is insisted upon at large in Reyn. *Quer. of the Ang. World, Q.* xvi. p. 13—28. But though it is certain the crime was *pride*, our conjectures may never be able to determine what was the particular instance; nor is the inquiry by any means necessary.

g *Snare of the devil.*] Some have explained the word, Διαβολος, of some human *slanderer*, but it seems to me much more natural to understand it in the sense it has just above, where I think it must signify our great *infernal enemy*. And it is easy to see that Satan might graft many dangerous temptations on the evil report which a man might have incurred by any scandal, before he entered on the ministry; either attempting to draw him to the repetition of former evils, from an apprehension that he had very little reputation to lose by a new fall, or weakening his hands in efforts of usefulness, by a fear that the remembrance of those past irregularities would render his attempts less effectual. Thoughts worthy the consideration of all who design themselves for the ministry, and especially to be recollected, when persons who have been remarkably profligate are desirous of undertaking it, or returning to it.

SECT. 4. 1 TIM. III. 11 *In like manner* [*let*] *the wives* of the deacons, and therefore much more of the bishops, [*be*] *grave* and sober in their deportment, *not* according to the example of the great enemy, that malignant spirit, who has his very name from thence, *false accusers* of the brethren and others. Let them also be *watchful* for occasions of doing good, and guard against every temptation to evil, and let them be *faithful in all things* which are committed to their care, lest their imprudent and unfaithful conduct should bring the character of their husbands under suspicion.

11 Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 *Let the deacons*, as well as the bishops, *be the husbands of* only *one wife*, and let them be men of prudence and resolution, *governing their children and* other members of *their own houses well;* that no irregularity at home may disgrace the society they belong to.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 It is necessary to be thus cautious, though their ministry be but of an inferior rank; *for they who have discharged the office of a deacon well, procure to themselves* not only a fair report in the general, but very often *a good degree*[h] of farther advancement in a higher office; *and* they lay a foundation for *great boldness in* professing *the faith which is in Christ Jesus*. Their acquaintance with the affairs of the church will render them more capable of defending it than many others can. And the honourable testimony borne to their character, by advancing them to this trust, and continuing them in it, will also embolden them to plead more freely, and engage the more respectful attention.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE teachers of others, and those who preside in the highest offices which Christ has founded in his church, may learn from this passage their duty as well as their dignity and honour. Let them remember, the work they
Ver. 1 have desired and engaged in is a good work. Let them think and speak, not arrogantly and tyrannically, but respectfully and solemnly, of their office, and let them cultivate all these excellent qualities which may fit them to dis-
2, 3 charge it aright; sobriety and vigilance, gravity and hospitality, the strictest temperance, the most diffusive benevolence. Let them rise far above those low views which are to worldly-minded ministers the occasion of so many scandalous contentions, which so often establish a separate interest, and produce a secret and mutual aversion between them and their people.

Let the churches of Christ attend to this charge, to direct them in the choice of their pastors; and let ministers of standing and reputation, under whose guidance the matter may in part fall, be very careful that they do not
12, 13 encourage any to undertake the work who are deficient in these things: things of such importance, that it is certain no genius and learning can make up for the want of them. If deacons, in their inferior station, are to be free from such stains, and to be remarkable for such virtues as are here described, how much more should the pastors themselves be so, to whom the inspection of the deacons is also committed!

Let the ministers of Christ therefore study to excel in them more and more. And let such as are but lately
6 entered on their work, though not novices in the language of the apostle, yet be on their guard, lest they be lifted up with pride, and so fall into the condemnation of the devil. But from this lurking and insinuating evil who is secure? Let all ministers learn to draw an occasion of exercising humility from what might in another view seem a temptation to vanity, a survey of the dignity and excellency of their office. For how justly may this humble them, when they reflect on the many imperfections which attend their discharge of it!

5, 15 To conclude: let all who are in any degree distinguished in the church, be excited to a care of presiding in a proper manner over their own families: and since it is evident that the apostolic rule allows of marriage, and supposes that, by whatever doctrine of devils it might be forbidden, it would generally be practised by the ministers of Christ, let them, however, take care to make choice of companions in conjugal life, who may adorn and bless the houses to which they belong, and lessen, rather than increase, the difficulties inseparable from their own station and office.

SECTION V.

Though he hoped quickly to have an interview with Timothy, the apostle recommends the care of the church to him; in which view he raises his idea of the charge he received, and represents the difficulties attending the faithful execution of it, in consequence of those pernicious doctrines which false teachers would endeavour to introduce. 1 Tim. iii. 14, *to the end;* iv. 1—5.

1 TIM. iii. 14.

SECT. 5. 1 TIM. III. 15 *THESE things* which thou hast now been reading concerning the character of persons who are to be intrusted with the office of bishops and deacons, *I write to thee, hoping to come to thee shortly.*[a] *But if I delay*, I give thee these instructions, *that thou mayst know how it becomes thee to converse in the house of God*, in which thou hast the honour to bear so high an office; even in that house *which is the church of the living God*. But I will not inculcate the matter farther, contenting myself with reminding thee, that *the* very *pillar and ground of* the whole system of gospel-*truth*,[b] upon which the

1 TIM. iii. 14.

THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

h *A good degree.*] As a learned education was not in this age of extraordinary gifts so necessary in the superior offices of the church as it has since been; and as it is highly probable deacons might frequently officiate as occasional teachers in public assemblies, it might be matter of prudence to chuse their elders or pastors out of the deacons, to which the apostle here evidently refers.

a *Hoping to come to thee shortly.*] It seems evident from hence, that Paul intended to have come back to Timothy at Ephesus in a little time, but was providentially called another way; but it can by no means be concluded from hence (as has been shown in the Introduction) that Paul wrote this Epistle to Timothy after his first imprisonment at Rome.

b *The pillar and ground of truth.*] Though it is, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, very true that this title is sometimes given by the rabbies to the members of the great *sanhedrim*, at least when assembled together, yet no interpretation of this text seems more precarious than that which refers it to the *church*. That had just before been called a *house*, and therefore cannot naturally be called a *pillar or foundation*. Yet if it were to be granted, it would only prove that the church was to support christianity from age to age, (which it has certainly done,) not that any particular church is infallible. But it is well known that many good critics refer this descriptive clause to Timothy, agreeably to that figure by which Peter is called a *pillar*, Gal. ii. 9. (Compare Rev. iii. 12.) But, I

16 And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

support of the entire edifice depends, *And* which is *confessedly great*, beyond all controversy and contradiction, *is the mystery of godliness*, that wonderful and sublime doctrine which it is our great business to assert and enforce, and which has so evident a tendency to promote true godliness in all its branches; *God was manifested in the flesh* of our blessed Redeemer, in whose human nature the incarnate Deity dwelt; and thus he was *justified in* and by *the Spirit*, whose extraordinary communication, in the midst of all the meanness of human nature in its suffering state, vindicated his high claim, and marked him out, in the most illustrious manner, for the Divine Person he professed himself to be. He was *seen of angels*, and gazed at by them in various circumstances of his life and death, as a most astonishing and instructive Spectacle. He was *preached among the Gentiles*, who were invited to embrace his religion, upon assurance of being received to equal privileges with the Jews. He was also *believed on in the world*, many of the most distant nations already coming in to the christian profession, and pressing for a share in the benefit of it. And at length, when his ministry on earth was completed, he was *received up into glory*, and seated on a throne in the heavens, where he presides over all things for the good of his church, and answers nobler purposes with regard to it than his corporeal presence here could have done.

SECT. 5. — 1 TIM. III. 16

1 Tim. iv. 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

These great doctrines of our holy faith are worthy of being recollected by every christian, and of being insisted upon by every minister. *But the Spirit* of divine inspiration, in the scriptures of truth,[c] and in evangelical prophets, particularly in me, *expressly saith* and testifies *that in the last times*,[d] in ages yet to come, *some* who are under the dispensation of the gospel, and make great pretences to zeal in its interests, *shall apostatize from* the purity of *the* original *faith: giving heed to deceitful spirits*, who shall endeavour to impose upon them by false though specious appearances, *and* to various *doctrines of demons*,[e] and particularly such doctrines relating to the spirits of dead men, as the devil, the great author and abettor of lies, shall suggest to them for the most pernicious purposes.

1 TIM. IV. 1

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

For they will come to be worshippers of dead idols and departed spirits, as in Israel also they worshipped them; *through the hypocrisy of* the most abandoned and shameless *liars*,[f] spreading their errors under pretence of sanctity; *whose own conscience is* so *seared* and cauterized, that they feel no manner of remorse for the grossest frauds, by which they impose on the weak and credulous with impious pretences to a divine revelation. They will indeed endeavour to gain the good opinion of men, as persons of extraordinary sanctity and mortification; in this view *requiring*, especially from the ministers of Christ, *abstinence from marriage*,[g] as if it were an impure state, [*and*] less pleasing to God than that of celibacy. They will also urge men *to refrain from* various kinds of *meats*, *which God*, the bountiful Former of all things, *hath created* for our nourishment and entertainment, *to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by those who know the truth*, and so are instructed to place religion not in such indifferent things as these, but in things more truly excellent and worthy of God. *For* whatever these deceivers may suggest, and however they may represent the matter, *every creature of God* [*is*] *good, and nothing* [*is*] *to be rejected* under a colour of scrupling the lawfulness of it, [*provided it be*] *received with thanksgiving: For it is* in that case *sanctified by the word of God*, which allows the use, *and* by *prayer*, which draws down a blessing upon it. And when persons attend to the instructions of God's word, and maintain converse with him by prayer, seeking thereby in particular his blessing upon their food, they may indifferently use on any days all kinds of wholesome nourishment, not excepting those which were most strictly forbidden by the Mosaic law, for reasons peculiar to that dispensation, and therefore to expire when the authority of that law was to cease.

2

3 Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

3

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.

4

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.

5

think, had this been the construction, the accusative case would have been used, to agree with σε understood. I therefore chuse to end the sentence with the word ζωντος, and begin the next with φυλος, as in the version and paraphrase; and then the whole system of evangelical truths is considered as resting on this *pillar* and *basis*, as εδραιωμα may signify.

c In the scriptures of truth, &c.] I have paraphrased this clause in its greatest extent; because, as there are some passages in the Old Testament which have been supposed, though I think not very expressly, to look this way, it is highly probable that others who had the gift of prophecy (as we are sure many at that time had) might predict so memorable and important an event, as Paul certainly had done before. (See 2 Thess. ii. 1, &c.) But the inspiration of the New Testament in general rests on much stronger evidence than what arises from this clause.

d *In the last times.*] Though it is certain that (as Dr. Whitby here proves at large) the phrase of the *last days* does often signify the concluding period of the Jewish church, and the first age of christianity; yet I cannot perceive that it is so confined to this, but that the whole period, or time under the reign of the Messiah, may be spoken of in this language.

e *Doctrines of demons.*] Archbishop Tillotson follows Mr. Joseph Mede in explaining this, as expressing *worship paid to* the spirits of *the dead*. (Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 53.) But though this be undoubtedly one branch of that diabolical doctrine which the church of Rome hath followed, I see no sufficient reason for limiting the phrase to that detestable tenet.

f *Through the hypocrisy of liars*, &c.] A very ingenious critic (many of whose remarks on scripture deserve attention) has urged the authority of Epiphanius for inserting into the former part of this verse the following words, as spoken by the apostle: Εσονται γαρ νεκροις λατρευοντες ως και εν τω Ισραηλ επεξαθησαν. (Epiph. *Hær.* 78. p. 1055. Ed. Col.) But the credit of *one copy* cannot be so considerable as to warrant such an *addition* to the sacred text, especially considering how *late* that citation was made, and how absolutely impossible it would have been, after the time of Epiphanius, to have corrected all the copies by erasing from them these words, of which no trace is any where else to be found. I rather think that this father, very far, to be sure, from being a correct writer, has confounded two quotations together, and in these words referred to 1 Cor. x. 7. illustrated by Psal. cvi. 28. of which he had an imperfect remembrance; or that by φησι (with which the passage is introduced) we are to understand, "*he means*," and then it will be only the gloss of Epiphanius. In this sense Mr. Mede took it, in his *Discourse on the Apostasy of the latter Times*. Yet as this seems a remarkable comment of so ancient a writer, I was willing to insert it in my paraphrase, though I could not mark it as any part of the text. The construction of the original in these two verses, προσεχοντες πνευμασι εν υποκρισει ψευδολογων, makes it necessary to vary from our translation in the manner I have here done. See *Crit. Not. on Script.* p. 92—103.

g *Abstinence from marriage and* various kinds of *meat.*] The original words, κωλυοντων γαμειν, απεχεσθαι βρωματων, contain, as Mr. Blackwall well observes, one of the boldest ellipses in the whole New Testament, where a word is to be understood contrary to that which is before expressed. But he shows that some of the most celebrated classical writers, and particularly Horace and Cicero, take the same liberty. Blackw. *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 72, 73.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 5. WHAT the Spirit of God expressly spake has been so expressly accomplished, as plainly to prove the divine original of this oracle, and of all that are connected with it. The grand apostasy of the latter days is made manifest, the seducing spirits have effectually done their part, the world has given heed to them and wandered 1 TIM. IV. after them; so that doctrines of devils have almost cast out from his own church the doctrine of Christ. No testimony of hypocritical liars hath been wanting to confirm the fraud to the utmost of their power, and the whole 3 conduct of it seems to declare to how dreadful a degree it is possible for conscience to be seared. Marriage has been forbidden, while the pardon of fornication, adultery, and incest, have been rated at a certain price by that grand merchant of the souls of men, who hath ventured to call himself the vicar of Christ upon earth. By him men have been taught to place the greater part of religion in abstaining from meats, in attending unintelligible jargon, instead of the service of God's sanctuary, and in transforming the high solemnities of the simplest and most rational worship that ever was instituted, into a ceremonious farce. Adored be divine providence and grace, that any parts of the once dark domains of this man of sin have been awakened to assert the purity of the christian faith and worship, and to seek to purge away the reproach and infamy which such adulterations had brought upon the name! Blessed be God that our attention is diverted from these trifles and monsters, these mysteries of folly and III. mysteries of iniquity, to the great mystery of godliness! Let it be familiar to our thoughts. The manifestation of 16 God in the flesh! A sight which the angels beheld with wonder, while the blessed Spirit sealed the authority of God's incarnate Son, and attested his gospel among the Gentiles, till the world was brought to believe in him; so that he looked down from the throne of glory, to which he was received, and saw his own oracle fulfilled, *If I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.* (John xii. 32.) May this mysterious yet resplendent truth be strenuously maintained, and practically preached, by all the ministers of the gospel: may they show, in every 15 other respect, that they know how to behave themselves aright in the house of the living God; and may many IV. by these means be brought to believe and to know the truth in its vital energy. Then will the common enjoy- 3, 4, 5 ments of life have an additional relish, being received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

SECTION VI.

Paul gives many good advices to Timothy to attend to the great essentials of religion, patiently to endure all afflictions, to behave with the most exact decorum and exemplary care, and study to improve the gifts with which God had honoured him, for the edification of the church and the salvation of souls. 1 Tim. iv. 6, *to the end.*

1 TIM. iv. 6.

SECT. 6. *IF thou shalt* be careful frequently to *suggest these* great and weighty *things*[a] of which I have now been writing *to the brethren* who are committed to thy charge, and to remind them of their importance with becoming zeal and affection, *thou shalt be a good minister* 1 TIM. IV. *of Jesus Christ*, and shalt act as may be expected from one who has been *nourished up* from his very childhood *in the words of faith and of good doctrine, which thou hast* 7 *accurately traced out*, and followed with suitable diligence. *But* these *profane and old wives' fables*[b] of which many of the Jewish allegorical and traditionary teachers are so fond, do thou *reject* as things altogether unworthy of thy regard, *and* rather take care strenuously to *exercise thyself* in those doctrines and practices which have the most immediate tendency 8 *to* promote real *godliness*. *For* that *bodily exercise* about which many are so solicitous, and in the pursuit of which they go through so many fatigues in preparing for and attending the public games, *is profitable to* but very *little*,[c] the best rewards of it being of a very transient and fading nature; *but* true, substantial, practical *godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise* both *of the present and future life*;[d] naturally tending to promote our real happiness in this world, and being surely and alone effectual to secure 9 the blessedness of the next. *This* [*is*] *a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance;* receive it, therefore, and retain it carefully, and inculcate it upon those who are committed 10 to thy charge, or whom thou mayst be concerned in setting apart for the ministry. *For* the advancement of *this* godliness is the *end* of all the hardships *we* encounter; while we *both* pass through the most fatiguing *labour, and suffer* the sharpest *reproach* and the most violent outrage, *because we have hoped*, and continue to hope, *in the* protection and fa-

1 TIM. iv. 6.

IF thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

10 For therefore we both labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the liv-

a *Suggest.*] Raphelius, *in loc.* justly observes, that this is the exact signification of the word υποτιθεμενος. For the import of παρηκολουθηκας, see on Luke i 3.

b *Old wives' fables.*] This undoubtedly signifies, *Jewish traditions.* (Compare chap. i. 4, 6; Tit. i. 14.) If they were such as those with which the rabbinical writers, so far as I have had an opportunity of judging of them, abound, nothing ever better deserved the name, they being not only the most *incredible*, but the most insipid and *senseless*, *tales* any where to be met with.

c *Bodily exercise is profitable to little:* Γυμνασια.] It seems much more reasonable, with Dr. Whitby and Dr. Edwards, (*On Script.* Vol. II. p. 167, 168.) to refer this to the celebrated exercises at the Grecian games, (of which Dr. West has given so entertaining and useful an account in the *Dissertation* prefixed to his *Pindar*,) than to those severities of the Jewish Essenes which some other commentators mention. These strenuous exercises might promote strength and courage; they would naturally raise high emulation; and the victors received great honours, and sometimes valuable immunities and privileges. Perhaps, indeed, some of these might hardly balance personal injuries they might meet with in them; and many had suffered much who received no reward at all. But the apostle stands not on this; he plainly intimates, that where men succeeded best, the greatest advantages they received by their victory all fell infinitely short of those which true religion secures.

d *Promise of the present and future life.*] *Godliness*, under the New-Testament dispensation, has no particular promise of *health*, or *reputation*, or *wealth*, or any other individual blessing, though in its natural consequences it wears a most friendly aspect upon *all*; but it has the promise of *comfort* and *happiness* in general; and that declaration of Christ, that the good man shall *receive an hundred fold*, even *in the midst of persecution*, if that should be his lot, (Mark x. 30.) might alone be sufficient to vindicate the apostle in this assertion. I have often wondered that so great a man as the present Bishop of London should suppose a reference here to the covenant with Noah, by which he supposes the original fertility of the earth was restored after the deluge; since there are so many other temporal promises made to the righteous; and the benefit of this is common both to good and bad men, admitting his Lordship's hypothesis as to the sense of it. See Dr. Sherl. *On Proph.* p. 111.

ing God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

11 These things command and teach.

12 Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

vour of the *living God, who is the Saviour* and Preserver *of all men*,[e] by his gracious providence, and *especially of the faithful* souls who cordially believe and sincerely obey the gospel; for whom he reserves the most invaluable blessings of a future state, and whom he will guide safely to it through all the dangers of this. *These*, my dear Timothy, are *things* of the greatest importance,[f] and, therefore, *give* them solemnly *in charge and teach* them to all, as thou hast opportunity. SECT. 6. 1 TIM. IV.

And that thou mayst inculcate them with the greater efficacy, *let* it be thy care to behave in such a manner that *no man* may be able to *despise thy youth; but*, on the contrary, let thy whole behaviour command a reverence to it, while others see that, young as thou art in years, thou art old in wisdom, piety, and universal goodness. *Be thou*, therefore, *an example to* all *the faithful, in* prudent and useful *speech, in* a grave, steady, and consistent *conversation, in* unbounded *love*, and *in* a candid yet zealous *spirit*,[g] *in* uniform and incorruptible *fidelity*, and *in* unspotted *purity*, by which all suspicion of evil shall be avoided, and even all occasion of apology superseded. And *till I come* back to Ephesus to take thee along with me, if Providence favour my purpose of returning, or if not, till I may have an interview with thee elsewhere, make the best improvement of thy time, as considering the greatness of thy work, and the various furniture which it requires. In this view, *attend to reading* the scriptures and other useful writings, and *to* the important care of *exhortation*, and *to teaching*, both in public and private. *Neglect* not, by proper and strenuous exercise, to rouse and cultivate *that gift* of God's Holy Spirit *which is in thee, which was given thee* in a large and sensible effusion on that ever-memorable day when thou wert set apart to thy sacred office *by* the ministration of those who had the gift of *prophecy*, by which they were enabled and excited to foretell something extraordinary concerning thee. *With* such a token of his special presence did God honour *the imposition of the hands of the* whole *presbytery*,[h] who concurred with me in recommending thee to his blessing by that solemn rite. *Meditate* therefore *on these things*, which I have now been writing thee by way of direction and charge; *be always employed in* attending to *these things, that thy improvement in all* that can conduce to the honourable and faithful discharge of thine office *may be* made *manifest* to all around thee. In a word, remember that thou art surrounded with numberless temptations, and that the trust committed to thee is a matter of infinite importance. *Take heed*, therefore, *to thyself*, to thine own temper and conduct; *and* take heed *to* [*thy*] *doctrine*, both with respect to the matter and manner of thy teaching, and *continue in them*, making this the whole of thy business and care. The fatigue, indeed, may be great, and many of the restraints to which thou mayst be subjected for the present disagreeable; but the happy consequence will counterbalance all; *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and thy hearers*.[i] It will be the means not only of delivering thine own soul in the great day of account, but of improving thy happiness to unknown degrees; and though it is not in thy power to command success, yet thou hast great encouragement to hope that God will so bless thy labours as to make thee instrumental in delivering many souls from death, and raising them to complete and everlasting felicity. 11 12 13 14 15 16

IMPROVEMENT.

It is doubtless a very great advantage to christians, and especially to the ministers of Christ, to have been nourished and educated in the words of faith and of good doctrine; and they who are honoured with the great trust of training them up should be particularly careful on this head, remembering that no other branches of learning are of comparable importance to any christian, and much less to those whose business it must be to maintain the faith of Christ in the world, and to instruct others in his doctrine both publicly and privately. Ver. 6

But to do this with success, and to command that reverence which it is desirable for the public good they should command, whether they be younger or elder, it is necessary that they endeavour to be examples to other believers in their whole conversation and deportment, in word and in spirit patterns of charity, faith, and purity. To qualify them more abundantly for such a work, whatever their gifts may be, whether of nature or of grace, it will be necessary to stir them up by frequent exercise, and to cultivate them by reading and meditation, as well as prayer; 12 14 13

e *Saviour of all men.*] This seems a title parallel to that in Job vii. 20. *Preserver of men*; but he is especially the *Saviour of believers*, as he extends to them the noblest and most important deliverance.

f *These* are *things* of the greatest importance.] The following expression of *giving them in charge*, shows that these words refer not merely to what was mentioned in the former clause, but to the whole preceding discourse.

g *In spirit.*] Some explain this of an industrious improvement of the *gifts* of the *Holy Spirit*, and have urged it as a proof that Timothy was possessed of such extraordinary endowments of this kind as raised him far above the rank of an ordinary minister That he had miraculous gifts is certain; (compare ver. 14.) but the proof of it from these words, which admit another sense so naturally and fairly, must be very precarious.

h *Gift—by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.*] The presbyters seemed to have laid on their hands with Paul, when Timothy was solemnly set apart to the ministerial work; and as the Spirit was often given by the imposition of the apostles' hands alone, (compare 2 Tim. i. 6; Acts viii. 17, 18.) we cannot suppose those of Paul would be less efficacious in this circumstance. (See *Misc. Sacr.* Vol. II. Ess. ii. p. 70.) It is strange that a man of Mr. Slater's good sense should have thought of interpreting *presbytery* here of the *whole college* of the *apostles*. There is no reason at all to believe that they were now together, or that any of them was with Paul at *Timothy's ordination*; for there is no hint of its being performed at Jerusalem, where a *few*, though but a few, of them might perhaps reside at this time. (See *Orig. Draught*, p. 184.) As this text strongly implies that Timothy was adorned with some supernatural gifts, so it also proves that the degree in which such favours were continued did very much depend on the diligence and fidelity with which they were cultivated by the person who had received them.

i *Save thyself and thy hearers.*] I cannot forbear observing here, though it be not a critical remark, that the salvation of others may accidentally have some influence upon a man's own salvation; as the better those about him are, the more advantage he has for religious improvement, the fewer hinderances from duty and temptations to sin. And the argument for imitation is much strengthened, when it comes from a person placed in an inferior station, from whom, therefore, less might be expected in that view than from ourselves. But certainly the thought chiefly referred to here is the necessity of acting faithfully in the ministry, in order to being entitled to the divine promise of salvation, in which persons who betray so important a trust can have no part.

SECT. 6. that their stock may be increasing; that their profiting may appear unto all; and that they may lose no advantage they can secure, of rendering their exhortations and instructions worthy the regard of the wisest and best, as well as the least and weakest, of those committed to their care.

1 TIM. IV. But surely, whatever difficulties may lie in their way, and whatever fatigues, or censures, or sufferings they may encounter, while thus employed, the prospect of success may sweeten all. If they may save themselves and 16 those that hear them; if they may give up an account with joy; if they may see souls recovered from the tyranny of sin and the kingdom of Satan, now, and at length, after having anticipated the pleasures of heaven upon earth, raised to the full enjoyment of those pleasures above,—they will bless the remembrance of their labours. Yea, the very consciousness of spending life in such pursuits, must, to a generous and pious mind, afford unspeakably more delight than the acquisition and enjoyment of any thing which the children of this world pursue, and perhaps some of them with equal fatigue.

8 Let christians in other stations also be quickened to exert themselves in the same blessed cause, remembering that while other things, for which men labour as in the fire, can profit but little, godliness is profitable to all. It hath so far the promise of this life, that the godly man shall not want any thing that his Father and his God knows to be truly good for him; and he will probably be abundantly happier in this world, amidst all the calamities to which he may be exposed, than in like circumstances he could possibly have been without such a principle of piety in his heart: and it has absolutely the promise of the life which is to come, and that such a life, so glorious and so lasting, that the very mention of it may well swallow up the thoughts of this life and its 9 interests, any farther than as they are connected with that. Let us then receive the word with all readiness, and 10 pursue those glorious objects, trusting in the living God, who, while he scatters the bounties of his common providence on all, is in a peculiar and most important sense, the Saviour, the Guardian, the Father of those who believe.

SECTION VII.

Directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances, and particularly elders and widows; which leads the apostle to give some advices concerning those matrons who were entrusted by the church with some peculiar office, and supported out of the public stock in the discharge of it. 1 Tim. v. 1—16.

1 TIM. v. 1.

SECT. 7. THY office, O Timothy, will often oblige thee to censure the conduct of others, and sometimes of those who are more advanced in age than thyself. But remember to do it with a becoming modesty and tenderness. *Rebuke not an aged man*[a] *severely, but* rather

1 TIM. V *exhort* [*him*] *as a father* to perform whatever duty he neglects, or to avoid those temptations which may be dangerous to him: [*and*] as to *the younger*, though thou mayst use 1 more freedom with them, yet remember still to treat them with kindness and affection *as* 2 *brethren*, and not with a lordly and supercilious contempt. Address thyself to *the aged women as mothers*, [*and*] to *the younger as sisters, with all chastity*, and the strictest decorum in thy converse with them; remembering how many eyes are upon thee, and how fatal any thing which might in that respect bring the least blemish upon thy character would be to the honour and success of thy ministry, and to the credit of the gospel and 3 its professors. *Honour*, and endeavour honourably to support, those *widows who are truly widows*,[b] and whose destitute circumstances recommend them as the certain objects 4 of charity. *But if any widow hath children or grandchildren*, who are capable of supporting her, *let them learn to exercise* grateful *piety at home, and to repay* the benefits they have received from *their parents*, or remoter progenitors, in their necessities, before they talk of extending their generosity to others; *for this is* good and decent, fair and *beautiful* in the eyes of men, *and* it is likewise *acceptable before God*, who requires us, out of regard to his honour and favour, to attend carefully to the duties of those relations in which we stand to each other.

5 *Now*, that you may understand the character to which I advise you to confine your charitable exhibitions, I must add, that *she who is truly a widow, and* thus *left alone*, and destitute of the assistance of human friends, is one that *hopeth in* the good providence of *God*, reposing herself with humble confidence on his faithful care, *and continues* constantly *day and night*[c] *in supplications and prayers*, makes devotion her business, in the proper return of its daily seasons, and endeavours to be as much at leisure for it as her cir- 6 cumstances in life will permit. *But she that liveth luxuriously*, as some christian widows, to the great shame and scandal of their profession, do, *is* indeed *dead while she* 7 *liveth*,[d] as to the noblest ends and purposes of life. *And* as this is a very important article, and *these things*, in some degree, affect christians of all circumstances and relations in life, who are too ready to lose themselves in the pursuit of sensual pleasure, I desire thou wouldst *give* them *in charge* to all thy hearers, *that* so *they may* in this respect *be blameless*,[e] and that by maintaining a due government of themselves, and strenu-

1 TIM. v. 1. REBUKE not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father, *and* the younger men as brethren.

2 The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

a *An aged man.*] The opposition between elder and younger plainly shows that πρεσβυτερος here signifies, an *aged person*, which may farther be argued from the opposition between elder and younger in the next verse.

b *Truly such.*] Here is, as Calvin justly observes, an allusion to the Greek word χηρα, which signifies a person in *distressed* and *indigent* circumstances.

c *Day and night.*] That is, *continually*, morning and evening, and on every proper occasion, by night or by day. 1 Thess. ii. 9; iii. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 3.

d *Dead while she liveth.*] Some philosophers, even among the barbarous nations, are noted for having spoken of those as *dead*, who deserted what their sects esteemed the doctrines of truth, and abandoned themselves to sensual passions. The word σπαταλωσα, which we may render, *living in pleasure*, properly signifies, *faring deliciously*; and Dr. Whitby observes, it especially refers to drinking strong and costly liquors.

e *That they may be blameless.*] Some would refer this to the *widows*; but the gender of the word ανεπιλημπτοι rather favours our referring it, either to the *deacons*, or to *Timothy's hearers* in gene-

ously attending to the duties of life, they may answer the obligations under which they lie. SECT. 7.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

But especially insist upon it, that a due care be taken of the poor by those of their relations who are capable of supporting them; for *if any do not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house,*[f] *he hath*, whatever he may pretend, in effect and practically *denied the faith, and*, on the whole, *is worse than an infidel:*[g] bringing a greater dishonour upon the gospel than one who openly professes to reject it, while he is thus deficient in those duties which common humanity teaches even many of the heathens to practise themselves, and to inculcate upon others. 1 TIM. V. 8

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man,

Let not a widow be taken upon the list[h] of those to be maintained by the church, and to minister in the office of deaconesses in it, who is *under sixty years old*, and then only such a person *who hath been the wife of one man*,[i] and avoided all scandalous commerce with others. 9

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

And as some peculiar trust is reposed in such, let care be taken that she be [*one*] *who hath a reputation for good works* in general; and she will especially be worthy of such an encouragement and honour, *if she have educated* her own *children* with care, or any other children who have been committed to her; *if* in her more prosperous days *she have* expressed an hospitable temper, and *lodged strangers* who have been at a loss for necessary accommodations on their journies; especially *if she have washed the saints' feet*, and in other respects relieved in a proper manner christians in such circumstances; *if she have*, in other instances, according to her abilities, *assisted the afflicted*, and, in short, *if she have followed every good work*, and endeavoured to adorn her profession by a benevolent and useful life. 10

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry:

But refuse to admit into such an office *the younger widows; for when they grow wanton*,[k] as (though such a disposition be directly *against* the laws of *Christ*) many in such a circumstance of life do, *they will marry*, and perhaps to husbands who are strangers to christianity: 11

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

Thereby *exposing themselves to* just blame of men and *condemnation* from God, *because they have disannulled their first faith*, and violated their engagement to the church, when it assigned them such an office, to which it would be very inconvenient to admit persons that have any views of entering again into the conjugal state; not to say that some men have been enticed, by very improper alliances, to throw off even the general profession of christianity. 12

13 And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

And indeed, with relation to several of such, (as I have observed in societies less careful in this respect than were to be wished,) these women *also*, while they pretend to continue in their office, *being idle* and slothful in the province *they* have undertaken, instead of staying at home and attending the proper duty of their charge, *learn* [*a habit of*] gadding abroad, and *going from house to house; and* [*they are*] *not only idle, but triflers also,*[l] *and busy-bodies:* there is a levity and impertinence in their behaviour, which is the natural result of neglecting to keep themselves well employed; and they are often *speaking things* that are very *unbecoming*, which do loudly proclaim the irregularity of their disposition, and show how much their minds are vitiated and disordered. 13

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

I would therefore have the younger [*widows,*] instead of thinking of a trust and situation for which they are generally so unfit, to *marry* again, if they are so inclined, as it is generally best that they should; *and* employ themselves in such cares as suit the mistress of a family, that they may *breed children*, [*and*] *govern their domestic affairs so as to give no occasion to the adversary*, who is glad to find any excuse for it, *to speak reproachfully* of religion, on account of the unsuitable behaviour of its professors. 14

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

And I give the caution with the greater solicitude, because it is too evident that as *for some* from whom the churches expected better things, they *have already turned aside after Satan*, so as to follow his leading and impulse, in direct opposition to the law of Christ, and much to the detriment of his interest. 15

ral; since it is certain that *widows* were not the only persons who, in so luxurious a city as Ephesus, were in danger of falling into such sensualities as he had been warning them against.

f *Those of his own house.*] Τουϊδιακων seems to signify, *domestics*, or those who dwelt with the indolent person here spoken of; and it would certainly be an aggravation of his neglect, if these relations, whom he was unwilling according to his ability to maintain, were in his family, and consequently under his eye; so that there does not seem to be reason, with Mr. Hallet, (*Notes on Script.* Vol. I. p. 31.) to conclude it signifies those of the *household of faith*, as the apostle speaks elsewhere, (Gal. vi. 10.) that is, *believing relatives*.

g *Worse than an infidel.*] Dr. Whitby proves, by very apposite citations, that the heathens were sensible of the reasonableness and necessity of taking care of near relations, and especially of parents, when they fell into poverty.

h *Taken upon the list*, &c.] Καταλεγεσθω has precisely this signification. Surely none can imagine that the apostle meant to confine the charity of the church to widows of *such an age*, and who had all these characters: we must therefore conclude that he speaks of those who bore the office of deaconesses, who were probably intrusted with the care of entertaining christian strangers, whether ministers or others, and perhaps of educating some poor children, who might be maintained by the *alms of the church*. And it might on many accounts, and for very obvious reasons, be proper that this office should be committed only to persons of an advanced age, and such as had laid aside all thoughts of marrying again. It is evident that they who had practised hospitality themselves in their more prosperous days, would be peculiarly fit for one part of this office, and peculiarly worthy of the countenance which this office gave, and of the trust which it implied.

i *The wife of one man.*] It is very certain that second marriages in general are not condemned by christianity, and it would be a great objection against it if they were. The apostle expressly advises the *younger widows to marry again*. (ver. 14.) and it would seem very hard to exclude them afterwards from this office, how fit soever they might be for it on other accounts, merely because they had done it. I therefore am inclinable to think the meaning of the expression may be, one who has chastely confined herself to one husband, while in the married relation; for it is certain that it never was usual among the Jews or the Greeks to admit women to have more than one husband at once. It may deserve consideration, whether this may not reflect some light on the correspondent phrase, when applied to a bishop. Chap. iii. 2.

k *Grow wanton*, &c.] Καταστρηνιασωσι is a strong expression, which cannot be exactly rendered into English. When these widows grew negligent of their proper duty, sensual affections might prevail upon them; and their credit among christians being hurt by such an unbecoming conduct, it is very probable they might often be forced to take up with *heathen husbands*, and so might at length be led to apostatize from christianity.

l *Triflers.*] The word φλυαροι seems to be derived from φλυειν, which I think properly signifies the noise which water makes when it is ready to boil over. (See Raph. *in. loc.*) And therefore it very well expresses the inward *fermentation* (if I may so speak) in the minds of these trifling people, which they vented by unprofitable discourses.

SECT. 7. 1 TIM. v.

But if any believer of either sex have near relations who are *widows, let them,* as I advised before, *take care of them* at home, *that the church may not be burdened* with more charitable cases than it can properly support, *but may take care of* [*those who are,*] as I have said, *truly widows,* and must otherwise be left altogether desolate.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 4, 16 MINISTERS are instructed by this apostolical advice, in the difficult duty of managing reproof aright. Churches may learn how their poor are to be treated, and children may be reminded of that grateful tribute which they owe especially to their aged and necessitous parents. No recompense can be fully adequate, but surely to a generous temper nothing can be more delightful than to soothe the declining years of those by whom our infant days were sustained, our feeble childhood supported, and our giddy youth moderated and directed.

6 Let St. Paul's sentiments of a luxurious life be particularly attended to in this age of ours, in which so many are entirely devoted to these pleasures. They call it living, but the wiser apostle pronounces it a kind of moral death. And many of the heathens themselves have been instructed by nature to speak in a language like his. Nay, some of them acted on this principle, in a manner which might shame most that call themselves christians. Let us learn to form our taste to nobler pleasures than those on which thoughtless multitudes are so intent. Let us cultivate those that are suited to our rational and immortal spirits, and that will not only follow us into the invisible world, but will there be exalted and improved.

8 But let us be particularly careful, that while religion raises us above a sensual life, we do not make use of it as a pretence to excuse ourselves from attending to social duty. To neglect a due care of those whom Providence has committed to us, would, in the apostle's language, be a denial of the faith, and would even argue us worse than infidels, who, deficient as they were in the knowledge of God, or in such regards to him as were even proportionable to what they knew, discoursed largely and excellently on the obligations of justice and benevolence to our fellow-creatures, and were themselves examples of what they taught in relation to them.

10 Among other virtues here spoken of with due honour, a proper care in the education of children is none of the least. Let christians of both sexes be diligent in it, and let women, to whom the chief care of children is consigned in those tender years, when the deepest and surest impressions are often made, be sensible how great advantage the 13 public may receive by their wise and pious conduct towards them. While many are triflers and busy-bodies, running from house to house, and speaking things which they ought not, let women professing godliness remember they are to adorn it by the exercise of domestic virtues so as to cut off occasion of speaking reproachfully, even 19 from the ingenious malice of adversaries: occasion too often given by those who, while they follow the gay desires of their hearts, and the fashions of this vain world, seem to have forgotten what the apostle intended by the awful 15 and lively phrase of being turned aside after Satan; and make themselves his more secure and certain prey by every step they take in these flattering paths through which he would lead them to final destruction.

SECTION VIII.

The apostle adds directions concerning the regard to be shown by the people to their faithful ministers; concerning the method of proceeding against those who were accused of any fault; and the most prudent and regular manner of treating candidates for the ministry. The section concludes with some other necessary advices and particulars for the instruction of christian slaves. 1 Tim. v. 17, *to the end;* vi. 1, 2.

1 TIM. v. 17.

SECT. 8. 1 TIM. v.

I HAVE already been giving you some directions with relation to those who are elders in age, and now let me add a word or two concerning those who are distinguished by the office they bear in the christian church, and have that title of respect and reverence given 17 them on that account. And here *let the elders who preside well*[a] *be esteemed worthy of double honour,*[b] and, as circumstances may require and admit, let them be respectfully maintained by the society; *especially those who,* to all their other kind cares of a more private nature, add an exemplary attendance to that of public instruction, and *labour* with diligence and zeal *in* administering *the word, and* stating and vindicating the *doctrine* of 18 the gospel in your religious assemblies.[c] *For* you well remember, I doubt not, that *the scripture has said* again and again, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,* but shalt allow him, while labouring upon it, to eat of it as his hunger requires, (Deut. xxv. 24; 1 Cor. ix. 9; and note,) *and* the Old Testament, as well as the words of our Lord and the reason of mankind, teaches us that *the workman* [*is*] *worthy of his hire*:[d] on which account the law requires that, instead of being entirely withheld from him, it should not be delayed for a day. (Deut. xxiv. 14; Lev. xix. 13.) Persons,

1 TIM. v. 17.
LET the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

a *The elders who preside well.*] Mr. Reeves (*Apol.* Vol. I. p. 115. note p) must surely be driven to very great extremities, when, to ward off some consequences which were to him disagreeable, he concludes that these elders were bishops, in the English sense of the word, or persons of an order *superior* to common ministers; which interpretation would suppose that some such officers in the church might *preside* well, though they did not *labour* in the *word* while able to do it, which the following words evidently suppose the elders here spoken of to be: for else their being disabled by age, or any other infirmities, would be a strong reason for their being honourably maintained, on account of the services of their better years. Compare note on 1 Thess. v. 12.

b *Double honour.*] It is a scrupulous nicety of interpretation to explain this as a decision that they were to have twice as much as the *deaconesses.* Different circumstances might require different exhibitions to persons in the same office. It seems only to express a plentiful maintenance, (according to what they needed, and the society could afford,) given in a liberal and respectful manner.

c *Especially they who labour.*] This seems to intimate that there were some who, though they *presided* in the church, were *not* employed in *preaching.* Limborch indeed is of opinion that κοπιῶντες signifies those who did even *fatigue themselves with their extraordinary labours,* which some might not do, who yet in the general *presided* well, supposing preaching to be a part of their work. (Limb. *Theol. lib.* vii. *cap.* iv. § 10.) But it seems to me much more natural to follow the former interpretation. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

d *The workman, &c.*] As the very words of this passage only occur, Luke x. 7. it is the opinion of the ingenious Mr. Seed, that St. Paul here quotes these words of the Evangelist as of equal authority with those of Moses, Deut. xxv. 4. Seed's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 292.

SECT. 8.

1 TIM. V. 19

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

therefore, who labour in so honourable and important a work are by no means to be neglected, nor suffered to want necessary support and encouragement. Great care should also be taken that their reputation, on which their usefulness will so much depend, may not be lightly impeached. Accordingly, *do not receive an accusation against an elder, unless on the testimony of two or three* credible *witnesses;* for the single report of any one person is not material enough to set against the word of an elder, maintaining his own innocence.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

You will, I doubt not, use your utmost endeavours to preserve the purity of the church; yet as offences will certainly come, let me advise you to keep up a due solemnity in church-censures; and as for *those that sin*[e] in any scandalous and remarkable manner, *rebuke* them *before all, that even the rest* of the congregation *may fear*, and stand upon their guard against those temptations which have brought upon others such public admonition and reproof. *I* know how contrary these faithful proceedings may sometimes be to flesh and blood, and therefore solemnly *charge* [*thee*] *before* the blessed *God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels,*[f] (who, having kept their stations, when so many of their fellows were seduced by Satan, are now confirmed in a state of immutable felicity, and shall attend our common Lord to the awful judgment of the great day,) *that thou keep these things without* any *prejudice* against any part of them; *doing nothing by partiality*, in favour of one person more than another, according to the inducement of private friendship or affection. And as it is a matter of so great importance to the christian church what persons are admitted to minister in it, I must also charge thee, that thou *lay hands suddenly* and rashly *on no man,*[g] to set him apart for that sacred trust, before his character and qualifications have been fully examined and thoroughly approved. *Neither make thyself partaker in the sins of others*, as thou wilt certainly do, if thou art the means of bringing those that thou mightest have discovered to be unworthy men, into the ministry; who may have much greater opportunities of doing mischief, in consequence of their bearing such an office, and may give great scandal, and lead many others astray. Therefore *keep thyself pure* from such pollutions, as well as all others, by guarding against the first occasion of them. A recollection of the difficulty of thy work, and what I know of the tenderness of thy constitution and thy great abstinence, engage me to caution thee that thou *do not* confine thyself *any longer* to *drink water* alone, *but use a little wine* mingled with it, *for the sake of thy stomach*, which needs to be strengthened by that more generous liquor in a moderate quantity; *and* out of regard to *thy frequent infirmities*, which otherwise may grow upon thee, so as to render thee incapable of that public service for which thou art so well qualified.[h]

20 21 22 23

21 I also charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.

In judging of characters, and passing sentence according to the advice given above, you will find it necessary in different cases to use different precautions. *The sins of some men are manifest, leading on to* pass *judgment* on them without any difficulty; *whereas some follow after*, and are so artfully disguised, that it will require great diligence and strict examination to detect them. *So also the good works* [*of some*] *are manifest* to all, and spread a kind of glory around those that perform them, which renders them lovely and venerable in all eyes: *and those which are otherwise*, though for a while concealed under the thickest veils that humility can spread over them, *cannot* long *be* entirely *hid*. They will appear on accurate observation; and as they will at the last day be laid open to their public honour, they will in the mean time recommend such silent and reserved christians to the esteem and respect of those who are intimately conversant with them; and may even prove the means of advancing them to some important trusts, which they are not the less fit for, because they have so low an opinion of their own merit.

24 25

25 Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

1 TIM. VI. 1

1 Tim. vi. 1. Let as many

I shall only here add a word or two concerning servants, whom, inferior as their station

e *Those that sin.*] I see no reason for understanding this of *offending elders;* though, were it to be so taken, it would, by a strong consequence, be applicable to others. A humour of seeking a stricter connexion than is any way necessary, has led many commentators into very limited, and sometimes into whimsical, interpretations.

f *The elect angels.*] Mr. Joseph Mede interprets this of the *seven archangels* chosen by God to the greatest nearness to him, and highest honours in the court of heaven. But all his arguments to prove that there is *such* a number of celestial spirits, in such *posts of distinction*, appeared to me so precarious, that I rather chose to explain the words in a more general manner, on principles which I think much more certain.

g *Lay hands suddenly* and rashly.] That this is the signification of ταχέως, Raphelius has sufficiently shown. Though some have referred this to the laying on of hands in the *absolution* of notorious offenders, it seems safer and more natural to explain it of *ordination to the ministry;* in reference to which this rite is often alluded to in these Epistles. It has been said by one of the most rational and candid patrons of diocesan episcopacy, "What need was there that, "after the settlement of a christian church at Ephesus, Timothy "should be sent to *ordain elders*, if a right of ordination lay in "presbyters, or in a *church*, nominating to the pastoral office? "Especially, how should he, on this supposition, be directed to "perform it *himself*, and not merely to advise and assist others in "the performance?" Bishop of Winchester, (Dr. Hoadly,) *Of Epis.* p. 392. But I must beg leave to answer, that this does not appear to be the chief reason of Timothy's being sent to Ephesus, or rather being left there, when Paul went into Macedonia. (Chap. i. 3.) Various circumstances of this church might require that a person of Timothy's extraordinary gifts and character should be left to superintend their affairs; and it might reasonably be taken for granted, that, as he was there by the apostle's special direction, so much regard would be paid to him, that he would be desired to preside in their sacred solemnities, in the same manner as Paul had done when among them. But that no elder could at any time be ordained without the presence and concurrence of such an extraordinary person, and that such an extraordinary power and influence should afterwards be transferred to others not in like manner qualified for the management of it, are things neither easy to be proved, nor rashly to be taken for granted, on a question of so great moment.

h *Use a little wine*, &c.] One cannot forbear reflecting here, how very temperate Timothy must have been, to need an advice of this kind; which amounts to no more than mingling a little wine with his water. And what is said of his *many infirmities*, compared with the apostle's exhortation to him to be *instant in preaching* the word, may certainly teach us, that every weakness of constitution is not to be acquiesced in as an excuse for not going on with the ministry; though, to be sure, great allowances are to be made for bodily infirmities, and life itself may often depend upon seasonable interruptions of public labour. Sir N. Knatchbull, observing that the connexion is so broken between the 22d and 24th verses, by the insertion of this advice in this place, conjectures that Paul might write it in the margin by way of postscript, and that it was introduced into the text by the mistake of some early transcriber.

SECT. 8.

in life is, I would not have you overlook; since their souls are equally valuable before God with those of their superiors, and much of the credit of christianity is concerned in their conduct and behaviour. *Let* therefore *as many servants as are under the yoke* of bondage, *account their own masters worthy of all* that civil *honour* and respect which suits the station in which they respectively are; not taking occasion, from their own religious knowledge and privileges, to despise and rebel against them; *that the name and doctrine of God,* which they profess, *may not be blasphemed* by their insolence and pride. *And as for those* servants *who* are so happy as to *have believing masters, let them not* presume upon that account to *despise* [*them*] *because they are brethren,* and with respect to sacred privileges equal in Christ their common Lord; *but let them rather serve* [*them*] with so much the greater care, tenderness, and respect, *because they are faithful and beloved,* [*and*] *partakers with them of the* great and glorious benefit[i] which the gospel brings to all its faithful professors, of whatsoever rank or profession in life. And let the thought of the degree in which they share the favour of God, the tender bond in which as fellow-christians they are joined, and the hope of partaking with them in all the final blessings of an happy immortality, while it engages their servants to behave towards them in a becoming manner, teach the masters duly to condescend to them, and treat them, not only with justice, but with kindness.

1 TIM. VI. 1 2

servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren: but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE regards here required to the elders who preside well, and who labour in the word and doctrine, are in
Ver. 17 themselves so reasonable, that where the other duties of christianity are attended to, and the inestimable blessings
19 of it duly apprehended and esteemed, there will be no need of insisting largely upon them. To be cautious how we lightly believe any report to the injury of such, is what we owe to ourselves as well as them, since our own improvement, by their ministration, will be greatly obstructed by any prejudices taken against their persons.

Let the ministers of the gospel remember how much it is their duty to appear strenuously in defence of their
20 Master's precepts, and to reprove bold and insolent offenders, in whatsoever rank they may stand. And lest riches
21 and power, and greatness of station, should obstruct their faithful execution of this office, let them think of the solemn charge they have received before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, and of the appearance which they and their people must make before the awful tribunal of Christ, when he shall come in his own glory and that of his Father, and attended by all his holy angels. The frequent consideration of that important day would have an uniform influence on the whole of their conduct; it would particularly make them careful that they
22 do not contract pollutions, and make themselves partakers in other men's sins, by laying hands suddenly on any; but use a proper care in examining, that in the great business of ordination they may act on the conviction of their consciences in the sight of God, and maintain an unbiassed regard to the honour of the great Redeemer and the
23 salvation of souls. Yet let them still be severer towards themselves than others, and maintain that strict temperance and self-government in every respect which may become the dignity of their characters, and command the reverence of all about them.

Let us all endeavour to be shining examples of good works; and while so many declare their sins openly, and
24 send them, as it were, before them to judgment, let us never be ashamed of religion. Yet where a modest reserve may be conveniently maintained, let us study it, and always avoid an unnecessary ostentation, as remembering the
25 time will come when those good works which have been most solicitously concealed from the eyes of men, will be publicly honoured and rewarded by God. In expectation of that day, let us all attend to our proper offices, whether in superior or inferior stations of life, studying so to behave as that the name and doctrine of God may
VI. never be blasphemed upon our account, and always feeling the force of that endearing engagement to all social
1, 2 duties, which arises from our sharing with all true christians in the favour of God, and in the blessings and hopes of his gospel.

SECTION IX.

The apostle presses Timothy to urge on his hearers the great things which relate to practical godliness, as what will be attended with the happiest consequences; and cautions against covetousness, as the root of all evil. 1 Tim. vi. 2—12.

1 TIM. vi. 2.

SECT. 9.

THESE things which I have been mentioning, take care, O Timothy, to *teach and exhort* thine hearers always to maintain a due regard to them. And *if any one teach otherwise,* if he attempt to broach principles contrary to these great maxims, *and attend not*[a] *to* such sound and *wholesome words,* [*even*] *to those of our Lord Jesus Christ,*[b]

1 TIM. VI. 2.

THESE things teach and exhort.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the

i *Partakers with them of the benefit.*] Some would render α της ευεργεσιας αντιλαμβανομενοι, &c. *because they who partake of the benefit,* that is, the benefit of their service, *are faithful and beloved.* But this seems to take it for granted, that what the apostle exhorted to was already actually done; that is, that such faithful services *were* rendered. Others, as Mr. Cradock has observed, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 221.) would translate it, *who will be careful to recompense the well-doing of their servants;* but I think ευεργεσια signifies a *benefit freely conferred,* and therefore is hardly fit to express even the cheerful and exact obedience of slaves. If this clause be referred to the *servants,* and the whole be rendered, *but rather let them who partake of the benefit* that is, who have a share in the same blessed hope with their masters, *do service to them, because they are faithful and beloved,* the sense will be so far the same, that ευεργεσια will signify that great and glorious *benefit* which, by virtue of our christian profession, superiors and inferiors equally share; and strongly suggests, what a band of union the participation of it should in all reason prove. But this supposes a transposition which seemed unnecessary; so that this is on the whole one of the many texts where, having examined a variety of versions, we have been obliged to acquiesce in our own, which is in the main a very good one, and generally gives the *true* sense, though the elegance and spirit of it may often be improved.

a *Attend not.*] I think it is with great reason that the learned Dr. Bently supposes that the original reading was not προσεχειαι, which is seldom used in this sense, but προστεχειαι, or rather προστεχει, which has been thus used in this Epistle, chap. i. 4. See Phil. Lips. *Against Coll.* p 72, 73.

b *Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] I neither suppose, with Mr. Pyle, that this refers to Mat. xxi. 27. and the many parallel places,

words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness:

as these may with strict propriety be called, *and* which express *the doctrine* [*that is*] *agreeable* and subservient *to* the great cause of practical *godliness*, which it is the declared design of the gospel to promote in the world: whatever fair shows of simplicity and humility he may affect, *he is* certainly *proud*, and, whatever conceit he may have of his superior knowledge, he is *one who knows nothing* to any good purpose; *but*, like a man *raving* and delirious in a fever, he runs on, declaiming *on* idle *questions*,[c] *and* useless *de-*

SECT. 9.

1 TIM. VI.

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words; whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil-surmisings,

4

bates about words; from whence no good can be expected to *arise*, but, on the contrary, a great variety of mischief, *envying* of those more regarded than themselves, *contention* with others who will not submissively yield to what such self-sufficient teachers dictate, *abusive language*, which their intemperate zeal deals round to all who offend them, and *evil suspicions*, and obnoxious representations of the worthiest and most amiable characters: Angry *debates of men whose minds are corrupted and averse from the truth*, for which they pretend so eagerly; *while they* seem to *suppose* that which promises the largest quantity of *gain to be* most worthy of their pursuit; and would, if possible, varnish it over with the venerable name of *godliness*. *Turn away* therefore *from such*, and have no intimacy with them. *Whereas*, on the contrary, if any man will but have the integrity and resolution to follow true religion, wherever it leads him, he will certainly find that *godliness*, which is so naturally accompanied *with* inward *contentment*[d] and peace of mind, in every circumstance of life which providence may appoint, *is* indeed *great gain;* and does much more to promote real happiness than any accession of wealth could possibly do. And it is the truest wisdom to accustom our minds to such reflections as these; *for we brought nothing into the world* along with us, but were thrown naked upon the indulgent provision which our gracious Creator has been pleased to make for us; [*and it is*] *evident that*, whatever treasures the most insatiable avarice could amass, *we cannot carry any thing out* of it, but must in a little time return to the dust, stripped of all. *Having therefore*, while we continue in this transitory and uncertain life, *food and raiment*, and having the other necessaries of it, *let us be content with these*, and not seek, with restless earnestness and solicitude, the great things of it, which are often of so short a continuance, and of so precarious as well as so unsatisfying a nature. With these sentiments we may enjoy what happiness is to be expected in a world like this; *but they who are determined that* at all adventures *they will be rich, fall headlong into* many a dangerous *temptation and* many *a* fatal *snare, and* [*into*] *many foolish and mischievous desires, which* not only sink men beneath the dignity of their nature, but prove the occasion of much further mischief; insomuch that they frequently *plunge men into* an irrecoverable abyss of *ruin and destruction*, in which they lose their worldly possessions, and what is infinitely more valuable, their souls too. *For the* excessive *love of money is the root of* moral *evil, which some having greedily desired have* so debauched their minds with corrupt prejudices, that they have *wandered from the faith*, so as to abandon the very profession of the gospel; *and* while they were dreaming only of the pleasurable consequences that would attend their more exalted circumstances in human life, have *pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, and felt long and incurable pains, by the numerous wounds they have given to their own consciences, as it were on every side.[e]

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.

5

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

6

7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

7

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

8

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

9

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

10

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

But thou, O man of God, whom he hath honoured as he did the prophets of old, making thee his messenger to thy fellow-creatures, *shun these things;* these insatiable desires of worldly possessions and enjoyments, which will render thee most unfit for so sacred an office; *and pursue*, as the richest prize and the noblest gain, the practice of universal *righteousness* towards men, and *piety* towards God, *fidelity* in every branch of trust committed to thee, *love* to all mankind, *patience* under every affliction, and *meekness* under every provocation. *Maintain*, in the most strenuous manner, and with all the force thy soul can exert, *the good*, noble, and glorious *combat of faith*;[f] *lay hold on* the prize of *eternal life:* and let none, how violently soever they may assault thee, wrest it out of thine hands: even that life, *to* the hope of *which thou hast been* solemnly *called*,

11

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast pro-

12

nor with others, to any sayings of our Lord's which *tradition* had as yet continued, but which are now lost. It seems much more natural to conclude it goes on this important principle, that what the apostle wrote, as by divine direction, was in effect the *words* and commandments of Christ. Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

c *Raving on questions, &c.*] It is so well known that νοσων signifies a person in a *distempered* state, that it hardly required the pains which Dr. Abraham Taylor has taken to prove it, by a large collection of authorities. Bishop Wilkins would render it, he is *sick of questions*, or of the *wrangling disease*, with which it is much to be lamented that the christian clergy, as well as laity, have so generally been infected, in almost all ages and nations. Wilk. *Serm.* p. 73. The word here seems to express the effect of a disease upon the mind, in which view, raving appeared a more proper word than doting.

d *With contentment.*] Diodati thinks αυταρκειαν here signifies a *competency;* but it gives a much nobler sense to suppose the apostle to intimate, that *contentment* will attend *godliness*, as its inseparable companion: and consequently that the godly man will be happy, whatever his circumstances in life may be, and even much more so than any accumulation of worldly wealth can make him.

e *Pierced themselves through.*] I have endeavoured in the paraphrase (though I could not do it in the version) to give something of the emphasis which Leigh and other critics have observed in the word περιεπειραν, which, we are told, properly signifies, they have *stabbed themselves*, as it were, *from head to feet*, so as to be all covered with wounds. And this indeed happily expresses the innumerable outrages done to conscience by those madmen who have taken up this fatal resolution, that they will, at all adventures, be rich.

f *Maintain the good combat, &c.*] These and the following words are plainly *agonistical*, and refer to the eagerness with which they who contended in the Grecian games struggled for and laid hold upon the crown; and the degree to which the presence of many spectators, or (as the apostle elsewhere speaks) the *cloud of witnesses*, animated them in their contests for it. It might perhaps more literally be rendered, *Exercise the good exercise:* but that is a Grecism which the English language will not conveniently allow; nor does the word *exercise* by any means express the force of αγωνα, which always supposes an opponent to be resisted, as *combat* also does. The learned Dr. Lardner very justly observes, we are often liable to be diverted from the right meaning by a translation, which yet is not the fault of it, but owing to some defect in modern languages, which want words exactly correspondent to the ancient original. Lard. *Serm.* p. 270.

SECT. 9. 1 TIM. VI.

and in pursuance of it *hast confessed a good*, fair, and worthy *confession before many witnesses*, who were present on that solemn day when thou wert given up to the full exercise of the ministry.

fessed a good profession before many witnesses.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10 If we do indeed believe the love of money to be the root of all evil, let us set ourselves seriously to extirpate it 6 out of our bosoms, and to imbibe this true philosophy of the apostle, to seek our gain in that godliness on which 8 contentment waits, and which makes its disciples happy on the easiest terms, by moderating their desires. Food and raiment of one kind or another few want. But where there is real necessity, and has been a care to behave well, if a man's own stock be deficient, he is generally supplied from the charity of others; and true piety and greatness of mind can enjoy the gift of Providence on these terms without repining, being truly sensible how little, even the best, amidst so many imperfections and miscarriages, can deserve to receive any thing from God by the instrumentality of any creature.

To this day do we see such facts as taught the apostle these useful remarks, independent on those miraculous 7 influences by which he was guided, in things spiritual and evangelical. As we see the new-born race of human creatures rising naked into life, we see death stripping the rich, the noble, and the powerful, and returning them naked to the dust. In the mean time, while we may observe many in lower circumstances cheerful and thankful, 9 we see those who are determined on being rich, falling into temptations and snares. We see them piercing them- 10 selves through with many sorrows, and plunging themselves into irrecoverable ruin and destruction, while they pursue to the utmost verge of the fatal precipice, those shadowy phantoms which owe all their semblance of reality to the magic of those passions which riches or the desires of them have excited.

Happy would it be for the church of Christ, if these important doctrines of practical religion were more incul- 4 cated, and less of the zeal of its teachers spent in discussing vain questions and intricate strifes about words, which 11 have been productive of so much envy and contention, obloquy and suspicion. Let the men of God, therefore, inculcate righteousness and faith, piety and charity, patience and meekness, and let them endeavour to render their lessons successful, by a care themselves to pursue these graces; to exercise themselves more strenuously in that 12 noble and generous conflict to which they are called, so as to lay hold on the crown of eternal life, and to retain 3 it against the most powerful antagonist. These are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, even these doctrines according to godliness; and the minister who will be wise enough to preach and act upon these principles, will raise the most lasting character, and secure the most valuable reward.

SECTION X.

The apostle concludes with a solemn charge to fidelity in the ministry, and particularly urges Timothy to inculcate on those that were rich such exhortations and cautions as their peculiar circumstances required. 1 Tim. vi. 13, *to the end.*

1 TIM. vi. 13.

SECT. 10. 1 TIM. VI.

AND now, to conclude: *I* solemnly *charge thee*, as *in the presence of God, who*, by his continual energy, animates and *quickens all things*[a] in the whole compass of the creation, and at his sovereign pleasure revives the dead; *and* in the presence of *Christ Jesus, who*, when he was examined *before Pontius Pilate, witnessed*, at the apparent hazard of his life, *a good confession*,[b] in declaring himself to be indeed a king, though he 14 knew how liable that declaration was to a most unjust and pernicious interpretation: In this august presence do I charge thee, O Timothy, *to keep* [*this*] *commandment* which I have now given thee, in all its branches, and to deliver it down to those who may succeed thee, *unspotted and blameless*, that it may shine with uncorrupted lustre through all future 15 ages, even *till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which, in his own* appointed *times, he shall manifest* in the most awful and conspicuous manner, [*who is*] *the blessed and* indeed the *only Potentate*, before whom no other name or power is worthy of being mentioned. He may with the strictest propriety be spoken of by that title, by which other princes have vainly and blasphemously affected to be called, *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, who hath the fates and lives of all the monarchs on earth entirely in his hands, 16 and can dispose of them all according to his sovereign pleasure: Even he, *who alone hath immortality* in himself; so that all kinds and degrees of life in others are derived from him, and continually dependent upon him, according to the orders issued from that throne on which he sits supreme, *inhabiting inaccessible light; whom no man hath* ever *seen* in the full display of his glory, *nor* indeed *can see*, without being immediately overwhelmed with the first glance of it: *to whom* [*be*] *honour and everlasting dominion* ascribed by us, and by all his creatures through eternal ages. *Amen.*

17 One farther instruction I have to give thee, which I shall here add by way of postscript. There are indeed few of *those who are rich in this* present *world*[c] that embrace the gospel, or will have any regard for the instructions of its ministers. But as it is probable that some such may be found in so opulent a city as that of Ephesus, in which thou now residest, and

1 TIM. vi. 13.

I GIVE thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;

15 Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they

a *Quickens all things.*] This seems a very suitable though oblique intimation, that should Timothy, after the example of his great Lord, sacrifice his life to the honour of his profession, God, *who raised up Christ from the dead*, was equally able to raise him. And this is most fully expressed and urged, 2 Tim. ii. 8, 10, 11.

b *Witnessed a good confession.*] This refers to John xviii. 37. Christ's confession before the Jewish high-priest, when interrogated upon oath, (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; Mark xiv. 61, 62.) was rather more *express*, but this before Pilate was more *dangerous*; as his owning himself a *king* was the only pretension that was likely to expose him to the resentment of the Roman governor, who had the supreme power of life and death. John xix. 10. It is perhaps called a *good confession*, not only as in itself noble and generous, but as all our hopes of salvation and happiness are built upon the *truth* of it.

c *Rich in this world.*] This clause seems to be added to extenuate the value of riches, which extend only to *this* transitory and precarious *world*, and can neither attend us into the *other*, nor at all influence our happiness there.

be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

as my own labours there have succeeded with some few in this rank of men, remember that their character and behaviour is of peculiar moment. Do not therefore flatter them, but faithfully *charge* them to behave in a manner suitable to their distinguished station, and to guard against the snares to which it exposes them; particularly urge it upon them, *that they be not high-minded*, so as to despise their inferiors, who often are in the sight of God much wiser and better than themselves: and *that they do not trust in uncertain riches*, of which a thousand accidents may immediately deprive them, *but in the living God*, whose favour will be a sure and eternal portion to all that are possessed of it; even in that gracious Being, *who imparts to us all things richly for* our *enjoyment*, and who has so liberally distinguished them by the communications of his bounty. Charge it upon them, *that*, in proportion to the abundance God has given them, *they do good, that they be rich in good works*, that they be *ready to distribute* what Providence hath lodged in their hands, and *willing to communicate*[d] what they have so freely received: Thereby *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the future; that they may*, through the riches of divine grace, *lay hold on eternal life*, when they relinquish all their possessions here, and find every temporal enjoyment deserting them for ever.

SECT. 10. — 1 TIM. VI. 17, 18, 19

To conclude all: *O* my beloved *Timothy*, as thou valuest thine own soul, and desirest to give up thine account with joy, *keep that* gospel *which is lodged with thee*, as a sacred trust, and never suffer it to be wrested out of thy hands. Let thy very soul dwell upon it, *avoiding profane* [*and*] *empty babblings, and the opposition of that which is falsely called knowledge*,[e] but is indeed ignorance, pride, and folly: *Which some having professed* to pursue, *have* fatally *wandered from the* christian *faith*, some entirely forsaking it, and others corrupting it with such adulterations, that it is hardly to be known for that religion which came immediately out of the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that thou mayst ever oppose such false teachers with integrity, courage, and success, *may* the *grace* of Christ [*be*] ever *with thee* in all things, to guide thy judgment and thy conduct. *Amen.*

20, 21

IMPROVEMENT.

Oh that we might often be setting ourselves as in the presence of God, the great and blessed God, whose almighty power quickeneth all things, and is the life of universal nature, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead! Let the thoughts of so august a presence awaken our souls to diligence in the discharge of our duty, and let it animate us with courage to witness a good confession, to whatever inconvenience and danger it may expose us. Never let us forget that appearance which he shall manifest, to whom all these sublime titles belong, even that blessed and only Potentate, before whom all the lustre of all the princes upon earth vanishes in a moment, like that of the smallest stars before the rising sun: the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, and dwelleth in unapproachable light. How astonishing his goodness in veiling his glory, so that we may approach him, in bowing down his ear to receive our requests, yea, in coming to dwell with that man who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at his word! (Isa. lxvi. 2.) To him be honour and power everlasting. And let his infinite majesty be deeply and affectionately remembered amidst all the condescensions of his love. Ver. 15, 16

Let the rich in this world, since the riches which here distinguish them cannot attend them into another, be engaged to receive with all reverence the charge of our holy apostle. Too many of them walk in pride; but they see by the sepulchres of many once as opulent and as haughty as themselves, and by a thousand other marks of the divine power and human weakness, how soon God is able to abase them, (Dan. iv. 37.) Forsaking, therefore, what they think their strong tower, and the high wall, which, instead of sheltering, may soon crush them into ruins, let them transfer their confidence to the living God. Alarmed in a state which renders their salvation almost as difficult as it is for a camel to go through a needle's eye, let them learn from hence how to improve what is another's in such a manner, that they may in due time receive what shall be for ever their own. (Luke xvi. 12.) Let them learn to be rich in good works, and, by a readiness to distribute and communicate, let them lay up a celestial treasure, and drop with joy every gilded trifle which would hinder their laying hold on eternal life. Let the ministers of the great Lord who is so much higher than all the kings of the earth, at least show their fidelity to him, in giving such plain and faithful charges, even to those who, by their outward circumstances, are placed in the highest ranks of life; being infinitely more solicitous about securing their Master's approbation than gaining the favour of mortal worms, who lift up their heads on high, because they have a few grains of shining dust at their disposal. And may the men of God manifest the like wise and pious magnanimity, in avoiding the vain glitter of a falsely pretended science, when it would either lead them to err from the faith, or to neglect those important articles of it which lie most plain and obvious in the word of God; and for that very reason are too often disregarded by those whom an empty ostentation of subtilty and learning has taught to treat the divine wisdom of God as foolishness. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

d *Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*] If these phrases have any thing of a different signification, perhaps it may be, as Archbishop Sharpe explains it: Let them endeavour in the general to do good, not only now and then, in some scanty proportion, but *frequently, constantly*, and *abundantly*: not only with their time, labour, and interest, but by distributing of their substance too; and this as freely as if it were a common stock to which all had a right. Archbishop Sharpe's *Serm.* Vol. I. p. 136. Yet these expressions clearly show that there was not a community of goods among christians in general, for in that case there could have been no room for the exhortation, and the distinction on which it is founded.

e *Falsely called knowledge.*] Though it is not certain that the name of *gnostics*, or the *knowing men*, was so early used to denominate a distinct sect, yet it is highly probable that they who opposed the apostle made extraordinary pretences to *knowledge*: and this text seems sufficient to prove it.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

IT is uncertain where Timothy was when he received this Epistle. Some have supposed he must have been at Ephesus; but their arguments in support of that opinion seem inconclusive, as Mr. Boyse has well observed. And indeed it does not seem very easy to reconcile this supposition with the apostle's charge, (chap. iv. 13.) to bring with him the *books* and *parchments* he had left at Troas, that city lying so far out of his way from Ephesus to Rome, especially as he had expressed a desire of seeing him as soon as possible. And if it should be pleaded that the things he sent for might not then be at Troas but at some other place that might lie in his way, it is sufficient to answer, that it would, in that case, have been more to Paul's purpose to have directed Timothy where to have found them, than to inform him where they were first left.—To which may be added, that if Timothy had been at Ephesus when this Epistle was written, the apostle would hardly have said, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," (chap. iv. 12.) but rather, "Tychicus have I sent to *you*."

That this Epistle was written while Paul was under confinement at Rome, is universally agreed; but whether it was during his first or second imprisonment, has been matter of debate. Several learned writers, among whom are Hammond, Lightfoot, and Cave, have maintained the *former* opinion; while others have argued in favour of the *latter*, from chap. i. 18. where Paul, speaking of Onesiphorus, says, *he sought him diligently at Rome;* which they apprehend implies, that the apostle was kept under so close a confinement at this time, that few knew where he was to be found; whereas in that imprisonment of which Luke gives an account in the conclusion of his history, we are told, *He dwelt in an hired house, receiving all that came to him.* (Acts xxviii. 30.) But the strongest argument in support of this opinion is drawn from chap. iv. 6. *I am now just ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* From whence it has been inferred, that Paul, when he wrote this, was in immediate expectation of death, in consequence of Nero's menaces, or of some express revelation from Christ; (which some have thought Peter also had a little before his martyrdom, 2 Pet. i. 14.) Yet the directions he afterwards gives, plainly show he had some expectations of living a while longer. Else it is difficult to say why he should so much urge Timothy to *give diligence to come to him*, (ver. 21.) or press his care of the *cloak*, *books*, and *parchments*, mentioned, ver. 13. Though, after all, these words must, I think, express an apprehension that his life and ministry were drawing towards a close: which is yet farther confirmed by observing, that whereas in his former imprisonment the apostle had often expressed his persuasion of being released and seeing his christian friends again, he gives no hint in this Epistle of any such expectation, but seems to intimate the contrary, (ver. 18.) by expressing his confidence, not that he should be again rescued from his enemy, as he had been upon making his first apology, but that God would *deliver him from every evil work*, and *preserve him to his heavenly kingdom.*—Upon the whole, therefore, I conclude that this Epistle was written some time towards the close of Paul's second imprisonment, and consequently about the year of our Lord, 66 or 67, and in the 13th of the Emperor Nero. (See note g. p. 578, 579.)

The apostle seems to have intended in this Epistle, to prepare Timothy for those sufferings to which he foresaw he would be exposed; to forewarn him of the fatal apostasy and declension that was beginning to appear in the church; and at the same time to animate him, from his own example and the great motives of christianity, to the most vigorous and resolute discharge of every part of the ministerial office.

In pursuance of this general design, the apostle, after his usual salutation, begins with assuring Timothy of his most affectionate remembrance, and his earnest desire to see him, expressing his satisfaction in those marks of sincere faith which appeared in him, as well as in his pious ancestors. He then takes occasion, from his own suffering, to excite him to a becoming fortitude and resolution in the christian cause; and represents in a strong light the excellence of that gospel which he was appointed to preach, and on which he placed an entire dependence: chap. i. 1—12. The apostle, being firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had so often inculcated upon his beloved pupil,

exhorts him strenuously to retain them in the midst of all discouragements and opposition, and to go through the duties of his ministerial work with the utmost diligence and constancy, in dependence on the grace of God; mentioning at the same time the treachery of several Asiatics, and acknowledging with the warmest gratitude the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus. Ver. 13; ii. 1—7. And in order yet more effectually to fortify Timothy against the difficulties he might be called to encounter, he lays open the motives and hopes by which he himself was supported under the sufferings he bore in defence of the gospel; assuring him, that those who suffered with Christ should also be glorified with him. To this he adds some directions in relation to his ministry; advising him, in particular, to avoid and discourage all those empty harangues and idle controversies which only served to confound the mind, and by which some had been seduced from the purity of the christian faith. Ver. 8—18. The apostle then takes occasion, from a general view of the great design and tendency of the gospel, to urge the necessity of holiness in all christians, and especially in ministers; and recommends to the latter the utmost gentleness and meekness, in their attempts to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen. Ver. 19, *to the end*.—And to make him more sensible of the importance of exerting himself in order to maintain the purity and honour of religion, he assures him that a great declension and apostasy was to prevail in the christian world, and that false teachers were rising up in it, by whose wicked artifices many weak persons were deceived and led astray; reminding him at the same time of that patience and fortitude which he had seen him discover amidst the severest persecutions. Chap. iii. 1—13. To guard Timothy against these seducers, and to preserve the church from their fatal influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures as of the utmost importance to all the purposes of christian edification; and charges him in a solemn manner to use the utmost diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; declaring at the same time, for his encouragement, the satisfaction with which he reflected on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth. Ver. 14; iv. 1—8. The apostle concludes this Epistle with requesting Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, in order to assist and comfort him under the unworthy treatment he had met with from some of his christian brethren; giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and having expressed his cheerful confidence that he should be safely conducted to the presence of his Lord, he adds some particular salutations, and closes with his usual benediction. Ver. 9, *to the end of the Epistle*.

Whoever reads over this Epistle with that attention it deserves, and considers the circumstance in which it was written, will be sensible that it affords a very strong argument in favour of christianity.—The apostle had been for some time under close confinement at Rome, at the mercy of a cruel and capricious tyrant. He had seen himself deserted by his friends in his greatest extremity; and had nothing before him but the certain prospect of being called to suffer death in the same cause to which he had devoted his life.—In this situation how does he behave? Does he seem to look back with concern on his past conduct, or to regret the sacrifice he had made of all his worldly interests? Can we discover any thing that betrays a secret consciousness of guilt, or even a suspicion of the weakness of his cause? Nay, does he drop a single expression that can be interpreted as a mark of fear, or discomposure of mind, in the apprehension of those gloomy scenes that lay before him?—Surely if he had been an impostor, or had entertained the least doubt of the doctrines he taught, something of this kind must have escaped him when writing to so intimate a friend, with whom he could entrust all the secrets of his breast.—On the contrary, upon the most calm and deliberate survey, he expresses an entire satisfaction in reflecting on the part he had acted; and earnestly recommends it to his beloved pupil, to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause, even at the hazard of his life. He appears throughout his Epistle to have felt a strong inward conviction of the truth of those principles he had embraced, and glories in the sufferings he endured in support of them; triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Master, and of receiving at his hands a crown of distinguished lustre. A behaviour like this, in one who had so considerable a share in establishing the christian religion, and expected in a short time to seal his testimony to it with his blood, must be allowed a strong confirmation of the truth of those facts on which our faith depends. It is at least a convincing proof that the apostle was himself sincere in what he professed to believe: and when the several circumstances of his history are considered and impartially weighed, it will appear as evident that he could not possibly be deceived, and consequently that his testimony is to be admitted in its full force.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECTION I.

The apostle begins his Epistle, after proper salutations, with expressions of his affection to Timothy, and general acknowledgments of his joy in, and dependence upon, the grace of that gospel which he was employed to preach. 2 Tim. i. 1—12.

2 TIMOTHY i. 1.

1 *PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,* whose eternal counsels, with reference to me, were manifested in that wonderful manner in which I was set apart for the service of the gospel, *(agreeably to the promise of* eternal *life,* which is given us *in Christ Jesus,* and by which I am animated in all my labours and sufferings,) Send this Second Epistle *to Timothy,* [*my*] *beloved son;* whose humble and faithful services in the gospel I have so long proved, and whom I love with the affection of a father. Nor can I express this affection better than by wishing, as I most sincerely do, that *grace, mercy,* and *peace* may attend thee, *from God, the* gracious and merciful *Father* of all true believers, *and from Christ Jesus,* his Son and *our Lord,* who is also our Peace.

SECT. 1. — 2 TIM. 1. — 2

I give thanks unto this blessed *God, whom I serve, after* the example of [*my*] pious *progenitors, with a pure conscience, that,* through his goodness, laying the case upon my heart, *I am incessantly mindful of thee in my prayers night and day,* so that I scarce ever rise up in the morning, or lie down in the evening, without allowing thee a share in my devout remembrance; *Desiring earnestly to see thee, as I am mindful of thy tears,* which flowed so plentifully at our last separation, *that I might be filled with joy* in an interview with so dear and amiable a friend. And indeed thou hast, as it were, an hereditary title to my regard, *as I* also *keep in remembrance the undissembled faith which is in thee,* and *which first dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice,* who believed in Christ before thee, and have been happily instrumental in communicating to thy heart those good impressions which they felt on their own; *and I am persuaded that* [*it is*] *in thee too,* and that thou still retainest it in the midst of all opposition: *For which cause, I* am the more encouraged to *remind thee of stirring up the gift of God*[a] *which is in thee by the imposition of my hands;*[b] whereby those miraculous communications of the Spirit were imparted to thee, which it will be thy duty to cherish, by frequently engaging in those devotional exercises and active services for which they are intended to qualify thee. Exert thyself therefore with cheerfulness and boldness, without dreading any opposition that may arise; *for God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice* and fear, *but of courage, and of love, and of wisdom;*[c] and if we conduct ourselves prudently, under the influences of a spirit of universal love, we may hope that his Spirit will work mightily in us, to fit us for those services which his providence may point out. *Be not therefore ashamed of* that sacred truth, which is *the testimony of our Lord,* taught by his mouth, confirmed by his death and resurrection, and the descent of his Spirit; *nor of me,* who am now *his prisoner; but* resolutely own thy regard to me, and *take thy share in the afflictions* which may lie in thy way while bearing a courageous testimony to the truth *of the gospel, according to the* evidence derived to it from the miraculous *power of God; Who hath saved us* from that ruin into which the world hath fallen by its fatal apostasy, *and* hath *called* [*us*] out from the rest of mankind *by an holy calling, not according to* any distinguished merit of *our* own *works, but according to his own purpose, and* those rich overflowings of *grace given to*

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 TIMOTHY i. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in

a *Stirring up the gift:* Αναζωπυρειν.] The metaphor is plainly borrowed from stirring up fire when it is almost extinct; and some have imagined it might refer to that part of the priest's office which consisted in trimming the lamps in the temple, and supplying them with oil, in order to keep them continually burning, (see Raphel. *E Polyb. in loc.*) while others have thought it alludes to the form of flames in which the Spirit descended. Acts ii. 3. See 1 Thess. v. 19. and note there. Compare Gen. xlv. 27. Septuag.

b *Imposition of my hands.*] See the note on 1 Tim. iv. 14.

c *God hath not given us, &c.*] Perhaps Paul added this under an apprehension that the tender spirit of Timothy might have been something terrified by the prospect of persecution.

SECT. 1.

us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages,[d] as he was appointed, in the everlasting and immutable counsels of God, to be a Redeemer and Saviour unto us. *But* this long-concealed grace *is now made manifest by the* illustrious *appearance of our Saviour Jesus*

2 TIM. I. 10 *Christ, who,* by what he has done and suffered in human flesh for the salvation of his faithful servants, *hath* in effect *abolished death,* has deposed it from its tyrannical empire, *and thrown a light on* the important doctrine of *life and immortality by the gospel;*[e] which gives us a more express assurance and more lively view of it than any former dis-

11 pensation had ever done, or could possibly do. This is that important message of God to men, for the proclamation and confirmation *of which I was appointed an herald and apostle, and* particularly had it in my charge, while others were more immediately sent to

12 the circumcision, to be myself *a teacher of the Gentiles: For which cause also I suffer these* hard *things* which press me in this state of confinement; *but* though my condition may seem infamous, *I am not ashamed* of these bonds, or any of the reproaches and insults with which they are attended; *for I know to whom I have trusted* all my most important concerns, *and am* fully *persuaded that he is* well *able to keep that* precious immortal soul, *which I have deposited with him,* even *unto that* great and important *day* when the promised salvation shall be completed.[f]

Christ Jesus before the world began;

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8, 9 WHO that attentively considers the holy calling with which we are called, according to the grace given us in Christ Jesus, can endure the thought of being ashamed of Christ's gospel, or any of his servants, to whatever difficulties they may be exposed, with whatever infamy they may be loaded? For ever adored be that Prince of life,

10 who hath deposed death from his throne; who hath enlightened, by rays reflected from his own beautiful and resplendent countenance, the regions of the invisible world, over which so dark a veil had before been spread! Let our eyes be fixed more and more on this illustrious Object, and, confiding in the power and grace of Christ, let us

12 all immediately and daily commit to him that invaluable jewel of an immortal soul which God hath given us. We may surely survey it with a mixture of delight and terror, till we have thus provided for its safety; and then may that terror be allowed to disappear, and give place to a rational delight, and we may justly congratulate ourselves while we adore our Saviour.

Let the proclamation of this gospel be most welcome to us, and let us call up all the strength and vigour of our

7 souls to assert and advance it; for *God hath given us the spirit, not of fear, but of courage, sobriety, and*

6 *charity.* Whatever gifts we have received, let us stir them up to their proper use, and let one generation of christians deliver down to another a sense of the excellency of their holy religion. Pious women may take encourage-

5 ment from the success of Lois and Eunice on Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister; as perhaps some of the worthiest and most valuable ministers the church of Christ has ever been able to boast of, have had reason to bless God for those early impressions which were made upon their mind by the religious instructions of persons in the same relations.

To conclude: let us learn by the repeated example of the apostle, to be earnest in prayer for our christian friends;

3 and if we find our hearts excited to remember them in our prayers day and night, let us, with him, return our thanks to God, that he puts such benevolent affections into our hearts; for every good disposition that springs up there is implanted and cherished by him.

SECTION II.

The apostle exhorts Timothy strenuously to retain the gospel in the midst of all discouragements and oppositions, and to go through the duties of his ministerial office in dependence upon the grace of God; mentioning the treachery of several Asiatics, and the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus.

SECT. 2. 2 Tim. i. 13; ii. 7.

2 TIM. i. 13.

2 TIM. I. 13 ENCOURAGED by that confidence which I have been expressing in the power and fidelity of my Lord, to whom I have intrusted the care of my immortal interests and con-

2 TIM. i. 13.

HOLD fast the form of sound words, which thou

d *Given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages.*] I see no reason for rendering it, as Dr. Whitby would do, *according to his purpose before all ages, and the grace given us in Christ Jesus.* The grace might be said to be given us in Christ, as the Father stipulated with him, through his hand, as well as for his sake, to give us that grace which we do actually receive.

e *Thrown a light upon life and immortality.*] *Life* and *immortality* is put by a usual Hebraism for *immortal life,* as Archbishop Tillotson well observes (Vol. III. p. 112.) in his discourse on these words; in which he has shown how uncertain the heathens were as to the doctrines of a future state of retribution, and the comparative obscurity of that *light* in which it was placed under the Old Testament. The former article is much illustrated by Dr. Whitby's learned and excellent note. But what Mr. Warburton has written upon this subject, in his *Divine Legation,* Vol. I. and what is said upon it in the last edition of the *Critical Inquiry into the Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers,* has done abundantly more than any thing else to vindicate the propriety of this expression; and I must refer to these learned and ingenious writers for the most satisfactory commentary on these words of the apostle.—But the learned and pious Dr. Hodges (who, so far as I can judge, has given us a greater variety of new and plausible interpretations of scripture than any other divine in the *Hutchinsonian* scheme) contends, that the word αφθαρσια ought to be rendered, *incorruption,* and that Christ himself is to be understood both by *life* and *incorruption*; so that the text must refer to his throwing light on Psal. xvi. 10, 11. and on other scriptures, where it was foretold that the Messiah should be the *light of the world,* and bestow *incorruptible life* upon others, by raising himself from the grave before he was corrupted there. But if any should still think this expression refers to the future state, to which Dr. Hodges apprehends it has no regard, he would have him consider it as applicable to the Gentiles only; on which account he supposes the apostle presently after speaks of his being *appointed as their teacher,* ver. 11. This violent interpretation (for such on the whole it appears to me) is intended to obviate the objection which arises from this text, against several new criticisms, by which this ingenious writer would find references to a future state and the resurrection, in passages of the Old Testament in which they were never before thought of. See Dr. Hodges's *Elihu,* p. 251, 252.

f *That which I have deposited with him.*] Philo and Josephus have many passages (several of them collected by Dr. Whitby, in his note on this text,) in which both the *soul* and the *law* are in different views called παρακαθηκαι, *the depositum of God.* The soul, as it is said, is to be returned into the hands of God, and committed to his care at death; and this, they tell us, may be done more cheerfully, in proportion to the degree in which care has been taken to maintain the honour of his law with due fidelity. There is, to be sure, a similarity of sentiment with regard to the gospel, but Paul might have used this expression without borrowing the hint from any Jewish writer whatever.

hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

17 But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

2 Tim. ii. 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

cerns, be thou, O Timothy, engaged resolutely to *retain* and exactly to adhere to *the form of sound words*,[a] that system of divine and everlasting truths *which thou hast heard of me;* keep it, not merely *in* thy memory, but in thine heart, with cordial *faith, and* that sincere, fervent *love, which is* the great badge of our being *in Christ Jesus*, and which will finally secure our being owned by him as his true disciples. And as thou desirest to have the same cheerful confidence, let it be thy care to *keep that good thing which is deposited with thee*,[b] even the gospel of Christ lodged in thine hands: assert its honours, *by the* aids of the *Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us*, and which will, I trust, enable thee to act with that integrity and zeal which so arduous and important a service requires.

SECT. 2.

2 TIM. I. 14

Thou knowest this, that all those of Asia[c] who are at Rome, and were known to me by a profession of christianity, *are turned from me*, and have proved treacherous friends, after all their forward pretences; *of which number are Phygellus and Hermogenes*,[d] whom it is with great concern that I am obliged particularly to point out on such an occasion. But it is with proportionable pleasure that I mention another person of a very different character, whose affection and zeal were illustrated by their baseness and disingenuity. *May the Lord grant* his *mercy* to his family! I mean *to the household of Onesiphorus; for he hath often refreshed me*, both by his visits and liberalities, *and hath not been ashamed of my chain*, (Eph. vi. 20.) but has rather esteemed it his honour to own me, while I was under disgrace and persecution in so good a cause. *But being* here *in Rome, he sought me out* so much the *more diligently* on that very account, *and*, when he had *found* [*me*,] took every opportunity of expressing his unfeigned love and veneration for a servant and apostle of Christ in such a circumstance. *The Lord grant unto him that*, after having enjoyed all the blessings of a long and useful life, *he may find mercy of the Lord in that* great *day*, to which our eyes and hopes, as christians, are continually directed. *And on how many occasions he ministered* [*to me*] *in Ephesus, thou very well knowest*, as thou wert an eye-witness to it, while we were together there.

15 16 17 18

Thou therefore, my dearly-beloved *son* Timothy, animated by such an example of fidelity and courage, *be strong, in* humble and continual dependence upon *the grace which is in Christ Jesus*, and resolve never to be ashamed of any of his faithful servants under disgrace and difficulties, while adhering to his cause. *And the things which thou hast heard from me*, and which I have solemnly testified again and again, *before many witnesses*, in one place and another, *these commit thou* with all diligence and care *to faithful men*,[e] *who may be able also to teach others*, that so there may be, throughout all ages, a succession of such, who shall deliver them down from one to another, even till the end of time, according to God's gracious purposes in revealing them to us. And especially do *thou* see to it thyself, that thine own temper and conduct be such as may engage them to fidelity in bearing their testimony. *Therefore*, as thy lot is cast in a time when we are called to suffer so many severe things for the truth, prepare thyself steadily and resolutely to *endure afflictions*, and hardships, *as* it becomes *a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and one whom he hath honoured with a distinguished rank in his army, that thou mayst marshal and lead on others. And, to pursue the metaphor, remember that *no one who goes out to war entangles himself with secular affairs*, but relinquishes every other calling and employment, *that he may please him under whom he is inlisted*, and be ready to receive and execute his commands. Accordingly, keep thyself as much as possible disengaged from worldly business, and from every thing which might tend to take off thy thoughts from thy great work, and render thee less active in thy sacred warfare. *And* thou *also* knowest, that *if any one wrestles* or contends in any other of those games for which Greece is so celebrated, if he do gain an advantage over his antagonist, *he is not crowned unless he wrestle*, or perform any other athletic exercise, *according to the law* of the respective contention. So let us take care to learn the rules which Christ has laid down to direct us in our attempts, and act according to them. And be not impatient, though the expected and promised reward should be long delayed; for thou well knowest that *the husbandman must first labour*, and wait while the harvest is growing, through succeeding weeks and months, [*and then*] *partake of the fruits* produced by his toils.[f]

2 TIM. II. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Consider the things which I say as matters of high importance, in which thou art intimately concerned; *and may the Lord give thee* a good *understanding in all things*, and enable thee to act in a manner suitable to the instructions thou hast received!

7

a *Form of sound words.*] Archbishop Tillotson explains this of that profession of faith which was made by christians at their baptism, (*Works*, Vol. II. p. 38) and the author of *Miscellanea Sacra* observes, that it is not said that Timothy received this form by immediate inspiration, but heard it of Paul, as, according to him, *the word of wisdom* was given only to the apostles. Chap. ii. 2; iii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

b *That good thing which is deposited.*] See the note on ver. 12.

c *Those in Asia*, &c.] The Asiatics were infamous for their cowardice and effeminacy. Paul probably alludes to their behaviour at Rome, (chap. iv. 16.) of which Timothy might have been informed by travellers. But Dr. Whitby refers this to those of Ephesus who had deserted the apostle, giving ear, as he supposes, to the seduction of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, by whom he had been represented as a despiser of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, I prefer the former interpretation, as evidently more natural.

d *Phygellus and Hermogenes.*] Probably he mentions these two persons as known to Timothy, or as having distinguished themselves by their profession; so that there was particular reason to expect a different conduct from them.

e *Commit to faithful men.*] This is quoted by many as an argument that the *people* were not left to chuse their own ministers. But if they did chuse them, or propose them to Timothy, it might yet be his appropriate office to *admit* them to the ministry, and solemnly to *commit* the gospel to them. Compare the note on Tit. i. 5.

f *Must first labour.*] It was entirely to the apostle's purpose to remind Timothy that the *labour* of the *husbandman* must *precede* the *harvest;* but whether he was to receive these fruits *first* was not the point in question. We must therefore acquiesce in this transposition, and the like is necessary in several other places. See Heb. viii. 4. in the original.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 2. LET us all be exhorted to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and, in humble dependence upon it, let us go forth cheerfully to our work and warfare as christians. This is a strength so great, and communicated with so rich a freedom, that the christian minister, under his peculiar difficulties, will find it adequate to them all.

2 TIM. I. Let such particularly apply to themselves the exhortations and consolations which are here given or suggested. Let them strenuously *retain the form of sound words*, which the inspired apostles have delivered, *with faith and*
Ver. 13 *love, which is in Christ Jesus.* To this orthodoxy of principle which a due regard to this great and only standard will teach them, let them add orthodoxy of temper. And as they desire that Christ may keep what they
14 profess to have deposited with him, let them faithfully keep what he has lodged in their hands. And may the Holy Spirit dwell in them, to make them faithful in all, and direct them in their efforts to defend the gospel, to spread its influence on the hearts of men, and transmit it from one generation to another; lodging it with faithful
II. men, who may teach others, when their teachers and fathers in Christ shall rest from their labours. Such a succes-
2 sion may God continue in his churches; and may he prosper the work of those who are employed in humble and faithful attempts to promote so good a cause, by forming for this important charge those who, like Timothy, have early known the scripture, and felt its power on their hearts.

Let such as are setting out in this holy warfare, remember the caution which the apostle gives. May they not
4 unnecessarily encumber themselves with secular cares, which would render them less fit to please the great General under whose banner they are inlisted. Let them strive lawfully, if they hope for the crown, and, cultivating the ground with diligence, let them wait with patience, if they desire at length to reap that blessed harvest. Nor let that general apostasy from the power of religion, which is the shame of the present day, deter them; but rather let it whet their pious zeal to own, with more strenuous attachment, the cause of Christ and of his faithful servants. And when they have done all, may they ever retain an humble sense of their dependence on the divine mercy: and the Lord grant to us all, ministers and people, that we may find it in that great day!

SECTION III.

Paul further animates Timothy to fidelity, by laying open the motives and hopes which supported him under the difficulties he bore in the defence of the gospel; interspersing several addresses relating to that purity, prudence, and meekness, with which he should endeavour to conduct himself in the ministry. 2 Tim. ii. 8—18.

2 TIM. ii. 8.

SECT. 3. TO animate thee, O Timothy, to all the labours and all the sufferings of the christian and ministerial life, *remember Jesus Christ*, the promised Messiah *of the seed of David*, the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, *who*, after having spent and laid down his

2 TIM. II. life in the prosecution of his great work, *was raised from the dead*,[a] and at length exalted to
8 the right hand of God, there to receive the reward of all his labours and sufferings, *according to* the tenor of *my gospel*, which, as thou well knowest, I every where preach and
9 attest. *In* the service of *which*[b] *I suffer evil*, [*even*] *to bonds*; the chief magistrates of my country sentencing me to confinement, after the many insults which have been offered me by the dregs of the people, *as* if I were *a malefactor* worthy of some heavy punishment; *but* my great comfort is, that *the word of God is not bound.* I rejoice that many of my brethren are at liberty to preach it publicly, and am thankful for every opportunity of bearing my testimony to so good a cause, in such a private manner as my present circumstances may admit; well knowing that God can bless even these limited attempts, to what degree
10 he shall in his infinite wisdom see fit. (Compare Phil. i. 12.) *On this account I* cheerfully *endure all* these *things*, and whatever else Providence may appoint, *for the sake of the elect; that* the gracious purposes of God for their happiness may be effected, and *they may obtain* that complete *salvation which is in Christ Jesus*, and which shall be attended *with eternal* as well as illustrious and exalted *glory.*

11 [*It is*] *a faithful word*[c] which I have often insisted upon, and it shall undoubtedly be verified; *that if we* have the resolution to *die with* [*him,*] even that blessed Saviour, according to the obligation of our baptismal vow, *we shall also live with* [*him,*] in that ever-
12 lasting happiness which he hath prepared for all his people. *If we* patiently *endure* our part in his afflictions, *we shall also* share his triumph, and *reign with* [*him*] in his celestial kingdom. But on the other hand, *if we* are intimidated with these transitory evils, so as to desert his cause and *deny* [*him*] before men, *he will also*, as he hath expressly threaten-
13 ed, *deny us* in the great day, before his Father and his holy angels. *If we are unfaithful*[d] and false to our engagements, *he abideth faithful*, and will steadily adhere to those rules of judgment and distribution which he hath so solemnly laid down in his word;

2 TIM. ii. 8.
REMEMBER that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him:*

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him;* if we deny *him*, he will also deny us:

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

a *Remember Christ, who was raised from the dead.*] Our translators render it, *Remember that he was raised;* as if he had said, Adhere to this as the great foundation of the gospel. But though this be undoubtedly true, the apostle's thought seems rather more lively: remember Him who was thus raised from the dead, and that will be instead of a thousand arguments to bear thee through all thy difficulties.

b *In* the service of *which.*] Dr. Whitby has shown, in his note on this clause, that εν ῳ sometimes signifies, *in which cause*, or *for the sake of which.*

c *It is a faithful word.*] Some refer this to the concluding clause of the former verse; but it seems much more reasonable to connect it with what follows, as, generally speaking, this phrase is introductory to the weighty sentence it is intended to confirm. (See 1 Tim. i. 15; iv. 8, 9. though Tit. iii. 8. seems an exception.) Dr. Tillotson thinks this was a *celebrated saying* among christians, which was either derived by tradition from Christ or some of the apostles; and it had so powerful a tendency to keep them steady to their religion, that it is no wonder it was in frequent use. Tillot. Vol. II. p. 175, 176.

d *If we are unfaithful.*] So I think ει απιστουμεν should be rendered, as it stands opposed to πιστος· and so the *words* will farther imply, that whatever we lose by our unfaithfulness, in whatever degree it appears, it is no argument of any unfaithfulness *in him;* as his promises are made to *faithful* servants, and fair warning is given to persons of a different character.

(compare Matt. x. 33.) for we may be sure *he cannot deny himself*, by frustrating his own public declaration. It becomes us, therefore, to weigh the tenor of them with all seriousness, and humbly to acquiesce in his terms, since it is impossible he should be brought to change them in favour of ours. SECT. 3. 2 TIM. II.

14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord, that they may strive not about words, to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

Remind [*them*] *of these things*, as thou art engaged to sacrifice every other view to the great prospect of approving thy fidelity to such a Master. And for this purpose, *testify*, as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence,[e] to those over whom thou art called to preside, *that men do not contend* and quarrel *about words*, an evil to [*which*] they are so obnoxious: for such a contention [*is*] *altogether unprofitable*, [*and even tends*] *to the subversion of the hearers*, taking off their attention from true religion, and filling their minds with pride and passion, and numberless other disorders and vices. 14

15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Diligently endeavour, whenever thou comest *to present thyself before God* in any of the duties of thine office, that, whatever men may judge of thee and thy services, thou mayst be *approved* by him as *a workman who hath no cause to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*,[f] distributing with prudence as well as fidelity, to each his proper share. 15

16 But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

But avoid, and stand at a distance from, those *profane and empty declamations* with which some who affect to be thought of importance in the christian church are ready to amuse themselves: *for* though the evil of some of them may not immediately appear, and they may seem trifling rather than mischievous, *they will* at length *advance unto more impiety*; and when Satan has prevailed upon men once to quit the right way, he will be continually gaining greater advantages over them. 16

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus:

And their discourse will eat like a gangrene, spreading itself farther and farther, till the whole body is infected and even destroyed by it. Such teachers there are now in the church; *of which* [*number*,] in particular, *are Hymeneus and Philetus: Who have erred with respect to the truth*, so as to be wide of the mark. For they have, by their allegorical interpretations, explained away one of the most fundamental doctrines of our religion, *asserting that the resurrection*, of which it so largely speaks, consists only in a conversion from vice to virtue, and consequently *is already past*,[g] with regard to all true christians; *and* so they *subvert the faith of some* who are less established in the doctrines of the gospel, and endanger their salvation. It will therefore become thee, amidst all the candour which I have so often inculcated, to guard against such tenets and the authors of them. 17, 18

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying, That the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is not, perhaps, a single precept in the whole sacred volume which would be more extensively useful to ministers or to private christians, than this of the apostle, taken in all its extent, *Remember Jesus Christ*. Many a sweet memorial hath he left us of himself. Often, very often, have we been called solemnly to survey them, and yet how ready are we to forget him, and by a natural consequence to forget ourselves, our duty and interest on the one hand, and our danger on the other. "Blessed Jesus! may we daily and hourly remember thee! that thou "hast died, that thou art raised from the dead, and that thou art ever near thy people, to protect, to comfort, and to "bless them. If for thy cause we should be called to suffer evil as evil-doers, whether in our persons, or reputations, "may we not be discouraged, but rather rejoice in the honour thou doest us in appointing for us such a conformity to "thyself! The enemies of thy gospel may indeed oppose it, they may bind its most faithful preachers, but their "opposition, their persecution, is vain." *The word of God is not bound*; and divine grace, operating by it, will sooner or later give it the intended, the promised triumph; that his elect may obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, and may only escape the condemnation and ruin of the impenitent world, but may finally be crowned with eternal glory. Ver. 8–10

May we ever be mindful of this faithful word, That if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him too; and may we endure the greatest hardships to which we can be called out, as considering that our sufferings are momentary, but our reign will be eternal. Never may we, for any allurement or terror, deny him, as we would not finally be denied by him, when no other honour will remain but that which he confers, no other happiness but that which he bestows. 11–13

In the mean time, as we desire the prosperity of his kingdom, let us earnestly pray that he will raise up to his church a multitude of faithful ministers, who may govern themselves by these truly apostolical canons; ministers who may not contend about words in a manner unprofitable and vain, who may not amuse their hearers with empty harangues about insignificant curiosities or perplexing subtilties; but may in the integrity of their hearts endeavour to approve themselves to God, as workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And may divine grace preserve the church from those seducing teachers, whose doctrine like a secret gangrene might spread itself to the destruction of the body, so that the faith of many might be overthrown! 14–18

e *Testify* as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence.] There is a most *awful solemnity* in this charge, which plainly shows the great folly and mischief of striving about little controversies; and I pray God to affect the hearts of his ministers with a deeper sense of this, before the interests of vital religion among us be utterly undone by our severe contentions; or, as the excellent Archbishop Leighton expresses it in his lively manner, "What we profess to "hold so *sacred*, be itself torn in pieces, while we are struggling "about its *fringes*."

f *Rightly dividing the word of truth*: Ορθοτομουντα τον λογον της αληθειας.] Some think here is an allusion to what the Jewish priest or Levite did in dissecting the victim, and separating the parts in a proper manner; as some were to be laid on God's altar, and others to be given to those who were to share in the sacrifice. Others think it refers to guiding a plough aright, in order to divide the clods in the most proper and effectual manner, and to make straight furrows. But, perhaps, the metaphor may be taken from the distribution made by a steward,, in delivering out to each person under his care such things as his office and their necessities required.

g *Asserting that the resurrection is past*.] Vice, as my learned friend Mr. Warburton with great propriety observes in reference to the text, was in the philosophical schools called *death*. And, upon the same principle, a recovery to a virtuous course and temper might be called a kind of *resurrection* from the dead. But nothing can be more evident than that this was by no means the resurrection which christianity taught. Yet as there is nothing too absurd for some who pride themselves in their philosophy to believe, this foolish refinement found its followers among some pretended christians of this stamp. Warb. *Div. Leg.* Vol. I. p. 435.

SECTION IV.

The apostle urges the necessity of holiness in all christians, but especially in ministers: and of meekness in their endeavours to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen. 2 Tim. ii. 19, *to the end.*

2 TIM. ii. 19.

SECT. 4.

2 TIM. II. 19

IN order to excite thee, O Timothy, to contend earnestly for the great doctrines of the gospel, I have taken notice of the manner in which some have revolted from them. And it is matter of mournful reflection, that there should be such instances of apostasy in this early age of the church. *Nevertheless*, we recollect with pleasure, that whatever defections there may be in particular persons, *the* great *foundation* Stone, which the mercy and faithfulness *of God* has laid for the support and comfort of his people, *standeth firm* and stedfast, *having*, as it were, *this* double seal or *inscription*:[a] on the one hand, *The Lord knoweth them that are his own*, and as he surely distinguishes them in every circumstance, so he bears a steady and constant favour to them, nor can any alienate them from his gracious regards; *and*, on the other side, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ*, every one that professes his religion, and pretends the least regard to him, *depart from iniquity*; let him stand off and keep at the greatest distance from every kind and degree of immorality, from every appearance and occasion of sin. But though our obligations to such a conduct be so many and so great, we cannot flatter ourselves that all professing christians will be sensible of them. *For in a great house there are vessels, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, the former* being intended *for honourable, the other for* meaner and *dishonourable, uses*: and accordingly, there will be, in the church of God, persons of different characters, who will meet with very different treatment. *If therefore any one cleanse himself from these*, if he be careful to avoid the society of persons who have revolted from true religion, and made themselves instruments of impurity and iniquity, *he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and useful to the* immediate and personal service of his great *Lord* and Master; and such an one will be constantly *ready*, as the nobler vessels of a house, *to every good work*, which will be the surest test of our real goodness. *But flee from* all occasions of exciting or gratifying *the passions of youth*; whether, on the one hand, the love of sensual pleasure, or, on the other, rashness, contention, pride, and vain-glory,[b] to which young persons are peculiarly obnoxious: for these will render thee unfit for the honour of being used by thy Lord for the purposes of his glory and the edification of his church. *And*, therefore, instead of making provision for these, *pursue*, with the greatest ardour and intenseness of mind, *righteousness* and *fidelity*, *love* and *peace*; cultivate an upright, benevolent, candid temper *towards* all, and especially towards *those that invoke* the name of *the Lord* Jesus Christ *out of a pure heart*, so far as the conduct can discover the inward temper. *But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that*, how curious soever they appear, *they* only tend to *beget strifes* and contentions in the church; and I reckon it a most important part of the learning of a christian minister to guard against such occasions of offence and mischief.

Let the bigoted Jews and the vain-glorious heathens on each side split into ever so many different sects and parties, and dispute as eagerly about such things as they will; *but the servant of the Lord*, the christian, and especially the minister, *must not strive* in an angry and hostile manner, *but be* mild and *gentle towards all, ready to teach* the ignorant; and, instead of hurting [*and*] injuring any, be willing *to endure evil* from those who, instead of receiving his doctrine, repay his kindness with outrage: *In meekness instructing opposers, if by any means God may*, perhaps, in his own due time, conquer their savage prejudices, and *give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*; of which, through the riches of divine grace, we see some instances, even where there had been a long and inveterate struggle against it. *And* surely it will be worth while to try every method on such unhappy souls, *that they may awaken* and recover themselves *out of the snare of the devil, who have* lain sleeping, and, as it were, intoxicated in it, having *been taken* by that subtle fowler, and, like a living prey, detained *captive by him at his* cruel *pleasure*, while perhaps they have been dreaming of liberty and happiness in the midst of the most shameful bondage and the extremest danger.[c]

2 TIM. ii. 19. NEVERTHELESS the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

a *Inscription.*] Many critics have justly observed, that the word σφραγις often signifies an *inscription*, or the *mark* made *by a seal*, as well as the *seal* itself. (See Rev. ix. 4.) And the expression is here used with peculiar propriety, in allusion to the custom of engraving upon some stones laid in the foundation of buildings the name of the persons by whom, and the purposes for which, the structure is raised. And nothing can have a greater tendency to encourage the hope, and at the same time to engage the obedience, of christians, than this *double* inscription. Dr. Whitby supposes that clause, *The Lord knoweth them that are his own*, has a peculiar reference to the apostles, in opposition to heretical teachers, and that it alludes to Numb. xvi. 5. Septuag. That to *know* often signifies, to *regard with favour*, as well as to *distinguish*, hath been shown elsewhere. Rom. viii. 27.

b Rashness, contention, &c.] These are *youthful passions*, of the danger of which some heady young men, who may value themselves for their freedom from other scandals, seem to think but little; yet it is plain from the opposition between this and the latter part of the verse, they were particularly in Paul's mind when he gave this caution.

c *That they may recover*, &c.] In order to understand this beautiful image, it is proper to observe that the word ανανηψωσιν properly signifies to *awake from a deep sleep*, or from a fit of *intoxication*, (see Elsn. *Obs. Sac. in loc.*) and refers to an artifice of fowlers to scatter seeds impregnated with some drugs intended to lay birds asleep, that they might draw the net over them with the greater security. The interpretation which a late writer has given of these words, who would render them, "*being taken alive by him*, that is, "the christian minister, *for* the purposes of *the divine will*," is so unnatural, that merely to compare it with the former is to confute it. (Taylor, *On Orig. Sin.* p. 152.) Nor can any thing be more evidently wrong than to maintain that ζωγρεω necessarily implies a

IMPROVEMENT.

How affecting a representation is here made of the wretched state of sinners! they are described as *sleeping in Satan's snare*, like birds in a net, taken alive, and at the fowler's mercy; while they imagine they can spring up whenever they please, and range at full liberty. Alas! they will soon perceive their fatal captivity: but they will perceive it too late, if divine grace do not quickly awaken them. Who would not wish to do something for their recovery? Let the ministers of the gospel pity them. Let us pray that God, whose work it is, *would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* Let us try every gentle method which the sincerest compassion can dictate, toward effecting so happy a design, and not suffer ourselves to be transported to undue severities of language or of sentiments, even though we should receive the greatest injuries where we intend the most important kindness. SECT. 4. 2 TIM. II. 24

Let those that have the honour to bear the most holy character which any office can devolve on mortal man, avoid with the greatest care every thing that would bring a stain, or even a suspicion, upon it. Let them revere the voice of the great apostle, while it animates them to pursue righteousness and faith, love and peace, with all their fellow-christians of every denomination, with all that invoke Christ, and that trust in him. So shall they be vessels of honour, so may they humbly hope that their Lord will condescend to make some special use of them, for the purposes of his own glory, and the salvation of their fellow-creatures. 22 21

To conclude: let ministers and people be daily reading, with all possible care, this double inscription on the foundation of God and while we rejoice in the one, let us be admonished by the other. For what is it to us, that the Lord knows, distinguishes, and favours his own, that his almighty power protects them, and that his infinite mercy will for ever save them, if we are ourselves found among *the wicked, with whom he is angry every day*, among the workers of iniquity, whom he will publicly disown, and to whom he will say, *I know not whence you are.* To name the name of Christ with dispositions like these, will be to injure and profane it; and our profession itself will be interpreted as an act of hostility against him, whom we have presumed so vainly to call the Foundation of our hopes, and the Sovereign of our souls. 19

SECTION V.

Paul cautions Timothy against that great declension and apostasy which was to prevail in the christian world, and against those false teachers who were rising up in it; reminding him of the example he had seen in him, in the midst of such persecutions as were still to be expected. 2 Tim. iii. 1—13.

2 TIM. iii. 1.

2 TIM. iii. 1. THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

IT is the more necessary thus to urge thee to every precaution and every effort which may preserve the purity and honour of the christian church, as, after all we can do for this purpose, such sad scenes are to open in it. We are indeed acquainted with our duty, and we shall find our own highest account in attending to it. *But this know*, O Timothy, *that in the last days*, under the evangelical dispensation which is to wind up the economy of Providence, and is to remain in full force even to the end of the world, *difficult times* and circumstances *shall arise*, in which it will be hard to discharge our consciences, and at the same time maintain our safety. *For men shall be lovers of themselves*,[a] in the most absurd and excessive degree; *lovers of money*, so as to be impelled to the basest practices by the hopes of obtaining it; *boasters* of what they have, and *proud* pretenders to what they have not; *blasphemers* of God and revilers of their fellow-creatures; *disobedient to parents*, notwithstanding all the obligations they are under to their care and tenderness; *unthankful* and ungrateful to other benefactors; *unholy*, though they profess themselves devoted to God, and consecrated to his service by the most solemn rites: They will be *destitute of natural affection* even to their own children, as well as of piety toward their parents; *implacable* where enmities have been commenced, and treacherous in their mutual engagements, when there has been a pretence of making them up;[b] *false accusers*, in which they will imitate that diabolical malignity which renders the great enemy of mankind so justly odious; *intemperate* in their pleasures, *fierce* in their resentments, cruel in their revenge; *destitute of all love to goodness*, though it so naturally extorts a tribute of veneration and affection from every human heart which is not sunk into the last degeneracy. They will be *traitors* to those that place the greatest confidence in them, such base traitors, as even to give up their brethren into the hands of persecutors; *heady* and rash in enterprizing things, which can only issue in the disturbance of society, or the ruin of those that undertake them. In the mean time, they will be *puffed up with* such *insolence* and self-sufficiency, as to despise any remonstrance which can be made to bring them to a wiser and SECT. 5. 2 TIM. III. 1 2 3 4

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

purpose of *preserving*, whereas it only imports *taking a captive*, without determining whether it be for servitude or for death. Compare 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Septuag.

a *Men shall be lovers of themselves*, &c.] Dr. Whitby takes great pains to show that these characters were applicable to the Jews in the last days of their commonwealth; and supposes the apostle refers to the difficulty of retaining the christian profession, or acting so as to preserve a safe conscience in it. Many of the lineaments here drawn were, no doubt, to be found in the unbelieving Jews; but, especially considering ver. 5—7. I rather chuse to interpret the words as describing some who not only *professed* christianity, but pretended to *teach* it. And I must beg leave to refer my readers to that very learned and ingenious dissertation of Vitringa, (*Observ. Sac. lib.* iv. *cap.* 7.) in which he attempts to prove that there was a great alteration in the face of the christian church between the time of Nero and Trajan, within which period he apprehends great numbers of professors to have departed from the strictness of christian morals, as well as the purity of the faith. I cannot be satisfied that the supposed predictions of this remarkable event, which he produces from the Old Testament, in his viiith chapter, are so convincing as he thinks them, viz. Isa. xi. 4; xli. 10—12; xliii. 1—3; xlix. 14; l. 10; Mic. vii. 10; Psal. v. 1; xl. 13, 14; lvii. 5; lxxii. 4. His arguments from the New Testament have much greater weight, viz. Matt. x. 21, 22; xxiv. 9—13, 22; Acts xx. 29; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; 1 Pet. iv. 16, 17; with the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Second of Peter, and that of Jude; and I wonder he hath not added this remarkable text to the catalogue.

b *Implacable* and treacherous.] The word ασπονδους certainly takes in *both* ideas, and may be applied to men, who, when once offended, will come into no *treaty* of reconciliation, and also to such as will not think themselves *bound* by such treaties, when they may answer any purposes of their own by the violation of them.

SECT. 5. 2 TIM. III.

more decent conduct; and, upon the whole, will prove *lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God;* who will therefore sacrifice all considerations of religion to the gratification of their appetites. And yet, in the midst of all these enormities, they will still profess themselves christians, *having a form of godliness*, and observing with exactness the rituals and externals of religion, *but* at the same time *denying* and opposing *the power of it* in their lives, and demonstrating that it has no real influence upon them. *From such* therefore, even from all in whom thou discernest a temper like that which I have here described, *turn away;* avoid all intimacy with them, lest they should avail themselves of the friendship to which thou mightest admit them, as an advantage for doing further mischief; let it therefore evidently appear that thou givest them no countenance.

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 This temper, as I have intimated before, has begun to appear in many of our contemporaries, *of which* [*number*] *are those* artful deceivers, *who insinuate themselves*[c] *into houses, and* are especially successful in their attempts to *captivate inconsiderable women*, of low rank, and mean understandings, yet easily inflamed with passionate zeal; being indeed, whatever pretences they may make to sanctity, *laden with sins*, and *led aside by various lusts*, which these seducers know how to flatter in such a manner as to make them their own property. These foolish creatures are *always learning*, they pretend to hear with great eagerness, and are charmed with every appearance of novelty and fervour; *but* they are tossed about with every gale of doctrine, and *never able to come to the acknowledgment of the truth*, or to attain any fixed and steady principles. *And* these designing wretches, of whom I have been speaking, seize on such as their proper prey, and just *as Jannes and Jambres*,[d] the Egyptian magicians, *withstood Moses*, when he came to Pharaoh with a message from God, *so do these* men *also withstand the truth* of the gospel. I speak of *persons whose minds are* utterly *corrupted, who with respect to the faith are disapproved*, and worthy of being rejected as enemies to it, and unworthy to know it, though they pretend so much zeal in its defence. *But* I foresee, that *they shall not proceed much farther*[e] in these artifices, *for their folly shall be manifested to all, as theirs also was*, when God sent upon the Egyptians plagues, which, far from being able to remove, or mitigate, they could not, as in former instances, so much as imitate.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no farther; for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.

10 *But thou hast exactly traced*, and been accurately acquainted with, *my doctrine*, and my *conversation*, the steadiness of my aim, *purpose*, and resolution in the cause of God; that firm and uniform *fidelity* which I have always strenuously maintained, without yielding up any the least article of it; my *long-suffering*, when I had been treated in the most injurious manner; my *love* to all, however different in opinion, not excepting even mine enemies and persecutors; and my *patience* under such pressing trials. Particularly under the *persecutions* [and] *sufferings which befell me in* the Pisidian *Antioch* (Acts xiii. 45.) *in Iconium*, (xiv. 2.) *in Lystra*, (xiv. 19.) where thou hast not only heard, but seen, *what persecutions I endured; but the Lord* Jesus, whom I serve, was still with me, and *rescued me out of* them *all. Yea, and all who are* resolutely *determined* upon it, *that they will live godly in Christ Jesus*,[f] that they will conduct themselves by the strict rules of piety which he has prescribed, not turning aside to the right hand or the left, *shall suffer persecution* or opposition of one kind or another: for Christ has decreed to lead all his people to glory, through a variety of difficulties and hardships. *But wicked men and impostors*, by whatever artifices they may decline persecution, are in a yet more wretched state; for they provoke God to give them up to the lusts of their own heart, and so *will grow* continually *worse and worse*, more obstinate in their opposition to the gospel and its faithful ministers; *deceiving* others indeed by false *and* treacherous pretences, but *being* themselves much more fatally *deceived* by their own corruptions which delude them with the visionary hope of some temporal advantage, while they are plunging into irrecoverable and everlasting ruin.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. MUST we not, on the survey of this scripture, in comparison with what we every day behold in life, cry out, "Verily these are the last days?" They are assuredly times of difficulty and peril. Self-love, pride, ingratitude, treachery, intemperance, insolence, the contempt of all authority, human and divine, each, all of these characters may too plainly declare it. But none with more striking evidence than the excessive love of pleasure, on which so many are doting to destruction, while every consideration, both of religion and of prudence, falls at the shrine of this favourite idol. Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, more than lovers of their families, yea, though self-interest be in many instances so scandalously pursued, yet more than lovers of themselves; and when they have sacrificed every thing else to their gain, they sacrifice even that gain to luxury. And would to God

c *Insinuate themselves, &c.*] This character, as we hinted above, seems rather to suit disaffected and seducing christian teachers, than infidel Jews, who no doubt carried it with an high hand, and would scorn to think of crouching to the leaders of so contemptible a sect as they called that of the Nazarenes.

d *Jannes and Jambres.*] It is remarkable, that the former of these is mentioned together with Moses by Pliny, and both of them by Numenius the philosopher, quoted in Eusebius, as celebrated magicians. See Plin. *Nat. Hist. lib.* 30. *cap.* i. and Euseb. *lib.* 9. *cap.* 8. It is of no importance to inquire by what tradition their names came down to so distant an age.

e *Shall not proceed much farther.*] Translating it thus will easily reconcile this with what is afterwards said of their *growing worse and worse*, ver. 13. and of their word *eating as a gangrene*. Diodati indeed explains this and the 13th verse of *different* persons: this, of some who had already appeared; that, of others who were soon to arise. But there seems not the least need of having recourse to such a solution.

f *Live godly in Christ Jesus, &c.*] This, as Dr. Evans justly observes, may import something *peculiar* in the godliness to be exercised by christians, as being agreeable to the revelation of Christ, animated by his example, dependent on his Spirit for assistance, and his atonement for acceptance with God. Important topics, which all who desire to obtain and promote *godliness* ought to dwell much upon. See Evans's *Christian Temper*, Vol. I. p. 192.

there was none such, even among those that retain the form of godliness, which so many indeed have scornfully cast off! But O, how vain the form, where the power of it is thus denied! And how peculiarly scandalous are these characters in those who call themselves teachers of religion! Yet to such they are here originally applied; and their race is not yet extinct. SECT. 5. 2 TIM. III.

Blessed be God, there are those yet remaining who are the happy reverse of these; ministers, who can appeal to the consciences of men as to their doctrine, their conversation, their resolution, their fidelity, their gentleness, their charity, and their patience. Happy are they, how ill soever they may be treated in the world! Happy would they be, though exposed to all the terrors of persecution which the apostles and their first followers endured! But we are all warned to prepare for some degree of it; and indeed, who can wonder if, amidst so many evils, they who will not go on with the multitude, should sometimes be rudely pressed by them; and it may be, in some instances, cast down and trampled under foot. But be it so; though cast down, they shall not be destroyed. (2 Cor. iv. 9.) A little time will balance all. An hour of eternity will more than balance it. Let us guard against the deceits by which so many suffer. Let us guard, above all, against those deceits which men practise upon themselves, and whereby they hurt themselves infinitely more than all their fraud or violence can hurt any who are not accessary to their own undoing. 10 11 12 13

SECTION VI.

To guard Timothy against those seducing teachers, and to preserve the church from their evil influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures, and great diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; reflecting with pleasure on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth. 2 Tim. iii. 14, *to the end;* iv. 1—8.

2 TIM. iii. 14.

2 TIM. iii. 14.
BUT continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*.

I HAVE mentioned the case of these wretched men, who grow worse and worse, deceiving others and themselves most of all. *But* that thou, O Timothy, mayst effectually avoid them, *continue thou* stedfast *in the things which thou hast learnt* from me, *and hast believed* upon the authority of God speaking in and by me; *knowing from whom thou hast learnt* [*them*,] and what convincing proofs I have given thee, both of my general integrity, and of that extraordinary inspiration by which I teach. SECT. 6. 2 TIM. III.

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

And 15 knowing also, *that* the oracles of the Old Testament confirm the system of doctrines which I have taught; of which thou must be very sensible, because *from thine infancy*[a] *thou hast known the sacred scriptures*, in which the grand learning of our Jewish nation consists, and *which* are indeed most worthy of being studied by all, as they *are able to make thee*, and all that faithfully admit and follow their guidance, *wise unto* eternal *salvation*; a science infinitely nobler and more important than human literature in its greatest refinements can pretend to teach, and which is to be learned only *through* that *faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

For *the whole scripture*, received by the Jewish church, [*is*] *divinely inspired*,[b] *and* 16 therefore, as may well be imagined, is *profitable* to the highest purposes. It is fitted *for doctrine*, as it lays down the most fundamental principles of religion in the view it gives us of the divine nature and perfections, and *for conviction* of those opposite errors, which the licentious and perverse wit of man has invented in so great abundance, and set off with so many plausible arguments. It is also useful *for the reproof* of irregularities in practice, which, how speciously soever they may be defended by the sophistry of those that think it their interest to plead for them, quickly fall before the authority of the divine word. And when men have submitted to it, they will also find it effectual *for instruction in righteousness*, and will be led on from one degree of virtue and piety to another, with a progress which will continually advance in proportion to the regard they pay to that divine book.

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Tim. iv. 1. I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

To this therefore, I hope thou, O Timothy, and every minister of the gospel, will 17 diligently apply, *that the* furniture of the *man of God may be complete*, and that he may be *thoroughly fitted for every good work* which his holy calling may require. *I charge* [*thee*] *therefore*, considering what I have urged in the former part of this Epistle, in the most awful manner, *before* the great and blessed *God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, his 1 only-begotten Son, *who shall judge the living and the dead*, and pronounce on them all their final and everlasting doom, *at his* last public glorious *appearance*, when the extent *and* majesty of *his kingdom* shall appear in full display: I charge thee to execute the important trust committed to thee with the strictest fidelity. For this purpose, *preach the* 2 *word* of God with all possible seriousness and earnestness; *be instant in* the prosecution of that good work, in the stated *season* of religious assemblies, [*and*] *out of* that *season*, when occasional providences may give thee an opportunity; yea, carry it into thy private conversation, in the intervals of thy public labours. Endeavour to *convince* the consciences of men, and to reclaim them from their erroneous principles; *rebuke* them for their irregularities and vices, without fearing the face of any; and *exhort* them to diligence and zeal in the performance of their duty, *with all long-suffering*, though thou mayst not immediately see the desired success; *and* enforce these exhortations with all those well-known and important motives which the *doctrine* of the gospel may suggest. Seize the present opportu- 3

2 TIM. IV.

2 Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come

a *From thine infancy.*] Hence it appears, that little children may learn some useful lessons from scripture, and that they ought to be early initiated into the study of the sacred letters; directly contrary to what the church of Rome teaches.

b *The whole scripture* [*is*] *divinely inspired.*] Grotius translates the words, *the whole divinely-inspired scripture is profitable, &c.* which they will undoubtedly bear; and as we may be sure that, by *scripture*, the apostle means the books which the Jews received as canonical, that version gives a true sense; but I take this, which is our own, to be more literal.

SECT. 6. 2 TIM. IV.

nity with all eagerness, *for* I see that *the time will* quickly *come, when they will not endure* good and wholesome *doctrine, but,* thinking themselves above the plainness of moral and practical instruction, *shall* wantonly *heap up to themselves* seducing *teachers,*[c] whose harangues shall be just *according to* the prejudices of *their own lusts, having* nothing else to recommend them, unless it be perhaps a glare of false and affected eloquence,

when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

4 which may gratify the vain curiosity and *itching ears* of their hearers. *And* so unhappily will their minds be disposed, that *they shall turn away* [*their*] *attention from* simple *truth,* of the greatest certainty, on which nothing less than their salvation depends, *and shall be turned aside to* idle *fables,* which they eagerly drink in, under a fond semblance of mystery and obscure science, which they pretend to be veiled in these abstruse and enigmatical forms.

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 *But be thou,* O Timothy, diligent and *watchful in all things* that may tend to the security of thy charge, and prepare thyself resolutely to *endure adversity,* and to *perform the* full *work of an evangelist,* and fully to *accomplish* all the branches of *thy ministry.*[d]

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 And the rather, considering how soon the world will lose whatever advantage it may now receive from my personal labours; *for* I may well conclude, from my age and circumstances, that *I am now,* as it were, *just ready to be offered,* to be poured out as a libation upon God's altar, *and the time of my departure is near* at hand; the time when I shall be dismissed from this state of confinement, when I shall weigh anchor from these mortal

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 shores, and launch into the ocean of eternity. And, while I stand on the borders of that awful state, it is with unspeakable pleasure I reflect, that *I have maintained the good combat* against the sharpest opposition, that *I have finished* [*my*] *race,* though it has been so arduous, that *I have kept the* holy *faith* committed to my trust, and with the strictest

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith.

8 fidelity endeavoured to preserve it free from human additions and corruptions. *It remaineth* [*that*] *a crown of righteousness* and glory *is laid up* in sure reserve *for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,* who presides in this great exercise, *shall,* with distinguished honour, before the assembled world, *render* and award *to me, in that* illustrious *day,*[e] upon which our hopes and hearts are set; *and* it is the joy of my soul to think, that he shall *not* assign it *to me alone, but to all them also who love* the thoughts of *his* final *appearance* to the universal judgment, and are or shall be making a wise and pious preparation for it.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 BEHOLD this blessed man, this prisoner, this martyr of Christ, appearing in his chains, and, in the near views of a violent death, more truly majestic and happy, than Cæsar on his imperial throne! Blessed man indeed; who could look upon the pouring forth of his blood, as the libation of a sacrifice of thanksgiving, on which he could call for the congratulations of his friends, rather than their condolence: who could loosen from these mortal shores, and set sail for eternity with a shout! O may we all be excited by his example to fight the good fight, to finish 7 our course, to keep the faith, in the view of that crown of righteousness which is not reserved only for Paul, or for 8 ministers and christians of the first rank, who have been eminent for the most distinguished services, but for all who love Christ's appearance, and whose hearts are thoroughly reconciled to his government!

5 May we therefore be watchful in all things. May we endure every affliction which God shall lay in our way, 1 and fill up with proper services every station in which we are fixed. Let the ministers of Christ attend to this solemn charge, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead, at his appearance and in his kingdom. They are as much concerned in this judgment as Timothy or Paul; their own eternal state is in question, and none can have greater reason than themselves to be impressed with it. Let as many therefore 2 as are called to it by divine providence and grace, preach the word with zeal and fervency, as well as fidelity; let them be instant in season, and out of season, with a resolution tempered with gentleness, and supported by firm 3 faith in him, who intrusts them with the message. And let the petulancy of men, which indisposes them to endure sound doctrine, yet makes them need it so much the more, be considered by them as an engagement to greater zeal, rather than an excuse for remissness.

III. 16, 17 That they may be animated to it, and furnished for it, thoroughly furnished for every good work incumbent upon them, as men of God, a becoming reverence is to be maintained for the divinely inspired scriptures, apparently profitable for doctrine and reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness. Let us all esteem it our great 15 happiness, if from children we have been acquainted with them; let us study them diligently, and take faithful care to deliver them down to those that arise after us, as the oracles of that eternal wisdom by which we and they may be made wise to salvation.

c *They shall heap up to themselves teachers.*] Mr. Slater, in his *Original Draught, &c.* p. 126. urges this text as an argument against allowing to the *people* the choice of *their own* ministers; but that right is by no means in question here. The danger there was of men's hearkening to erroneous and seducing teachers, would, upon every imaginable hypothesis, be a solid argument for Timothy's exerting himself to the utmost, in preaching the word, and endeavouring to guard the churches against errors which might otherwise soon have become fatally prevalent. I must add, that the expression, *heaping up to themselves,* implies, that they should be *desirous* of such, and that they should meet with many of such a character.

d *Accomplish thy ministry.*] It surely must have been owing to a strong prepossession in favour of diocesan episcopacy, that the worthy person I mentioned above could imagine these words contained an argument for it. He explains the words πληροφορησον την διακονιαν σου as an exhortation to *take upon him the complete office of a bishop,* because Paul himself was ready to quit it; not considering how ill this interpretation agrees with his own supposition, of Timothy's being in the episcopal office when Paul wrote his first Epistle to him. Whatever Timothy's office were, the argument which Paul suggests, of the satisfaction he found in the reflection of his own fidelity, would be very conclusive.

e *In that day.*] This text will certainly prove, that the great and most glorious reward of faithful christians is referred to the day of general judgment. But it would be very precarious to argue from hence, that there shall be no *prelibation* and *anticipation* of this happiness in a separate state. And when the many texts, which have been so often urged in proof of that *intermediate happiness,* are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which has been drawn from such passages as this:

SECTION VII.

The apostle concludes with requesting Timothy to come to him, giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and adding some particular salutations and directions. 2 Tim. iv. 9, *to the end.*

2 TIM. iv. 9.

2 TIM. iv. 9.

DO thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

I MIGHT add much more on this occasion, but the hope I have of seeing thee ere long, SECT. makes me the easier in omitting it. I cannot but be very desirous of such an interview. 7.
Endeavour therefore by all means *to come to me* here at Rome, as *quickly* as possible. 2 TIM.
For I need the assistance and company of such a faithful friend, as I have met with very iv.
unworthy treatment from some who ought to have acted in a very different manner. And 9
I must particularly inform thee, that *Demas hath forsaken me*,[a] *having loved the pre-* 10
sent world, and followed another way, as his secular views invited him. In pursuit of these, he *is gone to Thessalonica*, as *Crescens* is *to Galatia*, and *Titus*, for whom thou knowest I have a very high regard, is gone *to Dalmatia*. *Luke alone*, whose faithful friendship I have long experienced, *is* still *with me*. I desire thou wouldst *take* the first 11
opportunity of engaging the company of *Mark*, [*and*] *bring him along with thee*, *for he is useful to* the advancement of *my ministry* among the Gentiles, having often attended both Barnabas and me in our progress amongst them. Thou wilt perceive, by what I have 12
just been saying, what reason I have to wish for the society of an approved christian friend *and* brother, at a time when I am left thus destitute: yet, preferring the edification of the church of Christ to any personal consideration of my own, *I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus*, where I some years ago left thee, to take care of the flourishing church which I planted there, and with some of whose members I have had so long and intimate an acquaintance. *When thou comest* hither, as I hope thou quickly wilt, I desire thou 13
wouldst remember to *bring* [*with thee*] *that cloak*[b] *which I left at the house of* our friend *Carpus*, *in Troas*,[c] when I passed through it the last time. *And* bring also *the books* which I left there, [*but*] *especially the parchments*.[d]

When I speak of these parts, I cannot forbear telling thee, that *Alexander the brazier*[e] 14
has brought many evils and mischiefs *upon me*. And I doubt not but *the Lord*, who exercises a guardian care over me as his faithful servant, will sooner or later *reward him according to his works*. May it be an instructive and merciful discipline, to reform rather than to destroy him. *Against whom*, in the mean time, *be thou also* particularly 15
upon thy guard, or thou mayst receive much detriment from him; *for he hath* not only done me a great deal of personal injury, but hath *greatly withstood our words*, and taken every measure in his power to prevent the progress and advancement of the gospel, which is indeed wounding me in the most tender and sensible part.

In my first apology before the prefect of the city, *no man*, of all the christians here at 16
Rome, *appeared with me*, for my countenance and support, *but all*, either through treachery or cowardice, *forsook me*.[f] *May it not be charged to their account*, as an instance of unfaithfulness to our common Master! Yet I was not left entirely destitute, *but* 17
can say it with great pleasure, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ *stood by me, and strengthened me* with that inward fortitude of soul which no human support could have inspired; *that by me the preaching* [*of his gospel*] *might be carried on with confidence*,[g] *and* [*that*] *all*

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his words.

15 Of whom be thou ware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all

a *Demas hath forsaken me.*] I think we can neither be certain that Demas was ever a good man, from Paul's speaking of him, as one whom in the judgment of charity he hoped to be so, nor can we certainly infer from his dishonourable conduct on this occasion, that he totally apostatized from christianity, and much less, that he never returned to a sense of it any more. John Mark had once acted a part very like this, yet was evidently restored to the esteem of our apostle. Compare Acts xv. 38. with the next verse of this chapter.

b *Bring with thee that cloak.*] If φελον here signifies, *cloak* or *mantle*, it is, as Grotius justly observes, a proof of Paul's poverty, that he had occasion to send so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one. But some understand by it, either a *parchment-roll*, or something like a *portmanteau*, the contents of which might be more important than the thing itself.

c *At Troas.*] See the Introduction to this Epistle, p. 921.

d *The parchments.*] Bishop Bull thinks these parchments might be a kind of *common-place book*, in which the apostle inserted hints and extracts of what seemed most remarkable in the authors he read.

e *Alexander the brazier.*] The name of Alexander was so common, that we cannot certainly say whether this were the person mentioned, Acts xix. 33 or 1 Tim. i. 20. but what is here said of this brazier agrees so well with this last passage, that I think it probable it refers to the same man. What we know of Paul's character must lead us to conclude, that if he meant not the following words as a mere prediction, he did not however wish evil to him, as evil, but only that he might be so animadverted upon, as to prevent the contagion of his bad example from spreading in the church, and bring him to repentance and reformation, that so he might be preserved from final destruction.

f *All men forsook me.*] Many circumstances make it astonishing that Paul should have been deserted by the christians at Rome in this extremity. When he wrote his Epistle to the church there, which must have been ten years before this, he speaks of their *faith* as celebrated *through the world;* (Rom. i. 8.) He salutes a vast number of illustrious persons by name, and mentions many of them as his particular *friends;* (xvi. 3—15.) and we may assure ourselves that, during the two years he spent there in his hired house, when access was granted to all that desired it, the number, and probably the zeal, of christian converts would be greatly increased; as indeed he expressly assures the Philippians that it was, and that some of Cæsar's palace were added to them. (Phil. i. 12—14; iv. 22.) We are ready to say, How then was it possible he should be thus forsaken! But there is a material circumstance, seldom taken notice of in this connexion, which accounts in a great measure for what might otherwise appear so strange. Clement, the companion of Paul, informs us, that he suffered martyrdom under the governors, (as Bishop Pearson and L'Enfant explain αχρι των επι των ηγουμενων,) that is, as they understand it, when Nero was gone into Greece, and had left the government of the city to Tigellinus and Sabinus, prefects of the prætorian guard, and that monster Helius. If this be allowed, it fixes the death of Paul to A. D. 66 or 67. But the cruel persecution which Nero had raised against the christians at Rome, (in which they were worried in the skins of wild beasts, and burnt alive for a kind of public illumination,) was, according to Tacitus, at least two years before this. It is possible, therefore, that many of the excellent persons mentioned above, might have suffered death for their religion, or, according to our Lord's advice, (Mat. x. 23.) have retired to a distance from Rome. The Asiatic christians, who came with Paul, as it seems, to rally the broken remains of this once celebrated church, acted a mean part in deserting Paul, as the other christians of the place did. But it is less surprising upon the supposition above, than it would otherwise have appeared; and it might be among the first-fruits of that sad apostasy, which Vitringa (as was elsewhere observed) supposes to have begun in the time of Nero, and continued to that of Trajan. See note a, on 2 Tim. iii. 1 p. 929.

g *Carried on with confidence.*] So the original, πληροφορηθη, here signifies. Calvin truly observes, that it was a glorious testimony

SECT 7. 2 TIM. IV.

the nations might hear; for I made my defence in a manner that will, I doubt not, be taken notice of and reported abroad, much to the advantage of that sacred cause, which is dearer to me than my life. *And* though this plain and faithful testimony did indeed expose me to great danger, yet *I was* for the present *rescued,* like Daniel, *out of the mouth of the lion;* so that, fierce as he was, God did not suffer him to devour me, when he seemed to have me at his mercy. *And* I am confident that *the Lord,* whose power and faithfulness are always the same, *will rescue me* from what I fear much more than any thing this body can suffer, even *from every evil work;* will strengthen me against the most pressing and violent temptations, so that I shall do nothing unbecoming my christian faith, or ministerial office, *and thus will preserve* and conduct [*me*] *to his heavenly kingdom* with peace and triumph; *to him* therefore [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I must conclude with desiring thee to *salute Priscilla and Aquila,*[h] those dear friends with whom I have had so agreeable an acquaintance and intercourse these many years; *and* also *the family of* good *Onesiphorus.* In my last journey through Asia and Greece I had the affliction to part with some of our common friends, whose conversation and company would have been very desirable, had Providence permitted it. *Erastus* in particular *abode at Corinth,*[i] *and Trophimus I left sick at Miletus:*[k] nor did the Lord, who hath made me an instrument of miraculous healing to so many strangers, permit me at that time to be so to him. *Endeavour* therefore, as I am deprived of these agreeable friends, and surrounded with so many dangers and enemies which threaten my life, *to come* to me *before winter.*[l] Several christians here at Rome desire I would send their commendations to thee: and in particular *Eubulus salutes thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia,* and indeed *all the brethren* in general. My heart is, as at all times, full of the tenderest affection for thee; which I cannot express better than by praying, as I most sincerely do, that *the Lord Jesus Christ* himself may [*be*] ever present with *thy spirit,* and shed abroad those sanctifying, quickening, and comforting influences of divine grace, which may fit thee for all thou hast to do and bear under thy christian and ministerial character. And, wherever this finds thee, I desire thou wouldst assure my fellow-christians that I wish them well. May *grace* [*be*] *with you* all, as your circumstances require, to render you more eminently useful in the present state, and prepare you for complete and everlasting happiness in the next. *Amen.*

19 Salute Prisca, and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 22 Be this our prayer for ourselves and our friends, that the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits* and ours; that, though we have not seen him here, neither can see him, we may ever feel his vital presence, and
17 may live and act as ever near him, and as conscious that he is ever with us. Then may we promise ourselves that, while he stands by us, we shall be strengthened, how weak soever we are in ourselves; that we shall be
18 comforted, whoever may desert us; that we shall be rescued from the extremest dangers, *delivered out of the mouth of the* infernal *lion,* and safely *preserved to his heavenly kingdom.*

16 That such a confessor as the holy apostle St. Paul should have been deserted, at the time of his apology, when there must have been so large a number of christians at Rome, may justly appear one of the most surprising circumstances recorded in the sacred history. It teaches us to cease from man, and to repose ourselves with some caution upon the friendship of the very best. It teaches us to watch over *ourselves,* lest *the fear of man* should *bring a snare* upon us, (Prov. xxix. 25.) and lead us to be ashamed of Christ in his members. It concurs with
10 the apostasy of Demas, to warn us that we beware of loving this present world, and keep our eyes more steadily fixed on a better, in which our highest interest lies, and by regarding which, our souls will acquire a certain uniform tenor, that will prove their honour and their safety.

10, 12 The readiness of Paul, amidst such a dearth of true and faithful friends, to part with those that yet remained, when he thought the service of christianity required it, is an amiable and instructive part of his character. They know not the heart of a man, and the duty of a christian aright, who know not that even the tender and friendly passions are to be guarded against, and admitted no farther than reason and religion will warrant; and that such society as is far dearer to us than any animal delight, or secular accommodation, is often to be given up, that our fidelity to God may be approved.

13 Once more, it is obvious to remark, that Paul, though favoured with such extraordinary degrees of divine inspira-

to the honour of christianity, that the apostle could thus courageously maintain it, when all his *friends* forsook him, and his *enemies* were so fiercely raging against him.

h *Priscilla and Aquila.*] This has often been urged, as a conclusive argument, to prove that Timothy was now at Ephesus, because it was there that Apollos met with them, (Acts xviii. 26.) but they might have removed from thence, as they did from Corinth, to which place they came when first banished from Rome. *Ib.* ver. 2.

i *Erastus abode at Corinth, &c.*] It is probable that this was his native city, or at least a place where he had a stated charge. (See Rom. xvi. 23.) It seems, by this clause, that he was in Paul's company when he parted with Timothy, as it is likely Trophimus also was. And as none can suppose Paul would have mentioned these things to Timothy in this connexion, if they had happened many years before, (Acts xix. 22.) I look upon this as a very material argument to prove that he returned into these eastern parts, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though probably, if he ever saw Ephesus again, most of the ministers of that and the neighbouring places, with whom he had the celebrated interview at Miletus, mentioned Acts xx. were either dead or removed. See ver. 25. note f; and ver. 38. note r, p. 541. and 542. Compare the Introduction to the First Epistle to Timothy, p. 899.

k *Left sick.*] It has been very justly argued from this text, that a power of working miracles did not always reside in the apostles; and indeed if it had, one can hardly imagine that any good and useful man would have been sick, and have died under their notice, which would have been quite inconsistent with the scheme of providence. Timothy's frequent infirmities afford a farther argument to the same purpose. (Compare Acts viii. 21. note d, p. 467.) But such good men as these did not need the miraculous cure of their own distempers, to confirm their faith in the gospel.

l *Come to me before winter.*] Bishop Lloyd, in his *Funeral Sermon* for Bishop Wilkins, p. 6. comparing with this text Heb. xiii. 23. concludes that Timothy did come, and was seized at Rome, and confined longer than Paul himself; but it seems much more probable that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written during Paul's *first* imprisonment, and consequently several years before this.

tion, sets a proper value upon books, and expresses a great concern about their being safely conveyed to him. Let us therefore pity the ignorance, rather than imitate the enthusiasm and madness, of those that set learning at defiance, especially in the ministers of the gospel. Let us thankfully acknowledge the divine goodness, in having furnished us with so many excellent *writings* of wise and pious men in all ages; and let us endeavour, by frequent converse with them, to improve our furniture, *that our profiting may appear unto all men.* Yet let us all remember that, how large and well-chosen soever our library may be, the sacred volume is of infinitely greater importance than all that Greece, or Rome, or Britain has produced, or the united labours of all the best of men who have written since it was concluded. And let the christian minister remember, that the two Epistles, through which we have now passed, and that which we are next to survey, are to be esteemed by him amongst the most edifying and important parts even of that incomparable and divine book.

SECT. 7.

2 TIM. IV. Ver. 1

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS, to whom this Epistle is addressed, was a Greek, (Gal. ii. 3.) and was probably converted to christianity by St. Paul, as we may conclude from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4.) though the particular time of his conversion cannot be ascertained.—The earliest account of him we meet with (for Luke does not once mention his name in the Acts) is in Gal. ii. 1. where the apostle says, he took him with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, to attend the grand council that was held there, in the year 49; and, as Titus was of Gentile parents, and consequently uncircumcised, St. Paul would not suffer him to submit to that rite, that he might not seem to abridge the liberty of the christian Gentiles. (Ver. 3.)

Some years after this, we find the apostle had sent him to Corinth, (2 Cor. xii. 18.) to inquire into the state of things in that church, and particularly to learn what effect his former letter had produced. The intelligence Titus brought St. Paul at his return gave him the highest satisfaction, as it far exceeded all his expectations; (chap. vii. 6, 13.) and, as Titus had expressed a particular regard for the Corinthians, he thought proper to send him back again, with some others, to hasten the collection for the poor christians in Judea. (Chap. viii. 6.) After this, we hear no more mention of him, till he is spoken of in this Epistle as having been with St. Paul in Crete.—It appears that the apostle had a very great regard for him, not only from his appointing him to take care of the church he had planted in Crete, but from the manner in which he speaks of his discharging the commission he gave him to the Corinthians, and the honourable terms in which he recommends him to them as *his partner* and *fellow-helper*. (Chap. viii. 23.)

This Epistle was most probably written in some part of St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; and consequently the last of his Epistles, except the Second to Timothy: but nothing can be certainly determined, either as to its date, or the place from which it was sent; for though the spurious postscript supposes it to have been written from Nicopolis, yet the contrary seems to be plainly intimated, chap. iii. 12. as the apostle says not, I propose to winter *here*, (which would have been most natural, if he had resided there when he was writing,) but *there*; which shows he was at that time in some other place.—However, it is plain Titus was at Crete when he received it, where St. Paul had left him, to settle the church he had established there, and carry on the work he had begun. Accordingly the greatest part of the Epistle is taken up in giving him directions for the more successful discharge of his ministry amongst them; and particularly for his behaviour towards those corrupt judaizing teachers who endeavoured to pervert the faith and disturb the peace of the christian church.

The apostle, after a short introduction, in which (agreeably to the design of the Epistle) he intimates that he was commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him at Crete, and directs him on what principles he was to act in the ordination of those christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches; representing them as persons not only of a blameless but exemplary character, who should be eminent for their piety, and for every social and personal virtue, as well as thoroughly established in the christian faith. (Chap. i. 1—9.) And, to make Titus more sensible of the necessity of using this precaution, he puts him in mind of those seducing judaizing teachers with which that church was infested; who, under the mask of greater zeal and knowledge than others, concealed the grossest corruption of morals, and whose mischievous attempts were the more likely to succeed, considering the general character of the Cretans. Such therefore he directs him to reprove with great severity, and, in opposition to their false and dangerous tenets, advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. And to give the greater weight to his instructions, he admonishes him to be himself an example of what he taught, and by the purity of his doctrine, as well as the innocence of his conduct, to silence his opponents. (Ver. 10, *to the end*. Chap ii. 1—8.) St.

Paul then proceeds to urge on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station, that they might, according to their sphere, do an honour to the religion they professed; and represents the obligation they were under to such a conduct from the great design of the gospel-institution, and our Saviour's sufferings and death, which was to deliver mankind from sin, and form them to universal holiness in heart and life. (Ver. 9, *to the end.*)—Agreeably to this view of religion, the apostle exhorts Titus to enforce subjection to the civil magistrate, and a readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention, and recommends a meek, peaceable, and forgiving temper: which he intimates might the more reasonably be expected from christian Gentiles, as before their conversion their character had been so corrupt. This leads him to acknowledge the grace of God in Christ, to which all christians were indebted for the change produced in them, and for the hopes of salvation they were taught to entertain; from whence he takes occasion to remind Titus of the importance of insisting upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those empty speculations and useless controversies to which some were attached. In the close of the Epistle, he directs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and having expressed his desire to see him at Nicopolis, where he proposed to winter, he concludes with a general salutation. (Chap. iii. 1, *to the end of the Epistle.*)

Upon a review of this, and the two Epistles to Timothy, it is natural to reflect how much they tend to illustrate and confirm the internal evidence of christianity.—It has been often observed, and very justly, that nothing sets the characters of great men in so true a light as their letters to their particular friends: while they are acting in the eye of the world they frequently appear in disguise, and the real motives of their conduct lie out of sight; but in their familiar correspondence they open their minds with freedom, and throw off all reserve. If therefore any should object to the argument drawn from St. Paul's Epistles to the churches, that, as they were designed for the public view, he would be upon his guard, not to let any expression escape him that might give the world an unfavourable idea of himself, or the cause in which he was engaged; yet certainly, when he is writing, as in this and the two former Epistles, to his most intimate friends, who were embarked with him in the same design, and with whom therefore he could use the utmost confidence, we may reasonably expect to find him disclosing his real sentiments, stripped of all artifice and disguise.—And now, upon the most accurate and impartial examination of these Epistles, what do we discover? Can we trace any marks of insincerity and imposture? Does the apostle wear any other character than that in which he had appeared to the whole world? Does he drop the least hint that can lead one so much as to suspect that he had been only acting a part, and imposing upon mankind? Can we perceive the least shadow of inconsistency between the views he gives of religion in these and his other writings? Is there any thing like that double doctrine which some have charged upon the ancient philosophers?—On the contrary, is it not most evident, that he founded his own hopes, and formed his own conduct, upon the very same principles which he recommended to others; that he had no views of secular interest or ambition to gratify, and was influenced by no other motives than those which he openly avowed in the face of the world: in a word, that his character, as well as his doctrine, was consistent and uniform, and his inward sentiments the same with his outward profession? The instructions he gives his friends for the exercise of their office had nothing of art or subtilty, but were all plain and simple, and centred in that grand design of advancing the interests of religion and the happiness of mankind, which ever lay near his heart: and so far is he from flattering them with the prospect of any worldly advantage, that he exhorts them to be ready, after his example, to sacrifice every temporal interest, and even life itself, in the cause they had undertaken to support.

Now, if this be allowed a just representation of the case, it will certainly follow, that the apostle was himself thoroughly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines he had taught: and since it may be easily proved, that the *evidence* on which he built his faith was of such a nature as to exclude all possibility of *mistake*, we may safely conclude, upon the credit of *his* testimony *alone*, (had we no other arguments to produce,) that the christian religion is not *a cunningly devised fable*, formed to answer the ambitious or interested views of its authors, but that it is indeed *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

SECTION I.

Paul, after a proper introduction, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him in Crete; and directs him on what principles he should act in the ordination of those christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches. Tit. i. 1—9.

TITUS i. 1.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness:

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour:

4 To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

TITUS i. 1.

SECT. 1.

THIS Epistle is written by *Paul, a servant of* the one living and true *God, and an apostle of* his only-begotten Son, *Jesus Christ, for* the advancement of *the faith*[a] *of God's chosen* people, *and* to promote *the acknowledgment of the truth* of the gospel; that divine doctrine *which* [*is*] *according to godliness*, and has the greatest tendency to promote the interest of the true religion in all its branches; whilst it exhibits, *in* so clear a manner, *the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie*, nor deceive any of his creatures, *hath* 2 not only, as under the former dispensation, intimated to us, but expressly *promised* to all believers, in consequence of those great engagements into which he entered with his Son, under the character of our Surety and Redeemer, *before the world began*,[b] or time was divided into these revolving periods which measure out its succeeding ages. The plan 3 was distinctly drawn in his all-comprehensive mind; *but* he *hath* now *manifested* it, *in his own* due and well-chosen *time*, by *his word*; which administers to us that glorious hope, *by the* public *preaching* and declaration of it, *with which I was intrusted, according to the commandment* and sovereign pleasure *of God our Saviour*. And I address 4 this Epistle *to Titus*, [*my*] *genuine son, according to the* tenor of the *common faith*, even that christian faith to which I had the happiness of converting thee: to whom, with an affection becoming a father in Christ, I unfeignedly wish every desirable blessing, even *grace, mercy*, and *peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*; by whom we obtain an interest in him, and hope for that eternal salvation from him, with which no inheritance on earth is by any means worthy to be compared.

For this cause I left thee in Crete, though I could have been so heartily glad of thy 5 company in my travels, *that thou mightest set in order the things which were deficient* there, as I could not stay long enough myself to reduce them into so regular a state as I could have wished; *and* particularly, that thou mightest *ordain elders in every city*[c] in which christian churches are planted, to whom the stated oversight of them may be committed in the Lord, *as I gave thee in charge* when I parted with thee.

The office is so very important, that I hope thou wilt be proportionably careful as to 6 the character of the persons who are to be invested with it; and *if any one is* thought of in that view, let it be one who is known to be *blameless* in his conduct, *the husband of* only *one wife*, to whom he entirely confines himself, neither allowing of polygamy, or divorce, or an irregular commerce with any other women; and let him be one *who hath believing children*,[d] if he have any that are grown up, *not accused of* any kind of *debauchery, or ungovernable* in their temper and disposition, which would render them a

a *For the faith, &c.*] This is the proper signification of κατα πιστιν, in this connexion, which expresses the *end* to which his labours tended. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 3. See Raph. *Ex Xen. in loc.*

b *Before the world began.*] It seems more natural to refer this to the promise made by the Father to Christ, in the *covenant of redemption*, than, with Mr. Rymer, to explain it of the *promise* made quickly after the *creation* to our fallen parents, Gen. iii. 15. See Rymer, *Of rev. Rel.* p. 49.

c *Ordain elders in every city.*] There were an hundred cities in the island of Crete, though its dimensions were not very large; but it is well known that every considerable town was called a *city* by the ancients. It is most likely, that some congregations were settled under proper ministers while Paul was among them; but there were others not so provided, and the interposition of so wise and good a man as Titus, probably honoured with such extraordinary gifts, would, no doubt, have great weight on such an occasion.

d *Believing children.*] This is mentioned with great propriety; for if a man were not careful to instruct his *children* in the principles of christianity, there would be great reason to doubt whether he were hearty in the belief of it himself, and under a governing sense of its truth and importance; and if a man had only *unbelieving* children in his house, that is, such as were so obstinate that they could not be brought to embrace christianity, by any of the arguments which could be laid before them in that age of miracles, it would be a great discouragement, and in some circumstances, a great hinderance, to him, from pursuing the duties of a christian elder or bishop. And those evils, into which such obstinate infidel *children* might fall, would, very probably, bring a reproach upon

SECT. 1. TITUS I.

reproach rather than an honour to the christian name. I must insist on a care in this respect, *for* it is evident, that the disorders of children often reflect a dishonour on their parents, and indeed arise from something amiss in them: but *a bishop*, or overseer of a christian congregation, which the elder we speak of, by virtue of his office, is, *must* necessarily *be blameless*,[e] *as* he is, in that society over which he presides, *the steward of God*,
7 who is appointed in his name to take care of his family. He must *not* therefore be fierce and *self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant,[f] *not soon provoked* to be angry, *not one who sits long over* his cups, and loves to drink large quantities of *wine*, *not a striker* of others, by which, whatsoever his provocation may be, he always degrades himself in the eyes of those that are witnesses of the quarrel, *nor greedy of sordid* and infamous *gain:*
8 *But* he ought to maintain a character directly the opposite of all these, and to be *hospitable*, *benign*, *sober*, and grave in his deportment, *righteous*, *holy*, *devout*, and *temperate* in
9 all things; *Holding fast*, in the most resolute manner, *the faithful word which he hath been taught* by those who were commissioned to publish it to the world, *that* so *he may be able both to instruct* others *in sound doctrine*, *and to convince* and silence *those that contradict it.*

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 NEVER let it be forgotten by any that call themselves christians, that the faith of God's elect is the acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness. Never let the great design of christianity be lost in an eager contention for any of its appendages, or any of its parts. Yet alas, how often has it, in particular instances, been wounded almost to death, in a furious attempt to rescue it, and that, sometimes perhaps, from only an imaginary danger.

2 That we may be more sensible of its vital influence, let us ever retain the hope of that eternal life which it proposes as the great end of all our pursuits; even of that life which God that cannot lie hath promised. Let us rejoice to think that so immense a superstructure has so firm, so divine a foundation; and let us never give it up for any thing that a flattering world, always ready to engage, and slow to perform, can promise.

Let us ever be very thankful for the provision God hath made for the manifestation of his word through preaching,
3 and for his goodness in raising up faithful pastors to his church, overseers in every age, who have been blameless,
7, 8 sober, just, holy, and temperate. Such may all be that appear under that sacred character; able, by their
9 doctrine to instruct, by their reasoning to convince, by their practice to edify; ever solicitous, that they may not neglect their pastoral services, that they may not lord it proudly over their brethren, that they may not be transported by furious passions, or misguided by rash conclusions, or perverted by low interests, and the greediness of filthy
7 lucre; but that they may approve themselves the faithful stewards of God, and promote the good order of his house; and, so far as their influence can reach, the happiness of every member of his family.

In order to this, let them look well to their own houses, that nothing may be wanting on their part, to make
6 their children tractable, faithful, and sober. And let the children of ministers consider the obligations they are under, to cultivate a teachable spirit, and to maintain the strictest decency in their whole deportment, as remembering the superior advantages they may be supposed to enjoy for religious improvement, and how much a minister's reputation and usefulness depend upon the regularity of his family.

SECTION II.

Paul cautions Titus against seducing teachers, and the native vices of the Cretans; and advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. Titus i. 10, *to the end;* ii. 1—8.

TIT. i. 10.

SECT. 2. TITUS I.

I HAVE particularly insisted upon it, that a bishop should be able to convince gainsayers, as well as to instruct candid and obedient hearers. And indeed the precaution is very necessary at present, and particularly in the place where you now preside; *for there are many disorderly* [*persons*] *and vain talkers who are deceived in their own minds*, in
10 consequence of which it is no wonder if they are active in deceiving others. And this is *especially* the case with *those of the circumcision*, who are so eager to impose on their Gentile brethren the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as if christianity itself were insufficient
11 to save us without them: *Whose mouth must* therefore *be stopped* by solid arguments, and their unreasonable clamours silenced by the strenuous exercise of discipline: for they are persons *who* are so active in spreading these mischievous notions, that they *overturn whole families*, *teaching things which they ought not*, *for the sake of infamous gain;* hoping by their doctrines to secure the favour of some rich men, who never think they can do enough for those preachers that support their own factions and dividing notions.
12 I know that there are many such at present in your island; and I remember that Epimenides, *one of their* [*countrymen*,] and a poet in such high renown, that I may call him a kind of *prophet of their own*,[a] *has said, The Cretans are always liars, pernicious savage*

TIT. i. 10.

FOR there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *use* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

the family, which might in a degree hurt the character of him who presided in it.

e *For a bishop must be blameless.*] It has been often observed, that if the bishop of whom Paul speaks had been invested with an office *distinct* from, and *superior* to, the *elder* mentioned above, there could have been no room to conclude, that an *elder must be blameless*, because a bishop must be so, though the argument would have held strongly in an inverted order. By what degrees, and on what reasons, the distinction was afterwards introduced, (as a distinction to be sure there early was,) it is not my business here to inquire.

f *Self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant.] Raphelius has taken a great deal of pains to show that this is the proper signification of αὐθάδη, the word here used. See Raph. *Ex Herod. in loc.*

a *A prophet.*] Epimenides, whose words Paul here quotes, is said by Diogenes Laertius, to have been a great favourite of the gods; but Aristotle says he never foretold any future event; which,

beasts, and yet *slow bellies*,[b] a wretched compound of luxury and idleness, fierceness and falsehood, which makes it exceedingly difficult to reform them, or even to live safely and quietly among them. *This witness* concerning them *is*, in the general, *true*, though some particular persons may be found of a different character. *For which cause rebuke them severely*,[c] when they begin to show a disposition to corrupt christianity; *that they may be sound in the faith*, and that the simpler part of them may be preserved from the dishonest artifices and attempts of others. And particularly, that they may *not* fall into the folly of *giving heed to Jewish fables, and* to *the commandments* and traditions *of men, who pervert the truth* of the gospel with those human mixtures by which they have in a great measure spoiled and enervated the law of Moses, for which they pretend so great a zeal.

SECT. 2. TITUS I.

13 This witness is true: Wherefore rebuke them sharply; that they may be sound in the faith;

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

13 14

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

I know they value themselves highly upon the distinctions of food, which they inculcate as of so great importance to purity. But they are much mistaken. *To the pure indeed all things* [*are*] *pure*. A man that habitually exercises a good conscience towards God, according to the best of his knowledge, is accepted of him, whether he do, or do not, abstain from such particular kinds of food as they scruple; *whereas, to the polluted and unbelieving*, which, alas, is too generally their character, *nothing* [*is*] *pure, but their very mind and conscience is defiled*, and they pollute, as it were, every thing they touch; they sin in all their actions, and even in those very meals in which they are most careful to abstain from what they have been taught to esteem common and unclean. I speak not now of all who practise Jewish ceremonies, but of those [*who, while*] *they profess to know God*, and glory in their relation to him, as his peculiar people, *in works deny* [*him,*] and act as if they disbelieved his very existence; *being abominable* to all that can judge of true worth, *and disobedient* to the plainest dictates of duty, *and* with respect *to every good work reprobate*, disapproved and condemned, when brought to the standard of God's word, though they are among the first to judge and condemn others.

15

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

16

Such is the temper and character of many! *But do thou*, O Titus, not only guard against the infection thyself, but endeavour to fortify others against it, and *speak the things which become wholesome doctrine*, doctrine which may tend to promote the health and happiness of those minds by which it is imbibed. And endeavour to suit thy instructions to *the* different characters of persons whom thou addressest. When, for instance, thou art applying thyself to *aged men*, [*admonish*] them *to be watchful* against temptations, which might dishonour their advanced years, by drawing them into any unseemly behaviour; to be *grave* in their whole deportment, avoiding such levities as are, even in youth itself, rather pardonable than commendable, but in those who are quitting the stage of life, highly indecent. Press it upon them, that they be *sober* and temperate in the use of animal pleasures, as their highest relish for them may well be supposed, by this time, to be abated. In a word, that they be *sound*, healthful, and vigorous in the several graces of the christian temper, and particularly *in faith, in love*, and *in patience*; that the principles of christianity may be retained, and have a suitable effect upon their hearts, to produce unbounded charity, and a calm composure under the calamities they may suffer from the hand of God, or the persecutions they may meet with in the cause of the gospel.

TITUS II. 1

Tit. ii. 1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience:

2

The aged women, in like manner, [*exhort*] *to that steadiness which becometh saints*, and suits the holy profession they make; that they be *not false accusers* of others, a character rather to be expected from the great enemy of mankind, who has his name from thence, than from the disciples of the benevolent Jesus. Urge them also that they be *not given to much wine*, for some of the Cretan women, as well as men, are infected with that luxurious evil. And, as it may be reasonably expected, that persons so advanced in life should have laid up a treasure of prudence and religious wisdom in their minds, press them, in such a manner as becomes their private station, to be *teachers of that which is good:* And particularly, *that they wisely admonish the younger women*; for whom they ought to maintain a maternal affection, and form them, on discreet maxims, to a prudent care in future life; teaching them *to love* and honour *their husbands; to love their children* with such a true affection as shall engage them to use the most pious and tender care in

3

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

4

as Dr. Scott justly observes, (Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 650.) is a plain argument, that the word *prophet* is sometimes used in a large sense, for one who is supposed, by the person applying the title to him, to be an *instructor of men in divine things*, from whom the will of the *Deity* may be learnt.

b *Cretans are always liars, &c.*] Perhaps it might have been in some views more proper to have translated this Greek verse in such a manner, that it might have read as a verse in English, "*False Cretans! Savage beasts, with bellies slow!*" It is evident, the poet here suggests a remarkable contrast, to show what a mixture there was of *fierceness* and *luxury* in the character of the Cretans. Savage beasts are generally active and nimble; but *these men*, while they had the fury of lions and tigers, indulged themselves so much in the most sordid idleness and intemperance, that they grew (as it were) *all belly*; and, like a breed of swine common in the eastern countries, were often so burdened with fat that they could hardly move. As for their proneness to *falsehood*, it is well known that κρητιζειν, *to talk like a Cretan*, was a proverb for lying, (as κορινθιαζειν, *to live like a Corinthian*, was for a luxurious and debauched life, see Erasm. *Prov.* p. 642, 643.) and it is remarkable, that Polybius scarce ever mentions this nation without some severe censure. See Raphel. *E Polyb. in loc.*

c *Rebuke them severely.*] Αποτομως, with a *cutting severity* From whence Mr. Blackwall infers, that it is a vain pretence that only *gentle* and *soft* expressions are to be applied to people that renounce good principles, and corrupt the gospel. (Black. *Vind.* Vol. I. p. 308, 309.) But Paul speaks of reproving *vice*, not *error*; and if any consequence is to be drawn from one to the other, the remark is to be admitted with much caution, considering to what a degree pride and passion often transport men, even in the management of *theological* controversies, beyond all bounds of prudence, charity, and decency. Timothy is exhorted to *rebuke with all long-suffering*, (2 Tim. iv. 2.) and some account for the difference, by the different tempers of the reprovers; supposing that of Timothy might be *warmer* than that of Titus; others, by the different *character* of the persons to be reproved; as the Ephesians seem to have been more gentle, obliging, and complaisant, the Cretans more obstinate, rough, and headstrong. But the best reply seems to be this, that there is a *degree* of *long-suffering* and gentleness, very consistent with all that *severity* which faithfulness requires; which is not that of boisterous passion, ill-nature, and scurrility, but of *meek*, though *resolute*, zeal for God, and friendship to the offender, which yet will not be silenced by trifling excuses, nor fail seriously to represent the fatal consequences that may attend the evil reproved.

SECT. 2. TITUS II. forming their minds by all the offices of a good education, so many of which will naturally depend upon the mother. Let them inculcate it upon these young mistresses of rising families, [*that they be*] *discreet* and *chaste*, attentive to domestic affairs, and in that view *keeping at home*,[d] to look after them with prudence and care; that they be 5 *good*, kind, and benevolent in their behaviour to all, and, particularly, *obedient to their own husbands, that* so *the word of God*, which they profess to have received into their hearts, and to reverence as their oracles, *may not be blasphemed* by their foolish or perverse, rebellious or licentious, conduct.

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 *In like manner* also, *exhort the young men*, the hope of rising families, upon whom so much of the credit and support of the gospel will depend, that they accustom themselves betimes *to be sober* and steady in their behaviour, superior to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

7 And that this address to them and others may be more successful *in all things*, be still *showing thyself a pattern of good works*, by which others may model their conduct with advantage: while employed *in teaching*, be constantly [*exercising*] *uncorruptness*, that nothing may be spoken but the genuine truth; and let it be attended with a *gravity* in 8 declaring it, proportionable to its importance, and proceed from *sincerity* of heart; Still uttering *wholesome speech that cannot be confuted, that he who is on the contrary side*, and will obstinately persist in his infidelity, *may be ashamed* of his opposition, *having no evil to say of you*, or those committed to your care; but may be obliged, with all his prejudices, to acknowledge that you are a worthy president over a worthy and valuable society of men.

7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.

8 Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

IMPROVEMENT.

TITUS I. Ver. 12 WHILE we are reading the word of God, let us attentively observe what characters are adorned with honour, and what are branded with infamy. It is melancholy to think that any nation, though ever so small, ever so remote, ever so destitute of cultivation and instruction, should deserve the character which Epimenides gave of the Cretans, and which Paul found reason to confirm: that luxury and fraud, idleness and fury, dissonant as they may seem, should be their governing inclinations. Sad distempers in the mind of men! But how peculiarly lamentable when they prevail among professing christians! for among those that are christians indeed they cannot possibly prevail. Yet surely there are not a few, even in Britain, with all its advantages, who, while professing to know God, 16 and Christ Jesus his Son, in works deny them. Such are abominable, in proportion to the degree in which they are disobedient; and, as they are reprobate to every good work now, must expect to be rejected with abhorrence at last, by that God, whose name they have blasphemed, and whose Son they have dishonoured.

TITUS II. 1. To remedy, and if it be possible to prevent, such evils, let the ministers of Christ be still applying themselves, 2, 6 with suitable exhortations and charges, to all with whom they are concerned. Let them apply to the aged and the young; and let the aged of both sexes use that authority which their more advanced progress in life may give, 4, 5 to enforce upon the rising generation lessons of wisdom and piety, according to their respective sexes and circumstances in life: that prudence and chastity, economy and sweetness of temper, a subjection to their husbands, formed on love and on religion, may be the character of young wives; and that they may join to it that very important 6 duty of a pious care in the education of those children which God may give them. And may the sobriety of young men encourage a hope, that they will preside over their families in the fear of God, and repay the goodness of such amiable consorts! And may the teachers, whether in public or private life, be themselves examples of the virtues they inculcate; that they who study to asperse christianity, may find themselves silenced, till their shame turns into a worthier affection; till their silence breaks out into praise, and they, imbibing the like principles, feel them productive of the like virtues!

SECTION III.

Paul urges on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station; and represents their great obligations to discharge them, from a general view of the design of the gospel, and the love of our Redeemer in it. Tit. ii. 9, *to the end.*

TIT. ii. 9.

SECT. 3. TITUS II. WHILST thou art, according to the direction I have given thee above, instructing the superior ranks of mankind, I would not have thee neglect the lowest; but [*exhort*] their slaves and other *servants*, who are honoured with a call into the christian church, *to be subject to their own masters*, with reverence and obedience; *pleasing* [*them*] *in all things*, so far as they lawfully may, and *not answering again*, in a pert and insolent manner, if 9 they are reproved by them, even though it should be unjustly, or with an excess of severity.

TIT. ii. 9. *EXHORT* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things; not answering again;

10 *Not privately defrauding* them[a] of any thing that is committed to their trust, *but showing all good fidelity* upon every occasion; *that* so, instead of bringing any reproach upon religion, *they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, and recommend it to the esteem of their masters and others, when they shall observe its influence on all its professors, to make them careful in the discharge of every social and relative duty.

10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

11 *For the saving grace of God*, in the gospel-dispensation, *hath appeared unto all men*,

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;

d *Keeping at home*, to look after, &c.] Elsner has shown, in a learned note on this place, that the word οἰκουρὸς is used by several of the best authors to express both these ideas.

a *Privately defrauding.*] The word νοσφιζειν properly signifies, to *keep back part of the worth of any thing*, and is used in the case of *Ananias' secreting a part*, where the *whole* was pretended to be returned. (Acts v. 2, 3.) This *servants*, at least among the heathens, might probably do when employed by their masters to vend commodities; and other fraudulent practices, among persons of their rank, were so common, that the same word in the Latin language [*fur*] is used for a *servant* and a *thief*.

to men of all nations, and of all ranks and orders of life, for this great purpose, that it may train them up for eternal salvation, by a holy temper, and a useful, exemplary behaviour. SECT. 3.

12 Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

This it effects under divine influence, by *instructing us* all, wherever it comes, *that denying* the solicitations of *ungodliness and worldly lusts*, to which men of this world so naturally abandon themselves, *we should live soberly* in the government of our appetites *and* passions; *righteously* in our conduct towards our fellow-creatures; *and piously* in our behaviour towards God, and converse with him, while we are by his providence continued *in this present* vain and transitory *world*: through which we trust he is leading us to a blissful immortality. And this is the great object which he requires us still to keep in view; and that we should all, in our different situations, be *waiting*, with ardent expectation and desire, *for the blessed hope* which he hath set before us, *and* for the full consummation of it, in *the glorious appearance of the great God, and* of *our Saviour Jesus Christ*;[b] who shall be manifested with divine pomp and majesty, in the last day, to redeem all his servants from the power of the grave, and to conduct them, in their complete persons, to the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom.

TITUS II. 12

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

13

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Such are our sublime hopes from this glorious Lord, to whom we have all vowed subjection, whether we be bond or free; even to him *who gave himself* up to ignominy, torment, and death *for us, that he might* thereby *redeem us*, not only from final vengeance and destruction, but *from* the power of *all iniquity; and* might *purify to himself a peculiar people*, who should thankfully own themselves his property, and express their gratitude for such inestimable favours, by being not only careful to avoid the practice of evil, but *zealous of good works*, active in all the duties of life, and in every office of righteousness and goodness to each other. The highest of mankind are not above owning the obligation, and it is his will that the lowest should remember it. *These things* therefore *speak* boldly, *and* earnestly *exhort* all thine hearers to attend to them. *And* if they fail of regarding them in a proper manner, *rebuke* them *with all authority* as one that knows he has a divine commission to support him: and, upon the whole, *let no man despise thee;* but endeavour to give these exhortations with that solemnity and dignity, and to enforce them by that wisdom and sanctity of behaviour, which may set thee above all danger of contempt.

14

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

15

IMPROVEMENT.

HARDLY does the word of God afford a more instructive and comprehensive summary of the gospel, than that which is here before us. It gives us a view of the nature of the dispensation, as a doctrine of grace; and, at the same time, a doctrine according to godliness. It hath appeared to all men, and it bringeth them salvation, by inculcating the most salutary lessons that man can receive. It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, how pressing soever their solicitations may be. It instructs us in all the branches of our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow-christians. It guides us to uniform and complete goodness; not extolling any one part, to the neglect or injury of the rest, but tending to produce this beautiful birth, entire in all its members, and then to nourish it to its full maturity. As we are slow of heart to attend to such instructions, it enforces them with motives the most generous and the most animating. It represents to us, as it were in prophetic vision, that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; when he shall come with everlasting blessings in his hands, to reward all his faithful people; and with terrors of divine vengeance, to be poured forth upon all that have rejected the authority of his gospel. And that the most powerful considerations of gratitude may join with those of the highest interest, it directs our eyes to this divine triumphant Saviour, as having once given himself to torture and death for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, devoted to God, and zealous of good works. And surely, if this view cannot prevail upon us to consecrate ourselves to God, and to engage with vigour in his service, we must be utterly insensible, and worthy the severest punishment.

Ver. 11

12

13

14

Let these lessons, therefore, every where be taught with all authority. Let them be addressed at once to the meanest and the greatest of mankind; that they may join in a pious care to adorn the doctrine of such a Saviour, and to secure their share in such a salvation.

15, 10

SECTION IV.

The apostle concludes his Epistle with exhorting Titus to recommend obedience to magistrates, and readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention; acknowledging the grace of God as that to which all christians owe their hopes of salvation, and strongly pressing him to insist upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those idle controversies to which many were attached. He also instructs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and closes with giving him some directions about meeting him at Nicopolis, and a general salutation to all his friends. Tit. iii. 1, *to the end.*

SECT. 4.

TIT. iii. 1.

TIT. iii. 1.

PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and

AMONG other useful lessons, which it will be thy duty to give the Cretans, while thou continuest with them *remind them of being subject to* those *principalities and powers*

TITUS III. 1

b *The great God and our Saviour.*] The words τη μεγαλη Θεου και σωτηρος ημων, might with propriety be rendered, *our great God and Saviour*, though they are also susceptible of the other version. But it is certain, that if Christ be here called *our great God*, it is not in any view of *opposition* between *Him* and the *Father*. (Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27.) Mr. Fleming, in support of this interpretation, observes, (Flem. *Christol.* Vol. I. p. 203.) that we never read in scripture of the *Father's* appearance.

SECT. 4. TITUS III.

which God hath set in supreme authority over them, by no means excepting those who stand at the greatest distance from christianity: exhort them also *to obey* subordinate *governors;* and, upon the whole, *to be ready to every good work*, in every relation which they sustain in life. Charge them *to calumniate no man*,[a] *not to be contentious*, [*but*] *gentle* in their whole demeanour, *showing all meekness to all men*, even those from whom they may receive the greatest provocation. Let us not bear ourselves too highly on the superiority of our own characters, be they now ever so blameless, or ever so exemplary; *for we ourselves*[b] *also were formerly foolish*, as well as others, *disobedient* to the divine authority, and perhaps to those whom God had invested with power over us; *wandering* from the paths both of truth and virtue, and *enslaved to various lusts and pleasures;* in the pursuit and gratification of which we degraded the nobler powers of our souls. We were *living in malice and envy*, *hateful* ourselves, while under the tyranny of such fierce and detestable passions, [*and*] *hating one another*, on account of little clashings and oppositions in our temporal interests, while we forgot the great ties and bonds which ought to have endeared us to each other.

powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

But when the admirable *kindness and love of God our Saviour*[c] *towards man*, so signally displayed in the gospel, *appeared* to us, we were delivered from this miserable condition: the remembrance therefore of this deliverance ought to make us compassionate, rather than severe, towards others in the same unhappy circumstance in which we once were; especially when we consider the manner in which it was accomplished. For it was *not by* any *works of righteousness which we* ourselves *had done;* for any acts of obedience, whether to ceremonial or moral precepts, by which we had made ourselves worthy of his favourable regard; *but according to his own mercy*, that *he saved us* from condemnation and ruin, *by the washing of regeneration*,[d] *and the renewing of the Holy Spirit;* which by its purifying influence operates at first to turn us to God, and bring us into the number of his children, and afterwards advances the happy work, by improving us more and more in the divine life and image: Even by that Spirit *which he poured out upon us richly*[e] and abundantly, in his various gifts and graces, *by Jesus Christ our Saviour*, in virtue of whose intercession it has been imparted to the children of men: *That being justified by his grace, we might become heirs* of the most valuable blessings, *according to the hope of eternal life*, which, as the gift of that grace, he hath exhibited to our believing views, as the great and noble object of our pursuit. [*This,*] which I have here been attesting, [*is*] *a faithful saying*, most credible in itself, as well as of great weight and importance; *and concerning these things*, these distinguishing principles of the gospel, *I will* and charge, *that thou* steadily *affirm* and *constantly* inculcate them; *that* so *they who have believed in God*, and by baptism professed to embrace this gospel, may not imagine, that by the dispensation of grace, they are excused from the observation of duty; but, on the contrary, that, being thus engaged, and encouraged by such grace and hope, they *may be* so much the more *careful*, thoughtful, and diligent *to signalize themselves* as examples of the greatest zeal *in good works. These things are good and profitable to men:* there is a beauty and advantage in them which nothing can equal. Let these therefore be the darling topics of thy preaching, as thou desirest the edification and salvation of thy hearers.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.

But avoid, and endeavour to guard others against, *foolish questions*, which the judaizing teachers are ready to start, that tend only to amuse an idle curiosity; *and* those perplexed *genealogies*,[f] about which they so eagerly debate, *and* other *strifes and contentions about the law* of Moses; *for they are unprofitable and vain*, not only consuming to no purpose that time which is capable of much better improvement, but also tending to discompose the mind, to alienate the affections of christians from each other, and to render them indifferent to the proper duties of life. And *a man that*, on this occasion, or any other, *is a* factious and obstinate *heretic*,[g] that introduces such controversies as these into the

9 But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an here-

a *Calumniate no man.*] Not even your pagan or Jewish neighbour, says good Dr. Barrow, (Vol. I. p. 162.) however enormous in their lives, or cruel in their behaviour to you.

b *We ourselves.*] Dr. Whitby pleads, this cannot be applicable to Paul himself, and argues from Acts xxiii 1; 2 Tim. i. 3; Phil. iii. 6. But I am persuaded that when the apostle wrote this, he had such sublime views of the *purity* of God's law, and the *imperfection* of his own best obedience, how capable soever of being justified *to men*, that, notwithstanding all he says in the text quoted, he could apply what he here wrote to much of *his* own character, while an enemy of christianity. Compare note e, below.

c *God our Saviour.*] It is observable, that *God the Father* is here called *our Saviour*, to intimate that it was his paternal love to us that engaged him to appoint *his Son* to redeem us, and to perform all those important offices for us, by which he accomplishes our salvation.

d *By the washing of regeneration.*] This hath often been explained of *baptism*, and Mr. Joseph Mede insists upon it, that it alludes to cleansing the new-born infant from the *pollutions* which necessarily attend it. (Ezek. xvi. 4—6.) But I cannot think this interpretation at all favourable to the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration;* since it is not by *washing* the *infant* that the *birth is produced;* and, therefore, it can surely signify no more, than that they who are *regenerated* are to be thus *washed*. I have observed elsewhere, that λουτρον, the word here used, is by no means entirely synonymous to λεκνος, a laver. The sense here given of this much controverted passage is what I verily believe to be the justest and safest; though I am well aware, that the christian church soon began to lay a disproportionable stress on *forms*, and to ascribe too great efficacy to the ritual of *baptism*. See the Preface and Postscript to my *Sermons on Regeneration*, second edition.

e *Which he poured out upon us richly.*] These words have been explained as referring to Paul alone, and the effusion of the Spirit upon *him*, to qualify him for his extraordinary office. But, to say nothing of the harshness of this interpretation, and the violence it must do to several phrases here used, it is evident that it would make the text quite foreign to the purpose for which it is introduced, viz. of dissuading from severe and uncharitable censures.

f Perplexed *genealogies.*] It is well known, that the Jews carried their fondness for these to a great excess: and Jerome tells us, they were as well acquainted with those from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their own names.

g *Heretic.*] After all the tedious controversies which have arisen about the sense of this text, I have been obliged to acquiesce in that given in the paraphrase, being well assured, that a person may be said to be *self-condemned* if he furnish *matter of conviction* against himself. Compare Heb. xi. 7; Matt. xii. 41, 42; Acts xiii. 46; Job xv. 6; Luke xix. 22. And, indeed, if Dr. Whitby's interpretation, borrowed and defended by Dr. Foster, is to be admitted, viz. that he is a heretic who teaches directly *contrary* to what he inwardly *believes*, the *truth* or *falsehood* of his notions will be a matter quite *indifferent* as to fixing this censure upon him; and a man, who was really an atheist, might be subject to *condemnation*,

tic, after the first and second admonition, reject.

church, and perversely maintains and propagates them, in a manner injurious to the peace of society, *after the first and second admonition* from thee and the church, given with proper solemnity, *reject*, and declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as a member of it.

11 Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Knowing that such a one who is so fond of his own darling notions, that he will ruin the peace of the church for them, and will not submit to thy remonstrances, and those of the wiser and better part of the society, *is perverted* by some very ill principles, whatever zeal he may pretend for what he maintains as truth; *and* that he not only errs, but *sins* too, in such obstinate efforts to diffuse his errors, *being* indeed *self-condemned*, and judged out of his own mouth, as his own words furnish sufficient matter of conviction; and while he makes such a breach in the church, he in effect passes on himself that sentence of separation from it which he well deserves to lie under till he returns to a better temper.

11

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

When I shall send to thee Artemas or Tychicus, to supply thy place in Crete, as I hope quickly to do, *endeavour to come to me at Nicopolis; for there I have determined to pass the winter*,[h] if Providence gives me an opportunity.

12

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

As *Zenas, the* worthy *lawyer*, who, though well versed in those studies, on which some of his Jewish brethren value themselves so highly, is now a sincere and active christian, *and* my eloquent and pious friend *Apollos*, will be with thee when this comes to thy hand, or quickly afterwards, I desire thou wouldst *bring* them *forward on their journey* to me, *with* readiness and *diligence;* and take all the care thou canst, *that nothing* convenient *may be wanting to them* which thou canst supply them with.

13

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

I hope these good men will meet with that hospitable treatment among the christians in your parts, which their character deserves; *and let* all *those that belong to us*, and call themselves christian brethren, whether they were before Jews or Gentiles, *learn to distinguish themselves in good works, for necessary purposes* of aid and service to others; *that they may not be unfruitful*, and act as if they had learned nothing but barren speculations from that religion which is so well calculated to inspire and animate every sentiment of benevolence and generosity.

14

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

All the christians *that are* here *with me salute thee*, in an affectionate and respectful manner. *Salute them who love us in the* bonds of our common *faith;* and assure my christian friends, that I feel an equal affection for them. *Grace* and peace, and every other blessing, from our Father and Saviour, [*be*] *with you all. Amen.*

15

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the remembrance of the irregularities with which we ourselves were once chargeable, of that sinful and miserable condition in which we once were, make us candid to others, and silence our too severe censures against them. Ver. 2

And let us rather, with the apostle, humbly adore that grace which has now made a difference between us and those that are still foolish and disobedient, wandering in the paths of vice, and enslaved to divers lusts and pas- 3
sions. Let the kindness, the philanthropy of God, be daily celebrated and adored by us; of God who hath saved 4, 5
us, not by the righteousness of our works, but by his own rich and overflowing mercy; hath justified us by his 7
free grace in Christ, and thereby made us heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. Nor let us ever forget how
much we are indebted to the regenerating and renewing influences of the Holy Ghost shed abroad upon us richly 6
by Jesus Christ our Saviour. May it wash and purify our souls more and more from every stain of sin, and may it
inspire us with a pious ardour to honour our profession, by distinguishing ourselves in all good works for necessary 14
uses, and according to the calls which Providence gives us in life. Having professed our belief in God, let us care-
fully practise all the virtues of the christian character; for these things are indeed good and profitable to men. But 8
let us guard against those airy curiosities and abstruse speculations, which, on the contrary, are unprofitable and vain. 9

May all the churches of Christ be delivered from such factious members and teachers as would depart from the infallible rule of truth which is laid down in the word of God, and would subvert the faith once delivered to the saints; introducing, instead of it, the doctrines of men, and teaching things which tend to alienate the minds of christians from the gospel, and from each other, that they may set up their own authority, and promote their own secular interest. We ought undoubtedly to be cautious how we pass such a censure on particular persons, without clear and evident proofs; but when such proofs arise, and the persons in question appear to be the turbulent and 10
pernicious heretics that St. Paul describes, it were to be wished they might always meet with the treatment which he recommends. They ought first to be plainly and seriously admonished; and, if repeated admonitions are rejected, it is the duty of the wiser and sounder parts of christian societies to expel them; that they may be less capable of doing mischief, and that the gangrene of such pernicious principles and dispositions may not spread, to the disgrace and ruin of the churches to which they belong. But let it ever be remembered, that this is all the remedy which scripture furnishes us with; and they who, to the solemn censure of disturbed and injured churches, add any corporal severities or civil penalties whatsoever, are taking up weapons which Christ has never put into their hands, and may very probably do more mischief in the church and the world, than the most erroneous of those against whom they would arm their terrors.

as a heretic for teaching the most *orthodox* system of christianity that can be conceived, if his secret atheism should by any means be discovered. And so the word *heresy* will be made to signify a kind of *solemn lying;* which is such an abuse of speech as I suppose few will be capable of admitting. I shall only add, that, as Dr. Foster is obliged to allow there are fundamental errors for which, how sincerely soever received and maintained, a man ought to be separated from a christian society, the dispute between this learned gentleman and his antagonist was brought to this question, what St. Paul calls *heresy?* and the hints laid down above convince me, that what Dr. Whitby has said on this head cannot be defended, even by this ingenious reviver of it.

h *There I have determined to pass the winter.*] Several cities of this name are mentioned in antiquity; one, not far from Philippi, in Macedonia; another in Epirus, which took its rise and name from the victory of Augustus over Anthony and Cleopatra at Actium. M. L'Enfant is of opinion this last is referred to here, supposing that Paul intended a visit to those in or near Illyricum, among whom he had preached the gospel; Rom. xv. 19. But Mr. Cradock, and many others, think it was the former. After all, it seems to me something uncertain, as well as the particular time when this Epistle was written, and the place from whence it was sent. (See the Introduction to this Epistle, p. 937.)

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was an inhabitant of Colosse, as we may conclude from St. Paul's mentioning Onesimus, in his Epistle to the Colossians, as one of them, (chap. iv. 9.) as well as from his saluting Archippus in this Epistle, (ver. 2.) who appears, from Col. iv. 17. to have been a pastor of that church. The title of fellow-labourer, given Philemon, (ver. 1.) makes it probable that he was his colleague in the ministry: and though we cannot certainly determine when he first embraced christianity, it is evident, from the oblique insinuation in the 19th verse, that he was one of the apostle's converts; and it is not at all unlikely, (as some have conjectured,) that he might have had an opportunity of attending upon him during his long residence at Ephesus, where we are told St. Paul preached with so much success, that *all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ.* (Acts xix. 10.)—He seems, from several hints given in the Epistle, to have been a person of distinction; particularly from the mention made of the church in his house, (ver. 2.) and his liberal contribution to the relief of the saints, (ver. 5, 7.) and the general strain of the letter shows, that the apostle held him in very high esteem, and looked upon him as one of the great supports of religion in that society.

It appears from the first verse of this Epistle, that St. Paul was under confinement when he wrote it; and, as he expresses (ver. 22.) his expectation of being shortly released, it is probable that it was written towards the close of his first imprisonment at Rome, and sent, together with the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus, about the year of our Lord 63, or the ninth of the Emperor Nero. (Compare Introduction to Ephesians, p. 798. and note g, p. 578, 579.)

The occasion of the letter was this:—Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed his master, and fled to Rome; where, happily for him, he met with the apostle, who was at that time a prisoner at large, and by his instructions and admonitions was converted to christianity, and reclaimed to a sense of his duty. St. Paul seems to have kept him for some considerable time under his eye, that he might be satisfied of the reality of the change; and, when he had made a sufficient trial of him, and found that his behaviour was entirely agreeable to his profession, he would not detain him any longer for his own private convenience, though in a situation that rendered such an assistant peculiarly desirable, (compare ver. 13, 14.) but sent him back to his master; and, as a mark of his esteem, intrusted him, together with Tychicus, with the charge of delivering his Epistle to the church at Colosse, and giving them a particular account of the state of things at Rome, recommending him to them, at the same time, as *a faithful and beloved brother.* (Col. iv. 9.)—And, as Philemon might well be supposed to be strongly prejudiced against one who had left his service in so infamous a manner, he sends him this letter, in which he employs all his influence to remove his suspicions, and reconcile him to the thoughts of taking Onesimus into his family again. And whereas St. Paul might have exerted that authority which his character as an apostle, and the relation in which he stood to Philemon as a spiritual father, would naturally give him, he chuses to entreat him as a friend, and with the softest and most insinuating address, urges his suit, conjuring him, by all the ties of christian friendship, that he would not deny him his request. And the more effectually to prevail upon him, he represents his own peace and happiness as deeply interested in the event: and speaks of Onesimus in such terms, as were best adapted to soften his prejudices, and dispose him to receive one who was so dear to himself, not merely as a servant, but as a fellow-christian and a friend.

But though the apostle's subject did not lead him to treat so directly of the doctrines or precepts of christianity in this as in his other Epistles, yet a person whose mind like his was so deeply and habitually impressed with a sense of divine truths, could not fail, even when writing upon the most common and familiar occurrences, to introduce some hints that might tend to cherish pious and virtuous sentiments in the breast of his friend; and accordingly, in this short Epistle, we meet with several allusions to different parts of the christian plan, interwoven in so easy and natural a manner with the rest of the letter, as must convince us how near those subjects lay to his heart.

It is impossible to read over this admirable Epistle, without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is, not only with all the warmth and sincerity of the friend, but even with the dignity of the christian and the apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed a masterpiece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an Epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written upon a similar occasion; (*lib.* ix. *let.* 21.) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, and though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged, by every impartial reader, vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle.

One cannot but be solicitous to know what effect such an Epistle produced. One would willingly hope it was attended with all the success which St. Paul seemed to expect, when he tells Philemon that he wrote to him in full "confidence of his "obedience, knowing that he would do even more than he said." And though nothing indeed is expressly asserted in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, from the nature of the thing, that Onesimus had already waited upon his master, and been received into favour, when he discharged the commission with which (as we have observed) he was honoured to the Colossians. For it is hardly to be imagined, that the apostle would direct him to join with Tychicus, in delivering such a message to a church, that was in part under the care of Philemon, before he had made his submission to him, and obtained his pardon. (Compare the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 798.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

SECTION I.

Paul intending to intercede with Philemon, in favour of his fugitive servant Onesimus, introduces his design with a most affectionate and proper salutation. Philem. ver. 1—7.

PHILEMON 1.

PAUL, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer,

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house;

3 Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers:

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

PHILEMON 1.

PAUL, a well known *prisoner* in the cause *of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, a brother,* not unknown, join their salutations *to Philemon our beloved* friend, *and* pious *fellow-labourer* in the work and gospel of our blessed Redeemer, and one of the pastors of the Colossian church: *And* we also address them *to the beloved Apphia,*[a] his pious consort, *and to* his associate in the ministry, *Archippus,* (Col. iv. 17.) *our fellow-soldier* in that holy warfare in which we are engaged; *and to the* little *church* of christians [*that is*] *in thine house,* as we know thou art so happy as to have several of thy numerous family united to thee, and to us, in the bonds of the Lord. May *grace and peace,* that abundance of spiritual blessings, and that happiness resulting from them, which we so often wish to our christian friends, when we are addressing them by letter, [*be*] *unto you from God our* gracious and bountiful *Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ,* to whose intercession we owe our interest in the divine favour.

SECT. 1. PHIL. 1. 2 3

You may be sure, my dear Philemon, that though absent from you, and surrounded with many cares and sorrows, yet far from being unmindful of you in my addresses to the throne of grace, *I always thank my God* on your account, when I am *making mention of thee in my prayers: Hearing,* with greater pleasure than I can express, *of the* steady *faith which thou hast,* and always maintainest, *towards the Lord Jesus* Christ, as the great Object to which our faith as christians is directed, *and of thy* ardent *love to all the saints,*[b] who are the excellent of the earth, and the most deserving our esteem and affection. It is therefore matter of my most fervent prayer, that these promising openings may be abundantly answered; and *that thy communion* with us *in the faith* of our blessed Redeemer, the advantages of which thou dost now so happily share, *may be* more and more apparently *efficacious in* extorting from all that behold it, *the* due *acknowledgment of every good* and valuable *thing which is in you* all *towards Christ Jesus,* and all those whom he is pleased to own and favour. Permit me to say this, in my own name, and that of my companion Timothy; *for we are* ourselves *greatly rejoiced and comforted by thy love,* which thou art in so many generous ways expressing to our fellow-christians; and particularly, *that the bowels of the* poor *saints are refreshed by thee* our dear *brother,* while thou feedest and relievest the poor, and makest those possessions which Providence hath given thee, a general good. None of the hungry that are fed at thy table can find a supply of their necessities more sensible and delightful, than the joy we feel from the report of so beneficent a conduct, in one whom we so tenderly regard.

4 5 6 7

IMPROVEMENT.

IF any could be so weak as to think the character of the christian and the minister at all inconsistent with that of the well-bred man, they must see a remarkable demonstration to the contrary in this familiar Epistle of St. Paul to his friend Philemon; which is conducted with the happiest address, and which, in true politeness, may vie with that of the greatest masters of the epistolary style in antiquity. The Introduction (the length of which obliges us to separate it from the remainder to which it is so happily connected) leads us naturally to a variety of useful remarks, and conveys important instruction in the vehicle of well deserved praise. How elevated soever the station of Philemon might be, and how plentiful soever his circumstances, it was his chief glory and felicity to be so dis-

a *To the beloved Apphia.*] It has been observed, that this lady and Archippus are probably named in a view of engaging their good offices with Philemon, in favour of Onesimus; and no doubt Paul would wish they might be engaged: but, separate from that view, it would have been natural and decent to mention them both.

b *Of the faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to all the saints.*] The words in the original stand as they are placed in our version; and many instances of such a transposition are produced by Dr. Whitby, in his learned note on this place; but Mr. Blackwall justly observes, that our language does not admit of the like, and therefore proposes the rendering we have followed. Blackwall's *Sac. Class.* Vol. I. p. 87.

SECT. 1. PHIL. 6 7

tinguished for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints. And indeed it is most unworthy the profession we make of faith in Christ, as the great Head of the church, not to love all his members: unworthy our character of saints, not to feel a sympathetic affection for all that are sanctified. If others are deficient here, alas! many are too sadly deficient, let us exert ourselves so much the more, and labour to give the most substantial demonstrations of our love. It will be an honour to us and to the christian name, that our communion in this precious faith should extort an acknowledgment of good things in us, from all who are intimately acquainted and conversant with us. Thus shall we diffuse happiness in a wide circle; for it is a sincere joy to all good men, to behold the graces and the usefulness of others. Especially are the hearts of faithful and zealous ministers comforted, when the bowels of poor saints are refreshed by the liberality of the rich. They share alternately the pleasure which is felt on the side of the pious benefactors and their grateful beneficiaries; and were they, with Paul, in the confinement and necessities of a prison, the report would delight and enlarge their souls.

SECTION II.

The apostle proceeds to the main business of this short Epistle: and labours, by the happiest address that can be imagined, to engage Philemon kindly to receive and forgive Onesimus, his fugitive slave, who, after having greatly injured his master, had happily been converted by St. Paul at Rome. He concludes with some particular salutations and messages. Philem. ver. 8, *to the end.*

PHILEM. 8.

SECT. 2. PHIL. 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

I HAVE been expressing, my dear Philemon, the confidence I have in your excellent character, and the great pleasure with which both I and Timothy, my brother, have heard of your many generous and beneficent actions; and *therefore*, in reference to the particular occasion of this letter, which to so good a heart cannot be disagreeable, *though I might take great freedom, in* virtue of my relation to *Christ*, and the authority he has given me, *to* prescribe and *enjoin that which* it [*is*] *proper* and reasonable *for thee* to do, *I rather* chuse *by love* to *intreat* [*thee,*] *being such an one as Paul the aged;*[a] whose superior standing in life and in religion I know thou wouldst revere, though in a private station, *and* especially as I am *now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ*, whom thou wouldst, I am sure, honour, as a confessor in his cause, if I were not distinguished by so immediate a commission from him, or so long a train of services in his church. *I intreat thee*, I say, *concerning a* certain *son of mine, whom I have begotten* to Christ *in my bonds;*[b] and whom I hope thou wilt, upon that account, be inclined to favour, knowing how dear he must be to me, considered as a soul which God hath given me at such a season as this. And it is no other than thy servant *Onesimus; Who* indeed, if I may so allude to his name, did not formerly answer it, for he *was once unprofitable to thee*, negligent of thy business, and so conscious of having deserved thy displeasure, that he fled from it. *But* he *now* is, and I trust will be, *profitable* both *to thee and* to *me*,[c] so as daily to give increasing satisfaction to us both: *Whom*, how agreeable and useful soever he might have been to me here, *I have sent* back to thee *again: Do thou therefore receive* him with readiness and affection. Receive *him*, did I say? nay rather receive, *as it were, my own bowels:* a person whom I so tenderly love, that he may seem, as it were, to carry the heart of Paul along with him whithersoever he goes. *Whom* indeed *I was desirous to have kept near me, that he might* have officiated for thee, and *in thy stead have attended upon me in the bonds* I suffer for the sake *of the gospel:* for I do thee, O Philemon, the justice to believe, thou wouldst have found a pious pleasure in every ministration of this kind, if thou wert near me. *But I would do nothing* in this affair *without thy* express *consent, that thy benefit might not seem to be* extorted *by necessity, but* appear a *voluntary* act. I therefore return him to thee by the first opportunity; *for perhaps he was separated from thee for a while*, by the permission of Providence, *to this* very *end, that thou mightest* receive and *enjoy him for ever;* that he might not only be dear and useful to thee, during all the remainder of his life, as a servant, whose ear is as it were bored to the door of thine house, (to allude to the Hebrew custom, Exod. xxi. 6.) but that he might indeed be a source of eternal delight to thee, in that infinitely better world, where all distinctions between masters and their slaves shall cease, even that world of complete liberty and everlasting friendship.

In the mean time, receive him, *not now as a* fugitive slave, to be long frowned upon, and kept at a distance, for his former faults; nor treat him merely as a common *servant, but* as *above a servant*, as standing in another, a much more dear and honourable relation, *a*

PHILEM. 8.
WHEREFORE, though I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which *is* convenient;

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds;

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a bro-

a *Paul the aged.*] It is generally agreed, that this Epistle was written about the year of Christ 63; and, if we suppose Paul to have been 24 years old when Stephen was stoned, (which is consistent with his being called a young man,) that being about the year 34, (for we have not *data* sufficient absolutely to determine the exact time,) he would now be 53; and, considering how much his constitution would probably be impaired by his fatigues and sufferings, before that time, he might properly enough call himself, πρεσβύτης, *one advanced in age*, though not an old man. Dr. Whitby indeed says, we are *young* till 40, and not properly *aged* till after 60, and concludes he might be about 34 at the death of Stephen, and 63 at the date of this Epistle. If the reader be not satisfied with either of these conjectures, he may take any medium between them that shall appear to him more plausible.

b *A son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds—Onesimus.*] Thus the words stand in the original; and I thought it incumbent upon me to preserve that order, because it keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive.

c *Was unprofitable, but now is profitable.*] It has been justly observed, that it was strange Onesimus, who had been so wicked in the pious family of Philemon amidst all the religious opportunities he enjoyed there, should meet with conversion in his rambles at Rome. Instances have often happened somewhat of a similar nature; but it is very unjustifiable, and may probably be fatal, for any to presume on the like extraordinary interpositions of Providence and grace in their favour.—The word *Onesimus* is pretty generally known to signify *profit*, and *Onesiphorus* is much of the same import. They were names which might perhaps be given to slaves by way of good omen, expressing an expectation that they would bring advantage to their masters, and it is very evident, that Paul refers to the etymology of the word.

ther beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account:

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee, how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus;

24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

beloved brother, especially to me, as having been for some time a very useful attendant upon me in my afflictions; *but how much more so to thee,* to whom he belongs *both in the flesh and in the Lord,* as thou hast so long known him, and wilt have the pleasure of discerning more particularly how happy a change christianity hath made in his temper and character. *If therefore thou esteemest me* as a friend and *a companion*[d] in Christ, I beseech thee to *receive him,* even *as* thou wouldst receive *myself,* if I could have the satisfaction of making thee a visit in person. *If he have injured thee in any* pecuniary *matter, or is indebted* [*to thee*] in consequence of any former extravagances and follies, (of which divine grace hath now, I hope, made him truly sensible,) so far as it has been the case, *charge it to my account. I Paul have written* [*it*] *with my own hand,* and do hereby, as it were, give thee legal security for it; *I will pay it again* upon demand, as far as my little substance will go. *Not to say to thee that,* as I was the happy instrument of thy conversion to Christ, *thou owest even thine own self unto me.* We will put that quite out of the question, and if thou pleasest to require it, I will really charge myself as thy debtor, and take the first opportunity of making thee a remittance. *Yes,* [*my*] dear *brother,* let me prevail upon thee in this request, *let me have joy of thee in the Lord;* and while thou art so ready to do good to others, and to communicate for their comfort, out of those stores which Providence has so graciously given thee, let me beseech thee to *refresh my bowels*[e] *in the Lord;* for the christian consolation which it will afford me to see thee and Onesimus happy in each other, will be better, and more delightful, than food to the hungry.

But I will not urge the matter farther; *I have written to thee, in* full *confidence of thy* ready *obedience* and deference to my request, and indeed, as *knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say;* thou wilt not think of insisting upon the exact balance of former accounts, but wilt readily embrace this thy returning servant in the arms of paternal love. At the same time, I must *also* desire thee to *prepare a lodging for me,*[f] *for,* though I am as yet a prisoner, *I hope that I shall,* ere long, *through your prayers be granted to you;* and, if Providence set me at liberty again, I intend to visit your parts, and shall, if it be convenient, cast myself on the known hospitality of your family. In the mean while, accept the greeting of our christian brethren here at Rome, and let me particularly tell thee, that *Epaphras, my fellow-captive in Christ Jesus, salutes thee;* As [*also*] *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas,* and *Luke, my fellow-labourers,* who are cordially engaged with me in the service of the gospel, and take a peculiar pleasure in lending that assistance to the churches in Rome which my confinement will not conveniently admit me to impart. I conclude with the best wish which the most endearing christian friendship can form: May *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* ever [*be*] *with your spirit,* and shed abroad on thee, and all thy companions in him, that peace and happiness which nothing but the communications of his favour can give. *Amen.*

SECT. 2. PHIL. 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the condescension of the holy apostle! how charming and delicate his address in this whole section! which makes the immediate occasion of this letter, minute as it may seem, matter of congratulation to the christian world. St. Paul lays aside the authority which his office, his age, his sufferings gave him, to address Philemon, as on a foot of equal friendship, chusing rather by love to entreat. Let the example be imitated by those in superior stations and relations of life; and let them learn likewise, from the tenderness which such a man expresses about this poor slave, in whom he traced the appearance of a truly christian temper, to interest themselves in the happiness of those whose rank is far beneath their own; and learn to make the situation of their servants easy, by a kind and friendly treatment. Well may such a care be expected, especially when we can look on such as brethren beloved in the Lord, and partakers with us in the same Saviour and hope. Ver. 8, 9 16

Let those, to whom God hath blessed the labours of his faithful ministers, as the means of their conversion, remember it with pleasure, and ascribe it to the riches of divine grace, to which all is originally to be traced; remembering also, that there is a sense in which they owe even themselves to those who have been honoured as the instruments of bringing them to Christ, without an acquaintance with whom they had lost themselves, and been ruined for ever. Let the kindness which Paul expresses for Onesimus, in being willing that his debt to Philemon should be charged to his account, lead us to reflect on our infinite obligations to a gracious Redeemer. He has suffered our ten thousand talents to be imputed to him, that his righteousness might be so imputed to us, that for the sake of it we should finally be re-admitted to the family of God. With an ingratitude not to be paralleled by any thing which can pass between mortal men, we had perfidiously deserted it; but the divine goodness leaves us room humbly to hope, we may have departed from it for a while, to be received into it for ever. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit, to produce those strong impressions of wonder, thankfulness, and love, which ought to fill it, in every remembrance of such overflowing and triumphant mercy! *Amen.* 19 18 18, 19 15 25

d *Esteemest me a companion.*] L'Enfant translates it; "I conjure thee, therefore, by all that is common between us, receive him as myself," in imitation of Theodoret, who was no doubt an excellent commentator. But the main thought which prevailed in the apostle's mind, seems to have been the participation they both had in the blessings of the gospel, which was the dearest bond of their friendship.

e *Refresh my bowels.*] The word σπλαγχνον is wonderfully emphatical. It literally signifies, to *appease*, or *quiet*; which strongly intimates the commotion he felt, through the ardour of his concern for Onesimus; and seems to represent the *eagerness* of his desire for his re-establishment in Philemon's family, by the appetite of *hunger*. Incapable, as in many other places, of expressing this in the version, I have attempted it, though by no means with equal spirit, in the paraphrase. Compare ver. 7. where the same word is used, and seems to be referred to here with peculiar beauty and propriety.

f *Prepare a lodging for me.*] Theodoret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add greater weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

LEARNED men have been divided in their opinions concerning the author of this celebrated Epistle. It hath been ascribed to St. Luke, to Barnabas, and to *Clement of Rome*. But though some considerable persons have given the sanction of their authority to the several opinions I have mentioned, yet the most prevailing one among the ancients was, and among the moderns still is, that this Epistle is a genuine work of St. Paul. Among those who believe that St. Paul was its author, there are some indeed who imagine it was written by him in the Hebrew or Syriac language, and translated into Greek either by St. Luke or Clement. And it is certain there was such an ancient tradition, mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Jerome. And there are arguments in support of all the particular hypotheses concerning the author of the Epistle, the language in which it was originally written, and the person who translated it into Greek; I say, there are various arguments in favour of all these different opinions, taken from similarity of style, the use of particular words, and the manner of composition. But I apprehend, whoever carefully considers the observations that have been made by very learned men, upon the language of St. Paul, of Luke, or Clement, in defence of their respective hypotheses, will conclude, that such arguments are very little to be depended upon, as they frequently are much indebted to a strong imagination, and, in the present case, appear to be urged with equal plausibility on all sides.

I have already given my opinion, that St. Paul was the author of this Epistle, (note g, p. 578, 579.) and that because the current of antiquity, though not the authority of every individual father, runs strongly this way; Jerome expressly asserts, that the Epistle to the Hebrews had been received as St. Paul's by all the Greek writers. And though this Epistle wants one characteristic of St. Paul's other Epistles, the prefixing his name, and his usual form of inscription; (for a very obvious reason, that he might not too early awaken the prejudices the Jewish converts had conceived against him;) yet it might be easy to collect from the Epistle itself some strong indications that St. Paul was its author.

It is of less importance in what language it was originally written, if the translation were made (as the tradition says) by some companion and fellow-labourer of St. Paul. Though it should be considered, that the presumption lies on the side of our present Greek copy, that it is an original, and not a translation; and therefore the arguments which induce any to be of a contrary opinion, should be very strong and convincing. If the reader should be inclined to examine this matter more accurately, he may consult Spanheim's *Dissertation* concerning the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, particularly part iii. chap. 2. concerning the language;* and the learned Mr. Hallet's Introduction to his *Supplement to Mr. Pierce's Paraphrase;* which Mr. Wolfius hath translated into Latin, and published at the close of the 4th volume of his *Curæ Philologicæ*, with some of his own remarks and strictures in the margin. As for the date of this Epistle, I am of opinion it was about the year 63, while St. Paul was imprisoned at Rome, or quickly after it. See note g, p. 578, 579. and compare Heb. xiii. 23.

This Epistle was written to the Hebrews, or converts from Judaism to christianity, who inhabited at least some one particular country, (as may be inferred from the apostle's saying, chap. xiii. 19. "I beseech you the rather to do this, that "I may be restored to you the sooner;" and ver. 23. "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, "if he come shortly, I will see you.") And this country most probably was Judea, where the converts to christianity from Judaism were almost incessantly persecuted by their unbelieving brethren, who tenaciously adhered to the constitution and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which christianity superseded. Now the manifest design of St. Paul in this Epistle is, "to confirm the Jewish christians in the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ which they might be in danger of "deserting, either through the insinuations or ill treatment of their persecutors."

It was natural for the zealous defenders of the Mosaic law to insist upon the divine authority of Moses, the distinguishing

* Fred. Spanheim. *Op. tom.* ii. p. 245, &c.

glory and majesty which attended its first promulgation by the ministry of angels, and the special privileges with which it invested those who adhered to it. In answer to all arguments and insinuations of this kind, the apostle shows,

I. That in all these several articles, christianity had an infinite superiority to the law. Which topic he pursues from chap. i. to xi. Reminding the believing Hebrews, That it was a most extraordinary favour, that God had sent them a revelation by his own Son, whose glory was far superior to that of angels, (chap. i. *throughout*,) very naturally inferring from hence the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation, which, in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons: particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God. (Chap. ii. *throughout*.) With the same view he farther magnifies Christ as superior to Moses their great legislator; and from the sentence passed on those who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of despising the promises of the gospel. (Chap. iii. 1—13.) And as it was natural from hence, to call to mind that rest in Canaan to which the authority wherewith Moses was invested was intended to lead them, the apostle cautions them against the sin of unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression which he shows to refer to a nobler state of rest than what the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages. (Chap. iii. 14.—iv. 11.) Farther enforcing this caution by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ as our High-Priest, of whose divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises farther illustrations of so important a topic. (Chap. iv. 12, *to the end*; v. *throughout*.) Declaring that he would advance to sublimer truths without dwelling upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless, (chap. vi. 1—9.) and then, for the establishment and comfort of sincere believers, he sets before them the consideration of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to his sacred engagements, the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner. (Chap. vi. 9, *to the end*.) Farther to illustrate the character of our blessed Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, he enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from instances in which the priesthood of Melchisedec excelled the Levitical priesthood, he infers the surpassing glory of the priesthood of Christ to the priesthood under the law. (Chap. vii. 1—17.) From these premises, which plainly manifested the defects of the Aaronical priesthood, he argues, that it was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated, by that of Christ, to which it was introductory and subservient; and, by consequence, that the obligation of the law was henceforth dissolved. (Chap. vii. 18, *to the end*.) He then recapitulates what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High-Priest of christians, and farther illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old. (Chap. viii. *throughout*.) Illustrating farther the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high-priest did on the great day of atonement. (Chap. ix. 1—14.) And having enlarged on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it, (chap. ix. 15, *to the end*,) and proved that legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience, and from thence argued the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it, (chap. x. 1—15.) the apostle urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an High-Priest and covenant conferred on them, to the purpose of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other. (Chap. x. 15—25.)

The apostle having thus at large obviated the insinuations and objections of the Jews to the gospel of Christ, as inferior to the Mosaic dispensation, by showing its transcendent excellence in a clear and convincing light, for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds,

II. To awaken their attention, and fortify their minds against the storm of persecution which had come, and was farther likely to come, upon them, for the sake of the christian faith. To this end, he reminds them of the extremities they had already endured in defence of the gospel, and of the fatal consequences which would attend their apostasy. (Chap. x. 26, *to the end*.) Calling to their remembrance the renowned examples of faith and fortitude which had been exhibited by holy men mentioned in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, (chap. xi. 1—16.) by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. (Chap. xi. 17—29.) Concluding his discourse with glancing on many other illustrious worthies; and besides those recorded in Scripture, referring also to the case of several who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. (Chap. xi. 30.—xii. 2.)

And having thus executed his design in the argumentative part of the Epistle, he applies the whole, by exhorting the Hebrew christians to sustain and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness. (Chap. xii. 3—14.) Cautioning them against disparaging the blessings of the gospel, and making them a sacrifice either to any secular views or sensual gratifications; representing the incomparable excellence of these blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced, which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal. (Chap. xii. 15—29.) Exhorting them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion, dependence on the divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man, from the consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ; which ought always to encourage us resolutely to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet with in his cause. (Chap. xiii. 1—16.) Concluding the whole, with recommending to them some particular regards to their pious ministers; and entreating their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction. (Chap. xiii. 17, *to the end*.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

SECTION I.

The apostle reminds the Hebrews to whom he writes, of the great favour God had done them, in sending them a revelation by his own Son; on whose glory he expatiates as far superior to that of angels, intending by this representation to engage them to embrace and retain the gospel. Heb. i. 1, *to the end.*

HEBREWS i. 1.

GOD, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance ob-

HEBREWS i. 1.

SECT. 1.

HEB. I.

THE great and wise *God*,[a] *who* in his wonderful condescension *hath at many times, and in various manners*,[b] *of old, spoken to the fathers* of the Jewish nation, *by the prophets*, whom he hath in successive ages raised up and employed as the messengers of his will to them, *In these last days* hath magnified his mercy in a yet more amazing manner: for he *hath spoken unto us by the Son*,[c] his only-begotten and best beloved Son, whom he hath sent into our world as the Ambassador of his mercy to us, even that illustrious person, *whom he hath appointed the Heir* and Possessor *of all things*.[d] He hath adjusted all things in such a manner as to advance the purposes of his glory, and committed the administration of his providential kingdom into his hands, *by whom*, and in reference to whose honour, *he also* created all things, and *constituted the ages*[e] and dispensations of the church and world. I speak of that great Immanuel, whom we have so long been taught to know and adore; *who being the effulgent Ray of* [*his*] *glory, and the express Delineation of his person*,[f] on whom his likeness is enstamped in living characters, in a manner which no created nature can admit, *and upholding the universe* which he hath made *by the* efficacious *word of his* Father's *power*,[g] which is ever resident in him as his own, by virtue of that intimate though incomprehensible union which renders them one, (John x. 30.) was nevertheless set forth in the feeble dress and humble form of human flesh, that he might be our atoning Sacrifice. And accordingly, *having by himself performed* that great transaction, which is *the cleansing away of our sins*, he is now returned to the celestial world, from which he descended for this gracious purpose, and is *set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*,[h] of that glorious and excellent Being, who reigns supreme in the heaven of heavens.

2

3

To this exalted Redeemer would I now call your thoughts, of whom I have some very important and sublime truths to deliver. Consider, therefore, my brethren, what reverence, what fidelity, what zeal you owe to him *who was made* in exaltation and celestial glory *as much superior to angels*[i] *as the name he has inherited*, and by which through many

4

a *God, who,* &c.] Though St. Paul was the author of this Epistle, as we have already observed, yet he does not begin it, as he does most of his other Epistles, by prefixing his name to it; the reason of which probably was, that those to whom he was now writing were under strong prejudices against his name; and he was not willing to alarm those prejudices at the beginning of his letter.

b *Many times, and various manners.*] The first word, as some apprehend, refers to the *parcels* by which God's will was delivered, in opposition to a *complete* revelation; and the last, to the *manner* in which it was made known, namely, by dreams, visions, urim, prophets, voices, signs.

c *By the Son.*] This is no argument that God did not speak by Christ before; but only that it was not in so clear and express a manner.

d *Heir* and Possessor.] Mr. Pierce learnedly vindicates the latter of these interpretations.

e *Constituted the ages.*] The sentiment, as thus expressed, is a very important one; but if any insist upon rendering αιωνας, *the world itself*, I shall not oppose it; for it is certain that St. Paul asserts this doctrine, Col. i. 15—17. if not here.

f *Delineation of his person.*] That is, saith Leigh, answering to the divine perfections, as the impression of the wax does to the engraving of the seal.—It is observable, that Philo calls the *Logos*, χαρακτης και εικων Θεου. See Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 559.

g *Word of his power.*] Many explain this of the *Father's* power, which is the sense I have given in the paraphrase. Some copies read αυτου, which would fully justify our version. But if the power of the Father be the power of Christ, to be used by him at pleasure for the security of his people, it seems to be all that the establishment of our faith in him requires.

h *Sat down on the right hand.*] Some understand this of the *right hand* of the *Shechinah*, in the most honourable place among men or angels; and quote 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. i. 20, 21. supposing there may be some glorious appearance of the Father's presence in heaven, as there was upon earth, which hath, properly speaking, a *right* or a *left hand*. But this I esteem no article of faith. Compare chap. viii. 1.

i *Superior to angels.*] Some have, I think very precariously, imagined, that the apostle, in this and the next chapter, insists so much on Christ's superiority to angels, in order to take off the Jews from that angel-worship to which they were greatly inclined. But it is evident the apostle does not speak expressly on that subject. It is more certain, therefore, that his intention was to exalt their ideas of our blessed Redeemer; as indeed their entertaining high and honourable conceptions of him would be of great importance to their holding fast their christian profession. It is plain, the Jews considered the angels as concerned in the promulgation of their law, on which account they might be the more zealously attached to it, and in this view there was a peculiar propriety in the apostle's labouring the argument he is here upon, namely, the superiority of our blessed Lord to all the angelic orders.

SECT. 1. HEB. 1.

succeeding ages he hath been spoken of in the sacred oracles, [*is*] *more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels hath he ever said*, as we know he hath said to the Messiah in that celebrated prophecy, (Psal. ii. 7.) *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*[k] *And again*, (2 Sam. vii. 14.) *I will be a Father to him, and he shall be my Son?*[l] For if these words were immediately spoken of Solomon, it was chiefly as
6 a type of Christ, the great Son of David, and Prince of peace. *But* so far is he from speaking of the angels in terms expressing equal dignity, that *when he again introduces his first-begotten Son into the world*, and speaks of him as coming with royal pomp to take possession of his kingdom, *he saith*, (Psal. xcvii. 7.) *And let all the angels of God worship him.* And accordingly he did actually demand their homage to him, as constituted their Lord and Sovereign, not only in regard to his originally superior glories, but in consideration of that fidelity and zeal with which he had discharged his important
7 errand to our world. *And concerning the angels he saith*, (Psal. civ. 4.) *he maketh his angels winds*,[m] *and his ministers a flame of fire.* He who rules the winds and the lightnings, has his angels under equal command, and employs them with the strength of winds, and the rapidity of lightnings in his service.
8 *But to the Son* [*he*] speaks in a very different manner, and [*saith*] in those memorable words, which have an ultimate reference to Christ, (Psal. xlv. 6, 7.) *Thy throne, O God*,[n] [*is*] *for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom* [*is*] *a sceptre of righteousness.*
9 *Thou hast*, in the most eminent degree, through the whole of thine administration, *loved righteousness and hated iniquity*,[o] and hast taken the most effectual method to suppress it; *therefore God, thy God* and Father, *hath anointed thee* plentifully *with the oil of gladness above thy associates:*[p] thou art exalted to superior honour and happiness; so that none of thy brethren, none of the angels whom thou mayst in any instance or degree have condescended to join with thyself, and lead in thy train, can pretend to compare with thee in glory or in joy. Yea, as divine, thou art fixed in thine eternal throne,
10 that the whole created world may unite its prostrate homage before thee. *And* it is to him who presided, as is well known, over the Jewish nation, and received the tribute of praise which they paid to Jehovah their God, that those words are addressed, (Psal. cii. 26.) *Thou, Lord, from the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the*
11 *works of thy hands. They*, permanent as they seem, *shall* at length *perish* and wear out; *but thou endurest* in undecaying glory; *yea, all of them shall grow old like a*
12 *garment, And as a mantle thou shalt fold them up*,[q] *and they shall be changed;* shalt remove them out of their place, and introduce a new scene of things, with as much ease as a prince lays aside one robe and puts on another; *but thou art* ever *the same, and thy years shall not fail* through everlasting ages, nor can thy perfections admit any possible diminution.
13 *But* not to insist on the manner in which men have addressed their homage and their praises to him, even under the inspiration of an unerring Spirit, let me refer you to another passage, in which the Father himself speaks to him under the character of his Son, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom, that you may take an idea of his grandeur from thence. For *to which of the angels hath he ever said, Sit thou* enthroned in glory *at my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet*, and give thee to trample upon the last and the proudest of them all? The spirits of heaven expect no such honour as this; the noblest of them all esteems himself happy in an opportunity of worshipping this
14 triumphant Lord, and ministering even to the least of his servants. Is it not a known and delightful truth? *are they not* indeed *all ministering spirits*, who officiate before the throne of God, and are *sent out to attend on those who shall inherit salvation?* and always willing to undertake the offices he shall assign them, for the safety and good of his people? And therefore, far from thinking of them in any view of comparison with him, let us humbly adore him, for the benefits which by his authority and favour we daily receive from these benevolent creatures.

talned a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

k *Thou art my Son.*] These words are taken from Psal. ii. 7. And I think it is evident (as others have observed) that this, and the rest of the passages here quoted, must refer to Christ in their original sense, and in the strictest propriety of interpretation; otherwise the argument would be entirely inconclusive; for it might be replied, that, supposing these passages to be applicable to Christ, they will not prove him to be superior to the angels, since they originally refer to David and others confessedly inferior to those celestial spirits. It might be easily proved that this second Psalm does originally belong to the Messiah. Compare Acts iv. 25; xiii. 33.

l *He shall be my Son.*] Mr. Pierce hath laboured largely to prove, that these words can, in their original and primary sense, refer only to Christ.

m *He maketh his angels winds.*] That is, saith Mr. Cradock, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 363.) He, the Son, makes use of the angels as his ministers, in producing storms and lightning according to his pleasure. But I would not change the signification of the pronoun He, which returns here, without absolute necessity.—The rendering πνευματα, *winds*, is very agreeable to the original and the context.

n *Thy throne, O God, &c.*] To render this, as some would do, *God is thy throne, for ever and ever*, that is, God will establish thy throne, (according to 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14; Psal. lxxxix. 4.) appears to me very unnatural.

o *Loved righteousness, hated iniquity.*] It may be objected, that as all the angels have maintained this character, consequently this can be no just reason for preferring Christ to them. But I think the true answer is, not so much that the angels are chargeable with mistakes, though not with moral evil, (Job iv. 18; xv. 15.) as Mr. Pierce suggests, but rather that it refers to that unparalleled instance of the love of moral rectitude which Christ hath given in becoming a Sacrifice for sin by his atonement; doing more than hath been ever done by any rational agent, towards displaying his *love of righteousness*, and *hatred of iniquity*.

p *Above thy associates:* μετοχοι.] It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of other countries; in reference to which it is that they are called his *fellows* or *companions;* for (as others have observed) if *fellows* do not signify *angels*, the quotation is nothing to the apostle's purpose.

q *Fold them up.*] For ελιξεις, Mr. Pierce would read, αλλαξεις, *change them*, agreeable to the Hebrews; and imagines that *heaven and earth* here signifies, *governments*, as indeed the phrase sometimes may; but I think not in this place.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from this wonderful and delightful portion of scripture, how we are to conceive of our blessed Redeemer. Admirable contrast of characters! which might appear to our feeble reason inconsistent, if faith did not teach us to reconcile them. Strange, that the Brightness of his Father's glory, and the express Image of his person, by whom he made the worlds, should condescend by himself to purge our sins! That he, to whom God saith, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; that he, whom the angels are commanded to worship; that he, whose divine throne is for ever and ever; that he, whom the church hath for successive ages adored as having founded the earth and formed the heavens, as in his original perfections and glories far more immutable than they, changing them as a vesture at his sovereign pleasure; that this great, this illustrious, this divine Person, should have laid aside these robes of celestial light to array himself in mortal flesh; not only that he might reveal his Father's will, and speak to us in his name, but that he might redeem us to God by his blood! What shall we say? We will receive the message he brings us with all humble thankfulness; we will seek his favour with more earnest solicitude; we will congratulate his exaltation with loyal joy. O triumphant, transporting thought, that Jesus is enthroned above all heavens, that he is anointed with an unequalled effusion of the oil of gladness! with angels we will fall down and worship him as our Lord and our God. Our hosannahs shall proclaim it, that he is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and that God hath engaged to make his enemies his footstool. Angels minister before him with unwearied vigour, with inconceivable speed do they fly like flames of lightning from one end of the heaven to the other, from world to world, to execute his sacred commands. With delight do they minister to those whom he hath appointed heirs of salvation, nor do they neglect the youngest or meanest. Let us thankfully acknowledge the great Redeemer's goodness and care, in every kind office we receive from them. And as our obligations to him are infinitely superior to theirs, let us emulate their fidelity, vigour, and zeal, in the steadiness and cheerfulness of our obedience; till we join them in services like their own, in that world where they dwell, and to which, if we approve ourselves his faithful servants, he will ere long give them a charge safely and joyfully to convey us.

SECT. 1. HEB. I. 10 11 13 9 3 13 7

SECTION II.

From what has been before said, the apostle infers the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation; which, in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him, for wise and important reasons; particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God. Heb. ii. 1, *to the end.*

HEB. ii. 1.

THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

HEB. ii. 1.

SOMETHING we have said in the former section concerning the supreme dignity of our blessed Redeemer. And now give me leave, before I proceed to other arguments which will naturally occur, to draw this obvious consequence from what I have already said: If he be so far superior to angels, *we ought therefore to yield extraordinary attention to the things which we have heard*[a] by his authority; *lest by any means we let* [*them*] *flow out* of our minds, and lose the impression they once made upon us. *For if the* Mosaic law, which was the *word spoken by angels*,[b] proclaiming it in the name and presence of Jehovah from Mount Sinai, *was stedfast, and* confirmed by such awful sanctions, that *every* instance of wilful *transgression and disobedience received, as its reward, a correspondent* and severe *vengeance; How shall we* have any room to hope that we shall *escape, neglecting so great* and glorious *a salvation* as that which the gospel sets before us? A salvation, *which having at its beginning been spoken by the Lord* of angels himself, *was confirmed to us by* the certain report of *them that heard* [*him*] preach it with his own lips: the blessed *God* himself *joining his* own divine and sacred *testimony* with theirs, *both by* enabling them to perform the most amazing *signs and wonders*,[c] *and various* incontestable *miracles, and* endowing them in a rich abundance, with *distributions of the Holy Spirit* in its extraordinary operations, imparted in different degrees to different persons, *according to his own* sovereign *will* and pleasure.

And by these wonderful operations the superiority of Christ to angels is farther illustrated; *for to angels*, even the most exalted of them, *he*, that is, God, *hath not subjected the world to come*,[d] nor ever intended that they should preside in the latest and best dis-

SECT. 2. HEB. II. 2 3 4 5

a *We have heard.*] Nothing can be more evidently weak than the argument drawn from hence, to prove that St. Paul was not the author of this *Epistle*, because it was not by hearing only that *he* received the *gospel*. It is to be considered, that he speaks in the name of all to whom he was writing, as well as his own, to render the instruction the more unexceptionable and the more forcible. Besides that to *hear any thing* signifies in general to be *instructed in it*.

b *Angels.*] See Dr. Whitby's admirable note on this text.

c *Signs and wonders.*] I think it is very needless to inquire curiously into the difference of each of these words, when it is usual by a Hebraism to express a great degree and variety of things of any kind, by heaping together a great many synonymous words.

d *To angels he hath not subjected, &c.*] Archbishop Tillotson thinks the meaning of this scripture is, that God did not empower the angels who delivered the law, to enforce it with clear and express promises of a future state, as Christ had enforced the gospel. (See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 136.) Dr. Barrow explains it of the Messiah making so great an alteration in the constitution of things, that it is represented by a *new heaven and a new earth*, (Isa. lxv. 17. *et sim.*) on which account it was called by the Jews, *the world to come*; a phrase which, it is observable, St. Paul only uses in this Epistle to the Hebrews, as being familiar to them. (Barrow's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 202.) Others have argued from this text, that angels were possessed of certain authority and power in the world before Christ came, of which they were divested upon his appearance; and of those who have agreed in this general explication, some (as Mr. Pierce) have referred the presidence of angels to their having the guardianship of particular countries, and others, to some particular influences of their counsels in projecting the schemes which preceded the display of the gospel. But it seems to me, that the simplest, plainest, and most unexceptionable sense is this, "That God "had appointed his Son to preside in the last great dispensation; "which he elsewhere expresses, by saying, *He has united all things* "*under him, as their* common *Head*, Eph. i. 10."—and this certainly is an honour to which no angel can pretend. Dr. Burnet's explication of this, as referring to the new heavens and earth, which he supposes shall succeed the conflagration in which Christ is to reign, (which he also thinks referred to, Isa. ix. 6.) is so very precarious and improbable an interpretation, that I think it is hardly worth mentioning. Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*, Vol. II. p. 392.

SECT. 2. HEB. II.

pensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth, but to heaven, *concerning which we* now *speak*, as it is the great business of the author's life to promote its interests. *But a certain* [*writer*,][e] well known, I am persuaded, to you Hebrews, *somewhere bears his testimony, saying*, (Psal. viii. 4.) O Lord, *what is man, that thou rememberest him, or the son of man, that thou regardest him!* After which he goes on
7 in words that have a most remarkable correspondence to the character and circumstances of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in his humbled and in his exalted state; for he adds, speaking of the Son of man, *Thou hast made him* but *a little lower than the angels; with glory and honour hast thou crowned him, and hast constituted him* [*Lord*] *over* all *the* visible
8 *works of thine hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.* This may be interpreted in the widest extent; *for in putting all things under him, nothing was left out,* [*which was*] *not* represented as *reduced to subjection to him. But now we do not as yet see* that *all things* are *put under him*, to whom we refer these words; but on the contrary,
9 a great part of the world is as yet unacquainted with him and his authority. *Nevertheless*, we see what we may well look upon as an earnest and security of it; for *we see Jesus, who*, for the few years he dwelt upon earth, *was made* in human form and state *a little lower than the angels* of God, over whom he had an original right, as their Maker, to preside, exalted to the most conspicuous dignity in the celestial world: we see him, who was thus humbled *for the suffering of death*,[f] that he might be capable of it, and *that by the grace of God* to sinful creatures, *he might taste* the bitterness of *death for every man*, who would obediently accept of life through him, now *crowned with* a *glory and honour* far superior to what Adam had in the day in which he was created.

10 Such hath been the conduct of God in this great affair of our redemption. And the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent, in proportion to the degree in which it is examined. *For* though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah, as a scheme conducive to the divine glory, *it* well *became him*[g] *for whom* [*are*] *all things, and by whom* [*are*] *all things*, the glorious Being who is the first Cause and last End of all, *in* pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of *conducting many* whom he is pleased to adopt as his *sons*, *to* the possession of that inheritance of *glory* he has intended for them, *to make* and constitute Jesus his first-begotten and best-beloved Son, *the Leader* and Prince *of their salvation;* and to make him *perfect* or completely fit for the full execution of his office, *by* a long train of various and extreme *sufferings*, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it.

11 *Now*, in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, *the* great *Sanctifier*, who engages and consecrates men to the service of God, *and they who are sanctified*, that is, consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance, [*are*] *all of one* family; all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense the seed of Abraham; *for which cause he is not ashamed to*
12 *call them* whom he thus redeems and presents to divine favour, his *brethren; Saying*, (Psal. xxii. 22, 26.) in the person of David, when representing the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, *I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of* the assembly of thy people, the great assembly, which, by way of eminence, shall be called *the church*,
13 *will I praise thee*, for thy gracious interposition in my favour. *And again*, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties as others were, he says in a psalm which represents his triumph over his enemies, *I will trust in him*, as other good men have in all ages done; *and again*, elsewhere in the person of Isaiah, (Isa. vii. 18.) *Behold, I and the children which* my *God hath given me*, are for signs and for
14 wonders. *Seeing then* those whom he represents in one place and another as *the children* of the same family with himself, *are partakers of* human *flesh and blood, he himself in like manner participated of them*, and assumed all their sinless infirmities, *that* thereby becoming capable of those sufferings to which, without such a union with flesh, he could not have been obnoxious, *he might, by* his own voluntary and meritorious *death*, abolish and *depose him*,[h] *who* by divine permission *had the empire of death*,[i] and led it in his train, when it made its first invasion on mankind, *that is, the devil*, the great artificer of mischief and destruction: at the beginning the murderer of the human race, who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality which is his work, and who may often by God's righteous permission be the executioner of it. But Christ, the great Prince of mercy *and* life,

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that* is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, *are* all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:

e *A certain* [*writer*] *bears his testimony.*] It has been matter of much debate among critics, whether these words are to be considered as, in their original intent, a prophecy of the Messiah, or a description of the dignity and glory of human nature, to which the apostle alludes; making use of David's language to clothe his own ideas, though by an application very different from his design. It seems evident to me, that there is nothing in the viiith Psalm by which, independent upon the apostle's authority, it could be known to belong to the Messiah. On the whole, therefore, I prefer the latter opinion, though I readily confess, that if the former could be proved, it would establish a direct argument in words, which must otherwise be only understood as an allusion; but the grand truth to which they refer, the exaltation of Christ to supreme dignity, was so expressly asserted by himself, (Matt. xxviii. 18.) and was so fundamental a doctrine, and so universally received in the christian church, that it did not seem to stand in need of such an additional proof.

f *For the suffering of death.*] These words may seem *ambiguous*, and capable of being referred either to the preceding or following clause. It is indeed true, that Christ was crowned as a reward for his suffering death, as the apostle expressly teaches. (Phil. ii. 8, 9.) But the concluding words of the verse, which have plainly a connexion with these, determine them to the former sense.

g *It became him.*] This seems to signify, not only that the course he took was well worthy of God, but that in order to act worthy of himself, it was expedient he should take this method.

h *Depose him.*] The original word, καταργησῃ, properly signifies to *deprive of all power*, Rom. vi. 6. When applied to the law, it signifies, *abolition*. To suppose, with Archbishop Tillotson, that it chiefly means, that Christ might give mankind the hope of immortality, when they actually saw one risen from the dead, and ascending to heaven, is, I think, sinking the interpretation a great deal too low.

i *The empire of death.*] Some have inferred from hence, that *the devil is the executioner* of the sentence of death both on good and bad men. But I think the sense in the paraphrase less obnoxious and precarious.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him *the nature of* angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people:

18 For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

graciously interposed, that he might *deliver those* his miserable captives, *who through fear of death were*, or justly might have been, *all their life-time obnoxious to bondage*; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery: whereas now changing their Lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life. SECT 2. HEB. II.

We the sinful children of Adam, though the heirs of death, are thus delivered by him; 16 but not the infernal powers, who were the first authors of their seduction; *for truly he took not hold of the angels* to save them from plunging into the abyss of misery; *but he took hold of the seed of Abraham*, and hath made a gracious provision for the salvation of all who shall by true faith approve themselves the genuine children of that holy patriarch. *From whence*, and in consequence of which design, *it behoved him to be made* 17 *in all things like unto* those whom he condescends to call [*his*] *brethren, that so he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest*,[k] *in things* [*relating*] *to God, that he might* in the most effectual manner *make atonement for the sins of the people*; which he could not have done if he had not assumed our nature. But now, in consequence of 18 that, he has not only provided himself with something to offer, but has, by the experience of our infirmities, contracted that peculiar kind of compassion, which nothing else can teach; *and in that he hath himself suffered, being tempted* and tried with such a variety of assaults and sorrows, *he can*, in the most ready and endearing, as well as effectual manner, *help those that are tempted*, and are making their way through those scenes of difficulty which he passed through with such fortitude and honour.

IMPROVEMENT.

ETERNAL praise to our compassionate High-Priest, who put on our infirmities that he might know how to pity Ver. 18 and relieve them! Eternal praise to him, by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, that he has concerted the merciful scheme of bringing many sons unto glory, in a manner so well worthy of his divine perfections, 10 and so full of instruction and comfort to us; appointing his own Son the Captain of our salvation, and making him perfect through sufferings! Let us daily reflect upon it with pleasure and gratitude, that he is not ashamed to call 11 us his brethren, though so highly exalted above the angels of God; and that he took not hold of the superior 16 nature of angels which was sunk into apostasy, guilt, and ruin, but took hold on the seed of Abraham. How venerable, as well as amiable, is that condescension with which he made himself a little lower than the angels, that by the grace of God which was to owe its highest honours to his cross, he might taste death for every man! He hath effected his merciful purpose: by death he hath deposed and abolished the tyrannical prince of death, that is, 9 the devil, and delivered from the fears of death those who, had they known and considered their real circumstances, might have been continually in bondage to it.

We see our great enemy deposed; we see life and immortality brought to light by his gospel: let us see it with gratitude and pleasure. And let us learn from all, if we would not charge ourselves with the most inexcusable guilt, and the basest ingratitude, if we would not plunge ourselves into the lowest gulf of perdition, *not to neglect so great a salvation*. Let the doom which the law of Moses passed upon the presumptuous transgressor, deter us; and let 3, 2 the grace of the gospel allure and invite us to attend to the *salvation spoken by the Lord*, and to *take the most* 1 *earnest heed* to it, *lest we let slip* that golden opportunity, which, if neglected, will never return.

SECTION III.

The apostle farther takes occasion to manifest Christ, as superior to Moses, the great legislator of the Jews; and begins to caution them, from the sentence passed on the rebels against the authority of Moses, of the danger of despising the gospel-promises. Heb. iii. 1—13.

HEB. iii. 1.

HEB. iii. 1.
WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

I HAVE just pointed out to you the Son of God, under the endearing character of a compassionate and faithful High-Priest. And *therefore* suffer me to address you, my dear and *holy brethren*, whom he hath brought near to God, and graciously made *partakers of the heavenly calling*,[a] by which he animates his people to aspire to the noblest views and pursuits; and let me entreat you frequently to direct your eyes and hearts to him: *attentively regard* this gracious Saviour, who hath condescended to become *the Apostle* of 1 God to us, that he might bring us the messages of his will, *and* who is also constituted the *High-Priest of our profession*,[b] by whom our guilt is expiated, and our happiness secured, even *Christ Jesus*, so well known to us under this great and honourable character. Let that illustrious Person be daily familiar to your minds, even he *who was faithful to* 2 *him that appointed him* to his office, *as Moses* [*was*] *also* faithful *for all his house*; according to that testimony with which God himself was pleased to honour him. (Numb. xii. 7.) But I design not by applying these words, to insinuate, that there is room for a complete comparison between them. On the contrary, it is very apparent, that as *for* him 3 SECT. 3. HEB. III.

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house

3 For this *man* was count-

k *Faithful High-Priest.*] Mr. Fleming thinks πιστος signifies the same as αξιοπιστος, one *worthy of our trust* and confidence; but the former implies the latter. Fleming's *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 266.

a *Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.*] Mr. Pierce thinks, when they are called *holy brethren* by the apostle, it is in allusion to what was said of their *being sanctified*, chap. ii. 11. that when he speaks of their *calling*, he means their being *called his brethren*; and that when he styles them *partakers of this calling*, it is to intimate that they do not *engross* it. But all these interpretations seem to me more refined than solid. The *calling* generally signifies *the call* that is given us by the gospel to pursue immortality and glory.

b *Apostle and High-Priest.*] Both are properly mentioned, as the author was to show that, as an *Apostle*, Christ was superior to Moses; and as an *High-Priest*, to Aaron. He is called an *Apostle* as sent from *God* with full commission for the important affair he came to transact. That *apostle* signifies *messenger*, see many places in the New Testament, cited, § 162. note e, p. 325.

SECT. 3. HEB. III.

of whom I now speak, *he was esteemed worthy of* far *more honour than Moses,*[c] *in proportion to the degree in which the builder of a house*[d] *hath more honour than the house* itself. For Christ laid the plan of the Mosaic dispensation, and Moses who was himself his creature, evidently acted as his delegate in the revelation which he made to the people of Israel; so that whatever excellences that dispensation can boast, they reflect an honour ultimately on the Divine Person from whom he received it. *For every house hath some builder,*[e] by whom its several parts were modelled, raised, and disposed, and every thing well adjusted in it displays the skill of its Architect and Disposer; *now he who built* and adjusted *all things* [*is*] *God,* whose works of creation and providence are worthy their great Author, and proclaim that power, wisdom, and goodness, which set him infinitely above the most excellent of creatures.

ed worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house *is* builded by some man; but he that built all things *is* God.

And that Christ is incomparably more to be honoured than Moses, appears even from this consideration, though inferior to the former, that *Moses* [*was*] *indeed faithful in all his house, as a servant,* who was appointed to act in an inferior economy, *for a testimony of things afterwards to be mentioned;* the evangelical design of which we shall in some measure discuss in the following parts of this Epistle, according to their relation and connexion. *But Christ* was faithful in a far superior character, even *as a Son in his own house,*[f] that is, over the church, in which as Heir of all things, he hath not only a trust and office, but also a property, and which is appointed for him to inhabit and preside over; *whose house,* his chosen and delightful habitation, *we* christians now *are, if we* strenuously *maintain* [*our*] *freedom of profession,*[g] *and boasting of hope, stedfast unto the end;* if having so glorious an hope set before us, in which we may justly boast as our greatest honour and happiness, we resolutely adhere to it, and permit nothing to wrest it out of our hands.

5 And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken of after:

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house: whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

And to this I am labouring to animate you, by the representation I have given of the dignity and glory of our blessed Saviour. *Therefore, as the Holy Ghost saith,* in a psalm which he dictated to David, (Psal. xcv. 7.) *To-day if ye will* ever *hear his voice* at all, *Harden not your hearts* any longer; lest you bring destruction upon yourselves, *as* your predecessors did, *in the* bitter *provocation* which they presumed to offer me *in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your* unbelieving *fathers tempted me,* and *proved me,* as if they would have made an experiment how much it was possible for me to bear; *and* this, though they *saw my works* in such a variety of wonders, as passed in the wilderness in the course of *forty* succeeding *years. Therefore I was angry with that* perverse *generation, and said, They always* do and will *err in* [*their*] *hearts,* through their own obstinacy and folly, *and they have not known my ways,* nor paid any regard to the clearest discoveries of my will and design; *So* that after repeated abuses of my patience and long-suffering, *I sware in my wrath,* and solemnly declared by my own holy and majestic name, *that they should never enter into my rest;*[h] but that the carcasses of all that came adult out of Egypt, shall fall in the wilderness, and that generation of men be totally consumed. How awful a determination, after all the hopes which such signal deliverances had concurred to inspire! *See to it* therefore, *brethren, lest there ever be in any of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from* him who still wears the same omnipotent terrors, and continues, and will ever continue, *the living* and true *God,* to whom you profess so great a regard, and from whom you will indeed revolt, if you give up the religion of Christ Jesus his Son. You are surrounded with many temptations to do this; *but exhort one another daily,* while you are under this dispensation of grace, *whilst it is called to-day,*[i] and the deserved judgments of God are suspended, *that no one of you may,* by insensible degrees and artful insinuations, *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,* and its fallacious advances on the mind; whereby if you are not resolutely on your guard, you may be seduced finally to forfeit the invaluable blessings which are so freely offered, and which have so long been set before you.

7 Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works, forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in *their* hearts; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WE are partakers of this heavenly calling, and to us are the messages of mercy addressed: let us therefore hear with reverence and obedience the admonitions of the word of God. Let us behold with veneration and delight,

c *More honour than Moses.*] As it was their attachment to the Mosaic law, and the writings of the Old Testament, that hindered so many Jews from embracing christianity, it is with the utmost propriety of address that the apostle here undertakes to show that Christ was superior to Moses; and, by a necessary consequence, to the rest of the prophets and sacred authors, whom they acknowledged to be inferior to this *great* Prophet.

d *Builder of a house.*] Both Mr. Pyle and Dr. Whitby would render κατασκευαζω not, to *build,* but, to *order,* or *govern,* as the word *house* signifies not a building, but a *family.*

e *Hath some builder.*] So I think the words κατασκευασζέλει υπο τινος may be rendered, the word *man* not being in the original, nor here being properly inserted. Dr. Calamy has argued from hence the supreme *deity* of Christ, in consequence of his being the Creator of all things, (Calamy, *On Trin.* p. 44.) But Mr. Pierce pleads, that if it had been the intent of the apostle here to assert that Christ was the *Creator* of all things, it would have been sufficient to have stopped here, and that what follows would sink the argument lower; therefore he would translate it as the vulgar Latin does, *The builder of the house,* that is, the head and founder of the family, *has the greatest honour of any person in the house;* and by consequence they must have the *next* honour who are most *nearly* related to him. So Christ, who is his Son, must have greater honour than Moses, who was no more than a servant.

f *In his own house.*] Mr. Pierce brings many arguments to prove it should be, *in his house,* that is, God's, in which sense the very words are used and translated *before;* but as Christ is appointed the *Heir of all things,* the paraphrase cannot, I think, be contested. Compare Heb. x. 21.

g *Our freedom of profession.*] Some would render it, *if we hold fast the confidence, even the rejoicing of our hope, firm unto the end,* supposing it to refer to that confession which they made at their *baptism* with solemnity and joy.

h *My rest.*] Canaan is so called, as they there reposed themselves after the labours of a long war, as well as the fatigues of a tedious march; and perhaps as entering upon a course of stated worship, it might appear as a kind of sabbath-keeping.

i *Whilst it is called to-day.*] L'Enfant thinks this refers to that *patience* which God still exercises towards a nation soon to be overwhelmed with his judgments.

the Son of God becoming the Messenger of his Father's love, and the High-Priest of our christian profession. He is the great Prophet too, whom God hath raised up unto us like Moses, in many respects; but O how far superior to him! More completely faithful to him who hath appointed him; faithful as a son in his own house. SECT. 3.

The world is an edifice raised by Christ: the church is the house in which he delights to reside. Let both be considered in this important view. The divine perfections of the great Architect are indeed illustriously displayed in the construction and constitution of this visible world. Does the meanest house or cottage declare itself to be the work of some intelligent agent? And does it not much more evidently appear, that this commodious and magnificent structure must have been planned and reared by proportionable wisdom, grandeur, and power? HEB. III. Ver. 4

It is the work of Christ; and let it often be devoutly surveyed and contemplated in this view; and from thence let us infer his divine glories, and read in them his matchless condescensions. Let us learn with how much security and delight we may commit our immortal souls to him who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and shall endure the same when they shall be dissolved and perish. Let us view him also as the Lord of the church; and consider the fabric of grace as raised to his honour; that in that as his temple, every one might speak of his glory; and let all the churches, and every member of each, make it their faithful care to honour him more and more.

In this view may we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope stedfast unto the end, and never suffer any 6
one to take our crown, or terrify or allure us from that faithful subjection of soul to Christ, which his perfections
and our obligations to him concur to demand. Who of us can say he is beyond all danger of being ensnared by an
evil heart of unbelief, of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Let us then, in compliance with so salutary 12
and necessary an exhortation, redouble our guard; let us watch over ourselves and each other; exhorting one another 13
daily, while it is called to-day, and charging our souls by the awful authority of the living God, that after having
approached so near him, that after having so solemnly professed to devote ourselves to him, nothing may ever pre-
vail upon us deliberately and wickedly to depart from him.

SECTION IV.

The apostle goes on to repeat the caution he had given against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression which he shows to refer to something much nobler than that rest which the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages. Heb. iii. 14.—iv. 11.

Heb. iii. 14.

Heb. iii. 14.
FOR we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.

15 While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses:

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was* it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb. iv. 1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise be-

I GIVE you such cautions to guard against the deceitfulness of sin, and an evil heart of unbelief, because I know your highest interests are concerned; *for we are made partakers* of the grace and mercy *of Christ*, and admitted by him into the family of God, *if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence* in him, as our great Saviour, *stedfast unto the end* of our lives, whatever difficulties and oppositions may arise. Let us therefore be strenuous and incessant in this care; *forasmuch as it is said*,[a] in the passage I have quoted above, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as* they did *in the provocation* which was offered to God in the wilderness. *For some* of them *who heard* so many divine messages solemnly declared, and the law spoken by the very mouth of God himself from mount Sinai, *provoked* [*him*] to indignation; *but not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses*:[b] there was a remnant then,[c] as there now is, of believing and obedient souls, to whom the promise of God shall be accomplished. *And by whom was he provoked* by a long succession of infidelity and folly for *forty years?* [*was it*] *not with those who* well deserved that displeasure? With those who *sinned* against him by suspecting his presence with them, after so many amazing and unparalleled demonstrations of it; *whose carcasses*, according to his awful prediction, *fell in the wilderness* during those years of wandering to which they were justly doomed? *And* was there any thing in this that looks like a breach of promise on the part of the blessed God? Far from it,—*To whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but unto those who were* so obstinate and *disobedient*, as entirely to forfeit all claim to his promise and favour? *And* when we come to consider the cause of that disobedience, *we see* that it was owing to a secret infidelity with regard to the divine power and goodness, either to preserve them in the wilderness, or conduct them into Canaan. So that I may say *they could not* possibly *enter* into the promised rest, *because of unbelief:* that was upon the whole the evil that destroyed them. *Let us therefore* improve so awful a dispensation of Providence to our own instruction, and *fear*,[d] *lest a promise being* now *left* [*unto us*] *of entering into his* most happy and SECT. 4. HEB. III. 15 16 17 18 19 HEB. IV 1

a *Forasmuch as it is said.*] The words εν τω λεγεσθαι are something ambiguous, and may either signify, *forasmuch as it is said*, or, *while it is said*; and if the latter version be preferred, perhaps this 15th verse may be connected with the 13th. *Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, while it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice:* as if he had said, The matter is of so much importance, that it is not to be neglected so much as for a *single day*, lest the proper season should be slipt. But as αχρις, a different phrase, was used for *while* in the 13th verse, I judge the rendering I have given most probable, and ventured it, in order to avoid an inconvenient length, by dividing the section as I have here done.

b *But not all they who came out of Egypt.*] Mr. Pyle gives it a different and remarkable interpretation, making the former part of the verse an interrogation, *Who were they that, when they heard*, that is, heard the report of the spies, (Numb. xiv.) *did provoke him? Were not they all that came out of Egypt?* And this he supposes is a distinct argument for perseverance, taken from the infectious nature, as well as pernicious consequences, of infidelity and apostasy. But had this been the sense, I think αχι would have been used instead of αλλ' ε, especially as by this means the correspondence with the 17th verse would have been more evident.

c *There was a remnant.*] Joshua, Caleb, the women and children, and some think, some of the Levites, were not included in this sentence. Bishop Fell mentions this as an intimation, that all shall not apostatize in the worst times.

d *Let us therefore fear.*] The example, as has often been observed, is most suitable, being taken from their own ancestors, the evil being the same, namely, unbelief, the time resembling it just after the establishment of a new constitution, and the consequence the same, the exclusion from rest. The superior dignity of Christ above Moses, and the superior excellence of heaven above Canaan, greatly confirm the force of the argument. Pierce, on Heb. iii. 12. note n.

SECT. 4.

glorious *rest, any of us*[e] *should* even, at any time, so much as *seem* like *to come short* [*of it.*] *For we are made partakers of the good tidings*[f] of the promised rest, *as they also were. But the word* of promise *which they heard, did not profit them,* as it might otherwise have done, in matters of the highest importance, *not being* duly *mixed* and attempered *with faith in them that heard* [*it.*] *For we* cordially *believing*[g] the gospel, and faithfully retaining it, are so secure of final happiness, that it may with some propriety be said, we *have* already *entered into rest; as he said,* in the fore-cited text, *So I sware in my wrath they should not enter into my rest. And* this may lead us farther to reflect on what is elsewhere said concerning *his works,* as they *were finished from the foundation of the world.*[h] *For* after Moses had given us an account of the creation, *he somewhere saith concerning the seventh* [*day*] *thus,* (Gen. ii. 2; Exod. xxxi. 17.) *And God rested the seventh day from all his works. And in this* [*place*] which we have quoted *again* he saith, [*I have sworn*] *they shall not enter into my rest.* Now this certainly implies, that when these words were written, there was a rest of God, from which these sinners should be excluded, though they actually dwelt in the land of Canaan, secure under the protection of David, their victorious monarch, and enjoyed the repose of God's sabbath there.

HEB. IV.

Seeing then it remaineth that some must enter into it, which is spoken of in this scripture as a certain thing, *and they to whom the good tidings* of rest *were at first declared did not enter because of* their *unbelief,* which you know was threatened with such punishment; *He again determineth a certain day,* marked out within certain limits and boundaries, in reference to which he urges their immediate attention and obedience to the manifestation of the divine will, *saying, in* that well known composition of *David,* of which we have just been speaking, *This day,* and that *after so long a time* as had passed after the rest of God at the creation mentioned above, *as it is said, This day, if ye will hear his voice* at all, *harden not your hearts. Now* it is certain, as I hinted above, the rest here referred to is not, and cannot be, interpreted of the land of Canaan; for *if Joshua,*[i] who introduced them thither, and settled them there, *had given them* the great and peaceful *rest* referred to, *he would not* so long *after that* settlement *have spoken,* as you see in the days of David he does, *concerning another day* of trial, and another day of rest into which it was a supposable case that they might not enter. *Therefore* it is very evident, that *there remaineth a rest*[k] *for the people of God;* which, when we consider it in reference to that sabbatical rest of which we have been speaking, may properly be called the celebration of a sabbath, which, blessed be God, will be eternal. It may be thus called with happy propriety, *for he who hath entered into* this, *his* final and complete *rest,* of which we now speak, *hath also himself* entirely *ceased from* all the labours and fatigues of *his works, as God* rested *from his own* on that first seventh day, which, in commemoration of it, was appointed sacred to future ages. *Let us therefore labour* with all possible diligence and constancy, *to enter into that* important and eternal *rest, that no one may* finally *fall* into ruin *by the same example of disobedience,* which hath undone so many thousands already, and proved so fatal to Israel, in the instance I have been handling at large.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

ing left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it.*

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

IMPROVEMENT.

HEB. III.

WHAT can be so desirable as to partake of Christ, and all the saving benefits, which believers receive in and by him, by virtue of that relation to which he condescends to admit them? Let us seek this happiness by persevering faith, and holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; bearing still in our minds the melancholy example of the children of Israel, who though by such wonderful interpositions led out of Egypt, were doomed by the divine vengeance to die in the wilderness for their unbelief. That obstructed their entrance into Canaan: nor can we ever hope to partake of the land of promise above, if we resign that faith which is the spring of every other grace that is necessary to prepare us for it.

IV.

Let us take the alarm, and exercise that pious fear which so well consists with a cheerful hope in God, and committing our souls to his fatherly care. We hear the word of salvation; let us pray that it may profit us; and for that purpose, let us be often realizing to our minds its divine authority, and those invisible objects which it opens upon us. It speaks of a rest remaining for the people of God; and oh, how much nobler a rest than that of Canaan. Our true Joshua leads us on, as the Captain of our salvation. He conquers all our spiritual enemies by his invincible word, and will divide us an inheritance, an everlasting inheritance there, if we are faithful to the death. To-day, after so long a time, are we still called to pursue it: let us therefore give diligence, that we may enter: and let those sabbaths, which are instituted in kind commemoration of God's having rested on the seventh day from his labours, and which are intended in some degree to anticipate the heavenly rest, be improved for this valuable purpose. So shall we ere long rest from our works, as God did from his, and after the labours of these few mortal

1 3 7 8 9 10

e *Any of us.*] Some copies read ημων, *us,* instead of υμων, *you;* and their authority is evidently confirmed by the connexion. See Dr. Mills, *in loc.*

f *Partakers of the good tidings.*] So I chuse to render the word ευηγγελισμενοι. For, that we have the gospel (taking it for the message by Christ) at least as well as these people had in the wilderness, and indeed a great deal more plainly, is so evident, that it may seem but a very low sense of the words, and not worthy the wisdom and gravity of the apostle to insert it.

g *We believing have entered, &c.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *We believing enter into rest,* that is, Faith is the way by which men must expect to enter into whatever rest God promises in one age or another; and so it appears necessary that the *word* should be mixed with it. This, it must be acknowledged, is a very probable and weighty sense.

h *His works finished from the foundation, &c.*] Mr. Pierce thinks the apostle intends to lay in an answer to an objection which might arise against the caution given from their being entered into *rest* already, that is, into the land of Canaan, where they celebrated the *sabbath.* He therefore shows that the words could neither extend to the one or the other of these rests.

i *If Joshua.*] So this proper name should be rendered; for Ιησους, *Jesus,* is only the Greek manner of expressing *Joshua.*

k *Remaineth a rest.*] He here changes the word κατπαυσις for σαββατισμος, to signify its being *entire* and *perfect,* and like a *sabbath.*

days, shall enjoy immortal tranquillity and repose: we shall pass a perpetual sabbath in those elevations of pure devotion, which the sublimest moments of our most sacred and happy days here can teach us but imperfectly to conceive. SECT. 4.

SECTION V.

The apostle enforces the caution he had before given, by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ, as our High-Priest; of whose divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises farther illustrations of so important a topic. Heb. iv. 12, *to the end;* v. 1—14.

HEB. iv. 12.

Heb. iv. 12.
FOR the word of God *is* quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

HAVING warned you against the fatal example of unbelief, which we see in God's Israel of old, let me entreat you to dwell upon it, in your most serious and attentive reflections. *For the word of God,*[a] which gives you this account, as well as that glorious Person his essential Word, by whom he manifested himself to Israel in the wilderness, [*is*] still *living and efficacious,*[b] *and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing,* in the acutest manner that can be imagined, *even to the separating between the soul and spirit,* the respective principles of animal and rational life, and to the dividing the remotest *and* most closely connected parts *of* the body; so that it reaches to *the joints and* even to *the marrow,*[c] contained in the bones. *And,* to speak in less figurative terms, as he [*is*] *an exact Discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart,* his word meets with the most secret purpose, and exerts a divine authority, in controlling irregularities and disorders which no human eye can penetrate. *And* it may well be supposed that it should be so; for *there is no creature, which is not* apparent and *manifested in his presence; but all things* [*are*] *naked, and laid bare*[d] *before the eyes of him to whom we are to give an account.* He discerns them as the inwards of sacrificed animals are discerned, when their bodies are completely laid open, and therefore it will be altogether in vain to attempt a disguise before him. SECT. 5. HEB. IV. 12 13

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Now, on this consideration, and because the all-seeing God, who is to be our final Judge, has displayed his mercy in directing our eyes to a Saviour, by whose mediation we are to be delivered from the fierceness of his deserved vengeance; let us, I say, by such powerful considerations, be awakened to have recourse to him, and encouraged to confide in him, and to adhere to his cause amidst all opposition. *Having therefore a great High-Priest, who hath passed* through the vail, and entered *into the heavens,* that he might there intercede with God for us, even *Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast* [*our*] *profession* of faith in him, and never suffer the most violent attack to wrest it from us. *For we have not an high-priest incapable of sympathizing with our infirmities, but* on the contrary, [*one who*] *has* a most tender feeling of them, having *been* himself *tried in every respect, in like manner* [*with us, yet*] *without* any degree of *sin,* or any approach toward it, from which, amidst his severest trials, he remained perfectly free. *Let us, therefore,* humbly confiding in his intercession, *approach with freedom of speech to the throne of grace,* to present our petitions, *that we may receive* that *mercy* which he hath been appointed to purchase, *and* may *find grace* from that throne *for our seasonable assistance,* according to our respective necessities. 14 15 16

14 Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

15 For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb. v. 1. For every high-priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way: for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

HEB. V.

I speak of Christ under the character of the great High-Priest with evident propriety, to which I hope you will attend; *for every high-priest*[e] *taken from among men,* as those of the Mosaic ritual are, *is constituted* or chosen *for* the benefit of *men,* and set *over things which relate to* the service and honour of *God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins* in an acceptable manner. *Being able to proportion his compassion*[f] *to those that are ignorant, and wandering* from the exact paths of God's commandments, for whom alone, you know, sin-offerings are provided; *because he himself also is incident to infirmity. And for this reason, it is necessary that he should offer* an appointed expiatory sacrifice *for sins on his own account, as well as for the people,* and should make way for their sin-offering by the presentation of his own. 1 2 3

And this is so awful an *office,* that *no man* who has any regard to duty or safety, *taketh* it *to himself; but he* only wears it *who is called of God* for that purpose, *as Aaron* [*was.*] 4

a *The word of God.*] It is greatly debated among commentators, whether this is to be understood of Christ, or of the gospel and scripture revelation. I have endeavoured to give a hint of both senses in the paraphrase; but esteeming the latter preferable, have chiefly pointed that out; and I believe any one versed in the energy of scripture will think it a very suitable and natural sense.

b *Living and efficacious.*] Mr. Pierce thinks there is an allusion here to the lightning by which they fell in the wilderness, whom he had so often and so long been speaking of.

c *Soul and spirit, joints and marrow.*] There seems in this text an evident reference to the doctrine of two principles, called *soul* and *spirit,* as the seats of rational and sensitive life; *to distinguish* these seems to be spoken of as an instance of the greatest penetration. Some have explained it as if he had said, He is able at pleasure to give a mortal wound; as when the marrow is separated from the joints, or the soul from the spirit, death ensues. But I rather think the meaning of the latter clause is, He can divide the joints and divide the marrow, that is, enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce perhaps some sentiment which it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret as well as open wickedness.

d *Naked, and laid bare.*] It has been well observed, that these two words contain a graceful allusion to the custom in sacrificing, of flaying off the skin from the victim, and cutting it open, whereby all the vitals and inwards are exposed to full view; as γυμνος signifies, *what had no cover,* and τετραχηλισμενος, *what had no concealment within.* See Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 251.

e *Every high-priest.*] All the following discourse is intended to moderate their regards for the Levitical priesthood, and to give them more exalted notions of Christ, that they might be more resolute in adhering to him.

f *Proportion his compassion.*] So the word μετριοπαθειν properly signifies. The *ignorant and erroneous* is here put, by a usual figure, for those who *wander* or *sin through ignorance;* the case in which *priests,* appointed by *men,* were to offer sacrifice for them.

SECT. 5. HEB. V.

So Christ also, we well know, *did not glorify himself to be made an High-Priest*[g], he did not aspire to, or seize upon, this exalted office without a proper call; *but he* raised him to this conspicuous dignity, *who said unto him,* in the place quoted and pleaded above, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*[h] *As also in another* [*place*] which it will be proper to take very particular notice of, (Psal. cx. 4.) *He saith* to him whom he had called to sit on his right hand, *Thou* [*art*] *a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec.*

Such a priest shall we presently see our great Redeemer to have been, even that compassionate Saviour, *who in the days of his flesh,* and while he sojourned here amidst the infirmities and calamities to which human nature is obnoxious, being assaulted with the utmost violence by the powers of darkness, *offered* repeated *prayers and supplications,* which were attended *with* humble prostrations, *a strong cry and* flowing *tears, to him who was able to save him from death: and* his supplications were not in vain; for though his heavenly Father did not think fit to exert that power in his total deliverance; yet *he was heard in* being delivered from *that which he* particularly *feared,*[i] and which threw him into such an agony in the garden, that he sweat drops of blood. It is indeed a wonderful, but at the same time a very instructive, dispensation, and therefore worthy of our deep consideration and reflection: that *though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience*[k] *by the things which he suffered,* and was trained up for more eminent services, by a series of painful discipline. *And being* thus *consecrated* to God[l] by his own blood, in virtue of which he was installed in his priestly office, *he became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;* to all that practically own his authority, as well as profess a dependence on his grace; being, as we observed before, *Called* and denominated *of God an High-Priest according to the order of Melchisedec: Concerning whom,* by the way, it is necessary that before we dismiss this argument, *we speak, having much discourse, and* some of it perhaps *hard to be understood;* not so much from the difficulty of the thing itself, as *because you are* slow and *sluggish of hearing,* and your minds are not awakened to that attention to these things, which might reasonably be expected from you: and especially as you are much prejudiced against every thing which may seem to lessen the glory of the Levitical priesthood: *For* indeed, *whereas you ought for the time* that you have been under the instructions of the gospel, to have been qualified *to be teachers* of others, you are so attached to Jewish ceremonies and forms, that *ye have need again that one should* lead you back as it were to some of the first principles of religion, relating to the ends and purposes of Christ's death, and *teach you what* [*are*] *the* first initial *elements of the divine oracles;* so that you seem to be in a state of infancy as to these things, *and are become persons who have need of milk, and not of strong food,* such as suits a manly age and robust constitution. *For every one who partaketh of milk,* and subsists on that, without being able to digest strong food, [*is*] to be considered as *unskilful in the word of righteousness,*[m] that is, in the gospel, which directs us in the true way of justification by the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer; *for he is* yet but *an infant,* and a compassionate regard must be paid to him under this view, in hope that he may hereafter attain to a superior stature and more vigorous age. *But strong food belongs to full-grown men, who, by* long use and *habit, have* [*their*] *senses exercised,* so as to be able readily *to distinguish* between *both good and evil;* which if they cannot, there may indeed be danger of being imposed upon by that which would be unwholesome to their souls; though administered under the pretence of being fit to nourish them, and adapted to persons of most eminent attainments.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High-Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place,* Thou *art* a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered:

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God, an High-Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk, *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

IMPROVEMENT.

HEB. IV. 12, 13

MAY we all experience more of the efficacy of the divine word upon our hearts. May we all be more and more thoughtful of the account we are to give up of ourselves to God; and of that perfect discerning which he has, not only of our actions, but the secrets of our hearts; that we may never go about to conceal any thing from him, before whom all things are naked and open.

14 When we consider how many evils this all-penetrating eye hath discerned there, let it teach us to rejoice in that compassionate High-Priest, who hath undertaken our cause; which could never succeed in any other hand. And

g *Did not glorify himself, &c.*] He did not assume the *mediatorial* office without a divine authority, nor affect to appear before his time in the pomp and splendour of it.

h *This day have I begotten thee.*] This will by no means prove he was not a *High-Priest* before his *resurrection* from the dead: and indeed if it signifies that his priesthood is to be dated only from the day of his *resurrection,* not to mention the other absurdities of that supposition, it would, contrary to the judgment of those who bring it in this view, prove that Christ was a Priest while he was *upon earth,* that is, during the period between his resurrection and ascension.

i From *that which he* particularly *feared.*] So I chose to render and explain the words; though Bishop Fell and some others, taking ευλαβειαν for a *religious reverence of God,* (compare chap. xii. 28.) interpret it, as if it had been said, that *his piety* rendered his prayer acceptable. Dr. Whitby has said so much to confute this sense, and establish the rendering in the paraphrase, that I need not add more, but refer to the note on Luke xxii. 42. (p. 369. note h,) for a further illustration of the general interpretation here given to this text.

k *Learned obedience.*] He found he must suffer, and by one degree of suffering was better fitted for another. As Christ's human soul advanced gradually in knowledge, so also in the perfection of virtue, though always free from any defilement of sin; and his patient and cheerful submission was improved by every trial.—But Dr. Whitby would render it, he *taught obedience* to others by it.

l *Being made perfect.*] Archbishop Tillotson would translate it, *having attained the end of his race through sufferings,* that is, passed through sufferings in his way to consummate glory. (Compare John xix. 30; Luke xiii. 32; Heb. ii. 10.) But Dr. Jackson would render it, *being consecrated,* and is large in showing how Christ might be said to be consecrated to his priestly office by his passion. Compare chap. vii. 28; ii. 10. See Dr. Jackson's *Works, tom.* ii. book ix. p. 943, &c. and Dr. Owen, on chap. ii. 10.

m *Word of righteousness.*] This phrase Mr. Pierce explains by referring to the passages of the Old Testament which speak of *justification by faith,* quoted in the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians; which these Hebrews might seem to overlook. L'Enfant explains them much in the same sense.

let it embolden our petitions, in humble expectation that we shall not only receive that mercy, without which we perish, but grace to strengthen and help us in proportion to all our necessities. And when pressed with temptations, let it revive us to recollect, that he was in all points tempted as we are, so far as it was consistent with the perfect innocence which his office required, and which always gained new lustre by every attempt of the enemy to obscure and pollute it. SECT. 5. HEB. V.

Let inferior ministers in God's sanctuary learn to imitate him; and being themselves compassed with so many infirmities, have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. And under a sense of our common weakness, let us all be earnest in our applications to the throne of grace for help. If Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, poured out supplications with strong crying and tears, let none of us imagine we can be safe in the neglect of prayer, or that we are ever to despond in any circumstances which leave room for devout ejaculations to God. Still he lives, who is able to save from death, and who can also hear us in that which we fear. 2 7

Let us wisely prepare for afflictions. If Christ, though a Son, learned obedience by sufferings, how much more do we need the salutary lessons they teach. But let no sufferings prevent our adhering to him, who being consecrated by them to so high an office, is become the Author of salvation, of eternal salvation, to his faithful followers. Let it ever be remembered, that it is to them that obey him that this salvation is promised: may we be found in their number; and being entered as obedient disciples into his school, may we become proficients there; not such dull and forgetful scholars as need to be led back daily to the first elements and first principles of the divine oracles, not babes in Christ, and unskilful in the word of righteousness; but such as having our senses spiritually exercised to discern good and evil, may be capable of receiving and digesting strong meat, and may thereby grow stronger and stronger. 8 9 11, 12 14

SECTION VI.

The apostle declares his resolution of advancing to sublimer truths, without dwelling farther upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless. Heb. vi. 1—9.

Heb. vi. 1.

Heb. vi. 1. THEREFORE, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God.

WE have had reason to complain that too many of you are but in an infant state; yet I know that, as I intimated before, there are some among you who can bear stronger food than the state of babes will admit: to such I would show some regard. *Dismissing therefore* any farther *discourse on the* first *principles* [*of the doctrine*] *of Christ*,[a] *let us be carried on to perfection*, and pursue more eminent degrees of improvement in it, and more advanced and elevated knowledge; *not laying again the* first *foundation* of christianity, by inculcating the well known necessity *of repentance from dead works*, from the practices of those who are dead in sin, *and* whereby the soul is defiled, as the priests of God were by the touch of a dead body; nor insisting on the importance *of faith in* the one living and true God, as the universal Lord of all; Nor leading you back to *the doctrine of baptisms*,[b] those instituted under the Mosaic dispensation to inculcate moral purity on all who would draw near to God with acceptance; or that appointed by Christ, as the rite by which we enter into his church. *And* we will not now treat *of the imposition of hands*,[c] by which the Spirit hath been communicated to those that have embraced the gospel, *and of the resurrection of the dead*, which, though not so clearly and fully revealed, was assuredly believed by the Jewish church before our Lord's appearance; *and of eternal judgment*, when the whole world shall be convened before Christ, and each of its inhabitants fixed by his final sentence in an unalterable eternity. SECT. 6. HEB. VI. 1 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 2

3 And this will we do, if God permit. These are indeed important doctrines, and it will become you constantly to bear them in mind. But while I am addressing you at present, it may be more profitable for me to lead you into some higher improvements in christian knowledge, and to build some farther divine instruction upon these sure and solid foundations. *And this we will do, if God permit;* if God may assist us in attempting it, and this letter reach you, as I trust it will, while you continue your adherence to the christian faith. 3

4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, As for those who seem to have forgot these sacred principles, and put the greatest slight upon them, by renouncing our holy religion, I give them up as persons from whom I have no farther expectations; *for* [*it is*] in a manner *impossible*[d] to succeed in any charitable 4

a *First principles.*] Mr. Pierce understands all that follows as referring to the Jewish doctrines, which might be considered as the elements of the christian. *Repentance from dead works*, that is, from sin, was a Jewish doctrine, and he thinks it had a peculiar reference to that solemn and public repentance on the day of atonement. *Faith towards God*, he considers as without any regard to the Messiah. The *baptisms* he takes for the *Jewish washings*, observing that βαπτισμοι in the plural number is never used in any other sense. *Laying on of hands*, he takes for the rite that attended sacrifices; and imagines that the *resurrection of the dead*, and *eternal judgment*, are either to be understood as principles common to Judaism and christianity, or rather peculiar to the former; in which view, the *resurrection of the dead*, refers either to the *resurrection* of particular persons under the Old Testament in confirmation of the divine mission of the prophets, (which might in the nature of things render the doctrine of Christ's resurrection more credible to those who believed these,) or the resurrection of the Jewish people from Egypt, or deliverance from any other great extremity. (Compare Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12.) And the latter, that is, *eternal judgment*, he thinks may be explained of dreadful judgments inflicted of old, as upon the sinners of the old world, the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. I thought it not improper to propose so remarkable an interpretation, but not seeing any reason for confining several of the clauses to so contracted a sense, I have taken them in a much larger extent.

b *Of baptisms.*] Lord Barrington understands this of the *baptism of water*, and the *effusion of the Holy Spirit*, by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles, were initiated. He also explains the *laying on of hands*, as referring to the immediate communication of *spiritual gifts* by means of the apostles. These he thinks were *first principles*, as *baptism* was the first entrance into the church, and *laying on of hands*, the great evidence of it, as *faith* and *repentance* are the substance of christianity, and a *resurrection and eternal judgment* the great motives leading men to embrace it. Bar. *Mis. Ess.* II. p. 116.

c *The imposition of hands.*] This answered such great purposes in the christian church, as the appointed method of communicating important gifts, that it might well be mentioned among *first principles*.——But it is by a very precarious consequence, that any can infer from hence the *universal* obligation of this rite, in admitting persons into full *church-membership*, or even to the ministry. See Pierce's *Vindicat.* p. 463.

d *For it is impossible.*] This text has been the subject of great

SECT. 6. HEB. VI.

endeavour *with regard to those who have once been enlightened* with the knowledge of such glorious truths as are essential to christianity, *and have tasted of the heavenly gift* which our exalted Redeemer hath shed down upon us, *and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost*,[e] in his miraculous and amazing communications. *And have tasted*, by some affectionate impressions on their minds, the efficacy of *the good word of God*, 5 *and* felt something of *the powers of the world to come*,[f] awakening in them a conviction 6 of sin, and some desires after holiness, and resolutions in favour of it: I say, that as for such persons, *if*, after all this, *they* totally fall *away*[g] from christianity, their case is in a manner desperate, and it is impossible *again to renew* the good impressions made on *them*, so as to bring them back *to repentance*, and to recover them to a sense of duty; *since they* reject the strongest evidence that can be conceived, and do, as it were, by this apostasy and blasphemy of theirs, so far as in them lies, *crucify to themselves the Son of God again*,[h] *and make an open example* [*of him*;] by renouncing that divine doctrine which hath been so gloriously demonstrated to them, they do in effect declare they look on Jesus as an Impostor, who deserved what he met with; and they seem to ascribe the miraculous energy of the Spirit to some diabolical agency: which Christ himself represented as the sin that should never be forgiven. (Compare Matt. xii. 30, 31.)

lightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

7 We will therefore, without any further efforts for the recovery of such, leave them to the awful sentence which he hath pronounced upon them. *For* whereas *the earth that drinketh in the rain, which often cometh upon it, and produceth herbage fit for them by whom it is cultivated, partaketh of the divine blessing*, and wears a pleasant and delightful face; so shall those souls, who improve gospel-ordinances and christian knowledge so as to produce the fruits of holiness, be favourably accepted of God, and feel a 8 divine joy in themselves. *But* as *that* ground *which bringeth forth* only *thorns and briers*, under the same cultivation, and the same refreshing showers, [*is*] *rejected as* utterly useless; so likewise shall the unfruitful soul be deserted by God in righteous displeasure, *and* is *near to* that dreadful hour, when *a curse* shall come upon it never to be revoked. And as such a barren soil, *whose* case we have been describing, is at last burnt up by the violent heat of the sun, and becomes dry heath;[i] so the *end* of such an unhappy creature [*shall be*] everlasting *burning*, in that miserable world, where all the means of grace and influences of the Spirit of God shall be for ever withdrawn, and the soul shall 9 be given up to incurable wickedness, and eternal anguish. Such is the case of these wretched apostates; *but* I will enlarge no farther on this awful subject; for *we are persuaded* there is room to hope much *better things of you*, my *beloved* brethren, *even things that accompany salvation*, and do, as it were, bring it along with them: we have this cheerful expectation concerning you, *though we* think ourselves obliged *thus* to *speak;* that nothing in our power may be wanting to guard you against the greatest danger.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2

In every respect, both with regard to knowledge and practice, let us go on to perfection: and if we cannot attain to it, let us rise as near as we can! For this purpose, as christians, let us remember what foundation has been already laid, of repentance and faith, of baptism, of a resurrection, and a future judgment; a judgment, eternal in its consequences, and therefore infinitely important. And let us remember that, as the building, in its highest advances, rests upon the foundation, and owes its stability to its union with it, so in like manner does our progress and advance in christian piety stand in a near connexion with our retaining these truths, though we by no means confine ourselves to them.

4 It is by a continual care to improve in them, that we shall most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of apostasy, to which we may otherwise be exposed. And O! let the awful passage before us be duly attended to

debate, which I must not by any means enter into here. Compare Limb. *Theol.* 5. lxxxiv. 10—19. Baxter's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 305. As to the phrase *enlightened*, it is certain the ancient fathers early used it to express *baptism*. But in this view I much question the propriety of the phrase, and think that *illumination* as well as *regeneration*, in the most important and scriptural sense of the words, were regularly to *precede* the administration of that ordinance. And I think that what the papists, and some too ready to follow them, have taught of an extraordinary illumination following the administration of the ordinance of *baptism*, is very enthusiastical, and absolutely destitute of proof.

e *Heavenly gift—partakers of the Holy Ghost.*] Though by *heavenly gift*, Archbishop Tillotson, (Vol. II. p. 485.) understands *remission of sin*, urging Rom. v. 15—18. in proof of it; and distinguishes it from the communication of the *Holy Ghost*, and this too, as he ventures to assert, in its sanctifying power and influence; I see no necessity for making such a distinction, or extending in this place the energy of the Spirit beyond his extraordinary gifts. Bishop Hopkins quotes Acts viii. 15. (which he thinks must include Simon Magus,) as a proof, that *unregenerate* men might receive the *Holy Ghost*. Hopkins' Works, p. 520.

f *The powers of the world to come.*] This phrase is ambiguous. Some understand it of those miraculous powers with which the gospel-age (called *the world to come* elsewhere, and particularly chap. ii. 5.) should be attended.—But if the preceding clause be explained as above, it will diversify the sense more, to understand this of impressions made relating to the *importance* of a *future state*. And as we so often read of *this world* and *the present world*; the invisible state into which we pass by death, may certainly, with great propriety, be expressed by the phrase of *the world to come*; as indeed that is its common signification. But if any on the whole think it is more reasonable to interpret this clause in the former sense, and so will understand the other clauses as explained in the former part of note e, it must be observed, that the apostle, in thus giving judgment upon the case, if it should happen, does not declare that it actually does.

g *If they* totally *fall away.*] It is certain the words *fall away* must be understood *thus:* or it would prove, contrary to the plainest fact, that it is impossible to recover christians who have fallen into great and wilful sins.

h *Crucify to themselves, &c.*] Some would interpret it, *so far as in them lies they do it*, that is, they pour all the contempt upon Christ in their power, and offer all the injury to him they can; and were he upon earth, and subject to the violence he once suffered, they would treat him as his worst enemies did.—It seems to me that the apostle here gives up apostates, as hopeless in the general, in order to fortify christians against the great danger to which they were exposed. But I think it cannot be inferred from hence, that, in ages where the evidence of christianity might be less plainly demonstrative, those who had fallen into this crime with circumstances less aggravated, and professed repentance, were never to be received to the peace of the church any more; as the Donatists supposed, and on this text founded their inexorably rigorous discipline.

i *Dry heath.*] *Heath* is the emblem of the *cursed man*, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

in this view! Let us not rest in any enlightening we may have received, in any taste we may have had of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, or the powers of the world to come, nor in any operation of the Spirit of God upon our minds, to form them to the most splendid talents, and qualify us for the most pompous external services. Men may have all these, and yet fall away, and their guilt become more aggravated: they may injure the Redeemer so much more in proportion to all they have known of him: and indeed will be capable of wounding him the deeper by their apostasy, and of exposing him to greater infamy. Let us daily pray to be delivered from so great an evil! We are not left to be like a barren wilderness; the rain from on high comes often upon us, and we enjoy the choicest cultivation: may we bring forth fruits meet for him by whom we are dressed, the genuine fruits of practical, vital religion. So shall we receive a blessing from God, and flourish more and more, till we are transplanted to the paradise above.

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But as for those unhappy creatures who still continue to bring forth briers and thorns, let them dread that final rejection which will be the portion of those who persist in abusing the divine goodness; let them dread the curse, the awful, the irrevocable curse, to be pronounced on such; let them dread the everlasting dearth with which their souls shall be parched, when ordinances, when the workings of the Spirit of God, when the common comforts and supports of this mortal, animal life, shall be no more. Gladly do the ministers of Christ entertain better hopes concerning those committed to their care, while yet there is room for hope, though faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men, obliges them to speak in the language of such cautions as these. May divine grace apply it to those who are particularly concerned in it, and plant what hath hitherto been a barren and abandoned desert, with such fruits of holiness, as may transform it into the garden of the Lord.

8 9

SECTION VII.

Addressing himself to sincere believers, the apostle comforts them with a view of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to those sacred engagements into which he hath condescended to enter: the performance of which is farther sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner. Heb. vi. 10, *to the end.*

HEB. vi. 10.

FOR God *is* not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

I JUST now mentioned my hopes of your complete salvation; and I have reason to entertain such hopes, as well knowing the benevolent and pious dispositions which many of you have expressed. *For God* [*is*] *not unrighteous*, or unmindful of his gracious promises, so as *to forget your* diligent *work and labour* in his service, animated by a principle *of* unfeigned *love, which you have manifested*, not only to your brethren, but *to his name* also, in *having ministered, and* in still *ministering*, as his providence gives you opportunity, *to* the necessities of *the saints*. *And we* heartily *wish* that this temper were as universal as it is commendable where it prevails; so *that every one of you*, into whose hands this Epistle *may* come, might *show the same diligence*, and exert the same studious care, in order *to* establish *the full assurance of* your *hope*, even *unto the end* of your christian course; by which hope you must still be supported, while in this world: *That* so, on the whole, *you may not be sluggish* and indolent, *but imitators of those who, through* the exercise of *faith and long-suffering, do* now reap the blessed fruit of these graces, and *inherit the promises*[a] which God hath made to support and cherish them in the hearts of his people through every age.

SECT. 7. HEB. VI. 10 11 12

11 And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.

And a glorious confirmation you will find these promises to be, when you come to compare one spiritual object with another, and are better skilled in the method of interpreting the sacred oracles, on principles which I am going to lay down. *For* I may, in the first place, lead you to observe, that *when God made the* great and comprehensive *promise to Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 2, 3; and xvii. 1—6.) on which so much of our hope as christians doth also depend, the promise that he would be a God to him, and that all nations should be blessed in his seed; *seeing he had no greater* [*a person*] *to swear by, he swore by himself*, even by the honours of his own sacred and divine name; *Saying*, by an audible voice from heaven, when he repeated the promise, while Abraham stood with Isaac before that altar on which with humble submission to the divine appointment he had just before laid him, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou "hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that, *blessing I* "*will* assuredly *bless thee, and multiplying I will* assuredly *multiply thee*;[b] I will bless "and multiply thee remarkably, so as to make thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the "sand which is upon the sea-shore." *And thus having waited long* in humble faith and patience, *he obtained* in due time the accomplishment of *the promise*, first in the birth of Isaac, and then after a much longer attendance, the consummation of a better hope. And we whose circumstances so happily resemble his in this respect, may well follow the example of his faith, when we survey the foundation of it. *For men truly swear by a* [*being*] *greater* than themselves, to whom they ascribe that knowledge and power which is supposed to render him the object of their veneration and worship; *and*

13 14 15 16

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater; and an

a *Through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises.*] Mr Pierce explains this of the Gentiles who were converted to christianity. If it be intended as a hint to stir up the Jews to emulation, as he supposes, it is indeed a very obscure one; for comparatively it is a low sense, in which christians in this imperfect state can be said to *inherit the promises*. I rather think it refers to *all good men*, who were departed out of our world, whether in former or latter days, and under whatever disposition they died.—Taking it in this view, it will be (as several have observed) an argument against the soul's continuing in a state of sleep during the intermediate period between death and the resurrection.

b *Multiplying, I will multiply thee.*] That part of the promise to Abraham which immediately follows the clause here quoted, in Gen. xxii. 17. most certainly relates to the Gentiles; and therefore had the apostle intended ver. 12. of this chapter in the sense in which Mr. Pierce explains it, of *the Gentiles converted to christianity*, I cannot think he would have stopped short at *multiplying I will multiply thee*, and omitted what follows of making *his seed as*

SECT. 7. HEB. VI.

an oath, when thus taken *for confirmation* [*is*] *to them an end of all* farther strife and *contention. On which account* the blessed *God*, in humble condescension to our infirmities, *being willing, in the most abundant manner, to manifest to the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel*, and his determinate resolution of bestowing upon them the blessings he engaged, *interposed with* the solemnity of *an oath, That by* 18 *two immutable things, in* each of *which* [*it is*] *impossible for God to lie*, even his word and his oath, *we might have strong consolation*, even we, *who*, in humble obedience to the gracious designs of his gospel, *have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope laid before us*, the noble prize which that gospel proposes as the great object of our ambition 19 and pursuit; I speak of eternal life, the hope of *which* through the divine goodness *we have*, and I trust we shall resolutely retain it, *as an anchor of the soul, both secure and stedfast, and* as *entering into the place within the vail*, the holy of holies, where God 20 dwells, and where we hope to dwell for ever with him. This anchor will indeed be sufficient to enable us to outride all the storms of temptation, being fixed in that glorious though invisible world, *whither Jesus* as *the Forerunner is entered for us*, to take possession of glory in our name, and prepare all things necessary for our admittance into it: even he, [*who is*] *made an High-Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec*; as we are going more largely to show.

oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,

20 Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10 WITH what amazing condescension doth God, by his apostles, speak of those works and labours of love, which the persons who have performed them with the greatest simplicity of heart, know to be most undeserving of his regard! How kindly hath he made himself a Debtor to us, or rather to his own promise and oath, so that it would indeed be unrighteous in him to fail those expectations which nothing in ourselves could possibly raise! Let us then 11 be animated to the greatest diligence, by a full assurance of hope. There are those who inherit the promises, of 12 which we are the heirs, and they have passed to that glorious inheritance by the exercise of faith and patience. Let us chide our sluggish souls into a more resolute imitation of them. And when they are ready to sink into indolence again, let us again awaken them by viewing those promises, and the fidelity of that God who hath made them, and who hath added, by a condescension that can never be sufficiently acknowledged and adored, the sanction of 13 his oath to that of his word. Behold the strong consolation which he hath given. And given to whom? To 16—18 those who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. Thither let us fly for our lives; fly as if we heard the footsteps of the avenger of blood just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of 19 the present moment. Happy the souls that have found this refuge! Whose faith and hope, like a strong and steady anchor, hath entered into heaven, hath fixed on that blessed Redeemer who lives and reigns there, who appears as an Intercessor for his people, and intercedes with such efficacy and success, that he is also to be regarded as their 20 Forerunner, as gone to prepare a place for them. Let us constantly retain that view of him; and while we continue exposed to all the labours and sorrows of mortality, let us seek our safety and our comfort by fixing our regards upon him, waiting continually the aids of his grace, till he shall see fit to call us to fill the place he hath provided, and receive the inheritance he hath secured, for us.

SECTION VIII.

The apostle enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from various respects, in which the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood, infers also the superior glory of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. vii. 1—17.

HEB. vii. 1.

SECT. 8. HEB. VII.

I HAVE again and again mentioned that scripture in which the Messiah is spoken of in prophecy, as made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Now I think it may be worth our while to dwell a little more intently on the contemplation of this subject; and then we shall find that, without straining the allegory, it holds in a variety of instructive 1 particulars; *for this Melchisedec*, of whom Moses speaks in that celebrated history, (Gen. xiv. 18, &c.) to which David refers, [*was*] *king of Salem*, and *priest of the most high God:* in both which offices he was a remarkable type of our blessed Lord. And it is well known, he was the celebrated and holy person *who met* that illustrious patriarch, our father *Abraham, when returning from the slaughter of the kings*, who had taken Lot prisoner, with the king of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities of the plain. *And* we are expressly told, that he *blessed him* on this occasion, that is, he pronounced 2 on Abraham himself a blessing in the name of God to whom he ministered. *To whom also Abraham divided the tenth*[a] *of all* the spoils he had brought back, in token of his reverence to the office he bore. And indeed when we come to consider his name and title according to the signification of it in the Hebrew language, we shall find it bear a remarkable analogy to that of our Lord Jesus Christ: for *first*, his name Melchisedec, *being inter-*

HEB. vii. 1.

FOR this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him:

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation

the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore, and—*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

a *Abraham divided the tenth.*] The objection which Mr. Chubb has brought against this from Gen. xiv. 23. as if it were Melchisedec who paid tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchisedec, is really trifling; a change of person, without express notice given of it, being usual in the sacred scriptures, and in all writers and languages; not to observe, that the version of the LXX. in the common editions, and in that copy which is printed in the polyglot, instead of *He*, expressly reads *Abraham*. But Mr. Chubb's particular exceptions have been so abundantly answered by the author of, *The Case of Abraham and Melchisedec, Jacob and Esau, &c. considered, published, anno* 1746, against Chubb's *Four Dissertations*, that I need not particularly enlarge. This may however be a proper place to observe, that the relative must evidently refer to the remote antecedent in the following passages, Luke xvii. 16; Acts xxiii. 23; 2 Kings xviii. 29; Psal. cv. 37; Acts vii. 5; Deut. xxxi. 22, 23; Gen. xiv. 20, &c.

king of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace:

preted, signifies that he, [*is*] *king of righteousness,* or a most righteous sovereign; *and then,* his title taken from the place where he resided and ruled, is *King of Salem, that is, King of Peace;* for it is well known, that Salem in the Hebrew tongue is Peace, as Melech is King, and Tsedec Righteousness.

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

Now if we come to compare this Melchisedec, this king of righteousness and peace, with the Mosaic priests, we shall find a remarkable difference in many respects in all which there is a resemblance between him and our Lord. For instance, whereas it is necessary the Jewish priests should all be of the family of Aaron, and there are several laws concerning the descent and qualities of their mothers, which must be observed and recorded, in order to make out their legitimacy, and their consequent right to serve at the altar, Melchisedec is, as it were, *without father,* and *without mother,*[b] neither his father nor his mother are mentioned in scripture; and he is *without pedigree,*[c] or any written account of his genealogy, by which it may be traced up to more distant progenitors of the priestly order; and herein he answers to Christ, who, with respect to his human nature, had no father, nor any mother with regard to his divine. Again, as there was a certain age at which the Jewish priests entered upon the ministry in the tabernacle and temple, and at which they quitted it, Melchisedec *having neither beginning of days nor end of life,* mentioned in scripture, *but being* in that respect as if he were immortal, and therein *made like to the Son of God,* who existed before all worlds, he *remaineth a priest for ever.*[d] 3

4 Now consider how great this man *was,* unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Now, I doubt not, my brethren, but that as I proceed in this argument, *you see* and reflect, *how great a man*[e] *this* Melchisedec [*was,*] *to whom,* as I hinted above, *even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of* all *the spoils* he had recovered from the king of Shinar and his allies. 4

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.

And this will be farther illustrated, by considering *that truly they of the descendants of Levi who receive the* Aaronical *priesthood, have, according to the law* by which they are constituted, *a commandment;* and in consequence of that, a right only *to tithe the people that is their brethren, though* indeed coming as well as themselves *out of the loins of Abraham*: *But he* of whom we have now been speaking, *whose pedigree is not reckoned from them,* not had any relation at all to the Abrahamic family, *took tithes of Abraham* himself, *and* even *blessed him who had* received *the promises,* 5 6

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

so much celebrated in your history through every generation. *But without all contradiction, the inferior is blessed of the superior,* rather than the superior of the inferior; so that, while pronouncing this blessing upon Abraham, Melchisedec evidently acted in an higher character than the patriarch himself sustained at that time, and in that circumstance. 7

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater.

And again, it may farther be observed for the illustration of this argument, that *here,* under the institution of Moses, *men who die receive tithes;* the priests of that dispensation are mortal men, like their brethren; *but there,* in the case of Melchisedec, *he* [*receiveth them*] *of whom it is* only *testified* in scripture, *that he liveth,* but of whose death we have no account; and in that respect, he may be said to bear some resemblance to the ever-living and ever-blessed Jesus. 8

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them,* of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

And indeed *as one may say,*[f] *by Abraham* and in his person, *even Levi, who* in his posterity *received the tithes* of the other descendants of Israel, *was* himself *tithed.* 9

9 And as I may so say, Levi also who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

For he was yet in the loins of [*his*] *father* Abraham,[g] *when Melchisedec met him* upon the occasion I have just been mentioning. 10

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Now I introduce all these reflections, to lead you to consider the aspect this wears as to the gospel, and the view it gives of its superior excellence in comparison of the law. And I may reason thus upon the premises. *If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood,*[h] and no more excellent atonement and intercession than theirs could be expected, (*for* you know that it was *under it* that *the people received the law,* that is, it was a part of the legal appointment to which a multitude of other precepts in the ritual referred, and on which the possibility of performing them depended,) *what farther need* [*was there*] *that another priest should arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and* that he should *not be reckoned according to the order of Aaron?* 11

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

b *Without father, without mother.*] It has been observed by many, and it is not unfit the reader should be reminded of it here; that several ancient writers of character among the heathens speak of persons being *born of no father,* or *without a father,* when they mean only to express by it that their *father was unknown.* (See Harris, *On the Messiah,* Serm. ix. p. 262.) Elsner likewise (*Observ. Sacr.* Vol. II. p. 347.) hath some remarkable quotations to show that it was usual among the Greeks to say of a person that he was ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, *without father, without mother,* when his parents were unknown. And accordingly, several of the fathers imagine, that this is here asserted of Melchisedec, because there is no mention made of his parents in the sacred scriptures. But the reason, in Elsner's opinion, is, that there was no trace of his parentage in the sacerdotal genealogies, he being without *priestly descent,* ἀγενεαλόγητος, as it immediately follows, *not enrolled among the priests.*

c *Without pedigree.*] As the genealogy of our Lord is so distinctly delivered both by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke, there may seem here to be a failure in the resemblance; I therefore added the words which determine it to the idea of some priestly ancestors, which will render the propriety very conspicuous, and is agreeable to Elsner's interpretation mentioned in the note above.

d *Remaineth a priest for ever.*] Bishop Burnet would transpose this clause, *He was a priest of God for ever, made like unto the Son of God.* I cannot forbear observing, that I think his interpretation and illustration of this scripture, (4 Dis. p. 69—71.) the best I remember to have seen.

e *How great a man.*] This is a severe stroke upon the Jews, not only as it proves the superior dignity of Christ above the Aaronical priesthood, but shows also that God had of old a people among the Gentiles, and that there was a person among them superior to Abraham himself.

f *As one may say: ως επος ειπειν.*] Elsner is of opinion, (*Observ. Sacr.* Vol. II. p. 350.) that this should be translated, *to say the truth:* alleging, that it is not agreeable to the respect we owe to the apostle's character, to suppose that he inserted those words as an apology for an assertion in itself not strictly just and exact; and he produces some passages out of the classics to vindicate this version. But the justness of it is largely controverted by Raphelius. *Annot. ex Herod. in loc.*

g *In the loins of Abraham.*] Christ could not be said to be so because of his extraordinary descent; otherwise the argument would, I think, have been inconclusive, as it would have been proved that Christ, as well as Levi, paid tithes in Abraham.

h *Now—if perfection, &c.*] Elsner justly observes, (*Observ. Sacr.* Vol. II. p. 351.) that this is not to be considered as a consequence flowing directly from the verses immediately preceding, as might be concluded from the rendering of the Vulgate and Erasmus Schmidius, and our common translation; but that it is the beginning of a new paragraph, or branch of discourse; and that ει μεν should be rendered, *but if,* or, which is much the same, *now if,* in support of which he produces several authorities.

SECT. 8. HEB. VII.

This will draw after it a long train of extensive and important consequences; *for the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity also be a change of the law;* for as I hinted above, all the ceremonial law depended upon it; and if our regards be directed to another priest, who is not of the family of Aaron, there is then an end of the obligation to the ritual, which confined all its precepts to priests of that line, and supposed that as long as it was binding, they would always subsist and bear office. And that is now evidently the case, *for the person of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, of whom no one appertained to the* Jewish *altar*, or had any right to minister at it. *For* [*it is*] *plain that our Lord* Jesus Christ, the only true Messiah, foretold by David in the passage I have been discoursing upon, *sprung from Judah*,[i] *of which tribe Moses spake nothing* at all *relating to the priesthood* he ordained, so as to reserve any right of sacerdotal ministry to them, more than to any other tribe in Israel. *And* independent on all genealogical controversy, which the most ingenious malice could urge concerning Mary's family, *it is yet more abundantly manifest*, from the least attention to that single scripture alone which I have so frequently mentioned, *that there arises*[k] *another priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec; Who*, therefore, we may assure ourselves, *is made* and constituted *not according* or in regard *to the law of the carnal commandment*, that system of ceremonial precepts which contained so many things of an external, and comparatively of a carnal, nature, and which considered men as dwelling in mortal flesh, and so to succeed each other; *but according to the* undecaying *power of an* indissolvable and *endless life*.[l] *For* you will be careful to remember what *he testifieth, Thou* [*art*] *a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec:* which implieth all that I have asserted concerning Christ. Let us reflect upon it with pleasure, that he retains his priesthood for ever; and therefore is able to give everlasting efficacy to his administration, and everlasting blessings to those who cast themselves upon its protection, animated by the glorious promises which it exhibits.

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 *For it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let our souls adore the King of righteousness, and the King of peace; submitting to him under the former title, 3 that we may experience the peace which he gives, and which none can take away. Let us repose our confidence in the Son of God, who without beginning of days, or end of life, abideth a Priest for ever; a Priest on a throne to confirm the counsels of eternal peace transacted between the Father and himself. (Zech. vi. 13.) To him do all the 6 prophets bear witness, to him did all the patriarchs render humble homage, and his blessing was that which rendered 14 Abraham, the father of the faithful, blessed indeed. He sprang from the tribe of Judah, and was the Shiloh that was 15, 16 to come before it ceased to be a tribe, according to the ancient oracle of dying Jacob. (Gen. xlix. 10.) But the honours of the priesthood are now transferred to, and centred in him, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but the superior power of an endless life. Let us rejoice that his life is endless, and that by him we may 8 likewise attain to an endless life, to an immortality of glory. The priests of the Old Testament, the ministers of the New, as well as private believers under both dispensations, die; but the eternally prevailing priesthood of Jesus gives us life in death, and entitles us to the hope of that glorious world, where he will put his own likeness and 5 splendour upon us, and make us in our inferior degrees of dignity, immortal kings and priests to God, even the Father: to him be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.* (Rev. i. 6.)

SECTION IX.

From what had been said above, the apostle argues, that the Aaronical priesthood was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ; and by consequence that the obligation of the law was dissolved. Heb. vii. 18, *to the end.*

Heb. vii. 18.

SECT. 9. HEB. VII.

I HAVE been discoursing largely on the resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; and I may fairly argue from hence, not only the superior dignity and excellence of Christ, but the freedom of Jews as well as christians, from the obligations of the ceremonial law. Let me urge it *therefore* plainly, that *there is an abolition of the former commandment* 18 in all its extent of ritual observances, *because of its weakness and unprofitableness:* for weak and unprofitable it appears to be, in comparison of that everlasting priesthood which 19 I have just now mentioned. *For the law* of Moses *made nothing perfect*,[a] but left in its most essential institutions, as we shall presently show, the manifest traces and evidences of its own imperfection; whereas full provision for our pardon and sanctification must be ascribed to *the introduction of a better hope*, by a dispensation of a far superior nature, *by which we* now under the gospel *draw near to God* in cheerful dependence upon the 20 efficacious intercession of our ever-living and glorious High-Priest: A High-Priest, evidently superior to any of the Aaronical line, on many other accounts, *and* we may add on this

Heb. vii. 18.

FOR there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did;* by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inasmuch as not

i *Sprung from Judah.*] It may be worth remembering here, that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom, refer to the table made at the taxation, in proof of this; and it may be considered whether the apostle does not insinuate the same reference. (See Dr. Barrow's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 188.) Undoubtedly he would not have spoken with such confidence, if it had not been generally allowed.

k *That there arises.*] Dr. Whitby proves by many convincing authorities, that the particle ὅτι sometimes signifies *that*, as it is plain it here does.

l *Of an endless life.*] Archbishop Tillotson thinks the gospel is called *the power of an endless life*, to intimate the *powerful* influence which the views of immortality proposed by it, will have upon the mind. (p. 568.) I have therefore kept that thought a little in view, though I am far from imagining it to be the chief design of the expression.

a *The law made nothing perfect.*] Mr. Pierce includes these words in a parenthesis: as if the apostle had said, "Since the law "made nothing perfect, it could not make the priesthood so; it "could not remove the guilt of sin, or give strength to obey its "commands."

without an oath *he was made priest.*

21 (For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.)

22 By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament.

likewise, *inasmuch as* [*he was*] *not* [*constituted*] *without* the solemnity of *an oath*[b] on the part of God; intended no doubt to show the great importance of what he was to transact. *For they indeed are become priests* by a general, divine ordination, *without* the interposition of *an oath* at their investiture; *but he*, of whom we have been speaking, was set apart to his office *with an oath, by him who said unto him, The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent, Thou* [*art*] *a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec.* Now *by so much* dignity as such an introduction to his office by the oath of God adds to him, does it appear that *Jesus* our Lord is preferable to Aaron and his sons: from whence it is natural to infer, that he *is the Surety of a better covenant*;[c] or that the covenant of which he is the great Guarantee between God and man, is more excellent than that, of which Aaron and his sons might be said to be sureties in reference to certain acts which they were to perform on the part of the people to God, and in the name of God to the people, with which promises of temporal pardon and blessings are connected; for to them alone did that covenant extend.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an High-Priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

And again, I may further observe, that *there were many priests, because they were hindered by death from continuing* in the perpetual execution of their office. *But he, because he abideth for ever*, and is risen to a life of immortal glory in the heavens, where he shall reign as long as any can need the benefit of his ministrations, *hath a priesthood that never passeth over to another* as his successor. *From whence also* it appears, that *he is able to save to the uttermost*, that is, always and completely to save, *those who* humbly *approach to God by him* as their appointed High-Priest, *always living to intercede for them* in every circumstance of their respective lives, through all successive ages and generations.

Let us pause, therefore, and enjoy the comfort of so glorious a truth; *for* the more we reflect upon it, the more consolation shall we derive from it. Exactly *such an High-Priest* as this indeed *suited us*; his character most perfectly corresponded to our circumstances and necessities, [*who was*] solemnly set apart to his office by the highest authority, and in the execution of it, entirely *holy, harmless* in himself, *unpolluted* by others, *separate from* all defiling society of *sinners*, though mercifully conversant among them; *and* to complete all, a person of such dignity of nature, and so eminently dear to God, as to be *made higher than the heavens*,[d] and all their inhabitants, far more superior to the noblest of them, than Aaron himself to the meanest Levite who ministered in the tabernacle.

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Glorious High-Priest indeed! *who had not daily necessity, as those high-priests* appointed by Moses, *first to present sacrifices for his own sins, and then for those of the people*: of the former of these he never had any need, nor could there be any room *for* it; and *this* last *he did once for all in offering himself* as a spotless and acceptable sacrifice to God. *For the law*, as is well known, *constitutes men high priests, who have infirmities* of their own, which need expiation; *but the word of the oath, which* [*reaches*] *beyond the law*,[e] and of which I have so largely been speaking, [*constitutes*] to that office the only-begotten *Son* of God, who is *consecrated for ever* to the execution of it, and is the great substance of what they were only dim and imperfect shadows.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let the introduction of this better hope which we receive by Jesus Christ, and which bringeth the greatest perfection of happiness to those that embrace it, fill our hearts with thankfulness to God, and with a solicitous zeal to secure an interest in it. Let us draw near to God under its supporting influence, and be quickened thereby to purify ourselves from all pollutions of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God; in firm dependence upon the High-Priest, whom he hath constituted with the solemnity of an oath, as the great Surety and Guarantee of the better covenant. Ver. 19, 20, 21

God helps the frailty of our nature, by transmitting his promises to us through the hands of his Son, and by giving us such a proof of his gracious regards, as his incarnation and sufferings afford: in which it is certain, that God hath already done what is far more astonishing than any thing which he hath promised farther to do. And Jesus takes his covenant-people under his care, and graciously engages to watch over them for their good, and to communicate to them all such assistances of his grace as may be sufficient to induce them to answer their part of the engagement. 22

He is possessed of an unchangeable priesthood: let us daily look to him, as knowing, that in consequence of the intercession, which he ever lives to make, he is ever able completely to save all that come unto God by him. Let us every day, and every hour, have recourse to him as the Mediator of our approaches to God. And let us make the thoughts of him familiar to our minds, the thought of his sanctity, his dignity, and his love: confiding in that sacrifice he hath once for all offered for his people, being above all need of sacrificing for himself. To conclude, while we cheer and strengthen our hearts with such contemplations as these, let us always consider the obligation which the character of our High-Priest and our Saviour lays upon us, to be ourselves holy, harmless, and undefiled, and to maintain a separation from sinners, so far as the duties of life, in the present circumstances of the world, may admit. 24, 25, 27

b *An oath.*] Which argues the *solemnity* and *importance*, and also the *immutability* of the action.

c *Better covenant.*] So I render διαθηκη, and as this is the most common use of the word, so here it best suits the connexion.

d *Higher than the heavens.*] Mr. Blackwall (*Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 241, 242.) takes notice of this expression as very sublime, superior to Homer's description of Jupiter upon Mount Ida; and perhaps taken from Psal. cxiii. 4, 6.

e *Beyond the law.*] Our translators render μετα τον νομον, *since the law.* But μετα often signifies, *beyond.* Compare chap. ix. 3. and many other places.

SECTION X.

The apostle briefly recapitulates what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High-Priest of christians, and further illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old. Heb. viii. 1, *to the end.*

Heb. viii. 1.

SECT. 10. HEB. VIII.

NOW the chief article of the things which have been spoken, in the preceding parts of this discourse, [*is this*;] that *we have such a* great and illustrious *High-Priest* as hath been described, made after the order of Melchisedec, and by the oath of God himself invested with immortal honours: *who* having on earth performed all that was necessary, 1 by way of preparation, *hath now set down at the right hand of the majestic throne in the heavens*, (compare chap. i. 3. note h,) exalted by the divine authority to rule over 2 all things, for the glory of God, and the good of his people. And we are ever to regard him under his priestly, as well as his royal, character, as *a Minister of holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which not man, but the Lord* himself, *hath pitched*; a sanctuary infinitely superior to any which human hands could be concerned in rearing, and proportionable to the boundless wisdom, power, and magnificence of God.

3 *For every high-priest*, who ministers there, *is constituted to offer gifts and sacrifices: therefore* [*it was*] *necessary that this Man also*, even the glorious Person of whom I 4 speak, *should have something to present. But* we may observe by the way, that *if he were* always to continue *on earth, he could not*, in any consistence with the Jewish institutions, *have been a Priest*,[a] to officiate at the temple of God in Jerusalem; *as there are* already a certain order of *priests* there, *who offer* the *gifts* of the people, *according to the law*, and it is expressly settled, that none of any other family should have access to these services; nor would it have been agreeable to the divine schemes, that Jesus should, by ex- 5 traordinary dispensation, have interfered with their peculiar functions. These he left entirely to those priests, *who perform divine service to* an economy, which contains only *the example and shadow of celestial things*:[b] *as Moses was charged by the oracle, when he was about to finish the tabernacle: for see, saith he*, [*that*] *thou make all things according to the model shown thee upon the mountain*; lest an error, which may seem to thee small, should be more material than thou art aware. (Exod. xxv. 40.) Now this exactness was required in special regard to the typical representations couched under 6 these ordinances, the particulars of which Moses himself did not perfectly understand. *But he*, that is, Christ, *hath now* much *nobler services allotted to him* in that heavenly sanctuary, *inasmuch as he is the Mediator even of a better covenant* than that in which the Jewish high-priest mediated; *which was established upon better promises* than those of the Mosaic law; for they only referred to the blessings of a temporal Canaan, to be enjoyed by the people, while they continued obedient to its precepts, which placed them under such a special providence, as the nature of that dispensation absolutely required, and made them a spectacle to the whole world.

7 This superior excellence of that economy which our Lord introduces, might indeed have been concluded from its being exhibited after the Mosaic: *for*, as we know God never alters but for the better; *if that first* [*covenant*] *had been* esteemed so *faultless*, as to have no remaining deficiency, *there would have been no place sought for a second;* yet 8 we in fact see this intimation of an exception taken to it; *For finding fault with them*,[c] that is, with the Jews, to whom he was addressing, *he saith* by the prophet Jeremiah, in that celebrated text which undoubtedly refers to the gospel-dispensation, (Jer. xxxi. 31.) *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the* 9 *house of Judah.* And he expressly mentions the superior excellence of the covenant there referred to, when compared with that which was transacted on mount Sinai. For he adds there, The transaction shall *not* be *according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt*; as you well know it was while the great work of conducting them to Canaan was yet imperfect, that the law of Moses was given; *because they continued not in my covenant, and* 10 *I disregarded them*,[d] *saith the Lord. For this* [*is*] *the covenant that I will make with*

Heb. viii. 1.

NOW of the things which we have spoken, *this is* the sum: we have such an High-Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law;

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, See (saith he) *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with

a *He could not have been a Priest.*] From hence hath the great argument been taken against Christ's performing any sacerdotal acts upon earth; and consequently against the reasonableness of considering his *death* as a *sacrifice*, though the scripture expressly declares it was so. But it is evident the sense of the words given in the paraphrase, which undermines all such arguments, can alone be maintained as the true one; since it is plain, that under the Jewish economy, though none but a priest ever ministered as such in the tabernacle, yet sacrifices were offered by special divine appointment by some (as by prophets, &c.) who were not of that order; and being so offered, were accordingly accepted.

b *The example, &c.* υποδειγμα των επουρανιων.] Dr. Sykes would explain it, the *copy* of what Moses saw in the mount: as if he had said, the former was but a *copy* of the latter, and no more to be compared with it than the *shadow* to the *substance*. See Sykes, *On Christianity*, p. 184. Pierce, *in loc.* I rather take it in the sense generally given, for the *administration* or sketch of heavenly blessings. Dr. Barrow, (Vol. II. p. 205.) renders it by a very expressive word, the *subindication*.

c *Finding fault with them.*] This is translated by Grotius and others, *finding fault he saith to them*, and understood of *finding fault with the former covenant*. But that covenant was certainly wise and good, and adapted to the purpose for which it was designed and appointed. It seems therefore much more proper to understand it, *finding fault with the Jews*, (as God evidently does in the words preceding those here quoted, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.) for using the proverb against which he expresses so much displeasure in Ezek. xviii. 2. And in the *words* themselves he also finds fault with them for *breaking* this covenant, though he had with so much tender care brought them out of the land of Egypt. Raphelius, *in loc.* translates the words under consideration, (μεμφομενος γαρ αυτοις λεγει,) *finding fault with them he saith*, agreeably to our common translation; and justifies this version by the authority of Chrysostom, a Greek father, and by two passages from Herodotus, where μεμφομενος is used with a dative case after it.

d *I disregarded them.*] The quotation here is according to the LXX. and by no means agreeable to the Hebrew, which reads it as we do, *though I was a husband to them, saith the Lord.* Mr. Pierce

the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, *is* ready to vanish away.

the house of Israel after those days; that is, in the times of the Messiah, *saith the Lord; I will give my laws to their soul, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts,* in more lasting characters than those in which I wrote the commandments on the tables of stone; *and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people:* I will answer all the import of that high relation to them, and they shall persist in their obedience to me. *And they shall no more* have need to *teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them.* They shall have a much more certain and effectual teaching than they can derive one from another. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteous deeds,*[e] various and aggravated as they are, *and their sins and their iniquities,* of what kind soever, *I will remember no more,* so as to bring them into judgment; but will pardon the most heinous offences, which were incapable of expiation under the former covenant.

SECT. 10. HEB. VIII. 11 12

Now I would observe in the close of this argument, that *when he saith, A new* [*covenant*] shall be made, *he hath* in effect *made the first old,* he hath, as it were, spoken of it as antiquated: *now that which is antiquated and fallen into old age,* cannot be expected to live long. And so in like manner [*is*] that old covenant of Moses just *ready to disappear.* Divine Providence will put such a period to it ere long, as shall be remarkable in the eyes of the whole world; so that the grand apparatus which now preserves its visible form and lustre, shall be known no more. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

ADORED be that grace which hath constituted and revealed this everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure; established on such promises as are, of all that can be conceived, most valuable to sinful creatures; and especially on that, without which no other declaration could impart any comfort to such, I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. With this is connected that other promise, so comprehensive of every thing that is truly valuable, I will be a God unto them, and they shall be unto me a people. Happy indeed the people that are in such a case; yea, happy the people whose God is the Lord, who are taught by him to know him under that character, taught by that energy of his Spirit, which gives his law to their mind, and inscribes it on their heart. There may we ever retain it engraven in living and durable characters, as a law of love, which may make obedience to every precept easy. Ver. 6 12 10

In this connexion let us look with pleasure to that High-Priest who is set down on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and presides over all for the good of his people, that Minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord, not man, hath pitched! ever maintaining an humble dependence on the sacrifice he hath offered: A sacrifice better than any of the Aaronical priests could present, in proportion to the degree in which the covenant, of which he is the Mediator, is nobler than theirs. The first covenant, wisely allayed with such a mixture of imperfection as was suitable to its being introductory to the second, is now vanished to make way for this second and better dispensation: to this let us therefore adhere, and, so doing, cheerfully expect all the invaluable blessings it imparts. 1 2 7 13

SECTION XI.

The apostle illustrates the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high-priest did on the great day of atonement. Heb. ix. 1—14.

HEB. ix. 1.

THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

HEB. ix. 1.

HOW reasonable it is to expect, that the former covenant of which I have been speaking, should give way to another and a nobler, you may easily apprehend from surveying it, and considering, in comparison with it, the great things which the gospel teaches us concerning Christ, and to which I would now call your contemplations. *The first tabernacle,*[a] you will *therefore* recollect, *had* certain ceremonial *ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary:* a sanctuary made of such materials as this earth of ours could furnish out, and the centre of a ritual which contained many institutions comparatively low and carnal. *For the first* part of the *tabernacle was prepared* of boards and curtains, pillars and coverings, which constituted a little apartment as a kind of antichamber to the oracle; *in which* there [*was*] *the candlestick* of pure gold, with its seven lamps, *and the table* of shew-bread as it was called, *and the setting on the* twelve *loaves* upon it, *which* were always to stand before the Lord; and this apartment *is called the Holy Place,* in which also the golden altar of incense stood. *And beyond the second vail* was that apartment of *the tabernacle which was called the Holy of Holies,* or the most holy of all, where God was pleased to keep his special residence, and which was as his presence-chamber. *Having the golden censer,*[b] in which the high-priest used to burn incense on the great

SECT. 11. HEB. IX. 1 2 3 4

2 For there was a tabernacle made: the first wherein *was* the candlestick and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the Sanctuary.

3 And after the second vail, the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the

thinks the seventy interpreters, in their copy, either read מעלי, or מעלי, instead of מעלי, in either of which there is only the variation of a single letter, and this will justify the translation here given. Dr. Pocock maintains that the word is capable of such a translation, as it now stands in the original. So that they seem to agree that our English version of the text in question should be altered.

e *For I will be merciful.*] Some would render כי, *and thereupon,* that is, upon their being thus taught by me; or *so that,* which signification it is certain that כי sometimes hath; but here it may signify, that because God had proposed to extend his pardoning mercy to them, he thus taught them by his Spirit; and therefore I have rendered it, *for.*

a *The first tabernacle.*] Mr. Pierce thinks this is to be considered as connected with chap. viii. 6. and that all which intervenes is a digression, though a very pertinent and useful one, relating to the meliority of the covenant established under that better Priest. But I can see no necessity for this, since it may well be connected with the words immediately preceding: as if he had said, And because that covenant was intended but for a little while, therefore there was a great deal of external ceremony in it, fit for the puerile disposition of the persons to whom it was given. Our translators strangely supply the word *covenant* instead of *tabernacle,* whereas most copies read σκηνη, *tabernacle,* and that undoubtedly suits the connexion best. The word we render *ordinances* is, δικαιωματα, *justifications,* or ways of becoming righteous.

b *The golden censer.*] It hath been queried, why the *golden altar* was not mentioned; and some are of opinion that it may be comprehended in the word θυμιατηριον, which we render, *censer.*

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day of atonement, *and the ark of the covenant* so *covered over on every side with gold*, that it appeared as if it had been one mass of that precious metal: *in which* apartment, in or very near the ark,[c] [*was*] *the golden pot, containing the manna* that remained incorruptible through so many ages, *and the rod of Aaron that blossomed, and the* two *tables of the covenant* on which the ten commandments were inscribed by the finger of God.

5 *And over it* were *the cherubs of glory*,[d] *shadowing* with their wings that golden cover of the ark which was called *the mercy-seat*, or propitiatory, as to it propitiations were referred, and where God was pleased to appear in a visible symbol of his propitious and gracious presence. These were all important things in the Mosaic tabernacle, *concerning*

6 *which there is not now* [*room*] *to speak particularly. And these things being thus* prepared and *adjusted*, both in the holy and most holy place, *the* ordinary *priests went continually into the first* apartment of the *tabernacle, performing* [*their*] daily *services*, by trimming the lamps, and burning incense upon the holy altar, changing the loaves on the

7 sacred table every Sabbath, and sprinkling the blood of the victims before the vail. *But into the second* apartment *only the high-priest* [*went*] *once a-year*, and that *not without* the *blood* of the sin-offering, *which he offered* first *for himself, and* then [*for*] *the sins of ignorance committed by the people*, to which sort of offences alone, and not to those presumptuously committed, the efficacy of the atonements extended.

8 Such was the ritual of Moses, *the Holy Spirit* by whom it was prescribed, *signifying*, by *this* difficulty of entrance, and the necessity of the incense cloud, and the atoning blood, *that the way into the holiest* place, that is, into God's immediate presence, *was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle had its continuance*, and retained its station

9 and use, or, in other words, while the Jewish economy lasted. *Which*, far from being the grand and ultimate scheme, [*is*] only *a* kind of allegorical *figure* and parable *referring to the* glorious displays of the *present time*;[e] *in which*, nevertheless, there is hitherto a continuance of the temple-service; so that *gifts and sacrifices are* still *offered, which* yet, in the nature of things, *are not able to make the person who performs the service perfect with respect to the conscience;* as they refer not to the real expiation of guilt, but

10 only to averting some temporal evils[f] which the law denounced on transgressors. For this the Mosaic dispensation was insufficient, which in the peculiarities of it related, not to the views of another life, nor the sublimest means of preparing the soul for it; [*but consisted*] *only*[g] *in* the distinction between different kinds of *meats*, clean or unclean; *and drinks*, some of which were allowed, and others denied, to priests in some circumstances, and to Nazarites in others; *and in different* baptisms, or *washings*, either of the whole body, or a part of it in water, as different occasions demanded; *and* in a variety of other *ordinances* relating to the purification *of the flesh*, which were *to continue* in force only *till the time of reformation*, when things should be put into a better situation by the

11 appearance of the Messiah himself in his church. But *Christ* having now appeared, and *being become an High-Priest of* those *good things* which were then future, and which the church through preceding ages expected as *to come*, the obligation of these things would of course soon be superseded. Accordingly he performed his ministry *in a greater and more perfect tabernacle* above, *not made with* human *hands, that is, not* making

12 any part *of this* lower *creation*. *Neither* doth he expiate the guilt of his people *by* presenting before God *the blood of goats, and of calves*, and of young bullocks, which were the noblest sacrifices the high-priest presented in the day of atonement; *but* it is *by* the efficacy of *his own blood*, which he continually pleads before the Father, that *he hath entered once for all into the holy place* above,[h] *having obtained* [*for us*] by his perfect sacrifice, that *eternal redemption* and salvation, of which all the remissions and all the benefits procured by the ministration of the Aaronical priesthood, were but very imperfect figures.

13 And certainly a little reflection may convince us of this; *for if the blood of bulls and of goats*, of which I have just been speaking, when presented to God with the appointed circumstances on the day of general expiation; *and* in cases of personal pollution, *the ashes of the* red *heifer*, burnt with hyssop, scarlet wool, and other ingredients, being

covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*.

7 But into the second *went* the high-priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people.

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.

10 *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprink-

c *In which:* εν η.] I say, *in* or *near which*, as many good commentators think the words εν η may be taken in that latitude, to reconcile it with 1 Kings viii. 9. where it is said, that *there was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone*. Or perhaps εν η, *in which*, may refer to σκηνη, *the tabernacle*, rather than to κιβωτος, *the ark*, as probably Aaron's rod, which is here said to be in the same place, could not lie in the *ark*.

d *Cherubs of glory.*] That is, the *cherubs* that waited upon the *Shechinah*, or sensible glory of the Deity.

e *Referring to the present time.*] We render it, *for the time then present*. But the words, εις τον καιρον τον ενεστηκοτα, may certainly bear the rendering which I have given them; and I would understand it, not merely as if he had said that this similitude of comparison may be properly used in this present time, as to the temple at Jerusalem, which has its *holy of holies*, as the *Mosaic tabernacle* had; but that the constitution before described was a *figurative* representation of the christian dispensation, which, at the time when the apostle wrote, was displayed in all its glory.

f Averting some temporal evils.] This in a few words expresses what I take to be of the greatest importance for understanding the Mosaic sacrifices; which is, that they were never intended to *expiate* offences to such a degree, as to deliver the sinner from the *final* judgment of God in another world; but merely to make his peace with the *government* under which he *then* was, and to furnish him with a pardon, pleadable against any prosecution which might be commenced against him in their courts of justice, or any exclusion from the privilege of drawing near to God, as one externally at peace with him, in the solemnities of his temple-worship. And I must desire the reader to examine and digest this explication, that I may not be under the necessity of repeating it for the illustration of what is to follow.

g [*Consisted*] *only.*] The construction of the Greek is perplexed: I have given the version that seemed to me most natural; but Mr. Pierce would connect the two verses thus, *He who worshipped—— with meats and drinks;* and reads δικαιωματα instead of δικαιωμασι, in conformity with the Alexandrian and other manuscripts; supplying κτινα ην, *which were corporeal ordinances, imposed till the time of reformation*, that is, the appearance of the Messiah.

h *Entered once.*] Hence Bishop Pearson infers, that Christ ascended only *once* for all into heaven, and not again and again, as the Socinians pretended. Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 109.

ling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

mingled with water, and *sprinkled on the* persons who were ceremonially *unclean, sanctified to the cleansing of the flesh*, and hath so much efficacy in consequence of the divine institution, as to reconcile God to the whole Jewish people in the former instance, and in the other, to introduce persons to the liberty of approaching him in his sanctuary, which would otherwise have been denied them: *How much more* efficacious *shall the blood of Christ*[i] be, even of that Divine Saviour, *who, by the* aids of the *eternal Spirit*[k] supporting the infirmities of his human nature, and animating him to the exercise of all those virtues and graces which shed such a lustre around all the infamy of his cross, *offered himself* as a most *spotless* and acceptable Sacrifice *to God?* How much more, I say, shall that blood of his avail to *cleanse your conscience from* the pollutions ye have contracted by your *dead*, unprofitable, and sinful *works, that ye may* freely approach and *serve the living God* with acceptance? How surely shall it appease that consciousness of guilt, which might otherwise be so painful to us, and introduce us to present our homage in the divine presence, with the hope of the most favourable regard.

SECT. 11.

HEB. IX. 14

IMPROVEMENT.

THE whole progress of the apostle's argument will lead us to reflect on the reason we have for thankfulness, whose eyes are directed, not to an earthly sanctuary and its furniture, splendid indeed, yet comparatively dark, mutable, and perishing; but to the holiest of all, the way to which is now clearly manifested. What matter of solid and everlasting joy! that whereas those gifts and sacrifices were incapable of making those perfect who presented them, or attended upon them, and the ordinances of that sanctuary consisted only in meats and drinks, and corporeal purifications and ceremonies; we by faith behold an High-Priest of a better and more perfect tabernacle, an High-Priest who hath wrought out eternal redemption, and entered once for all into heaven for us! Eternal redemption! who hath duly considered its glorious import? To him, and only to him, who hath attentively considered it, is the name of the Redeemer sufficiently dear. But O, what short of the possession of it, can teach us the true value! What, but to view that temple of God above, where through his intercession we hope to be made pillars, and from thence to look down upon that abyss of misery and destruction from which nothing but his blood was sufficient to ransom us!

Ver. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12

Let that blood, which is our redemption, be our confidence. We know there was no real efficacy in that of bulls or of goats, or in the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean. All that these things could do was to purify the flesh, and to restore men to an external communion with God in the Jewish sanctuary. But the blood of Christ can purify the conscience, and restore its peace when troubled, when tortured with a sense of a guilt contracted by dead works, which render us unfit for, and incapable of, divine converse. To that blood, therefore, let us look: let the death of Christ be remembered as the great spotless sacrifice by which we draw nigh unto God; and let those virtues and graces which were displayed in it, under the influences of that eternal Spirit, which was given unto him without measure, concur with that benevolence which subjected him to it for our sakes, to recommend him to our humblest veneration and our warmest affections.

13, 14

To conclude, since it is so expressly said, that the Holy Ghost signified in some degree the great and important doctrines of the gospel by the constitution of the Jewish ritual; let us think of that ritual, whatever obscurity may attend it in part, with a becoming esteem; and peruse it with a view to that great Antitype, who is in every sense the End of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth; to him who, by fulfilling it, hath given it a glory much brighter than that which was reflected upon it from the face of Moses, or the most splendid magnificence of Solomon's temple.

8

SECTION XII.

The apostle discourses, by way of digression, on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it. Heb. ix. 15, *to the end.*

HEB. IX. 15.

AND for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

I HAVE just mentioned the offering which Christ made of himself to God by the eternal Spirit; *and* it is a subject so delightful and so important, that I must dilate upon it a little more largely. Attend to it, therefore, that *he is in this respect*, and for this purpose, *the Mediator of a new* and better *covenant*,[a] far preferable to that of Moses; *that death being undergone, for the redemption* and expiation *of transgressions against the former covenant*, and which could not be removed by it, *they who are called* to the engagements and benefits of this, *might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance*, to which that of Sinai had no immediate reference;[b] its promises only relating to an inheritance in

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HEB. IX. 15

1 *How much more shall the blood of Christ.*] The argument in these words seems to consist in this; it was merely by an *arbitrary* appointment, that *blood* and *ashes*, which in themselves are rather defiling, should be the methods of purification; but a *death* like that of our blessed Lord, has *in itself* a proper and mighty energy to promote the purification of the soul.

k *Eternal Spirit.*] Many have understood this of the *deity* in general, or the *divine nature of Christ.* But since the words may, in a very good and consistent sense, be referred to the *Spirit*, I could not acquiesce in any other interpretation. Bishop Fell considers them in the same light, and pertinently mentions Christ's being conceived, proclaimed, anointed for working miracles, and at last voluntarily laying down and taking up his life, by *this Spirit.* And I have the pleasure to find Dr. Owen (*On the Spirit*, p. 143. see also his *Exposition* on the place) expressing himself to the same purpose; mentioning also, agreeable to the paraphrase, that by this Spirit, Christ was strengthened in the exercise of that admirable faith, submission, charity, and zeal, which he showed in his dying moments.—But when this Spirit is called *eternal*, I can never think with Dr. Patrick, (on Numb. xix. 4.) that it refers to the *durable* nature of the ashes used for purification under the law; nor with Mr. Hallet, (*Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 36.) that it is opposed to the *spirit of brutes*, or relates to the *eternal* redemption purchased by Christ. It seems a plain testimony to the *eternity*, and consequently the *deity*, of the Holy Spirit.

a *Mediator of a new covenant.*] This is the only place in the New Testament, where διαθήκη can be supposed to signify a *testament*, or will, rather than a *covenant.* But the *mediator of a testament* is a very improper expression; and one cannot suppose the apostle would play on the ambiguity of the word; I therefore think with Mr. Pierce, that it is better here to retain the usual translation of it.—*Redemption* in the next clause plainly signifies *purchasing* the pardon.

b *Immediate reference.*] For the proof of this, I must refer my

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Canaan, and to those temporal enjoyments which were there conferred upon those who were obedient to the divine law: I say, it is in consequence of his undergoing death, that he effectually secures these blessings to us by his covenant; *for where a covenant* [*is*,] answerable to that which typified this of what I now speak, *it necessarily imports the death of that by which the covenant is confirmed*:[c] *For* you know that sacrificial rites have ever attended the most celebrated covenants which God hath made with men; so that I may say, *a covenant* [*is*] *confirmed over the dead, so that it does not avail*, nor has any force at all, *while he by whom it is confirmed liveth*. From *whence*, and on which principle we may observe, *neither was the first* [*covenant*] of which we have been speaking, I mean that of Moses, *originally transacted without* the *blood* of an appointed sacrifice. *For when every command was spoken* and delivered *according to the law by Moses to all the people*, it is expressly said that, *taking the blood of calves and goats* mingled *with water, and* dipping into it a piece of *scarlet wool, and* a bunch of *hyssop*,[d] *he sprinkled the book itself*, which contained the covenant, *and all the people* who were to enter into it; *Saying*, at the same time, *This* [*is*] *the blood of the covenant which God hath commanded with respect to you*, appointing you to declare your consent to the terms of it, as you desire divine favour and acceptance. *And the tabernacle and all the vessels of* divine *service* with which it was furnished, *he also sprinkled with* the same *blood* of the sacrifices. *And* indeed *almost all things were under the law purified by blood* in their first consecration; and it was by blood that they were cleansed from pollution, whether general or special. *And* if any transgression had been committed through ignorance or surprise, yet so solicitous was the blessed God to maintain the honour of his law, and the decorum of his administration, that in case of such offences, *without shedding of blood*, where an animal sacrifice could be procured, *there was no forgiveness* of sin.[e] [*It was*] *therefore necessary*, according to the divine appointment, *that* the tabernacle, and those instruments and utensils belonging to it, which were *the copies* or imitations *of things in the heavens, should be purified by* the blood of *these* animal victims; *but the celestial things themselves, with more excellent sacrifices than they*,[f] even with the sacred blood of Christ himself, which these offerings were designed to typify. And the expedience of this appears from the method which God hath in fact taken; *for* it is plain, that *Christ is not entered into* an earthly tabernacle, or *holy places made with hands*, though adorned with ever so much art and expense; [*which*] at best [*were*] but *the figures*, or imperfect copies, *of the true: but* he is entered *into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*, as our great High-Priest, and ever-glorious and powerful Intercessor. *Not that* it was necessary *he should offer himself frequently, as the High-Priest entered into the most holy place yearly* on the day of atonement, *with the blood of others*, that is, of bullocks and goats: *For then*, as the Jewish sacrifice was often repeated, so *it would have been necessary for him often to have suffered* in many successive periods, *from the foundation of the world*, in order to the salvation of good men in their several ages and generations, which we know he did not. *But now once for all, at the conclusion of the ages*,[g] *he hath been made manifest for the abolishing of sin*, and wiping out its dreadful score, *by the sacrifice of himself*, that he might purchase the pardon of it, and effectually teach men to subdue it,[h] when they see such a ransom paid for their forfeited lives. *And* just *as* with respect to the common lot of mankind, *it is appointed to* all *men once to die, and after that the judgment* is ordained, which fixes them in an unalterable state, without any farther revolution of life and death: *So Christ* passed through one death, no more to be subject to the possibility of it, and *having once been offered*, as the scape-goat on the great day of expiation, *to bear the* punishment due to the

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.

20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 (For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world:) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;

28 So Christ was* once offered to bear the sins of

readers to what my learned friend Dr. Warburton has written, I think, irrefragably on this subject, in his elaborate and ingenious volumes *On the Divine Legation of Moses*.

c *By which the covenant is confirmed.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *of that sacrifice which is appointed by God to pacify*; and he brings a remarkable instance from Appian, where διαθεμενος signifies, *pacifier*. He saith the scope of the writer requires that it should be so translated here, and accordingly in the next verse he renders it, *The pacifier can do nothing, as long as he liveth*. But I think if διαθεμενος be rendered, *he by whom it is confirmed*, the argument will be clearer. Yet I confess considerable difficulties attend both these interpretations; though the connexion with what follows appears easier upon that which I have given. The reader will do well, if he consult Dr. Whitby upon this passage, who assigns and vindicates an interpretation much the same with that which is proposed in this version and paraphrase.—The phrase αναγκη φερεσθαι, which I have rendered, *necessarily imports*, is very strong; the death must be *produced*, it must not only be *effected*, but also made *apparent*. Elsner hath shown, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 361.) that the word φερεσθαι is used in a *forensic* sense, for what is produced, and proved, or made apparent in a court of judicature.

d *Scarlet wool and hyssop.*] It is certain that Moses, in his account of this transaction, (Lev. xvi.) does not mention all these circumstances. Probably St. Paul received them from tradition. Ceremonies of a similar kind are prescribed, Lev. xiv. 4—6, 49—52. as in *cleansing the leper*. And it is highly probable, that the sprinkling the *blood* of the *sin-offering* might be done in this method. The blood was mixed with water, to preserve it from coagulating; and perhaps to this the mixture of *sacramental* wine with water, which pretty soon prevailed in the *primitive church*, might have some intended reference. It is the opinion of Dr. Owen, that the ceremony here referred to was constantly performed on the *day of atonement*. But it is certain it is not expressly prescribed in the account given us of the *ritual* of that day.

e *No forgiveness.*] I look upon this as a certain proof, that the *sin-offerings* were not merely tokens of *friendship restored* between God and the offender, but that the blood was looked upon as the *consideration* on which the pardon was granted, being an acknowledgment on the part of the offerer that he had *deserved death*, if God had been strict to mark offences.

f *The celestial things themselves with more excellent sacrifices.*] It may perhaps seem strange, that *celestial things* should be spoken of as needing to be *purified* and *cleansed*. But it is to be considered, that as the sacred *dwelling* and the *vessels* were esteemed to be polluted by the Israelites, who, in various degrees, had access to them; so *heaven* would have been, as it were, *polluted* by the entrance of such sinners as went into it, had not the blood of Christ intervened. This I think much more natural than, with Bishop Fell, to explain it of some pollutions contracted by the sin of the angels.

g *Conclusion of the ages.*] So συντελειαι των αιωνων is most exactly rendered; meaning the *last of the dispensations* God ever intended to give mankind. See note d, p. 319.

h Purchase the pardon of it, and teach men to subdue it.] Dr. Harris (in his *Discourses on the Principal Representations of the Messiah*, p. 252.) explains εις αθετησιν αμαρτιας, *for the abolishing of sin*, of *wiping out a score*, so that it should be no longer actionable. But I think it extends to every method of *abolishing* sin or putting it away, and may include, besides the *satisfaction* made to the divine justice, the *subduing* it also in our own *hearts*.

many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

sins of many, even of all his believing people, and to carry away, as it were, the guilt of them into the land of oblivion, *he shall the second time appear* to preside in that judgment which men are to undergo. And then he shall come like the high-priest,[i] in his richest dress, when the grand act of expiation was over, *without* any thing that wears the marks of humiliation or abasement, or resembles the form in which he came to make an atonement for *sin*.[k] And while he brings with him everlasting terror to all that despise and reject him, he shall manifest himself *to those who have waited for him, to* complete their eternal *salvation*,[l] and conduct them, in their entire persons, to those regions of glory which he hath prepared for them.

SECT. 12. HEB. IX. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

WE are heirs of an eternal inheritance, and we owe all our expectations of it to the Mediator of that better covenant, who at the expense of his own blood procured redemption from the guilt and condemnation of those transgressions which have been committed under the first covenant: what praise do we owe to that voluntary Victim who made his blood the seal of that better covenant? O, that as all the vessels of the sanctuary, and all the people were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices, on that day when Moses entered them into solemn covenant with God; so our souls and all our services might be under the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! By the efficacy of that were the heavenly places sanctified and prepared for us; by that our way into them is opened: let us be daily looking up to the Lord Jesus Christ, as gone to appear in the presence of God for us, and entered into heaven with his own blood. May his death be as efficacious to subdue the power of sin in our hearts, as it is to expiate our guilt before God. Then may we look forward with pleasure to the great solemnities of death and judgment, and expect that faithful Redeemer, who, though he is to come no more as a Sacrifice for sin, will then appear for the complete salvation of all who have obediently received him under that character, and waited for him according to his word. Ver. 15 16 19, 22 23 24, 25 27, 28

In the mean time, that we may be engaged thus to apply to him, and improve our knowledge of him to the great purposes intended, may we live in the continual views of death, as what is indispensably appointed to men; and remember that it is our certain, inevitable doom. May we also consider it as standing in a most certain connexion with judgment; assuring ourselves, that whatever the period of time between the one and the other may be, there is no room for a change in our character or state. Let therefore the thoughts of judgment, and its awful, eternal consequences, stir us up to a diligent preparation for death. Let it engage us to make an immediate application to Christ as the great Saviour, with entire submission to his princely authority; for if that be disregarded, how shall we meet him as our Judge! For when he appears the second time for the salvation of his people, he will execute righteous vengeance on his enemies; and that vengeance can never appear so terrible, as when considered as coming from the mouth of him who was once manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27

SECTION XIII.

The apostle returns from his digression, to prove that the legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience; and from thence argues the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it. Heb. x. 1—15.

HEB. x. 1.

FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

HEB. x. 1.

YOU see that it is the design of all this discourse, to raise your minds from the Mosaic law, to the gospel; and it is an important design, which, the dearer you are to me, the more earnestly I must pursue. *For the law having*, as it were, only *a shadow*, or imperfect sketch, *of future good things*, and *not the* complete delineation or the *very image of the things* [*themselves*,][a] *could by no means*, even *by those sacrifices* of atonement *which they always offer yearly*,[b] and are the most solemn which belong to the whole Hebrew ritual, *perfect those who come unto* [*them*,] so as to remove the moral guilt of their offences, and bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, and to that settled peace of conscience, which results from a sense of his favour. And indeed the very circumstance of their yearly repetition is a proof of this; for *otherwise*, that is, could they have made such a complete reconciliation, *they would have ceased to be offered*[c] any more, at least

SECT. 13. HEB. X. 1 2

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offer-

i Like the high-priest.] I doubt not but there is indeed, as Limborch supposes, an allusion here to the *high-priest* coming out to *bless the people* who were waiting for him in the *temple* when the great day of *atonement* was over. And as he then appeared in his *golden garments*, whereas before he had officiated in the plain dress of a common priest; and as the *trumpet* of the jubilee on that year sounded to proclaim the commencement of that happy period, there is not perhaps an image that can enter into the mind of man more suitable to convey the *grand* idea which the apostle intended to convey by it, than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the grand *solemnity* to which it referred.

k *Without sin.*] Mr. Fleming supposes this refers to Christ's having, in that great day, the glory of the *Shechinah* upon him, of which the splendour of the richest habits Aaron and his sons wore was but a faint shadow; and that it farther alludes to the stripping Adam of that glory which he contracted from his first interview with the *Shechinah*, as soon as he had sinned. In consequence of which Christ appearing in the days of his flesh like one of us, without this glory, might be said to come as *with sin*, or, as it is expressed, Rom. viii. 3. *In the likeness of sinful flesh.* Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 301.

l *To salvation:* εις σωτηριαν.] Wolfius is of opinion that these words should be connected with those immediately preceding, as expressing the view with which they waited for the returning Saviour, namely, that they might obtain *complete salvation*. But, with Grotius, I think it preferable to connect them in this manner, οφθησεται—εις σωτηριαν, *he shall appear—to salvation*. And certainly this is much more natural than, with Beza and Erasmus Schmidius, to refer it to so remote a clause as εις το πολλων ανενεγκειν αμαρτιας, *to bear the sins of many*, in order to their salvation. See Wolfii, *Curæ Philologicæ, in loc.*

a *Shadow and image:* σκιαν, εικονα.] Here is an allusion, I apprehend, to the different state of a painting, when the first sketch only is drawn, and when the piece is finished; or to the first sketch of a painting, when compared with what is yet more expressive than even the completest painting, an exact image. I cannot be of opinion, with Mr. Pierce, that εικων, *image*, here signifies the original from whence the delineation or draught is made. It is a very unusual sense of the word; nor can I think Rom. i. 23. sufficient to justify and support it. Besides, even under the gospel, we have not the heavenly blessings *themselves*, but only a clearer representation or revelation of them.

b *Sacrifices which they always offer yearly.*] The sacrifices offered on the day of *atonement*, being by far the most solemn of any of the expiatory kind among the Jews, are mentioned here with the utmost propriety. And this interpretation seems to supersede the necessity of following Mr. Pierce's translation, who would, by transposing the points, render it, *The law having only a shadow of good things to come—yearly, can never, with the same sacrifices, which they continually offer, make the comers thereunto perfect.*

c *They would have ceased to be offered.*] This reading is more easy and natural than that which our translators have followed;

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by the same persons: *because they who had performed that service, being once purified* by it, *would have had no more consciousness of sins;* but have enjoyed the efficacy of that atonement to the last moment of their lives, on applying to it on any future occasion; as we christians do, by renewed acts of faith on our great Sacrifice, if through the frailty of human nature we are so unhappy as to fall into sin. *But in them* [*there is*] of course, as it 3 were, *a yearly commemoration of sins,* by a yearly presentation of the atoning blood of new sacrifices in the most holy place; which shows that their efficacy is so far from extending, as that of the true expiation does, to all nations, times, and places, that it only looks back upon the year completed,[d] and hath no influence, even with regard to those persons who are actually present in the temple, or any thing future.

4 And indeed the reason of this is plain; *for* [*it is*] in the nature of things *impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should,* on the whole, *take away sins,* or make a real atonement to God, as the great Governor of the world, for the moral guilt of any transgression: though it may by divine appointment put a stop to any farther prosecution which might proceed in Jewish courts, or any such extraordinary judgment, as the peculiar state 5 of things among that people might otherwise require. *Therefore when* the Messiah is described in David, as *making his entrance into the world, he saith,* in those well known words, (Psal. xl. 7.) "*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not* [*accept,*] *but a body thou* 6 "*hast provided me,*[e] in which I may render thee a more acceptable service: *In whole* "*burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou hadst no complacency,* when considered in this 7 "view, and in reference to this great event. *Then I said,* with the most cheerful consent, "*Behold, I come; in the volume of the book,*[f] which contains the ancient prophecies, *it* "*is written of me,* that I should accomplish this service, and I delight *to do thy will, O* my 8 "*God;* for thy law in all its branches is within my heart." *Having* in effect *said above, As for sacrifice and offering,* whether they were *burnt-offerings, or sacrifices for sin, thou didst not desire* [*them,*] *or take pleasure* [*in them,*] which comprehends the most 9 material and considerable of those things *which were offered* to God *under the law; Then he said, Behold, I come to do thy will, O God.* So that you see, *he taketh away the first,* that is, burnt-offerings and sacrifices, *that he may establish the second,* that is, doing God's will; pointing therein to that great act of obedience, by which the pardon of sin was to be 10 secured, and the divine honour most effectually promoted. *In* the execution of *which will we are sanctified,* cleansed from our sins, and recommended to the divine acceptance, even *by the offering up the body of* our Lord *Jesus Christ once for all,* as an atoning sacrifice.

11 *And* this agrees with what I observed above, to be the property of a true and effectual atonement. For *indeed every priest* of the Mosaic law *standeth daily ministering, and offering the same sacrifices often, which,* as appears from that very circumstance of the 12 repetition of them, *can never* avail to *take away* the guilt of *sins; But he,* that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, *having offered one* ever-efficacious *sacrifice for the sins* of all who shall believe in him, and obey him, *hath for ever set down at the right hand of God;* never more to stand and minister in such a manner as he has done, but answering the great character drawn in the prophet, (Zech. vi. 13.) of a priest on a throne, where royal dignity 13 and certain conquest are added to his other glories; *For the rest, waiting* only *till* the appointed time come, in which, according to the promise we have been contemplating, all 14 *his enemies shall be made the footstool of his feet. For by* that *one offering* up of himself, concerning which we have been speaking, *he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified* by it, and on whom its blood is, as it were, sprinkled, and hath rendered all believers perfectly acceptable to God, and made effectual provision for raising them to a state of complete holiness, felicity, and glory.

ed; because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt-offerings and *sacrifices* for sin, thou hast had no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God.

8 Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein,* (which are offered by the law:)

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins:

12 But this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

IMPROVEMENT.

VER. 1 Since the shadows are now fled away, and the substance is come; since the most substantial blessings are bestowed by the gospel; let us celebrate the praises of him by whom we have received them; of him, who so 5 cheerfully presented himself a spotless Sacrifice to God for us. In the body which God hath prepared for him, he fulfilled all righteousness, and made a most perfect atonement; in that he, once for all, made full expiation for the

while they have placed this in the margin. It is supported by many copies, and adopted by the Vulgate and Syriac version.

d *Looks back upon the year completed.*] I am surprised that Diodati should imagine this must have been expressly revealed to the apostle: I think it sufficiently appears from the tenor of the Mosaic law; for if the expiation was to be offered yearly for the whole people, it must include the expiation of sins remaining unatoned to the time of its offering; and if it were to be repeated the next year, it could reach no further.—But still it must be remembered, that this only referred to those temporal punishments which God, as the King of Israel, might have inflicted upon the whole people, if by a neglect of this annual atonement, they had in effect broke their covenant, and thrown a contempt upon his institution.

e *A body hast thou provided me.*] After having deliberately considered the various interpretations which have been given of this text, I find none so probable as that of Mr. Pierce, who supposes that the original reading of the Hebrew which the LXX. follow, instead of אזנים was גוף, and that כרה sometimes signifies, to *procure,* as well as to *dig;* and then their version will be justified, and the apostle's following it easily accounted for. Next to this is the solution of the ingenious and learned Mr. Saurin, who supposes the LXX. chose to explain the phrase of *boring the ear,* by that of *preparing the body for service,* as better known to those for whom the version was intended; and therefore preferred also by the apostle, who though he directs this Epistle to the Hebrews to whom the other custom might be known, intended it for general use. Saurin's *Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 17—23. The interpretation given by Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 362.) is much to the same purpose with this of Mr. Saurin.

f *Volume of the book.*] This is, in the Pentateuch, the only book containing prophecies of Christ written before David's time. As if he had said, I rejoice, that I am registered in thy book as thy servant. This is the sense of Bishop Fell. On the whole, I think the apostle so plainly argues from this text, that it proves the psalm to which he refers to be a literal prophecy of the Messiah; and consequently the twelfth verse of it, which affords the only material argument against this interpretation, must either be explained of those iniquities which, though not properly Christ's own, were laid upon him; or rather those calamities which he bore for the expiation of sin.

sins of his people, having no sin of his own to expiate: and oh, with what grateful emotions of heart should we commemorate his love; reflecting that when all other sacrifices would have been vain, he should so readily cry out, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God; when that will of his heavenly Father was, that his body should be offered in so painful and so tragical a manner! With such readiness let us too concur in every intimation of the divine good pleasure: let us, like the blessed man whom David described, not only fear the Lord, but delight greatly in his commandments, (Psal. cxii. 1.) and labour that the law of God may be inscribed on our hearts, and the characters grow larger and deeper there. This shall please God better than the most costly sacrifices, even of his own ritual; better than any whole burnt-offering, and sin-offering, though it were an ox or a bullock, which hath horns and hoofs. (Psal. lxix. 31.) SECT. 13. HEB. X. 8

May we be so sanctified through the sacrifice of Christ, according to the will of God, that we may approach the Divine Being with acceptance. And may we daily be looking to Jesus as set down at his Father's right hand, where he waits till his enemies are made his footstool. Let us likewise expect that great event in full assurance of faith. Let our affections be there where Jesus sits; and let us live in cheerful confidence, that the Saviour, in whose cause we are engaged, will finally appear triumphant over all his enemies and ours. Amen. 10 12, 13

SECTION XIV.

The apostle urges christians to improve the privileges which such an High-Priest and covenant gave them, to the purposes of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and a benevolent love to each other. Heb. x. 15—25.

Heb. x. 15

Heb. x. 15. WHEREOF the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now, where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And *having* an High-Priest over the house of God:

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he *is* faithful that promised.)

I HAVE spoken of Christ, as having by one offering of himself for ever perfected those that are sanctified; and this is a representation very agreeable to the word of God: for *even the Holy Ghost testifieth to us*[a] in that passage (Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.) which I have quoted above, *after having before said, This [is] the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will give my laws* to be written *on their hearts; I will also inscribe them upon their minds:* my Holy Spirit shall work in them cordial dispositions humbly to practise and obey them; He adds, in consequence of this, *their sins and their transgressions*, how many and aggravated soever they may have been, *I will never remember any more. But where [there is]* such an entire *remission of these*, as this great amnesty, this universal pardon, implies, which wipes out the very remembrance of all offences, *[there is] no more* room for any *sacrifice for sin*, which implies that they are remembered, and remain to be expiated. SECT. 14. HEB. X. 15 16 17 18

This *therefore*, my dear *brethren*, is now our happy case; and let us endeavour to enjoy and improve it aright. *Having* such *liberty to enter into the holy places by the* efficacy of this atoning *blood of Jesus: [Having that] new*-discovered *and* ever-*living way*,[b] *which he hath consecrated for us through the vail*,[c] *that is*, by means of *his flesh*, or of that human nature in which he hath vailed his divine glories, and to which it ever becomes us to pay a regard in our access to God. *And [having]* also such *a great* and glorious *Priest over the house of God*, who most faithfully manages his Father's concerns, and bears a most tender regard to ours; Let us not stand at a distance as if God were inaccessible; but, on the contrary, *let us draw near with a sincere* and affectionate *heart, in the full assurance of faith*, supported by such considerations as these, which may well embolden us, (conscious as we are of our own unworthiness,) to make our approach unto him in the most cheerful expectation of his blessing. Only let us take care that this approach be made in a regular and proper manner, as ever we desire to meet with divine favour and acceptance; particularly, as the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the Israelites, to cleanse them from any pollutions they might have contracted, so let us see to it that we come, *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, free from all allowed guilt and indulged sin. *And* this is indeed our case, if we are true christians: our hearts are thus sprinkled by the purifying and cleansing blood of Jesus, as well as *our bodies* in baptism *washed with pure water*,[d] intended to represent our being cleansed from sin. And since we have received such benefits by the gospel which we have embraced, *let us hold fast the profession of [our] hope*,[e] *without* ever giving way to the pressure and agitation of any temptation, or *wavering* in a case where we have such certain and indubitable evidence; *for* we know that whatever storms and tempests may arise, *he [is]* assuredly *faithful who hath promised*; he will stand by to defend us, and to make 19 20 21 22 23

a *Testifieth to us.*] Or, as it might be rendered, *bears witness with us*, that is, *assents to*, and confirms by his testimony, what I have said; in which sense the original word is used, as Raphelius hath shown, by several Greek classics.

b *New and living way.*] Dr. Owen illustrates this, by observing that the blood of other sacrifices was to be used immediately upon its effusion; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use to be offered or sprinkled; but the blood of Christ is, as it were, always warm, having the same spirit of life and sanctification moving in it. So that the way of approach by it is said to be ζωσα και προσφατος, *living*, yet, (putting it for Christ, who is the *Way*,) always, as it were, *newly slain*. See Owen, *On the Spirit*, p. 386.

c *The vail.*] It is well known, that the *vail* was a curtain separating the *holy* from the *most holy* place. The priest could not pass to the sanctuary, unless he passed through it; so Christ could not pass into heaven as our *High-Priest*, till he had taken human flesh in his way; and till it had been, as it were, put aside by death. And I cannot forbear thinking, that it may farther refer to the *Shechinah* being *vailed* by this curtain, which bore so remarkable an analogy to the divine glory of Christ, as vailed by assuming human nature.

d *Bodies washed with pure water.*] Mr. Pierce would make this the beginning of another sentence; *and having washed our bodies with pure water*, that is, "having been solemnly devoted to "God in *baptism*, let us answer the engagements of that holy ordi- "nance by *holding fast the profession of our faith*, &c. considering "that he is *faithful* to the engagements he was pleased to seal unto "us by it." But I think the sense will be very easy and intelligible, if it be connected with the preceding words, as referring to the custom of *washing* their bodies in clean water, before they went to worship at the *temple*, especially upon their solemn days.

e *Profession of [our] hope.*] Instead of ελπιδος, *hope*, our translators read πιστεως, *faith*, upon the authority only of a single manuscript. See Dr. Mills, *in loc.*

SECT. 14. HEB. X. us more than conquerors over all. *And let us consider each other*, and reflect seriously on the circumstances in which we and our brethren are situated, that we may judge what influence we can have over them for their advantage, and may endeavour accordingly *to* 24 *provoke* and stimulate them on *to* the exercise of sincere *love, and* to a readiness *to* all *good works*, by our exhortations, and especially by our example, and by such a conduct towards them as may engage the return of their affection, and the exertion of their zeal for 25 the general good: *Not deserting the assembling ourselves together*,[f] for the solemn purposes of public worship, *as the manner of some* now [*is*,] in order to decline that reproach and persecution which the attendance on such assemblies may draw after it; *but exhorting* and comforting [*one another*] as much as we can; *and* this *so much the rather, as ye see the day approaching*;[g] that awful day, in which we must appear before the tribunal of God, and that day of vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which Christ hath described as so terrible an emblem of it. And let none, who would not share with the enemies of Christ in the destruction which shall be poured out upon them, abandon his people now, and basely betray that cause and interest, by which none shall on the whole be losers, whatever they may for the present suffer on its account.

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 22 WHAT can be more desirable than to approach to God! what more effectually encourage that approach, than the consideration which the apostle here urges: the new and living way which this great High-Priest hath conse- 19, 20 crated! Let us then see to it that we thus approach in the way of his appointment. But if we desire accept- 22 ance, let us attend to the strength of our faith, and the purity of our consciences; that inward purity, without which our baptismal washing will stand us in little stead. To establish us in a resolution of retaining the profession of our faith and hope, amidst all the attempts that may be made to wrest it out of our hands, let us often reflect 23 on the importance of those promises we have received, and the infallible fidelity of that God, who hath condescended to enter himself into such engagements. Let the community of that blessed hope which these sacred engagements afford, unite us in the bonds of the most affectionate love. Instead of watching over each other for evil, 24 let us consider one another's circumstances with the most friendly and compassionate eye. And whatever we behold of necessity or distress, let us immediately be instigated and quickened kindly to attempt relief and assistance; that every one may be, as it were, in a confederacy against the evil by which any one may be attacked.

25 Much will this benevolent disposition be promoted, by a diligent attendance on the ordinances of religious worship; and much is it to be lamented, that it is the manner of so many to forsake them, even the assemblies which are honoured with the promise of the divine presence; a promise, to the accomplishment of which thousands can bear testimony. Let us guard against so ungrateful and pernicious a neglect; and set ourselves to promote, as far as possible, mutual edification; and so much the rather as we see the day approaching; that solemn day, when all our opportunities in this world being come to a period, we must render up an account of all. It is a day in which God will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil; let us therefore give all diligence to prepare ourselves for it; and remember how happily the ordinances of public worship are calculated to promote that preparation.

SECTION XV.

The apostle enforces his exhortation steadily to adhere to their christian faith, by reminding them of the extremities they had endured in its defence, and of the fatal consequences of apostasy. Heb. x. 26, *to the end.*

HEB. X. 26.

SECT. 15. HEB. X. I HAVE urged you to a steadiness and courage in the profession of the christian faith, and have cautioned you against neglecting those acts of public worship by which it is professed, on any consideration whatsoever. And I must continue to inculcate the caution with the greatest seriousness: *for if we sin wilfully*[a] and presumptuously by apostatizing, *after* 26 *having received the knowledge of the truth* with such incontestable evidence and power, *there remaineth yet no more sacrifice for sin*;[b] nor is it possible to find any atonement that shall be efficacious, after having thus ungratefully and wickedly disowned that which 27 God had appointed. *But*, on the contrary, all that remaineth is *a certain fearful expectation of the judgment* of God, *and* of his *fiery indignation, which is* just *ready to devour the adversaries* of his gospel, and shall, in a very little time, be poured out upon them in all its terrors.

28 This we might easily infer from the nature of things, even though we had not been so expressly warned of it in the word of God. For if *any one*, of whatever order and dig-

HEB. X. 26.

FOR if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Mo-

f *Assembling ourselves together.*] Mr. Pierce is of opinion, that when the apostle adds, *as the manner of some is*, he intends to blame the conduct of the Jews, who, on account of their old prejudices against the Gentile converts, absented themselves from the assemblies into which they were admitted; and perhaps also to censure a similar behaviour in the Gentile converts arising from prejudices they had newly contracted against the Jews. And he imagines this, in some measure, is intimated by the use of the word επισυναγωγην. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 1.) But I think the account given of the ground of this caution in the paraphrase, is on the whole much more certain.

g *Day approaching.*] They knew that the day of Christ's final judgment, being certainly future, came nearer and nearer. And from what Christ had said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as to happen in the lives of some who had been present with him about thirty years before the date of this Epistle, (compare Matt. xvi. 28.) they might infer that *that* was now near, though they should not have been able to trace it up into its causes, or to calculate the exact time.

a *If we sin wilfully.*] The emphasis of the apostle's argument must lead us to interpret this of *apostasy from christianity*. But as Diodati well observes, it might perhaps be expressed in this more general manner, to intimate how carefully we ought to guard against *every degree of wilful sin*, lest it should lead to that dreadful conclusion.

b *No more sacrifice for sin.*] This plainly intimates, as Dr. Bates (*Harm.* p. 293.) well observes, that God will not pardon sin without *some sacrifice* or satisfaction; else the argument would be inconclusive.

ses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses:

nity, *who set at nought the law of Moses*,[c] by any presumptuous transgression of it, though that transgression might in itself seem ever so small, *died without mercy on* [*the evidence of*] *two or three witnesses*, and was excluded any benefit from those sin-offerings which were appointed for offences of ignorance and inconsideration: *Of how much sorer punishment do ye suppose he shall be counted worthy*, who hath not merely insulted a faithful servant, but even *trampled upon*[d] *the Son of God*, and who hath not only slighted the method of reconciliation *and* purification which God hath appointed for lower purposes, but *hath accounted the* sacred *blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified*,[e] and solemnly set apart to the service of God, *a common* or an unclean *thing*, like the blood of a malefactor justly executed for his crimes? Now this he certainly doth who rejects the gospel; which cannot possibly be done without the greatest imaginable outrage to the memory of its Divine Author, who, had he not indeed been the extraordinary Person he professed himself to be, would deservedly have been reckoned among the most detestable of impostors. *And* such an offence is in present circumstances the more aggravated, as it is plain, that he who commits it has *offered* the most *contemptuous injury to the Spirit of grace*, by whose miraculous and saving operations the truth of the gospel is demonstrated to such a degree, that the highest blasphemy against him must virtually be expressed by such a conduct as we here suppose.

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

29

Avoid therefore all approaches to this with the most solicitous care, *for* the divine justice is not to be trifled with, as *we know him that hath said*, (Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.) *Vengeance* [*belongeth*] *to me*: *I will render recompense, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord will judge his people*;[f] and if he vindicate and avenge the injury done to them, he will much more severely animadvert upon those which are offered to his Spirit and his Son. Now surely you must immediately be sensible that [*it is*] *dreadful* indeed *to fall into the hands of the living God*; who, living for ever, can for ever punish, in what degree he pleases, the wretched creatures who have made themselves the objects of his final displeasure.

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

30

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

31

But I humbly hope you will be delivered from so terrible a ruin; and that you may, I will lead back your thoughts to former events, which, if duly considered, may be very instructive, and may prove the means of establishing you in your resolution of adhering to the gospel. And I must particularly urge you to *call to remembrance the former days, in which, having been enlightened*[g] with the knowledge of christianity, and solemnly engaged in the profession of it by baptism, *you endured a great contest of sufferings*,[h] struggling and contending as for your lives, or what indeed was much more valuable: *Partly as ye were made a public spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions*, like men exposed on a theatre as infamous; *and partly as ye were made partakers with those who were so treated*, and most affectionately appeared in the defence of the divine cause, at the greatest hazard as well as expense.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:

32

33 Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

33

And indeed I have reason to speak this upon my own knowledge, *for ye sympathized with me in my bonds; and ye took the plunder of your goods*, not only with patience, but *with joy, knowing in yourselves that you have*, upon the security of the gospel-promises, *a* far *better and an enduring substance in the heavens*, where eternal riches and felicity await you, when all the possessions of earth are lost, and all its sorrows come to a perpetual period.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

34

Let the remembrance of these things, *therefore*, animate you to persist in such heroic resolutions, and *cast not away that confidence of yours*, and that free and courageous profession of it, *which hath* so *great* and glorious a *recompense* entailed upon it; even that *of* eternal life and happiness, which the divine goodness will bestow as a gracious *reward* on all who thus maintain it. It will indeed be necessary that, in order to secure it, you should take up a firm and vigorous resolution: *for ye have* still *need of* continued *patience, that having done the will of God*, during this short state of probation here, *ye may receive* and inherit *the promise* of life and salvation, to which ye have already expressed such a firm regard. And I hope you will still go on to maintain the glorious cause; for it is but

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

35

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

36

37 For yet a little while,

37

c *Set at nought the law of Moses.*] This evidently alludes to that very important precept, Numb. xv. 30, 31. which doomed to *certain death* every one who offended with *an high hand*; that is, who was guilty of any wilful, deliberate, and presumptuous sin, whether in matters great or small; though a plea of ignorance or inconsideration was allowed, where the rebellion and presumption was not made apparent by any *overt act*. And this was the foundation of the *sin-offering*, which was in some degree analogous to the smaller punishment inflicted among us, for a crime, in other circumstances, *capital*, where *benefit of clergy* is sought and admitted.

d *Trampled upon.*] As it appears to me, that this is a description of a case that could only occur where what was properly *the sin against the Holy Ghost* was committed, that is, ascribing the miracles wrought by his power to magic, and the operation of demons, I have paraphrased these words agreeable to that principle.

e *By which he was sanctified.*] As it could not on any principles be certainly inferred, that every one who thus apostatized from christianity had been truly *renewed*, I think it very apparent, that this *sanctification* must only refer to his being *externally set apart*, or consecrated to God; though I will not certainly say how far it may, as Bishop Hoadly has thought, refer to the *sacramental wine* representing *the blood of the covenant*. (Hoadly, *On Episc.* p. 453.) Some have interpreted it of the *blood* whereby *Christ* was *sanctified*, or dedicated by God as a *High-Priest*. (Compare John x. 36; xvii. 19.) But the former sense seems to me more natural.

f *The Lord will judge his people*, &c.] The connexion seems plainly to require this interpretation; and it agrees very well with the purpose for which it is here introduced. Very few commentators have considered it in this view; yet since I wrote this, I find Mr. Cradock (*Apost. Hist.* p. 387.) gives it the same sense. And Raphelius (*Annot. in loc.*) hath produced a passage from Xenophon, in which the original word, κρινει, *will judge*, is used to signify, *vindicating*, or pronouncing sentence in favour of.

g *Having been enlightened.*] By some this is understood of *baptism*; and it is certain the fathers use the phrase in that sense. But I see no reason from scripture, for limiting it to that interpretation; or supposing, as Diodati himself does, there was any efficacy in *baptism* to *enlighten*, any more than to *regenerate*. Though, as it was indeed the ordinance by which persons were solemnly entered into the list of those who were in the main, and in the judgment of charity, *enlightened* and *regenerated*, my respect for the opinion of so many eminent persons, ancient and modern, has determined me to hint at the sense they have generally given to it in the paraphrase.

h *A great contest.*] This is the emphatical signification of the word αθλησις, which gives a view of their *courage* and *bravery* very

SECT. 15. HEB. X. 37 *yet a very little time,*[i] *and* as God declared by the prophet Habakkuk, though he supposes he might for a while tarry, (Hab. ii. 3.) *he that cometh,* he that is known by that illustrious title of the Comer, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, on whom our eyes and our hopes are fixed, *will come* to the rescue of his people, *and he will not delay* beyond the period which his wisdom and faithfulness have marked out. He will come and open those important scenes, which shall not only conclude our labours and sufferings, but abundantly repay them all. *But* in the mean time, as it is there added, *the just shall live by* his *faith,* so we are assured by the repeated testimony of the word of God, that the truly good man shall, by firm faith in the divine perfections, promises, and grace, obtain justification and comfort, life and happiness. *Yet if he draw back,*[k] *my soul,* saith the same divine oracle, *shall have no complacency in him:* a total apostasy would expose even the best of men to the divine displeasure and abhorrence; as former experiences of religion would render the guilt of such apostasy more aggravated. *But* blessed be God, we have a cheerful hope of being preserved from so terrible a state; for *we are not of them that draw back to* such dreadful *destruction, but of them that* go on, amidst all opposition, still to *believe;* and, sustained by divine grace, will persevere in that happy way, *to the* preservation and complete *salvation of the soul.*

and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 26 WE see the dreadful consequences of sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth; how diligently should we guard against every, even the least, appearance of it. Should we fall into so great an evil, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin; and O how dreadful, to lose our part in that great Sacrifice, and be consigned over to a certain fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation! but blessed be God, it is not yet our case. It is not every wilful sin which thus seals up the wretched soul to condemnation; for who then could hope for heaven? or who, in the utter despair of heaven, could enjoy this world? may we not say, who could endure it?

If we would avoid this dreadful doom, let us guard against every approach toward any thing which might be interpreted treading under foot the Son of God, or doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. On the contrary, let us ever retain the most reverend affection for the Son of God, and ever cherish the influences of the Spirit. So shall we avoid the threatened vengeance, and escape that infinitely dreadful thing, the falling into the hands of the living God.

To have experienced in any degree the power and efficacy of religion, is the great preservative against apostasy. They who have already, like those believing Hebrews, made great sacrifices to their conscience, ought to feel the force of the obligation. The struggles through which they have already passed, the combats they have already maintained, should have a powerful influence on their future resolution, that they may not stain the lustre of their former victories.

If such trials be appointed for us, may our faith be proportionably strengthened; that we may take joyfully, not only the spoiling of our goods, but the torture of our bodies; knowing that we have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance than worldly wealth, and a far more glorious abode than these tabernacles of clay. Let the recompense of reward be kept continually in our view; that thereby that patience may be supported, of which we ever stand in such evident need, that after we have done the will of God, we may go to inherit the promises.

Let the certain and speedy approach of him that is to come, daily comfort us, and confirm the faith by which we live; and let us still pour out our fervent supplications before God, that we may not draw back, which if we do, it will be infinitely fatal. Then, instead of beholding us with complacency, God's soul will abhor us; and that abhorrence will be proportionable to our violated engagements, and dishonoured profession. Perdition pursues our retreat. Let every consideration, therefore, of honour, of gratitude, of interest, and of safety, concur to urge us on, and to support the steadiness of our faith, till we receive the glorious crown of it, in the complete salvation of our souls.

SECTION XVI.

The apostle enters on a discourse, in which he proposes to the Hebrews illustrious examples of faith, which had appeared in holy men mentioned in their scriptures, and particularly in Abel, Enoch, Noah; and Abraham and Sarah. Heb. xi. 1—16.

HEB. xi. 1.

SECT. 16. HEB. XI. 1 I HAVE spoken of the faith by which the just shall live; and that I may excite you to cultivate that blessed principle more and more, let me *now* enter into a more distinct consideration of it, and set before your eyes, O ye believing Hebrews, some glorious examples of it, with which your sacred history abounds. To consider it, then, in its nature; *faith is the confident expectation*[a] *of things hoped for,* upon the security of the divine promise, and *the* powerful *conviction*[b] *of things* which are *not seen;* but of whose certainty and importance there is such a full persuasion, that they act upon the mind, in a great measure, as if they were present.

HEB. xi. 1. NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

proper for his purpose, while he was thus commending and animating them.

i *Yet a little time.*] Some would render it, *a little, a very little time.*—It has been observed, that ερχομενος, *the Comer,* is a title given to the Messiah, Matt. xi. 3.

k *Yet if ye draw back.*] We render the phrase in Habakkuk, *lifted up.* And it is observable, that the alteration of a *single letter* changes the reading into this sense, in which the LXX. have taken it.—The original word, υποστειληται, properly signifies to *sneak* or *to slink away,* Acts xx. 20; Gal. ii. 12.

a *Confident expectation.*] Compare 2 Cor. ix. 4; Heb. iii. 14. where the word υποστασις is used in this sense; and Raphelius hath confirmed it by some pertinent quotations from Polybius.

b *The* powerful *conviction of things not seen;* ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων.] Ελεγχος, it hath been observed by many learned men, and particularly by Raphelius, *in loc.* is a strict *proof* or *demonstration,* that is, saith Mr. Hallet, such a kind of reason and argument, as both *convinces* the understanding, and *engages* a man to *act* according to that conviction. Accordingly I have rendered it by the word, *conviction,* which I think properly expresses the apostle's meaning.

SECT. 16. HEB. XI.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

To this I would excite you, by considerations peculiarly suited to your own case, as the children of the patriarchs; *for by it the* illustrious *elders obtained an* [*honourable*] *testimony* to their character, and it lay at the root of many of the most glorious things they have ever done.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

By faith we understand that the worlds were adjusted by the word of God,[c] and the several revolutions of them directed by the operations of his secret providence, *as* the whole universe was at first created by his power, wisdom, and goodness, and *the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear:*[d] it is certain no visible cause could produce these things, which would be in effect to suppose them to have produced themselves; we therefore by faith refer them to a divine, invisible Original. 3

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.

And this happy and sublime principle hath wrought even from the beginning of the world, and animated good men to actions most pleasing to God, and honourable to themselves. It was, for instance, *by faith* that *Abel offered to God a greater* and more acceptable *sacrifice than Cain;*[e] *by means of which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous; God*, by the visible tokens of his favour, *bearing witness to his gifts*, which he presented on the altar; *and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh,*[f] and recommends to us in all ages that regard to the great atonement, which he expressed by bringing an animal sacrifice, while Cain contented himself with the vegetable products of the ground. And though Abel became the early victim of Cain's rage, yet that circumstance, in conjunction with the declaration he received of the divine acceptance and favour, is very instructive, in that it affords so powerful an evidence of a future state. 4

5 By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

By faith the celebrated patriarch *Enoch was*, in a miraculous manner, *translated* from among men; so *that he should not see death; and he was not found*[g] any longer among the inhabitants of this lower world, *because God had translated him* to the celestial regions, in a manner before altogether unexampled, nor ever since equalled among mortals, but in the single instance of Elijah. And God thus translated him, not only because he had a regard for his character, but because he would, by such an interposition, give a visible and very important lesson to others, to seek and secure his favour by the exercise of such a disposition. *For before his translation, he obtained witness that he pleased God;* preceding tokens were given of God's favourable regards to him; and that character is expressed by the sacred historian, when it is said (Gen. v. 24.) that Enoch walked with God; that is, he maintained a constant regard to him, and received the indication of his favour; so that there subsisted a holy intercourse and friendship between God and Enoch. 5

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him:* for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and *that* he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

But without a sincere *faith*, as the great principle of action, [*it is*] absolutely *impossible to please* [*him;*] *for he who approacheth to God*, and pretends to walk with him,[h] *must*, as the foundation of that intercourse, firmly *believe that he exists, and* [*that*] *he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and will bestow some peculiar and important blessings upon them. For where there are no such expectations as these, the soul cannot be animated to the labours and struggles of a truly religious life. 6

7 By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the

By faith the patriarch *Noah*, the second common ancestor of mankind, *being admonished by a divine oracle, concerning things which were not yet seen*, and things of such a nature, that no one had ever seen or heard of any thing parallel to them, the dissolution of the world by a flood, and the destruction of all its inhabitants, believed and revered the awful threatening. And *being impressed with* a pious and, in that connexion, most rational *fear* of the divine judgments, with immense labour and cost, amidst all the insults of profane and wicked men, *prepared an ark*, which God taught him to build, *for the* 7

c *That the worlds were adjusted by the word of God.*] As the original word is αιωνας, I was once inclined to have rendered it, *the various ages of the world were adjusted;* and I have included this sense in the paraphrase. But it does not so evidently appear, that the consequence, relating to *things not being made by those that appear*, could be deduced from that principle: I therefore conclude, upon the whole, that this is an instance where αιων signifies, *world;* as is often translated in the New Testament. Bishop Pearson would translate it, *were made of things which do not appear*, that is, made out of *nothing*, without any pre-existent matter, before God created the worlds. Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 58.

d *As—the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear:* εις το μη εκ φαινομενων, κ. τ. λ.] Our translators have rendered this clause, *So that the things which are seen, &c.* But this does not seem to be sufficiently agreeable either to the original, or to the design of the apostle; which was not to deduce the sentiment contained in the latter clause as an inference from the former; but rather to establish the position in the first part of the verse, by the principle laid down in the latter. Accordingly I have given it this turn in the paraphrase, and have taken the liberty to translate εις το, &c. *as*, which clearly expresses, I apprehend, the apostle's intention. The construction of Rom. iv. 16. is somewhat similar to this; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace,* διοτι τυτο εκ πιστεως ινα κατα χαριν, that is, "that it might appear to be of grace, as we have already proved it is." The apostle's intention was, by the latter clause, as an uncontested principle, to establish what he now wanted to prove, namely, that *justification* was by *faith;* and this he does from the consideration of its being by *grace*. It may be proper to consult Mr. Hallet on Heb. xi. 3. note q, who refers to Eph. i. 12; and 1 Cor. x. 6. where the apostle's words, εις το, &c. cannot signify any thing but, *to the intent that.*

e *A greater and more excellent sacrifice.*] A late ingenious writer, Mr. Kennicott, (in his *Two Dissertations on the Tree of Life and the Oblations of Cain and Abel*, p. 197.) has inferred from the word πλειονα θυσιαν, which may be rendered, *a greater* or *fuller sacrifice*, that Cain contented himself with presenting only the *mincha*, a bread-offering, without a *victim;* whereas Abel sacrificed both, and by presenting a *lamb*, showed his faith in the great sacrifice of the *Lamb of God.*—After all that has been offered to the contrary, I must think that the *divine original of sacrifices* is strongly insinuated in this place.

f *Dead, yet speaketh.*] Some would render it, *And for this they say he died*, that is, there is a tradition that he was massacred by Cain, in a dispute about the recompense of a future life, which faith proposes. Saurin's *Sermons*, Vol. IX. p. 54. I rather think it refers to the *testimony* borne, as it were, to a *future state*, by his story, as he was so excellent a person, and visibly approved by God, yet left to suffer by the cruelty of his wicked brother. Some would render λαλειται, *he is spoken of* to this day, as a person of most eminent piety and goodness.

g *Was not found.*] The circumstances of his translation are not mentioned; but some have thought this intimates he was privately translated and sought for, as Elijah afterwards was, 2 Kings ii. 17.

h *Approacheth to God*, and pretends to walk with him.] Raphelius hath shown, that the original word προσερχομενον is applied, in the Greek classics, to *coming to God by prayer;* and it is used in chap. x. 1, 22; and xii. 22, 23. for *approaching* to God in any act of *divine worship*. He therefore justly observes, that it may here be taken in a larger sense, and refer to that steady course of piety and virtue, which is implied in *pleasing God*, or walking with him, as in the former verse Enoch is said to have done; and which, in the preceding clause, it is declared to be impossible for any one to do without faith.

SECT. 16. HEB. XI.

salvation of his house and family; *by* means of *which he condemned the* unbelieving *world*,[l] by bearing a public and convincing testimony against them: *And* thus he *became heir of the righteousness which is* obtained *by faith*;[k] he was pronounced by God a righteous person, though his character was not absolutely free from imperfections, and became by divine grace entitled to the promise of eternal life, of which his temporal deliverance, though so amazing, was only an emblem.

saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 *By faith* that illustrious patriarch *Abraham*, from whom you justly esteem it a peculiar honour and happiness to be descended, *being called* by the God of glory, who appeared to him, *to go out* from his father's house and native land, *to a* distant *place, which* God promised that *he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed* without disputing or murmuring, *and went out, though he knew not* at all *whither he was going*, or to which part of the world he was to steer his course, humbly resigning himself to divine providence to mark out his journey and his abode. *By faith he sojourned* all the remainder of his days *in the land of promise*, when he knew it to be so, *as* [*in*] *a strange country*, without having any property there, unless it was that of a sepulchre towards the close of his life; *dwelling in tents*, easily moved from one place to another, some part of the time *with Isaac and Jacob*;[l] who, in their succession, were *heirs with him of the same promise*, and depositories of it, yet led the same kind of wandering life. But he passed from place to place with cheerfulness; *for he expected* at length to be led on to *a city*, and that not such a one as he had left in his native land, or such as he saw in Canaan, or even in Egypt, grand and populous as some of their buildings were; the object of his joyful and confident expectation, was that city *which* alone *hath* firm and immovable *foundations*, in comparison with which they were but like a frail tabernacle; a city, *of which God* [*is*] *the Builder and Former*, who drew and executed the great plan, and laid out upon it all the richest ornaments, which might raise it to a magnificence worthy of his own abode, and the inheritance of his beloved children.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 *By faith Sarai herself*, notwithstanding some mixture of suspicion, at length, as the worthy consort of such an husband, and worthy mother of such an offspring, *received strength for the conception of seed, and brought forth a child beyond the* due *time of age* for such a purpose, when she was ninety years old, and in the course of nature absolutely incapable of being a mother; *because she accounted him who had promised to be* the *faithful* and Almighty God, who could, with infinite ease, accomplish an event, which then seemed to be, and indeed was, unparalleled. *Therefore* by this mighty principle of faith in her, and in Abraham, *there sprang even from one* father, *and he in this respect*, as it were, *dead*, [*a posterity*] *in multitude as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable*,[m] according to that divine promise, which carried its efficacy into so many remoter ages, and retains it even to this day.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable.

13 Now *all these* worthy and excellent persons, of whom I have here been speaking, *died in faith, not having received the* blessings exhibited in the *promises; but having seen them afar off, and having been* fully *persuaded* [*of them*,] *and embraced* [*them*] with the most cordial affection, and greatest ardour of mind, *and having*, through the whole course of their lives, *confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on earth*; as we know that these holy patriarchs, and some of their most eminent descendants did. (Gen. xxiii. 4; xlvii. 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Psal. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19, 54.) *For they who say such things* as these, and speak of themselves as strangers and pilgrims, *plainly express that they seek a country*[n] different from that in which they dwell, when they use such language. *And* as for these excellent men, *if indeed they had been mindful of that* country *from which they came out, they might* sure *have had an opportunity of returning* to it; for they were a considerable body, and they might have marched back without the probability of meeting with any resistance, and might have expected a subsistence among the relations of their family, who were themselves in a prosperous state, and often expressed, on proper occasions, their regard to these their illustrious kinsmen. *Now therefore* it appears, that *they were desirous of a better, that is, an heavenly* [*country*;[o]] for there was no earthly country, which they seem to have been pursuing. And indeed this is the great excellence of their character, to be governed by such views; *therefore God* determined to bestow this happy land upon them, and he *is not ashamed to be called their God*, in such a peculiar manner, as he has assumed the title, *because he hath prepared them* such *a city* as they sought; whereas if he had done nothing more for them than he did here upon earth, it would have been beneath his dignity to have professed that

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned:

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

l *Condemned the world.*] It is plain that here, as in many other places, a person is said to *condemn* those against whom he furnishes out matter of accusation; in which view Titus iii. 11. may be understood. See the note there.

k *Heir of the righteousness.*] Bishop Cumberland observes, that Noah is the first to whom the name of *righteous man* is applied in scripture. Cumb. *Orig. Gent.* p. 418.

l *With Isaac and Jacob.*] It is plain, from the account of the lives of these patriarchs, that Jacob was born fifteen years before Abraham died: and the oracle given to Isaac before the birth of his children, would sufficiently intimate to Abraham, that he was the *heir* of the promise.

m *In multitude as the stars of heaven, &c.*] Mr. Hallet observes here a great propriety in the apostle's saying that *they should be in multitude as the stars of heaven*, and *as the sand on the sea-shore innumerable*: there being an impossibility of numbering the latter, whereas the former, since they have been reduced into constellations, have been numbered with a considerable degree of exactness. See Hallet, *in loc.* where he endeavours to account, consistently with this observation, for Psal. cxlvii. 4. *He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*, as if this were the peculiar prerogative of God.

n *Seek a country*: πατρίδα.] The original word is very emphatical; it signifies, as it were, a *native* country, or a country in which their *father* dwelt, and is opposed to that in which they were *strangers* and *pilgrims*.

o *Better country, that is, an heavenly.*] The argument, according to the turn I have given it, is much the same with that which our Lord urges, Matt. xxii. 32.

relation; as the title naturally imports something great and excellent, far beyond what these patriarchs received, and indeed what any can possibly receive in this mortal and transitory life. SECT. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

HEB. XI.

LET the many glorious examples of faith, which are here set before us, animate our souls to imitation, and excite in us a generous desire of acting upon that noble and sublime principle, without which it is impossible to please God. And O, may what we call our faith be not merely a speculative and ineffectual assent to the truth, even of the most weighty propositions; but a firm persuasion of their certainty, and a deep conviction of their importance, that we also may obtain a good report. Ver. 6 1 2

May we believe in God, as the Former and Support of universal nature, as most assuredly existing, and as most bountifully rewarding all that seek him with sincerity and diligence. So shall our sacrifices be acceptable to him, as those of Abel were, while with him we look to that great Sacrifice and Atonement, of which his victim was the appointed representation. Like Enoch we shall then be animated to walk with God, and favoured with divine intercourse and communications. And though we cannot expect a translation like his, which should exempt us from the common lot of mortality, we shall be secure of admission into the paradise of God above, and in due time shall ascend to it in our complete persons. We shall then, like Noah, find our safety in the midst of a dissolving world, and while sinners are condemned, be found the heirs of righteousness. 3 6, 4 5 7

While we wait for this happiness, let us endeavour to approve ourselves the genuine children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Ever attentive to the divine call, may we, in obedience to it, be willing to go forth, though we do not particularly know whither; and with an intrepidity like his, may we even be ready to exchange worlds, at the command of God, ignorant as we are of what lies beyond the grave; thinking it enough, that we know it is a land which God hath promised as the inheritance of his children. It is indeed a city that hath foundations, in comparison of which all the most magnificent and established buildings of the children of men are but mean and moveable tents. 8 10

God boasts in the title of its Builder and Maker, having formed and fashioned it for the highest displays of his glory and his love; and in reference to it, he is not ashamed to be called our God; for by bestowing it upon us, he answers all which that high and glorious title might import. May we ever desire this as our better country, and live as its citizens ought; confessing ourselves, in reference to it, to be pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. And though we here receive not the accomplishment of the promises, may we keep our eyes on the objects they exhibit, how distant soever they may seem; and being persuaded of them, may we embrace them; embrace them even with our dying arms, and breathe out our prepared and willing spirits, in full assurance that we are going to receive and possess them. 16 13

SECTION XVII.

The apostle further dilates upon examples and instances of faith in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. Heb. xi. 17—29.

HEB. xi. 17.

BY faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten *son*:

HEB. xi. 17.

I HAVE already mentioned some glorious instances of the faith of Abraham, our illustrious progenitor; but I should be far from doing justice to my subject, if I were not to add another, the most celebrated of all. You will remember, therefore, that it was *by faith* that *Abraham* was supported, *when he was tried*, in that most severe instance, and at the divine command *offered* his son, his only son *Isaac*, whom he loved; *yea, he who had received the promises*, which terminated not only in his seed, but in Isaac by name, *offered his only-begotten* [*son*] in whom they so centred, that they must necessarily have failed, if he had perished without any offspring. So that nothing seemed more difficult, on principles of common reason, than the reconciliation of the promise with the command. Even when he was destined to the altar, *concerning whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, (Gen. xxi. 12.) yet his triumphant faith surmounted even such an obstacle, and it was as wise and rational as it was pious and heroic: *Reasoning* within himself as he did, *that God was able even to raise* [*him*] *from the dead*;[a] and consequently that he could have brought Isaac to life again, if he had really expired under the sacrificial knife, and been reduced to ashes: *from whence he received him even in a figure*.[b] For as his production was a miracle, raising him, as it were, from the dead bodies of those who in a course of nature had no hope of children; so he was in another sense raised from the dead, when God gave him back to Abraham in the mount, in that awful transaction, in which was so significant a representation of Christ's day, (John viii. 56.) and of the method which God took for our redemption, in the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son. SECT. 17. HEB. XI. 17 18 19

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise *him* up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

By faith in a revelation which he then received from God, under that superior direction, *Isaac*, when advanced in age, *blessed* his two children, *Jacob and Esau*,[c] and uttered some remarkable oracles *concerning things* long *to come*, and of such a nature, that no human foresight could possibly reach them. 20

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

a *Reasoning that God was able even to raise him.*] Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that his *faith* was in this respect the more *admirable*, as, so far as we can learn, there never had been *one single* instance of a resurrection from the dead, *in*, or *before*, the days of Abraham.

b *In a figure:* εν παραβολη.] Some think this implies, that his birth was a kind of resurrection from the dead. But the learned Dr. Warburton contends earnestly for it, that εν παραβολη intimates, that the whole transaction was *parabolical* or *typical* of the method God would take for the salvation of men. The learned Wolfius is of the same opinion, (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV. p. 762.) and observes, in support of it, that the Greek word παραβολη answers to the Hebrew משל, and is so used by the Seventy: and that the Hebrews are wont to say משל, *in* or *by a parable* or *figure*, when they would express a *typical representation*. He imagines this interpretation to be the more probable, because the apostle hath put a mark of emphasis upon εν παραβολη, by prefixing και to it, *even in a figure*.

c *Blessed Jacob.*] He was persuaded that God would one way or

SECT. 17. HEB. XI.

By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, in full dependence on the divine promise of an inheritance in Canaan; appointing these his grandchildren tribes in Israel: foretelling the superiority of Ephraim the younger, to Manasseh the elder; *and,* in thankful acknowledgment of that divine goodness which he had so long experienced, at the same time *worshipped,*[d] bowing down *upon the top of his staff,* with which
21 he supported himself as he sat on the side of his bed.[e]

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

22 Again, it was *by faith* that *Joseph,* when *dying, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel* out of Egypt, as a fact which should certainly come to pass, though at a long distance of time; *and* then, in token of his entire dependence upon it, and expectation of the inheritance they would then possess, he *gave a charge concerning* the carrying *his bones* with them, to be interred in the sepulchre of his fathers in Canaan.

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 The case of our illustrious lawgiver will also furnish us with farther glorious examples of that which was in him a kind of hereditary virtue; for it was *by faith* that *Moses, when* he was just *born, was hidden three months by his* pious *parents* in their own house; *because they saw* [*he was*] *a graceful child,* who seemed by his aspect to promise something uncommon. *And they* therefore determined, if possible, to preserve his life, and *feared not the commandment of the king,* requiring all Israelitish parents, on pain of death, to give up their male children, that they might be thrown into the river.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 *By faith* this *Moses, when he was grown up*[f] to maturity of age, and become great in the dignities and preferments of the Egyptian court, on full consideration of all that could be pleaded in favour of secular views, deliberately *refused to be* any longer *called,* as he had before been, *the son of Pharaoh's daughter,* but boldly professed himself an Israelite,
25 and interposed to vindicate his brethren from their oppression: *Chusing* much *rather to partake with the people of God in their affliction, than to enjoy the temporary* and transient *pleasures of sin* which he might have expected had he continued in that magni-
26 ficent but corrupt court: *Esteeming the reproach of Christ,*[g] the infamy that he might meet with in acknowledging himself one of the Israelites whom Christ had been pleased to take under his special protection, and whom God had acknowledged for his anointed people, *greater riches than* all *the treasures in Egypt,* though so opulent a kingdom: *for he directed his regards to the recompense of reward,*[h] which he expected to receive in the invisible and eternal world, and to possess, when princes shall have quitted their
27 thrones, and all the pride of monarchs be laid low. It was also *by faith* that *he left Egypt* in that resolute and heroic manner; *not fearing the wrath of the king,*[i] when he charged him on pain of death to see his face no more; but before he went, boldly predicted the destruction of the first-born, which was to follow all the dreadful judgments already executed; *for he was* inwardly *strengthened* to this dignity and steadiness of conduct, *as seeing him who is* the great *invisible* Being, ever present to the eye of the believing mind, and whose presence and friendship is of such infinite importance, that he who fixes his regards on him, will never by any consideration be influenced to offend him, nor much impressed with the fear of any thing that would tempt him to do this.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter:

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 *By faith* that God would assuredly send his angel on the vindictive design foretold, and spare the houses properly distinguished, *he celebrated the passover, and the pouring forth the blood* of the lamb, which he sprinkled on the lintels and the posts of the doors, as the mark of committing those who dwelt under such roofs to the divine protection; *that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them,* under the security of that

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

another make good his promises to them, though he could not certainly tell *how,* and was mistaken in the person.

d *Worshipped.*] He thought it so great a privilege to be buried in the land of Canaan, that he *bowed his head,* in token of thankfulness for it; which was another demonstration of faith in God's promise. Gen. xlvii. 30, 31.

e *On the top of his staff,* as he sat on the side of his bed.] In the passage referred to, Gen. xlvii. 31. it is said, according to our English version, Israel *bowed himself upon his bed's head.* The apostle says, he *worshipped upon the top of his staff;* and this agrees with the Greek and Syriac translation; and Wolfius adds, that the LXX. always render the Hebrew word מטה, *a staff.* Mr. Hallet, therefore, in a learned note upon this place, is of opinion that the Hebrew word signifies either a *bed* or a *staff,* and that our English translators too implicitly followed the modern Jews, and supposed it here to signify a *bed,* in opposition to the authority of the LXX. and of the apostle. The passages may possibly be reconciled, if there be any occasion for it, by the circumstance mentioned in the paraphrase, as it is not likely that Jacob was now *in bed,* (see Gen. xlvii. 29.) but he might very probably be sitting on the side of it. His leaning on the *top of his staff* shows that he was very *old* and *feeble;* and this circumstance, saith Mr. Hallet, is very pertinently mentioned by the apostle, to intimate that, feeble as he was, he would worship God in the best manner he was able.

f *Grown up.*] Some would more literally render it, *grown great;* that is, a *great man* in power and dignity. But the version I have preferred is justified by Erasmus Schmidius, and by the learned Eos, who, in support of it, cites a remarkable passage from Homer, (*Exercit. Philolog.* p. 252.) and it appears by the account of Stephen, Acts xii. 23. that Moses was now forty years old. I have given a hint of both interpretations in the paraphrase. Some are of opinion that this passage refers to the story which Josephus tells us, of his trampling on the crown when a boy; and that it is as if the apostle had said, "He did not do it as a puerile action, and when he understood not the value of things; but when he knew all the "worth it could be supposed to have." See Tillotson's *Works,* Vol. II. p. 20.—If Josephus's account be right, Pharaoh's daughter had no son of her own, and adopted him, with some view to make him successor to the crown; but I do not apprehend the laws of Egypt would have permitted that, as he was of foreign birth.

g *Reproach of Christ.*] There are some who understand this of the reproach of Israel, God's *anointed* people, and so would render it, *the reproach of the anointed;* but I rather apprehend, considering the sense in which this name is every where else used by the apostle, that it refers to the relation in which Christ stood to Israel, as his peculiar people; so that reproach borne on *their account* was borne *for him,* (1 Cor. x. 9.) and Mr. Fleming (*Christology,* Vol. I. p. 169.) urges this as an argument for Christ's existence before the time of Moses. Du Mont supposes that the Israelites expected deliverance by the Messiah, and that the Egyptians insulted them on that account; and it is certain, reproach borne *on the account of Christ* may be and is called, the *reproach of Christ.* Compare Heb. xiii. 13; Du Mont's *Serm.* p. 151—155. And for the illustration of this he quotes, and by this key explains, Psal. lxxxix. 50—52.

h *Recompense of reward.*] That *reward* could not be *temporal grandeur,* which he might have had with much greater security and advantage in Egypt; nor the possession of Canaan, which he never saw. It must therefore be the *eternal inheritance,* which was discovered to him by the principle here so largely described and recommended.

i *Fearing the wrath of the king.*] As it is so expressly said, (Exod. ii. 14, 15.) that when he first quitted Egypt, and went to sojourn in Midian, *he was afraid;* I apprehend the assertion of the apostle, that *he did not fear the wrath of the king,* refers to the instance mentioned in the paraphrase.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry *land:* which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

peaceful sign: an emblem of the safety we expect by means of the blood of Jesus, the true and great Passover, who is sacrificed for us. SECT. 17.

Again, *by faith* operating in Moses, and in its degree in them likewise, *they passed over the Red sea*[k] sedately, *as* if they had marched *on dry land*, while its waters by the divine command divided, and left the channel bare to them, so that they completed their march through it, and arrived safely on the opposite shore; *which the Egyptians making an* insolent and rash *attempt to do were* all *drowned*, and sunk like lead in the mighty waters, which returned upon them with irresistible violence. HEB. XI.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET these glorious instances of faith be preserved in our memory, and have their due influence upon our hearts. When God calls us to resign our dearest comforts, let us think of that heroic act of faith by which Abraham offered up Isaac, and seemed in him to sacrifice all the promises, as well as his son. Yet he therein acted a part the most strictly rational; as rightly concluding, that God could with infinite ease call him back to life again, and make a person, who had poured forth all his blood on the altar, and been reduced to ashes there, the father of many nations. Let dying parents commit their children to the care of the ever-living God, like Jacob; and worship him who hath fed them all their lives long, and who will never forsake those that put their trust in him. Let those who are called to glorify God, by opposing the unjust commands of great and powerful men, remember the parents of Moses, and remember their illustrious child. Does he now repent that wonderful choice that he made at an adult age? does he now wish that he had been called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, rather than the servant of God, faithful in all his house? does he wish that he had secured the treasures of Egypt, and the temporary pleasures of sin, and declined that reproach of Christ, which has ended in eternal glory? Our hearts, our consciences will soon answer: Let us, then, like him, have respect unto the recompense of reward. Let us endeavour more frequently to direct our regards to God, and live as seeing him who is invisible. Ver. 17 19 20 21 24 25 26 27

And while our faith is thus viewing him, let us look with pleasure to the blood of sprinkling, which places us under his protection; which introduces us to his favour; which secures us from the destroying angel. He will lead us on safely to his heavenly Canaan, if we fall not by unbelief. He will open our passage through seas of difficulty; he will send down upon us every suitable supply, and would much sooner command the skies to rain down bread, or the flinty rock to melt into streams of water, than desert his people in the wilderness. Let all his wonders of power, and of love, to Israel of old, animate our faith: and let them all quicken our obedience; and under a sense of our own weakness, and the importance of this leading, this princely grace, let us daily pray, Lord, increase our faith! 28 29

SECTION XVIII.

The apostle concludes his discourse on faith, by hinting at many other glorious instances of it, and besides several recorded in scripture, refers also to the case of those who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Heb. xi. 30; xii. 2.

HEB. xi. 30.

BY faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

I HAVE mentioned the faith which our forefathers exercised on the miraculous power of God to lead them out of Egypt, and through the Red sea; and I must farther observe, that they continued under the influence of the same principle when they came into the promised land: for it was *by faith* in those who marched round *the* strongly fortified *walls of Jericho*, following the ark, and who at the appointed signal blew the trumpets of rams' horns and shouted, that, contrary to all sensible appearances of possibility, they *fell down*, smitten by the hand of God, without any human force, *having been* only *surrounded seven days* in solemn silence, according to the divine command; how absurd a spectacle soever their procession might appear to the besieged. It was *by faith*, and in consequence of it, that *Rahab the harlot did not perish with the infidels* of that city among whom she dwelt; *having received the spies* hospitably and dismissed them *in peace*, when an alarm was taken by her fellow-citizens, and they searched for them to destroy them. She therefore hazarded her own life to preserve theirs, believing them to be the servants of the Almighty Jehovah, and assuring herself that he could protect her in her efforts for their security, and could make them the means of delivering her and her family; which was accordingly the case. SECT. 18. HEB. XI. 30 31

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthæ: *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets;

And what shall I say farther upon this copious, this inexhaustible subject? *for the time would fail me* if I should attempt *to discourse* at large *concerning Gideon*, who, with so small a band of men, cut off so many thousands of the Midianites; *and Barak*, who freed Israel from the oppression of Jabin, and routed Sisera his general; *and Samson*, who slew so many thousands of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; *and* performed so many other astonishing achievements: I might also speak of the victory of *Jephtha* over the Ammonites, *and* the heroic acts of *David*, in his combat with Goliath, and his other frequent encounters with the enemies of God, and his Israel; *and* even of *Samuel*, who, though his character seemed more pacific, as a prophet and a judge, yet led on the armies of the Lord, on a remarkable occasion, to an illustrious victory. I might also enlarge on the celebrated histories of Elijah, Elisha, *and* others of *the prophets*, particularly Daniel, and the three young worthies, whose magnanimous history he 32

k *By faith they passed.*] M. Saurin observes, with his usual delicacy, that since it very evidently appears, that of those who passed through the sea, there were *some* with whom *God was not well pleased*, (1 Cor. x. 5.) we cannot infer, that *all* the persons afterwards mentioned by name, as instances of *faith*, were, on the whole, in such a state of acceptance with him as to be entitled to his *everlasting favour*. Saur. *Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 47.

SECT. 18. HEB. XI.

hath particularly recorded. I will not dwell on the history of those heroes *who* have transmitted their names to our age, and shall transmit them to all who are to come, with such distinguished honour; but shall content myself with observing, that it was by the exercise of this great principle, that they were raised to those sublime degrees of reputation and glory. It was *by faith* that some of them, after many a painful struggle,

33 *subdued* the *kingdoms* of those princes which had oppressed God's Israel; others of them *wrought righteousness*,[a] and carried their obedience to God, and their zeal for his law to the most extraordinary degrees; others of them *obtained promises* of the most unexpected events in their favour, which were exactly and circumstantially performed; others *stopped the mouths of lions*, which came roaring against them, as if they would have devoured them in a moment, or into whose dens they were thrown.

34 Nay, as to some of them we are expressly told, that they *quenched the violence of* the *fire*, when they were actually thrown into the furnace; others of them *escaped the edge of the sword*,[b] when it was just lifted up to destroy them; *they were strengthened in* the midst of *weakness*,[c] and many of them *became* so *valiant in battle*, that they *repelled*

35 *the armies of the aliens*, or foreign enemies, when they encamped against them. There are also recorded in the prophetic writings other instances, in which *women received their dead* [*children*] *by a resurrection* from the dead; which till these examples, had never been known or heard of. (Compare 1 Kings xvii. 22, 23; 2 Kings iv. 36, 37.) *And* the credible records of succeeding ages inform us of the triumphs of faith in a still more glorious degree: in which several *others*, and particularly seven children, and one pious and holy mother, *were tortured*[d] in the most inhuman manner, to compel them to renounce their religion, and commit idolatry; but endured all with invincible fortitude, *not accepting deliverance*[e] when it was offered them, nor even riches and preferments added to the proposal, *that they might obtain a better resurrection*[f] than their persecutors could offer them, when they seemed more than half dead; even a resurrection to the enjoyment

36 of an everlasting kingdom in the heavens. *And others*, in the same glorious cause, *received the trial of* cruel *mockings and scourgings*;[g] but neither the derision nor the pain could prevail upon them to desert their profession. *Yea*, they proved *also* the utmost force *of bonds and imprisonment*, in which many of them languished for tedious months

37 and years, under all the ill-usage which commonly attends such confinements. And others were brought out from their bonds to the most infamous and painful executions; and *they were* stoned, and *stoned*, and others *sawn asunder*,[h] they were *tempted*[i] by unheard-of cruelties, on the one hand, as well as the offers of immediate deliverance, on the other, and at length *slain with the sword; they wandered about* clothed in the meanest manner, and sometimes, when their former habits were worn out, only in *sheep-skins*[k] *and in goat-skins, being destitute* of the common accommodations of life, *afflicted*, and even *tormented*, sometimes by the fury of their enemies, and at other times by the rigour of the

38 seasons. And though these were persons of the most amiable and venerable characters, *of whom the world was not worthy* that they should inhabit it; *they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and holes of the earth*, that they might hide themselves, if possible, from the rage of their persecutors, who often, like dogs hunting for their prey, followed them even into these last retreats, solitary and inhospitable as they were.

39 *And all these* heroes, in different ages, were supported under their respective trials, severe and extreme as they were, *by* the exercise of a firm and lively *faith* in the fidelity of

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented:

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all having obtained a good report

a *Wrought righteousness.*] Some have interpreted this, not only of their leading lives exemplary for holiness, but *administering justice* to others. But I do not know that the phrase has ever that signification.

b *Edge of the sword.*] Probably this may refer to the deliverance of David from the sword of Saul, and of Elijah and Micajah, from that of Ahab.

c *Strengthened in weakness.*] Some refer this to their being recovered from sickness, by faith and prayer, as Hezekiah, Job, and David were.

d *Were tortured.*] The original word signifies a peculiar sort of torture, which was called that of the tympanum, or drum, when they were extended in the most violent manner, and then beaten with clubs, which must give exquisite pain, when all the parts were on such a stretch. See Wolfius, *Curæ Philolog. in loc.*

e *Not accepting deliverance.*] Probably the apostle here refers to 2 Mac. viii. 11, 14, 23, 29. where there is an evident reference to a *resurrection*, which plainly shows it then to have been assuredly believed among the Jews. Dr. Scott thinks it was revealed to them by Daniel and Ezekiel, in order to prepare them for those severe trials which they were afterwards to undergo for the sake of their religion. (Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. V. p. 208.) But it may be justly debated, how far the passages referred to could afford *certain* proof of a resurrection. It is observable, that Josephus, being probably ashamed to avow a hope which the heathens had so much derided, suppressed this circumstance, and only hints at some expectation of a *future state*.

f *Better resurrection.*] Dr. Owen understands this, as if the apostle had meant, *The better resurrection*, that is, the resurrection which is better than the *resurrection of the wicked*. But it is observed by Jacobus Capellus, that most probably, in that case, the article would have been prefixed, της κρειττονος αναστασεως. The opinion of Crellius and Dr. Hammond is, that the word *better* is to be understood as opposed to a *present remission of their torments*; and this sense I have adopted in the paraphrase; supposing it bears a respect to the deliverance which they would not accept, mentioned in the words immediately preceding. Mr. Hallet is exceedingly clear, that the opposition lies between the resurrection to *eternal life*, which these martyrs expected, and the resurrection of the dead children to *life in this world*, mentioned in the first clause of the verse.

g *Scourgings.*] Jeremiah was buffeted, (Jer. xx. 2.) and some think scourged too. (Chap. xxvii. 15.) But *scourging* was so frequent a punishment, both alone and before a capital execution, (compare Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Vol. I. Book I. chap. viii. § 13; and Dr. Scott, on Matt. xxvii. 26.) that it is probable it was inflicted on many other pious persons on account of their religion.

h *Sawn asunder.*] Dr. Prideaux, (*Connect.* Vol. I. p. 29.) and many others, suppose the apostle might here refer to the tradition among the Jews, that the prophet Isaiah was *sawn asunder* at the command of Manasseh. Calmet understands by this expression, *being torn in pieces*, as it were under a *thrashing instrument*, consisting of wooden rollers, full of sharp iron teeth like a *harrow*. Compare Isa. xli. 15; xxviii. 27; 2 Sam. xii. 31. Calmet's *Diss.* Vol. II. No. 5. p. 134, 135.

i *Tempted.*] Some suppose a mistake in the reading, and that it should be, επυρωθησαν, they were *seared* with a red-hot iron, or *burnt* alive, which undoubtedly would give a still stronger sense. The learned Albert (*Observ. Philolog.* p. 436.) supposes, that instead of επειρασθησαν, the apostle wrote εσπειρασθησαν, which expressed their being *squeezed* to death by *ropes* or *cords* twisted, and drawn tight about the body; or at least *their being strangled*.

k *Sheep-skins: μηλωταις.*] The LXX. in the case of Elijah, translate the word which we render *mantle*, by μηλωτη, a *sheep-skin*. That *sheep-skins* and *goat-skins*, or at least the skins of some animals, were frequently worn by the ancient prophets, seems to be intimated, Zech. xiii. 4.

through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

God, and the invisible rewards and glories of a future state; and it was by this, that, *having obtained a good report*, they persevered to the end. But they *did not receive the* full accomplishment of the *promise* made to their fathers, nor have they yet arrived to the full and complete enjoyment of that glory which faith taught them to expect: *God having*, according to the counsels of his infinite wisdom, *provided something* still *better for us*, in the gospel-revelation; that so the beauty of his conduct and administration might be so much the more apparent; and *that they without us might not be made perfect*:[l] but all might end with the greatest dignity and propriety, in bringing all his children together, to the full consummation of their hopes in Christ Jesus his Son, at the time of his final and triumphant appearance.

SECT. 18.

HEB. XI. 40

Heb. xii. 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

2 Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In the mean time, we may consider this glorious and triumphant assembly, as looking down from the peaceful and blessed state at which many of them are already arrived, and observing the manner in which we endeavour to follow them. And let the thought animate us in a becoming manner. *Being therefore*, as we are, *encompassed*[m] *with so great a cloud of witnesses*,[n] who surround us on every side in a vast, innumerable assembly, the spectators of our trial, *let us lay aside every* incumbering *weight, and* especially *the sin which in present circumstances has the greatest advantage* [*against us*,][o] I mean, a disposition to relinquish or dissemble the gospel, for fear of sufferings; [*and*] let us *run with patience* and perseverance *the race which is set before us*, resolutely persisting in it, how long and painful soever it may be. Looking off from every object which would interrupt us in our career, and *fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the Leader and Finisher of* [*our*] *faith*,[p] who called us out to this strenuous, yet glorious enterprize; who animates us by his example, and supports us by his grace, till the season comes in which he shall bestow upon us the promised crown. He indeed is the most illustrious Example of all, *who for the joy* and glory *that was set before him*,[q] in the view of honouring his heavenly Father, and procuring the salvation of men, and so passing to such exalted honour and felicity, *endured* all the agonies of *the cross, despising the shame* of so ignominious an execution. *And* accordingly, now the infamy, the pain, and the humiliation are ceased for ever, he is ascended to that world, where alone such consummate goodness could receive its proper reward. And there he *is set down*, in conspicuous and peerless majesty, *at the right hand of the* glorious and exalted *throne of God*, there to live and reign in immortal felicity and dignity. And among all the illustrious examples of faith, by whom you may be animated and edified, there is none comparable to him.

HEB. XII. 1 2

IMPROVEMENT.

Is it possible we should read these animated periods, without feeling our hearts glow with a sacred ambition of acting as becomes those who had heard such tidings and beheld such examples? If the triumphs of faith in Rahab, and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephtha, cannot move us, nor even those of David, and of Samuel; if we are insensible of the martial prowess which they exerted in firm dependence on the Lord God of hosts; let us behold other combats, in which they who seemed weaker, became yet more gloriously victorious. Let us remember, not only the mouths of lions stopped, but the violence of fire quenched, when the faithful servants of God were thrown into it: yea, let us behold those who endured its unquenched violence, and turned all those painful and terrible sensations into an heroic occasion of expressing the superior ardour of their love to God, and the stedfastness of their faith in him. Let us remember those youths, and children, and women, among the rest of these worthies, and indeed among the worthiest of them, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Ver. 31, 32 33 34 35

In vain were all the terrors of persecuting rage and cruelty opposed to these triumphs. They submitted to im- 36

l *That they without us might not be made perfect.*] It is debated, whether this refers to the most perfect state of the church *on earth*, and so expresses a *decorum* in the conduct of Providence, in gradually improving the church of God; or to the glory of the future state. I have given in the paraphrase what seemed to me the most noble and important sense.—The learned Wolfius (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV. p. 774.) mentions with approbation the exposition of Alexander More, to this effect, that the promise which these worthies did not receive related to the first personal appearance of the Messiah: that the better thing which God hath provided for us is, the promise of Christ's second appearance, that they might *then* be made perfect, but not without *us*, though *we* have received the accomplishment of the first promise without *them*.

m *Being therefore encompassed, &c. let us.*] Our translators have rendered this, *Wherefore seeing we also*; connecting και with ημεις, whereas it should be joined with τοιγαρουν, and considered as a kind of expletive.

n *Cloud of witnesses.*] Capellus thinks this expression is an allusion to vast numbers of birds flying together like a *cloud*, Isa. lx. 8. The word *witnesses* certainly alludes to the Olympic race, where persons were appointed to stand at the *mark*, to observe who first came thither, and give evidence in favour of the *conqueror*; upon whom therefore a *crown* was bestowed according to their testimony. The allusion in *laying aside every incumbrance*, is too evident to need farther illustration. See the next note.

o *In present circumstances has the greatest advantage*: αμαρτιαν ευπεριστατον.] This (as some imagine) may signify *a sin which sits easily about us*; which is explained of *the vanity of the world*, that seems to be matter of comparatively little danger, yet may be a fatal entanglement to us; as light garments may to those who run a race, when they are blown about by the wind. Others would render it, *The well circumstanced sin*, in opposition to what is απερισπαστος, without any recommending circumstance, or *bare of ornament*. Thus it is illustrated by Dunlop, Vol. I. *Serm.* xiii. p. 309—316.

p *The Author and Finisher of our faith.*] It must be confessed the word [*our*] is not in the original; but the *faith* of which *Christ* is the *Author* and *Finisher* must be the faith of christians; and when he is said to be the *Author and Finisher of our faith*, it must signify not only that he was an illustrious *Example* of it, but that, as our *Leader*, he brings us to it, and carries us on in the exercise of it, till we attain the complete felicity to which it was intended to introduce us. The word, *looking*, αφορωντες, properly signifies, our *taking off* our regard from other things, that we may fix them upon Christ.—Mr. Dunlop thinks Christ is called the *Author and Finisher of faith*, in allusion to the judges of the games, who set laws before the contenders, whereby they were to govern themselves, and then adjudged the crowns to the conquerors. Thus, says that excellent writer, he eases us of our burdens, animates our faintness, retards the progress of our enemies, and at length will with his own hands set upon our heads that beautiful diadem which he hath purchased with his own blood.

q *For the joy that was set before him.*] Some would render it, *Instead of the joy that lay before him*, meaning the honour and happiness he might have enjoyed in the present world. But προκειμενης has so evident a reference to ver. 1. that I cannot by any means acquiesce in that interpretation. Besides, the word αντι may well signify, *set against that joy*, and then the meaning will be that he despised the shame of the cross in comparison of the joy set before him. Nor can we imagine any love more disinterested than that which should make his recovering sinners to God and happiness the great joy of his heart, and, in subserviency to the divine glory, the grand motive of his actions and sufferings.

SECT. 18. prisonment, and banishment, how dear soever liberty and their native country might be; they quitted their commodious habitations for rocks and caves, and their comfortable apparel for sheep-skins and goat-skins. And when deserts and dens could no longer shelter their wretchedness, but they were seized by their blood-thirsty
HEB. XI. enemies, they beheld and endured, undismayed, the most horrid instruments of death. When the piercing sword
37 entered their vitals, when overwhelming stones dashed them in pieces, when the torturing saw was tearing out their very entrails, there was a principle within superior to all these, which nothing could pierce, which nothing could rend away, which nothing could overwhelm. God hath done an honour to our nature in raising up such illustrious
38 persons, of whom the world was not worthy, and whose distinguished worth could never have been manifested in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, had it not been called out to such rigorous trials. Well might they rejoice on any terms in their dismission from a state of existence, so far beneath the elevation of their views. And though their names may be perished from among men, and the distinct history of each lost in the crowds of countless multitudes, yet are they all in remembrance before God; and the death of each of his saints, in such circumstances, peculiarly precious in his sight. They are now bathing in those rivers of delight which flow through the celestial
40 paradise, and waiting the full consummation of their hope in that better resurrection, in the views of which they suffered so bravely. In the mean time, they look down, as it were, from the battlements of heaven, upon our combats, upon our race. O, let them not see us basely shrinking back, or loitering! Let us lay aside every weight;
HEB. XII. let us especially guard against the sin which most easily besets us. And to establish all our fortitude, and to awaken all our ardour, let us look to an Object brighter and nobler than all these, even to the Son of God, the Sun
1 of righteousness, shining in high pre-eminence above all this cloud, and as it were gilding it by the reflection of his
2 effulgent rays. Let us look to Jesus, who leads us on; to Jesus, who will complete the triumph of our faith, and set the crown on the head of every one who overcometh! Let us daily think what agony, what ignominy, he endured for us; and let every consideration of noble ambition, of duty, and of gratitude, fire our souls and add wings to our zeal: so shall we at length share in his joy, and sit down victorious with him on his throne, as he hath also overcome, and is set down with the Father on his throne.

SECTION XIX.

The apostle animates the believing Hebrews to bear and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interest of peace and holiness. Heb. xii. 3—14.

Heb. xii. 3.

SECT. 19. IN order to encourage you, my dear brethren, in your christian course, I have directed you, and I must again direct you, to the Lord Jesus Christ; *for* what can be more important than to *consider him*,[a] *who*, with patient fortitude, *endured such* obstinate and
HEB. XII. perverse *contradiction of* ungrateful *sinners against himself*. Think how great and
3 illustrious a Person he was, and what severe things he suffered, *that you may not grow weary* in your christian course, *nor faint in your minds*, when called to share in some
4 degree of his trials. And indeed you will be inexcusable if you should desert his cause, on account of any such trials as you have yet endured; for *you have not* as *yet* undergone the severest proofs of your integrity, nor *resisted unto blood, striving against sin*,[b] as he did,
5 who made his life a sacrifice to duty. *And ye* seem to *have forgotten the exhortation*[c] of the word of God, *which speaketh to you, as to* his *sons*, (Prov. iii. 11, 12.) saying, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord*, as if it were a small matter; *nor faint* and sink, *when thou art rebuked by him;* but avoid the extremes of proud insensibility,
6 and entire dejection. *For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth*, with seem-
7 ing severity, *every son whom he receiveth*[d] to peculiar favour. It is evident, therefore, that *if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as* wise and affectionate parents deal *with* their beloved *sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not*, more or less? There are scarce any children who do not sometimes need correction, and no wise
8 and good parent who will always forbear it. *But if ye are without chastisement, of which all* the genuine children *are partakers, then are ye* treated as men often treat *bastards*,[e] about whose education they are often careless, as being ashamed of them, and looking upon them as a scandal to their families; *and not* as they treat their legitimate *sons*, whom they intend to make their heirs, and concerning whom they are solicitous that they may be happy themselves, and a credit and comfort to the family they stand related to; which a child left to himself, without correction, is by no means like to prove.
9 *Now if*[f] *when we had fathers of our flesh, who corrected* [*us,*] *we gave* [*them*] *rever-*

Heb. xii. 3.

FOR consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected *us;* and we gave *them* reverence:

a *Consider him:* ἀναλογίσασθε.] The original word is very emphatical; and, as Erasmus Schmidius observes, is a metaphor taken from *arithmetical* and *geometrical proportions*. So that it signifies the great *accuracy* and *exactness* with which they should consider the Author and Finisher of their faith, and especially the analogy between his case and their own.

b *Resisted unto blood.*] It has been justly observed by several commentators, that there are many agonistical terms in this context. In the phrase before us, there seems to be an allusion to the *pugiles*, or boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often besmeared with blood. M. Saurin justly observes, in his beautiful illustration of this text, (*Serm.* ix. p. 90.) that sometimes men were killed by the blows of the *cestus*. See also Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

c *Ye have forgotten the exhortation.*] Beza, and some others, chuse to read this clause with an interrogation, *Have ye forgotten the exhortation?*

d *Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in these words. To *receive*, signifies here, to *have a particular regard for*. Compare Isa. xlii. 1. in the LXX. The passage is quoted from Prov. iii. 11, 12. and the last clause of the apostle's citation, which is, *And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, is, by our English version, and the old Latin, there rendered, *Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*. And this is agreeable to the modern pointing. But without any change in the Hebrew letters, the clause may be translated as it is by the apostle, agreeably to the rendering of the LXX. and some other ancient versions. See Mr. Hallet, *in loc.*

e *Bastards.*] In those dissolute ages there were among the heathen many base-born children. And it is highly probable, that as for such, their education (like that of Jephtha, whose fatal error might perhaps be owing to it) was much neglected, so as to come almost into a proverb.

f *Now if.*] Instead of εἰ δὲ, the Syriac version seems to have read ει δε, *but if*. This reading is followed by Curcellæus, Beza expresses some approbation of it.—The learned Albert, and Raphelius, consider the clause as a smart and animated interrogation, and

shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

ence,[g] and submitted patiently and quietly to their discipline, *shall we not much rather*, SECT. on the justest principles of filial duty, *be in subjection to the* great *Father of* our *spirits*, 19. by whom that noble part of our nature was produced, in the production of which our earthly parents had no share? *And* indeed we know this to be necessary, if we desire to HEB. *live*,[h] since rebellion against him will be infinitely fatal, and expose us to a dreadful and XII. capital punishment. 9

10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

But not to insist on considerations of terror, let us attend to those of a more ingenuous 10 nature, and particularly those which arise from the reason of things, and a view of what will on the whole be most conducive to our own truest advantage. *As for* our earthly parents, *they indeed, for a few days*,[i] while we were in a state of infancy and childhood, *corrected* [*us*] *as they thought good*, and there might sometimes be a mixture of weakness and arbitrary passion in their chastisements; *but* we are sure this can never be the case with respect to our heavenly Father. O, far from that: if *he* take the rod into his hand, it is *for our advantage*, and *that we may be partakers of his holiness;* which is indeed the greatest dignity, beauty, and glory of the rational nature, and what most immediately tends to the happiness of time and eternity. *Now* it is true, that *all chastening for the* 11

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

present seemeth not to be [*matter*] *of joy, but of grief:* it is painful to the flesh, and human nature would rather desire to be excused from it: *but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness*,[k] *to those that are* in a suitable manner *exercised therewith*.[l] It produces and improves those virtues which afford peace and joy to the mind, and like a nobler crown than that which many endure so much to obtain, richly rewards the most strenuous labour, and most afflictive struggle.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees:

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Therefore rally your languid spirits, *lift up the hands that hang down*,[m] that they 12 may exert themselves in this glorious combat, *and* strengthen *the feeble*, tottering *knees*, that they may hold out to the end of this important race. *And* by the proper exercise of 13 discipline in your christian societies, and by all the other offices of true and faithful friendship, *make straight paths for your feet*. Regulate matters so, that the way of duty may be as obvious and easy as possible, *that the infirm*, the lame, and the decrepit *may not*, by discouragements and temptations, *be turned out of the way*, or thrown down, *but* that every such feeble traveller in the way to Sion *may rather be healed;* recovered from falls or weakness, and strengthened to a course of more strenuous and persevering piety.

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

And while the jarring interests of this world so often occasion scandalous contentions between men and even between christians, let it be your faithful and zealous care to *pursue* 14 *peace with all men*, even when it may seem to flee from you. *And* at the same time remember, whatever the consequence may be, to cultivate universal *holiness* in all its branches; *without which*, how ready soever men may be to flatter themselves with vain expectations, *no man shall see the Lord*. For it is his unalterable decree, for ever to exclude those souls in which sin reigns, from that sight of him in the celestial world, for which their tempers and dispositions render them altogether unfit, even to a degree of utter incapacity.

IMPROVEMENT.

In what clearer words can those exhortations of the apostle be expressed! by what more powerful motives can Ver. 14 they be enforced! Behold the whole of our duty comprehended in one word: to follow after peace and holiness! Behold the most awful engagements suggested, that no man, whatever his profession, or hope, or confidence may be, can possibly see the Lord without it! What a solicitude should it awaken to cultivate holiness in ourselves, to promote it in others, and to remove every obstruction as much as possible. "Awaken our spirits, O Lord, by thy "good Spirit, that the most languid hands and feeble knees may be strengthened and confirmed." And that they may be strengthened, let us look to our great Leader, to him who passed through so many years, in the midst of 12 the most violent opposition, the most perverse contradiction. Surely we might see enough to animate us to main- 3 tain the combat, even till we left the last drop of our blood in the place, when we strive against sin, against his 4 enemies and ours, to deliver us from the power of which, he assumed flesh and blood and died.

He, the best beloved Son, was distinguished by his Father's chastisement, though there was not the least degree

produce various passages to show that this is the force of the Greek particle, εἰπὲ.

g *When we had fathers of our flesh—we gave them reverence.*] It had indeed been more literally rendered, *We had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence:* which some consider as a Hebraism, as if he had said, *Who corrected us that we might give them reverence.* But it seems more natural to understand the particle, καὶ, as connecting the two clauses. *We had fathers of our flesh, and we gave them reverence.* In which view the version I have given fully expresses the apostle's design.

h *And live.*] This awful yet tender insinuation of the terrible consequences of rebellion against the Father of spirits, (in which there is an allusion to the capital punishment to be inflicted on a disobedient child, Deut. xxi. 18, &c.) is very remarkable, and an instance of the apostle's forcible manner of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique manner, and in very few words. Compare Rom. xii. ult. 1 Tim. iv. 16; Tit. ii. 15; Phil. i. 29; Heb. xii. 28. and many passages to be found in all his writings.

i *For a few days.*] This is to be applied both to our earthly parents, and our heavenly Father, and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation that this *whole* life, when compared with our *future* being, is but as a *few days:* indeed infinitely less than the days of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth.

k *Peaceful fruit of righteousness.*] Possibly alluding to the crowns of olive given to the victor in the Olympic games, which was also an emblem of peace. The learned Bos would translate the word, εἰρηνικὸν, *pleasant, joyful*, it being usual to express *pleasure* and *happiness* by *peace;* Wolfius is of opinion, that the expression refers to that *peace with God which we obtain by faith.* See *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV. p. 783.

l *Exercised thereby.*] Not only corrected, but *instructed* and *edified;* setting themselves to search out the proper lessons which afflictive dispensations are intended to teach.

m *Lift up the hands that hang down.*] The connexion of these words in Isa. xxxv. 3. from whence they are borrowed, leads us to understand them of assistance given to others. But this must by necessary consequence suppose a care to *exert ourselves* with vigour and resolution. It is certain that these are likewise agonistic phrases, by the following expression, *make straight paths for your feet*, which some understand, ordering their lives so that others might be directed and encouraged by their example. Diodati gives it a singular sense, as if it had been said, By your voluntary and cheerful obedience, make the rules of the gospel seem easy. I have in the paraphrase endeavoured to unite both the views to ourselves and others, as it is certain one could not be intended as exclusive of the other.

SECT. 19. HEB. XII.

of failing in him to deserve it. But the chastisement of our peace was upon him. And shall we who have merited to be chastised with scorpions, mourn at the rod? Let this scripture be attentively reviewed, and laid up in our mind, to dispose us to the most exemplary patience under affliction; and to guard against the opposite and dangerous extremes of despising divine corrections, or fainting under them. Would we wish to be excused from the 8 tokens of God's paternal love? Would we wish to be neglected, as if we were bastards, rather than cultivated with the discipline of beloved children? Were we submissive to our earthly parents, and shall we rebel against our 9 Father in heaven? Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live? May our souls remember the unanswerable argument and the awful motive to this subjection. In what would opposition end, but in death? and how unreasonable would that opposition be? Is God in these latter ages of the world become an arbitrary and tyrannical Being, that his proceedings should now be suspected and censured? Is he no longer concerned for the profit and advantage of his children? or is it no longer desirable to be partaker of his holiness? of that holiness, which is to fit us to see and enjoy him for ever? Lord, should each of us say, I bless thee, that thou hast made me partaker of thy providential bounties, of thy gospel, of thy grace, in any degree: but oh, my soul longs to 11 be partaker of thine holiness, to bear thine image more completely, as the great glory and blessedness of my nature. For this therefore would I submit to thy corrections, though for the present ever so grievous, and wait those peaceable fruits of righteousness which will be so rich an equivalent for all.

SECTION XX.

The apostle solemnly cautions them against despising the blessings of the gospel, and sacrificing them to any secular views, or animal gratifications; and enforces the caution by representing the incomparable excellence of those blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced; which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious as that was, did by no means equal. Heb. xii. 15—29.

HEB. xii. 15.

SECT. 20. HEB. XII.

I HAVE been earnestly exhorting you to cultivate holiness in your own hearts and lives; and I must farther press it upon you, that you endeavour to maintain a friendly and brotherly inspection over each other. *Look to it*, therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, *lest any one*, by apostasy from the christian religion, 15 *fall short of the grace of God*, under the day of grace and dispensation of the gospel; *lest any root of bitterness*[a] and poison, *springing up* unheeded, *occasion trouble* to the society in general, *and by it*, before you are aware, *many be* disturbed and *defiled*, through 16 the contagion of so bad an example: *Lest there* [*be*,] for instance, *any fornicator*, who should abuse the liberty of the gospel into an occasion of gratifying his fleshly lusts; *or* any other voluptuous and *profane person*,[b] who should put an open contempt upon spiritual blessings, sacrificing them to the hope of some present indulgence; *as Esau, who, for* so mean a thing as *one meal, gave away his birth-right*,[c] even all the peculiar and 17 religious honours, as well as revenues, of his primogeniture. *For ye know, that when afterwards he would gladly have inherited the blessing*, which was its most valuable attendant, *he was rejected*;[d] *for* when he would have persuaded Isaac his father to have revoked and transferred that which he had just before pronounced upon his brother Jacob, *he found no room for repentance*,[e] no possibility of changing his father's mind by all his submissions and entreaties; *though he sought it earnestly*, and even *with tears*, yet still Isaac persisted in what he had done, and said, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be "blessed," Gen. xxvii. 33.

HEB. xii. 15. LOOKING diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

18 The inestimable privileges and prerogatives, which the gospel brings along with it, so superior to the Mosaic law, add great weight to these exhortations and cautions; *for ye*, who are proselyted to christianity, *are not come to* Sinai again, to *the* awful *mountain which was the object of touch*,[f] though the touch of it were prohibited on so high a penalty; *and to the burning fire* that surrounded it, *and the thick cloud and darkness, and* dread- 19 ful *tempest*, which were the tremendous signals of God's descent upon it; *And to the sound of the trumpet*, which at length waxed exceeding loud, (Exod. xix. 18, 19.) *and the voice of* distinct *words*, spoken with a sound which reached all the thousands of Israel, and with *which they who heard* were so powerfully affected, that they *entreated the word might not be continued*, or carried on any farther *to them*, but that the remainder of what the 20 Lord had to say to them, might be delivered by the mediation of Moses: *For they were not able to endure that* charge *which was pronounced;* so that there seemed little room for the caution given, *and* that with so much severity, that it was added, *If so much as a*

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more;

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much

a *Root of bitterness* and poison.] The word ρόζ, which is used, Deut. xxix. 18. properly signifies an *infectious kind of plant*, which by its influence taints other vegetables which grow near it.

b *Profane person.*] Esau is called a *profane person*, because as a *prophetic blessing* went along with the *birth-right*, there was a *profane* contempt of it in the infamous bargain here referred to. And as an immoderate eagerness in the gratification of appetite would naturally imply a contempt of spiritual and divine blessings to be sacrificed to such gratifications, it was properly expressed by *profaneness*.

c *For one meal gave away his birth-right.*] That seems the just rendering of αντι βρωτεως μιας απεδοτο τα πρωτοτοκια αυτου. Dr. Barrow, I think, would render it, *for one little eating bout;* but that seemed not sufficiently grave.

d *He was rejected.*] From comparing the blessing of Jacob and Esau, (Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 39, 40.) it will appear that there must be something *spiritual* in the blessing of Jacob; else Esau would not have been said to be *rejected*, considering what he obtained. See Dr. Goodwin's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 43.

e *No room for repentance.*] We render it, *no place for repentance.* The meaning of this undoubtedly is not, that he would have *repented*, and *could not;* but that there was no *room* for his repentance, it would not be regarded, or, in other words, that his father's mind could not be changed.

f *Mountain which was the object of touch:* ορει ψηλαφωμενω.] Dr. Wall, in his note on this place, declares himself inclined, if he had the authority of any manuscript or version to support him, to read ω ψηλαφωμενω, *which might not be touched*, referring to the prohibition in Exod. xix. 13. and which the apostle mentions in the very next verse. But there is no necessity at all for this alteration. For it is not intimated by the expression, that the mountain might *lawfully* be touched, but that, as I have translated it, it was *the object of touch*, which indeed is implied in the very prohibition itself. And in thus characterizing Mount Sinai, it was his intention to inti-

as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear, and quake.)

22 But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

24 And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven

26 Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things

beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or struck through with a dart, if it escape immediate death from the tempest and the lightning. (Exod. xix. 12, 13.) *And the appearance was so dreadful* [*that*] *Moses* himself, who was happy in such unparalleled degrees of the divine favour, and accustomed to converse with God in so intimate a manner, when urged by the people to act as their mediator in this awful transaction, *said*, Though I consent to undertake the charge, *I do* nevertheless *exceedingly fear and tremble.*[g] *But* 22 *ye*, my dear brethren, *are* so happy as to be *come to* a dispensation, the reverse of all these terrors, even to the mild and gentle discoveries which God makes of his presence on *Mount Sion*;[h] *and to* the holy and joyous solemnities which grace *the city of the living God* situated there, even *the heavenly Jerusalem*, his sacred and everlasting abode; *and to myriads of* surrounding *angels*, whom it is impossible to number. Ye are come *to the* 23 great *general assembly*[i] *and church of the first-born*,[k] the priests of God, *who are written in heaven*, whose names are registered among the inhabitants of the place, the denizens of that city, *and* ministers of God's temple there. Above all, it is to be remembered, that ye are come *to God, the* supreme *Judge of all*, from whose sentence there can be no appeal; *and to the spirits of the righteous*, whose guilt being entirely expiated, they are *made perfect*[l] and complete both in holiness and happiness, so far as may consist with the separate state, in which they are joyfully waiting the appearance of their Lord. To this 24 society you are related, *and* ye shall shortly arrive at that world where it holds its supreme residence; since you have happily drawn near *to Jesus, the Mediator of the new* and better *covenant*, far exceeding that established with Israel of old by the mediation of Moses: *and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than* [*the blood of*] *Abel*;[m] crying for pardon, whereas his cried aloud for vengeance.

And since this is the nature of the dispensation under which ye are now brought, let 25 me solemnly charge it upon you to *see to it that ye reject not him that speaketh* to you with these circumstances of endearment as well as solemnity: *for if they escaped not* capital punishment *who rejected him that*, by divine inspiration, *gave forth oracles on earth*,[n] *how much more* [*shall*] *we* [*not be able to escape*] *if we turn away from him* [*that speaketh to us*], *from* his throne in *the heavens?* If all indignities done to Moses, a mortal man, when speaking by divine authority, were so severely avenged; how much more those offered to the Lord Jesus, who condescended to come down from heaven, and lay aside the glories in which he there dwelt, to undertake the office of our Lawgiver, and our Mediator?

And indeed the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom God has now spoken to us, is the Person 26 that presided in that great solemnity of giving the law, to which we have been referring. It was he, *whose voice then shook the earth*, and whose Spirit inspired the prophets; *but now he hath promised, saying* by one of them, (Hag. ii. 6.) Behold, *yet once more I* make so thorough a reformation, that I may be said to *shake not the earth only, but also the heavens?*[o] For it is in such language that he hath chosen to represent the change of the Mosaic economy for that of the gospel. *And* it is evident that *this* [*expression,*] *Yet* 27 *once more*, or for the last time, not only *signifies the removal* and change *of the things* there said to be *shaken*,[p] that is, of the ordinances of Moses, *as of things which were*

mate that it was an earthly mountain, not like Mount Sion, *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*

g *Moses said.*] This circumstance is not recorded in the Mosaic history. Some imagine that the apostle received it by divine *revelation*; and others resolve it into a *tradition*, the truth of which his *inspiration* enabled him to distinguish. Mr. Calvin supposes Moses spoke these words in the name of the people.

h *Mount Sion.*] There seems to be throughout this whole period a reference to the manifestation God made of himself upon Mount Sion, as being milder than that upon Mount Sinai. And the heavenly society with which christians are incorporated, is considered as resembling the *former* (that is, Mount Sion) in those circumstances in which it was more amiable than the *latter*. Sion was the *city of God*. In the temple, which stood there, cherubim were the ornaments of the walls, both in the *holy* and *most holy* place, to signify the presence of *angels*. There was a *general assembly* and congregation of the *priests*, which were substituted instead of the *first-born*, of whose *names catalogues* were kept. There was God, as the supreme *Judge* of controversies, giving forth his oracles. The *high-priest* was the *mediator* between God and Israel, (compare Luke i. 8—10.) and the *blood of sprinkling* was daily used.

i *The general assembly;* πανηγυρει.] The learned Albert shows (*Observ. Philolog.* p. 441.) that this word properly signifies, a stated convention upon some joyful and festival occasion; particularly that it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games. In which view it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general *terror*, when they were convened before Mount Sinai.

k *First-born.*] Saints are called the first-born, because, under the law, the first-born were peculiarly appropriated to God, and *heirs* of a double honour and inheritance.

l *Just men made perfect.*] *Justified* before God, *sanctified* in their natures, and *holy* in their lives. Dr. Watts thinks the apostle here uses the expression *just*, or *righteous*, to intimate that he included the patriarchs, or Jewish saints; and that there was a peculiar propriety in doing it, as he is writing to the Hebrews. Watts's *Death and Heaven*, p. 72.—Mr. Baxter urges this as a proof of the distinct existence of the soul in a separate state.

m [*Blood of*] *Abel.*] By this some understand the *blood of sacrifices* in general, called the *blood of Abel*, because he is the first of whose animal sacrifices we read: but there is a harshness in that expression not easily paralleled; I should therefore rather understand it of the blood of *Abel himself*, as referring to the gentle and gracious character of Christ, and the blessings, instead of vengeance, drawn down by his blood. There is certainly some transposition of what one would have thought the most natural order here; but it must be ascribed to the rapturous manner in which St. Paul conceived of these things, and his fulness of matter when he touched upon them.

n *Him that gave forth oracles on earth.*] This is generally expounded of Moses. Mr. Pierce refers it to God; since it is said, *his voice there shook the earth*, which he saith must be the voice of God. And the argument of the apostle, according to him, is taken from the different manner of speaking; his speaking *on earth* being accompanied with *earthly* signs, &c. whereas his speaking *from heaven* means speaking *by Christ* coming down from heaven, and declaring *heavenly things*, (John iii. 12, 31, 32; 1 Pet. i. 12.) more glorious than the law. (2 Cor. iii. 6—11.) But it may be objected, that God spoke to them *from heaven*, when he gave the law at Mount Sinai, and that the words, *whose voice*, may refer to the latter clause, *Him that speaketh from heaven*. Yet even on this supposition, he that *speaketh from heaven* must, I think, be *God*, since it is said, that his voice *shook the earth*, verse 26.

o *Shake not the earth only, but also the heaven.*] This *shaking* must refer to the *alterations* made in the *constitution* of religion, and be considered not as introductory to, but consequent upon, the coming of the Messiah. Many think this refers to the *new heavens and earth*, or the state of glory to be at length introduced. Grotius explains it of the extraordinary phenomena in the heavens, and on the earth, at the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, and mission of the Spirit, as in part an accomplishment of this prophecy. But there would be great room to debate, how far these were more extraordinary than the commotions on giving the Mosaic law. I therefore chose to adhere to the other, as the most probable interpretation.

p *Of the things shaken:* σαλευομενων.] The original word is very elegant and expressive: it being, as the learned Bos observes, *Exercitat. Philolog.* p. 259. a metaphor taken from ships at

SECT. 20. HEB. XII.

made and *constituted* only for a time;[q] but also strongly intimates, that he would introduce thereby a dispensation to be changed no more, *that the things not to be shaken* any more *might* be set up, and *remain* fixed on a perpetual basis; even that eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace, which God hath established by Christ Jesus his Son. *As therefore we have received* such *an unshaken kingdom*, which shall never be removed
28 to make way for any different establishment, and which gives us the assurance of a reign in eternal glory, *let us* see to it, that we *have grace whereby we may serve God*, from whom we receive it, *in an acceptable manner*. As that grace is so freely offered to us,[r] let us not be so wanting to ourselves as to fall short of it. And while we feel our hearts inspired with all that gratitude and confidence which suits the genius of so merciful a dispensation, let them be attempered *with* a becoming mixture of *reverence and pious fear*; that we may not, by an unworthy abuse of the gospel, deprive ourselves of its invaluable
29 blessings, and sin beyond all possibility of farther remedy. *For* though *our God* manifests himself in the beams of such mild majesty, he [*is*] still possessed of that tremendous power, which was so awfully displayed at Mount Sinai, and will break forth as *a consuming fire* against all those that presumptuously violate his laws, and despise his gospel. Deut. iv. 23, 24.

that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE glories of the eternal Jehovah are indeed inconceivable and immutable. Still he is possessed of all that awful majesty which he displayed on Mount Sinai, and able in a moment, as a devouring fire, to consume the transgres-
Ver. 29 sors of his law. But though he kindly reminds us of this dreadful scene, he does not limit and confine our views
18 to it; he appears to us not on that mountain, which was involved in blackness and darkness, in tempest and fire: but calls us to the milder glories of Mount Sion. Yet even there might our consciousness of guilt cause us to fear.
22 How should we appear in the city of the living God, or presume to mingle ourselves with the general assembly and church of the first-born? How should we hope for a place among myriads of angels, and the perfected spirits of the
23 just, in the presence of God, the Judge of all, if it were not for the refuge and support which we find in Jesus, the
24 Mediator of the new covenant, and in the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel? But being thus encouraged, let us draw near with humble boldness, though with reverence and godly fear; while we
26 hear the voice that once shook the earth, speaking to us in accents of love, and promising a kingdom that cannot
28 be moved. That kingdom do we in some degree receive now, and we hope for the full possession hereafter. It shall indeed be obtained, if we learn so to value it, as, in the expectation of it, to serve God acceptably, in the improvement of that grace, which awaits us, to make us equal to his service: only let us see to it, that we do not, by our
15 own criminal negligence, fail of that grace: that we do not profanely and foolishly follow the example of that wretched Esau, who stands recorded with so much infamy, as having for one sorry meal sold his birth-right, with all
16 his sacred privileges. How many sons of Abraham, having followed him, have found, as he did, the impossibility
17 of retrieving so fatal a bargain; found as he did, that there was no place for repentance, though they may have sought it carefully with tears; with an anguish of heart, which none can conceive, but they who know what final
15 and everlasting despair means! May God preserve all his churches from such roots of bitterness as, alas! have too often sprung up among them! And since there is so much danger that many may be defiled by them, let those that have a real concern for their honour and safety, be looking round, with a proper solicitude, to guard against the first appearance of what may be so fatal to their honour, their purity, and their peace.

SECTION XXI.

The apostle exhorts christians to brotherly love, purity, compassion, dependence on the divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man; from a consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ, which ought always to encourage us boldly to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet in his cause. Heb. xiii. 1—16.

HEB. xiii. 1.

SECT. 21. HEB. XIII.

I SHALL conclude my present address to you with some practical exhortations. And one of the most comprehensive and important I can give you, is this: *Let brotherly love* always *continue*[s] among you. And remember not only the common obligations of benevolence, by which all human creatures are connected with each other, but those peculiar
1 engagements which the christian profession lays you under to study the good of those who by faith in the gospel are all the children of one Father, and heirs of one glorious inherit-
2 ance. This should certainly engage you to relieve and accommodate such as are in necessity, and especially your christian brethren, in their travels from place to place, often undertaken for the service of their great Master. *Be not*, therefore, *forgetful of hospi-*

HEB. xiii. 1.

LET brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to en-

anchor, which, though they are secured from being driven away, yet are in a fluctuating condition, and tossed up and down, within a certain compass, by the force of the wind and waves.

q *As of things* made and *constituted* only for a time.] Bos imagines that there is in the original a mistake of the transcribers, and for ως πεποιημενων, *as of things which were made*, he would read πεπονημενων, *as of things shattered and worn out*, namely, by being *tossed* and *shaken*, and therefore wanting to be changed and repaired. And thus he supposes there is a continuation of the metaphor, which is mentioned in the note above. But conjectural emendations, supported by the authority of not a single manuscript, are not to be admitted without evident necessity. Mr. Pierce justly remarks, that ποιειν is frequently used for appointing or constituting, as in chap. iii. 2; Mark iii. 14. and many other places; and that πεποιημενων, being a *participle of the preterperfect tense*, ought not to have been translated, *Things which are made*, as in our English version, but, *Things which were*, or *had been made*, or *constituted* and appointed for a time; and I have rendered and explained it accordingly.

r As grace is so freely offered.] This is strongly intimated in the words of the exhortation; else there could be no room for it. And this oblique intimation, in which it is, as it were, taken for *granted*, that we may certainly *have grace*, if we take proper methods for obtaining it, appears to me peculiarly affecting.

s *Let brotherly love continue.*] Diodati thinks this exhortation was peculiarly suitable to *converted Jews*, as the prejudices against their Gentile brethren were in many of them so strong, that they were ready to disown them with abhorrence.

tertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

tality; for some have, by the practice of it, *entertained angels* as common strangers, *without knowing it,*[b] and have found the hospitalities of many former years abundantly rewarded by one such favourable visit. And thus you know not but they who come to you under a very mean appearance, may be as messengers from God to you, and the instruments of bestowing some extraordinary favours from him.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

You see many of your brethren suffering for conscience sake, and some thrown into prison; *remember them* 3 therefore, especially, *who are in* such *bonds, as* if you were yourselves *bound with them,* [*and*] *them that suffer* any kind of *ill treatment* in such a case, *as being yourselves also in the* same *body* with them, and so obliged to a tender sympathy; not now to insist on your sharing the same common infirmities of human nature with them all, which should engage you to carry your compassion to strangers, and even to enemies.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

I know that some, who pretend to more than ordinary chastity, say many reproachful 4 things of a conjugal life; but I assure you they are much to blame; *for marriage* [*is*] to be held *honourable in all,*[c] *and the* proper use of the *marriage-bed* is to be esteemed as *undefiled;* since none can imagine, that God would make an action in itself morally evil, absolutely necessary for the support of the human race in future generations. *But* as for *whoremongers and adulterers,* who either despise or pollute it, *God will* undoubtedly *judge* them, however they may escape human punishment.

5 *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness: *and be* content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

[*Let your*] *conversation* [*be*] *free from* every degree of *covetousness,* and [*be*] *con-* 5 *tented with such things as ye have,*[d] without eagerly or impatiently desiring what divine providence may see fit to withhold. And though, being so slenderly provided for, as most of you are, it may seem very probable you should soon come to want even the necessaries of life, especially after the late ravages you have suffered from your enemies, who have plundered your goods, (chap. x. 34.) be not anxiously solicitous about that; *for he* who hath all the stores of nature at his command, and who owns the relation of a Father to us, *hath* graciously *said,* (Josh. i. 5.) *I will not, I will not leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee.*

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

And though these emphatical words were at first spoken to 6 Joshua, yet it was not under a personal character only, but considering him in his relation to the Israel of God, and as acting for its support; *so that* all God's people, as his love to them is in all ages the same, may take a just encouragement from it, and *we* in particular *may take courage to say,*[e] *The Lord* [*is*] *my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me:* thus comforting ourselves, not only in the seeming uncertainty of future supplies, but in the midst of the greatest dangers, and when threatened by our enemies with the severest sufferings.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

And let me now urge you to *remember those* dear and venerable persons *who, having* 7 formerly *presided over you*[f] in holy things, *have spoken to you the word of God, whose* course is now finished. Though all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not however forget their instructions and their examples; but be mindful of that *faith* which they taught, and which they exercised. And let it be your great care to *imitate* them, *considering the end of their conversation.* Reflect on the happy manner in which they quitted life, on that support which they found, in their latest moments, from the truths they had taught you, and on that heroic resolution with which some of them were animated to meet even martyrdom itself in that sacred cause: and let the remembrance of these things engage you stedfastly to retain their faith, and courageously to follow their steps.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

And remember for your farther encouragement, that though the most faithful 8 ministers of the gospel die, yet as that sacred dispensation still continues immutable, so *Jesus Christ,* the great Guardian of those who faithfully adhere to it, in the tenor of his declarations, as well as in the glories of his divine nature, [*is*] *the same*[g] *yesterday, to-day, and for ever;* and therefore can well support you, by whomsoever you may be forsaken.

b *Entertained angels unawares.*] It is possible that from the story of Abraham and Lot, who had the honour of entertaining angels, under the form of ordinary travellers, some tradition might reach the Indian Brahmins, who tell their people, that the gods sometimes descend in the form of poor indigent persons, and that when any of the children of men relieve them, they repay the charity with vast advantage. See Millar's *Propagation of Christianity,* Vol. II. p. 217. I can lay no stress upon Mr. Pierce's reasoning against our supposing that Christ was one of those angels, that then the apostle would have urged the argument in a stronger view, by observing that they had *entertained Christ himself.* (See his notes on chap. i. ver. 2. and Mr. Hallet on this verse.) For the apostles were under no obligation, on all occasions, to use the strongest argument that could possibly be thought of; and as there might perhaps be some room to debate this matter, it was great prudence to build an argument upon a principle, in which all that believe the authority of scripture must agree.

c *Marriage is honourable.*] Some critics (and especially the popish writers, to avoid the argument which naturally arises from hence against *forbidding marriage* to the clergy) would render it, *Let marriage be honourable in all, and let the bed be undefiled.* But the connexion of the latter clause, introduced by the particle, *but,* is sufficient to vindicate our version, unless we should be disposed, with the Vulgate, to prefer the authority of the Alexandrian and Clermont copies, which instead of δε, read γαρ, *For whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

d *Content with such things as ye have.*] Phocylides makes use of the very words of the apostle in a precept of this kind, Αρκεισθαι παρεουσιν. But what the age of that writer was, I fear it is impossible to ascertain. There are other passages however in his excellent moral poems, which make it probable he was acquainted with the New Testament as well as the Old, from whence he has taken so many pious and humane precepts.

e *We may take courage to say, &c.*] This application of a particular promise to such general purposes, opens a noble hint for the improvement of the Old Testament, upon this great and solid principle, that *God,* who is *no Respecter of persons,* intends that expressions of his favour to *this* or *that* eminently good man, should be used for the encouragement of *all others* of the *like* character. The emphasis of the original is so well known, that I shall not insist upon it.

f *Presided over you.*] Bishop Lloyd (*Funeral Sermon for Bishop Wilkins,* p. 7, 8.) thinks this may refer to *James the Apostle,* and to *James,* commonly called the *first Bishop of Jerusalem;* both of which had been put to death there before this Epistle was written. —Our English version here is very far from being justifiable, *Remember them which have the rule over you;* whereas they were now *dead.* It should have been, *Who have presided, or had the rule over you;* or, as I have rendered the two clauses in connexion, *Who having presided over you, have spoken to you the word of God.*

g *Christ the same.*] I think this makes a much nobler sense, if explained of the immutability of *Christ's power and grace,* than if merely understood of his doctrine; though I have given a hint of the latter sense, out of regard to some great expositors, who have urged Acts v. 42; 2 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Cor. i. 24. as instances in which *Christ* signifies not his *person,* but his *word.*

SECT. 21. HEB. XIII.

And let this be a powerful engagement to adhere to his gospel, and to preserve it uncorrupted. In this view, see to it that ye *be not carried about by various and foreign doctrines*, disagreeing with each other, and with the great standard of truth in the divine revelation. Many are zealous *for* such, and particularly judaizing teachers; but remember, [*it is*] *a good thing that the heart be established in* an adherence to the *grace* of
9 the gospel, and *not* zealous *in* those distinctions between various kinds of *meats*, and reposing its confidence in those ritual observances which some are ready to lay so much stress upon; but *by which they who have been* most *conversant* [*in them,*] and regarded them with the greatest exactness, *have not profited*, so as to make any real attainment in
10 religion, by all that scrupulosity and mortification. They boast indeed of many of their privileges, in which they think themselves superior to us; but it is infinitely more than a balance to all, that *we have an altar* of a spiritual nature, even that dignified by the sacrifice of the Son of God, *of which they have no authority to eat, who attend* divine
11 *service in the tabernacle. For* it is well known, that *the bodies of those animals, whose blood,* [*being offered*] *for sin, is carried*[h] *by the high-priest into the holy place, are,* according to the appointment of the law as instituted in the wilderness, to be *burnt without the camp*, and afterwards without the city of Jerusalem; no part of them being
12 eaten by the priests. Now methinks there is something in this circumstance which may suggest to us matter of pious and comfortable meditation, when we compare it with what we know of the great High-Priest of our profession. We may *therefore*, methinks, say that *Jesus also, that* under his grand sacerdotal character *he might sanctify the people*, not by animal victims, but *by his own blood*, which he offered up as a sin-offering for us, to atone our guilt, and consecrate us to God, *suffered* not within the walls of the temple, or the city, but upon Mount Calvary, which you well know lies *without the gate*
13 of Jerusalem. And this consideration, as it suggests our leaving the Jewish sacrifices, so it should undoubtedly engage us willingly to suffer all extremities in his cause. *Let us therefore* break through every attachment, and *go out*, as it were, *unto him without the camp, bearing* our part in *his reproach*. If our fidelity to him require, as it very possibly may, that we should submit to excommunication, infamy, and persecution, let us acquiesce, and find an equivalent in this thought, that we are hereby rendered more conformable to
14 Christ. And let us submit to this so much the more cheerfully, considering how trivial the interests of this mortal life are, when compared with those which relate to eternity; *for* it is most certain, that *we have here no abiding city;* in which view, I spoke of our sojourning here, as an encampment in moveable tabernacles or tents. *But*, blessed be God, *we* are animated with the cheerful hope and expectation of better blessings, and *seek one to come;* a splendid and secure abode where it will be our everlasting business to admire and adore its great Founder and Sovereign, and to worship in his celestial temple.
15 In the mean time, Jesus is there under the character of our great High-Priest, who ever lives to perform that important office for us to which he is every way equal; *by him therefore let us always offer the sacrifice of praise*[i] *to God, that is, the fruit of* [*our*] *lips, giving*
16 *thanks to his* glorious *name*. *But* while we present this verbal tribute, let us remember that another yet more substantial is required. *Be not* therefore *forgetful of doing* all the *good* you possibly can, in your respective stations, *and of communicating* liberally and cheerfully of your substance, to those that are in necessity; *for God is well pleased with such sacrifices;* which were always more pleasing to him than any victim, which, in the neglect of these, could be brought to his altar.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16 THOSE other expensive sacrifices which the Mosaic law required, are now entirely abrogated. Let us consider this as an additional engagement upon us, to abound more and more in those of unfeigned benevolence and real charity; rejoicing that the God of our lives, who gives us all, will condescend to have any regard to them. And
1, 2 let our brethren in Christ be remembered with that distinguishing affection which suits the relation in which we
3 stand to them; and in whatever bonds of affliction they may be bound, let us endeavour to make their fetters sit lighter upon them, by every thing which our compassionate assistance can do for that purpose; considering ourselves as in the body.

5 That we may be ready to all such kind offices, let us endeavour to overcome the love of money, which is the root of all evil. Let us learn (and O that divine grace may effectually teach us!) to moderate our desires, to be contented with what providence allots us, whether more or less, and to trust in God, as to the supply of our future wants. Well may we not only trust, but even boast, in him, when we consider in how endearing a manner he hath declared, with such reiterated assurances, that he will never, never, never leave us; that he will not,
5 yea, he will not forsake us. Surely the language of the most cheerful and courageous faith well corresponds to
6 that of so gracious and soul-reviving a promise. Let faith then put a reality into it, or rather glory in that certain
8 reality which there cannot but be in every promise; especially as Jesus Christ, in whom this and all the promises are confirmed to us, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

7 And let this thought support us under those breaches which may be made on the church by death. Christ ever lives to guard and protect it, and to maintain those great truths which in every age have been the joy and confi-
8 dence of his people. Let our attachment to him, therefore, be preserved inviolable, and the purity of our souls

h *Whose blood—is carried, &c.*] An argument has been drawn from these words, as from some other passages that occur, to prove that the temple was standing when this Epistle was written.

i *Sacrifice of praise.*] To suppose that this refers to the *eucharist*, and the following verse to charitable collections made at the celebration of that ordinance, seems very fanciful.

unspotted. And let us never fear to share in his reproach, in whose glory we have such a security of sharing; but cheerfully go, as it were, out of the camp to him, who suffered crucifixion for us without the gates of the city. Were we called to endure martyrdom for his sake, he would only lead us out of a mean and precarious tabernacle; for we have here no continuing city; but then he will conduct us, if we are faithful to him, to a city so durable that its foundations are represented by rocks of solid gems, so glorious, that its pavements are described as gold, and its gates as pearl. May our faith be daily beholding it as near; and may we feel every day more of its attractive influence, to render us superior to all that earth can promise, and to all it can threaten, while we are passing thither. Under his guardianship, let us daily be offering the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name, as well knowing, that while we are on our journey to the new Jerusalem, no mountain can be so steep and rugged, no valley so deep and gloomy, as not to admit of the songs of Sion.

SECT. 21.

HEB. XIII. 14, 15

SECTION XXII.

The apostle concludes with recommending to them some particular regards to their pious ministers, and entreats their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction. Heb. xiii. 17, *to the end.*

HEB. xiii. 17.

OBEY them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

HEB. xiii. 17.

I HAVE been urging you to an affectionate remembrance of those who were once your teachers, but are now dismissed from their labours, and received to their reward. And I must, on the same principles, press upon you a due regard to those faithful ministers who still survive. *Obey them*, therefore, *who preside over you*,[a] in those rules and directions which they are authorized by Christ to give you, *and submit yourselves* [*to them*] with a becoming respect; even though their office should sometimes oblige them to make such addresses to you as may for the present be disagreeable. *For they* are solemnly appointed to *watch for your souls*,[b] for their everlasting safety and happiness. And well knowing that the trust is of infinite importance, they would execute it *as those that must render an* awful and strict *account* of their office, and of the fidelity with which they have discharged it. Behave towards them, therefore, while they are pursuing the several duties of it, in such a manner, *that they may do it with joy, and not with* inward *groaning*,[c] under discouragements arising from your unkind treatment, or from such other irregularities of your conduct as may require them to interpose by any methods of severity; *for that* [*is*] most *unprofitable* and dangerous *for you*, and will on the whole be much more for your own detriment than it can possibly be for theirs.

SECT. 22.

HEB. XIII. 17

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Among the rest of your christian ministers, we persuade ourselves that you will not forget us. And we entreat, that while absence may render many other instances of affection impracticable, you would not fail however to *pray for us*. And indeed we may very cheerfully ask, and very reasonably expect this; *for* though our enemies may meanly insinuate the contrary, *we are confident that we have a good conscience*, and have conducted ourselves, so as to have a testimony to our integrity in yours, that we are *determined*, whatever it may cost us, *in all things to behave honourably*, to converse in the most fair and reputable manner, according to the obligations of our sacred profession and office, though we should sacrifice every thing to that resolution. *And I especially beseech you* 19 *to do this*, that is, to pray earnestly and affectionately for me, both in your private retirements, and in your public assemblies, *that I may quickly be restored to you* from this confinement, and may have an opportunity of rendering you those services which were prevented by this unjust imprisonment, occasioned by the fury of the populace when I was last at Jerusalem.

18

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in

And *now*, to draw towards a close, *may* that great and blessed Being, who condescends 20 in his gospel to reveal himself to us under the endearing character of *the God of peace*, *who*, reconciling us unto himself by his Son, becomes the Author of eternal blessings, cause his choicest favours to descend upon you. May he who, to confirm these gracious purposes, *hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus* Christ, who is constituted *that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant*,[d] and by his blood sealed the everlasting and unchangeable covenant which appoints him to stand in that amiable relation to his people; May he, I say, *make you perfect in every good work*, 21 *that you may*, cheerfully and constantly, *do his will*, exerting an holy readiness and alacrity in the discharge of every duty; himself *producing in you that* temper and disposition of soul *which is* most pleasing and *acceptable in his sight*, through the powerful

20

21

a *Preside over you.*] Lord Barrington imagines, that he refers to the *apostles of the circumcision*, to show that he would not in any respect derogate from their authority; (*Essay* I. p. 87;) but I cannot think the word ηγουμενοι should be thus limited. I rather apprehend, with Mr. Boyse, (*Serm.* Vol. I. p. 415.) that it refers to those who *immediately presided* over them in their religious affairs, that is, the ministers of the several particular churches. The application of it to diocesan bishops is merely arbitrary.

b *Watch for your souls.*] Chrysostom says, he never read these words without *trembling*, though he often preached several times in a day.

c *That they may do it with joy, and not with groaning.*] This must necessarily refer to the present discharge of their office; for it is not possible for any perverseness of the people to prevent a faithful minister's *giving up his account with joy*. Nor can any *groans* be mingled with those *triumphant songs* which God will put into the mouths of all his people. But their Master will remember what they suffered by their people's means; and the account may sit heavy on them, when the sorrows of their faithful pastors are all over. Not to say, that great present damage to the people would proceed from those things which are grievous to their faithful and affectionate spiritual guides. See Dr. Owen, *in loc.*

d *By the blood of the everlasting covenant.*] There is an ambiguity in the connexion of these words. Some think they refer to *God's bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ*, according to that *engagement* or *covenant* which was sealed by his *blood*. Beza and others connect the clause with the words immediately preceding, namely, *that great Shepherd of the sheep*, which our Lord was constituted by the *blood of the everlasting covenant*. And this sense seems to be far preferable. Compare Acts xx. 28; and John x. 11.

SECT. 22. influences of his Spirit, given you *by Jesus Christ*, who hath procured this invaluable favour for his people; *to whom* [*be*] *glory* in all the churches, *for ever and ever. Amen.*

his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I have discovered my mind to you in the course of this Epistle with great freedom, *but*

HEB. XIII. as it all proceeds from the most sincere affection, *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written to you* above *in a few words;* but if I were to open

22 all that is in my heart, the letter would swell far beyond the bounds I have here assigned

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 it. In concluding it, I give you the pleasure to *know that* [*our*] dear *brother Timothy*, whose zeal for me had for a while made him a partner in my confinement, *is* now *set at liberty, with whom, if he come soon*, I hope, by the divine permission, *I shall* be able to *see you*, which I cannot but greatly desire.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 In the mean time, *salute* in the most respectful and affectionate manner, in my name, *all that preside over you*, as the officers of your respective churches, *and all the* other *saints*, who are private members of them. *They* who are natives *of Italy*, joined in the bonds of the same christian profession, and now with me at Rome, most cordially *salute*

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 *you*. May the blessing of God, and the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I am so often commending you and all my christian brethren, [*be*] *with you all.* I put my hearty *Amen* to it; and you assuredly know, that I can wish you nothing better. I hope, therefore, that you will with all your hearts put your own Amen to it.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let those whom God, in the course of his providence, hath called to preside over the souls of others, remember to watch over them with a becoming diligence, considering that an impartial account will shortly be required; con-

VER. 17 sidering that if they do not properly conduct themselves in this important office, their blood who perish by their neglect, must be required at their hands. And let the people committed to their care be concerned, that the faithful servants of Christ may discharge their office with joy, and not with grief; that they may not from time to time be sent with groanings, and with tears, to the presence of their great Master, to lament the obstinacy, perverseness, and rebellion of those over whom God hath made them watchmen and shepherds. The grief would now sensibly affect the minister; yet on the whole, as he would be to God a sweet savour in Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that believe, the greatest detriment would fall on those who have made such ungrateful returns to the divine goodness, and to their fidelity.

That all other duties may be more regularly and properly discharged, let private christians be engaged to pray

18 earnestly for their ministers; for those especially who make it apparent, that they desire to maintain always a good conscience; and that whatever sacrifices they may be called to make to it, they are determined in all things to live reputably and honourably, so that the ministry may not be blamed, but the christian profession in general adorned. And God grant, that none but persons of such a character may be introduced into the ministry, or supported and countenanced in it!

20 Let pastors and people be often looking to him, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, and whose relation to the flock is established on the blood of the everlasting covenant. Ever may the thoughts of that blood engage us to regard him with all due veneration and love; ever may we be looking to him who, through this blessed Saviour, appears as the God of peace, for every blessing we respectively need.

We all need his gracious influence, to implant the first principles of the divine life; and we need them, to make us perfect to do his will, and to work in us those things which may render us more completely pleasing in his

21 sight. And therefore let an humble dependence on his grace be daily maintained and expressed; considering of how great importance it is to be acceptable in the sight of God, and to approve ourselves at all times to him.

22 That it may be so, may grace be with us all, and continue with us, from the first entrance on the christian life, through the whole course of it, till it present us blameless in the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. Amen.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE JAMES.

THE Epistle of St. James, and the six following Epistles, have been commonly distinguished by the appellation of *catholic* or *general*, because most of them are inscribed, not to particular churches or persons, but to the body either of Jewish or Gentile converts over the whole world, or at least dispersed in several countries.

The first of these, I mean that of St. James, was from the earliest times received by the christian church, though not so universally as most of the Epistles of St. Paul. But a precise detail and examination of the several arguments relating to this question, would bear too large a proportion in the space allotted to these Introductions. It may however be right to observe, in support of the authenticity and authority of this Epistle, that considerable stress hath deservedly been laid upon its antiquity, which appears both from internal and external evidence; and also, upon the correspondence of the sentiments it contains, with the tenor of the christian doctrine; and though this hath been called in question by some, through an attachment to particular hypotheses,* yet it is evident, I apprehend beyond all controversy, to those who read the Epistle with suitable candour and attention. And it appears to me, that the authority of this, and some other parts of the New Testament, having been early questioned by some primitive churches, affords an argument of their particular caution, that no other writings should be admitted into the sacred canon, however excellent, besides those which had an undoubted claim to that distinction; and justly challenges our deference to their judgment, who doubtless were most capable of deciding, and gave sufficient evidence of their care as well as their capacity. The Epistle before us having passed through a severe and accurate scrutiny, appears to have been at length universally received, and accordingly hath been transmitted down to the present age, as an authentic part of those *oracles of God, which are able to make us wise to salvation.*

If any particular argument were to be suggested to second the force of these observations, it might be this, that this Epistle is found in the Syriac version, and was received by the churches in Syria. This version is undoubtedly ancient, and is apprehended by most learned men to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. And besides the authority conciliated to the Epistle of St. James by the antiquity of the version, it should be observed, that the version was made for the particular service of the converted Jews, to whom the Epistle itself was originally written; and it should therefore seem, that its authenticity and authority were from the beginning acknowledged by those for whom it was intended: and I think it can hardly be doubted, that they were better judges of the question than the Gentiles, to whom it was not written, among whom therefore it was not likely to be propagated so early, and who at first might be prejudiced against it, because it was inscribed to the Jews.

If any are disposed to examine the several testimonies of the christian fathers, as to the authority of this Epistle, they may find them collected with great fidelity and accuracy, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the second part of his valuable work, the *Credibility of the Gospel History.*

As to the author of this Epistle, some have imagined it to be James the elder, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. But in this they are evidently mistaken. James the elder was beheaded by Herod, in the year of our Lord 44; whereas this Epistle was not written till a very considerable time afterwards. So early as the year 44, the gospel does not seem to have been propagated far beyond the bounds of Palestine; and it cannot be supposed there was any very large number of the Jews of the dispersion who were then converted to the christian faith: and though the Epistle seems to have been intended in some

* It is well known, that at the beginning of the Reformation, Luther, apprehending the doctrine delivered by St. James concerning *justification* to be inconsistent with that of St. Paul, opposed the authority of this Epistle, in the Preface to his *German Translation* of the New Testament, published in the year 1522; though he is not followed in this point by those who at this day are distinguished by his name; and indeed he himself, as we are informed by Wolfius, (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 6.) and by Fabricius, (*Biblioth. Græc. lib.* iv. *cap.* v. § 9.) afterwards changed his opinion.

measure for the general benefit of the twelve tribes, yet more especially for those among them who were converts to the christian religion. Besides, it is intimated in the Epistle itself, that the Jewish christians were at this time sunk into very remarkable degeneracy, both in doctrine and practice, which is not likely to have been the case while they were under the first impressions of their conversion. And indeed in this Epistle there are some plain intimations that the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand, (chap. v. 1—8.) which event was accomplished about the year 70; and from this circumstance we may reasonably conclude the date of this Epistle to be about the year 60, or 61.

It therefore appears, that this Epistle was not written by James the elder, but must have been the composition of another James, called James the less, who was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and is said to be the brother, that is, according to the latitude in which the Jews were accustomed to understand this expression, the kinsman, of our Lord, see Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. and who is expressly numbered among the twelve apostles. See Matt. x. 2, 3; Mark. iii. 17, 18; Luke iv. 14, 15; Acts i. 13. And though the time of this James being put to death is not absolutely certain, it is supposed by many learned men to have happened in the year 62, before St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews, which was in the year 63. And if this account be right, the date of his Epistle cannot be later than I have already assigned it.

James the less statedly resided at Jerusalem; whence he hath been styled by some ancient fathers, bishop of that city, though without sufficient foundation, as we observed, note c, p. 509. Now James being one of the apostles of the circumcision, while he confined his personal labours to the inhabitants of Judea, it was very natural for him to endeavour by his writings to extend his services to the Jewish christians who were dispersed abroad in more distant regions. For this purpose there are two points which the apostle seems to have principally aimed at, though he hath not pursued them in an orderly and logical method, but in the free epistolary manner, handling them jointly or distinctly, as occasions naturally offered. And these were—"To correct those errors, both in doctrine and practice, into which the Jewish christians had fallen, "which might otherwise have produced fatal consequences; and then to establish the faith, and animate the hope, of sin-"cere believers, both under their present and their approaching sufferings."

And in prosecution of this double view, after inscribing the Epistle to the twelve tribes in their dispersion, the apostle enters on his subject, by endeavouring to fortify their minds under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace in answer to the fervent prayer of faith, and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors. (Chap. i. 1—16.) And then, as a means of their stedfastness, notwithstanding the most powerful temptations to apostasy, he exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue, especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted. (Ver. 17, *to the end.*) And then the apostle, by an easy transition, having glanced at some of their particular failings, takes the occasion of introducing cautions on sundry other articles in which they needed reprehension; particularly against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the divine precepts, especially where the royal law of charity, or universal benevolence, was in question. (Chap. ii. 1—13.) After this, as several of the Jewish christians discovered a disposition to rest in an external and empty profession of religion, probably from an abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, he largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere historical faith, and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation. (Ver. 14, *to the end.*) And as such a barren profession is apt to inspire men with conceited and vain-glorious sentiments of themselves, while they are destitute of every divine habit and attainment, he deems it expedient to subjoin a caution to these Jewish christians, against their being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and as spiritual pride tends to inflame men's unbridled passions, and to set on fire their licentious tongues, he resumes and expatiates on a subject which he had before only slightly touched upon, recommending a strict government of the tongue as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance. (Chap. iii. 1—12.) And in close connexion with such a topic, it was very natural to inculcate, as the apostle does, a candid, benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them; to restrain which, he recommends a humble application to God for divine influences. (Ver. 13—chap. iv. 10.) Suggesting particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin. And then, as to afflicted and oppressed christians, he encourages and exhorts them to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord. (Ver. 11.—chap. v. 8.) And concludes the Epistle with condemning profane and vain swearing, with recommending moderation, fortitude and prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation. (Ver. 9, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

SECTION I.

The apostle James endeavours to fortify the christians to whom he writes, under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, and of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace, in answer to the fervent prayer of faith; and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors. James i. 1—16.

JAMES i. 1.

JAMES i. 1.
JAMES, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

THIS Epistle is written by *James*,[a] who esteems it his honour to be *a* faithful *servant* and constant worshipper *of* the true and living *God, and of* his Son *the Lord Jesus Christ*; and is addressed with the sincerest affection *to the twelve tribes*[b] of Israel *in* this their state of *dispersion*;[c] so that he would have every son of Abraham according to the flesh consider it as addressed to him, and would himself be considered as *greeting* them all with the most cordial wishes of grace and peace; though especially as addressing himself to those whom the bond of the same christian profession unites yet more strictly to the author. SECT. 1. JAMES i. 1

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

My dear *brethren, count it* matter of *all joy when you fall into a variety of trials*, for the sake of the true religion, which so many, instead of embracing with a becoming thankfulness and zeal, are by all possible methods endeavouring to extirpate. Far from being discouraged by such trials, in such a cause, rejoice in them, as *knowing that the* little and short *proof of your faith* to which it is now brought, in its natural consequences, under the influences of divine grace, *worketh patience*, which will grow up by such exercise. 2

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

And let patience have [*its*] *perfect work*, that it may rise to its highest improvements, during this little space of time, in which alone you will have an opportunity of glorifying God, and adorning christianity, *that* so *ye may be perfect and complete, deficient in nothing*; for the other graces of christianity will generally shine brightest where patience is most conspicuous. 3

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

But if any one of you be deficient in wisdom,[d] and incapable of certainly discerning his duty in such critical conjunctures as these in which you are called out to act; *let him ask* further supplies of [*it*] *from God*, its eternal Fountain, *who gives to all* every necessary communication of that, and all other blessings, *liberally, and upbraideth not* any with the importunity or frequency of their addresses; *and it shall be given him*, so far as is needful for his safety, and the discharge of his duty. 4

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.

But then *let him* take care that he *ask in* steady *faith, nothing wavering*, not divided by the desires of obtaining, and the fears of not obtaining, the grace he asks, or doubting of God's readiness to bestow it; *for he that wavers*, and has not a firm confidence in the divine goodness and faithfulness, can have no other solid and substantial support; but *is like a billow of the sea*,[e] *driven on and tossed by the wind*, in a restless and unsettled condition, (Isa. lvii. 20.) 5

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. 6

a *James.*] That is, as we have already observed, *the apostle James the less*; whom antiquity (I know not on what pretence) calls, *Bishop of Jerusalem*; perhaps because he resided *there* more than most of the apostles. He was the *brother* of Christ: and it is said he was exalted to this office, on the death of *James the great*, beheaded by Herod. Acts xii. 2, 17.

b *Twelve tribes.*] Dr. Lardner, (*Credibility*, Vol. I. p. 223, &c.) very justly observes, that Josephus concludes the *twelve tribes* to be still in being, when he says, that six persons were sent out of every tribe, to assist in translating the scriptures into Greek. It is very evident, that at the restoration in Zorobabel's time, *ten tribes* staid behind. See Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

c *In* this their state of *dispersion.*] Dr. Whitby, *in loc.* hath some very pertinent quotations from Josephus, Philo, and even Cicero, to show that the Jews were dispersed abroad, and were to be found in great multitudes in almost all parts of the world. And Dr. Lardner, besides the citations in Dr. Whitby, produces another remarkable passage to the same purpose, from a letter of Agrippa to the Emperor. See *Credib. of the Gospel History*, Part I. Book I. chap. 3. Compare Acts ii. 4—11.

d *If any of you be deficient in wisdom.*] Several interpret this of wisdom to *bear* afflictions well, and suppose, that when God is said *not to upbraid*, it is upon supposition of *former* impatience: but this, though authorized by so great a name as Mr. Howe, (see his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 690.) is one of those limited interpretations which I cannot fully approve.

e *Like a wave of the sea.*] M. Saurin paraphrases it thus; "He "ought not to resemble the waves of the sea, which seem to offer to "the spectator, that is upon the shore, the treasure with which they "are charged; but soon plunge it in the abyss from which it can"not be recovered." Saurin's *Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 438. But the interpretation given in the paraphrase appears to me much more simple and natural. He elsewhere paraphrases it, "Like a wave "which moves on, and seems to come to the shore, but immediately "returns with impetuosity into the gulph from whence it came." *Ibid.* Vol. V. p. 56, 57.

SECT. 1. JAMES I

easily discomposed and agitated by every adverse blast, and in the greatest danger of being dashed in pieces. *Let not that man therefore think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord,* while he continues in such a situation, and dares not trust in him for those supplies of grace which he professes to seek. These unworthy suspicions, as they wrong the divine goodness, may in many instances prevent the communication of those favours which might otherwise be obtained. Such *a double-minded man,* whose schemes are divided between God and the world, and who cannot cheerfully and resolutely commit himself, in confidence of divine support, to be led whithersoever providence shall please, [*is*] *unsettled in all his ways;* he will perpetually be running into inconsistencies of conduct; and those imperfect and undetermined impressions of religion which he feels, will serve rather to perplex and torment, than guide and secure him.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double-minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

In nothing are the generality of men more apt to mistake, than in estimating the value of external circumstances; but let the principles of christianity instruct you, my brethren, to correct that mistake; and in this respect, *let the brother of low degree,* of a poor and obscure condition, *rejoice in his exaltation:* let him think of his dignity as a christian, and entirely acquiesce in his low sphere of life, for his circumstances do really give him such advantages for religion, by placing him under a shelter from many temptations, that he has a much fairer probability than others of rising to some eminence in the heavenly world. *But* let *the rich* man be greatly cautious, and if he allow himself to rejoice, let it not be *in* the height of *his* circumstances, but in the *humiliation*[f] of his mind; for all other occasions of rejoicing are very precarious. And as for his distinction in this world, *as the flower of the grass he shall* quickly *pass away. For* [*no sooner*] *is the sun risen with a scorching heat,* [*but*] immediately *the grass,* which in spring looks so fair and flourishing, *is dried up; and the flower thereof,* that adorned it, loses its painted glories yet much sooner; it *falleth* to the ground, *and* all *the beauty of its* lovely *form is perished: so shall the rich man also fade away in his paths,* and though he may, by prudent management or remarkable success, grow richer and richer, he dies in the midst of all his wealth, and it can no longer either delight or adorn him.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is *no sooner* risen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

You will be exercised with trials while you continue in the present world; but repine not at them: *happy* [*is*] *the man who* with a proper steadiness and fortitude of mind, *endures temptation: for being approved* by such a course of them as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint, *he shall receive the crown of* eternal *life, which the Lord* Jesus Christ *has* graciously *promised to* all *them that love him,* and express their love by such fidelity and zeal. *Let no man who is tempted say, I am tempted of God;*[g] *for God is* himself, by virtue of his boundless knowledge and almighty power, *incapable of being tempted by evils; and* such is the perfect rectitude and benevolence of his nature, that *he tempteth not any man;* but, on the contrary, abhors all sin, and lays no man, in any imaginable circumstances, under any necessity of committing it: *But every man is tempted* by the innate weakness of his own nature, in concurrence with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, *being allured by his own lusts, and* for want of wisely and resolutely opposing the first rising of them, being *ensnared*[h] to the actual commission of sin: *For* the gradation is much more swift and fatal than the generality of mankind are aware; and *indeed lust having conceived brings forth* actual *sin,* by a speedy birth, where perhaps the full indulgence of it was not intended; *and sin, when it is finished,* or perpetrated,[i] *is impregnated with death,* and tends in its consequences to the final ruin both of soul and body, as naturally as the conception of an animal does to the birth. *Therefore be not deceived,*[k] *my beloved brethren,* by its flattering form, nor venture to trifle with temptations, under a fond conceit that you shall be able to break the connexion, by stopping yourselves at pleasure in the advance of the danger, or recovering yourselves again when sin has been committed.

12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16, 14, 15, 13, 5

LET us learn this holy caution, and guard against those baits of lust under which death is concealed; remembering that God has made us with a power of determining our own actions, that he tempts none to evil, nor appoints to any such temptations as he knows to be in their own nature irresistible. Be our spiritual enemies ever so powerful, or ever so artful, they cannot do us any hurt, till we betray ourselves into their hands. Yet certain it is, that their artifice and their power, in conjunction with the advantage which the corruption of our own hearts gives them, make it requisite that, conscious to ourselves of our deficiency in wisdom, we should ask it of God. Let the liberality with which he gives it, and the royal freedom with which he has promised it, encourage us to ask it with

f *The rich* man *in his humiliation.*] Mr. Pyle explains this of a rich man's being stripped of his possessions by persecution, and so reduced for the sake of his adherence to christianity; but this seems not properly opposed to the *exaltation* mentioned above. Indeed in any view it must be allowed a very *difficult* passage. But I have preferred the interpretation which seemed to be least entangled,—and indeed to be most agreeable to the original, if we may rely on an observation made by Beza, and after him by Raphelius, (and they are both very critical judges of the Greek language,) that ταπεινωσις, the word here used by St. James, expresses rather the *disposition* of a man's *mind,* than his *state* and *condition,* which is properly ταπεινοφρων: though it must be confessed, this distinction is not *always* observed.

g *Tempted of God.*] The phrase, it seems, had formerly been in use; and there is a sense in which it is *allowable.* But the obnoxious sense is so much more obvious, that the apostle thought proper to advise it should be avoided for the future. Perhaps the word might have altered its *signification,* as it is certain many words do.

h *Being allured and ensnared:* εξελκομενος και δελεαζομενος.] The original words have a singular beauty and elegance, containing an allusion to the method of *drawing fishes* out of the water with a hook, concealed under the bait which they greedily devour.

i *Finished,* or perpetrated: αποτελεσθεισα.] The word is used in this sense by Polybius, in a passage quoted by Raphelius, *in loc.*

k *Therefore be not deceived.*] This is agreeable to the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript, which after μη inserts ουν, *therefore;* by which the connexion is rendered more apparent.

such constancy, that we may receive daily supplies; and with firm confidence in his goodness, that we may not waver, and be like a wave of the sea tossed with the wind. SECT. 1.

Trusting in that supply of grace we receive from him, let us go forth calmly and cheerfully to meet such trials as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint for us, how various and pressing soever they may be; remembering they tend to improve our patience, and by patience to perfect every other grace; and that if we be not overcome, we shall be approved, and made more meet to receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him. And oh that the love of this blessed Lord, who has procured as well as promised it, may always render us superior to every trial, and more than conquerors through him that hath loved us, and thereby hath acquired to himself so just a claim to our supreme affection. With hearts faithfully engaged to him, and established in the firmest resolutions for his service, let us look with indifference upon those worldly circumstances, about which they who have no sense of a higher interest are exceedingly solicitous: and let us regulate our value of all the good things of life, by a regard to their aspect upon our religious characters and hopes.—If low circumstances may improve these, let us look upon them as true exaltation; and if wealth, and dignity, and applause, may endanger these, let us rather fear them, than aspire to them. Whatever we have obtained of those things which the men of the world are most ready to covet and admire, is transitory and fading as the grass, or even as the flower of the field; and sometimes like those beautiful but tender productions of vegetable nature, is consumed by the excess of those causes to which it owes its existence and its beauty. "Give us, O Lord, durable riches, and righteousness, "and that honour which cometh from thee, and is immortal, as its great Original!" JAMES i. 9, 10, 12

SECTION II.

The apostle exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God, in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue; especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted. James i. 17, *to the end.*

JAMES i. 17.

EVERY good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

JAMES i. 17.

THAT ye may be fortified against every temptation, and may be animated to behave in a manner becoming your christian profession, remember, that *every good gift, and every perfect gift* which the children of men can receive, *is from above;* and the more completely excellent the benefit is, the more reason have they to acknowledge it as *descending from the* great and eternal *Father of lights,*[a] the blessed God, from whom reason and light and joy are derived. The sun itself is but a feeble image of his glory, *with whom there is no variableness, nor* so much as any *shadow of turning;*[b] whereas the sun is continually varying, and has no sooner arrived to its meridian, but it begins to descend to the west, or to its summer height, but it verges towards the winter again; causing the direction of the shadows it occasions proportionably to vary. But the immutable and everlasting God has condescended to multiply those favours upon us as christians, which should bind our souls to him in the bonds of unchangeable love; for *of his own* sovereign *will he impregnated us with the* powerful *word of* his divine and evangelical *truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits*[c] *of his creatures,* more excellent than others, and in a peculiar manner separated and consecrated to him from among the rest of mankind. Let us be conscious of the honour he has hereby done us, and take heed that we do not sacrilegiously alienate ourselves from his service. *Therefore, my beloved brethren,* that we may be thus religiously sacred to him, and ever employed to the purposes he has directed, *let every man be swift to hear* the instructions of his word, and all the good advices which may be given him agreeable to the tenor of it; but be *slow to speak,* guarding solicitously against every rash and especially every proud and dictatorial expression; and *slow to wrath,*[d] not easily yielding to provocations, how injuriously soever he may be treated; *For the wrath of man,* even where it may be most ready to assume the title of religious zeal, *worketh not,* but on the contrary greatly obstructs, *the righteousness of God;*[e] instead of promoting the cause of true religion in the world, it is a reproach to it, SECT. 2. JAMES i. 17, 18, 19, 20

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

a *Father of lights.*] It is the opinion of Glassius that this phrase only expresses the *majesty* and *glory* of God, as if the apostle had said, *The most illustrious and glorious Father.* But the accurate Bos most justly imagines, that the allusion to the *sun* which there is in the following words, begins here; and that the phrase refers to the heathens calling that glorious luminary, the *father of light* and the *author of light;* some instances of which he produces. See *Exercitat. Philolog. in loc.* The learned Albert cites a passage from Macrobius, in which the same title is applied to Jupiter. *Observ. Philolog. in loc.*

b *Every good gift,* &c.] It is observable that the apostle makes use of *two* different words to express *gift;* the one of which is more poetical and soundin than the other; and he has placed the words in such an order that they make an heroic verse. So that were they to be rendered, "*Every good gift, and every boon complete,*" it might perhaps give the English reader a more exact idea of the original; but as there is an imaginable reason to believe this was quite an accidental thing, I thought it might have the appearance of affectation to have endeavoured to retain it. As neither *boon* nor *present,* would have been proper in this connexion, I know not how to render δοσις and δωρημα by different words; such is the poverty of our language, or the defect of my acquaintance with it. But the words, *a completely excellent benefit,* are inserted in the paraphrase, to preserve some little imitation of the original. As some learned men have observed that τροπης αποσκιασμα is something of an *astronomical phrase,* and refers to the different *aspects* of the *sun,* as it approaches one or the other *tropic,* (see Dr. Bates's *Works,* p. 747.) I have been careful to express that sentiment. It hath been the opinion of some persons that this is intended to oppose some *heretical* notion of the *influence of the stars* in the affairs of human life; but I know not that any such ridiculous conceit had so early a footing in the church.

c *Kind of first-fruits.*] It has often been observed, that this was addressed to the Jews who were first called to christianity, before the gospel was preached to the Gentiles; but it will not follow, that all the *dispersed* of the *twelve tribes,* to whom he addresses, were so called; and God did not intend there should afterwards be any distinction between them and other christians. I think it therefore much better to explain it as referring to their christian privileges in general.

d *Slow to wrath.*] It is well known that the Jewish doctors were apt to contend very fiercely about their different opinions; but it is indeed so much the general infirmity of human nature, as unhappy experience teaches us, that the caution is of universal concern.

e *Worketh not the righteousness of God.*] Some think the meaning is, simply, A man, who is often a prey to angry passions, is incapable of performing that *obedience* which God requires; but *promoting the interest of the kingdom of God,* may be included in the

SECT. 2. JAMES I.

and a means of exciting the prejudices of mankind against it. Endeavour *therefore* to regulate your passions by these great maxims; and *laying aside all* inward or outward *filthiness* on the one hand, *and* all *overflowing of malignity* on the other, compose yourselves, *with all meekness* and gentleness of mind, to *receive the ingrafted word*[f] 21 that word, *which*, when implanted in your minds by the influence of divine grace, *is able to save your souls*, and will effectually form them to a meetness for a happy immortality.

22 *But* then you must remember to *be doers of the word, and not hearers only*, sophistically *deceiving* and imposing upon *yourselves*[g] with an unprofitable attendance, while it has 23 no inward efficacy upon your hearts. *For if any one be* merely *a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man* carelessly *beholding his natural face in a mirror* or glass, who sees some accidental spot upon it, which it would be convenient to wipe off. 24 *For* his looking into the glass, and taking notice of it for the present, will signify nothing, if *he beholds himself, and goes away and immediately forgets what manner of person* 25 *he was;* forgets what rendered him disagreeable, and required to be corrected. *But he* is the wise and happy man, *who* bends down as it were his whole attention to this important matter, and is so set upon his own reformation and improvement, that he *looketh into the* gospel, that *perfect law of liberty*,[h] by regarding which the truest *and* noblest liberty is obtained, whatever confinement it may seem to lay us under; he, I say, who not only takes a transient view of its contents and designs, but *continues* [*therein*,] deeply reflecting upon it, and charging his own soul with its important doctrines and precepts: *this man not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work* it enjoins—*this man*, I say, *shall be happy in his deed*, and shall find an advantage which mere speculative knowledge, 26 though the most perfect and excellent in its kind, could not possibly secure. But then remember, that when I speak of his deeds, I mean not on any account to excuse him from paying proper regard to his words; for it is necessary I should inculcate, that, *if any man among you seem to be religious, not* resolutely *bridling his tongue*, and reining it in, to prevent those sallies to which it may sometimes incline, *but deceiving his heart*,[i] with an imagination that a freedom from other acts of iniquity, or from gross profaneness and wickedness of speech, or that some good intention, notwithstanding his exorbitances of this kind, will excuse him before God, even though he indulge himself in venting irregular passions under sacred names; *this man's religion* [*is*] but *vain*, and will stand him in no real 27 stead, whatever complacency he may at present find in his religious pretensions. *Pure and undefiled religion*, that which is clear and without any flaw[k] or blemish, *before* the penetrating eyes of *God, even the Father*, consists not merely in speculations or forms, or in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship;[l] but it *is this, to take the oversight of orphans and widows in their affliction*,[m] with a tender regard to their calamitous circumstances, [*and*] endeavouring to oversee them, in such a manner as to provide for their relief, performing to others in distress suitable offices of kindness and charity; at the same time, taking a prudent care *to keep himself unspotted from* those bad practices, and irregular indulgences, which so generally prevail in *the world* about us, where so little either of religion or morality is to be found.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27 Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17 18 19 WITH all gratitude let us direct our eyes and our hearts to the unchangeable Father of lights, and acknowledge every good and every perfect gift as descending from him; but above all, the invaluable gift of his regenerating grace, to which, if we are the first-fruits of his creatures, we are certainly indebted, and are thereby laid under the strongest engagements to consecrate ourselves continually to his service. Let us therefore listen with a most obedient regard to every intimation of his will, and set a guard upon all our passions, that they may move in

meaning of *working his righteousness;* and this false zeal is so often defended under that notion, that I was willing in the paraphrase to point that idea plainly.

f *Ingrafted word:* Εμφυτον λογον.] Some have translated this phrase, the *natural*, the *innate*, or *internal* word, referring to what hath been sometimes called, *the light within:* and it must be acknowledged that εμφυτος hath frequently this signification. But the version here given is undeniably justified by Bos and Elsner, *in loc.* who illustrate this whole clause by some apposite and elegant quotations from the classics. The word of God is frequently compared to *seed*, or to a plant; particularly, 1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iii. 9. in which sense it is here said to be εμφυτος, *ingrafted*, or *implanted* in their minds.

g *Hearers only, deceiving, &c.*] The Jews did indeed place much of their religion in going up at proper times to the *synagogue to hear the law read;* and there may possibly be an allusion to that disposition. The exact signification of παραλογιζομενοι is, *imposing upon* any by a *sophistical* show of argument; and here it is used with great propriety, as M. Superville has observed, *Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 124. Yet Dr. Edwards tells us the Jewish writers have a proverb among them, that "he who hears the law, and does not practise it, is like a man who ploughs and sows, but never reaps."

h Bends down his whole attention, and *looketh, &c.*] I have endeavoured in the paraphrase to express the emphasis of the original, ο δε παρακυψας. Compare 1 Pet. i. 12. where there is an evident allusion to the bending posture of the *cherubim*, who overshadowed the *mercy-seat* in the *holy of holies*.

i *Not bridling, but deceiving, &c.*] That excellent person and writer, Dr. Butler, the late Bishop of Durham, justly observes, that this is the proper rendering of the word; as if the apostle had said, It is impossible that any man should so much as *seem to be religious*, if he does not at least *think* that he *bridles his tongue;* but if he *deceive himself* in this important branch of religion, he is deceived in the *whole* of it. Butler's *Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 58. And indeed so many sins of the tongue are committed without any apprehension of their being evil, that this caution, and this remark for the explication of it, is of great importance, considering how little many zealots seem to be aware of the great evil of bitterly reproaching their brethren upon account of their religious differences: the sin, which (as Mr. Baxter justly observes, see his *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 447.) the apostle seems to have had particularly in his view.

k Without any flaw.] Archbishop Tillotson has justly observed, that there seems here to be an allusion to the excellence of a *precious stone*, which consists much in its being καθαρα και αμιαντος, *clear*, and *without flaw*, or *cloud*. (See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 581.) And surely no *gem* is so precious or ornamental, as the *lovely* temper here described.

l *Pure and undefiled religion*—consists not merely in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship.] The original word, θρησκεια, which in conformity with our translators I have rendered, *religion*, strictly signifies *divine worship;* and intimates here, that no kind of religious services paid to the Deity, can be of any avail, if we neglect the *royal law of charity*, and to *visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;* an idea which I have endeavoured to preserve in the paraphrase.

m *Taking the oversight, &c.*] So επισκεπτεσθαι properly signifies, and may import, entering into measures for their *subsistence*, as well as sometimes *going* to them, and *conversing* with them in their distresses. See note d, on Mat. xxv. 36. § 166. p. 733.

sweet and harmonious subjection to it. Especially, let us be slow to wrath, and not imagine that we can be justified in the exorbitances of our angry transports, because they may possibly arise in the cause of religion. The righteousness of God is not to be promoted, but, on the contrary, will be disgraced and obstructed, by such outrageous, ungovernable sallies. Let every impure and malignant affection be therefore banished from our minds, and let us pray that the word of God may be so ingrafted into our souls, as to become the effectual means of our salvation. Let us not rest in a mere forgetful hearing, or indeed in an ineffectual remembrance; but having looked into the gospel, that perfect law, which, by binding the soul, gives it the truest liberty, let us by divine assistance continue therein, and improve to the immediate purposes of reformation, whatever knowledge we thereby gain; correcting whatever we observe amiss in ourselves. Particularly, let us study a proper command over our tongues, and cultivate those charitable dispositions and offices, in which true and undefiled religion is here said to consist; that widows and orphans may give us their blessing, as their guardians and friends, and then an unspotted life, untainted with the vices of a degenerate age, may bear witness that though in the world, we are not of it, and that we act in consistency with those sublime and holy ends to which we profess as christians to aspire.

SECT. 2. JAMES I. 22 25 26 27

SECTION III.

He cautions them against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the divine precepts; especially where the royal law of charity or universal benevolence was in question. James ii. 1—13.

JAMES ii. 1.

JAMES ii. 1.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

MY brethren, let me now caution you, that you *hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, [*the* great *Lord*] *of glory*,[a] *in a* partial *respect of persons*, so as to give undue preference to any upon account of their external circumstances; whereas the relation in which the meanest of your fellow-christians may stand to him, who is so glorious a Personage as the Son of God, should certainly recommend them to your regard and esteem. *For* I have observed something of this kind among many, which seems to require such an admonition as this; and have seen, that *if a man come into your synagogue*,[b] when you are met for religious worship, *with a gold ring*[c] [*and*] other parts of a *splendid dress, and* at the same time *there come in also a poor man in* mean and *sordid raiment;* you are apt to show an undue regard to the former, and to put a visible slight on the latter, at his first appearance, without considering what may be the real character of the one or the other. *And* whatever may be said in excuse for this, it is often blame-worthy; for if *ye have a respect*, as ye naturally have, *for him who wears a splendid dress, and say to him, Sit there in an honourable place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; And distinguish not in yourselves*[d] according to the different characters of these two men, but only regard their outward appearance, *you even become judges, who reason ill;*[e] you seem by such a conduct to determine, that external circumstances are chiefly to be considered; which certainly is wrong, and if it were to be pursued, would produce very iniquitous and unjustifiable sentiments and practices. By such a conduct as this, you court the favour of the rich, and strongly intimate your contempt of the poor, as poor; but *hearken, my beloved brethren*, and consider, for it is peculiarly worthy of your most attentive regard; *Hath not God* apparently *chosen* many who are among *the poor of this world* [*to be*] *rich in faith*;[f] *and* does it not appear that they are so? Are they not *heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him;* and just upon the point of being carried to a glory that will eclipse that of the greatest monarchs on earth? And does it become you, believing this, to despise those who, for any thing you know, may in a few days be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and placed in the most distinguished rank among the guests at the celestial banquet? *But* this indeed is the case; *you have* often *dishonoured the poor man*, though God may have condescended to visit him with such a gracious regard, and have enriched him with such inestimable mercies. On the other hand, *do not the rich*, whom you court with so much respect and assiduity, *tyrannize over you, and drag you to their tribunals?* Are not most of the rich your persecutors, rather than your friends? *Do they not blaspheme the honourable name* of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by which you are called?* and do they not often compel you to blaspheme it, and inflict the severest penalties upon you if you refuse? So that, on the whole, they often prove themselves the vilest of men. And can you think, that when this

SECT. 3. JAMES II. 2 3 4 5 6 7

2 For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

a [*The Lord*] *of glory.*] Dr. Whitby would render it, *The glorious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ:* but I cannot think that by any means necessary.

b *Into your synagogue.*] Mr. Cradock and Dr. Whitby explain this of their judicial assemblies, which the Jews held in their synagogues. Matt. x. 17; Acts xxii. 19. And they imagine it is probable, that when they were converted to christianity, they preserved the same custom; and that the partiality here blamed, related to two persons, who had causes to try, when the visible superiority given to one, in the setting him in a more honourable place than the other, would tend to pervert justice in his favour; and which Maimonides says the Jewish precepts particularly forbid. But the representing both the parties as seated does not suit this interpretation. It is urged, that some civil distinctions might reasonably be made, and it must be allowed: but the apostle probably saw it rising too high; and in times of persecution, when poor people ventured their lives in behalf of christianity, they had some peculiar title to honourable regard.

c *With a gold ring:* χρυσοδακτυλιος.] Perhaps this compound word might have been rendered, *Having his fingers adorned with gold rings.* The learned Albert has observed, that those who valued themselves upon the richness and luxury of their dress, were accustomed to deck their fingers with a considerable number of costly and valuable rings, frequently wearing several upon one finger. *Observ. Philolog. in loc.*

d *And distinguish not in yourselves:* και ου διεκριθητε εν εαυτοις.] This I take to be the exact rendering of this clause, as the verb is of the middle signification, and that it should not be read, as in our English version, with an interrogation.

e *Judges, who reason ill.*] Our English version in this place is literal, but at the same time very obscure and ambiguous. Beza's observation is a just one, that the phrase in the original is an Hebraism, and it is accordingly rendered by him, *Judices male ratiocinantes, Judges who reason ill.*

f [*To be*] *rich in faith.*] The *ellipsis* in these words of εις το ειναι, or γινεσθαι, is common: as Bos, and after him, Albert, hath observed. Accordingly I have rendered it, *to be rich in faith.*

SECT. 3. JAMES II.

is the case, and you see so many poor saints courageously enduring these extremities, that you ought to fix your eyes so much on a glaring outside, and overlook that heroic worth which so often appears under a veil of poverty? I beseech you, learn to think more reasonably at all times, and especially to bring better sentiments into your assemblies for public worship. And not only in such instances, *but* in all others, endeavour to act equitably;
8 for *if you fulfil the* noble and *royal law*, which, *according to* that expression of the *scripture*, ought with a kind of imperial authority to govern all our sentiments; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; ye do well:* that would be in every thing a rule to you, and particularly here; for none of you, if you were reduced to poverty, would wish to be treated with marks of slight and contempt on that account, without any regard to your
9 character in other respects. *But if ye* do in this partial manner *accept* the *persons* of men, *ye work iniquity* therein, *being convicted by the law* I have just now mentioned, *as transgressors* of it. • And give me leave to say, that whatever zeal you may show for any other precepts, if convicted here, you become guilty before God, and forfeit your ac-
10 ceptance with him. *For whoever shall keep the whole law* in every other instance, *but* allow himself to *offend in one* [*particular,*] *he is* in effect *guilty of all;* as he that committed but one capital crime would as surely suffer death as if he had committed
11 all that ever were prohibited in that light. *For* it is certain, that he disregards the authority of the Lawgiver, which has established every precept equally; as it is evident, *he that says, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath also said, Thou shalt do no murder. If therefore thou art not an adulterer, but committest murder, thou art* evidently *a transgressor of the law.* Hence it appears, that it is not by a regard to the divine authority that thou abstainest from the former crime, since that would equally have preserved
12 thee from the latter. Let it therefore be your care, that ye *so speak and so act as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty,* by the glorious gospel, which is a dispensation that sets us at liberty from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and directs us to all the branches of that virtue and holiness, which is the truest liberty of the mind, and which, being so excellent, must subject us to severer punishment if we presume to contemn it. And especially remember to maintain a regard to it, where the rules of charity are concerned.
13 *For* you know a particular stress is laid upon this branch, as of the highest moment in the sight of God; as we are warned by our compassionate Lord himself, that on the one hand, *he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath not exercised mercy; and* on the other hand, *mercy rejoices against judgment,* and emboldens our hopes, when we stand before that merciful Being, whom we have resembled in that amiable part of his character.

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 THE apostle could not intend to condemn those civil distinctions which are founded upon the different relations
4 and circumstances of mankind in the present world; but surely God intended to teach us how little esteem he sets upon riches, by bestowing them on many of the most undeserving of mankind, while he withholds them from his
6 dearest children: and to admire them, and others, on account of their riches, while we pour contempt on the poor, as poor, though so many of them are distinguished by the riches of the divine favour, must be highly unreasonable,
5 and to God highly offensive. As for those who are poor in this world, but rich in faith, let them adore the divine munificence to them, and think with pleasure of those durable riches, and of that everlasting kingdom, which God has prepared for them as their inheritance.

8 Whatever our stations be, let us pray that the royal law may be inscribed upon our hearts, and that we may
9 love our neighbours as ourselves; guarding against that mean and prohibited respect of persons, which would expose us to conviction, as transgressors of the law. Let us also learn to guard against that partiality in our
10 obedience to it, which is utterly inconsistent with sincerity. Let us remember, that the divine authority equally
11 establishes every precept of it, and that the generous nature of the gospel-dispensation, as a law of liberty, will be
12 a sad aggravation of our presumptuous violation of it. A consciousness of those many defects and imperfections, which the best of men may see reason to charge themselves with, should certainly engage our most earnest appli-
13 cations to God for mercy; and as we desire to obtain it, let it be our care to exercise mercy to others, both in the candour of our censures on the one hand, and the readiness of our liberality on the other.

SECTION IV.

The apostle largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere historical faith; and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation. James ii. 14, *to the end.*

JAMES ii. 14.

SECT. 4. JAMES II. 14

IT is with real grief that I perceive many of you seem highly to value yourselves upon the profession you make of the christian religion, without being suitably impressed with a practical sense of its important principles, and influenced to a life agreeable to them. But *what advantage* [*is there,*] *my brethren, if any one say he has faith, but has not* suitable works,[a] to support the justice of that pretension? *Can* such a *faith*, as may be

JAMES ii. 14.

WHAT *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

a *If any one say he has faith, but has not* suitable *works.*] I am surprised at the immense pains commentators have taken to reconcile St. Paul and St. James; and the many hypotheses they have formed for that purpose. Whereas to me nothing is more evident, than that the ideas they affix to the words *faith* and *works*, are entirely different. St. James, by the word *faith*, means simply an *assent* to the truth of religious principles, *without determining whether it be, or he not, effectual:* and then declares, that in case this assent does not produce *good works*, that is, the solid virtues of the heart and life, it cannot be accepted by God. Whereas St. Paul by the word *faith* means a cordial and *vital assent* to divine truth, which influences the heart to a holy temper, and according

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food;

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect:

23 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

separate from good works, *save him?* Consider the case, when men make professions of charity, without producing the proper fruits of it, and you will easily see how vain such a pretension is. *If*, for instance, *a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food* for the subsistence of life, *And one of you*, who calls himself a christian, *say to them*, We heartily pity your case, and feel the tender emotions of that love which our relation to each other requires; *depart* therefore *in peace*, whithersoever the providence of God may lead you, and I sincerely wish that you may meet with suitable accommodations: may ye *be* clothed and sheltered, *warmed, and fed to the full; but*, with all these soft addresses, if *ye give not to them* either food, or raiment, or any money to purchase *the things necessary for the body; what* [*does it*] *profit* them to be addressed with such hypocritical professions of love? Yea, does it not rather seem a cruel mockery, than a real kindness? *So also faith*, how zealously soever it may be professed, and how orthodox soever those articles are to which an assent is given, *if it have not* suitable *works* to attend it, *being by itself, is dead*,[b] and producing no substantial fruit, is altogether insignificant. *But one* better instructed in christianity, *may* perhaps *say* to one of these forward professors, in order to bring matters to a short issue, Thou sayest that *thou hast faith, and* I make it appear in my life and conversation, that *I have works*, which naturally spring from that principle; give me then the evidence I offer thee; *show me thy faith by thy works*,[c] *and I will* also in return *show thee my faith by my works;* let us, without quarrelling about different explications of faith, make it manifest to each other, that our profession is truly solid, by its substantial effects upon our tempers and lives. *Thou* assuredly *believest that there is one* only true and living *God*, and therein *thou doest well;* it is the grand fundamental principle of all true religion. But remember, it is a principle common to those who are entirely destitute of religion; for *the devils also* firmly *believe* it, and cannot withhold their assent; they are persuaded by dreadful experience of his existence, *and* of the terrors of his wrath, so as even to *tremble* in the expectation of that full display of it, to which they know they are inevitably doomed. *But wilt thou know, O vain*, empty *man*, who restest in that which might be found in equal, or in higher degrees, in the infernal spirits, *that faith without works*, a persuasion of the truths of christianity, if it produces no solid fruits of holiness, *is* really *dead* as to any valuable purpose that can be expected from it. Take an instance of this in the most celebrated of all the patriarchs; I mean the instance of *Abraham, our* great and illustrious *father; was he not* plainly *justified by works, when*, in consequence of that full persuasion he had of a divine commission and command to do it, *he offered his son Isaac upon the altar*, intending, in obedience to what he apprehended the will of God, actually to have slain him, and to have trusted in God to accomplish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from him, by raising him from the dead. *Thou seest* then in this instance, *that faith co-operated with his works*, and animated him to zeal and self-denial in them; *and faith was perfected by works;* the integrity of it was made fully apparent to himself, to angels, and to God. *And* thus *the scripture was fulfilled, which says*, (Gen. xv. 6.) referring to what passed long before this, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*;[d] and in consequence of this he was treated by God with such peculiar endearment, that *he was even called the Friend of God;* as it is said, (Isa. xli. 8.) The seed of Abraham my friend. This proved the sincerity of his faith, and that he was in some degree worthy the honour of the divine friendship. *You see then* by this instance of the great father of the faithful, if the characters of the children are to be estimated in the same manner as those of the father, *that a man is justified by works and not by faith only:* it is by no means enough, that the great principles of religion be credited, if they have not also their practical influence on the heart and life. *In like manner, also*, I might illustrate the matter by the farther instance of *Rahab*, who had been *the harlot*, though afterwards reclaimed by divine grace: *was she not justified by works, when*, in consequence of that faith which she professed in the God of Israel, *she received*, entertained, and sheltered *the spies*, who came to observe the state of Jericho, *and*, at the apparent hazard of her life, concealed them from those that came to search after them; till at length, knowing which way the pursuers would go, she *sent them out another way*, and so made effectual provision for their escape. And on such principles must all others expect justification and salvation; *for as the body without the spirit is* but a *dead* carcass, how fair and entire soever it may appear, and will at length fall into putrefaction and dissolution; *so* such a *faith* as

to the gracious terms of the gospel, entitles a man to divine acceptance, without any regard at all to the Mosaic law, and previous to the production of any of those good works which will naturally be the fruit of it. Had Luther calmly considered this, he would not have denied the *inspiration* of St. James, out of regard to his supposed *heterodoxy* in the business of *justification;* nor would one of his followers have presumed to charge him expressly with *lying*, as Limborch tells us he did, *Mentitus est Jacobus in caput suum.* Limborch, *Theol.* l. iii. 16.

b *Faith, if it hath not works*, &c.] From this passage it appears that we should not confine the idea of the word *faith*, as used by St. James, to a mere assent; for it would be an absurd supposition, that a *mere* assent should have any *works*. By this word therefore St. James (as we observed in the former note) means simply an *assent, whether it be or be not effectual.* Nor is it indeed the assent that saves when accompanied with *works*. So that the apostle's assertion is more critically and correctly true, than many of his commentators have apprehended.

c *Show me thy faith, &c.*] This version is so very different from our own, that many of my English readers will be much surprised at it.—But I have followed the most and best copies which read it, as in the margin of our Bibles, εκ των εργων σου—and—εκ των εργων μου, though some copies read the first clause χωρις των εργων σου, which our translators have followed.

d *The scripture was fulfilled, &c.*] This very text St. Paul quotes, Rom. iv. 3. to prove that *Abraham was justified by faith;* which plainly shows, that the *faith* by which St. Paul says he was *justified*, was such a faith as includes *good works* in it, as a certain *principle* of them; and consequently, established what was said above, for reconciling these two apostles in the easiest manner.

SECT. 4. remains *without* the substantial fruits of good *works*, which ought ever to attend it, *is also dead:* it now appears as a carcass in the sight of God, and as such will ere long perish.

IMPROVEMENT.

JAMES II. Ver. 14, &c. LET this great and important lesson, which the apostle here teaches so plainly, and inculcates so largely, be never forgotten. It is true indeed, (as St. Paul elsewhere fully proves,) that we are justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law. The works of the Mosaic law are by no means necessary; and it is not by our obedience to any law, but by embracing and resting upon the mercy of God in Christ, for our salvation, that we 26 obtain it. Nevertheless, it is vain to pretend to such a faith, if good works are not produced by it; and we might as soon expect the guardianship and counsel, the offices and consolations of friendship, from a dead corpse, as happiness from a mere assent, even to the most important doctrines. Let us therefore endeavour to show our faith by 18 our works. Let us be ready with Abraham, to offer up our dearest comforts to God. Let us, with Rahab, be 21 willing even to expose our lives in the defence of God's people and his cause; otherwise our faith being of no better 19 a kind than that of the devils, will leave us the companions of their misery and despair; even though the conviction should now be so powerful as to make us tremble; or a false persuasion of our enjoying privileges to which we are utter strangers, should give us as strong an emotion to any of the softer passions.

15, 16 Let faith then be active and influential. Let love be without dissimulation. Let us not love merely in word, but in deed, and charge it upon our consciences to be ready to authenticate by the most substantial offices of humanity, the profession we at any time make of friendly wishes, or kind intentions. Otherwise, such professions will be worse than unprofitable, as by encouraging only a false dependence and expectation, they will make the disappointment proportionably grievous and afflictive, to those whom we hypocritically or lightly pretended to compassionate or succour.

SECTION V.

The apostle cautions them against being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and recommends a strict government of the tongue, as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance. James iii. 1—12.

JAMES iii. 1.

SECT. 5. AND now, *my brethren*, give me leave to caution you against another evil which I have seen some reason to apprehend, and to press you that ye *be not many teachers*;[a] that none of you rashly undertake the office of teachers, which many are ready to intrude themJAMES III. selves into, without due qualifications, or a regular call: but I would urge you to be cautious against such an assuming disposition, as *knowing that* we who bear that office, 1 must expect that *we shall undergo greater* and stricter *judgment* than others in a more 2 private station of life. The many infirmities to which the best of us are subject, may indeed teach us to think with awe of that exact trial we are then to undergo; *for in many things we all offend*;[b] we are too ready to trip and stumble in our walk. And it is peculiarly worthy our attention here, that *if any one offend not in word, he* [*is*] *a perfect man*,[c] arrived at so high a pitch and improvement in virtue, that it may be concluded, that he is *able also to bridle in the whole body*; as it is frequently much more difficult to govern our 3 tongues in a becoming manner, than to avoid enormities in our actions. *Behold, we put bridles into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us*, according to their direction; *and* strong and sometimes furious as those creatures are, *we turn* them hither 4 and thither, so as to influence the motion of *their whole body. Behold also how the ships, though they be* many of them *so large, and* sometimes *agitated by violent winds, are turned by a very small helm, whithersoever the steersman pleaseth*,[d] and the wav5 ing of his hand determines their direction. *So also the tongue*, though it *is but a little member, yet boasteth great things*, pretends, and that not unjustly, to have a great deal of influence upon the world. *Behold*, and observe, *how great a quantity of ma6 terials a little fire kindleth* into a blaze. *And* thus *the tongue* [*is*] *a fire*, which often produces a great conflagration: it is *a* little *world of iniquity*[e] of itself. *The tongue is so set among our members*, holds such a rank and place, [*that*] indeed *it defiles the whole body and inflames the* whole course and *circle of nature*,[f] *and is* itself also *set on fire by hell*; the infernal spirit influences the heart, and its wickedness overflows by the

JAMES iii. 1.

MY brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

a *Not many teachers.*] Our translators render it, *masters*, as διδασκαλος is frequently rendered; and it is generally explained of *imperious* and *censorious dictators*, as many of the Jewish zealots were. But when he forbids *many* to be such, he seems to allow that *some* may; and consequently I think *teachers* ought to be explained in an innocent and indifferent sense, as in the paraphrase. And though the word κριμα, in the following clause, may usually signify *condemnation*, yet sometimes it means *judgment* in the general; particularly, Mat. vii. 2; Acts xxiv. 25; Rom. v. 16; (where it is evidently distinguished from κατακριμα,) 1 Cor. vi. 7; Heb. vi. 2; Rev. xx. 4; as, on the other hand, κρισις, which generally signifies *judgment* alone, sometimes includes *condemnation* in it. Mat. xxiii. 33; Mark iii. 29; Heb. x. 27.

b *All offend.*] The word πταιομεν, properly speaking, signifies, *we trip*; and Dr. Barrow (see his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 129.) has justly observed, that as the general course of life is called *a way*, and particular actions, *steps*; so going on in a regular course of right action, is *walking* uprightly; and acting amiss, *tripping* or *stumbling*.

c *Perfect man.*] It is certain, a man whose words are *inoffensive*, may possibly have some imperfections; it shows therefore in how limited a sense the word *perfect* is to be taken; and the observation may be applied to many other passages.

d *Whithersoever the steersman pleaseth.*] As the word is, ευθυνοντος, which signifies, any person that sits at the *helm*, and not necessarily the *pilot*, who is called by way of eminence, ο κυβερνητης, I thought it best to render it *steersman*: though I confess the remark and distinction to be a matter of small importance. I know not how well to express in English the force of ορμη του ευθυνοντος, which admirably represents the *impetuosity* with which, in a storm, a man at the *helm* on a critical occasion *turns his hand*. See Dr. Owen, *On the Spirit*, p. 57.

e *A world of iniquity:* ο κοσμος της αδικιας.] Elsner, (*Observ. Sacr. in loc.*) gives a very singular translation of this clause, *The tongue is the adorning of unrighteousness*; referring to those specious colourings by which wicked men endeavour to excuse or conceal their criminal conduct.

f *Circle of nature.*] So I thought τροχον might be rendered, which most exactly signifies, a *wheel*, from the *revolutions* formed. And perhaps it may intimate how the mischief done by the tongue often *comes round about*. A consideration which, were it not intimated by the expression, is well worthy the attention of every wise

tongue, and tends indeed, by its fatal consequences, to produce a very hell upon earth. SECT. 5.
It is observable, that *every species of wild beasts and birds, of reptiles and fishes,* JAMES III.
though some of them take shelter in inaccessible deserts, and others bury themselves in
the earth; though some mount the air, and others have their abode deep in the watery ele-
ment; yet still every sort *is subdued,*[g] *and has* in some instances or other *been subdued,* 7
by men: and many, whose natures are fiercest, are so tamed as to do the human spe-
cies no harm. *But the tongue no man can* entirely *subdue,* neither the tongues of others, 8
nor his own, so that it shall not in some instances be hurtful; for [*it is*] *an insuperable*
evil, and like a serpent or an adder, *full of mortal venom,* by which sometimes death,
and even damnation itself, is occasioned. *By it we* sometimes *bless God, even the Father;* 9
and it is our glory, when we make use of it in that sacred and honourable employment;
and yet sometimes this noble instrument is degraded to the vilest purposes, *and by it we*
curse and revile *men,* our brethren, *who are made after the likeness of God,* and
honoured with his image. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth the blessing and* 10
the curse, and the same tongue is the instrument of expressing both: and too frequently
when the act of devotion is over, the act of slander, or outrage and insult, commences.
Alas! *my brethren, these things ought not so to be:* it is a shame to human nature, and
it is surely a much fouler reproach to a christian profession. *Does a fountain from the* 11
same opening send forth alternately, and at different times, *sweet* [*water*] *and bitter?*
It is not known in the natural, and it ought not to be known in the moral, world. *Can a* 12
fig-tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine figs? No, but every tree has its own
proper productions. *So no fountain produces brackish water and sweet.* In like man-
ner there ought to be a great deal of care, that we maintain a consistency in our discourses,
and that if we profess religion and devotion, we speak at all times as those who are often
employing our speech to these noble purposes. So shall we honour God, and promote
the peace of society, and of our own minds; whereas, otherwise, we shall injure both;
yea, and injure others and ourselves the more, in consequence of the profession which
we make of religion.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? or a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET this pathetic discourse of the apostle concerning the difficulty and importance of governing our tongues aright, engage us to the strictest care on this great article of practical religion, of which so many are careless, in which the most are so far deficient, as to entitle those to the character of perfect men, who do not here offend. Ver. 2
Let us entreat the assistance of divine grace, that we may keep our mouths as with a bridle; (Psal. xxxix. 1.) that we may steer this important helm aright, lest, by the mismanagement of it, we shipwreck even our eternal hopes. 4
Let us be cautious of every spark, where there are so many combustible materials; and take heed, lest we and 6
others be defiled, and infernal flames kindled and propagated. It is indeed a difficult, but, in consequence of this,
a glorious toil, far more glorious than to subdue the fiercest animals, or the haughtiest enemies: let us therefore 7
resolutely make the attempt, and learn to employ our tongues, as indeed the glory of our frame, to bless God even 9
the Father. And let the remembrance of that similitude of God, in which men are formed, make us tender of all
their interests; and especially careful that we do not injure them by unkind reproaches, or detracting speeches; and
so much the rather, that we may maintain a consistency between the words of devotion addressed to God, and
those of converse with our fellow-creatures. So shall the well-spring of wisdom, rising up in our hearts, and 11
streaming forth from our lips, be as a flowing brook. Let those who are by providence called to be teachers of
others, set a double guard upon their words, not only in public but in private too, as peculiar notice will be taken
of them; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be greatly affected by the tenor of their discourses. And 1
let the awful account which such are to give, the greater judgment they are to expect, prevent any from intruding
themselves into such an office, without suitable qualifications, and a regular call. May God enable them to judge
rightly concerning that call; and where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish them for their work, and his 2
mercy cover those many imperfections, which the best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

SECTION VI.

The apostle urges a candid, benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them; to restrain which he recommends an humble application to God for divine influences. James iii. 13; iv. 10.

JAMES iii. 13.

MANKIND are naturally desirous of the reputation of an understanding superior to SECT. 6.
others: consider what is the best display of it. *Who* [*is*] *wise, and a man of sense among* JAMES III.
you, let him show himself to be possessed of the most valuable kind of knowledge, by
exhibiting *out of a good,* holy, and useful *conversation, his* honourable and beneficent
works. And let him do this, not with vain ostentation or rigorous zeal, but *with the* 14
meekness and gentleness *of* true *wisdom. But if ye have bitter zeal* against each other,
and uncharitable *contention in your hearts, boast not* of your improvements in chris-
tianity, *and lie not against the truth* by such groundless pretensions. *This is not the* 15

JAMES iii. 13.
WHO *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descend-

man. Elsner, Albert, and Bos, by this phrase, understand *successive generations* of men; as if the apostle had said, The tongue inflamed our *forefathers,* it hath the same bad influence on *us,* and is likely to have on our *posterity.*

g *Is subdued.*] So I chuse to render δαμαζεται, rather than *tamed,* that it may include the *conquering* great and mighty *fishes* of the sea, such as sharks and whales; of which it seems less proper to say they are *tamed,* as that generally imports a kind of *harmless familiarity* to which some savage beasts are indeed brought; but of which large fishes are in their nature incapable; and it may be questioned whether some other animals are not so likewise; and such it was most to the apostle's purpose to mention.

SECT. 6. JAMES III.

wisdom that cometh down from above, and which that religion that our Divine Master brought from heaven teaches us; *but* it [*is*,] on the contrary, *earthly, sensual*, and even *diabolical*.[a] It takes its rise from considerations relating to the present world, objects which gratify only our senses, the inferior part of our nature, and which are the baits of the devil's temptations, by which he endeavours to dishonour our profession, and ruin our
16 souls. *For* it is evident, in fact, that *where* uncharitable *zeal and contention* [*is*,] *there* [*is*] wild *confusion* and disorder, *and every* other *evil* and pernicious *work;* all the turbulent passions are in exercise, and a thousand irregular and fatal effects are produced.
17 *But the wisdom* [*which is*] *from above*, of celestial original, *is first pure* from all unclean and corrupt mixtures, and agreeable to the tenor of divine and evangelical truth; *then*, in consequence of that, *peaceable* and pacific, desirous to make and maintain peace; moderate and *gentle*, *easily to be entreated*, persuaded, and reconciled, where any matters of disgust may have arisen; *full of mercy and good fruits*, compassionate to the afflicted, beneficent to all; *without partiality* to those of our own sentiments and denomination, to the injury of others; *and without hypocrisy*, meaning all the kindness it expresses, and
18 glad to extend its good offices as universally as possible. *And* thus the good man recommends and adorns religion, and in this he finds his own truest account; for whereas the wrath of man, as I observed, worketh not the righteousness of God, *the* blessed *fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those that make peace;*[b] persons of such a spirit promote the spread of the gospel, that great root of righteousness; and while a harvest of goodness by this means springs up in the minds of others, they shall themselves in due time reap joy and blessing in the comforts of the present life, and in the fruits of a glorious immortality.

JAMES IV.

On the other hand, when we come to consider the effects of a contrary disposition, how melancholy and how dreadful are they! *Whence* [*are*] *wars and fightings among you?*[c]
1 Whence all the shocking scenes, which private quarrels and public wars occasion; even all the carnage of the field of slaughter, and the barbarous attempts which human creatures and brethren make to destroy one another? [*Is it*] *not hence, from your* sensual *lusts* and appetites, *which* first *war in your members;* that is, do first, as it were, give battle to your rational powers, and then turn the several members of your bodies into weapons
2 of mischief and destruction? *Ye covet* this and that pleasure and gratification, *and* in your present circumstances ye find that ye *have not*[d] the means of procuring it; and therefore *ye* are ready to *kill*[e] one another, because ye stand in each other's way, *and* one possesses what another would be glad to possess, even though it were at the expense of the owner's life. *Because ye* thus *earnestly desire* for yourselves, *and* envy each other the possession of what ye *cannot obtain*, *ye* quarrel and *fight*, make one injury beget another, till *ye* come to *wage* a confirmed *war* with each other. *Yet* after all, ye miss the surest way of obtaining the most desirable blessings, which would be earnestly to seek them of God in prayer; but this is omitted, and so *ye have not* the blessings ye might otherwise easily obtain, *be-*
3 *cause you ask not.* Or if you do pray, it is with little devotion, and so to little purpose: *ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss*, without a becoming faith and fervency, or without that regard to the glory of God, which ought to animate all your desires. Whereas ye seek these things only, *that ye may squander them away upon your lusts*, and indulge yourselves in the height of luxurious pleasures, while your poor brethren are in the last necessity; and surely the dearer any man is to God, the less likely will he be to succeed
4 in such petitions as these. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses*, (for I cannot give you a milder name, while guilty of this spiritual whoredom, while you are lavishing away your best affections upon objects so far beneath him to whom you have vowed them,) *know ye not that the friendship of the world*, which you so much court and caress, *is enmity against God? Whoever therefore will be a friend to the world*, and resolves to pursue it as his chief good, *is* by a necessary consequence declared and *adjudged to be an enemy*[f] *of God*, as he will be led into that rebellion against his law which makes up the grand character of
5 that enmity. *Do you think the scripture speaks in vain* in all the passages in which it guards us against such a temper as this, and leads the mind directly to God, as the supreme Good; teaching us to abandon every thing for him? Or *does the* Holy *Spirit that dwells*

eth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James iv. 1. From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

a *Earthly, sensual, diabolical.*] Dr. Bates supposes this refers to the *three* grand temptations of the world, *avarice*, a love of *pleasure*, and *ambition;* the first of which is *earthly*, the second *sensual*, the third *diabolical*, being the sin by which the devils fell. Bates's *Works*, p. 339.

b *The fruit of righteousness, &c.*] Possibly it might have been rendered, *The fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace.* As if it had been said, They who show a *peaceful* temper, (supposing it to proceed from right principles,) may assure themselves, that they shall *reap* a harvest, in a world where *righteousness* flourishes in eternal *peace*. A seed is sown, and it will spring up, and make them ample amends for all the injuries they have sustained in a contentious world.

c *Wars and fightings.*] The contentious spirit of the Jews was very apparent, and drew on them speedy destruction; as many writers have justly observed on this text. Plato says, "Nothing "but the body, and its lusts and appetites, kindle sedition, quarrels, "and wars in the world." But Mr. Blackwall observes, that the sentiment is here expressed with greater vivacity; and another beautiful metaphor is added, *Your lusts which war in your members;* intimating, that there is a state of civil war in the soul, either between sensual inclinations and conscience, or between one lust and another. Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 212.

d *Ye covet and have not.*] Dr. Whitby explains this particularly of the Jews. They *lusted* after two things, *freedom* from *tribute*, and *dominion* over neighbouring nations; and they continually prayed for these, without considering whether they were indeed agreeable to the will of God; and aiming at nothing more than the gratification of their sensual desires in them. But the apostle seems to imply, they *would have had* the desirable things here referred to, if they had asked *aright;* and I think *that* a good reason for the more *extensive* sense which, according to my usual manner, I have given to the words.

e *Ye kill.*] Beza and Erasmus Schmidius would read it, φθονειτε, *ye envy*, though without the authority of a single manuscript. But *slaughter* is agreeable enough to what was said above of *wars and fightings*, and to the contentious and sanguinary temper of the Jews.

f *Is adjudged to be an enemy.*] So Dr. Barrow (see his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 228.) justly observes, that the word καθισταται signifies; and there is a considerable emphasis in the expression: it is now *declared* and *adjudged* beyond controversy that he is an *enemy of God.*

in us christians, *lust to envy?*[25] does it encourage these worldly affections, this strife and envying, which we have reproved? or can it be imagined that we, who appear to have so much of the Spirit, have any interested views in the cautions we give, and would persuade you from the pursuit of the world, because we should envy you the enjoyment of it? No: *But* we rather pity such fond and wretched attachments; for *he gives* us *greater* degrees of *grace*, than to leave us the slaves of so wretched a disposition: *as it is said* in those ever memorable words, (Prov. iii. 34.) *God sets himself in battle-array against the proud, but to the lowly he giveth grace* and favour. *Subject yourselves therefore to God;* and being listed in his army, keep the rank[h] which he has assigned you; *resist the devil* steadily and courageously, as the great enemy of your eternal salvation; *and* though he may for a while combat you with his varied temptations, *he will* at length *flee from you*, and your progress in religion, and your victory over your spiritual adversaries, will grow daily more easy. *Draw near to God* with humble submission and earnest prayer, *and he will draw near to you* with mercy. *Cleanse* [*your*] *hands*, O *ye sinners*, from all the pollutions with which they are stained; *and* rest not merely in a freedom from evil actions, but labour to *purify* [*your*] *hearts* as much as possible, from all irregularities of affection. O *ye double-minded*, who continue thus wavering between God and the world, and have as yet learned to exert so little resolution in religion, that it is matter of doubt whether you have any principles of it at all. And when you reflect upon the former part of life, so unprofitably and so unworthily spent, *lament* the guilt of such a conduct; *and mourn and weep* for the miseries to which you have exposed yourselves by it. And instead of these vain indulgences, *let your laughter be turned into mourning, and* [*your*] ill-timed *joy into* expressions of the deepest *sorrow*. On the whole, *humble yourselves* in the very dust *before the Lord*, whom by your sins you have offended; *and* you may hope *he will* return to you in the methods of his mercy, and *raise you up* again from that prostrate condition.

SECT. 6.

JAMES IV.

6 But he giveth more grace; wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

6

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

7

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double-minded.

8

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

9

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

10

IMPROVEMENT.

If we desire the character of wisdom, let us learn from the oracles of eternal truth, how it is to be obtained— by meekness and a good conversation. Let us avoid that infernal wisdom, here so severely and justly branded, which consists in knowing the most effectual methods to distress others. On the contrary, let us pray and study and labour for that which is from above, and of which so amiable a character is here given. And so far as it can be obtained without injuring conscience, let us cultivate universal peace; and let a gentle and placable temper, an impartial and sincere disposition, be ever inviolably preserved, even when we are obliged to contend with others about matters of the highest importance; remembering, that the more sacred the cause is, the more solicitous we should be that we do not injure it by a passionate or iniquitous management of it. Thus let us sow the fruits of righteousness in peace, and wait the promised harvest; leaving wars and contentions to others, lamenting them, and praying that God would cause them entirely to cease. And that we may be less obnoxious to those temptations, whereby others are betrayed into them, let us endeavour to guard against those lusts and passions which give a disproportionate value to the objects about which those contentions arise. Does God brand them with this character of adultery? Let us preserve our souls pure from such affections, as ever we desire that our prayers should be acceptable to God. May his grace subdue all the workings of pride, of luxury, and of envy; and produce in our hearts more and more of that humility, to which he will give more grace; engaging us, when thus invited, to draw near to him, to ask aright what we need from him, trusting his promise that he will draw nigh to us, and that when we humble ourselves before him, he will raise us up. Cleansing our hands, let us endeavour to purify our hearts too. So may those who have hitherto been double-minded, hope to attain an establishment in religion, in conjunction with that established peace, which no carnal affection, even when most fully gratified, can either afford or admit.

JAMES III. Ver. 15 17 18 IV. 1, 2 4 3 6 8

SECTION VII.

The apostle suggests particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin; and concludes the section with encouraging and exhorting afflicted and oppressed christians to wait patiently for the coming of their Lord. James iv. 11—v. 8.

JAMES iv. 11.

SPEAK not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save,

LET me now charge you, my *brethren*, that ye *speak not evil of one another;* for *he that speaketh evil of* [*his*] *brother, and judgeth* [*his*] *brother* with a rash severity, therein *speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law;* condemning it as if it were an erroneous rule, in so expressly forbidding such a conduct.[a] *But if thou* thus *judgest the law*, and passest, as it were, a condemning sentence upon it, *thou art* then *not a doer of the law, but a judge.* And how the arrogance of setting up such a superiority to the great Governor of the universe will pass, when it comes under his final review, it well becomes you seriously to consider. For it is certain, *there is one* great Almighty *Lawgiver, who*

SECT. 7.

JAMES IV. 11 12

g *Does the Spirit—lust, &c.*] This rendering, (with Dr. Whitby,) I prefer to our own, which intimates the latter clause to be a quotation. Bishop Patrick supposes it is borrowed from Num. xi. 29. But I think it would be doing great violence to that text, to suppose this an intended quotation from thence.

h Keep the rank.] So the expression ὑποτάγητε properly and exactly signifies.

a *Speaketh evil of* [*his*] *brother, &c.*] Dr. Whitby explains this of the unbelieving Jews reproaching their christian brethren for their non-observation of the Mosaic law; and thinks the apostle intimates, that as the *ceremonial* law was not originally intended for the Gentiles, this conduct was a reflection upon the *wisdom of God* in giving it. But I chuse the more extensive explication.

SECT. 7.

is able abundantly *to* assert the honour of his own government; and as he can *save* his faithful *and* obedient subjects from the greatest extremity of danger and calamity, so he is also able *to destroy* the most obstinate and audacious rebel, and to smite him with irrecoverable ruin in the full career of his crimes. *Who art thou*, therefore, *that judgest another?*

and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another.

JAMES IV. 12 and darest to invade the office of this supreme and universal Lawgiver, and thereby expose thyself to his condemnation?

13 But to insist no farther upon this; let me now turn myself to those who are quite immersed in their worldly schemes, and promise themselves assuredly an opportunity to accomplish them. *Come now, ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go to such a city, and spend a year there, and traffic and get gain* by our merchandize, and then return

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain.

14 and enjoy the fruits of our labours. Alas! upon what an uncertainty do you proceed in such a supposition as this! *whereas*, instead of being able to count on a year to come, *ye know not* even *what* [*shall be*] *on the morrow*, and much less what the days and months of a year may bring forth. *For what* [*is*] *your life*, upon the continuance of which all your worldly projects depend? *For it is* only like *a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away*, and is seen no more; how gay soever its form might be, and

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow; for what is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 how wide soever it might have extended itself. *Whereas ye* [*ought*] *to say*, in consideration of this, *if the* great *Lord* of our lives *will* please to lengthen them, *we shall live, and do this or that*, intimating, even by your manner of speaking, the sense that you have of

15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.

16 his being able at pleasure to cut you short in all your purposes and appointments. *But now you rejoice in your boastings;* you take pleasure in this arrogant and confident manner of talking: whereas, *all such rejoicing is evil*, and ought to be corrected: and so much the rather, as you have been better instructed than many others, and *therefore* ought

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil.

17 to show the good effect of these instructions. For *to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is* aggravated *sin:* and it would have been much better for him, that he had wanted that degree of knowledge he had, than that he should thus abuse it.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

JAMES V. I direct these things especially to those who have the advantage of the christian revelation and institutions; but I confine not myself wholly to them. Let others pay them

James v. 1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, that shall come upon *you*.

1 regard in proportion to the degree in which they have opportunities of attaining divine knowledge. Let them take the greatest care that they do not abuse it. And let those especially be careful, whom Providence has distinguished by the fulness of their circumstances; which often proves a temptation to vice, though it should in all reason and gratitude be an engagement to virtue and piety. Experience will soon teach many such the vanity of those things in which they pride themselves, and which embolden them in their transgressions of the divine law. *Come now*, therefore, *ye rich men*,[b] *weep, and* even *howl over the miseries that are* speedily *coming upon* [*you*,] in those days which are

2 nearly approaching. You have been solicitous to lay up abundant stores for your future subsistence and security; but *your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-*

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 *eaten. Your gold and* your *silver*, which should have been brightened by a generous circulation, have been hoarded up, till they *are cankered, and their rust shall be a witness against you* in the sight of God, *and* so bring upon you such awful rebukes from him, that it *shall*, as it were, *eat* into *your flesh*, with an anguish as piercing and corroding *as fire* itself. *Ye have laid up treasures for the last days;*[c] for the last days are now coming, and the enemy shall seize and dissipate them all to your infinite vexa-

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 tion and distress. *Behold, the wages of the labourers who have reaped your fields, who have been defrauded by you* of their due reward, *crieth* for vengeance against you; *and the outcries of those who have gathered in your harvest have come into the ears*

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 *of the Lord of hosts. Ye have lived delicately and luxuriously upon the earth*, indulging yourselves in every desire that rose in your minds, without restraint. *Ye have pampered your hearts, as* beasts are fed *for a day of slaughter;*[d] and truly to you

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 it is much nearer than you are aware. And well has the vengeance been deserved by you; for *ye have condemned* [*and*] at last *murdered the righteous One*, the Son of God himself; [*and*] *he doth not* yet *resist you*[e] with that display of power which he can easily exert to your utter destruction; but the day will speedily come, when God will avenge his cause, and pour out the judgment he has threatened, on those who have treated him in so base and unworthy a manner.

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the just, *and* he doth not resist you.

7 Since this is the case, since our Divine Master has met with such injurious treatment, and borne it with such steady patience; *be ye therefore*, my *brethren*, long-suffering and *patient*, even *till the coming of the Lord* Jesus Christ: *behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth;* [*and*] though it does not immediately appear when sown, or ripen when it appears, yet he *exerciseth patience with respect to it, till he receive the former rain*, to produce it, *and the latter*, to bring it on to perfec-

7 Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

b *Ye rich men, &c.*] Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* v. 20, 30; iv. 19.) particularly observes, how much the *rich men* suffered by the Romans in the Jewish war.—I have rendered ταλαιπωριαις ταις επερχομεναις, *miseries which are coming upon you*, and I think it more agreeable to the original than our English version, επερχομεναις being a participle of the present tense.

c *The last days.*] This phrase does not merely signify, for *the time to come*, but for *that period* when the whole Jewish economy was to close, and when those awful *judgments* threatened in the *prophets* to be poured out upon wicked men in the *last days*, are just coming. Acts ii. 17; Heb. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 3; and the like. Compare Matt. xxiv. 33, 34; 1 Cor. x. 11.

d *For a day of slaughter:* ως εν ημερᾳ σφαγης.] There are some who render this, *as in a festival*, when many sacrifices are *slain*. But Wolfius observes, that the word is always used in the LXX. to signify not a day of *feasting*, but of *slaughter*.

e *Not resist you.*] Instead of ουκ, Dr. Bentley would read οκς, for ο Κυριος, *the Lord;* and would render it, *and the Lord resists you;* that is, you have brought the vengeance of his almighty arm upon you. *Memoirs of Literat.* Vol. VI. p. 173.—Others interpret it of

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

tion. *Be ye also patient*, and *strengthen your hearts* in every good resolution; *for the appearance of the Lord is near;* he will quickly come, and reward all your long-suffering, and take vengeance on your implacable enemies, for all the outrages they have committed against you. SECT. 7.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the law of that one great Legislator, who is able both to save and to destroy, be always seriously remembered and considered; that we may not affront his authority in pretending to judge others, nor set up for judges, and in effect condemners, of the law, by the severity of those censures which we pass upon our brethren. We are happy in knowing that sacred rule of life, if we obey it; otherwise, that knowledge of it which adds an aggravation even to sins of omission, will much more aggravate every presumptuous opposition to it. JAMES IV. 11 17

Let us look on this world as a scene of great uncertainty; and on life as a flattering vapour, which vanishes while we are beholding it; and let a sense of its shortness and uncertainty, and of our own ignorance what shall be on the morrow, engage us to be very careful that we do not presume upon the future, as if it were in our own power; but set ourselves with all possible diligence to improve present time, referring the disposal of all future events to the wisdom of that God on whom it depends to determine whether we shall live, and do this or that. 14 15

Let rich men read the address of the apostle to persons in their circumstances, with holy awe, and with a jealousy over themselves, lest their present prosperity be succeeded with misery, and their joy with weeping and howling; as it undoubtedly will be, if wealth be unjustly gotten, or sordidly hoarded up, or luxuriously employed to pamper their appetites, while the truest and noblest use of it, the relief of the poor, and the benefit of mankind, is forgotten. Especially have they reason to tremble, who abuse wealth and power as the instruments of oppression; soon will all their stores be wasted, soon will they become naked and indigent, and find a terrible account remaining, when all the gaieties and pleasures of life are utterly vanished. In the mean time, the saints of God may be among the poor and the oppressed; but let them wait patiently for the day of the Lord, for his coming is near. They sow in tears, but let them comfort their hearts with the view of the harvest; in like manner as the husbandman demands not immediately the fruit of that seed he has committed to the furrows. Adored be that kind Providence which gives the former and the latter rain in its season. To him, from whom we have received the bounties of nature, let us humbly look for the blessings of grace, and trust him to fulfil all his promises, who without a promise to bind him, in particular instances, *gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* Acts xiv. 17. V. 1 2—5 6 8 7

SECTION VIII.

He concludes the Epistle with inculcating moderation and fortitude, cautioning them against profane and vain swearing, and recommending prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation. James v. 9, *to the end.*

JAMES v. 9.

JAMES v. 9.

GRUDGE not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door.

AND now, to draw to a conclusion, *be not inwardly incensed against each other, brethren*, so as to grudge or envy one another any superior advantages in life, or to harbour even that malignity of disposition which should groan in secret,[a] while it wants opportunities of mischief; *that you* yourselves *be not condemned*, for *behold, the Judge is standing before the door:* he is now present, and sees all the irregularities of your tempers, as well as actions; in consequence of which, he will quickly bring these inward disorders of mind into judgment, as well as the enormities of the life. SECT. 8. JAMES V. 9

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

And that you may be fortified against such trying circumstances, *my brethren, take for an example of enduring adversity, and of long-suffering* under the greatest provocations, *the* holy *prophets* of old, *who spake* to our fathers *in the name of the Lord*, and gave such convincing evidences of their divine inspiration. (Heb. xi. 36, 37.) *Behold*, in this respect *we esteem them happy*[b] *who endure* steadily and patiently the trials which God appoints for them. In this view, *ye have heard of the* celebrated *patience of Job*, with how much honour it is proclaimed from generation to generation; *and ye have* also *seen the end of the Lord*,[c] how much to his honour, and how much to his comfort, his various and heavy afflictions concluded; *that the Lord is full of compassion, and of tender mercy;* and it is with the bowels of an affectionate Father that he corrects his beloved children, not for his own gratification, but from a view to their advantage. 9 10 11

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and *your* nay,

Among other effects of that impatience against which I am cautioning you, may be reckoned the irreverent use of the name of God, and profane oaths and execrations, into which, in the transport of their criminal passions, some unhappy wretches are ready to fall; *but* be you *above all things, my brethren*, careful that ye *swear not*, upon such occasions, or on any other, lightly and profanely,[d] *neither by heaven*, the throne of God, *nor by earth*, his footstool, *nor by any other oath; but* remember the command of the blessed Lord, (Mat. v. 37.) and *let your yea be yea, and* [*your*] *nay, nay;* content yourselves with a simple affir- 12

the *meek* sufferings of the disciples of Christ, in conformity to the example of their Master.

a Groan in secret.] Thus I have paraphrased the words, because it is well known, that the original, στενάζετε, (as Beza observes,) has this signification. Justin Martyr represents the Jewish converts as the worst sort of christians, who were apt to be impatient of the Gentile yoke, and to retain their attachment to the views of a temporal kingdom.

b *We esteem them happy, &c.*] The apostle speaks of this, not only as his own judgment, but that of all christians who judged right, and understood the nature of things. And it is indeed a judgment in which all christians should be agreed.

c *Seen the end of the Lord.*] It is observable, that in Job xlii. 7, &c. God decides the cause in his favour, and calls him his *servant Job* four times in the compass of a few verses.

d *Swear not.*] This the Jews were very apt to do upon trifling occasions.

SECT. 8. JAMES V.

mation or negation, and take care to maintain such constant integrity in all your words, that nothing more may be needful to gain them credit; *that ye may not fall under condemnation* for profaning the name of God, and lessening the regard due to an oath, when used on the most solemn and necessary occasions.

nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Accustom yourselves to the frequent exercises of devotion, as what will have the surest
13 tendency to promote the comfort and happiness of your lives in every circumstance. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray*, and cast the burden of his cares and sorrows upon the compassionate God, always ready to sustain his people. *Is any cheerful*, in easy and agreeable circumstances? *let him* rejoice in God, and *sing psalms* of praise to him in a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14 *Is any one among you sick? let him*, under his confinement, *call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him* for his recovery, *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord* Jesus Christ, if they feel themselves so instigated to do it by the secret workings of the Spirit of grace upon their minds, as may encourage them to hope for an extraordi-
15 nary cure: *And the prayer of faith*,[e] in such a circumstance as this, *shall save* and recover *the sick; and the Lord shall*, in answer to prayer, *raise him up; and if he hath committed sins*, which have brought this sickness upon him by way of extraordinary punishment, *they shall be forgiven him;* and the Lord shall have mercy upon him, and recover him according to the words of his servant.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:
15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. *Confess* [*your*] *faults one to another*,[f] for we are all too ready to stumble in the way of our duty; *and pray one for another*, especially when your brethren are under God's afflicting hand, or have been under any visible declension in religion, *that you may be healed*, and recovered. *The* earnest *prayer of a righteous man*, the effect of good affections
17 *wrought* in his heart *by the energy of the* Holy *Spirit*,[g] *is of great efficacy*. Many instances of this you know are recorded in scripture; and among others, that of *Elijah*, who *was a man subject to the like infirmities with us*, (compare Acts xiv. 15.) *and* had himself no greater command over the clouds and the rain than any of us; yet he *prayed with a prayer*, that is, with great faith and fervency, *that it might not rain:* which was not the effect of any resentment he had against his country for the ill usage he met with, but in obedience to a secret intimation that it was the will of God to glorify himself by sending upon them such a punishment for their idolatry; *and* the event, though so improbable, was correspondent to his prayer; for *it rained not upon the land for three years and six months*;[h] computing the time from the beginning of the
18 famine to the end of it. *And he prayed again*, at the end of that time, that God would be pleased to remove the heavy affliction which the drought occasioned; *and* the small cloud which appeared at first, soon spread itself over the whole horizon, so that *the heaven gave rain* in abundance, *and the land put forth* the green blade again, and yielded *its fruit* in great quantity, to repay the barrenness of former years.

16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 And now, *brethren*, let me conclude with one exhortation of the greatest importance both to yourselves and others; which is, that you labour to the utmost to promote the spiritual good of your fellow-creatures; for *if any one of you wander from the truth, and one turn him back* to it, and lead him to tread its forsaken paths, he performs the
20 most important charity that can be imagined: For *let him know, that he who* thus *turneth back a sinner from the error* and fatal wanderings *of his way*, shall produce a much happier effect than any miraculous cure of the body; for he *shall save a* precious *soul from* everlasting *death*,[i] ruin, and condemnation, *and so* veil or *cover a multitude of sins:* not only procuring the pardon of those committed by the convert, but also engaging God to look with greater indulgence on his own character, and to be less ready severely to mark all he shall have done amiss.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

e *The prayer of faith.*] I can by no means think that this is advised merely physically. By the *prayer of faith*, I understand such a *faith* as is founded on some more than ordinary impression, by which God intimated an intention of *working a miracle;* and I look upon it as a very considerable proof, that as the power of working miracles was not absolutely confined to the apostles, so it might in some instances continue something longer in the church than their days. Lord Barrington indeed thinks that the expression, *If he hath committed sin, &c.* refers to the commission of *such* a sin as had engaged the apostle to deliver them to Satan, in order to corporeal punishment. But I hardly think *an elder of the church* would then have been mentioned; and one cannot imagine, that when the apostles were so few, and two of them comparatively so seldom together, the expression, "*Send for the elders of the church*," should mean, Send for *some of the apostles*. How vastly different this is from the extreme unction, practised by the papists, not for *cure*, but only when life is *despaired* of, I think every reasonable man may easily judge.

f *Confess* [*your*] *faults, &c.*] The general candid sense which I have given to the words, and which is a very important one, seems to me utterly to supersede *all pretences* to claim from them any *priestly* power, or to the requiring *confession* in the manner which the church of Rome does. For the confession *here* mentioned is plainly spoken of as *mutual*.

g *Wrought—by the energy of the Spirit.*] The word ενεργουμενη, as Bishop Hopkins (in his *Works*, p. 749.) observes, seems to imply this sense. I have not confined it to the prayer of *miraculous* faith.

h *Three years and six months.*] Elijah is said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, &c. to have showed himself to Ahab in the *third year;* that is, from his going to live at Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 8, 9, 14. but from the beginning to the end of the famine was three years and six months, according to the account given by St. James, as also in Luke iv. 25.

i *Save a soul from death*, &c.] This way of expression intimates, in the strongest manner, the *infinite importance* of such an event; as to *save a soul from death* is yet more than *hiding the sins* of the convert. As to the latter clause, Bishop Atterbury and Dr. Scott urge the interpretation given in the last words of the paraphrase. See Atterbury's *Serm.* Vol. I. p. 46—48; Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 368. And I have not seen reason, on the most attentive inquiry, to disallow the force of their arguments. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 8. and the note there.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 8. JAMES V Ver. 20

May it ever be remembered by all, and especially by the ministers of the gospel, of how great importance it is to be instrumental in saving a soul from death, an immortal soul from everlasting death; that so they may be animated to the most zealous and laborious efforts for that blessed purpose; and think themselves richly rewarded, though it were for the otherwise unsuccessful labours of a whole life, by succeeding even in a single instance. In this view, may there be a care to bring them to the truth, that so they may be converted from their wandering ways, that their understandings being convinced of the truth and importance of the gospel, their conduct may be practically influenced by it; and that upon such steady principles, as may effectually prevent their return to their wanderings again. Thus may a multitude of sins be hidden, and the glory of God, and the salvation of men, be effectually promoted.

Whatever trials we may meet with in these charitable efforts, or in any other path of duty, may we take the pro- 10
phets of old, and the apostles of our Lord, for examples of suffering adversity and patience; especially remembering 11
their Lord, and ours; remembering how abundantly the patience of good men has been rewarded, the end of the
Lord with respect to holy Job, and many others, who have trode in his steps in succeeding ages; and remember- 9
ing especially, that the Judge stands at the door, that in a very little time he will appear, not only to put an end to
the trial of his servants, but to crown their virtues and graces. In the mean time, the bowels of his compassion are
abundant, and he will not be wanting in communicating all necessary consolations and supports. May we be so 11
happy, as to be acquainted with those of devotion, that in our affliction we may pray, and in our cheerfulness sing 13
psalms; that we may know by blessed experience the efficacy of such a temper to soften the sorrows of life, and to
sweeten its enjoyments. And as we desire to be visited of God in our afflictions, may we with christian sympathy
be ready to visit and relieve others in their sickness, or other kinds of distress. It is indeed the special office of the
elders of the church, who should be sent for upon such occasions with readiness, and who, if they be worthy of their 14
office, will attend with pleasure. But it is not their office alone. Let us all be ready to pray for each other in faith and 15
charity, and where offences have been committed, let there be a frank and candid acknowledgment of them on the 16
one side, and as hearty a forgiveness on the other. In a word, let the efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous be
often reflected on, to excite fervour, and to engage to righteousness, and to lead us to honour those who maintain
such a character, and who offer such petitions and supplications; that God may, in answer to their requests, *shower* 17, 18
down his blessing upon us, that our land may yield its increase, that righteousness may spring up out of the earth, and that in every sense *God*, as *our own God, may bless us.* (Psal. lxvii. 9; lxxxv. 11.)

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

THE apostle Peter makes a very eminent and illustrious figure on the theatre of the evangelical history, and was, on several occasions, favoured by our Lord with peculiar and distinguishing marks of honour. One instance, which I shall alone recite, among the many which might be recited, if it was needful, and which happened very soon after our Lord's ascension, is, that he was deemed worthy, under the impulse and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to open the gospel-dispensation, and first to preach salvation through a crucified Redeemer to the Jews (Acts ii.) and Gentiles. (Acts x.) And I the rather suggest this instance, because it affords some colour to my own opinion that this Epistle was written both to the Jewish and Gentile converts, who were dispersed in various regions of the world.

The sentiments of learned men upon this question—*To whom was this Epistle written?*—are very various. The principal and most remarkable are these—That it was to the converted Jews of the dispersion—Or to the converted Gentiles—Or lastly, (which is the opinion of Lord Barrington, embraced and defended by Dr. Benson,) to the converted *proselytes of the gate*. It is not necessary in this place* to enter into a particular confutation of the last-mentioned hypothesis; especially as I apprehend what is suggested in my notes on several passages of the Acts, may convince an attentive reader, that there is no sufficient ground to suppose there were ever any such persons as *proselytes of the gate*. And as to the two former opinions, when the several arguments by which they are supported are duly considered and examined, we shall perhaps be inclined to imagine that the apostle rather designed his Epistle for the Jewish and Gentile converts *both*, than for either of them *distinctly* and *separately*. Without discussing the reasons for the opinion I have adopted, I shall leave the reader to form his own judgment, after he hath perused my Paraphrase and Notes on those passages of this Epistle on which it is founded.

It is not very easy to assign the date of this Epistle with exactness. The most commonly received opinion is, that it was written in the year 61, the seventh of the Emperor Nero; and this seems to be a medium between the sentiments of those who place it some years higher, and those who place it lower, which bids fairest for the truth.

It is evidently the design of this Epistle, "To induce the christian converts, in various parts of the world, to maintain a "conversation, not merely inoffensive to all men, but in all respects worthy of the gospel; and to support them under the "severe persecutions and fiery trials they already endured, or were likely to endure, by the noblest considerations which "their religion could suggest."

The first branch of this design the apostle seems to keep particularly in view from chap. i.—iii. 7. And in pursuance of it, after having congratulated his brethren, who were dispersed abroad through various countries, on their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel, which was introduced into the world in so sublime a manner by the prophets and apostles, (chap. i. 1—12.) he exhorts them to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to universal obedience, by an affecting representation of their relation to God, their redemption by Christ's invaluable blood, and the excellence and perpetuity of the christian dispensation, and of its glorious fruits and consequences, compared with the vanity of all worldly enjoyments. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*) Urging them, by the like considerations, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ as the great Foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as would adorn his gospel among the unconverted Gentiles. (Chap. ii. 1—12.) For the same end, he exhorts them to the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even when their dispositions and injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with

* The learned author intended, had Providence prolonged his valuable life, to have published a distinct dissertation on this subject. But this, and many other designs he had projected, for the benefit of the church and the world, were prevented by his justly lamented death.

which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*) He likewise exhorts christian wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds rather than of their persons; and husbands to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. (Chap. iii. 1—7.)

In the ensuing part of the Epistle, the apostle's arguments and exhortations more immediately and directly refer to those dreadful sufferings and persecutions to which the christian converts were exposed, or which they actually endured, from the malevolence and rage of their implacable enemies. And here, well knowing that such treatment, unmerited and unprovoked, is apt to imbitter and narrow men's spirits, and inflame their resentments; in which case the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus would be greatly dishonoured, and its spread and influence in the world retarded, by the indiscreet behaviour of its friends and advocates; therefore St. Peter urges many arguments on the christian converts, in order to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life and conversation; and to a steady, courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. (Ver. 8—17.) And then animating them to endure their sufferings with patience and resignation, from the endearing consideration of what their Divine Saviour had suffered for them, he expatiates on his atonement, resurrection, and exaltation; on the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and on the awful solemnity of the last judgment, as powerful arguments to a life of mortification and holiness, whatever discouragement and opposition they might be called to encounter. (Ver. 18—iv. 6.) And as eminent vigilance, fidelity, and courage, would be requisite for rightly improving their talents, and for discharging the duties of their respective stations in the church, at all times, but especially in times of imminent danger and persecution, he distinctly inculcates these several virtues; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes, that a tremendous, inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving. (Ver. 7—19.) And at the close, he addresses some particular cautions both to ministers and private christians; urging on the former, humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a stedfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this sublime consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a while, make them perfect, according to the apostle's earnest prayer for them. (Chap. v. *throughout.*)

From this imperfect delineation of this admirable Epistle, the production of another eminent apostle, it is no unnatural or improper remark, that all the principles of our holy religion, as here represented, are perfectly consistent with the analogy of faith, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament; that they are directly levelled against all manner of corrupt affections and immoral practices, as well as urged in the light of motives to all those virtues and graces, in which our conformity to God, and the true glory of our nature consists. And (which, if it were the only circumstance that could be pleaded, would exalt our religion to an infinite superiority to the institutions of the most renowned heathen philosophers and lawgivers, and in connexion with its amazing progress, is a demonstration of its divine original) christians are here instructed to encounter outrageous violence and persecution only with the hallowed weapons of patience, meekness, and charity, and to silence the cavils, and blast the machinations of their own and their Master's bitterest enemies, with the lustre of a pure and holy life, and the fervour of a generous and invincible benevolence. How amiable, how elevated, how divine, how worthy of all acceptation is the religion of Jesus!—In delineating, as we have seen, the grand and essential branches of which, even Peter and Paul, notwithstanding all their contentions about things of inferior moment, or of a personal and private nature, are perfectly consistent and harmonious.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

SECTION I.

The apostle Peter begins his address to his brethren who were dispersed abroad, with congratulating their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel; and takes occasion to expatiate upon the sublime manner in which it was introduced both by the prophets and the apostles. 1 Pet. i. 1—12.

1 PETER i. 1.

1 PETER i. 1.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

PETER, who has the honour to be invested with the office of *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, inscribes and addresses this Epistle *to the elect strangers who are scattered abroad*;[a] to those christians whom providence has dispersed *through* various countries, and whom divine grace has taught to consider themselves, wherever they dwell, as strangers and sojourners on earth; and particularly to those who inhabit the regions of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia*, and those in the provinces of *Asia and Bithynia*. I call you [*elect*] because you

SECT. 1.

1 PET. 1.

2 Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

2 are indeed chosen *according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father*, who has projected all his schemes with the most consummate wisdom, and perfect discerning of every future event. He has been pleased, according to the steady purposes of his grace, to bring you, *by* means of the *sanctification of his Spirit*, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost operating upon your souls, *to* evangelical *obedience*. He has subdued all your prejudices against the gospel, and effectually engaged you to submit to it; *and* thus you are interested in the pardon of sin, and in all the other blessings which proceed from *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, whereby forgiveness is obtained for us christians as it was for the Jews under the law, upon sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices; and may this and every other instance and degree of *grace, and* all the *peace* consequent upon it, *be multiplied unto you* all, wherever you are and whatever your condition and circumstances in life may be. Whatever your afflictions are in this variable and troublesome

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

3 world, I hope you never will forget how indispensably you are obliged to thankfulness on account of your christian privileges; and to such thankfulness let me now excite you and myself; *blessed* therefore [*be*] *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath regenerated us to a* great, important, and *lively hope* of future happiness, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:* upon whom indeed, and upon whose resurrection, all our hopes depend. And by whom we are

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

4 brought *to* the cheerful and confident expectation of *an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled*,[b] *and unfading*, which nothing can spoil, which nothing can pollute, and which is incapable of any internal decay, as well as external violence. This inheritance is *reserved in the heavens for you*, and for all true believers: *Who*, though now surrounded

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith

5 with many apparent dangers, are not left defenceless, but *are guarded* as in a strong and impregnable garrison,[c] *by the* almighty *power of God, through* the continued exercise of

a *Scattered abroad.*] Lord Barrington (*Miscel. Sacr.* Essay II. p. 84—88.) strenuously maintains, that St. Peter wrote only to the converted *proselytes of the gate*; and in favour of this opinion he urgeth their being called *strangers*, which he thinks is the style peculiar to those who, having renounced idolatry, and receiving the seven precepts of Noah, were yet *strangers to the commonwealth of* Israel. He supposes they must have been Gentiles, because they are said, *once not to have been a people*, chap. ii. 9, 10. and to have been *ignorant*, ver. 14. and to have *wrought the will of the Gentiles*, chap. iv. 3. and he also pleads, from chap. i. 22. where they are said to have *purified their souls by obeying the truth*, that it is likely they were *proselytes of the gate*, because a parallel expression is used by St. Peter concerning Cornelius and his friends, (Acts xv. 7. See note h, p. 507.) whom he supposes to have been such. He likewise argues from their being addressed in these words, *If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work*, (chap. i. 17.) by St. Peter who had himself addressed Cornelius in almost the same terms. (Acts x. 34, 35. See note c, p. 482.) He pleads in support of the same opinion, their being called *christians*, (chap. iv. 16.) a title which he supposes was first given to the converted *proselytes of the gate*, of which the church at Antioch, where they were first called christians, in his apprehension, consisted. (Acts xi. 26. See note f, p. 487.) But all this appears to me to be utterly inconclusive; it is in part obviated already in my notes on the Acts; and as for the force which may seem to remain in his lordship's arguments, arising from the phrases in which St. Peter addresses those to whom he writes, it is, I think, entirely annihilated, by supposing that the Epistle was written both to the converted Jews and Gentiles; of which the reader will be able to form a judgment by observing whether my paraphrase of the several passages in question be natural and easy.

b *Undefiled.*] That is, into which nothing that *polluteth* can enter. The land of Canaan was said to be defiled by sinners; to which there may here be an allusion. Compare Rev. xxi. 27.

c *Are guarded*, &c.] The original word, Φρουρουμενους, is very emphatical, and properly signifies, *being kept as in an impregnable garrison*, secure from harm, under the observation of an *all-seeing eye*, and protection of an *almighty hand*. Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 196. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 32. in the Greek.

SECT. 1. ——— 1 PET. I.

that *faith* which this almighty power wrought in your hearts; and he will still maintain it *unto* that blessed hour when you shall receive the complete and eternal *salvation* which is already *prepared*, and though now kept as under a vail, is *to be revealed in* its full radiance of glory, *in the last time*,[d] the grand period, in which all the mysteries of Divine Providence shall beautifully terminate. This is the blessed state and condition to which 6 by the gospel you are brought, *in which*, and in the glorious hopes which it inspires, *you* cannot but *rejoice, though now for a little while, if it be necessary, you are grieved* and distressed *amidst various trials*. You know they are all under the direction of the infinite wisdom of your heavenly Father, who would not subject you to them, did he not see them to be subservient to your truest happiness; and they will ere long be brought to 7 an everlasting period. His intention in all is most kind and gracious, namely, *that the little trial of your faith*, which is *far more precious* and valuable *than* that *of gold which perishes*, and wears out in time, *though it be tried with fire*, and purified to the highest degree; *may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, in* the great day of *the revelation of Jesus Christ*, the Divine Author and Finisher of our faith, who having himself endured yet sorer trials, will rejoice to applaud and reward the fidelity of his servants 8 in his cause: I say, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that glorious Redeemer, *whom not having seen*[e] with your bodily eyes, nor personally conversed with him, *ye* nevertheless *love*, and *in whom, though now you see* [*him*] *not, yet* assuredly *believing, ye rejoice*, as your Almighty Saviour, Friend, and Protector, *with unutterable and* even *glorified joy*, with such a joy as seems to anticipate that of the saints in glory: *Receiving* with 9 unspeakable delight, as a full equivalent of all your trials, *the* great *end of your faith*, [*even*] *the* complete *salvation of* [*your*] *souls;* a prize of infinitely greater importance 10 than all you can be called to sacrifice for its sake? *Concerning which salvation, the prophets, who predicted the grace* of the gospel, [*which was appointed*] *to you, sought and* 11 *diligently enquired: Searching*, with the deepest and most attentive reflection, *to what* period, *or* to *what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did refer*,[f] *when he testified* long *before* they came to pass, *the* various *sufferings which were to come upon Christ, and the* exalted and permanent *glory which was to succeed* them, and render him and his kingdom so perpetually illustrious, and his servants so completely 12 happy. To the memorable testimony of these prophets it becomes us to pay a sincere and profound regard, *to whom* such extraordinary discoveries were made, as no attentive reader can view without conviction and astonishment; and *it was revealed*[g] to them among other things, *that* [*it was*] *not to themselves, but to us* that *they ministered these things;* they knew that we, when the events arose, should have a more complete understanding of these oracles, than any who declared them had. Consider, then, how happy you are in that dispensation under *which* you *now* live, when those divine mysteries, which were only in a more obscure manner hinted at by the prophets, *are* most clearly and expressly *declared to you, by those who have published the glad tidings of the gospel among you, by the* evident authority and attestation, as well as by the assistances, of the *Holy Spirit sent down from heaven* with such visible glory, and testifying his continued residence amongst us by such wonderful effects. And indeed the doctrines *which* they preach, are *things* of so great excellence and importance, as to be well worthy *the* regard of *angels*, as well as men; and, accordingly, (as the images of the cherubim on the mercy-seat seemed to bow down, to look upon the tables of the law laid up in the ark,) so those celestial spirits do, from their heavenly abode, *desire to bend down*,[h] *to* [*contemplate*] such glorious displays of divine wisdom and goodness, and attentively to survey those important scenes that are opening upon us here on earth; which is become so much more considerable than it would otherwise be, as it is honoured with being the theatre of such glorious events.

unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ;

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

d *In the last time.*] This plainly refers to the second appearance of Christ, called *the last time*, because it will be the concluding scene of all the divine dispensations relating to this world. For the same reason it is called *the last day*, John vi. 39; and xi. 24. And the design of the passage before us confirms this interpretation, since the apostle is here speaking of the full manifestation of the future happiness reserved in heaven for them. Some would connect, *in the last time*, with their being *kept by the power of God;* and understand it, as if the apostle had said, Though our lot is cast in the *last time* when the temptations to apostasy are so great and powerful, we are, notwithstanding, preserved from all the dangers to which we are exposed.

e *Not having seen.*] It is very possible that among these *dispersed christians*, there might be some who had visited Jerusalem whilst Christ was there, and might have seen, or even conversed with him; but as the *greater part* had not, St. Peter speaks, according to the usual apostolic manner, as if they *all* had not. Thus he speaks of them *all* as loving Christ, though there might be *some* among them who were *destitute* both of this divine principle and of that joy which he speaks of, as δεδοξασμενη, *wrought up even to glory.*

f *Spirit of Christ which was in them, &c.*] It is well worthy our notice, that the Spirit which dictated to the prophets, is called the *Spirit of Christ;* which (as Mr. Fleming observes, *Christol.* Vol. I. p. 185.) both proves his *existence* before his *incarnation*, and illustrates the full view he himself had of all he was to do and suffer under the character of our Redeemer; the particulars of which therefore must have been comprehended in the *stipulations* between *him* and the *Father*. The apostle, in discoursing so largely concerning the prophets, seems to have a special reference to the converted Jews, who would enter more thoroughly into this part of his reasoning than the converted Gentiles.

g *To whom it was revealed, &c.*] I think this text plainly proves, that the prophets had some general intimation that their prophecies referred to the Messiah; but that they did not understand every clause of them in their full force, nor so well as we understand them, who are capable of comparing them with the event.

h *Angels desire to bend down, &c.*] Thus it is in the original, επιθυμουσιν παρακυψαι, *desire to stoop down to;* in allusion, no doubt, (as M. Saurin, *Diss.* Vol. II. p. 266. has beautifully illustrated it, and many others have remarked,) to the *bending posture* in which they were represented on the *mercy-seat*. And Mr. Blackwall observes, (*Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p 431.) that it may denote, not only the *attentive curiosity* with which they may inquire into the *gospel*, but the *humility* of their *adoration*, whereas it is very probable that apostate brethren refused to stoop to such a scheme.

IMPROVEMENT.

ARE we desirous of rendering it apparent to ourselves, and all around us, that we are indeed the elect of God? Let it be by an humble application to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, on the one hand, and by the evident fruits of the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the other. SECT. 1.

The abundant mercy of God hath begotten real christians to the lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for them: let us keep it steadily in view, and earnestly pray that God would preserve us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Whilst we are waiting for this salvation, it is very possible, yea probable, affliction may be our portion; but let us remember, it is, if need be, that we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Our faith, and our other graces, are as it were thrown into the furnace, not to be consumed, but refined; that they may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ. Even at present, may this divine faith produce that love to an unseen Jesus, which is here so naturally expressed by the apostle; and though now we see him not, yet may that love be eminently productive of joy, even that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory; and in the lively and vigorous exercise of these graces, may we all receive the end of our faith, even the everlasting salvation of our souls! 1 PET. I. Ver. 4 5 6 7 8 9

Let what we are here told of the prophetic writers be improved as it ought, to confirm our faith in that glorious gospel, of which these holy men have given in their writings such wonderful intimations and predictions; writings which we have such excellent advantages for more distinctly and clearly understanding, than even they themselves did. What exalted ideas should we entertain of a dispensation introduced by such a series of wonders, preached by the inspired prophets, and by the Holy Ghost in his miraculous gifts and salutary influence sent down from heaven: a dispensation into the glories of which the angels desire to pry; how much more worthy, then, the attention of the children of men, who are so nearly concerned in it, who were redeemed from everlasting destruction by the blood of the Son of God? O let us review it with the closest application, and improve it to the infinitely gracious and important purposes for which it was intended. Then will grace and peace be multiplied to us; and however we may now be dispersed and afflicted, pilgrims and strangers, we shall ere long be brought to our everlasting home, and meet together in the presence of our dear and condescending Saviour; where, having a more lively sense of our obligations to him, and beholding his glory, we shall love him infinitely better than at this distance we have been capable of, and feel our joy in him increased in a proportionable degree. 10 11 12 2

SECTION II.

The apostle enforces his general exhortations to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to obedience, by an affecting representation of our relation to God, our redemption by the invaluable blood of Christ, the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, and the excellence and perpetuity of the gospel-dispensation. 1 Pet. i. 13, *to the end.*

1 PETER i. 13.

1 Peter i. 13. WHEREFORE, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

I HAVE been endeavouring to give you some general ideas of the excellence and importance of the gospel-dispensation; reminding you of the wonderful manner in which it was introduced by the united labours of the prophets and apostles, and of the regard paid to it by the native inhabitants of the heavenly world. Regard it *therefore* as worthy the closest attention; and let the blessings of it be most vigorously pursued; and *girding up the loins of your mind*, that you may be capable of the most strenuous action, and *being* continually *sober* and temperate, and watchful against every thing that would ensnare and pollute you, *hope unto the end for the grace* and mercy *which shall be brought unto you, in the* great and glorious day of the *revelation of Jesus Christ.* Live in the view of his second appearance, and think every labour, and every self-denial, happily bestowed, which may subserve your prospect of felicity in that important day. SECT. 2. 1 PET. I. 13

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance:

You have now the honour to be adopted into the family of God; conduct yourselves therefore *as* his *obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts* which you indulged *in the time of your ignorance*, when you knew not this gospel, and were many of you in heathen darkness, and others under the imperfect dispensation of Moses: 14

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

But as he that has called you to this glorious light, and participation of such invaluable blessings, *is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in the whole of* [*your*] *conversation*, in every thing you say and do, aspiring after this as your greatest honour, to bear the image of God in the moral perfections of his nature; 15

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

For it is written in several passages of the Mosaic scriptures, (Lev. xi. 44; xix. 2; xx. 7.) *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* There is the same force in the argument now, respecting us christians, which there was with regard to the Jews; yea, greater force, in proportion to the degree in which the sanctity of the Divine Being is now more illustriously displayed: 16

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

And accordingly let me exhort you, *if ye call upon the* God and *Father* of all, *who, without respect of persons*, or any kind of partiality, whether to Jews or Gentiles, *judges every one according to* [*his*] *work*, to *converse during the time of your sojourning* here, with all becoming reverence and humility, *in* the religious *fear* of God: and so much the rather, *knowing* the price of your redemption to have been so rich and invaluable. This is an important article of divine knowledge, of which 17

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as*

no christian can be ignorant, *that you were not redeemed with corruptible things*, as *with silver and gold*,[a] which, however regarded by men, have no value in the sight of 18

[a] *Redeemed with corruptible things, with silver and gold*, &c.] Some think here is an allusion to the *lamb*, which made an atonement, and was bought at the *common* expense furnished by the contribution of the *half-shekel*, as an atonement for their souls. Compare Exod. xxx. 11, &c. As for those that think here is a reference to the *stamp* of a *lamb* on the Jewish coin, I am neither sure of the truth of the fact, nor can I perceive the elegance of the supposed allusion. Compare Wells's *Geog. of the Old Test.* Vol. I. p. 275.

ECT. God; this, I say, was not the price which bought you *from your vain*, trifling, and
2. unprofitable *conversation, received by tradition from your fathers*,[b] from those here-
——— ditary superstitions, follies, and vices, which had in succeeding generations assumed the
1 PET. name and the garb of religion, and from the guilt which they had brought upon your
1. souls. Ineffectual had all the treasures of the earth been to purchase help for us under so
19 sad and deplorable a circumstance. *But* God was pleased to find out the only ransom,
and has redeemed us *with the precious blood of Christ*, his Son, *as of a lamb unblemished
and unspotted*, free from the least degree of moral pollution, and therefore properly repre-
sented by those lambs, free from all corporeal spots and blemishes, which the Jews were
20 required to offer as an expiation for their souls. And as the paschal lamb was chosen, and
set apart some time before it was sacrificed, so the Lord Jesus Christ, *who was indeed* ty-
pified by it, was known, approved, and *fore-appointed from the foundation of the
world, but made manifest in these latter times*, by the clear preaching of the gospel,
21 *for your sakes*, that ye might obtain redemption and salvation by him; Even ye all *who
by him*, and the manifestations of the divine grace and mercy in him, are brought to re-
pose your *trust* and confidence *in God*,[c] *who raised him from the dead, and gave him*
such exalted *glory* and majesty in the celestial world; *that* so *your faith and hope might
be in God*, and ye might be encouraged to commit all your concerns to him with cheer-
ful confidence, when he has appointed you such a Saviour; and to expect all blessings
from that friendship with him which is founded upon the incarnation, atonement, and
22 blood of his own Son. Let it be your care, therefore, that *having purified your souls*
by an application to this fountain which God has opened, and *by* that *obedience to the
truth* which will, *through* the assistance of *the Spirit*, be the result of such an applica-
tion; and since the whole genius and design of this religion, which you have imbibed
and professed, leads *to an undissembled brotherly love:* let it be your care, I say, to
enter affectionately into its design and tendency; and to *love one another out of a pure
heart*, operating fervently and *intensely*,[d] and not to rest merely in those deceitful forms
and professions of affection, with which the men of the world amuse themselves and each
other; or in those trifling instances of friendship which can do little to approve its reality
23 and sincerity. The temper and conduct which I recommend, may justly be expected from
you, considering your relation to God, and to each other; as *having been regenerated,
not by corruptible seed*, not by virtue of any descent from human parents, *but by incor-
ruptible;* not laying the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you
had the honour to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not en-
title you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is *by* means of the efficacy of *the
word of God* upon your hearts, even that powerful word *which lives and endures for
24 ever*,[e] that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical privileges. *For* as the
prophet Isaiah testifies, (Isaiah xl. 6.) *all flesh* [*is*] *as grass, and all the glory of man
as the flower of the grass*, which is yet frailer than that; *the grass withereth, and the
flower thereof falleth;* quickly deprived of its blooming honours, it drops, blasted and
dying, to the ground. And thus precarious and uncertain are all the dependences which
25 we can have on perishing creatures; *But the word of the Lord abideth for ever* in un-
diminished force and vigour, nor can ten thousand succeeding ages prevent or abate its
efficacy. *Now this*, which the prophet refers to in the oracle I have just been quoting, *is
the word which is preached to you in the gospel:* show, therefore, your regard to it by
such a temper and behaviour, both towards God and man, as it was intended to inculcate
and produce.

silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers,

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren; *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently;

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET it be matter of our daily, delightful meditation, that while we clearly discern the uncertainty of all human
Ver. 24 dependences, which wither like the grass, and fall like the flower of the field, the word of God is permanent and
25 immutable. Let us cheerfully repose our souls on this stable, unfailing security; gratefully acknowledging the
goodness of God, that he hath condescended to lay a foundation for our hope, so firm and durable as his own
23 infallible word, and to make that word the incorruptible seed of our regeneration. If we have indeed experi-
22 mentally known its efficacy and power, so that our souls are purified by obeying the truth, let us carefully express
our obedience to it, by undissembled, fervent, brotherly love; and animated by our glorious and exalted hopes as
13 christians, even that divine and illustrious hope of the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
14 let us set ourselves to the vigorous discharge of every duty, as knowing that we should be children of obedience,
having the excuse of ignorance no longer to plead for the indulgence of our lusts, but by a holy God being called
with a holy calling, and instructed to invoke him, at once, as our gracious Father and impartial Judge.
17 It is worthy of our special remark, that the blessed apostle urges us to pass the transitory and limited time of
18, 19 our sojourning here in fear, from the consideration of our being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, which

b *Received by tradition, &c.*] Some think this refers to the *Jewish traditions*, but perhaps it may express those vain *rites of worship* which for successive ages had been delivered down from parents to their children in the Gentile world.

c *Who by him trust in God.*] This phrase is remarkable, and I think with Mr. Hallet, (see his *Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 58.) that the meaning is, that christians, who before their conversion were *ignorant* of the true God, learnt his *being* and *providence* from the great fact of *Christ's resurrection*, and the power with which God invested him on his *ascension* into heaven.

d *Intensely.*] So I think the word ἐκτενῶς properly signifies; according to the sense in which it is used by Polybius and Herodotus. See Raphelius, *Annot. in loc.*

e *The word of God, which lives and endures for ever.*] This is rendered by some, *Who lives and endures for ever*, referring it to God himself. But it is more agreeable to the design of the apostle, (and, as Wolfius imagines, to the order of the original words,) to refer this clause to the *word* of God, which is here styled *incorruptible seed.*

is a price of infinitely more value than all the treasures of the universe. And certainly there is a mighty energy in the argument; for as it is a very amiable, so it is also a very awful, consideration. What heart so hardened, as not to tremble at trampling on the blood of the Son of God, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the important design of his death? Frustrating the design of a scheme, projected from eternity in the counsels of heaven, and at length made manifest with every circumstance to convince our judgments, and engage our affections. And while we are reflecting on the resurrection and exaltation of our Redeemer, as the great Foundation of our eternal hopes, let us dread to be found opposing him, whom God hath established on his own exalted throne; and with the utmost reverence let us kiss the Son, in token of our grateful acceptance of his mercy, and cheerful and humble submission to his authority. (Psal. ii. 12.) SECT. 2. 1 PET. I. 21

SECTION III.

The apostle urges them, by a representation of their christian privileges, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ, as the great Foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as might adorn his gospel, among the unconverted Gentiles. 1 Pet. ii. 1—12.

1 PET. ii. 1.

1 Pet. ii. 1.

WHEREFORE, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings,

2 As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe, *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner;

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

I HAVE been reminding you of the everlasting permanency and invariable certainty of the word of God; let this, *therefore*, engage you to pay it a becoming regard; and *laying aside all malignity, and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings*, which are so contrary to its benevolent design, with all simplicity, *as new-born infants*,[a] who are regenerated by divine grace, *desire* that spiritual nourishment, *that rational and unmingled milk*, if I may so call it; *that* so *ye may grow thereby* to a state of adult christianity. And this may reasonably be expected of you, *since you have* so experimentally felt and *tasted that the Lord [is] gracious*,[b] since you have known the sweetness there is in Christ, and how suitable he is to the necessities and desires of an awakened sinner: *To whom coming [as to] a living stone*, who is capable of diffusing spiritual life into those who are united to him, though *disallowed indeed* and rejected *of men, yet chosen of God, [and]* inexpressibly *precious* and valuable; *Ye also as living stones*, united to him, and deriving life from him, *are built up* as *a spiritual house*, consecrated to his service; and in another view, ye may be considered as *a holy priesthood*, destined *to offer up* the *spiritual sacrifices* of prayer, praise, and obedience, which are all *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, who is the great High-Priest over the house of God, whose intercession alone can recommend to the Father such imperfect services as ours. *Therefore it is contained in* a well-known passage of *the scripture*, (Isaiah xxviii. 16.) *Behold, I lay in Sion* a stone, even *a chief corner-stone, chosen, precious, and he that confideth in it shall not be ashamed:* which words undoubtedly refer to the Messiah, as the great Hope and Confidence of his church. *To you therefore who believe, [it is] precious:*[c] you who rest your salvation on this corner-stone, know by blessed experience its value, as infinitely beyond all that can be compared with it. *But as for those who are disobedient*, these words of the Psalmist are accomplished with regard to them, and may well be recollected in the present connexion, (Psal. cxviii. 22.) *The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner:* all their opposition to it is in vain: they can never pretend to prevent the honour to which it is destined in the divine purpose: *And* to themselves, it is also, as Isaiah expresses it in the preceding context, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;* they who would attempt, as it were, to remove it out of the way, find it an overmatch for their strength, and are dashed in pieces by it. *They being disobedient* to the divine revelation, *stumble at the word*[d] of the gospel, which contains this awful testimony, and bring inevitable ruin upon themselves; *to which also they were appointed* by the righteous sentence of God long before, even as early as in his first purpose and decree he ordained his Son to be the great Foundation of his church. *But you*, on the contrary, who unfeignedly believe in him, *[are] a chosen generation*,[e] *a royal priesthood*, who bear at once the dignity of kings, and sanctity of priests: *a holy nation*, set apart in a special manner for the service of God; and *a peculiar people*. When these titles were given to Israel of old, it was in an inferior sense; and it is in a much nobler signification that these words may be applied to you. Consider it therefore as the wise intention of Divine Providence, *that you should declare* and proclaim all abroad, *the virtues*[f] *of him who has called you out of* that *darkness* in which you originally were, *into his marvellous* and glorious *light*;[g] that clear light of the gospel, which opens so many illustrious SECT. 3. 1 PET. II. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

a *New-born infants.*] This expression very emphatically denotes those who are *newly converted* or *regenerated*.—Wolfius observes, (*Curæ Philol.* Vol. V. p. 105.) that the Jewish rabbies were wont to style new proselytes to their religion, *little children* and *new-born babes*.

b *Since you have tasted, &c.*] This is the proper rendering of ειπερ, and not, according to our translation, *if so be*. See Blackwall's *Sacred Class.* Vol. II. p. 203.

c *It is precious.*] Τιμη, *Preciousness itself*.

d *They being disobedient, stumble, &c.*] A learned writer, I think, very well observes, that it is doing violence to the text, to read it as one continued sentence, as it is in our translation. The truth is, the apostle runs a double *antithesis* between believers and unbelievers: υμιν εν—απειθουσιν, saith he, *To you who believe, it is precious:* απειθουσι δε, *but to them that are disobedient*, and unbelievers, *a stone of stumbling; οι προσκοπτουσι, they stumble: υμεις δε, but you are a chosen people, &c.* See Taylor's *Key to the Romans*, § 71.

e *Ye are a chosen generation.*] Dr. Whitby shows at large that the phrase of *God's chosen*, is applied to the *whole* nation of the Jews, good and bad, and not to those among them who might be supposed *elected to eternal life*. But it seems very unreasonable to limit such phrases as these, when applied to christians, just to the idea which the like phrases had when applied to the Jews.

f *The virtues.*] We render it *praises*; but the word αρετας is well known commonly to have the signification here assigned it.

g *Marvellous* and glorious *light.*] A most beautiful expression of the *wonders* the *gospel* opens on the *enlightened* eye. But perhaps no interpretation was ever more unnatural and servile to an hypothesis than that which the author of *Miscellanea Sacra* gives to these words, when he explains their being *called out of darkness*,

SECT. 3. scenes of divine wonders. To this are you, my brethren, called, *who once* [*were*] *not a people, but* [*are*] *now the people of God;*[h] *who had not obtained mercy;* who, many of you, lay in the ruins of the Gentile world, *but have now obtained mercy,* and are
1 PET. II. gathered into the church of God, and by his favour entitled to all its privileges. My *beloved* brethren, let it be your special care to walk worthy of these privileges; and that you
11 may, *I beseech* [*you*] *as strangers* in this world, *and sojourners* in the body, who are to be here but for a very little space of time, and must soon quit this state of mortality to dwell in another world, *that ye abstain from carnal lusts,* in the gratification of which only a very mean and transient pleasure is to be found: for these are appetites which are suited only to that part of our nature, which so soon is to be laid down, and *which* do indeed *make war against* the nobler powers of *the* immortal *soul,* and have a tendency, not
12 only to injure, but for ever to ruin it, if they are suffered to prevail and govern; *Having your conversation honest,* fair, and honourable *among the Gentiles,* particularly in an exemplary discharge of all social and relative duties; *that whereas they speak against you, as evil doers,* in separating from the worship of their gods, and joining yourselves with what they presumptuously call the impious sect of christians, *they being eye-witnesses* continually *of* [*your*] *good works,* may not only lay aside these blasphemous reproaches, but exchange them for commendations and praises; and so *may glorify God in the day of* [*their*] *visitation,* during the season in which the gospel is preached among them, whereby they are visited with the offers of pardon and salvation.

10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us examine our own hearts seriously and impartially, with respect to those branches of the christian temper, and those views of the christian life, which are exhibited in this excellent portion of holy writ. Let us
Ver. 2 especially inquire, in what manner, and to what purposes, we receive the word of God. Is it with the simplicity
1 of babes, or children? do we desire it, as they desire the breast? do we lay aside those evil affections of mind, which would incapacitate us for receiving it in a becoming manner? and does it conduce to our spiritual nourish-
3 ment, and growth in grace? Have we indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious? do we experimentally know, that
4 to the true believer the Redeemer is inestimably precious? have we indeed come to him, as to a living stone; and notwithstanding all the neglect and contempt with which he may be treated by many infatuated and miserable men, by wretches who are bent on their own destruction, do we regard, and build on him as our great and only Foundation? and do we feel that spiritual life diffused through our souls which is the genuine consequence of a real and vital union with him?—If these be our happy circumstances, we shall never be ashamed or confounded: for this is
6, 8 that foundation which God hath laid in Zion; and the united efforts of earth and hell to raze or overturn it, will be scattered as chaff and stubble, and by the breath of God be rendered utterly vain and ineffectual.

9, 10 Are we conscious of our high dignity, as we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people? are our hearts suitably affected with a sense of the divine goodness, in calling us to be a people, who once were not a people; and us beloved, who were not beloved; in leading us from the deplorable darkness of ignorance and vice, in which our ancestors were involved, into the marvellous light of his gospel; yea, in dissipating those thick clouds of prejudice and error, which once veiled this sacred light from our eyes, that its enlivening beams might break in upon our souls? And are we now showing forth his praises? are we now offering to him
5 spiritual sacrifices, in humble dependence on Christ, our great High-Priest, who continually intercedes for our acceptance with God? Then shall we indeed make our calling and our election sure, and shall ere long appear in his heavenly temple, both as kings and priests unto God, to participate of our Redeemer's glory, to reign with him, and minister to him for ever.

11 Let us be careful, in the mean time, to remember, that we are strangers and sojourners on earth, as all our fathers were; and that our days in this transitory life are but as a shadow that declineth; and let us learn to regard the appetites of our animal nature, and the interests of this mortal life, with a noble superiority, reflecting for how little a space of time they will solicit our attention. And as for fleshly lusts, let us consider them as making war against the soul; arming ourselves with that resolution and fortitude which is necessary to prevent their gaining a victory over us; which would be at once our disgrace and our ruin. There is an additional argument to be derived, for a strenuous opposition to them, from our circumstances and situation in the present world; where there are so
12 many enemies to our holy religion, who cannot be more effectually silenced than by our good conversation. Let it be, therefore, our principal care to cut off from them the occasion of speaking against us as evil doers; and by exhibiting a clear and unexceptionable pattern of good works in our daily conversation, let us invite and allure them to improve the day of their visitation, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

SECTION IV.

In order to adorn the gospel, the apostle urges upon them the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even where their dispositions or injunctions might be harsh and severe: enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. 1 Pet. ii. 13, *to the end.*

SECT. 4.

1 PET. II. 13

1 PET. ii. 13.

HAVING been already urging you to set a good example before those that are without; for the further illustration of that general precept, let me exhort you to be particularly

1 PET. ii. 13.

SUBMIT yourselves to every ordinance of man for

by their being first made *proselytes of the gate,* from their state of heathen idolatry, and then being brought into the *marvellous light* of the christian religion. *Miscell. Sacra,* Vol. II. p. 85.

h *Were not a people.*] I think it plain that Hosea ii. 23. (to which there seems here to be a reference) relates to the Israelites after their *rejection.* But it may with so much propriety be *accommodated* to the Gentiles, that I thought it much better to give it such a turn, than to suppose it here spoken only of Jewish converts.

the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps;

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

careful to *be subject to every human constitution*[a] of government, under which you are providentially placed, *for the Lord's sake*, and that ye may not bring any reflection upon the religion of Jesus; *whether it be to the king* or emperor, *as supreme; Or* whether it be *to governors*, and presidents, *as sent* and commissioned *by him* from Rome, *in order to the punishment of evil-doers*,[b] *but to the praise of them who do well:* for this is the true intent of magistracy, and this will be the care of them who rightly understand the nature and honour of their office. *For so is the will of God* in this respect, *that by doing good ye should bridle in the ignorance of foolish men*,[c] which might be ready to cast reflections upon you; *As* those who are indeed in the noblest sense *free*, in consequence of your relation to Christ, and your share in the purchase of his blood, *yet not using* [*your*] *liberty as a veil* and covering for the practice *of wickedness*, as the Jews too often do; *but* behaving continually *as* becomes *the servants of God*, as those who are now more than ever his property, in consequence of your having been bought with such a price. *Honour all men*; maintain an esteem for human nature in general, and observe with pleasure whatever is truly honourable in the meanest and most undeserving of mankind. *Love the* christian *brotherhood* with a peculiar and distinguishing affection, suitable to that fraternal relation into which you are brought by your joint adoption into the family of God, and insertion into the body of Christ. *Reverence God*[d] at all times with the sincerest and profoundest humility; and let a sense of the honour and favour he has conferred upon you increase, rather than diminish, that reverence. *Honour the king* whom God hath set over you, and all the subordinate governors who derive their authority from him; paying obedience to all their just commands, and taking heed that there be nothing rebellious or factious in your behaviour, which would turn to the hurt of society, and bring a reflection upon your holy profession. *Ye* who are *domestic servants* and slaves, *be in subjection to* [*your own*] *masters* in all things lawful, *with all reverence* and submission; and remember to pay this regard *not only to the good and the gentle*, whose moderation, clemency, and benevolence make your yoke easy; *but also to the froward* and perverse. *For this* [*is*] *graceful* indeed and deserves applause, *if any one for the sake of conscience towards God*, and a desire of performing his duty to him, patiently *endures grief* and sorrow, *though he suffer unjustly. For* after all, *what glory* [*is it,*] or what can you possibly value yourselves upon, *if, when ye have committed an offence, and are buffeted* and corrected for it, *ye endure* [*it?*] How can you indeed do otherwise? or if you could, how shameful were it in such a case to rise against the hand of your injured masters? *But if, when you have done good, and yet suffer* through their tyranny and perverseness, *ye endure* [*it*] meekly and patiently, *this* [*is*] acceptable and *graceful before God*:[e] his eye, which always judges of the true beauty of such characters aright, is even delighted with such a spectacle, though exhibited in the lowest rank of human life. And I would particularly urge this meek and patient temper upon you; *for to this you were called*; when you were brought into the profession of the christian faith; *because Christ himself*,[f] pure and spotless as he was, *suffered* not only buffetings and stripes, but deep and mortal wounds, *for you, leaving you*[g] *an example* and copy, *that you might* with certainty trace, and with constancy and diligence *follow, his footsteps*, and by observing them as his, be charmed to an imitation, even where it was most difficult and painful. We cannot expect indeed to arrive at a perfect resemblance of it; but let us endeavour to approach as near as possible, even to the amiable character of him *who did no sin, neither was* any degree of *deceit found in his mouth; Who, being reviled, reviled not again*, and *suffering* the most grievous insults and injuries, *threatened not* the vengeance which he had it in his power to have executed; *but committed* [*himself*] *to him who judgeth righteously*, and who in his own most proper time will make the righteous and innocent triumphant over all their enemies. Yet we know this spotless and Holy Person was as much distinguished by the grievousness of his sufferings, as by the integrity of his character. For it is He, *who himself bore* the punishment of *our sins in his own body*, when he hung in the agonies of crucifixion *on the* accursed *tree; that we being freed from* the guilt of our *sins*,[h] and the misery to which they exposed us, *might live unto righteousness: by whose stripes* and bruises *ye*

a *Every human constitution.*] The whole course of the apostle's reasoning in this place so plainly shows how very impertinent it is to apply this to the injunctions of men in matters of religion, that one cannot but wonder that any rational writer should ever have mentioned the argument which has been drawn from it.

b *In order to the punishment of evil-doers.*] The Roman governors had the power of *life* and *death* in such conquered provinces as those mentioned, chap. i. 1. There is, therefore, the exactest propriety in the style, as Dr. Lardner hath observed, *Credib.* Vol. I. p. 167.

c *The ignorance of foolish men.*] By the *foolish men* here spoken of, Dr. Whitby understands the heathens, who might be ready foolishly to judge of christians by the behaviour of the turbulent Jews, and so might represent them as a people naturally averse from subjection to kings; as Josephus says of his own nation.

d *Reverence God*, &c.] Perhaps no finer and stronger instances of the *Laconic style* are to be found any where than in this place. It is remarkable that they are required to *honour the emperor*, though so great a persecutor, and of so abandoned a character, as Nero himself.

e *If when ye have done good, and yet suffer, ye endure* [*it,*] *this* [*is*] *graceful before God.*] The emperor Antoninus quotes it as an excellent saying of Antisthenes, *That it is truly royal to do good and to be reproached.* Ant. *Med.* L. vii. § 36.

f *Because Christ himself*, &c.] It is observable, that upon the mention of the name of Christ, the apostle falls into a noble and animated digression of several verses, to the end of the chapter; afterwards he continues to pursue his exhortation to relative duties.

g *Suffered for you, leaving you, &c.*] I here prefer the reading of the Alexandrian and other MSS. as most agreeable to the sense and connexion.

h *That being freed from sin;* ταις αμαρτιαις απογενομενοι.] That our common translation is agreeable to the frequent signification of the original word, is certain. But so is the version I have chosen, which is approved by Beza, and is preferred and adopted by that judicious and learned critic Erasmus Schmidius.

SECT. 4. 1 PET. II. *are healed*[i] of evils infinitely greater than the cruelty of the severest masters can bring upon you; according to the well-known phrase of the prophet, (Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6.) *For ye were like sheep going astray*, exposed to want and danger, and wandering in the way to destruction; *but now ye are*, by divine grace, recovered and *turned again* to him who bears the important and tender character of *the* great *Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*,[k] who has graciously received you under his pastoral care, and will maintain that inspection over you which shall be your continued security from returning to those fatal wanderings; and the sense of this may cheer and comfort you under any oppression or injuries to which you may be exposed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13—18 As the honour of God is eminently concerned in the regard shown by his people to their relative duties, let us, out of a due respect to that, pay a very careful and diligent attention to them; that the ignorance of foolish men, 15 of those who reproach our good conversation in Christ, may be utterly silenced. Let magistrates especially be 13, 14 reverenced, and in all things lawful obeyed. And if they desire to secure reverence to their persons and authority, let them remember the end and design of their office, namely, to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and encouragement to the regular and virtuous. And let us, who rejoice in our liberty, that liberty wherewith Christ 16 hath made us free, be very careful that it be not abused as a cloak of licentiousness; but as we would manifest our 17 fear and reverence of God, let us remember to honour the king; yea, to render to every man, and every station and character, the esteem and respect which he justly claims; feeling, at the same time, the constraints of a peculiar affection to all those who are united to us by the endearing character of our brethren in the Lord.—Should men who fill superior stations and relations in life, not be so regular, and without exception, in their private and public 18 deportment as they ought, let us perform our duty, not only to the gentle and obliging, but to the perverse and 21 froward; remembering our Lord's example, which was set before us, that we might follow his steps. And let his 24 marvellous love in bearing our sins in his own sacred body on the tree, endear both his example and his precepts to our souls, and constrain us to a holy conformity to him.

25 Since he who is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, came on the most gracious and condescending errand of seeking and saving that which was lost, of gathering us into his fold who were wandering in the way to perdition; let us show so much gratitude and wisdom, as not to wander any more; but as we regard our security and our very life, let us keep our Shepherd in our eye, submit ourselves to his pastoral inspection, and cheerfully follow him in whatsoever path he shall condescend to conduct us.

SECTION V.

Christian wives are exhorted to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds, rather than of their persons; and likewise husbands are exhorted to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. 1 Pet. iii. 1—7.

1 PET. iii. 1.

SECT. 5. 1 PET. III. I HAVE been discoursing of the duty of a servant; let me now *likewise* consider those of some other relations; and particularly urge it upon you, O *ye* christian *wives*, that ye [*be*] *in subjection to your own husbands*, in all things just and lawful; *that if any* of them *be disobedient to the word* of the gospel, and have refused to yield to all the other 1 mighty arguments by which christianity is supported, *they may without* attending upon *the word, be gained over* to the love and practice of it, *by the* amiable and edifying 2 *deportment of* [*their*] *wives:* Particularly *beholding your chaste* and spotless *conversation, in the fear* of God, and with a due reverence to your husbands, for his sake, and not 3 merely on constraint. Be careful to behave in every respect as becomes those *whose* happiness it is to be acquainted with the great principles of christianity; and particularly consider, how they should influence your conduct in the *adorning* of your persons.[a] And as to this, *let it not be* merely *external*,[b] nor consist *in the plaiting* and braiding *the hair*, or *in putting on* chains of *gold* about the neck, or ear-rings, or bracelets of gold on 4 the arms, *or in wearing of* sumptuous and splendid *apparel: But* let your ornament be of a much more glorious nature; let it consist in a well-regulated temper of mind, in having *the hidden man of the heart* rightly formed: let it be seated *in what is* more *incorruptible* by far than gold, or gems, which, stable as they are, may in time wear away, and are liable to a variety of accidents; I mean in the beautiful and harmonious disposition of *a meek and quiet spirit*, silently submitting to the conduct of your husbands, and gently accommodating yourselves to them as far as reasonably you can: *which* argues an inward wisdom and goodness, that *is highly precious in the sight of God* himself; who looks

1 PET. iii. 1. LIKEWISE, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives,

2 While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear;

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

i *By whose stripes*, &c.] Mr. Cradock supposes the meaning of this is, as if he had said, The blood of Christ, by which your souls are saved, may be a sufficient balm for those wounds and bruises which your cruel masters may inflict upon you; that is, it may so delight your minds as to raise you above an undue regard to, and concern about, such corporeal sufferings. *Apost. Hist.* p. 407.

k *Bishop of your souls.*] This is an instance of that duplicity of design which is often to be found in the Epistles. The apostle urges these things peculiarly upon servants: yet does it in general language, as well knowing that many of them were the concerns of all christian readers.

a *Whose adorning*, &c.] Plutarch quotes a passage from Crates, in which he observes, in words greatly resembling these, "That "neither gold, nor emeralds, nor pearls, give grace and ornament "to a woman; but all those things which clearly express and set "off her gravity, regularity, and modesty." *Præcept. Cong.* p. 86. But St. Peter's precept is enriched with a variety of much more noble and agreeable thoughts; especially when recommending *virtue* as the *ornament of the hidden man, incorruptible*, and *precious in the sight of God*, the truest judge of beauty and perfection.

b *Let it not be*, &c.] This is not to be interpreted as absolutely prohibiting the ornaments of dress, but only the making these things our *chief* concern. Compare John vi. 27. with 1 Tim. v. 8.

SECT. 5.

1 PET. III.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands;

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

with comparative contempt on those little artifices by which the notice of vain men is often attracted. This has long been the prevailing fashion in God's family; *for so the holy women also, who hoped in God*, and served him in the integrity of their hearts, *long since, adorned themselves, being*, agreeably to the exhortations I have been giving you, *in subjection to their own husbands: As* you may particularly recollect in the instance of *Sarah*, who, you know, *obeyed Abraham* her husband, *calling him* constantly, when she spoke of him, her *lord*, though she was not only of the same family with him, but was herself in so peculiar a manner dignified by God, and had her name changed in token of her being a mother of many nations, and of the veneration in which she was to be held in all succeeding ages. Remember therefore the character of this excellent woman, whom those of you who are of Jewish extraction are so fond of calling your mother; and *whose daughters you* indeed *are, so long as ye do well, and* preserving, by such a conduct, your inward tranquillity and fortitude, *are not* meanly *terrified*, so as to act out of character, *with any amazement*,[c] or danger, which may meet you in the way of your duty. The want of a becoming and necessary fortitude in this case would indeed be attended with fatal consequences, and render you unworthy of so honourable a title. And that the duty of the wife may be rendered more easy and agreeable, and *ye husbands* may have more reason to expect it to be cheerfully performed, let it be your care *likewise* that ye *dwell with* [*your wives*] *according to knowledge*, and in such a manner as becomes those who have been instructed in that great system of wisdom and duty, the gospel of Christ. And particularly be careful so to order your affairs, that you may not be prevented from *allotting an honourable* and comfortable *subsistence to the woman*:[d] for this is a piece of respect which is due to the tenderness and infirmity of her sex, *as* being upon the whole *the weaker vessel*, less able to endure the fatigue of labour, and subject to various indispositions which peculiarly require succour and accommodation. See therefore that this duty be properly and carefully performed, that your hearts may be endeared to each other; *and*, upon the whole, converse together, *as* [*those who are*] *joint heirs of the grace of* eternal *life*, and are solicitous that your behaviour may be correspondent to so exalted a hope, and may be so ordered in every respect, *that your* joint *prayers may not be hindered*,[e] nor the pleasures of devotion impaired by any secret alienation of heart, but rather be increased by the strictest union and sincerest affection.

6

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

7

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe with a pleasing attention, how greatly solicitous all the apostles are, not only to establish the doctrines of christianity, but to inculcate its precepts; particularly those which refer to the relative duties of life. The comprehensive argument by which St. Peter enforces those of one peculiar relation, may be considered as also enforcing all the rest; I mean the tendency of our exemplary behaviour to win over those who are without the word, or are disobedient to it. In this manner let us all plead the cause of our Lord and Master. And this silent, this winning eloquence will, by the divine blessing, be powerful and effectual. The veil of modesty is decent in all, and an humble caution, and fear of offending, are to be considered as duties of universal obligation. But if the weaker sex are commanded to aim at a noble superiority to the concerns of this animal life, and to the parade and vanity of dress, it may, with greater reason, be expected from men, who boast of their superior understanding and larger experience. They, not only from christian humility, but, one would think, even from a manly pride, should be raised above such childish ornaments, in contriving and adjusting which many, who are stiled rational creatures, spend much too large a portion of their precious time, and for the sake of which they neglect the cultivation and embellishment of their intelligent and immortal part, and the securing an happiness that will never have an end: as if glittering in the eyes of our fellow-worms were so desirable a thing, that it were worth while, for the sake of it, to expose ourselves to condemnation from God! Let the hidden man of the heart be more our care; and when that is rightly governed, the proper conduct of our external behaviour will be natural and easy.

Ver. 1

2

3, 4

4

Let us labour to walk according to knowledge, to behave as those who have been well instructed in the science of the gospel, in comparison of which all other sciences are ignorance and vanity. Let us be ready to make allowance for the natural infirmities of those about us. Especially, let husbands consider those of their wives (not as an encouragement to oppression, than which nothing could be more ungenerous, but) as an engagement in all honour and conscience, to a tender and respectful behaviour. How becoming and amiable is such conduct in those who through divine grace are heirs of eternal life! And if a due care be not maintained on this head, there will be an indisposition for social and for secret prayer; and when the pleasures of devotion are destroyed or imbittered, it is not to be expected any other kind of pleasure, worth the regard of a rational creature, can long continue.

7

c *Not terrified with any amazement.*] Many have apprehended this last clause is suggested as an argument to persuade them to *do well*, that they would be preserved from those alarms and terrors which a perverse and rebellious contest with superior power might bring along with it, and which would indeed prove as injurious to their peace as to their character. But the structure of the Greek sentence makes it evident, that he speaks of the *condition* on which they were to preserve the characters of *daughters of Sarah*. Possibly the apostle might have in his mind the instance in which Sarah acted beneath her usual character, when, through fear and sudden amazement, she denied her having laughed, Gen. xviii. 15. And if he had, it is the design of this sentence to intimate, that though in that instance she failed, she generally acted in a very different manner: but as the hint is very oblique, I chose not to express it very strongly in the paraphrase, though I have indeed glanced upon it.

d *Allotting an honourable subsistence to the woman.*] The reader may see a very different, and truly, I think, a very unjustifiable interpretation of these words in Dr. Whitby; which I shall not so much as transcribe.—It is to be remembered, that many of the christians were persons of *low rank* in life; which might make such a precept of *maintaining their wives decently*, and not subjecting them to harder labour than they could bear, (which they might be tempted to do from their indigent circumstances,) exceeding proper. The sense of the word τιμη (as signifying *subsistence* or *maintenance*) is so much confirmed by 1 Tim. v. 17. that I think I need say no more to *vindicate* it.

e *That your prayers may not be hindered.*] These words seem strongly to intimate the great *importance* of *social prayer*; as when we shortly expect to unite in acts of domestic devotion, a concern not to be notoriously unfit for it, will be a guard upon our general behaviour.

SECTION VI.

The apostle urges various arguments on the christian converts, to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life and conversation, and to a steady, courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. 1 Pet. iii. 8—17.

1 PET. iii. 8.

SECT. 6.

1 PET. III.

TO conclude this head; my brethren, [*be*] *all unanimous*, guarding against all unnecessary occasion of contention; be *sympathizing*, *full of brotherly love* to all christians, *compassionate* to those that are in distress, and *friendly* to all those that need your assistance. *Not returning evil for evil, nor reproach for reproach; but, on the contrary,* rather *blessing*, even to those that curse you, according to our Lord's precept; *knowing that to this purpose ye were called* to the profession of christianity, *that ye might inherit* a *blessing* immense and eternal; the expectation of which (considering its infinite importance) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill-usage you may meet with from your fellow-men. *For* this you know is the language of the Psalmist, and it ought never to be forgotten, (Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13.) What man is *he that would love life*,[a] in the truest sense of loving and enjoying it, *and* would *see good*, prosperous, and happy *days? let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit: Let him turn away from* the practice of all that is *evil, and do good* to the utmost extent of his power; *let him seek* after *peace, and* resolutely *pursue it*, even though it may appear to fly away from him. *For the* favourable *eyes of the Lord* [*are*] continually set *upon the righteous*, to watch over and protect them; *and his ears* [*are*] ever [*open*] to listen *to* the voice of *their supplications; but the face of the Lord*, his countenance full of wrath and resentment, [*is*] set *against them that do evil;* insomuch that he will even blot out their names from the book of the living, and cause their remembrance to perish from the earth. These are the things which on the one hand may be hoped for, and on the other dreaded, as the consequence of practising or neglecting religion.

And now reflect with yourselves, *who shall hurt you?* who shall have the ability or inclination to hurt you, *if ye imitate him who is* supremely *good*, if you copy after the benevolence of the Divine Being, and of your great Master, whose whole life was so illustrious an example of the most diffusive generosity and goodness to his followers? *But if you should suffer on account of righteousness*, [*ye are*] still *happy*, in spite of all the malicious and outrageous efforts of your enemies to render you miserable: *therefore fear not their terror*,[b] *neither be troubled* as they are, under the various calamities of life, who are, alas! utterly destitute of your support. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts;* behave towards him continually with that reverence, with that dutiful and obedient regard, which his unrivalled perfections and glories demand; *and* [*be*] *always prepared*, by a ready and familiar acquaintance with the contents and evidences of your holy religion, and by that cheerfulness and presence of mind which arises from a consciousness of your practical regard to it, *to* [*offer*] *an apology to every one that demands of you an account of the* exalted *hope which is in you*, and which enabled you to maintain such serenity and composure, under those troubles and persecutions to which the profession of christianity may expose you. And that this noble defence may be rendered the more effectual, let it be made *with meekness and reverence;* the good fruit of your religious principles appearing in the piety and gentleness of your minds. Let it be your constant endeavour, that *having a good conscience*, you be always bold and courageous in the defence of that system of religion which gives to such a conscience so mighty and stable a support; *that wherein they*, who bitterly oppose your religion, *speak against you as evil-doers*, and lay to your charge crimes of the most detestable nature, *they may be ashamed;*[c] they, I say, *who revile your good*, inoffensive, and useful *conversation in* the profession of that religion which brings you into such an intimate relation to *Christ*. *For* [*it is*] certainly *better to suffer (if it be the will of God* that you should suffer) *for doing good, than for doing evil;* the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the divine favour, affording the noblest supports in the former case; whereas in the latter, the severest torments that can be endured are those which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself: to which we may add, that while we suffer for the truth, we have the pleasure of reflecting that we follow our blessed Redeemer; and this is another most powerful source of consolation, of which I shall presently have occasion to discourse more particularly and largely.

1 PET. iii. 8.
FINALLY, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:
9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.
11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.
13 And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?
14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye:* and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled:
15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
16 Having a good conscience: that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.
17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10 How very astonishing and lamentable is it, that when the way to happiness is so plainly delineated, so few should find it! What man is there who does not desire life, and love many days, in which he may see good?

a *He that would love life*, &c.] The apostle here urges in favour of the virtues he recommends, that by these the comforts of life will be secured, ver. 10, 11. the favour of God engaged, ver. 12. and the malice of men in a great measure disarmed, ver. 13, &c. And these three arguments are indeed of very great weight and importance.

b *Fear not their terror.*] Mr. Joseph Mede understands it as if he had said, Fear not the Jew, nor the Gentile; but sanctify, reverence, and worship the *one living God*. *Diatr.* on Luke xi. 2. But I think the interpretation given in the paraphrase is much more natural.

c *That wherein they speak against you, they may be ashamed.*] I think this remarkably illustrated by the strain of that epistle of Pliny, in which he gives an account of his own conduct in persecuting the christians; by which it plainly appears that he was ashamed of what the laws required, when he considered how inoffensive their behaviour was.

Yet how few tongues are kept from evil, how few lips from speaking guile! How few decline from evil, and do good! How few speak peace, and pursue it! On the contrary, how much low cunning and artifice, and what discords and contentions, reign among mankind! And they often issue in those bloody wars and fightings, which arise from those lusts that war in our members. How detestable, and how miserable, do these perverse and ungovernable passions render us! How sadly do they prevent the ascent of our prayers to God, and the descent of his mercies upon us! Mercies, which he is ever ready to impart to those who are meet and disposed to receive them. SECT. 6. 1 PET. III. 11

There is, notwithstanding, a little remnant, who are righteous before him: and to them his gracious eye is continually directed for their good; to their cry, yea, to the soft whispers of their supplications, his ears are ever open. Honoured and happy above all the children of men are they who have the favour and the attention of the great Sovereign of the universe. Who will be able to hurt or injure them, should they have malignity enough to wish and attempt it? And as this loving kindness of the Lord is thus productive of security and happiness to his people, let it engage us to be followers and imitators of him who is supremely good. We may then face all the menaces of a frowning world with an holy intrepidity; and sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, making him our Fear and our Dread, we need not have any terrible apprehensions of what men or devils can do unto us. Yea, we shall in that case not only have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope which can conduce to our real and everlasting felicity. Encouraged by these important considerations, let it be our care, in the fear of God, to study and endeavour clearly to understand the foundations of our religion, and of our glorious hopes, that we may be able to defend it against every attack, however formidable, and to give account of our hope to all who shall demand it, in sweet harmony and complacency of soul, undisturbed with the disquietude, and untainted with the example, of those who render evil for evil, and railing for railing. On the contrary, let us greatly triumph over all ill-usage, by repaying it with good; and may a sense of that important blessing, which by the gospel we are called to inherit, diffuse that pleasure and happiness through our whole souls, which may carry them above the resentment of the little injuries we receive from the unkindness of men, and dispose us to every genuine expression of that unlimited benevolence, which should fill and expand the hearts of those who are thus feasted with the divinest hopes and consolations. 12 13 14, 15 9 8

SECTION VII.

The apostle Peter urges on the christian converts the atonement, resurrection, and exaltation of their Divine Saviour, the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and the awful solemnity of the last judgment, to engage them to a life of christian mortification and holiness, whatever opposition they might be called to encounter. 1 Pet. iii. 18.—iv. 6.

1 Pet. iii. 18.

1 PET. iii. 18.

FOR Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God,) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

I HAVE already observed, that if it be the will of God you should suffer, it is better it should be for doing well than for doing evil; and it is very evidently so, *because* hereby we are made comformable to *Christ* our Head and Leader, whom it cannot but be our glory and happiness to resemble; for he *also once suffered for sins*;[a] he, who was so eminently and perfectly *the just*, suffered *for the unjust*, for our benefit and in our stead, *that he might introduce us to God*, and fix us in a state of acceptance and favourable intercourse with him, *being indeed put to death in the flesh*, by those enemies whom God permitted for a while to triumph over him; *but quickened by the Spirit of God*,[b] which soon reanimated his body, and raised it to an immortal life: Even that Spirit, *by* the inspiration of *which*, granted to his faithful servant Noah, *going forth* as it were in that progress in which he employed him, *he preached to* those notorious sinners, who for their disobedience have since experienced the just severity of *the* divine vengeance, and are now in the condition of separate *spirits*, reserved as it were *in prison*,[c] to the severer judgment at the great day. I speak of those, *who were long since disobedient, when once the* abused and insulted *long-suffering of* a compassionate *God waited* upon them, *in the days of* the patriarch *Noah*, during the succession of one hundred and twenty years, *while the ark was preparing; in which few, that is, eight souls*, of Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, *were carried safely through the water*,[d] in which the residue of mankind perished. *The antitype to which*,[e] (or that which corresponds to, and was figured by it, that is, by the preservation of Noah's family in the ark,) *does now save us*, or is the instrument of our safety and preservation, as the ark was of theirs; [*I mean*] *baptism*, whereby we are received into the christian church, and numbered amongst the heirs of salvation; but then it is to be remembered, that it is *not* merely *the putting away the pollution of the flesh* by the use of material water, for that would be very insignificant; *but the answer of a good conscience*,[f] the reply that it makes when interrogated *in the presence of* SECT. 7. 1 PET. III. 18 19 20 21

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto, *even* baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards

a *Because Christ also once suffered, &c.*] The following section, though it seems a kind of digression occasioned by the apostle's mentioning the name of his blessed Master, yet is, in the main, properly connected with his purpose of animating them under their sufferings.

b *Quickened by the Spirit.*] Dr. More renders it, *remaining alive in the spirit*, and urges it as an argument against the *sleep of the soul*. More's *Theol. Works*, p. 17.

c *The spirits in prison.*] Hardly any text has been more differently interpreted than this. Some understand it of *souls* who were in some *lower place* in paradise, εν φυλακη, or in a *watch-tower*, where they were waiting the Redeemer's coming; others of those *in hell*, whom he delivered, to *grace* his triumph. See Dr. More's *Theol. Works*, p. 18. Bishop Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 228. Lord Barrington understands it of Noah's preaching to his own family, shut up with him in the ark: while Drs. Whitby and Burnet understand it of those who were in the darkness of heathen ignorance. Burnet's *Four Discourses*, p. 68, 69. Compare Limborch's *Theol.* 3. xiii. 27, 28. Upon the whole, I think the sense given in the paraphrase is most easy; and next to that, know none more probable than that of Mr. Cradock, who explains it of Christ's preaching, while he was on earth, to those who were now *spirits in prison*; which might engage them to a holy caution, lest *they* also should trifle with the means of salvation which they enjoyed, and perish as the former did. Compare Mat. v. 25; Rev. xx. 7.

d *Carried safely through the water:* δι' ὑδατος.] Raphelius abundantly justifies this sense of the particle δια, when used with a *genitive* case. See *Annot. ex Xenoph. in loc.*

e *The antitype to which.*] That is, the thing which corresponds, not with the *water*, but with the *ark*.

f *Baptism, not the putting away the pollution of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.*] It is well known the Jews laid a great

SECT. 7.

God, and spoken in such a language as he only is capable of hearing and understanding; and when this likewise is found, then we attain salvation, *by* that great event in which at baptism we declare ourselves believers; I mean *the resurrection of* our Lord *Jesus*

1 PET. III. 22

Christ from the dead; *Who is* now set down *at the right hand of God, being gone into heaven*,[g] there to take possession of the glory prepared for him, where he reigns supreme over all worlds; all the *angels, and authorities, and powers*, which are there enthroned, *being made subject to him*, and humbly bowing before his superior dignity and authority.

God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

1 PET. IV. 1

As Christ therefore has suffered for us in the flesh such extreme and amazing sufferings as are not to be described, and even when their weight lay heaviest upon him, even in the agony of death, persisted in his generous design to accomplish all that was needful for our redemption and salvation; I beseech you, *arm yourselves likewise with the same* fortitude and resolution of *mind* in his cause, whatever extremities you may be called out to endure. And let this engage you, on the like principles, to mortify all your irregular desires, and to die to sin; *for he who hath*, in conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ, *suffered* this crucifixion *in the flesh* of which I now speak; he *has ceased from* the habitual practice of all *sin* whatsoever,[h] and considers himself as absolutely and finally dead to it,

1 Peter iv. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin;

2 *so as* never to return to it any more: And *no longer to live* [*his*] *remaining time in the flesh*, whether it be shorter or longer, *according to the lusts of men*, those lusts by which they are too frequently and generally governed; *but according to the will of God*, in a holy conformity and obedience to the divine precepts, how contrary soever they are to his

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 own carnal and sensitive inclinations, or to his worldly interests. *For* surely, *the time of life that is past* [*may*] appear to [*be*] *sufficient*, and more than sufficient *for us*, to have forgotten the great end for which life was given, and *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;* following those pleasures and pursuits to which the heathens, that know not God, are addicted; *when ye walked in* all the variety of *lasciviousness, inordinate desires,*

3 For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 *excess of wine, banqueting, drunkenness, and unlawful* detestable *idolatries*:[i] *In respect to which* abominable course of life, *they* who were once your partners in such enormities, now *think it strange*[k] *that you run not with them*, as you once did, *into the same profusion of* the most profligate *riot*:[l] *speaking evil* [*of you*,] wretched creatures as they are;

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you:*

5 *Who*, though forgetful of the true honour and happiness of the human nature, *shall* nevertheless *give an account* of all this disorder and abuse *to him who is ready* in a little time *to*

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 appear, that he may *judge the living and the dead: For* it was *to this purpose* that *the gospel was preached also to the* dissolute Gentiles, who might truly be said to be *dead* in trespasses and sins, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*;[m] that they might be brought to such a state of life, as their carnal neighbours will look upon as a kind of condemnation and death; *but might live according to God in the Spirit*, might be brought to a truly spiritual and divine life: and if when men hear of the gospel, they will not receive and improve it for this important purpose, they must expect to render to God an impartial and severe account for their abuse of it, and must stand by all the terrible consequences of their folly.

6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

1 PET. III. 18

LET our devoutest meditations frequently dwell on the benefits we receive by the death of Christ, and the wonderful manner in which they are conveyed. The important end for which he suffered, the just for the unjust, was

stress upon their lustrations. The apostle therefore very properly cautions them against such foolish dependences. A courageous readiness in the performance of their whole duty, and even in suffering persecution for the sake of truth, was absolutely necessary, in order to maintain that *good conscience*, to which in their baptism they professed such a regard, and to the exercise of which they so solemnly engaged themselves.—Archbishop Leighton has observed on this place, that the word ἐπερώτημα, here used, is a *judicial* word, and signifies *interrogations* used in the law for a trial, or executing a process, which is much preferable to the translation Dr. Barrow gives us, namely, the free and sincere stipulation. Barrow's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 355.—It is a credible fact, supported by Cyprian, and other ancient writers, that the *catechumen* had certain *interrogations* put to him at *baptism*, concerning his faith in Christ, and his renunciation of Satan, and all the works of *darkness*, and the vanity of the *world:* and it is very probable the apostle may refer to that *custom*.

g *Being gone into heaven*, &c.] When the apostle speaks of the resurrection and glory of Christ, he means not only to represent him as the Object of our confidence; but to intimate, that if we imitate him in his courageous fidelity, we may hope to partake with him in his glory.

h *He who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*, &c.] It is plain, that *suffering in the flesh* cannot signify *suffering death;* because the apostle, in the very next verse, mentions the *remaining part of life* as not to be spent in the lusts of the flesh. The sense, to be sure, is something obscure, and I have sometimes doubted whether it may not intimate, that the consciousness of having endured *suffering for Christ* greatly confirms our motives to *obedience*.

i *Unlawful idolatries.*] Considering how very averse the Jews were, in the apostle's times, to *idolatry*, I cannot think in this passage he hath a respect to them, and therefore I look upon this as one argument among many, which might be urged, to prove that this Epistle was written to Gentile as well as Jewish christians.

k *Think it strange:* ξενιζονται.] Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*) and others, have observed that the original word is very emphatical, and expresses a perfect *amazement* and *consternation* of mind. The same word is used below at the 12th verse.

l *Profusion of riot.*] This is a very literal translation of Archbishop Leighton.

m *That they might be judged*, &c.] This interpretation, which is preferred by Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to me, on a full examination, most probable; though the text must be confessed to be extremely difficult. Some have thought the apostle refers to those who then suffered martyrdom for christianity; as if he had said, "It was *gospel* indeed, *good tidings*, even to those who *died* for it; for though men condemned their bodies, yet the salvation of their souls, which is of infinitely greater importance, has been secured by it." Dr. Whitby renders the latter clause, "That they might condemn their former life, and live a better." But this does not preserve the force of κριθωσι, nor the opposition between κατα ανθρωπους and κατα Θεον. Sir Norton Knatchbull supposes α to be understood before κατα, and renders it, "That *they who are* according to men in the flesh (that is, live a sensual life) may be condemned; and they who live according to God in the spirit (that is, *a holy life*) may live." No interpretation seems more singular than that of M. Saurin; who seems to consider it as referring to chap. iii. 19. and understands it of the *sinners of the old world;* and founds upon this text some hopes of the *salvation* of some of them; as if the meaning were, God sent his message to them with a *kind* design, that though their bodies perished, their souls might be saved; and he fancies that for this reason the flood came gradually upon them. Saur. *Diss.* Vol. I. p. 112. If that interpretation be preferred, which refers it to those *actually dead*, it will be (as Mr. Baxter observes) a proof of the *existence* of spirits in a *separate* state. The chief objection against the sense I have chosen is, that it changes the signification of the word, *dead*, so soon.

to introduce us into the presence and favour of God: let us rejoice that we are brought nigh to the Infinite Majesty of heaven, the indefectible Source of perfection and blessedness; and always live as in a state of nearness and intimacy with him; dreading the most distant approach to that disobedience to the heavenly message, which even after the patience of God waited on them, proved fatal to the sinful inhabitants of the old world. That patience indeed waits upon us; but as their time was limited, so is ours. For ever blessed be the Father of mercies, that by Christ he hath made provision for our salvation, as he did of old for Noah and his family, by commanding him to prepare an ark. But then let us remember, the baptism that saves is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. If we have this inward witness, let the resurrection of Christ, and his exaltation to supreme glory at the right hand of the Father, encourage our sublimest hopes; and let us triumph in him as our all-sufficient Saviour, who, though he were once crucified, now sits on the throne of his glory, principalities and powers being made subject to him. SECT. 7. 1 PET. III. 20 21 22

Let the recollection of his bitter sufferings excite our zeal and courage in his sacred cause, and arm us with a conformity of sentiments and resolutions to his own; that we may cease from sin; that we may spend the residue of our lives, not in following the lusts of the flesh, but in fulfilling, in all respects, the will of our God. Let us often reflect, that, perhaps, we were long insensible of his sacred authority, and in many instances were the sport of irregular appetites and passions: let the past part of our lives suffice, and be deemed more than sufficient, to be spent in this inglorious and detestable slavery. By mortification let us assert our liberty. And though others wonder at our abstinence, severity, and self-denial, let us not envy that excess of riot into which, with unbridled eagerness, they allow themselves to run. But seriously considering the awful account they must render (though, alas! so ill prepared for it) to the great Judge of quick and dead, let us readily chuse, and cheerfully submit to the severest mortification which God may require of us. Let us rather embrace a life which infidels would esteem death, than expose our immortal souls to the judgment of God, to his condemnation, from which there lies no appeal, and which will consign over impenitent sinners to an execution infinitely dreadful, beyond their utmost fears and apprehensions. IV. 1 2 3 4 5 6

SECTION VIII.

The apostle exhorts the christian converts to watchfulness and to fidelity, that they might rightly improve their several talents, and discharge the duties of their respective stations in the church: and to courage and fortitude amidst their discouragements and persecutions; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes that a tremendous, inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving. 1 Pet. iv. 7—19.

1 PETER iv. 7.

BUT the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

1 PET. iv. 7.

HOW strongly are vain and sinful men attached to the amusements and interests of this mortal life, and to the gratification of their lusts! *But the* important *end of all things is at hand*,[a] when this earthly globe, and all things which are therein, shall be burnt up, when the eternal state of all its inhabitants shall be determined, and immutable happiness or misery shall be their final portion. *Be sober, therefore, and watch* against all occasions of intemperance and of impurity, and endeavour *to* preserve your souls in so divine a posture, as that you may be habitually qualified for joining in *prayer* and those other exercises of devotion, which have such an influence on our whole conduct. SECT. 8. 1 PET. IV. 7

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

And above all things be careful to remember the distinguishing badge of your religion, having and *maintaining fervent love towards one another;* which, as it will be very comfortable and honourable to yourselves, will be very pleasing and acceptable to God; *for* on the whole, as the wise man assures us, *love will cover a multitude of sins*;[b] it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings. 8

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

Be hospitable to each other, without grudging the expense which may attend the exercise of a virtue which in present circumstances is so important and necessary. 9

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

As every one has received the free *gift* of God, *exercise it towards each other, as* becomes those who know they are not themselves proprietors, but merely stewards of what they possess, and who desire to approve themselves *good stewards of the manifold grace of God,* with which they have the honour to be intrusted. 10

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

If any one speak in public assemblies, discoursing on the great topics of the gospel, [*let him handle the subject*] with seriousness and reverence, and *as* becomes one who knows that sublime dispensation contains no discoveries of doctrine or duty but what are indeed *the oracles of God. If any one minister* in any office of kindness to others, and particularly in the work of a deacon, [*let it be*] *according to the* utmost *ability which God supplies; that God may in all things be glorified by Jesus Christ,* who has called us to his service, and to the hope of enjoying him for ever; *to whom,* as our great Redeemer and Saviour, *be glory and dominion* ascribed *for ever and ever. Amen.* 11

a *The end of all things, &c.*] I cannot think this signifies the *destruction of Jerusalem;* an event, in which most of those to whom the apostle wrote, were comparatively but little concerned. It must undoubtedly *signify* either *death,* which may be considered as the end of the whole world to every particular person; or the *consummation of all things,* which may be said to be *at hand,* in the sense in which our Lord, long after the destruction of Jerusalem, says to the *church,* "*Behold, I come quickly.*" Rev. xxii. 7, 20.

b *Love will cover a multitude of sins.*] This is agreeable to the interpretation given of the parallel text, James v. *ult.* For the farther illustration of it, compare Eccles. iii. 20; Psal. xviii. 25; Prov. x. 12; Dan. iv. 27. It would be monstrous to imagine, that *acts of liberality* to the poor can procure the *pardon* of sin, while men continue in a course of *impenitence* and unbelief; for by this the whole gospel would be subverted; but where acts of charity to the souls and bodies of men spring from an inward principle of love to God, and faith in Christ, with that humble regard to his atonement and righteousness, which every true christian will have, it cheerfully encourages our hopes of finding many merciful allowances from God in our final account with him, which those who are destitute of this divine principle, in which so much of the image of God consists, must never expect, whatever faith or sanctity they may pretend to. Compare Matt. vii. 1, 2; James ii. 13.

SECT. 8. 1 PET. IV.

And now, my *beloved* brethren, let me seriously caution you, that you *be not surprised at the fiery trial*,[c] at the dreadful series of furious and bitter persecutions, *which is to try you, as if some strange* and unexampled *thing*, beyond all reasonable expectation, *had befallen you: But* rather *rejoice* in these trials, *as being* therein *partakers of the sufferings of Christ*, the memory of which should ever be dear and precious to you: 13 *that when his* final *glory shall be revealed*,[d] *ye*, in the participation of it, *may be* 14 *even transported with joy* far beyond what can now be described or conceived: In the mean time, while you are in this present world, and obnoxious to persecutions and injuries, *if you are reproached for the name of Christ*, [*ye are*] *happy*, and ought to reckon yourselves so, *because the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*;[e] which will support you under it, and spread a lustre around you; and [*though*] *he*, in whose cause ye suffer so unjustly, *is blasphemed on their part, yet on yours he is glorified*: it shows the excellence and sublime spirit of true religion, that it can support you under the oppro- 15 brious and cruel treatment which you endure, for adhering to it and defending it. *But let not any one of you*, who have the honour to bear the christian name, by any means *suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a malefactor* of any other kind, *or* even *as over-busy* and assuming *in the affairs of others*,[f] aspiring to direct, overrule, and determine them in a manner not suiting your station in life; in consequence of which you 16 may bring any degree of ill-will upon yourselves. *But if* it please Providence to appoint *that* [*any of you*] should [*suffer*] *as a christian, let him not be ashamed*, though the punishment, like that inflicted upon his Divine Master himself, should be ever so infamous; *but* rather *let him glorify God in this respect*, despising the shame, as well as 17 resolutely enduring the agony, that may attend it; *Because the time* [*is coming*] and just at hand, *when judgment is to begin at the house of God*;[g] for he hath determined to exercise his own people with very severe trials, giving them up for a while to the malice of their enemies; that by this means their characters may be approved, and those who are hypocrites may be separated from those who are sincere in their christian profession; *and if* [*it begin*] *first with us, what* [*shall be*] *the end of those who are* obstinately and presumptuously *disobedient to the gospel of God*, and who not only reject it, but persecute 18 its professors, and endeavour to root it out of the world? *And if the righteous* himself *be saved with difficulty*,[h] how miserable must *the ungodly and the sinner* be! *where shall he appear* in the day of divine vengeance, when all nature shall be, as it were, armed with terror, by the God of nature, for his destruction; and when all impious transgressors shall be brought forth in his awful presence, that his just though dreadful sentence of con- 19 demnation may be executed in its rigour? *Therefore let them also, who* now *suffer* this temporary punishment, which, *according to the will of God* so permitting, their enemies have at present a power of inflicting, acknowledge the providence of God in this mysterious event, and *commit their souls* [*to him*] *as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing*; assured that while they continue to act as under a sense of his presence, and endeavour to approve themselves to him, he will regard them as his creatures, and even his children, and will render their immortal interests secure, whatever injuries of a temporal nature he may suffer them to sustain.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

c *The fiery trial: πυρωσις.*] This is a metaphor, borrowed from chemical operations, and very emphatically expresses the nature of those trials, in the furnace of affliction, which were intended to refine their graces, and separate all the dross and allay from the pure gold.

d *When his glory shall be revealed.*] There is no occasion with Mr. Fleming to interpret this of the glory of the Shechinah appearing at the millennium, to excite the exceeding joy of the saints after the first resurrection. Flem. *Christol.* Vol. III. p. 868. It probably refers to the great and glorious day of Christ's second appearance, which is so often spoken of as the grand jubilee of christians, though not inconsistent with great joy to be received by the spirit of every good man, immediately on its entrance into the intermediate state.

e *Spirit of glory and of God.*] The *Velesian* reading is, "*The* "*spirit of honour, and of glory, and divine power, even the Spirit of* "*God, rests upon you.*" But I take the meaning to be in general, you shall have the *Spirit of God*, in a very glorious manner to support you, in proportion to the trials you are called out to; and this will spread a glory around you, even though you may be treated in the most infamous manner, as the vilest of malefactors, which we know many of the primitive christians were.

f *As over-busy in the affairs of others.*] Αλλοτριοεπισκοπος, says the learned Dr. Lardner, cannot here signify merely *a prying into the concerns of private families*; which could not be ranked with such crimes as are here mentioned, nor expose a man to the punishment of the civil magistrate: but it may signify a man that affects to inspect, or direct the affairs of others; perhaps that aspires to public authority, a temper which appeared much amongst the Jews, particularly at Alexandria and Cæsarea, and which would naturally give great offence to the Romans, and make them very dangerous enemies. If therefore any thing of this kind might appear among christians, it would be of particular bad consequence in those times. Lardn. *Credib.* Vol. I. p. 426. I have paraphrased the words so as to suggest this, yet so as to take in the most that could be imagined to be intended.

g *Time is coming when judgment is to begin at the house of God.*] As if he had said, "Do not think this a matter of *unconcerning* "speculation. *No*, the time foretold by Christ (John xvi. 2, &c.) "is coming." I doubt not there is an allusion to that passage in Ezek. ix. 6. where it is said the *slaughter* to be made was to *begin at the sanctuary*; but this cannot be interpreted as of the *temple of Jerusalem*, because it answers to *beginning with us*, that is, christians, immediately after. So that Grotius's criticism upon the word τελος, in the latter clause of this verse, as answering to קֵץ, Dan. ix. 27. and to τελος, in Matt. xxiv. 6. seems quite foreign to the purpose.

h *If the righteous be saved with difficulty.*] The apostle seems to quote Prov. xi. 31. according to the LXX. which in sense, though not exactly in words, agrees with the Hebrew. He cannot intend deliverance from the Roman invasion, in which so very few of those christians were concerned; nor merely deliverance from any of their persecutors, because he takes it for granted, that in this sense the *righteous would be saved*, though *with difficulty*; whereas multitudes fell by persecution, even of these christians in Bithynia, as appears by Pliny's letter. It is necessary, therefore, to understand it more generally of the *difficulty* with which good men *get to heaven*, through this dangerous and ensnaring world. Compare Acts xiv. 18; xxvii. 7, 8, 16. where μολις signifies, *with difficulty*; in which sense it is also used by Philo. (See Wolfii *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 161.)—The turn of the latter clause of the verse in the original, which I have endeavoured to preserve, is *very lively*; it seems as if the apostle were solicitous to lead the sinner to consider where he should hide his head; since, wherever he was, he would find God immediately appearing against him, as an irresistible enemy. This he might say by way of warning to persecutors, and to encourage christians to hope that God would vindicate their cause, and preserve them from turning aside to crooked paths. And this the connexion with the following verse favours.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us continually bear in mind the approaching end of all things; and then we shall neither omit the exercises of devotion, nor grow supine and careless in the discharge of them. Then shall we be engaged, through a sense of our need of the Divine clemency and indulgence, to exercise forbearance and candour, and maintain the most fervent charity to all without distinction; and we shall then be more disposed to consider ourselves as stewards, and as such, be concerned to behave with all good fidelity, both in the use and enjoyment of our possessions, and in the exercise of those gifts and endowments with which God hath been pleased to intrust us. To this they should especially attend, who are called to speak in God's name; they should consider that his oracles are committed to them: and though they cannot pretend that the instructions they deliver from thence are revealed to and impressed upon their minds by immediate inspiration, yet a reflection on the general nature of the glorious gospel, and on its important and everlasting consequences, may well dispose and form them to an humble awe and reverence in their manner of handling and dispensing it; and may remind them, that on the whole, in every ministration of the word of life, in every distribution of charity and office of kindness, the main end to be pursued is, That God may be glorified. SECT. 8. 1 PET. IV. Ver. 10 11

If, in the cause of Christ, Providence should call us out to encounter the severest persecutions, and even fiery trials, let us not be astonished, as if some strange thing had happened to us; let us not be discouraged, nor think ourselves hardly dealt with in such divine appointments; remembering that, in this case, we are only partakers in the sufferings of Christ, that we only tread in the same rough and thorny path in which he walked before us; and that in due time, if we continue faithful to him, we shall also be made partakers of his glory. In the mean while, the Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon us; only let us be jealous of his honour with a godly jealousy, and be greatly concerned that our sins and indiscretions may not throw a blemish on a profession which derives its appellation from him. Glorious are the privileges indeed which belong to the disciples of Christ; but they, notwithstanding, draw very awful consequences after them. For judgment begins at the house of God, and even his dearest children are exercised with trials of their fidelity and patience. Let us prepare for them before they come, that when they do come, we may bear them honourably, committing the keeping of our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing. But let the wicked and the ungodly meditate terror; for the vengeance of God will find them out; the great day of wrath will come; and who can be able to stand? May divine grace reclaim those who are now exposed to so terrible a condemnation; lest they know by experience, what no words can describe, no thought conceive, the end of those who obey not the gospel of God! 12 13 14 15, 16 17 19 18

SECTION IX.

The apostle concludes this Epistle with particular cautions to ministers and private christians; urging on the former humility, diligence, and watchfulness: and exhorting the latter to a stedfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a while, make them perfect, according to his earnest prayer for them. 1 Pet. v. 1, *to the end.*

1 PET. v. 1.

1 PET. v. 1.
THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

I WOULD now in the most affectionate manner address myself to those who are *the elders among you*, or any other christian societies into whose hands this Epistle may come; and *I* would *exhort* them with the greater warmth and freedom, [*as I also am*] *an elder with them, and* an eye-*witness of the sufferings of Christ, and* as I *also* hope, through divine grace, that I shall be *a partaker of the glory which shall* hereafter *be revealed*, when he shall appear the second time, in circumstances so different from those in which we have seen and conversed with him on earth. By all the engagements of love and duty to him, and by all the regard you owe to your own honour and happiness in that important day, let me beseech you to *feed the flock of God that is among you*, the churches of Christ which you are called to preside over; *discharge the episcopal office*[a] with that due inspection which its very name imports: *not by constraint*,[b] as if it were an ungrateful burden, *but willingly*, and cheerfully; *not for* the sake of *dishonourable gain*,[c] *but of a ready mind*, and because you love the flock, and readily desire its edification and welfare. *Not assuming* to yourselves *dominion over those who fall to your lot*;[d] *but being* humble, SECT. 9. 1 PET. V. 1 2 3

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, and

a *Discharge the episcopal office.*] This idea is so plainly suggested by the word επισκοπουντες, that I thought it matter of duty to translate it as I have done; that every reader might observe, what all candid people seem to confess, that those who are styled bishops, from their having the oversight of others, and also presbyters or elders, are spoken of as the same persons. Compare ver 1. And I hope the time will come, when good men will join their efforts to remove that very hard imposition by which the ministers of some churches are obliged, in order to their entering into the ministry, to declare, not only that they are different orders, but that it is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy scripture that they are so.

b *Not by constraint.*] It is true, that in the primitive church some were almost against their will forced into the episcopal office by dint of importunity. And one would hope it was not an affected modesty with which they declined the office, especially as it was then attended with no temporal emoluments, but exposed them to distinguished labours and sufferings. It is difficult to see how any could in the strictest sense be constrained; but perhaps the apostle saw some good men too unwilling to accept the office, when the churches chose them to it, and when inspired teachers urged it upon them. And though little gain could have been made of it, and the temptation to lord it over God's heritage was not so great as when ecclesiastical persons were invested with civil power, (in which most of the honour and influence of their ecclesiastical character, as such, has been generally lost,) yet foreseeing what would happen in the church, and observing perhaps some discoveries of such a temper beginning to prevail, the caution was exceedingly just, proper, and important. Compare Luke x. 2. and the note there.

c *Dishonourable gain.*] See the note on 1 Tim. iii. 3.

d *Those who fall to your lot.*] The word, *God's*, is not in the original. I think, therefore, it is with abundant reason that the learned Mr. Boyse refers this to their not domineering over the particular congregations, or bishoprics, which were by providence committed to their care; alluding to the division of Canaan by lots. Boyse's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 413. An interpretation much preferable to Dr. Whitby's, who explains it of the possessions of the church. (Compare Col. i. 12, note k.) And yet after proposing this interpretation at large, he admits, at the close of his note, that what is here styled κληρος, being in the same sentence expressed by ποιμνιον, the *flock of God*, it seems to establish the common interpretation. What the learned Mr. Dodwell had offered in support of the sense Dr. Whitby mentions is particularly considered and refuted by Wolfius, *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 163.

SECT. 9. 1 PET. V.

and behaving towards them with such gentle, tender solicitude for their souls, and such an entire freedom from the very appearance either of avarice or ambition, that your *examples* may be rendered worthy the imitation *of the flock*, and your conduct as instructive as any of your cautions and precepts can be: *And* if this be indeed your character and behaviour, you will render up your account hereafter with joy; for *when* he, who does you
4 the honour to acknowledge himself *the chief Shepherd* of the flock, *shall appear*, to take the final survey of it, and examine into the conduct of those to whom he had partly committed it, *you shall* be most magnificently and nobly rewarded, and *receive an unfading crown of glory:* a crown which shall bloom in immortal beauty and vigour, when all the transitory glories of this world are withered like a fading flower.

being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 But it is proper that I should *likewise* address some exhortations to others besides ministers; and particularly to you, *O ye younger persons;* and that I should urge you to *be in subjection to those* [*who are*] *more advanced in age*, and to pay a decent respect to their hoary hairs. *Yea, let all* [*of you*] *be subject to one another*, endeavouring, by mutual condescension, to make each other as easy and happy as possible; *and* for this purpose *be clothed with* unfeigned *humility; for God opposeth himself to the proud;* and draws up all his terrors, as it were, in battle array against him; *but giveth grace*
6 and favour *to the humble* soul. *Humble yourselves therefore* with that just reverence *under the mighty hand of God*,[e] (under all the dispensations of divine providence, even though wicked men should be made the instruments of effecting its purposes,) *that* so *he may exalt you in due time;* for in his own most proper and well-chosen season, he will certainly raise you up, though for the present you may seem to be depressed to the lowest
7 condition. In the mean while, whatever uncertainties and dangers may attend you, endeavour to live as easy as possible; *casting all your anxious care*,[f] and all those burdens that might otherwise occasion it, *upon him;* leaving it to his all-wise and all-gracious Providence to determine every event of your lives; *for he careth for you*, in a manner the most effectual; and his tender care will accomplish infinitely more than your utmost
8 anxiety can possibly effect. Turn your solicitude therefore into the right channel; *be sober* in the government of your appetites and passions; *be watchful*[g] against every occasion of mischief from your spiritual enemies; *for your* great and inveterate *adversary the devil is* continually *walking about*,[h] *like a roaring lion*, or evening wolf, prowling round the fold, *seeking whom he may* assault with the greatest likelihood of success, and may sud-
9 denly devour and *swallow up: Whom*, therefore, as you regard your safety and life, be careful stoutly to *resist, being stedfast in* your adherence to *the* christian *faith*, and armed with the most heroic courage and resolution in its defence. And to this you should the rather attend, as *knowing that* the trials, with which you are exercised, are not peculiar to you; but that *the same afflictions*, which you are called out to encounter, *are accomplished in* others *of your* christian *brethren, who are in the world;* and you may reason-
10 ably hope, the same grace which is their support will be also yours. *But may the God* who is the great Fountain *of all grace*, from whom descendeth every good and every perfect gift, and who hath displayed his goodness in innumerable important instances, even He *who has called us to* the hope and enjoyment of *his eternal glory in Christ Jesus:* may he grant you his perpetual presence and enlivening favour; and *when you have suffered for a little while* such trials as his infinite wisdom shall see fit to appoint, may he *make you perfect*[i] in every good disposition; in whatever improvements you are enabled to make, *may he confirm, strengthen, and establish* [*you*] upon a firm and unshaken
11 foundation. *To him*, therefore, who of all beings is infinitely most worthy of it, [*be*]
12 *glory and dominion* ascribed *for ever and ever, Amen. I have written briefly unto you by* the bearer *Silvanus*, in whom I place great confidence, *as I suppose* and conclude him to be *a* sincere christian and *faithful brother*;[k] one who hath the interest of Christ at heart, and on whose fidelity we may rely, and I send it, *exhorting, and testifying* with the greater solemnity, *that this is the true grace of God wherein ye have* hitherto *stood;* and urging it therefore upon you, that you steadily adhere to it in the
13 midst of all your difficulties and persecutions. *The* [*church which is*] here *in Babylon*,[l] *chosen with* [*you*] to partake of the privileges of the gospel, *saluteth you; and* [*so doth*]

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist, stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* Marcus my son.

e *Mighty hand of God.*] Perhaps by this expression, the apostle may intend to remind them, that the *hand* of a righteous *Providence* was concerned in those events which were owing to the wickedness of men; so far concerned, as to overrule them, and render them instrumental and subservient to the accomplishment of his own wise designs; as is strongly intimated, Isa. x. 5; Psal. xvii. 14. and in many parallel places.

f *Your anxious care.*] So I have rendered μεριμναν, because that is the proper signification of it; what does, as it were, *rend* and *tear* the mind to pieces. See Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 629.

g *Be watchful.*] St. Peter might well give such a caution as this, having himself received such particular and express warning from Christ his Master, (Luke xxii. 31, &c.) and so shamefully fallen immediately after, for want of the *watchfulness* he here recommends.

h *Walking about.*] I chose to express περιπατει with this exactness, that the force of its signification in this similitude might be observed. The word καταπιν expresses more than *devouring*, even *swallowing up;* and so represents the insatiable rage of the enemy of our salvation with great advantage.

i *Make you perfect.*] If any one please to peruse Archbishop Leighton's excellent *Discourse* on these words, he will have a fine specimen of his commentary on this Epistle; which I esteem to be among the most instructive and useful books our language affords, and cannot but consider it as a great honour conferred upon me by providence, to have been an instrument of presenting it to the world in so correct a form; as well as of rescuing many other instructive pieces of that excellent and amiable author from the oblivion in which they had so long been buried.

k *Silvanus, as I suppose, a faithful brother.*] Whether this was the Silas, or Silvanus, mentioned several times in the Acts as the companion of St. Paul, and by St. Paul himself, 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. we cannot certainly say.—The phrase *as I suppose*, does not seem to imply any doubt. Compare Rom. iii. 28. and viii. 18. in the original.

l *At Babylon.*] Hence Bishop Cumberland and Mr. Cradock argue, that probably St. Peter wrote from the neighbourhood of Babylon, and found many Jews remaining there ever since the Babylonish captivity, among whom he had preached the gospel with considerable success.

Marcus, whom I may call *my son*,[m] as being my convert, and behaving to me with all filial tenderness and respect. *Salute one another with a kiss of* pure and unfeigned *love*, in your christian assemblies; and may grace and *peace*, and the truest happiness, ever [*be*] *with you all who are in Christ Jesus*, who is the Corner-stone which God hath laid in Sion, and the great Foundation of all our eternal hopes. *Amen.*

SECT. 9.

1 PET. V.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

THIS apostolic charge should be received with the profoundest regard and submission, by all those who profess to reverence the authority of Christ, who thus, by the mouth of his servants, bespeaks their attention; and it should Ver. 1
both regulate their conduct, and animate and exalt their hopes. Let us therefore attend to this venerable elder, this witness of the sufferings of Christ, who, on the mount of transfiguration, had been favoured with an illustrious representation of that glory, wherein our Lord shall be hereafter revealed, and with which he will then invest all those who, in his cause, have approved themselves faithful unto death. Let ministers, especially, ever maintain a most affectionate and respectful regard for the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof with a ready and gene- 2
rous mind, and be examples to it in the mild and condescending temper of their common Master, as well as in all 3
other graces and virtues. It is indeed possible they may pursue such a conduct as this, and meet with very little esteem or recompense, yea, with injurious and unworthy treatment, from their fellow-men. But a crown of glory, a royal diadem, incorruptible and immortal, will be hereafter conferred on them by their exalted Saviour, in the day 4
of his triumphant appearance; and this crown, in itself so illustrious, will be a mark of still more distinguished honour, as it will be placed on their victorious heads in a season of such solemnity, in the view of the whole assembled world, and of the innumerable company of angels. But in the mean time, while we are continued in so 5
lowly a condition in the present world, let us all cultivate humility of mind, being clothed with that amiable virtue, which is certainly the most graceful ornament of our nature; an ornament of singular value in the eye of that God, whose approbation is the surest mark and criterion of excellence and honour. And that we may accordingly enter-
tain the more humble and lowly conceptions of ourselves, and the more grand and venerable ideas of the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, let us often and seriously reflect upon his mighty hand; how glori- 6
ously it hath been displayed in the infinite variety of the works of nature, in the continual agency and operation of providence, and in the wonderful scheme of redemption and salvation; how powerful and resistless it is in the execu-
tion of all its works; and yet how graciously its awful power is tempered and moderated, and to what kind and merciful purposes it hath been already exerted, and still is, in behalf of such degenerate and unworthy creatures as ourselves. By these considerations, let us be disposed to bow to every divine dispensation with all resignation and submission; fixing our dependence upon a power so wisely and graciously exerted; rejoicing that we are permitted 7
to cast our cares on God, and abhorring both the ingratitude and folly of fainting and sinking under our burdens, when we are favoured with the permission of relying on him, indeed with a paternal command as well as permis-
sion; which accordingly requires our obedience in point of duty, as well as of gratitude and honour.

Our great adversary the devil is still continually prowling round the fold of Christ; and therefore it behoves us to be constantly on our guard. And if we would escape both his wiles and his power, let us be especially careful, 8
that neither our security nor intemperance give him an advantage over us: but, on the contrary, as it is nothing less than our utter and eternal destruction he aims at, let us strenuously resist him, in the exercise of a steady faith, 9
and with a firm resolution. Let us also remember, that trials and afflictions have been the lot of all the people of God in all generations; and that the God of all grace is able, if it seem good to his infinite wisdom, to shorten and contract the time of our sufferings, and by means of them, whilst they last, to strengthen and perfect our immortal 10
souls. Let us, therefore, as the close of all, continue to stand fast in what is so authentically testified to be the true grace of God; and real substantial peace will be with us, will be our everlasting portion, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

m *Marcus my son.*] That is, my *convert*, or at least my *assistant* in the ministerial work. I have observed, note b, p. 493. that John Mark, who was the companion of Barnabas and Paul, was a different person from Mark the Evangelist, who was the intimate companion of the apostle Peter. And as he was so, it is likely that the Evangelist is the Mark of which the apostle here speaks. Under St. Peter's instruction he is said to have written his gospel, probably receiving at different times historical facts from him, which he records without very exact order, and which St. Luke afterwards greatly illustrated, without changing the order, by adding many more important circumstances.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON THE

SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

THERE were some in the primitive church who called in question the genuineness and authority of *this Epistle*, though it expressly claims St. Peter for its author, and contains very strong internal characters of its authenticity. But this being no proper or convenient place to enter largely into the argument, if any are desirous of seeing it truly and accurately represented, as far as it depends upon the testimonies of the christian fathers, they may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. As to the internal evidence, there are some general observations, which having made already in the Introduction to the Epistle of James, I think it unnecessary to repeat, though they are very applicable to the present occasion. But it is fit to observe, in particular, that the author of this Epistle hath some allusions or appeals to facts and circumstances as relative to himself, which evidently refer to St. Peter; and that, besides, there is a remarkable coincidence between the sentiments of this and of the former Epistle; insomuch that it is extremely probable it was the production of the same author, intending to confirm the doctrines he had already advanced, in opposition to the scruples of honest men, and the objection of designing ones. St. Jerome, acquainting us with the dispute which had been raised concerning the author and the authority of this Epistle, informs us, at the same time, that it was owing to a remarkable difference of style in this and the former unquestionably genuine Epistle of St. Peter. But the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no difference of style between the two Epistles, but only between the former Epistle, and a part of this, namely, the second chapter; which, indeed, is as different from the style of the remainder of this, as it is from that of the whole former Epistle. The fact, therefore, seems to be, (as the learned Bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, supposes, in his first *dissertation*, at the end of his *Discourses on Prophecy*, which is well worth the reader's perusal,) I say, the fact seems to be, that the apostle, in the second chapter of this Epistle, describing the character of such seducers and false teachers as endangered the faith of the christian converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish author, containing a very strong description, in the eastern manner, of the character and conduct of some false prophets of that, or earlier ages. And as St. Jude hath likewise described these false teachers, as well as St. Peter, and there is a remarkable similitude in some respects, and variation in others, between the account of these two apostles, it appears extremely probable, that they both took the principal features of their descriptions from the same author. And if this be a just account, the foundation of all the doubts concerning the genuineness of this Epistle is exceeding feeble; and no other reasonable conclusion can be drawn from them, except the singular caution of the primitive christians what writings they honoured with the veneration due to the oracles of God.

This Epistle was very probably written about the year 67; which was six years after the date of the former. For the apostle speaks of his death as very near at hand; *I think it meet*, saith he, *as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me;* (chap. i. 13, 14.) and ecclesiastical history informs us, that the apostle finished his race by martyrdom in the year 68, the 14th of the emperor Nero.

The general design of this Epistle is, To confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former; "to excite "the christian converts to adorn and stedfastly adhere to their holy religion, as a religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is at large described; or the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies."

The apostle, with this view, having first congratulated the christian converts on the happy condition into which they were brought by the gospel, exhorts them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to

improve in the most substantial graces and virtues. (Chap. i. 1—11.) And that their attention might be the more effectually engaged, he reminds them, both that he spoke to them in the near view of eternity, it being revealed to him that he should shortly put off his earthly tabernacle; and that the subjects on which he discoursed were not cunningly devised fables, but attested by a miraculous voice from heaven, and by divinely inspired prophecies. (Ver. 12, *to the end.*) And that this exhortation might not fail of producing the most kindly and genuine effects, he cautions them against the false teachers, whose character he describes; reminding them of the judgments executed on the apostate angels, on the old world, and on Sodom; and at the same time, of the deliverance of Noah and of Lot; as suggesting considerations, which, on the one hand, should terrify such ungodly wretches, and, on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of upright and pious christians. (Chap. ii. 1—9.) He then farther describes the character of these seducers; warning all true christians of the danger of being perverted by them, and them of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. (Ver. 10, *to the end.*) And that the persons to whom he was writing might more effectually escape the artifices of those who lay in wait to deceive, they are directed to adhere steadily and closely to the sacred scriptures, and to consider the absolute certainty and awful manner of the final destruction of this world: and then the whole is concluded with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. Chap. iii. *throughout.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

SECTION I.

The apostle Peter, after his salutation, begins his Epistle with congratulating the christians on the happy state into which they were brought by the gospel; and urges them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in its most substantial graces and virtues. 2 Pet. i. 1—11.

2 PETER i. 1.

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord:

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

2 PETER i. 1.

SECT. 1.

2 PET. i.

SIMON Peter, who has the honour to style himself *a servant, and* even *an apostle, of Jesus Christ*, being selected by his heavenly Master to that exalted and important office, sends his most affectionate salutation, with this his Epistle, *to* all *those* to whom it may come, *who have obtained like precious faith with us, in* that glorious gospel, which is a declaration of life and salvation by *the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*;[a] in which, sinful as we are, we obtain acceptance with the Father, through that atonement which our Divine Redeemer has made, and the perfect righteousness he has introduced, for the justification of all his believing people. 1

For this purpose, that this invaluable blessing may be ensured to you, may *grace and peace* in all your concerns, temporal and spiritual, *be multiplied unto you by the acknowledgment of* the great *God and of Jesus* Christ *our Lord*: by a faithful and courageous profession of whose name we put ourselves into the way of receiving the most important blessings. This we may cheerfully expect, *as his divine power has given unto us all things* in such rich abundance, *which* [*relate*] both *to life and godliness*;[b] whereby the present life is rendered much more comfortable to us, and the future and eternal life of our souls is secured. And this we obtain, *by the knowledge of him who has*, by his gospel, *called us by* that *glory* with which he has now invested us, *and* that strengthening *virtue*[c] and energy of his Spirit: *By means of which*[d] illustrious seal, set to the declaration of the gospel, *are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*, relating to blessings infinitely more valuable than any present enjoyments or expectations. And the design of God, in bestowing this inestimable favour is, *that by these you may be made partakers of a divine nature*;[e] transformed into the image of God's moral perfections; *having escaped the corruption* [*which is*] so generally prevalent *in the world, through* the *lust* which men are ready to indulge, to the reproach and destruction of their immortal souls. *And for this purpose*,[f] *applying with all* possible *diligence*, as you have believed the gospel, be careful to accompany that belief with all the lovely train of attendant graces; *associate*,[g] as it were, *to your faith, virtue*,[h] true fortitude, and resolution of

2 3 4 5

a *Of our God and Saviour, &c.*] The order of the original words rather favours this translation, though I confess it is not absolutely necessary, and it may be rendered, as in our version, *of God and our Saviour*. It is observable, that the order in the next verse is different, and determines it to the translation there used.

b *Life and godliness.*] Some imagine this to be an Hebraism for a *godly life*; but the meaning is so much enriched by understanding it more literally, that I chose to retain our version, and to paraphrase the words according to it.

c *By glory and virtue*: διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς.] This is the proper rendering of the word διὰ with a genitive case, as several critics have rightly observed. Dr. Whitby supposes these words to be an hendyades, and understands them of the *glorious and powerful effusion of the Spirit*. It is remarkable that the word ἀρετὴ, used so frequently in heathen writers, seldom occurs in the New Testament; and when it does, it does not always signify the *whole of a right principle*, but generally *courage*. (See note h, below.) And therefore, as the learned Albert observes, (*Observ. Philolog.* p. 460.) some interpreters, apprehending the word ἀρετὴ to be in no sense applicable to God, but only to men, have rendered this clause contrary to the Greek idiom, *to glory and virtue*. But it may very properly be understood of that strengthening energy which God exerts on the human mind, which appeared in so extraordinary a manner in the apostolic age.

d *By means of which.*] Some would render δι' ὧν, *for the sake of which*; that is, as they understand the clause, that we might attain *to this glory and virtue*, God has made such precious promises, of the pardon of sin, the assistances of his Spirit, and at last, eternal happiness. Dr. Whitby would read it, δι' ὃν, *by whom*, that is, by Christ; for which he hath the authority of some manuscripts.

e *Partakers of a divine nature.*] I cannot think the passages, which are produced from Philo and Josephus as parallel to this, are sufficient to justify Dr. Whitby's interpreting this phrase of *miraculous and prophetic endowments*.

f *For this purpose*: αὐτὸ τοῦτο.] The learned Albert supposes the particle ὡς to be understood, and I have translated it accordingly.

g *Associate.*] The word ἐπιχορηγήσατε properly signifies, to *lead up*, as in a *dance*, one of these virtues after another in a beautiful and majestic order. See Goodman's *Parable of the Prod.* p. 296. and Sir Norton Knatchbull, *in loc.*

h *Virtue.*] Virtue cannot here signify an universal *regularity of mind and manners*, (see Titus iii. 8.) because every particular, afterwards mentioned, is a virtue in that sense; and the apostle speaks

SECT. 1. 2 PET. 1.

mind, which may enable you to break through that variety of dangers with which your faith may be attended; *and to* this heroic *virtue* and bravery, that *knowledge* which may direct your resolution aright; *And to knowledge, temperance;* that if you should be in the most plentiful circumstances, they may not be a snare to you, and the bounties of Providence may not be abused to the dishonour of God, and your own detriment; *and to* 6 this *temperance* add *patience*, as you are not apprized what afflictions may possibly succeed your prosperity, nor how severe they may be; *and to patience* add *godliness*, that devout temper of mind, which will be so powerful a support to your patience, both by the 7 views it gives you of the wisdom and goodness of all the divine dispensations, and by the pleasure which it will mingle with the most painful exercises and trials: *And to godliness* add *brotherly-kindness*, that peculiar affection which you owe to your fellow-christians, as your brethren in the Lord; *and* add *to* this *brotherly-kindness* universal *love* to all your fellow-creatures, extending your kind, affectionate regards to those who are entirely strangers to that religion which you are so happy as to embrace, and even to those who most un- 8 righteously oppose it, and injure you for your profession of it: *For if these* excellent *things* which I have now described, *exist and abound in you, they will permit* [*you*] *to be neither inactive nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;* but as they must put you upon exerting yourselves in consequence of that knowledge, they will 9 make these your endeavours delightful and effectual for that purpose. *But he that is deficient in these things, is blind* as to the most important objects of knowledge; at best he is very *short-sighted*, his views are limited to a narrow circle of low and mean objects, which lie immediately before him, *and* cannot take in that enlarged and noble prospect which christianity sets before him. He shows that *he hath contracted a* sad *forgetfulness of* [*his*] baptismal engagements, and of that *purification from the sins of his former life*, which he professed to be in search of, and hoped to find by that solemn ordinance, which initiated him into the christian church.

10 And as it would be very fatal to fall from these bright views and expectations into a state of such aggravated condemnation, *therefore, my brethren, endeavour so much the more diligently to make your calling and* your *election sure*[i] and firm; that having been called into the church of Christ, and chosen to such exalted external privileges, and such glorious hopes, you may not finally lose them; but may be assured, upon the best grounds, that you are indeed effectually called by divine grace, and chosen to the possession of life everlasting. And this important end will be secured, if you resolutely persist in your duty, according to the directions I have now given; *for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;* God will support you with communications of grace, suitable to any extraordinary trial to which you may be called, till the whole is brought to a happy issue 11 and conclusion. *For so an entrance shall be* richly and *abundantly administered unto you in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;* you shall not only be secure of obtaining happiness there, but shall be received into it with circumstances of solemn pomp and distinguished honour; and those graces which adorned your profession here on earth, shall, as it were, attend you in a radiant train to those mansions of everlasting felicity and glory, which the divine mercy shall then assign you, through Jesus Christ, to whom the praise of all is to be ascribed, and with whom you shall reign through the endless ages of eternity.

6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness:

7 And to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 With all humility let us adore the divine goodness, in making us partakers of the like precious faith with that which he bestowed on the primitive believers. And let it often be considered in this comprehensive and edifying view, as terminating on the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, on that method of justification by him and his gospel which divine grace hath found out and proposed. With thankfulness let us own the abundant provision made for us, of all things pertaining to life and godliness; and above all, let the exceeding rich and 3 invaluable promises contained in the gospel be reviewed with sincere delight, and be esteemed as our securest and 4 most important treasure. May they actually have all that efficacy they are suited and intended to have, to procure and secure our escape from the pollutions which are in the world through lust, and to advance the divine resem- 5 blance in our souls. How various and how lovely are the graces which are here recommended, as what we are with all diligence to add to our faith; courage and temperance, patience and godliness, brotherly-kindness and 7, 8 universal charity: these are the genuine fruits of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; these, while they honour

of each as additional to what went before. It must therefore here signify *courage*, as the original word ἀρετη often does. (Compare note c, above.) And it is properly added to faith, in reference to the need faith has of a courageous defence, and of the advantage it gives us for that purpose. The knowledge to be added, signifies not that general knowledge on which faith and virtue must be founded, but an acquaintance with the importance of the several principles and duties comprehended in that general knowledge; and by this courage would properly be directed, which might otherwise act at random. Nor can we imagine that one of these good qualities can entirely subsist without another; but every one is to make up, as it were, a part of the chorus, appearing together in a lovely and venerable train.

i *Calling and election sure.*] Mr. Brekel, the ingenious author of the *Christian Warfare*, hath taken pains to prove that *calling* and *election* alludes to the manner in which armies were raised; first, by *calling together* all of a proper age to bear arms; and then *chusing out* such as were reckoned most proper for that purpose. And he supposes that *making the calling and election*, βεβαιαν, *stedfast*, was acting in such a manner that they might not be *cashiered* and *disbanded*, as unworthy a place in the *army* into which they had been *listed*. He has indeed proved, by a great number of learned quotations, that this was the case in the Grecian armies; and Rev. xvii. 14. may perhaps be a further illustration of it, as he well urges. But I cannot think, that by this we are to determine our notion of the *christian calling* and *election*; and whoever should attempt to apply this idea to such phrases in the multitude of places, would find it utterly unsuitable. I have therefore so taken in the idea, which this agreeable writer suggests, as not entirely to drop others, which I think it extremely probable the apostle might have in his view. And it will certainly be a good sense, if we understand the exhortation, Make it an *assured thing to yourselves*, that you are *called* and *chosen of God*.

him and adorn our profession, will be no less honourable and beneficial to ourselves. Short-sighted indeed we are, if we perceive not, on the one hand, the happy and delightful consequences which they will finally produce; and, on the other, how utterly vain our baptismal honours and engagements, and all external privileges of church-communion, will be, if these vitals of christianity are wanting. In order to excite our indolent minds to pursue these divine graces, with a spirit in some measure proportionable to their excellence, let us frequently reflect on our speedy removal from this world and all its vanities; how soon we must enter upon eternity. O how desirable, then, to enter on the kingdom of Christ, to be honoured with an abundant entrance into everlasting mansions, to be received as with a cordial welcome, to sail, as it were, into that blessed harbour with a full gale of consolation and joy! Be not deceived; God is not mocked; it is the invariable design of the gospel to produce and advance our holiness; it is the immutable constitution of the kingdom of Christ, that without it no man shall be permitted to see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.)

SECT. 1. 2 PET. I. 11

SECTION II.

The apostle, in the view of his own approaching dissolution, reminds his christian brethren that their religion was firmly founded, as it was attested both by the miraculous voice from heaven, which declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and by the divinely inspired prophecies, which also bore testimony to him under that character. 2 Pet. i 12, *to the end.*

2 PET. i. 12.

2 PET. i. 12.

WHEREFORE I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting *you* in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15 Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

I HAVE been exhorting you to cultivate the several graces of christianity, and urging this as necessary for the security of your eternal salvation; *therefore I will not neglect always to put you in mind of these things; though* I am aware that *you* already *know them, and are* well *established* by the instruction you have received *in the present truth,* relating to the practice of these virtues. *But I account it right* and expedient, yea, what by my office in the church of Christ I owe to you and my other brethren, *as long as I am in this tabernacle,* and inhabit this frail mortal body, from which God only knows how soon I may be dislodged, *to stir you up by way of remembrance,* and to endeavour to keep your hearts under as lively a sense of divine things as I can: *Knowing that* all these opportunities of service are confined within very narrow limits; and that *I must quickly put off* this *my tabernacle* by death, *even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me,* by an express prophecy, and that memorable action of his, when, just after his resurrection, he commanded me to follow him in token of my readiness to die for him, by the same kind of death which he suffered. (John xxi. 18, 19, 20.) *But I will endeavour,* to the utmost of my ability, while it pleases God to continue me among you, *that you may* have these things so familiar to your minds now, that ye may also *every one of you have them in remembrance after my departure,* when I shall have made my exit from the stage of mortality. *For we have not been pursuing* after a series of *artfully devised fables, while we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;* they were not fallaciously invented nor rashly credited by us; *but* we *were eye-witnesses of his majesty,* and of the solemn pomp and grandeur with which he appeared at his transfiguration. *For he* then *received from God the Father* illustrious *honour and glory;* sublime honour was done him, and a refulgent glory was shed round about him, *when such a voice was sent forth to him from the magnificent glory* of the Shechinah, which then appeared so conspicuous and glorious, and made that ever-memorable proclamation, *This is my* well-*beloved Son, in whom I acquiesce,* (Matt. xvii. 5.) and in whom my soul is perfectly well pleased. *And this voice, which came down from heaven, we,* his three distinguished friends, James and John, as well as myself, actually *heard, when we were with him in the holy mount,* which was, for the time, consecrated by the visible appearance of the divine glory upon it. *And we have a surer* and firmer *prophetical word,*[a] the evidence of which, on the whole, is far more extensive and important than that of any single miracle, how conspicuous soever; *to which,* therefore, *ye do* very *well to* adhere, and to *take heed* to its contents, *as to a lamp shining in a dark,* obscure, and gloomy *place.*[b] Observe it, therefore, and adhere to it, *till the dawn, and the morning star arise in your hearts,* with resplendent beams, as the sure herald of an eternal day, whose sun shall no more go down, nor its moon withdraw itself: *Knowing this first,* as a matter of chief importance, *that no prophecy of scripture is of private impulse,*[c] or original:

SECT. 2. 2 PET. I. 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

a *Surer prophetical word.*] Some are of opinion that the apostle intended no comparison in this place, but that the comparative is used for the positive; so that it only signifies *a very sure prophetical word.* As in Heb. xiii. 23. ταχιον is used for *quickly.* Acts xxv. 10. κρειττον for *well.* Compare 1 Tim. iii. 14; 2 Tim. i. 17, 18. And μειζονες for the *least,* Matt. xi. 11.; Luke vii. 28. Others assert, that the series of prophecies, when explained in the light of the New Testament, is a much clearer proof of Christ's being the Messiah, than any single miraculous fact, as this, was. It is also debated, whether prophecy signifies the *gift,* so called among christians, or the *written prophecies of the Old Testament.* But I think it cannot be doubted, that it refers to the latter, and is the same with what is called below, in the 20th verse, the *prophecy of scripture,* and is said to have *come in old time by the will of God.*

b *Lamp shining in a dark place.*] Bishop Chandler supposes prophecy is so called, because it grows gradually brighter and brighter, as it approaches nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. Bishop Chandler's *Defence of Christianity,* p. 23.

c *No prophecy of scripture is of private impulse.*] So I render επιλυσεως; and take it to signify, that men did not *work themselves up* into such agitations as led them to utter the predictions and oracles recorded. And this, I think, the original will very well bear, and the opposition justify. To interpret it in opposition to *the right of private judgment* in the interpretation of scripture, is quite foreign to the apostle's purpose, as well as extremely injurious to common sense. See Flem. *Christology,* Vol. I. p. 147. Dr. Clark and Mr. Baxter have understood this, as if the apostle had said, Scripture is not to be interpreted merely as speaking of this particular person of whom it literally speaks; but as having a farther sense, to which the expressions of the prophets were overruled under the influence of the Spirit, in reference to the gospel-dispensation; in respect to which they sometimes were carried farther than they themselves were aware. Mr. Jeffery (after Dr. Hammond) observes, that επιλυσεως originally signifies, a *sign* or *watch-word* given to the racers when they were to start. See his *Review* of the controversy between the author of *The Grounds, &c.* and his adversaries, p. 149.

SECT. 2. 2 PET. I. 21

For prophecy was not brought of old to the minds of those that uttered it *by the will of man;* they could not work themselves up to the attainment of this extraordinary gift, nor divinely foretell what they themselves desired, and whenever they pleased; *but holy men of God,* whom he honoured with that important work, *spake* [*as they were*] *borne on by the Holy Spirit;* and they were only his organs, in declaring to the people what he was disposed to suggest to them.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14 MAY that uncertainty, that frailty and brevity of human life, which the ministers of Christ are frequently inculcating upon others, be seriously considered by themselves. Let them remember, that they must quickly put off this tabernacle, and be dismissed from their present state of service; and while they have opportunity, therefore, 13 let them stir up the minds of the people committed to their charge, by way of remembrance, and give diligence to make such impressions upon their hearts, that when they themselves are laid down in the silence of the grave, and sleeping among the clods of the valley, by the recollection and improvement of the lessons they taught, survivors 15 may be quickened in their preparation to quit their dissolving tabernacles likewise, and to follow their pious leaders into the joy of their Lord.

16 It must undoubtedly yield us an inconceivable satisfaction as christians, that we have not followed cunningly devised fables; that the persons on whose testimony we rely, as an authentic evidence to the truth of our holy 17, 18 religion, were eye-witnesses of the illustrious facts on which it is founded! and particularly, that important oracle, the voice from heaven, by which the true and living God declared Jesus of Nazareth to be his well-beloved Son, and recommended him to the obedient regard of all who reverence his own authority, was on the mount of transfiguration distinctly heard by Peter, James, and John; who at the same time were eye-witnesses of his glory. Yet are we bound to acknowledge the divine oracles of the Old Testament, and the numerous and various prophecies they contain, to be to us a superior, a more sure and incontestable evidence: let us therefore take heed to it, as a glorious light to our feet, and lamp to our paths. And let what is particularly said of the ancient prophets recommend to our regard the whole sacred volume; namely, that it was not written by private impulse, but by the inspiration 20 of the Holy Ghost. Let us receive it with the profoundest humility, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed and in truth, the word of God, which is able to make us wise unto salvation; and let us follow its sacred illumi- 21 nation, till at length it conduct us to the dawning of an eternal day, and to the rising of that bright and morning 29 star, which will shine out hereafter with the full glory of the Sun of righteousness.

SECTION III.

The apostle cautions christians against false teachers: mentioning the judgments which God executed on the fallen angels, on the old world, and on Sodom, and the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, as considerations which should, on the one hand, terrify the ungodly, and, on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of good men. 2 Pet. ii. 1—9.

2 PET. II. 1.

SECT. 3. 2 PET. II. 1

I HAVE observed to you that it was by a divine impulse that the prophets delivered and wrote their predictions in former times; *but* they were not always regarded in a becoming manner; for *there were also false prophets among the people*[a] of the Jews, *as there shall also be among you,*[b] the disciples of a greater Master than Moses; *false teachers, who will* make parties among you, and *privately introduce* pernicious and *destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought* and redeemed *them;* as those false prophets denied the God who had redeemed Israel from its bondage and misery; but they will at last be found in the same dreadful circumstances, *bringing upon themselves swift de-* 2 *struction. And* yet *many will persist to follow their pernicious courses, by means of whom the way of truth,* the cause of genuine and uncorrupted christianity, *will* by many others *be blasphemed:* as if the errors and madness of those members who are corrupted, were to be charged on those who are not infected with their disorders, or the vices of a 3 few were to be imputed to all. *And* as for the false teachers I mention, *they* will order both their teaching and their conduct *by* views and maxims of *covetousness,* and *with deceitful words will make merchandise of you,* trafficking as it were for your immortal souls. These are wretches, *whose judgment for a long time delays not,* but advances apace; *and their destruction does not slumber,*[c] how fondly soever they may dream of escaping it. But if they consider the numerous examples God has already given of his 4 righteous indignation, they must certainly take the alarm: *For if God did not spare the angels that sinned,*[d] *but having cast* [*them*] *down* from heaven and sunk them *to* the

2 PET. II. 1.

BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and

a *There were also false prophets among the people.*] Dr. Sherlock (the late Bishop of London) has observed, in his first dissertation at the end of his *Discourses on Prophecy*, that there is a sensible difference, not so much between the First and Second Epistles of Peter, as between this second chapter, when compared with the first and third. This chapter abounds in pompous words and expressions. It is a description of false teachers, and seems to be extracted from some Jewish writer, who had given a description of the *false prophets*, either those of his own time, or those who had lived before him. This remark accounts for the great resemblance between this chapter and the Epistle of Jude; as was observed in the Introduction. He supposes it might be transcribed, or translated by them, from some Jewish or Hebrew book that remained among them. See the Epistle of Jude, note c.

b *As there shall also be among you.*] Hence Mr. Mede, I think somewhat precariously, infers a similitude between the errors propagated by the *false prophets* among the Jews, and those which were to overrun the christian church; and instances in image-worship, and the worship of departed saints and heroes, customary in the church of Rome. Mede, *in loc.* Dr. Whitby applies all these things to the Nicolaitans, and Gnostics, who were a branch of them.

c *Does not slumber.*] Mr. Blackwall observes, that this is a most beautiful figure, representing the vengeance that shall destroy such incorrigible sinners, as an angel of judgment pursuing them upon the wing, continually approaching nearer and nearer, and in the mean time keeping a watchful eye upon them, that he may at length discharge an unerring blow. See his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 297.

d *Did not spare the angels, &c.*] Some have imagined this to be an imperfect sentence: I think it complete in the 9th verse. But as the length of the sentence is so necessarily increased, by such a

delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly:

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds:)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

abyss of *hell*,[e] *delivered* [*them*] *to be reserved in chains of darkness*,[f] *to* the *judgment* of the great and terrible day of account; we may from hence reasonably conclude, that he will find out a proper season to punish wicked men, the confederates and instruments of those rebellious spirits. *And* indeed the history of mankind furnishes us with many awful instances of this kind: and one, in which almost the whole human species was made the monument of divine displeasure; for when God had long been insulted and provoked by their continued wickedness, we know that he *spared not the* inhabitants of the *old* antediluvian *world*. *Nevertheless*, it is worth our while at the same time to observe the favourable manner in which God interposed amidst the general ruin, for the preservation of the only good man that remained; for *he kept Noah, the eighth* [*person*,][g] who was *a preacher of righteousness*, and seven others, who were with him in the ark, *when he brought the* irresistible destruction of the universal *deluge upon the* whole *world of the ungodly*, and destroyed all the impious wretches who had derided the admonitions of that faithful patriarch. SECT. 3. 2 PET. II. 5

And in a succeeding age, when the inhabitants of those places were sunk into the lowest degeneracy, *he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah*, *with* the most dreadful *destruction*, *reducing them to ashes*, by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; *setting* [*them*] as *an example* and pattern *of* that final vengeance he will bring on *those* sinners *who should afterwards be ungodly*, that they might learn their own condemnation and misery from the memorials of the destruction of those once noble, pleasant, and flourishing cities of the plain. *And* by the miraculous interposition of his providence, he *rescued righteous Lot*, who was so long *grieved* and afflicted *by the lascivious conversation of these lawless men*. *For that righteous man, while he dwelt among them, seeing and hearing from day to day* the instances of their profligate and abandoned wickedness, *tormented* [*his*] *upright soul by* [*those*] *unlawful* and scandalous *works*, whose cry came up at length to heaven, and brought down upon them this flaming destruction. And thus, on the whole, we discern in this memorable example, that, on the one hand, *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation* and danger, *and*, on the other, *to reserve the unrighteous to the day of judgment, to be punished* with a severity becoming their guilt and wickedness. 6 7 8 9

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is no church so pure, but some false members, and even false teachers, may insinuate themselves into it; yet it is our duty to watch and pray, that the churches to which we respectively belong may be guarded against their pernicious insinuations, and especially against the destructive heresies of those who deny the Lord who bought them. As we regard the edification of the church, and the salvation of our own precious and immortal souls, let us guard against whatever may justly deserve such an imputation as this. Woe be to those teachers who are actuated with a covetous spirit, who teach things which they ought not for the sake of filthy lucre, and make merchandise of the souls of their hearers! How swiftly does their damnation approach, though they perceive not the gradations by which it advances; and with what irresistible terror will it at length overwhelm them! Ver. 1 3

That our hearts may be preserved under an awful impression of the divine judgments, let us often meditate on those displays of them of which the scripture informs us. And let us, in particular, reflect on the fall of the apostate angels, who were for their first offence precipitated from heaven, and reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day; and while we contemplate this awful dispensation, let us adore that distinguishing grace and compassion which laid hold on apostate man, and provided an all-sufficient Saviour for him. Let us call to remembrance the dissolution of the old world by a deluge of water, and the tremendous destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven; and let us fear that God, who can at pleasure break open the fountains of the great deep, and open the windows of heaven, and emit from these his various magazines, deluges of water, or torrents of burning sulphur, to execute his vengeance. Who can flee from his pursuing hand? or who can be secure and happy but under his almighty protection? Yet awful as the terrors of his indignation are, his eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. What a noble support and encouragement may it therefore 4 5, 6 7, 8

method of paraphrasing as I have chosen, (though brought into the narrowest limits which were judged consistent with answering the end,) I have thought it proper here, and in many other instances, to divide what, in the original, makes one sentence, into several; else I must have left many passages of the sacred writings far more intricate than I found them.

e *Cast* [*them*] *down to hell.*] Mr. Mede would translate the words, *When God had condemned the angels that sinned to the punishment of hell, he delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment.* I cannot but think that the word ταρταρώσας is illustrated by the description given of Tartarus in Homer, (*Iliad*, Θ, Lin. 13—15.) as a *deep gulph under the earth, where there are iron gates, and a brazen entrance.* It is derived from a word expressive of terror, and signifies, the doleful prison in which wicked spirits are reserved, till they shall be brought out to public condemnation and execution.

f *In chains of darkness.*] It has been queried, how the *confinement* of these unhappy spirits in *chains of darkness*, is consistent with their *wandering* up and down in the air, and upon earth. I think we are to answer, not by saying that the darkness is moral, or that the light is disagreeable to them, as some have suggested, (compare Reynolds's *Inquiry concerning the Angelic World*, Query xxx. p. 191.) but rather, that a general confinement may be reconcileable with some degree of liberty, yet still liable to restraint, as God shall see fit. Compare Luke viii. 31; Rev. xx. 1, 3. And this air over which they seem indeed to have some power sometimes granted them, (Eph. ii. 2.) is to be sure darkness, when compared with the light in which they originally dwelt.

g *The eighth* [*person*,] *a preacher of righteousness.*] Bishop Pearson would render this clause, *Noah the eighth preacher of righteousness*; supposing that Enos was the first, (Gen. iv. 26.) from whom Noah was the eighth; that all the intermediate persons bore the same office, and that Christ preached by them all. 1 Pet. iii. 19. Pears. *On the Creed*, p. 113. To which Bishop Cumberland assents, supposing God had a continued succession of extraordinary persons in the patriarchal church. Cumb. *On Gen.* p. 49. But I think it certain, that Enos could not be the *first* preacher of righteousness; Adam was in a wonderful manner fitted to perform that office in the *first* world, as Noah was in the *second*; and what excellent instructions both might give, Dr. Winder has finely represented. Winder's *History of Knowledge*, Vol. I. p. 17, &c. p. 81—92. Bishop Pearson adds, that if we are not disposed to refer ογδοον to κηρυκα, and translate it, *the eighth preacher of righteousness*, it may be understood as denoting, not the order in which Noah was ranked, but merely the number of persons that were with him, *Noah with seven others, or Noah one of eight*; and accordingly I have determined it to this sense in the paraphrase. The bishop hath produced several passages in the Greek classics in support of this sense of the word: and others may be seen in Raphelius. Compare also 1 Pet. iii. 20.

SECT. 3. 2 PET. II.

be to the small remnant, who from day to day are vexing their righteous souls at the ungodly deeds of the wicked among whom they dwell, to reflect on the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, from that general destruction with which they were surrounded. A more perfect and complete deliverance will be at length accomplished for all the faithful servants of God, and there will be no possibility of doubting any more his ability or his willingness to rescue them from every evil; for he will make the day of his vengeance on his enemies a day of complete and everlasting salvation to his saints. And the Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that important day.

SECTION IV.

The apostle describes, in very emphatical terms, the infamous character of some ungodly and seducing teachers, who were crept into the christian church; and warns the christian converts of the danger of their being perverted by them, and them of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. 2 Pet. ii. 10—22.

2 PET. ii. 10.

SECT. 4. 2 PET. II.

10 I HAVE been just mentioning the divine vengeance which will be poured out on audacious and impenitent sinners; *but* I would *especially* be understood to intend *those who go after* strange *flesh, in the lust of uncleanness;* for they are particularly detestable in the eye of God, and the crimes they commit so much resemble that of Sodom, that it is the less to be wondered if they share in its punishment: *and* with them I also comprehend those who *despise dominion*, of which there are many among the licentious wretches before described, *daring* and *self-willed*, uncontrollable in their own ways, and ready to face and withstand any opposition in the prosecution of them; *they fear not to speak*
11 *evil of* those who possess the highest *dignities: Whereas the angels*, even those *who are greater in strength and power* than the rest of those glorious beings, *bear not a reviling testimony against them before the Lord;* but abhorring all scurrility and violence of language, they with all calmness and decency declare matters as they are, as revering the presence of God, how much soever they may abhor the characters of ungodly men.
12 (Jude 9.) *But these men* behave *as if they were irrational animals,*[a] *made* by nature *to be taken, and destroyed*, and consumed: the fiercest savage beasts, whom men for their own security and preservation hunt down and destroy, can hardly be more violent and outrageous than they; *blaspheming things which they do not understand;* and the consequence will be, that they *shall be utterly destroyed in their corruption;*[b] and many of them, by their own intemperance, rashness, and folly, will hasten upon them-
13 selves that irretrievable ruin: *Receiving* indeed *the* just *reward of* their *unrighteousness* and irregularities; *while they account it a pleasure to riot in the day:* they are *spots and reproaches* to the society to which they belong, *living luxuriously* in other places *by means of* those *deceits*,[c] which they conceal under the mask of christianity, *banqueting*
14 *with you* at the holy table.[d] Many of them are as lewd as they are gluttonous, *having eyes full of adultery;*[e] *and that cannot cease from sin*, even when the powers of animal nature are exhausted; but by their words and gestures they endeavour to fan the flame; *ensnaring unstable souls* by their artful addresses, and *having their heart* continually *exercised in avaricious schemes;* on all which accounts they are the *children of a curse*, and they shall find that in the end it will indeed fall heavy upon them.
15 For, *deserting the straight* and upright *way* of truth and integrity, *they have wandered* in dangerous and destructive paths, *following in the way of* that infamous person *Balaam, [the son] of Bosor,*[f] *who* so *loved the wages of unrighteousness*, that he was
16 willing to sacrifice every other interest to obtain them. *But he received*, in a very extraordinary manner, *the reproof of his transgression;* for *the dumb beast* on which he rode, *speaking with the voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet*, when he
17 would have pressed on to his own destruction. *These*, notwithstanding all their boasted pretensions, *are fountains without water;* they are *clouds agitated by a whirlwind*, easily yielding to every wind of persecution or temptation, and themselves big with storms and tempests: but after all their turbulence and mischief, they will be found in the number of those *to whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever*, even the judgment of eter-
18 nal darkness and despair. They sometimes indeed affect sublime strains of language, which

2 PET. ii. 10.

BUT chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: presumptuous *are they*, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you:

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children;

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest: to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 For when they speak

a *Irrational animals.*] Dr. Whitby would render this, *But these are as natural brute beasts;* referring it to their *promiscuous exercise* of lust. And indeed it is evident, it must be explained as a general assertion, relating to some violence of temper; as no sin of the tongue, which is immediately afterwards spoken of, could be the resemblance of a brute. I may refer to their running headlong into extreme danger; which this licentious manner of speech, especially when attacking the characters of governors, might very naturally expose them to.

b *Destroyed in their corruption.*] The original phrase is εν τη φθορα αυτων καταφθαρησονται, and some would render it, *are destroyed by destruction*, that is, certainly or utterly destroyed. Compare Cradock's *Apostolical History*, p. 117. They boasted of being beyond the power of corruption and punishment, but are lost in both together.

c *Living luxuriously*, &c.] This is so good and proper a sense, that one is not tempted to wish the establishing of the reading of αγαπαις for απαταις, which some have proposed, and so explain it of the riot of those pretended *love-feasts*, into which indeed it is not impossible that *luxury* might soon come, when persons of such a character were concerned in them; and probably that was the occasion of laying them aside.

d *Banqueting with you.*] It is not to be thought that luxury could be introduced into those feasts which they celebrated with the church, without detecting their own characters; and therefore I think it most reasonable to consider their luxury as practised elsewhere; and to refer this *banqueting*, of which the apostle speaks, to their attending the *sacred banquet* of the *Lord's supper*, as a cover for their licentiousness.

e *Having eyes full of adultery:* Οφθαλμους—μεστους μοιχαλιδος.] There is a prodigious strength in this expression; it properly signifies their having an *adulteress* continually before their eyes.

f *Balaam [the son] of Bosor.*] There is one manuscript which reads Beor, and this reading is confirmed by the Syriac version. Mr. Ainsworth and Dr. Lightfoot suppose, that the apostle, in writing Bosor for Beor, used the Chaldee dialect, as he writ in the neighbourhood of Babylon. See Ainsworth on Numb. xxii. 5. and Dr. Lightfoot's *Addenda* to his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, on 1 Cor. xiv. *cap.* 4.

great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

are often void of any real meaning, *and speaking swelling* [*words*] *of vanity*,[g] *they ensnare in the lusts of the flesh*, which they practise and promote *in* all variety of *lasciviousness, those who were*, so far as we can judge by their external behaviour, *quite escaped*[h] *from them that have their conversation in error*, and they draw back into apostasy some, who appeared to have set their faces in good earnest towards the kingdom of heaven; by which means they become partakers in the guilt of that aggravated condemnation and ruin, which these deluded and unhappy persons bring upon themselves. For *promising them liberty*, they are so far from performing their engagements, that *they are themselves* the despicable *slaves of corruption*, and have not power and spirit enough to extricate themselves out of that infamous bondage; *for by whomsoever any one is* defeated and *conquered, by him he is* of course *also enslaved*; and it is too evident to admit of dispute, that these wretched men are continually conquered by sin. SECT. 4. 2 PET. II. 19

And they ought certainly to be reckoned among the most miserable of mankind; *for if, having escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled and subdued by them again*, caught, as it were, in their nets, and so lying at their mercy to be wounded and destroyed by them, *their last state is* certainly much *worse than the first:* 20

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness at all, *than, having known* [*it*,] and professed a desire and resolution of walking in it, *to have turned aside from the holy commandment*[i] *delivered to them*; for by this means their guilt is so much the more aggravated; their conduct is the more pernicious to others, and consequently to themselves. 21

But indeed, when the matter comes thoroughly to be considered, it will appear that, under all the external appearances of reformation, there was still an evil nature and principle remaining, which at length prevailed; so that *it is happened to them, according to the true proverb, The dog* [*is*] *returned to* gorge up *his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed* from the filthiness she had before contracted, having still the same unclean nature prevailing, is returned *to wallow in the mire*, and so makes herself as filthy as she had ever been before. (Compare Prov. xxvi. 11.) 22

IMPROVEMENT.

It is indeed matter of grievous lamentation, that such wretches as those who are here described, should be any where found in the christian church. Let us be the less surprised, if any such spots and blemishes are discovered among us, on whom the ends of the world are come; but let the licentious character here drawn be noted with a just abhorrence, that if any such persons are found, they may with becoming indignation be put away. Many there are, who seem to be as irrational and ravenous as brute beasts, and are far more pernicious to society than the race of savage or poisonous animals. They are indeed children of a curse, and they will inherit the curse, who thus contrive to make their lives one scene of iniquity; whose eyes and lips declare more wickedness in their hearts than they have power to execute. But it should be remembered, they are accountable to God, not only for all they do, but for all they desire and wish to do; and they are incessantly aggravating that terrible account. These disciples of Balaam will surely receive his reward; those dark clouds will quickly, if they continue thus to obscure with their crimes the horizon in which they ought to shine as stars, be doomed to blackness of darkness for ever. May persons of such a character, how specious soever the form which they wear, be universally detected and disgraced; may none of their swelling words of vanity entice and ensnare those who appear just escaping from the delusions of error and the fetters of vice; and may none permit themselves to be seduced by promises of liberty, from such mean and miserable slaves of corruption. Ver. 13 12 14 15, 16 17 18 19

Finally, let us learn, by the awful conclusion of this chapter, to guard against all temptations to apostasy; may we never, after having long escaped the pollutions of the world, be entangled again, and overcome by them. Better, far better, would it have been for us, not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment; our last end, in this case, would be worse than the beginning: and those expressive similes, taken from such loathsome and detestable animals, would not be sufficient to point out the degree in which we should ourselves be loathsome and odious in the sight of that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon evil. (Habak. i. 13.) May we, therefore, with the righteous, hold on our way; and taking care to preserve the cleanness of our hands and hearts, may we daily wax stronger and stronger, (Job xvii. 9.) and shine with an increasing lustre; for the path of the just should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.) 20 21 22

g *Swelling* [*words*] *of vanity.*] It is observed, that here, and in many other places, these heretical teachers are represented as seducing their followers, not by the power of *miracles*, but by the *arts of address.*

h *Quite escaped, &c.*] The words οντως αποφυγοντας, which is the received reading, certainly signify, those who were *thoroughly* or *entirely* escaped. But the Alexandrian reading ολιγως, which some other copies in some degree imitate, where they do not entirely follow, leaves a strong suspicion on my mind, that the apostle might intend those who had *almost escaped.* I have therefore taken a medium, and retaining the usual reading in the version, have paraphrased the words in what I apprehend the most natural sense, with some regard to the other copies.

i *From the holy commandment.*] The learned Dr. Sherlock, the late Bishop of London, interprets this of some directions drawn up by the apostles, relating to the conduct which christians should maintain with regard to these seducing teachers they are here cautioned against. See his *Discourses on Prophecy, Dis.* I. p. 124. It is, however, certain that it is capable of a larger interpretation, as many holy commandments remain upon record in the New Testament, which might guard them against the evils referred to in the preceding discourse.

SECTION V.

That they might be effectually guarded against the artifices of those who scoff at religion, or lie in wait to deceive, the apostle directs them to adhere closely and steadily to the holy scriptures; and represents to them the absolute certainty, and awful manner, of the destruction of this world; concluding with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. 2 Pet. iii. *throughout.*

2 PET. iii. 1.

SECT. 5.

2 PET. III.

1 *THIS second Epistle*[a] *I now write to you*, my dearly *beloved* brethren, with the same purpose with which I wrote the former; *in* [*both*] *which I stir up your sincere* and upright *minds*, for such I hope they indeed are, *in* the *remembrance* of those glorious principles of our holy religion, which may be of the greatest importance to your spiritual
2 improvement. For it is my ardent desire, *that* in order to your advancement in true religion, *you may be mindful of the words which were spoken* long *before* our own time, *by the holy prophets* who lived in remote ages; *and* also *of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*,[b] who hath condescended, by our instrumentality, to send you messages upon which your salvation evidently depends; a method which divine wisdom
3 and love hath pitched upon to accomplish that important and desirable end; *Knowing this first*, as what is most necessary to be remembered and considered, *that in the last days*, which are now approaching apace, *there shall come* profane *mockers*,[c] *walking* in a most scandalous and licentious manner, *according to* the impulse of *their own* ungoverned
4 *lusts* and appetites: *And* they shall deride the hope of the faithful followers of Christ, *saying*, "*Where is the* boasted *promise* and declaration *of his coming*, in which these "silly deluded creatures reposed so great a confidence? *For since the fathers* of former "ages *are fallen asleep*,[d] *all things remain* just in the same state and situation *as* [*they* "*were*] *from the beginning of the creation;* the times and seasons revolve as they did "before, and there is no such marvellous interposition of this Jesus, as to turn the sun into "darkness, and the moon into blood, to cause the stars to fall from heaven, to bring down "vengeance and destruction on all his enemies, and to confer an ample reward on his
5 "servants." *But this they willingly are ignorant of*, and they continue ignorant of it through affectation, plain and obvious as it is from the word of God, that all nature is in his hand, and at his disposal, and that he can, in whatsoever time and manner he pleases, change and overthrow its universal system; they know and consider not, *that by the* almighty and ever efficacious *word of God*, *the heavens*, with all their host, *were* produced *of old*, *and the earth subsisting from the water*, with which the mass of it was at first covered; till, by the divine command, it emerged from it, and the liquid element flowed to its appointed channel; *and* God ordained that the earth should be nourished
6 and supported *by water*, which is the life of the vegetable creation. Yet that very element from which it had its original and support, became at length, by divine appointment, the means of its destruction; *whereby*,[e] that is, in consequence of which constitution of things, under a different direction and agency of God, *the world that then was*, *being deluged with* an irresistible inundation of *water*, *perished*, and every thing upon the face of it was destroyed; none of the human race, or rather terrestrial animals, surviving, but those who,
7 by God's special providence, were preserved in the ark. It appears from hence credible in reason, as well as certain from divine revelation, that the earth may be dissolved, and its inhabitants removed. *But* we know that God has determined to effect this great revolution by a method far different from that of the former; for *the heavens and the earth which now* [*exist*] *are treasured up*, as it were, *by the same word*, and guarded from all danger of a second deluge of water, *being kept to* be dissolved by a deluge of *fire*, *on the day* which God has appointed for the display *of* his righteousness at the universal *judgment*, *and* for the *destruction of ungodly men*, who, alas! so generally abound, and
8 towards whom his patience has been so long exercised. This is indeed in the course of divine providence long delayed; *but let not this one thing be hid from you*, my dearly *beloved*, *that one day* [*is*] *with the Lord as a thousand years*,[f] *and a thousand years as one day;* all the divisions of our time are so absolutely disproportionable to his eternity, that the difference between one and another of them seems to be lost in his presence;

2 PET. iii. 1.

1 THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, That one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

a *This second Epistle.*] Archbishop Tillotson seems to think this last chapter to be a distinct Epistle by itself. See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 718. Grotius imagines that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and expresses the triumph of profane men, when they saw that Christ did not come to judgment, as it was expected he would then do. He infers from hence, that this *Epistle* was written, not by *Simon Peter the apostle*, but some other Simon. But I confess I see no reason at all for any such conclusion; nor do I perceive these scoffers were then actually come, but only predicted.

b *The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.*] Some translate this clause, *The commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour*, and would from hence infer that Simon, who wrote this Epistle, was not an apostle himself; but the version I have given is most agreeable to the order of the original words. The learned author, whom I mentioned above, (note g, p. 1045.) observes, that the apostolic constitutions affirm, there was a council of the apostles called on occasion of these teachers, whom St. Peter guards against, and all that in common delivered this advice, which he has admonished the christian converts to regard.

c *Mockers.*] Archbishop Tillotson explains this of the Carpocratians, a large sect of the Gnostics, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, and appeared quickly after the writing of this Epistle. See Tillotson's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 711.

d *Since the fathers are fallen asleep.*] Mr. Grove would render it, *for except that the fathers are fallen asleep;* that is, that the inhabitants of the world are continually changing, and new generations rising instead of the old, all other things continue as they were. See Grove's *Addit. Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 200.

e *Whereby.*] Very possibly δι' ων refers to υφαντος, *the heavens*, mentioned above, and may relate to the *windows of heaven* being opened, and pouring forth upon the earth a destructive deluge of water.

f *One day as a thousand years.*] This was, as many have observed, a proverbial expression among the Jews, to signify, that no *finite* duration bears any proportion to the *eternity* of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it in his discourse on the slowness of the divine vengeance.

and a vengeance certainly to be inflicted after a thousand years, is nearer in his estimation than that which is to be executed to-morrow is in ours. And indeed as to the delay of this awful season, *The Lord is not slow concerning* the accomplishment of *his promise* to his people, who look for this complete deliverance, *as some*, under the infirmities of their impatience, may be ready to *count* [*it*] *slowness: but* good reasons are to be assigned for it, most consistent with the perfections of the divine nature, especially this, That he *is long-suffering towards us*, and endures in great compassion, as *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come* over *to repentance*, and thereby to salvation; to which, by the exercise of this patience, he seems tenderly and graciously to invite the worst and most unworthy of mankind. *But* at length the day of patience will have its period, and this day of retribution will come suddenly and irresistibly; yes, sirs, *the day of the Lord*[g] *will come as a thief in the night*, (Matt. xxiv. 43.) will break in upon men, when they least expect it, with a terrible alarm; even that day, *in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements*, of which this goodly frame of nature is composed, *being set on fire, shall be dissolved, and the earth and its works shall be burnt up*, so that none of the ornaments of nature or of art shall any longer continue; but the whole shall be one undistinguished heap of smoking desolation. O, *therefore*, be persuaded to lay this to heart, and seriously and daily reflect with yourselves, *since all these things*, which are now so ready to engross your thoughts and your affections, *shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in* the exercise of *holy conversation and piety*. We christians, I say, who have the express revelation of these things, how should we be affected with them, *looking for, and*, as it were, *hastening on* with our ardent wishes,[h] *the coming of the day of God*, though it be attended with so much terror, though it be the day *in which the heavens being on fire*, as I said, *shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* Yet still, through the divine grace, it is a day that we have reason, not only to wish *but* even to long for, as *we, according to* the tenor of *his* unfailing *promise, look for* a glorious and transporting change, which will then commence, for *new heavens and a new earth*, new and everlasting abodes, which divine mercy will then open to our raptured view, into which it will conduct us, and *in which righteousness*, perfect holiness and felicity, *dwelleth*. *Therefore*, my *beloved*, bearing these great truths in your minds, give up your whole souls to their influence, and *expecting these things*, these most awful and important scenes, *endeavour with* the utmost *diligence, that ye may be found by him*, by your great Lord, who will preside over even this dissolving world, *in peace*, and may be presented *spotless and blameless* before him. *And* while this triumphant season is delayed, *account the long-suffering of our Lord* Jesus Christ to proceed, as it really does, not from the least defect of power, or forgetfulness of his promise, but from his gracious desire to promote the *salvation* of his people, and to afford to all who are willing to embrace it, an opportunity of securing this final and everlasting deliverance; *as also our beloved brother Paul*,[i] whom I am far from honouring the less on account of his being sent to the Gentiles, *according to the wisdom given to him* by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *has written*. The passage *to* which I refer, is in a letter immediately directed to the Romans, but it may be considered as designed for *you*,[k] and for the general use of all christians: I mean that in which he expressly testifies, that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance: (Rom. ii. 4.) *As also in all* [*his*] other *Epistles; speaking in them of such* persons as I have now described; for undoubtedly the words are peculiarly applicable to them; *in which* writings of his, and particularly in that from whence these words are taken, there *are some things hard to be understood*,[l] *which the unteachable and unstable torture* and wrest, *as* they *also* do

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.

11 *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness;

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless:

15 And account *that* the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation: even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that

g *The day of the Lord.*] It has always appeared surprising to me, that Dr. Hammond should refer this context to the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Ray has most solidly confuted him at large, in his *Three Discourses*, p. 244, 245. urging the opposition between the *deluge*, and the *day* here spoken of in the preceding verses, and that a long delay was intimated in the word, *thousand years*; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem happened, at farthest, about twenty years after the writing of this Epistle. *The day of judgment of ungodly men*, mentioned, ver. 7. does also, I think, afford a sufficient answer to this hypothesis; as well as the mention of a *new heaven and earth*, as what was immediately to succeed this important scene.

h *Hastening on*, &c.] This is the emphasis of the original expression, according to the version of Erasmus Schmidius, supported by several pertinent quotations from the classics, by Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Polyb.* and *ex Herod. in loc.*) and by Mr. Blackwall, (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p. 180.)

i *Our brother Paul.*] It is very evident from hence, not only that St. Peter maintained a reverent regard for Paul, and looked upon him as a *brother*, but also that he had seen his Epistles before he wrote this.

k *Has written to you.*] Lord Barrington is of opinion that this refers to *some Epistle* not now extant, which St. Paul wrote to the *proselytes of the gate*; imagining the converting and edifying them to have been a mixed province, partly managed by the apostles of the circumcision, and partly by those of the uncircumcision. *Miscell. Sacra*, Ess. II. p. 110. But as I think the whole foundation of this distinction groundless, I look upon this passage as a very instructive admonition to all christians, to consider St. Paul, and the other apostles, as writing to them in their Epistles, so far as a similarity of circumstances would admit. In which view it is of infinite importance that we should consider them as written to us, in like manner as St. Peter tells us, even the ancient prophets considered the great subjects of which these Epistles treat as relating to them. 1 Pet. i. 12.

l *Some things hard to be understood.*] Some by εν οις, understand, not the Epistles of St. Paul, but the things spoken of. But as these are plainly mentioned as spoken of in the scriptures, this interpretation will still leave us under a necessity of vindicating the perspicuity of some part of scripture. Not to mention that there are several manuscripts of considerable authority which read εν αις, which expressly refers to St. Paul's Epistles.—It is remarkable, that Barclay explains this of the ninth chapter of the Romans, in which there are some things which seem to be contrary to *God's long-suffering to all*, and which are very liable to be perniciously *wrested*. See Barcl. *Apol.* p. 155. It is by many writers justly remarked, that the difficulty is said to affect chiefly αμαθεις and αστηρικτοι, *unteachable* and *unsteady* men, whose prejudices indispose them for admitting the truth, or whose levity prevents their due solicitude to retain it; but not persons of *humble*, *teachable* minds, resolute in pursuing and maintaining the truth. And the remedy prescribed, is not *laying aside* the scriptures on account of their obscurity, as some would persuade us to do; but a concern to *grow in grace*, &c. (ver. 18.) The expression στρεβλουσιν, *wrest*, or *torture*, as on the rack, plainly implies, that *violence* is done, by these bad men, to some passages of scripture, to make them speak an unnatural sense, which may answer their own purposes. And truly he must know little of the history of theological controversies, who hath not observed many deplorable instances of this.

SECT. 5. *other scriptures*, whether belonging to the Old Testament or the New, *to their own destruction;* putting such perverse interpretations upon them, with some show or colour of reason, as no candid man would on the whole have thought of, or will admit. *You* 2 PET. III. 17 *therefore*, dearly *beloved*, *knowing* [*these things*] *before*, knowing especially in how awful a manner the scene will close, and what dreadful vengeance will be executed on all wicked men, and especially on those that pollute the church of Christ, into which they have professed to enter; *guard* [*yourselves,*] *that ye may not, being entangled with the error of the ungodly, fall from your own stedfastness*, which by God's assistance 18 you have hitherto retained. *But grow in grace* more and more, advancing from one stage of practical religion to another, *and* increasing daily *in the knowledge of our* Divine *Lord and* almighty and all-gracious *Saviour Jesus Christ: to him* [*be*] *glory* throughout all the churches, and all the creation of God, *both now and for ever. Amen.*

are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5 WHO is there, that can be so sluggish and lethargic, as not to be in some measure awakened and alarmed by the awful views here given of the dissolution, as well as the creation, of the world, by the word of God? Who must 6 not even tremble, when he turns his eye back to the dreadful ruin brought on it by the universal deluge; when that element, which had been, and is, the means and instrument of life to the whole animal creation, at the divine 10 signal became the means and instrument of death? Who can be unaffected, when he seriously reflects on the heavens passing away with a great noise? on the elements melting with fervent heat? on the burning up the earth 3 and all things therein? Let scoffers, who walk after their own lusts, madly deride the promise of his coming; let them deliver over their taunts and insults to each other, through the succession of a thousand years: were his coming at the distance of ten thousand generations, or a yet remoter distance, they who have any just impression on their 8 minds of the eternity of God, or the immortality of the human soul, would discern the important day of final retribution as immediate and present to their view. While they scoff and deride the tremendous reality, let us hear the declaration of its approach with the profoundest attention; and let our souls enter deeply into the alarm- 11 ing and important reflection. If indeed we look for such great things as these, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot or blemish? 14 And if we desire this blessedness, (as who can fail earnestly to desire it, who hath a firm and steady persuasion of its reality?) can we possibly live in tolerable composure, if we have little or no reason to conclude we shall 18 obtain an interest and share in it? Let us be all concerned that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; by the knowledge of whom every grace will be greatly revived and strengthened. On these lively and important subjects of meditation let our thoughts frequently dwell, and let us endeavour that the sentiments which result from them may be wrought into our hearts, and control our lives. And as for those hard say- 15, 16 ings which occur either in St. Peter or St. Paul, or any other sacred and inspired writer, let us neither wrest and torture them to our own mischief and destruction, nor be so curiously and sedulously diving into their meaning, as to neglect these and the like plain and serious admonitions, this sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. May all the powers of our souls be exerted in securing their deliverance from wrath to come, that so the patience of God, and his long-suffering toward us, may indeed prove salvation. And if that be indeed the case, the light of heaven will mightily illustrate those mysteries both of the divine word and providence, which our weak and defective organs of vision have not enabled us clearly to discern and unfold, while by the comparatively fainter, though in itself glorious, light of revelation, we are guided through this dark and gloomy valley,

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE apostle John, to whom the unanimous suffrage of the ancients hath ascribed this Epistle, is the same with John the *Evangelist*, who is said to have written his gospel in extreme *old age;* and, as Eusebius informs us, with a view to record some particulars concerning our blessed Lord, which had been omitted by the other Evangelists, though he explicitly acknowledged the truth of their history, as far as it went, and confirmed it by his own testimony. (See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* xxiv.) According to the title of this Epistle in the old Italic version, and the account which is given us by St. Austin and others, it was written to the christian converts in Parthia, which was a part of the Upper Asia. But in the opinion of the learned Dr. Mill, (see his *Prolegom.* p. 18. § 150. Edit. Kuster.) this notion had its sole original from a tradition, that the apostle John had preached the gospel in that country; whereas, if we may credit the report mentioned by Eusebius, it was St. Thomas who exercised his apostolical office among the Parthians. Others have conjectured, from some passages in this Epistle, in which the persons, whom St. John addresses, are represented as *having known Christ from the beginning*, (see chap. ii. 13, 14.) and in other places, that he writes only to the Jewish christians, who inhabited Judea and Galilee. But I very much question whether these expressions will support the stress which hath been laid upon them; and accordingly, in my paraphrase, I have assigned them a more general interpretation.

And as we find nothing but conjecture and uncertainty concerning the persons to whom this Epistle was addressed, so there is very little precision to be expected, in our inquiries concerning the time when it was written. From the apostle's saying, chap. ii. 18. *it is now the last time;* and chap. iv. 1. *that many false prophets are gone out into the world*, compared with Mat. xxiv. 24. where this is mentioned as a sign of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth; some have indeed inferred this Epistle was written a very short time before the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas, several others (and in particular Dr. Mill) are of opinion its date should be assigned to the year 91 or 92.—It was probably written before the Apocalypse, as I shall have occasion to observe hereafter, in sect. iv. note b.

In the style of this apostle there is a remarkable peculiarity; and especially in this Epistle. His sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible; but when we search for their connexion, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do even in the Epistles of St. Paul. The principal signature and characteristic of his manner is an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour, in conjunction with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. His conceptions are apparently delivered to us in the order in which they arose to his own mind, and are not the product of artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation.

His leading design is, "To demonstrate the vanity of faith separate from morality, to sooth and refine the warm and "over-zealous tempers of the christians to whom he writes, into that amiable charity and love for which he himself was so "eminent and illustrious, and to guard and arm them against the snares and efforts of *antichrist*, the grand *apostate* and "seducer of the christian church; and of all who were endued with his spirit."

In pursuance of which pious and benevolent intention, he first testifies the divine purity and holiness, and the grace and mercy which is exhibited in Jesus Christ, to all who lament and confess their sins with sincere desires of reformation and amendment. (Chap. i. 1, *to the end.*) And then he urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, as arguments to that obedience, that brotherly love, and that victory over the world, which are the genuine fruits of divine love. (Chap. ii. 1—17.) And that they might not be perverted from their course of fidelity and holy obedience, he forewarns them of the many *antichrists* who were springing up in the world; directing them to the best preservatives against their seducing and ensnaring doctrines. (Ver. 18—28.) With the same intention of awaking a generous ambition in their breasts to attain the

divine resemblance, he discourses of those exalted privileges to which christians, as the children of God, are entitled, and urges the necessity of holiness, both in heart and life, to prove that we are in that blessed number. (Ver. 29—chap. iii. 10.) In this view, namely, as the grand characteristic of the children of God, he farther enforces brotherly love. (Ver. 11, *to the end.*) Cautioning them more particularly against being deceived by seducing spirits, and directing them in what manner they might distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (Chap. iv. 1—12.) Drawing to a conclusion, with declaring his general design to be the confirmation of their faith; reminding them of the ground they had to hope their prayers should be heard for themselves and others, who had not sinned unpardonably; and at the close, adding a reflection on the happy difference which their knowing God in Jesus Christ had made between them and an ignorant and ungodly world. (Ver. 13, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The apostle John opens the pious and charitable design which he had in writing this Epistle, and lays the foundation of what he has farther to say, in bearing his testimony to the holiness of God, and to the mercy which he exhibits in Jesus Christ to all who are truly sensible of their sins, and confess them with sincere desires of reformation and amendment. 1 John i. 1, *to the end.*

1 JOHN i. 1.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:)

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of

1 JOHN i. 1.

MY christian brethren, I am now going to address you on a very important subject; to speak of *that which was from the beginning* of the gospel-declaration, and indeed from the beginning of the world, and previous to its existence; of *that which we have heard* most credibly attested by authentic witnesses, and *that which we have* not taken merely on their credit, but have *seen with our own eyes;* we are going to treat of *that which we have attentively looked upon,*[a] and viewed so near and so long, that it is impossible we should mistake in it; *and* which, in allusion to the condescension of our blessed Redeemer in submitting himself to be examined by our touch and feeling, I may venture to say, that even *our hands have handled*[b] *of the word of* eternal *life.* And well may it be styled the word of life; for *even* Jesus, who himself is *the* living Word, and eternal *Life, was* graciously *manifested* in human flesh for the redemption of sinful men; *and we saw* [*it*] in its full evidence, *and we* cheerfully *bear* our renewed *testimony, and declare unto you that eternal Life, which* from the foundation of the world *was with the Father,* most intimately conversant with him, *and* united to him; but in due time, by assuming the human nature into an union with the divine, *was manifested to us* with all the genuine characters of the promised Messiah. And in consequence of this, *what we have seen and* intimately conversed with, and have not only heard of, but have ourselves *heard* speaking to us, *we declare unto you: that ye also may have communion with us* in that dignity and felicity to which we are by divine grace exalted: *and truly* it is a glorious privilege, well worthy your most ready acceptance and earnest pursuit; for *our communion* [*is*] *with* God *the Father, and with his* only-begotten *Son Jesus Christ,* as we are happy in an intimate and inseparable union with each. *And these things we write to you,* that the divine life may be so improved in your souls, and your meetness for the heavenly inheritance may be so apparent, and so advanced, *that your joy may,* as far as possible, *be fulfilled,* and no circumstance, which this mortal state will admit, may be wanting to complete it.

And this is the great *declaration which we have heard from him,* upon which our faith most cheerfully centres, *and* which we again *declare unto you, that God is* perfect *Light,*[c] consummate knowledge and holiness; *and in him there is no darkness at all,* not the least mixture of ignorance or of sin. And *if we* pretend to *say that we have communion with him, and walk in darkness,* that is, go on in the practice of sin, which is as contrary to his holy nature as darkness is to that of light, whatever professions we may make of our acquaintance with christianity, and of being zealous for its interest, *we lie, and do not the truth,* but act in direct opposition to it. *But if,* on the other hand, *we walk in the light* of holiness, *as he himself is* ever *in the light* of it, and surrounded with it as his brightest glory, *we have* then *communion* with him, and *with one another* in him;

SECT. 1.

1 JOHN 1.

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a *That which we have attentively looked upon:* ο εθεασαμεθα.] Mr. Blackwall observes, (in his *Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p. 152.) that it is by no means synonymous with the former clause, but hath a more emphatical signification, namely, that of *beholding attentively*, with a kind of delight and admiration.

b *Our hands have handled.*] This probably refers to Thomas's having insisted upon handling Christ's body, in proof of his resurrection, which being permitted, was a confirmation of this important fact to all after-ages. Dr. Berriman supposes these words were particularly levelled against the Menandrians, who denied the real existence of the *flesh of Christ*, and asserted that it was only a visible appearance: they were therefore called δοκητα, and φαντασιασται. See his *Hist. of the Trin.* p. 77.

c *God is Light.*] This expresses his most clear and perfect *knowledge*, for light discovers all things; his unspotted *holiness*, for light is incapable of any pollution; and his sovereign *goodness*, and happiness, for light, joined with vital heat, inspires pleasure into universal nature. See Dr. Bates's *Works*, p. 537.

SECT. 1. 1 JOHN I.

and though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, for which so holy a God might for ever banish us from his presence, *and* of many remaining imperfections, which might discourage our approaches to him, we have this grand consolation, that *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all* our *sins*, be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous. And indeed it is a consolation which we absolutely need; for *if we* 8 *say that we have no sin*, it is too evident that *we* grossly *deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;* we must be destitute of every good principle, if we are utterly insensi- 9 ble of our own guilt and imperfection. But *if we confess our sins*[d] to God, with a becoming lowliness and contrition of spirit, *he is* not only merciful and gracious, but *faithful and just, to forgive us our sins*, in consideration of his engagements to our great Surety, and to us by him, *and* effectually *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, by his atoning blood, and the influence of that sanctifying Spirit which it has purchased for us.

Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 This is our ground of confidence, and our refuge as sinners; and let us often renew our applications to it: for as on this foundation we are indeed secure, so, on the other hand, *if we* are so rash and presumptuous as to *say that we have not sinned*, we not only lie ourselves, which in every instance must be displeasing to the God of truth; but *we*, in effect, *make him a Liar*,[e] who in the constitution of the gospel which he hath sent to all, goes on a supposition, that every soul to whom it is addressed is under guilt and condemnation. *And* consequently, if we assert and maintain our own personal innocence, we shall show that *his word is not in us*, that this humbling message of his grace has never been cordially received by us, nor hath produced its genuine effects on our hearts.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How seriously should we attend to the word of life, when addressed to us by those who were so intimately acquainted with it, and with him who brought it and revealed it to the world! In like manner may all concerned in dispensing it be able to say, that it is what they have heard, and, as it were, seen and handled; yea, tasted 2 and let in all its sweetness and energy. Jesus Christ is indeed that Life which was with the Father, and is now manifested unto us: may we ever regard him as such, and have communion with John, and the other sacred writers, 3 in their communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Surely they who by experience know the delight and benefit of that communion, will desire that others may be partakers of it with themselves. Their own 4 joy, instead of being diminished, will be rather rendered more complete and intense, by being in this manner imparted to others.

5 Nothing can be of more importance than to form right and worthy conceptions of God; and that we may do so, let us reflect on him as the purest and even unmingled Light, without any the least shade of darkness; as Truth in perfection, without any mixture of falsehood or evil. And let us be particularly concerned, that as we desire to 6 have fellowship with him, we allow not ourselves to walk in darkness of any kind, but put off all its works, that we 7 may put on the whole armour of light, and walk in the light, as he is of the light. Let every action of our lives, every thought of our hearts, be brought to the light of the gospel, and tried and proved according to it. And as 10 it would be very vain and criminal in us to deny our having any sin, as it would be self-deceit to imagine it, and self-confusion to affirm it, let us, with humble thankfulness, apply to that blood which is able to cleanse us from 9 all unrighteousness. Most freely confessing our sins, in all their aggravations, so far as our weak and limited thoughts can attain to the view of them, let us humbly plead his promise and his covenant; and then fidelity and justice will join with mercy, to insure our deliverance from the punishment they merit: so that instead of being, as we have deserved, companions in condemnation and ruin, we shall share together in that complete freedom from all the penal consequences of sin, which will be the portion of all those who truly repent and obey the gospel.

SECTION II.

Farther to promote that holiness of temper which it is the great design of this Epistle to recommend, the apostle urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, and the necessity of showing our love to God, by obedience, by brotherly love, and by overcoming the immoderate love of the world. 1 John ii. 1—17.

1 JOHN ii. 1.

SECT. 2. 1 JOHN II.

PERMIT me now to address myself to you, with all tenderness and endearment, as *my little children*, and to assure you, that *I write these things* concerning the readiness of God to forgive sin, not *to* encourage *you* to offend, but with a contrary purpose, *that you may not sin*. And I hope you will consider it as your highest interest, to guard against 1 that greatest and most formidable of all evils. *But if any man*, through the surprise of a violent temptation, and remaining infirmity of human nature, do fall into *sin*, let him not absolutely despair, as if his case were hopeless; for we have still this great and important consolation, that if we are true believers, *we have an Advocate with the Father*,[a] to plead

1 JOHN ii. 1.

MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

d *If we confess our sins.*] This so evidently refers to confessing our sins *to God*, and not to the *priest*, that one could hardly forbear being astonished that it should ever have been urged in behalf of auricular confession; if it were not for the many examples we have of such shameful and preposterous reasoning in the arguments which are pleaded in favour of popery.

e *We make him a Liar.*] This text plainly implies, that christianity does in effect assert, that we are all in a degenerate state, and consequently is a clear proof of the corruption of human nature.

a *An Advocate with the Father.*] The word *advocate*, in our language, commonly signifies one who is to plead for a person in a court of judicature; but Dr. Samuel Harris hath taken great pains to show, that it properly signifies the same with *patron* amongst the Romans, or עזר in the Hebrew, a *great person*, who used to patronize the cause of some of inferior rank, and who was also a *sponsor* for their good behaviour. By this he imagines several scriptures may be illustrated, and particularly Isa. l. 7—9; Job xxix. 12; Psal. lxxii. 12; Job xxxiii. 23, &c. And in confirmation of this sentiment he brings some remarkable quotations from the ancients. Harris's *Observ.* p. 49—61. Perhaps there is nothing that illustrates the matter more, than the residence of some eminent persons from distant provinces in the courts of great princes or

for our pardon and renew our peace, even *Jesus Christ, the righteous One;* that great exalted Saviour, who was himself, by way of eminence, and in such a degree as no other person dwelling in human flesh ever was, so perfectly righteous, that his obedience absolutely answered the demands of the divine law in all its extent and purity. *And he is the* great *Propitiation for our sins*, to whom, under that character, we have fled with cheerful confidence; *and* it is a joy to us to reflect, that he is *not only* the Propitiation *for ours, but also* [*for the sins*] *of the whole world*;[b] no nation under heaven is excluded from a share in the blessings he hath purchased, nor shall any person whatsoever be excluded, let his iniquities have been ever so great and aggravated, if he be disposed to make a proper application to him. *And by this* certain mark and evidence, *we know that we are acquainted with him* to the most happy and effectual purposes, even *if we* faithfully and uprightly *keep* all *his commandments.* For *he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar;* he falsely pretends to a knowledge of him, of which he is quite destitute; *and* therefore *in this respect the truth is not* [*in him.*] *But whosoever* uprightly and impartially *keepeth his word, in him certainly is the love of God perfected:* it is plain he has it truly in his heart, and does not, like those who are regardless of the divine authority, make a vain and hypocritical pretence to it. And *by this we know that we are* interested *in* the Son of God, and united to *him* by this influence of our faith upon our practice. *He that saith he abideth in him*, and pretends a claim to his saving benefits, *ought himself so to walk as he*, whom he calls his Divine Master, *walked* when he was here on earth. He ought in every thing to trace and endeavour to imitate his example.

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him:

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

And this is so obvious and natural a truth, that I persuade myself, *brethren*, ye already know it; for herein *I write no new commandment to you, but the old commandment*, founded in nature, recommended by the Mosaic law, and that *which ye had* especially inculcated *from the beginning* of your acquaintance with the gospel, the great practical intent of which was, doubtless, presently made known to you, by whomsoever it was preached. I may therefore well say, it is *the old commandment;* for it *is the word which you heard from the beginning* of your acquaintance with christianity. Yet considering its peculiar obligations, and the new motives with which it is enforced upon us continually, I may say *again, a new commandment I write to you, which* expression *is true in him, and in you*, for he has laid us under new engagements to observe it, by his admirable love declared and exhibited to us; *because the darkness* of heathenism, and twilight of the Jewish state, *is* now *passed away, and the true light now shineth*, and in proportion to our knowledge, he may reasonably expect, that our care to act suitably should be awakened. *He that saith he is in the light*, that he enjoyeth, that he understands and receives the gospel, *and hateth his brother*, and does him any designed injury, *is in the darkness even till now.* And his ineffectual acquaintance with some principles of religion, which do not influence his heart to charity and beneficence, will, as to his real and final happiness, stand him in no stead. But *he that loveth his brother abideth in the light*, he improves the advantages which he enjoys by the christian religion, and as he answers its end, he will continually share the pleasure *and* the security which it gives; for *there is no occasion of stumbling in him:* this will secure him from giving any just cause of offence; whereas the malevolent passions turn a thousand circumstances into temptations, which prove fatal to a man's credit and repose in this world, and his salvation in the next. *But*, on the contrary, as I said before, *he who hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness; and* the consequence of that is, that as one who walketh in the night, without any light to guide him, *knows not whither he goeth;* so such an one, while he flattereth himself with hopes of salvation on account of his knowledge and profession, is really ignorant of his own state, *because darkness hath blinded his eyes;* and so he is in the utmost danger of falling, before he is aware, into the bottomless pit, from whence there is no redemption.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

These things I say unto you, and they are of universal concern; I hope therefore you will all attend to them, and improve them for your own advantage. *I write unto you, little children*, amongst the rest, to guard the least and weakest of you against sin: *because by his name*, even the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for them, *your sins are forgiven you*, and I am very solicitous that you may make all due return for so inestimable a favour, as a pardon purchased at the expense of such sacred blood. [*I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him* [*that*] *is from the beginning;* because ye have heard of his divine dignity and glory, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and himself God; that ye may behave aright towards that Divine Saviour, who submitted to such abasement for us, though originally he was so exalted and glorious. *I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one*, have

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked

states, whose business it was constantly to negotiate with them the affairs of those whom they represented, to vindicate them from any unjust aspersions, and to advance their interest to the utmost of their power.

b *For the sins of the whole world.*] Mr. Reyner has urged this as a proof, that the merit of Christ's death shall extend, not only to *believers*, but to *virtuous heathens:* and I do not see that christianity can receive any prejudice by our acknowledging, that if there are those in whom a *truly virtuous* temper prevails, they may be accepted of God, in consideration of the *atonement* which Christ hath made. But this will by no means prove the doctrine of *universal redemption*, in the sense in which some persons have stated it. But it seems to me, that the apostle is to be understood as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world.

SECT. 2. bravely bid defiance to his allurements and terrors, in taking upon you, in so solemn a manner, the christian profession; and I would by no means have you disgrace the victory you have already gained. *I write to you, little children,*[c] *because* even the youngest
1 JOHN II. of *you have known* God, as *the Father* of his people, have been taught to call upon him as your Father in heaven; and I desire you may, with all filial reverence and love, approve
13 yourselves dutiful and grateful to him under that relation. And (as I have before said)
14 *I have written to you, fathers, because ye have known him who is from the beginning;* so also *I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong,* you are in the full vigour of nature; and may God preserve your hearts in a right frame, and lengthen out your lives to do him much service in future and distant years. *And* this may the rather be expected, as *the word of God abideth in you,* as you have been instructed in the principles of divine truth by your pious parents and other teachers, *and* many of *you have* given noble specimens of the good effects of their instructions, in that ye have already *overcome the wicked one* in many of his attacks; for otherwise ye could not have assumed the profession of the christian faith in these circumstances, nor have retained it for such a length of time.

ed one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 And now, whatever your age, station, and circumstances may be, suffer me to address to you one farther word of exhortation; which is this, *Love not the world, nor the things* [*which are*] *in the world,* in an irregular and excessive degree;[d] for *if any one love the world* with too great an attachment, and have his heart chiefly set on its interests or its pleasures, it may justly be concluded, that *the love of the Father is not in him;* for there is a real inconsistency between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God; which
16 will easily appear, when we consider what we may justly understand by the world; *For all that is in the world,* when it comes to make up the largest catalogue of good things which it can promise to those who eagerly and idolatrously pursue it, [*is*] to be comprehended under these three well known particulars, *the lust of the flesh,* that is, the pleasurable indulgence of our carnal appetites; *and the lust of the eyes,* that is, the acquisition of money, which, if not expended for other purposes for which it is designed, only serves us to behold and count over; *and the pride of life,*[e] some ambitious pursuits, in consequence of which we may make a parade in the eyes of our fellow-creatures for a little while, in our way to the grave, which is to strip us of it all. Now it is evident that [*these things,*] considered as the food of luxury, avarice, and ambition, *are not of the Father, but of the world.* It plainly appears that God, considered as the Author of all good, cannot be pleased with such affections and pursuits; and it would be profane to suppose that they are produced or excited by him, or that the prevalence of them can be acknowledged by
17 him, as consistent with his love in the heart. Endeavour, therefore, my brethren, to get more and more above such snares and entanglements as these; *and* so much the rather, as *the world, and* all *the luxury of it,* and whatever belongs to it, which can serve to the gratification of our desires, *passes away* like a glaring pageant, which only amuses the eye for a few transient moments, and then disappears. *But he that doeth the will of God* faithfully and steadily, *abideth for ever;* he hath built his happiness upon a basis which nothing can remove, and accordingly finds it secure, even when he quits this momentary world, and enters on an eternal and unalterable state.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 OFTEN let us be lifting up our eyes and our hearts to him who is our great Advocate with the Father; too frequently do the infirmities of our lives demand our application to him under that character. Let us rejoice that he
2 is Jesus Christ the righteous, that he is the Lord our Righteousness. While we joy in him as the Propitiation for our sins, let it comfort our heart to think how wide the efficacy of his atonement extends. O that all the world might be engaged to apply to him under this important consideration! O that all those who profess so to apply to him,
3, 5 might remember how necessary it is, that if they would show they indeed know him, they should keep his commandments: this, rather than any of those passionate transports of mind, on which some are ready to lay so great a stress, is the perfection of love to God. May the spirit of Christ impress upon us more of our Master's image, and
6 teach us with greater care and exactness to order our walk and conversation by his example. Since we have an

c *To you, little children, &c.*] There is such an apparent tautology in these three verses, as cannot, that I know of, be equalled in any other part of scripture. Some have imagined, that the signification of *little* children here, (in the original παιδια,) is different from that in the 12th verse, (where the word is τεκνια, which Wolfius says is used to signify christians in general; whereas παιδια refers either to those who are young in years, or lately converted to christianity. See *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 259.) And they have supposed the meaning of the apostle's exhortation here is, that as one of the first persons children become acquainted with is their father, so they should know God, and improve more and more in a practical acquaintance with him: and each of these congratulations contains a tacit exhortation to go on in that which he commends them for, or congratulates them upon. But on the whole, comparing the beginning of the 13th with the 14th verse, where the same words are repeated, I am ready to conjecture, that if they were written in the original, they were left out again, and were written more perfectly afterwards in the 14th; and consequently, that all that should be retained, is the last clause of it, in connexion with the 12th. *Your sins are forgiven—because ye have known the Father.* Thus all tautology is avoided, and every sentiment and expression in either of the verses is preserved. I have therefore inclosed in a parenthesis all that part, both of the text and paraphrase, which may be left out without taking away any thing from the sense, or burdening it with an unnecessary repetition.

d In an irregular and excessive degree.] It is plainly necessary to attend to *such a limitation;* for otherwise there is a *degree of love* to worldly enjoyments which is rational, and which we must have for them, or we cannot in a proper manner attend to the duties of life.

e *The pride of life;* αλαζονεια τυ βιυ.] Erasmus Schmidius understands this of that vain and empty boasting of the continuance of life, and of projects to be executed in some future part of it, which St. James condemns. (James iv. 16.) Raphelius seems to have been at first of the same opinion; (see *Annot. ex Xenoph. in loc.*) but afterwards, from the use of the word αλαζονεια, in Polybius, (see *Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*) he was disposed to understand it in general of the *splendour and luxury* which vain persons affect in their whole manner of living. But more strictly, the phrase αλαζονεια τυ βιυ refers to that ambitious turn of mind, which prompts men to engage in all those pursuits, which will supply materials for their vanity, and enable them to make a figure in the world. See Wolfii *Curæ Philolog. in loc.*

illustrious light to direct our path, let us make use of it to this purpose, lest eternal darkness come upon us. Let us learn the divine lesson we are here taught, to love our brethren, and gradually to rise higher above that love of the world, that attachment to temporal and present interests, which is inconsistent with the love of the Father! When we are tempted too fondly to admire, or too eagerly to pursue, this gaudy pageant, let us survey the inventory here given of its boasted treasures. Let us compute the most it can even pretend to confer upon us, and impartially weigh all that can gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, against those solid pleasures which arise from the love of God, against those infinite benefits which will finally result from it. They who do his will abide for ever, nor is their removal from this empty and transitory world any objection against it. Yea, rather, how would it be possible, or how desirable, they should abide for ever, were not a removal from such a mutable, such an unsatisfying, and in many respects afflicting world, to make a part of the plan formed by Divine Providence and grace in their favour!

SECT. 2. 1 JOHN II. 16 17

SECTION III.

The apostle discourses of the antichrists which then began to arise in the world, and directs christians to the best preservatives against their seducing doctrines. 1 John ii. 18—28.

1 JOHN ii. 18.

I JOHN ii. 18.

LITTLE children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

AND now, my beloved, dear to me as *little children* to the most affectionate parents,[a] attend to my cautions against those many seducers, with which not only the world, but even the church, abounds. *It is* indeed *the last time*;[b] the last dispensation God will ever give to the world is now promulgated; and it is no wonder if Satan endeavour to the utmost to adulterate a system from which his kingdom has so much to fear. *And as you have heard, that* one great seducer, from his opposition to Christ called *antichrist, is coming*, so I must assure you, that *even now there are many* aspiring and interested men, who act in such opposition to the Redeemer's cause, and the whole purpose of his appearance, that though they profess his name, they may not improperly be called *antichrists*,[c] *by which* indeed *we* may *know that this is the last time;* for when we compare this event with the predictions of our Lord, it is so far from contradicting them, that indeed it is a great accomplishment and illustration of them. Once indeed they pretended to join themselves to us; but that it was only an hypocritical pretence to christianity which they made, appears from the issue of it: *they went out from among us*, and *yet they were not*, upon the whole, *of us*, nor did truly belong to our number, while they seemed to adhere to us. *For if they had* ever *been* sincerely *of us*, so as to feel the inward power of our gospel on their hearts, *they would doubtless have continued with us;* upright men would never have seen any cause to leave us, and divine grace would have preserved such from the temptations by which these artful deceivers have been ensnared. *But* [*this hath happened,*] *that they might be made apparent*, and that we might also reap an advantage from the detection of their hypocrisy, *because* it would thereby appear, that *all* who join with us in external forms *are not* indeed *of us*;[d] but that even in the purest churches, there may be a mixture of tares among the wheat, which it will be prudence to remember, and to guard against. *And* as for you, I hope and trust you will not be seduced by them; for *ye have an* inward *anointing of the Holy One*, even the Spirit of purity and joy, which Christ, the Holy One of God, hath poured forth upon us; *and ye know all things* relating to christianity in such an experimental manner, as will effectually preserve you against those snares of this vain world which have been ruinous to those unhappy apostates I have just mentioned. And as to what I have now said, *I have not written to you, because ye know not the truth*, nor have I entered so largely into the discussion of this matter as would then have been necessary; *but*, on the contrary, have contented myself with these short hints, *because ye know it*, and I am desirous to confirm you in it, and to awaken your zeal to join with me in testifying it to others, and opposing the many false doctrines which are taught in opposition to it: *for every lie is not of the truth;* there is an irreconcileable inconsistency between truth and falsehood, and the more you are confirmed in the one, the more faithfully will you guard against and oppose the other. And *who is a liar* and a seducer in the most dangerous sense that can be imagined, *but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*[e] This is the most pernicious of all errors, and tends most directly to overthrow all virtue and religion in the world, and utterly to subvert and destroy men's souls; and he who maintains *this* detestable doctrine, *is* in a sense *antichrist, who* in effect *denies* both *the Father and the Son:* For however some may pretend a zeal for the honour of God, while they are crying down that of our Lord Jesus

SECT. 3. 1 JOHN II. 18

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth: but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not

19 20 21 22 23

a *Little children.*] Mr. Cradock has observed that *little children* are not so apt to *love the world;* but seem, by reason of the weakness of their understandings, more likely to be seduced by artful and designing men; and therefore he imagines, that in this place there is a peculiar propriety in this appellation. See Crad. *Apost. Hist.* p. 489.

b *The last time.*] Some explain this of the *last age* of the Jewish church and commonwealth, because it was the period in which our Saviour had foretold the rise of many *false Christs;* and this observation, to be sure, is material: but the expression of *the last time*, from comparing other scriptures, seems to be more extensive.

c *Many antichrists.*] Dr. Whitby explains these antichrists of unbelieving Jews opposing christianity. I rather understand them to be apostates, who had once professed themselves christians, and brought in pernicious, heretical notions.

d *That they might be made apparent, because all are not of us:* ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶ πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.] Thus, I think, these words may be rendered; and the meaning is, that as there are some who only *pretend* to be christians, when they are not, and for some secular end mingle themselves with us, God has suffered these to be discovered, to awe and alarm others who may yet be concealed.

e *Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.*] Some are of opinion this was written against Cerinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining them to be two *distinct* persons, and denied him to be the *Son of God.* See Dr. Berriman's *Hist. of the Trin.* p. 38. Compare Dr. Whitby's *Preface to this Epistle.* Mr. Baxter also takes in the Simonians, Menandrians, and Carpocratians, with other heretics in those early ages. Baxter's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 218.

SECT. 3. Christ, yet so it is, that *every one who denieth the Son, hath not* any real regard to *the Father*, nor any interest in him: for God hath declared, with an evidence which all who sincerely love and honour him will not fail to receive, that no man cometh to the Father but
1 JOHN II. 23 by Christ; that he is well pleased in him as his beloved Son, and maintains a favourable intercourse with sinful men only by him. [*But he who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also,*][f] and taketh the most effectual method to secure the continuance of his favour.

the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.*

24 *As for you, therefore,* to whom I now address myself, let what I here say be improved by way of caution to yourselves; be on your guard against the numerous artifices of those who would ensnare and seduce you, and *let that* word *which you have heard from* me, at *the beginning* of the gospel, *abide in you* so steadily, that no man may ever wrest it from you. And *if* it be indeed so, and *that* word *which ye have heard from the beginning* thus *abide in you, you also will abide in* that state of blessed union, in which you are, with *the Son and the Father;* you will dwell under their united protection, and find a source of delight springing up in your souls from communion with them, to which there
25 is nothing comparable in any of the enjoyments of the present world. *And this* will readily be acknowledged, if you only consider with what exalted hopes you will then be supported: for this *is the promise which he hath promised to us,* (which while I mention, I cannot but exceedingly rejoice in the consideration of my own interest in it,) even the possession of that invaluable treasure, *eternal life,* in comparison of which, whether we consider its excellence or its duration, all the glories of the world, and even the world itself, are lighter than vanity, and unworthy the reflection of a single moment.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

26 *These things* therefore *I have written unto you concerning those who would deceive you,*[g] and rob you of that inestimable treasure, that you may guard against them with the
27 utmost vigilance. *And* I trust this will indeed be the case, for *as for you* in general, I esteem you sincere in the profession of your religion, and therefore may reasonably say, that *the unction* of the Holy Spirit *which you have received from him,*[h] who hath given you the promise of eternal life, *abideth in you* perpetually and powerfully; *and* in consequence thereof, *you have no* such *necessity* as others, *that any one should teach you* the first principles of true religion. *But* let it be your care uprightly and humbly to yield up your souls to the superior instructions of this Divine Spirit; and *as this* same *unction* from him *teacheth you concerning all things,*[i] *and it is true, and has no* mixture of *falsehood* in it, *even as that has taught you, abide in him* to whom by that Spirit ye are
28 thus vitally united. *Yea,* let me *now* repeat it again, as a matter of the highest importance, comprehending in one word the whole of our duty and happiness; my dear christian friends, dear to me as *little children* to their affectionate parents, *abide in him, that when he shall appear,* as he assuredly will, in all his pomp and glory, *we may have* humble *boldness, and may not be put to shame* and confusion *before him at his coming;* but may welcome him with cheerfulness, as those who have approved their fidelity to him, and expect by his grace an abundant reward.

26 These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18, 19 LET us not be surprised, if there are some who revolt from christianity in our days; evincing thereby the insincerity of their former professions: since even the apostolic age produced some instances of this kind. But notwithstanding this, the foundation of God standeth firm, and the Lord knoweth them that are his; (2 Tim. ii. 19.) They will continue united with his church in faith and love, and no temptation will be able entirely to separate them from it.

22, 23, 25, 27, 24, 28 Vain are all pretences to adhere to the Father, if we desert the Son. To his gospel therefore let us stedfastly cleave, animated by the infinitely important promise of eternal life. Can we go to another Saviour? Can we expect from any other hand a nobler, or even an equal, reward? May we all, who profess a relation to him, receive an anointing from above, which may teach us all those things it is of importance for us to know, and which may engage us to abide in him with inseparable fidelity. Yet a little while, and he will again come, will appear with a glory which will warrant and will reward the firm attachment we have manifested to his interests. May we not, at that important period, have reason to be ashamed before him; may he not be ashamed of us; but having confessed him before men, may we be confessed by him before his Father and his holy angels! (Luke xii. 8.)

f *He who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.*] These words, which I have included in crotchets, are generally printed in our version in *Italic characters;* but they are to be found in so many good manuscripts, that I cannot but believe they made a part of the original, by whatever accident they were omitted in some early copy, to which, as it seems, too much regard has been paid. See Mills and Wetstein, *in loc.*

g *Those who would deceive you.*] It is in the original, *they who do deceive you;* but it is plain, as has often been observed, from the commendations given them elsewhere, that it signifies no more than an *endeavour to seduce;* and there are many passages, both in sacred and profane authors, in which a person is said to *do a thing* which he attempts. See Mr. Blackwall's *Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 121.

h *The unction which you have received from him,* &c.] *The Spirit of God* is compared to an *anointing,* because of his precious and cheering gifts which rendered christians more fit to encounter with their spiritual enemies; as wrestlers were anointed with oil to make them fitter for their various exercises, and to prevent the advantages which might otherwise be taken against them. Whether this passage will be less capable of yielding support to the popish doctrine of *chrism,* or that of the Quakers, which asserts such an *inspiration* of all christians as renders the office of a stated *ministry* unnecessary, it is hard to say. Compare Limborch's *Theol.* v. 77. 4. and Barclay's *Apology,* p. 52. With relation to the latter, it may be of some moment to observe, that the *christian ministry* was in the highest repute in the *church,* when the *gifts* of the *Spirit* were poured down upon it in the greatest abundance.

i *Unction teacheth you all things.*] It seems manifest from hence, that every christian is supposed to have been *anointed* by the *Holy Ghost.* But as it would be most absurd to pronounce it impossible that a man in any degree of error should be a true christian, it plainly shows in how restrained a sense many general expressions, occurring in scripture, may be taken, and in that view is well worth our attentive regard.

SECTION IV.

The apostle discourses concerning the exalted privileges of the children of God, to which all true christians are entitled, and urges the necessity of a holy temper, and of a holy life, in order to demonstrate that we are of that happy number. 1 John ii. 29.—iii. 10.

1 JOHN ii. 29.

1 JOHN ii. 29.

IF ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

I HAVE before been discoursing of the divine holiness and purity; now the consideration of this may enable you to judge, whether you are, or are not, in the happy number of the children of God. For *since ye know that he is* perfectly *righteous*, *ye* may *know that every one that practiseth righteousness is born of him;* as the production of righteousness in the mind argues a divine agency upon it, therefore he in whom it is produced is by regeneration the son of God. SECT. 4. 1 JOHN II.

1 John iii. 1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Now on this view I would entreat you attentively to dwell; as indeed no subject can be more worthy of your serious regard. *Behold*, my brethren, behold with delight and holy admiration, *what manner of love*, what immense, unutterable, inconceivable condescensions of love, *the Father* of universal nature, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *hath bestowed upon us* sinful mortals, *that we should be* honoured with so sublime an appellation, should be *called the children of God;*[a] as he hath himself expressed it, I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. vi. 18.) It is true, indeed, this is a dignity which only attracts the observation of very few, and *in this respect the world knows us not*, and doth not acknowledge us for what we really are, *because it knoweth not him* who is God's eternal and first-born Son, the Head of the family, through whom we have received the adoption. Such are the unhappy prejudices of apostate men against the divine will and the divine image, that Christ himself was unknown while he dwelt in human flesh; and therefore it is no wonder that we are so, in that respect in which we resemble him. Nevertheless, my *beloved*, it is a most certain and a most joyful truth, that *now we are the children of God, and* a truth which draws after it a long train of glorious consequences; for *it doth not yet* perfectly *appear what we shall be;*[b] the inheritance we expected is far beyond what we can at present conceive. *But* this *we know* in the general, *that if he*, by whom we have received the adoption, *be revealed*,[c] as he will certainly at length be, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;*[d] we shall have so clear and distinct a view and discernment of him, as shall transform us into his image, even the image of his holiness, the brightest and most illustrious of the various glories with which he is invested. 1 JOHN III. 1 2

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

But let not any imagine this is an expectation indiscriminately to be entertained by all who style themselves christians, or in any measure consistent with an unprofitable *and* wicked life. No, it is of the most generous tendency, and produces the most happy effects; for *every one who hath this hope in him* on a solid foundation, *purifieth himself* from every pollution, with a sincere desire to advance daily in every branch of moral perfection and excellence, till at length he becomes pure, *even as he is pure*, so far as the divine holiness can be resembled by any creature in this mortal and imperfect state. 3

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

On the other hand, *every one who practiseth sin, practiseth also the violation of the* divine *law*, *for* this is the very nature and essence of sin, and what is common to every kind and every act of it, that *sin is the violation of the law*,[e] either natural or revealed. 4

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

And ye know, that he who is so familiar to our thoughts and our discourses, even our Divine Master and Saviour, *was manifested, that he might take away* the guilt and power of *our sins*, by his atonement, and by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit; *and there is no* kind or degree of *sin in him*, nothing but what is of the most opposite nature. It is plain, therefore, that *every one who abideth in him, sinneth not*, cannot make a trade and practice of it; and that *every one who* thus habitually and allowedly *sinneth*,[f] *hath not seen him, nor known him:* his views and knowledge of him have been 5

6 Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. 6

a *We should be called the children of God.*] The original word is τεκνα, not υιοι, and therefore should be rendered *children*, rather than *sons*. It is worth observing upon this text, that when the Danish missionaries appointed some of their Malabarian converts to translate a catechism, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of christians to become *the sons of God*, one of the translators was startled at so bold a saying as he thought it, and said, *It is too much; let me rather render it, They shall be permitted to kiss his feet.' Let. of Dan. Mission.* No. 7. p. 56.

b *It doth not yet appear, &c.*] It is observable that these are the words of John, of him who had not only so familiarly conversed with Christ on this sublime and delightful subject, but had seen his transfiguration, when Moses and Elias appeared in such refulgent glory. He also, as Mr. Baxter observes in this connexion, (See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 16.) saw a most glorious *vision* of the *New Jerusalem*. But it may be doubted, whether this Epistle were not of an earlier date than the apocalypse, and it seems most probable that it was, both considering the great age of the apostle, when banished to Patmos, and how naturally some things on which he touches in this Epistle, especially relating to antichrist, might have been illustrated by what he saw there.

c *If he be revealed.*] This is one of the many places wherein the particle εαν, or ει, which is nearly equivalent to it, does not imply any *uncertainty of the event*, but is put for *when*.

d *We shall see him as he is.*] Archbishop Tillotson well observeth, and proves at large, that the *sight of God* is put to express the *knowledge* and *enjoyment* of him, because of its excellence and dignity, its largeness and comprehension, its spirituality and quickness, its evidence and certainty. (See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 194.) Seneca has some most sublime passages in his 102d Epistle, relating to that *divine light* which good men shall behold in a future state; the very thought of which, he says, will prohibit any thing sordid, base, or malevolent, from settling in the mind that entertains it.

e *Sin is the violation of the law.*] I chose *violation* as rather a more expressive word than *transgression*, and so answering more exactly to ανομια, which implies not only παραβασις, *a passing the bounds of God's law*, but an attempt, if possible, to *annihilate* and destroy it.

f *Every one who* habitually and allowedly *sinneth.*] It seems absolutely necessary to interpret the expression *thus*, not only to prevent some of the best of christians from falling into despair, on account of those remainders of sinful imperfection, which their very eminence in religion causes them to discern and to lament: while others, evidently their inferiors, are vain and ignorant enough to conclude themselves perfect, and lacking nothing; but likewise to make one scripture consistent with another, (compare James iii. 2.) and even to reconcile this assertion to other passages in the Epistle before us. See chap. i. 8—10.

SECT. 4. so superficial, as that they deserve not to be mentioned, since they have not conquered the love and prevalence of sin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.

My dear *little children, let no one deceive you* on this important matter by vain words,
1 JOHN III. with whatever pomp, or solemnity, or plausibility they may be attended. A Being himself immutably holy, can never dispense with the want of holiness in his reasonable creatures. *He who practiseth righteousness is righteous,*[g] *even as he himself is righteous:* it is his own image, and he must invariably love and delight in it, and must as invariably abhor
8 sin, as utterly contrary to his nature. For indeed *he who practiseth sin is of the devil:* he imitates his character, and complies with his instigations; *for the devil sinneth from the beginning:* he introduced sin into the creation of God, and he continues still to promote it ever since, to the utmost of his power and influence:[h] *whereas* the appearance of *the Son of God* was to a quite different and contrary purpose; for he *was manifested* in human flesh, *that he might* dissolve and *destroy the works of the devil,*[i] that he might recover mankind from the apostasy into which they were seduced by the temptations of Satan: and delivering them from the bondage of sin, might restore them to the practice
9 of universal righteousness, and thereby to the favour and enjoyment of God. *Every one who is born of God,* who is regenerated by divine grace, and adopted into the number of his children, *doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him;* there is an immortal principle implanted by God in the heart, which will not suffer a man who hath received it, entirely to overbear it; *and he cannot sin,* in such a manner, and to such a degree, as
10 others,[k] *because he is* thus *born of God. In this,* therefore, and by this, as the grand characteristic, *are the children of God manifested* on the one hand, *and the children of the devil* on the other. *Every one who doth not practise righteousness, is not of God; and* I may add, as a matter of great consequence, that *he who loveth not his brother,* as he cannot practise righteousness, a great part of which consists in brotherly love, is not of God, neither can he, without great presumption, pretend to claim a place amongst his children.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous:

8 He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How inestimable a privilege is it to be born of God! What infinite reason have those that possess it, to rejoice and be exceeding glad! With what astonishment should we reflect upon the divine condescension, in admitting us to such an endearing relation! Let us behold, with admiration and joy, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we sinful, wretched mortals should be called the sons of God! Let us behold how high it rises, how wide it diffuses its effects! How glorious the inheritance to which, in consequence of this, we are entitled!
2 The world indeed knows it not: nor do we ourselves completely know it. Even John, the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of our Lord, and drank so deep out of the fountain-head of knowledge and holiness, even he says, it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But let us, in sweet tranquillity of soul, depend on our heavenly Father, that he will do whatever is becoming his perfect wisdom and goodness, in respect to the advancement and felicity of his own children. During our state of minority, let us be contented to be at his allowance, and rejoice, that we are in the general told, that when Christ, the First-born of the family, shall make his second triumphant appearance, we shall also appear with him in glory, new dressed from the grave, to adorn his train, and transformed into his illustrious image, not only with respect to the glories of the body, but the brighter glories of the immortal spirit. With him we shall have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, and for ever experience the efficacy of that near and intimate vision of him, which we shall there enjoy, to transform us into the same likeness,
3 from glory to glory. O that, in the mean time, we may all feel the energy of this blessed hope to purify our souls,
5 that our hearts and dispositions may correspond to our expectations! When Christ came in human flesh, it was
8 with this important purpose, that he might take away sin, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and reduce to order and harmony that confusion and ruin, which Satan by his malicious insinuations had introduced into the world. Blessed Jesus! may this thy benevolent design be more and more effectual. May the empire of sin and corruption, which is the empire of hell, be entirely subdued, and thy celestial kingdom of grace and holiness
7 advanced. And may none deceive themselves, nor forget, that he alone is righteous who practiseth righteousness.
9, 10 By this let us judge of ourselves, whether we are the children of God, or of the devil. And instead of flattering ourselves that though we do commit sin with allowance, yet there may be some secret seed of God still concealed in our hearts; let us judge of our having received this regenerating seed, by its tendency to preserve us from sin, and the victories it enables us to gain over its destructive wiles and insufferable tyranny.

g *He that practiseth righteousness is righteous.*] It is very necessary to interpret the phrase *thus,* to avoid an indulgence as extravagant as the severity we have opposed above. For certainly it is not every one who performs some one just or righteous action that can be denominated righteous; nor can any man be entitled to that character, who doth not, in the main course of his life, practise universal righteousness.

h *Sinneth from the beginning,* &c.] Mr. Limborch imagines this phrase refers to *repeated* acts of sin, and a continued course of it, which preceded Satan's expulsion from heaven. See Limb. *Theol. lib. ii. cap.* xx. § 4. But it seems, that the use of the present tense implies a continuance in a course of sin; which is indeed the case with respect to this malignant and unhappy spirit, who continues incorrigible, notwithstanding all he has already suffered, and all which he certainly knows he has farther to endure.

i *Destroy the works of the devil:* λυση.] This expressive word leads us to look on sin and misery as a *fabric,* of which the devil is the great *architect,* and which Christ is come to *overthrow* and demolish. Accordingly he has already broken, as it were, the compages and strength of it; and we may hope it will gradually be levelled, and its very ruins removed. He has certainly done what has a most powerful tendency to produce such an effect. But it seems driving matters to a very unjustifiable extremity, to argue from hence, as some have done, the utter extirpation of all moral and penal evil from the universe. And were not the judgment so palpably biassed by the affections, as we see it to be in many instances, it is not to be conceived that men of penetration should have laid any stress on so precarious an argument.

k *He cannot sin.*] It is certain these words must be taken in something of a *qualified* sense, or they would prove not only the *sinless perfection* of every child of God, but also the *impeccability* of every such person, or the *impossibility* of his sinning, which none have been wild and enthusiastical enough to assert. It must therefore, I think, be understood only as expressing a *strong disinclination* to sin, in the kind and degree referred to before. And it is certain, there are many passages of scripture, in which the word, *cannot,* must be taken in such a latitude. Compare Luke xiii. 33; Heb. ix. 5; Neh. vi. 3; Numb. xxii. 18. And this phraseology Raphelius well illustrates by similar passages from the classics. See *Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*

SECTION V.

The apostle discourses of the necessity and importance of brotherly love, as a distinguishing mark and characteristic of the children of God. 1 John iii. 11, *to the end.*

1 JOHN iii. 11.

1 JOHN iii. 11.

FOR this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

I MENTIONED the want of brotherly love as an argument of not belonging to God; and a little consideration may persuade you that it is indeed so. *For this*, as you know, *is the message which you heard* of us the apostles and ministers of Christ, *from the beginning* of our appearance among you, as our Lord had frequently in person inculcated it, and almost with his dying breath, *that we should love one another:* And that we should *not* be *as Cain*, [*who*] *was* most apparently *of the wicked one, and* barbarously *slew his* own innocent and pious *brother. And for what cause did he slay him?* truly for this, *because his own deeds were evil, and those of his brother righteous:* in consequence of which he was disapproved, and his brother approved, by God; and this excited not his repentance, but his envy and hatred, which at length settled into the most rancorous malice, and produced that horrible effect. And as there is a great deal of the same malignant temper remaining in the world, and there are many, in that sense, though not by natural descent, of the seed of Cain, *wonder not, my brethren, if,* under this influence, *the world hate you.* But *we*, on the other hand, *know that we are passed over from* the boundaries and territories of *death to* those of *life*,[a] *because we* unfeignedly *love the brethren;* as they are the children of God as well as ourselves, and the members of one body with us. *He that loveth not* [*his*] *brother*, can have no good principle, but necessarily *abideth in* spiritual *death*, and must for ever continue in that miserable state, if the frame and temper of his mind be not entirely changed.

SECT. 5. 1 JOHN III. 12 13 14

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

And this you may easily apprehend, if you consider, that *every one who hateth his brother, is a murderer;* and were it not for the restraint of human laws, that private malice which is harboured in his thoughts would produce, as it did in the instance of Cain, actual murder. *And ye* assuredly *know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*, nor can any person of that detestable character enter into the celestial kingdom, the region of perfect love. Jesus Christ, who reigns in that blessed world, has given us various and numberless proofs of an unparalleled charity; and it is *in this*, above all the other instances of it, that *we know* by experience the greatness of *his love, as he hath laid down his life for us:*[b] *and we*, in imitation of such an example, *ought* to be ready *to lay down* [*our*] *lives for the brethren*,[c] when the good of his church, or of any number of our fellow-christians, requires it. And if we ought to be willing to die for the good of others, how much more to relieve them in any of those necessities, which require us only to impart to them a little of our substance? *Whosoever therefore hath the good things of the present world, and when he seeth his brother in necessity, shutteth up his bowels from him;* so that he will not impart any thing out of his own abundance for his relief; *how dwelleth the love of God in him*, or with what face can he presume to call himself a christian?

15 16 17

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, let me speak freely to you on this head, and *let us not love* merely *in word or in tongue*, not content ourselves with any external and complimental expressions of regard; *but* let our actions approve the sincerity of our professions, and show that we love *in deed and in truth. And in this we know that we are of the truth*, and that we are real christians; *and* in the consciousness of this *shall assure our hearts before him*, when we draw nigh in the exercises of devotion. *For if our* own *heart condemn us* of any evil which we secretly indulge, while we preserve our characters in the sight of men unsullied, we may well be thrown into terror and anxiety; knowing that *God is* infinitely *greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, without exception; so as continually to view numberless follies, which we never observed, or have entirely forgotten, and numberless aggravations attending each, which it was impossible for us fully and distinctly to conceive. But, *beloved, if our heart condemn us not*, but we have the testimony of our consciences before him, as to the sincerity of our repentance and faith, and the integrity of our general walk and conversation, [*then*] *have we* that *confidence* and freedom of speech *before God*, in our addresses to him, which nothing else could give us, and which it is impossible we should have, while we know that we deal deceitfully in any instance, either with him or our fellow-creatures. *And* we know that *whatever we ask we* shall *receive of him*, if subservient to our truest good, *because we* are conscious of a

18 19 20 21 22

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence towards God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, be-

a *Passed over from death to life.*] This is said even of the best of men; which implies, by a strong consequence, that they are, as it were, *born* in the land and territories of *death;* or that the gospel finds them in such a condition, as to be liable to condemnation and destruction, to the execution of a *capital sentence*. And it seems to me, that such oblique expressions speak such truths as these, in a manner peculiarly convincing and affecting.

b *We know his love, as he hath laid down his life for us.*] This text, as it stands in our version, has generally been mentioned as equivalent to Acts xx. 28. in which, as *he* who laid down his life for us is God, as well as *Man*, God is said to have done that which the Man united to him did. But it is not to be denied, that many copies, which I here follow, read only ΑΥΤΟΥ instead of ΘΕΟΥ: *hereby we perceive* HIS *love*. And there are many places, where the relative evidently refers to a remote antecedent. Compare Heb. vii. 2. note a.

c *Lay down* [*our*] *lives for the brethren.*] That is, when the life and happiness of *many* are concerned, we ought to be willing to sacrifice *our own*. If one only were to be rescued on such terms, the argument would in a great measure fail, unless that one were of so *great importance*, that in dying for him we died for many; and the heathens themselves saw the obligation to submit to death in such a case, though they were unacquainted with that noble motive to which the apostle here refers. Compare Cicero, *De Officiis, lib.* I. *cap.* iii. p. 34.

SECT. 5. prevailing care to *keep his commandments, and* to *do the things which* we have reason to apprehend *are pleasing in his sight;* which he, as the righteous God, will be pleased with, when proceeding from a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and attended with those humble regards to him, which the imperfections of our own obedience, in its best estate, will require. *And this is his* great *command, That we should believe in the name of his* dear *Son Jesus Christ,* and endeavour to grow more in that blessed principle of faith in him; *and* that we should unfeignedly and cordially *love one another, as he hath* so strongly and affectionately *charged us* to do. *And* this is the true way to have that communion with God, to which I expressed, in the beginning of my Epistle, such a desire to introduce you: for *he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he,* that is, God, *abideth in that man: and in this we* farther *know that he abideth in us,* by such an intimate union, even *from the Spirit which he hath given us,* and which is the token and effect of his habitation in us; producing in our souls, by his gracious operation, the image of God, and forming us to an intimacy with and nearness to him.

1 JOHN III. 23 24

because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is the commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11 O THAT the Divine Spirit, which God hath given to dwell in believers, and by which he himself resides in 24 them, may teach us more effectually this great lesson of love, which is so agreeable to the purposes for which he 12 was conferred! Let us abhor the temper of Cain, as much as we abhor the actions it produced, and dread the 13 doom they incurred. As for that hatred of the world, which in a steady adherence to our duty may probably fall to our lot, let it by no means surprise or discourage us. It is surely enough to support our spirits under the malice and outrage of a wicked world, that if we are steady and consistent christians, we may know that we are passed 14 from death to life. O blessed transition! O the adorable riches of divine grace to which it is owing! May the ardour of our love to our brethren render this happy change more and more apparent; and may this christian 16 benevolence be so ardent in our hearts, as to make us willing, when certain duty requires it, even to lay down our lives for them: having been ourselves distinguished with the like token of the love of our Divine Master, who spared not his own life for us; and O, what are even thousands of our lives in comparison of his! And shall we 17 then, while our brethren in the Lord are in necessity, be tenacious of our substance? When we are surrounded with 18 plenty, shall we be unwilling to impart a little of our abundance for their relief, or content ourselves with the charity of words, which cost us nothing, while we withhold the things that are needful for them? How will such shameful, detestable hypocrisy disgrace all our pretensions to the love of God: but let us treat all hypocrisy, either towards God or man, with detestation and abhorrence. Let us love, not only in word and in profession, but in deed and in truth; and rather chuse that our actions should exceed our engagements, than disappoint in any instance the expectations we have raised.

19 Of what infinite importance is it to have confidence towards God in all our addresses to his heavenly Majesty! And if we desire this to be the case, let us reverence our own consciences, avoiding every thing which would 20, 21 cause our hearts to condemn us, in the presence of him who is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. And while we rejoice in this, that they do not condemn us, let us be very careful that we examine them thoroughly, that we be not imposed on by a false answer, as it is to be feared many, through a superficial inquiry, are, whose 23 expectations are the most sanguine, and whose pretensions are the loudest. Let us remember this great summary of 22 christian duty, that we believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we keep his commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. An obedience, springing from such a faith, a faith verified by such an obedience, will give us a comfortable hope, that our prayers shall be accepted of God now, and our persons accepted hereafter to eternal life. Amen.

SECTION VI.

The apostle cautions the christian converts against being deceived by seducing spirits; and directs them how they may distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John iv. 1.—12.

1 JOHN iv. 1.

SECT. 6. IT is necessary, my *beloved,* that in the circumstances in which we are placed, I should caution you against credulously submitting to every one who pretends a divine inspiration for what he says; *believe not* therefore *every* pretended *spirit:*[a] *but make trial of the spirits, whether they be* indeed *of God* or not, *for* it is certain, that *many false prophets are gone forth into the world,* boasting a divine mission, and thereby laying snares for 1 the souls of men, with such artifice, that might, as our Lord expresses it, (Mat. xxiv. 24.) 2 deceive the very elect, if it were possible. Now *in this ye know* and may distinguish *the Spirit of God,* which is the spirit of truth, from that of error: *every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh,*[b] that pays a becoming deference to his authority and the divine discoveries which he hath made, *is of God:* there cannot, in the general, be any better attestation of any spirit than this, that it tends, in its agency and operations, 3 to promote the honour of the great Redeemer. *And* you may, on the other hand, be sure of this, that *every* pretended *spirit* of revelation, *that doth not confess* and do homage to *Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, is not of God: and* indeed *this is,* on the con-

1 JOHN IV. 1 2 3

1 JOHN iv. 1.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,

a *Believe not every spirit.*] Many pretended to the character of the Messiah, and others, in an extraordinary manner to be sent and inspired of God; and this they did with a view of turning away christians from their faith and hope. The apostle here, by a short turn of argument, demonstrates that they were indeed impostors from this very attempt.

b *That confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh.*] So the words ο ομολογει Ιησουν Χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα may very well be rendered: and indeed they must be so in this connexion, for the bare confession of Christ's incarnation would not have been sufficient to have cleared them from the suspicion of being impostors. To *confess Jesus Christ,* seems to mean, not barely professing some kind of regard to him, but yielding a regular, consistent homage, and, as it were, harmonizing and falling in with his design.

is not of God; and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God: but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

trary, *the* very [*spirit*] *of antichrist*,[c] *of whom you have heard* in the divine oracles and predictions which our blessed Lord delivered concerning this last time *that he is coming, and is now* in some measure *already in the world.* But, my *dear children, ye are of God, and have overcome them,* in all their snares and delusions,[d] *because greater* and more powerful by far *is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;* the Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostasy, and for all his confederates. *They* of whom I have now been speaking, *are of the world,* and they know how to manage their affairs in a manner which will be pleasing to it: *therefore they speak as of the world,* as taking their instructions from it, they give their followers worldly hopes and expectations, *and the world* greedily *hears them,* and drinks in their fallacious maxims, to the unspeakable detriment of the interests of true religion. Whereas, on the contrary, *we are of God,* and have approved ourselves to be so, by such irresistible evidence, that I may now venture to say, that *he who knoweth God,* and experiences the governing influence of divine fear and love, *heareth* and regardeth *us*;[e] but *he who is not of God, doth not* attentively and obediently *hear us;* and by rejecting our testimony, attended with such evidence, proves himself destitute of all true religion. After such a series of miracles, as have been wrought in confirmation of the gospel, and other proofs attending it in their days, it may be laid down as a test; so that *by this we* may sufficiently *know,* and discern between *the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,* as the one receives, and the other rejects, this divine system.

But think it not enough speculatively to admit its authority. Let it be your great care practically to acknowledge it; and especially to the purposes of mutual benevolence. Yes, my *beloved, let us love one another*;[f] *for love is* as really *from God,* as truth itself; *and every one who loveth,* every one in whose heart this divine principle reigns and triumphs over the selfish and contrary passions, shows by it that he *is born of God,* by his regenerating and transforming grace, *and* that he truly *knoweth God;* he makes it appear, that he judges rightly of God's nature and will; and that his acquaintance with him has made deep and powerful impressions on his heart. Whereas *he who loveth not,* whatever he may pretend, *hath not* truly *known God; for God is Love,* its great Fountain and Exemplar; he recommends it by his law, and produces and cherishes it by his influences: and the due contemplation of him will naturally inflame our hearts with love to his Divine Majesty, and to our fellow-creatures for his sake, whose creatures they are. And *in this* great instance *is the love of God,* of which I now speak, when I say that God is himself Love, in the most illustrious manner *manifested,* and displayed *in* and towards *us, that God sent* Jesus, *his only-begotten* and well-beloved *Son, into the world, that we,* condemned and miserable sinners, *might live through him;* that the sentence of death, to which we were obnoxious, might be reversed, that we might be quickened to a principle of spiritual life, and so conducted to the possession of life everlasting. Yes, sirs, I must repeat it again, that your hearts and my own may be the more deeply affected with it, *herein is love, not* indeed *that we loved God,* for we were, on the contrary, in a state of enmity to him, in which, unsolicited and untouched by his love and grace, we should have persisted and perished; *but that he loved us, and* in boundless compassion to our necessities and our miseries, *sent his Son* [*to be*] *a Propitiation for our sins;* to make atonement to his injured justice for our offences, and so to introduce us on honourable terms to his favour. And let me make this important inference from it, my *beloved; if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another,* in imitation of his divine example, from a sense of the happy state into which we are brought, and in gratitude to him for so inestimable a favour! And the inference has the greater weight, as *no man hath ever seen God,* or can see him, since he is in his own nature invisible, and possessed of such essential perfections, that it is impossible that any expressions of love and duty from any of his creatures should in the least degree increase his happiness. But as he is the great Fountain of benevolence, *if we love one another,* it appears that *God dwelleth in us, and* that *his love is perfected in us;* for this is the best proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image.

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

c *This is the spirit of antichrist.*] From hence some have argued, that the pope cannot be antichrist, because he confesses Christ; and that it must necessarily be some entirely opposing person or sect, and which does not bear the christian name: but the interpretation above obviates this objection; for it is certain popery is an usurpation entirely inconsistent with a due homage to Christ, and founded upon principles most opposite to those of his government and religion. It is said to have been already in the world, as the ambitious, imposing, persecuting spirit, which is the very essence of antichristianism, did then greatly prevail.

d *Ye—have overcome them.*] That is, your doctrines have prevailed against some who deserve the name of antichrist, as undoubtedly all who opposed the christian interest in some measure did; and as you have the true miraculous gifts of the Spirit, to which they falsely pretend, it is soon seen, that the advantage is clearly on your side.

e *He who knoweth God, heareth us.*] Bishop Bull thinks, the meaning of this is, "Regard our temper and conduct, and compare "it with that of those who oppose us, and you will find a *carnal* principle continually prevailing in them, and a *spiritual* principle "governing us: in consequence of which you may know assuredly "that *we* are *of God,* and *they of the world.*" Compare Bull's *Serm.* i. p. 11. I rather think, as Archbishop Tillotson has stated it, (Vol. III. p. 501.) he considers the christian religion as now so abundantly demonstrated, that it might be made a test by which other doctrines and pretences might be tried; and to those who have received it upon full evidence, it must be so. Thus the Jews were directed to judge and obliged to condemn, a pretended prophet, as *ipso facto,* proved an impostor, if he attempted to turn them aside from the revelation which God had given by Moses. Deut. xiii. 1—3.

f *Let us love one another.*] It is reported, that when the apostle John was grown old, and past preaching, he used to be led to the church at Ephesus, and only say these words to the people, *Little children, love one another.* And the importance of the argument by which he enforces *love,* justifies the repetition of it so frequently.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 6. THE spirit of error has been working, in some measure, in all ages of the church: nor are we to wonder, if, having infested that of the apostles, it be transmitted to our own. It is necessary, therefore, to try the spirits, whether they be of God; and we may safely try them by the homage they pay to Christ; and this not merely to his name, but to the genius of his religion, and to the great standard of it, which he hath left upon record in his word, that it might not be that uncertain thing which the fancies or traditions of fallible men might have rendered it. Antichristian principles and powers have arisen, but God has enabled, and he will enable, the remnant of his people to conquer them; for the spirit in them is greater than that which is in the world. That may hearken to seducers as they accommodate their doctrine to its prevailing lusts and passions; but let us remember that the gospel is now established as a test, and may we admit or reject all human teachings, as they agree or disagree with it.

1 JOHN IV.

If we read and hear it to any valuable purpose, it will teach us to love one another: that great lesson of our Divine Master, with relation to which we have line upon line, and precept upon precept. If we value ourselves in any degree upon knowing God, let us give this proof of it, without which all our most subtle speculations or debates concerning his nature and perfections will be utterly vain. And that we may attain to this, let us frequently contemplate that incomparable display of his love towards us, in sending his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Let us daily consider our lives as derived from that great act of mercy and grace; and that it is through Christ alone, as thus given us of God, that we can obtain and secure life eternal, since in him we receive the only appointed propitiation for those sins, which would otherwise have obstructed the passage of all good to us, even from the great eternal Fountain of felicity. He hath prevented us with the blessings of his goodness; we did not love him, but he first loved us. O that this love on his part may produce the warmest return on ours! and let us testify the sincerity of this affection, by remembering how it ought to influence our hearts to benevolence as well as devotion. And as we cannot see God at any time, nor extend any act of beneficence to him, let us see his image with due regard in every christian, and in some degree in every human creature, that we may express our love to him, by doing good to them for his sake.

SECTION VII.

The apostle farther urges the excellence of love, as a substantial proof of our knowing God, and dwelling in him; and as bringing the greatest honour to God, and affording the truest composure and confidence to the soul. 1 John iv. 13, *to the end.*

1 JOHN iv. 13.

SECT. 7. I HAVE been mentioning love as an argument of our union to God; and I must now add, that *in this* also *we know that we abide in him, and* that *he* dwelleth *in us, because he hath given to us* the communication *of his Spirit*, which, operating in us by its gracious influences, sets, as it were, the mark of God upon us, and thereby assures us that he owns us as his, and is become our God: *And* animated and sealed by this Spirit, as *we have seen and* known by undoubted evidence ourselves, so we courageously *testify* to others, how hazardous soever the bearing that testimony may be, *that the* great Almighty *Father* of all *hath sent* Jesus *the Son*, under the high character of *the Saviour of the world*, and that it is in and by him alone, how proudly soever the infidel world may reject and disdain him, that eternal salvation can be obtained. *Whosoever*, in a steady and uniform manner, *shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God*,[a] maintaining this profession of faith with resolution and zeal, and acting in conformity to it, gives the happiest proof that *God dwelleth in him, and* that *he* dwelleth *in God:* there is a blessed union between God and his soul: so that it is, in the language of scripture, (Isa. lvii. 15.) the habitation of God, and he may be said to be, as to his affections and hopes, with God in heaven, and shall ere long, in his complete person, reside there. *And we have known, and* firmly *believed, the love which God hath unto us;* for as we have again and again taught you, and know not how to cease inculcating it, *God is* himself *Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*;[b] this is the bond of union, and the pledge of its perpetuity. (Compare ver. 8, and 12.) And *herein is love perfected in us, that* notwithstanding all our acknowledged and lamented imperfections, *we may have boldness* and confidence *in the* great *day of* universal *judgment*,[c] *in that as he* our Father and our God *is, so are we* in some prevailing degree, even while we reside *in this world*, so far as the imperfections of that mortal life, to which we are here confined, will admit.

1 JOHN IV. 14 15 16 17

1 JOHN iv. 13. HEREBY know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 And happy are they, who are arrived to such a temper and character as this; for *there is no* servile and abject *fear in love, but perfect love casteth out* such *fear* from the soul in which it resides. And this is a very desirable effect; *because fear hath torment*, it

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that

a *Whosoever shall confess, &c.*] Bishop Hopkins accounts for *this*, and such passages, by observing, that in the primitive times there were no *temporal* inducements to embrace christianity; and consequently *most* of the professors of it acted upon conscience, and it might be charitably hoped they were indeed *regenerate*. See his *Works*, p. 520.

b *Dwelleth in God, and God in him.*] Perhaps when John wrote this Epistle, he might refer to that excellent prayer of our blessed Lord, which he has recorded in his gospel, and to such passages of it as John xvii. 22, 23.

c *In the day of judgment.*] Some by this phrase understand *the day* in which christians were judged: as if it had been said, The perfection of *love* is, when it induces us to maintain the cause of Christ before *judges* and *persecutors*, that we may be conformed to him, whose life was in a manner a continued series of sufferings: whereas the violent *fear of death*, which, where it prevails, is a *tormenting* passion, is inconsistent with the perfect love of Christ. This is the sense which Dr. Bates gives to this passage. Bates's *Works*, p. 924. But the *day of judgment* has generally a different signification from what this explication gives it; and therefore I chuse to paraphrase the words after the manner in which they are usually understood.

fear eth, is not made perfect in love.

throws the mind into a most uneasy situation: but *he that feareth is not made perfect in love.* Study therefore to increase more and more in that noble affection of love to God, and you will find your self-enjoyment rising in proportion to it. And reflect upon this with all humility, that if we do indeed experience any thing of that divine principle in our hearts, we must freely acknowledge that *we love him, because he first loved us.* He hath not only given us natures capable of these sublime actings, and poured in upon us, from their first original, numberless providential bounties, but hath also appointed his Son to lay a foundation for our happiness in his own blood, and his Spirit to diffuse that grace in our hearts, by which they are formed to every sentiment of pious gratitude.

SECT. 7.

1 JOHN IV. 19

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

And let this also be remembered, as of the last importance, that *if any one say, I love God, and hateth his brother,* how high soever his pretences to devotion may be, and to whatever fervours he may carry his zeal, *he is a liar;* for it is impossible that the love of God should be sincere in the soul which is destitute of this brotherly affection; as will appear, if you consider what peculiar advantages we have for engaging our hearts towards those with whom we are conversant; *for how can he who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen?*[d] The invisible nature of the Divine Being is, in this respect, an obstacle which our weak and carnal minds cannot be expected easily to conquer; *And* it is certain, that the neglect of this benevolent disposition would be an high instance of disobedience to him, since *we have this* express *commandment from him, that he who loveth God,* and professeth himself religious, *should also love his brother.* And God hath hereby in effect declared, that he will treat those as his enemies who pretend to devout zeal, while they are destitute of brotherly love.

20

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also

21

IMPROVEMENT.

THAT all these repeated exhortations may not be entirely in vain, let us now call our hearts to a deep and affectionate contemplation of the astonishing love of God, that he hath sent even his Son to be the Saviour of the world, according to the testimony of this divine herald, who beheld his glory, and witnessed it to be such a glory, as became the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.) Ver. 14

Let us think of the world as lost, of the whole race of rational creatures in it as perishing, as going down to eternal perdition. But a Saviour is provided: and O what a Saviour! The Son of God, that Almighty Deliverer, to whom our salvation was dearer than his own life! So dear, that he was willing to be invested with mortal flesh, in order that he might be capable of enduring pain and death for our redemption. Have we not herein seen and known the love of God to us? That love, wherewith he has so graciously prevented us; for surely nothing can be more apparent than this, that if we do indeed love him sincerely and faithfully, it is because he hath first loved us. And therefore, instead of boasting of our love to him, as if we could make him our Debtor, let us humbly acknowledge that he is the great Original and Support of that beatifying affection of the human mind; and that our obligations to him are great, in proportion to the degree in which we feel it working in us. Let us be encouraged boldly to confess Christ as the Son of God. Let us seek after more perfect love to him, and to the Father, as that which tends to make the mind happy by casting out every tormenting passion, and to establish it in an humble boldness amidst the most awful prospects. It is matter of deep lamentation, that our spirits should be so degenerate, as that while we are strongly impressed by sensible objects, we should be the less inclined to love the blessed God, because he is an invisible Being. 16 19 15 17 20

Let us adore his goodness, that in condescension to our weakness, he hath made himself visible in the person of his Son; and as Christ has constituted our brethren, in some degree, his representatives, to receive, as in his name, the tokens of our kindness and affection, let us be studious by our love to them, and particularly to the poor among them, who have peculiarly this honour; let us, I say, be studious to approve the sincerity of that love to him, which we so universally profess, and the absence of which were so inexcusably criminal. 21

SECTION VIII.

The apostle farther discourses of the character of those who are born of God, particularly describing them as lovers of Christ, as conquerors of the world, and as courageously maintaining the gospel, on the witnesses to which, both in heaven and on earth, he more especially enlarges. 1 John v. 1—12.

1 JOHN v. 1.

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 JOHN v. 1.

HAVING been discoursing of the privileges of the children of God, let me a little farther illustrate and remind you of the great essentials of their character, that you may judge the better of your own concern in what is said. And here nothing is of more importance than to observe, that *every one who* truly *believeth that Jesus is the Christ,* so as to have his heart duly affected with the belief, without which faith does not deserve its name, *is born of God:*[a] he is brought to that divine temper by the influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and in consequence of this he may be assured of his adoption. *And every one who loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten by him:* we naturally love the children of our common friends; and much more will the children of our heavenly

SECT. 8.

1 JOHN V. 1

d *How can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God, &c.*] Mr. Howe observes, that the apostle seems to take it for granted, that we are *more disposed* to the love of our *fellow-creatures* than to the love of *God.* Mr. Seed has charmingly illustrated this text, (*Serm.* Vol. I. p. 390.) and observes, that we rise to the *love of God* from the *love of our fellow-creatures;* as to the *knowledge* of God, by the knowledge of the creatures. Hardly any text was ever more fully illustrated than this, in those *Posthumous Sermons* of the great Mr. Howe, which were published by Mr. Fletcher.

a *Is born of God.*] It is probable the apostle may here refer to the vain boasts which the Jews made of being the children of God, while they set Christ at defiance, and poured the greatest infamy on his name and cause. Mr. Locke quotes this place to prove that this was the only fundamental of the gospel; but it is evident, this proposition may be understood in very different senses; and consequently there is no room to lay all the stress that he supposes may be laid on such an expression.

SECT. 8. 1 JOHN V.

Father be dear to us, if we bear a becoming affection to him. And we may take the same truth likewise the other way, and say, that *in this we know that we love the children of God, if we love God, and keep his commandments.*[b] For certainly if our love to the children of God arise from truly religious motives, it will be an uniform thing, and all the other precepts of God will have a suitable influence upon our hearts and lives; whereas any pretended benevolence of temper, which leaves us rebels to the authority of the common Father of the family, is a mere natural impulse, and deserves not the noble name of brotherly love. Wonder not that I insist so much on the influence of religious principles on the life and conversation. *For this is the love of God,* this is the great evidence we are to give of it, *that we* impartially *keep* all *his commandments,* without allowing ourselves in the violation of any one of them. *And* to a mind influenced by true love, *his commandments are not grievous;* as they are all most equitable, reasonable, and gracious in themselves, all adapted to promote the true happiness of our lives, so we shall find, that fervent love will make them all pleasant and delightful to us. *Because,* whereas the great obstruction to keeping God's commandments is the influence of worldly motives and considerations on the mind, *whatever is born of God,* every son and daughter of his, not excepting even the feeblest, *conquers the world,* and would despise and trample upon all the glories of universal empire, if opposed to the favour of his heavenly Father. *And this is the* great *victory that conquers the world,* the grand triumphant principle which accomplishes things which appear so incredible, [*even*] *our* firm *faith* in the great articles of the christian religion; particularly, that Christ is the Son of God, that he came into the world to redeem us from its lusts and vanities, and that he will assuredly conduct all his people to seats of infinitely greater and nobler felicity. And indeed, as this is the happiness of true christians, so only of them; for *who is he that conquers the world, except* it be *he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* The great principles peculiar to our divine religion, a sense of redeeming love, and the prospect of such a sublime and perpetual happiness as the gospel opens upon us, can alone be sufficient to teach us to triumph over these transitory vanities, and to establish an uniform character, superior to the variety of temptations with which we can be assaulted: while the boasted triumphs of others, upon meaner principles, have been very partial and imperfect, and they have evidently been subdued by one vanity, while they have gloried in despising another.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 *This* Jesus, of whom we have now been speaking, *is he who came by water, and* by *blood;*[c] even *Jesus the Christ,* whose great design it was both to cleanse and purify his people, and to make an atonement to God for their sins. He came *not by water only,* did not only instruct men in the purest morals, or set them the most perfect and complete example; *but by water and blood.* He shed his most precious blood to expiate our offences, and God gave, as it were, a sensible intimation of these united purposes, when there came out of his wounded side a stream of blood and water, which descended in such a manner, as that each might evidently be distinguished from the other. *And the Spirit is that which witnesseth,* the extraordinary communication of the Spirit to his servants is the most glorious attestation of all; *for* we well know that *the Spirit is Truth;* and when we consider the wonderful manner of its interposition, we can no longer doubt of the truth of whatever shall be attested by such an authority.

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 And indeed, when I consider this, I may say, that whereas the law admitted the concurrent testimony of two witnesses as valid, we have, as it were, a double trinity of witnesses, one in heaven, and the other on earth, to support this most momentous truth. *For there are three, who bear witness* to it[d] [*in heaven, the Father,* by whom the scheme of our salvation was originally projected, and who revealed it so early to the church by the prophets; *the* Divine *Word,* whose great business it was, by such humiliations, labours, and sufferings, to bring it into execution; *and the Holy Spirit,*[e] who seals and applies it to believers; *and these Three are One,* as in the agreement of their testimony, so likewise in the perfections of their nature, and each worthy of those divine honours, which cannot be communicated to any creature. *And there are three on earth who bear witness,*] *the Spirit,* sent down from heaven in its sanctifying and miraculous operations, which still continue to produce the noblest effect; *and the water* of baptism, *and the* representation made of Christ's *blood* in the sacramental wine,[f] which are intended, through-

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and

b *In this we know that we love the children of God, &c.*] Dr. Clarke supposes this clause to be transposed, and that it should be read, "*By this we know that we love God, and keep his commandments, because we love his children.*" *Posth. Serm.* Vol. II. p. 102. To the common reading it has been *objected,* that the medium is more *obscure* than the thing to be learnt from it. Dr. Bates answers, that the apostle speaks concerning our knowing that our *love* to the brethren is of the true christian stamp: now a strong internal principle of *love to God* may be more self-evident to the mind, as less in danger of being confounded with a merely human affection, or benevolent instinct. Bates's *Works,* p. 695. Some have queried, whether it might not be translated, *Hereby, even in that we love the children of God, do we know that we love God, and keep his commandments.*

c *Came by water and blood.*] I think it a great mistake of Mr. Cradock and some others to imagine that this relates to *external washing* and Jewish sacrifices.

d *There are three who bear witness,* &c.] As it would be altogether unfit to introduce into such short notes as these are intended to be, a critical dissertation upon the authority of this *celebrated text,* I shall content myself with referring to what so many learned persons as have engaged in the controversy have written on each side; but I thought myself obliged to intimate such a remaining *doubt* at least, concerning its authenticity, as I have done by inclosing it within crotchets. I am persuaded the words contain an important truth; but whether they have been added by some, or omitted by others, contrary to the original copy, I will not pretend to determine.

e *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.*] *The Father,* Matt. iii. 16, 17; xvii. 5; John xii 28. The *Word* himself, Acts vii. 55, 56; ix. 3, 4; Rev. i. 10; &c. The *Holy Ghost,* John i. 32, 33.

f *The water and the blood.*] By *the water,* Mr. Jeffery understands the *baptism* of Christ, and the miracles which were wrought on that occasion, as the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven; and by *the blood, the death of Christ,* which he willingly

the blood: and these three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son, hath life: *and* he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

SECT. 8.

out all ages, to keep up the remembrance of these wonderful facts, and to bear, as it were, their testimony of this mysterious Person, who united in himself humanity and deity, and came by water and by blood; *and these three agree in one;* they join to advance the same end, by establishing the gospel in the world. And *if we receive the testimony of men,* which in many cases we cannot without the most palpable absurdity reject, surely *the testimony of God is* worthy of infinitely *greater* credit; *for this is the testimony of God, which he hath witnessed concerning his Son,* recommending him thereby to our most dutiful and obedient regard; that by a firm faith in him, and adherence to him, we may conquer the world, and all the enemies of our salvation. *He who,* upon this testimony, *believeth in the Son of God,* hath not only an external evidence to produce, which may suffice for the conviction and condemnation of the unbelieving world, but from the time in which he experiences the efficacy of his faith, *hath* also *the witness within himself;*[g] the happy change it makes in the whole state of his soul, manifests the excellence and reality of its object. But *he that believeth not God,* offers him the grossest and most insufferable affront, for he in effect *makes him a Liar;* charges him with attesting the most notorious falsehood in the most solemn manner; *because he hath not believed in the testimony which God hath testified concerning his Son* by so many prophecies, and other miraculous interpositions, to demonstrate the truth of his mission. So that if this may be rejected, it cannot be conceived how he should ever be able to give any convincing proof that he testifies any thing at all. *And this is,* in one word, *the* substance and abridgment of this *testimony, that* the blessed *God hath,* in his infinite condescension and bounty, *given unto us* the promises of *eternal life; and this life is in his Son;* purchased by him, and laid up in him, to be bestowed according to his pleasure; and therefore only to be obtained through him. So that *he who hath* an interest in *the Son* by a lively and operative faith, *hath* this eternal *life,* in the sure pledges and beginnings of it in his own heart, and shall shortly enter on the complete enjoyment, though in himself acknowledged to be ever so unworthy of it; and *he who hath not* an interest in *the Son of God hath not life,* whatever proud conceit he may entertain of his own merits and excellences; but, on the contrary, remains exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, and under a sentence of eternal death.

1 JOHN V. 9
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11
12

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us regard the grand question, on which our life, our eternal life, is suspended! I mean, whether we have or have not the Son of God? Let us then examine into this important matter with the greatest attention. Let us hearken to, and receive the testimony of God, as comprehended in this one word, that God hath given even to us, dying and perishing men, eternal life; and this life is in his Son. Let us receive this transcendent gift with all humility and thankfulness; and so much the rather, as it is given us in him. By firmly believing this, we shall conquer the world, and gain a victory of an infinitely different and more exalted nature, than they who are strangers to Christ, or who reject him, ever have done, or can possibly do. Ver. 12 11 10 4

May our stedfast faith in him furnish us with a substantial attestation that we are born of God; and may we prove it to be sincere, by loving the children of God, and by keeping all his commandments. We must surely acknowledge that his commandments are reasonable; and if we have a genuine love to God existing in our hearts, it will render the observance of them pleasant and delightful. And if we are not possessed of that evidence of love, which arises from a disposition to obedience, let us remember, he hath fairly and frequently warned us, that no other expressions of love, how fervent and pathetic soever, will be accepted or allowed by him. That our faith may be confirmed, and our love awakened, let us often look to Christ, as coming by water and by blood. Let us meditate on that mysterious stream of blood and water which came forth from his wounded side. Let us solemnly remind ourselves of the baptismal water, in which we were washed, and of the sacred cup, the communion of the blood of Christ, referring to this great important event. And while we are contemplating the memorial of his humility, let us also consider him as one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and as each of the sacred Three join their testimony to the truth of the gospel, and join their kind offices for supplying to us the invaluable blessings of it, let us joyfully ascribe glory to each, world without end. Amen. 1 8 6 7

SECTION IX.

The apostle concludes his Epistle; declaring its general design to be the confirmation of their faith; and reminding them of the encouragement they had to hope that their prayers should be heard, for themselves, and for others, who had not sinned unpardonably. And he then adds a reflection on the happy difference which the knowledge of God in Christ made between them and an ignorant and wicked world. 1 John v. 13, *to the end.*

SECT. 9.

1 JOHN v. 13.

THESE things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God:

1 JOHN v. 13.

AND now, to draw towards a conclusion, *these things have I written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God,* to confirm your faith, and establish your joy, *that*

1 JOHN V. 13.

suffered, and demonstrated thereby, that he was no impostor, especially as he predicted so many extraordinary circumstances attending it. See his *Review* of the *Controversy with Collins.* Others interpret the *blood* here spoken of, of the *blood* of the martyrs shed in confirmation of christianity, and the *water,* of the purity of the lives of christians. I confess it is a *difficult* text; but on the whole, prefer the sense given in the paraphrase.

g *Hath the witness within himself.*] Some have considered and explained this, as if the meaning were, that every christian did in those days receive some miraculous proofs of his religion, by some communication of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; in consequence of which he might, by looking within himself, know the certainty of the gospel. But I think this assertion incapable of being proved, either from this passage or any other; and can prefer no sense of this celebrated text to that which Dr. Watts has so largely established and illustrated in his *Sermons* upon it; to which, therefore, I refer my reader with the utmost satisfaction. Watts's *Sermons,* Vol. I. Serm. 1—3.

SECT. 9. 1 JOHN V. 13–20

ye may know that, if your attachment to him is of the right kind, *you have*, in consequence of it, an interest in *eternal life; and that*, this hope operating to produce the substantial fruits of genuine and universal obedience, *ye may* yet more fully and stedfastly *believe on the* mighty and divine *name of the Son of God*,[a] Then you may be assured
13 of the certain truth of his religion, in proportion to the degree in which you inwardly experience its noble effects; and may, in consequence of this, keep your hearts continually
14 fixed upon him, in the many important views in which faith exhibits him. *And this is the confidence which we have towards him*, as our prevalent Intercessor and mighty Saviour at God's right hand: *that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*[b]
15 graciously: that he observes and takes notice of all our petitions. *And* we are sure his is not an ineffectual notice; *for if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know*, as a farther consequence, since he is ever able to carry all his gracious purposes into immediate execution, that *we shall* certainly *have* an accomplishment of *those petitions which we have asked of him*;[c] supposing, as I said before, they are agreeable to his will; and it is always his will, that his people should be truly happy, and be supplied with every necessary good.

16 And let me now add one precaution, with regard to the cases in which it may be proper to remember offenders in our prayers; *if any one see his brother commit a sin* [*which is*] *not unto death*, that is, any sin but that which is marked out in the awful words of our Lord Jesus Christ as unpardonable; *he shall ask, and* may hope that, through the divine goodness, *he shall give him life:* he may cheerfully expect, that God will return in mercy *to those who sin not unto death. There is* indeed *a sin* [*that is*] *unto death*, I mean such an apostasy from christianity, as is attended with blaspheming the operations of the Spirit of God, and ascribing them to Satan; and *I say not that he*, whose aid may be requested on such a sad occasion, *should pray concerning that*;[d] for Christ has told us it shall never be forgiven in this world, or the next. And as nothing but a miracle of divine grace, never to be expected, can recover a person in such circumstances, it is better to wave the petition, how much soever we may be disposed to lament the misery of the unhappy
17 creature who has fallen into it. *Every* instance of *unrighteousness is* indeed *sin*, and every breach of his law must be displeasing to God, and be esteemed matter of just censure and lamentation; *but there is a sin not unto death* in the sense just assigned. There are indeed many, from which it evidently appears that persons may be recovered; and in all
18 such cases, christian charity will require you to pray for your brethren. And from this dreadful evil divine grace will preserve every good man; for *we know that whoever is born of God, does not sin*, in this terrible and ruinous manner; *but he who is born of God* diligently *keepeth himself* from it, *and* Satan, *the wicked one*, who is the great abettor of all evil, *doth not touch*, or come near *him*, but is immediately repelled in his first
19 assaults. *We* christians do indeed *know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*;[e] it is in subjection to the wicked one, and lies wounded and slain under
20 him. *But we know that*, when the whole human race was in this helpless and miserable condition, *the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true*, even in the Father and *in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life*;[f] he partakes with the Father in proper deity; and our immortal life is supported by union with him.

that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true: *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

a *That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*] It is manifest the apostle does not in this *Epistle*, to establish their faith, produce the *evidences* of christianity, and argue upon them. But the *good dispositions*, which his whole discourse has a tendency to promote, would certainly have a strong influence to *confirm* their faith; as such dispositions would appear to be the effect of the gospel; and as an ardent zeal in the teachers of the gospel to promote them, was a strong confirmation of their being *faithful witnesses* to the great facts which had before been received upon their credit. I look upon this as a strong text to prove, in opposition to what Dr. Whitby has advanced, that christians are urged in the *New Testament to believe in Jesus Christ.*

b *That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*] Archbishop Tillotson supposes this refers particularly to the apostles. (Compare Matt. xviii. 18, 19; John xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23, 24.) But so few of the apostles could be concerned in this advice of St. John, and there are so many promises of the *answer of prayer* scattered up and down in the *Old and New Testaments* (see Dr. Clark, *On the Promises, cap.* iii. § vi.) that I would by no means thus confine the interpretation.

c *If we know that he heareth—we shall have the petitions.*] *Hearing* cannot, in the preceding verse, signify merely, *knowing what we say*; for then there would be no reason to limit the assertion to our asking any thing *according to his will*: and it may seem, that if we take it for *answering our petitions*, it is a mere tautology: it is therefore necessary to interpret the former clause of *taking notice of us*, the other of *operating* in consequence of that notice. The almighty power of God, to fulfil all his gracious purposes in favour of his people, seems to be the medium on which the inference is grounded.

d *I say not that he should pray concerning that.*] It seems to be intended as a brand set on a person who had been guilty of the *sin here specified*, that he was not to be *prayed for* by his converted fellow-christians. Some indeed would interpret this sin of the more heinous kind of offences punishable with death by human laws: but I can see no sort of reason for refusing the charity of our prayers to persons in such circumstances. Others think it refers to the case of illness; but there is no express mention of it here; and it seems to have been taken for granted, without reason, that this text is parallel to James v. 14, 15. It is certain, that illness in case of a capital crime, would not delay the execution. The popish distinction between mortal and venial sins will however appear to have no foundation in this text upon the interpretation we have given, or indeed upon any we have mentioned. The chief difficulty remaining is, how it could be known, that the apostasy in question was attended with such circumstances as made it the unpardonable sin? Where it was most difficult to distinguish, the *gift of discerning spirits* might infallibly decide it; where it was dubious, charity would incline to the milder extreme; and conditional prayer might however be offered.

e *The world lieth in wickedness:* ο κοσμος ολος εν τω πονηρω κειται.] The whole *world* here, as the *whole creation*, Rom. viii. 22. signifies that part of the world in which christianity was not received. Some imagine, that by the *world's lying in wickedness*, εν τω πονηρω, the apostle refers to the abandoned wickedness of the Roman emperors, by whose means the most enormous impiety and immorality was propagated through the whole empire, by *prefects, officers*, and *soldiers*. *Gosp. Truths Vindic.* p. 174. Mr. Reynolds, who supposes that *hell* is situated in the *air*, observes, that the *earth*, on that hypothesis, lies, as it were, in the *suburbs* and *frontiers* of it. See his *Inquiries concerning the Angelic World*, p. 191. But I rather think the word κειται alludes to the circumstance of a body which *lies slain:* in which sense it is often used by Homer; and on this interpretation it gives us a most compassionable idea of the great misery and helpless state of mankind, fallen by the stroke of this formidable enemy, the *wicked one*, (ο πονηρος,) and insulted over by him as his prey.

f *This is the true God.*] To paraphrase this of the *true religion*, as a very celebrated divine does, is quite enervating the force of scripture, and taking a liberty with plain words by no means to be al-

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

See to it, therefore, my dear *little children*, that you adhere to the worship of this true God alone, and *keep yourselves from idols*[g] of every kind; whom the jealous God will not suffer to share with him, either in the offices of religious worship, or in the supreme affection of the mind. *Amen*, may you be so kept and preserved to eternal life! SECT. 9. 1 JOHN V.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us thankfully own the divine goodness, in giving us so many helps for the confirmation of our faith; and learn the importance of its being thus confirmed, from that variety of provision made for its establishment. The declared end of the apostle in writing this Epistle was, that they who believed in the name of the Son of God might more firmly believe in it. Lord, increase our faith, and with it our zeal for him in whose name we believe, and our love to each other, for his sake: then shall we have eternal life, the gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord; and in the mean time may address the throne with cheerfulness, and present our petitions in a pleading and confident hope, that asking what is agreeable to his will, (and all that he knows to be subservient to our truest interest is so,) he will hear us, and we shall receive the things that we ask. Encouraged by this promise, with what *boldness* may we come *to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in every time of need!* (Heb. iv. 16.) Let his compassion to us teach us to have compassion on our brethren, on our afflicted brethren: yea, on those whose miscarriages have evidently brought their afflictions upon them. Let us not too soon pronounce the case of a sinner hopeless; but rather subject ourselves to the trouble of some fruitless attempts to reclaim him, than omit any thing where there may be a possibility of succeeding. May divine grace awaken all to stand at the remotest distance, not only from the unpardonable sin, but from whatever might dishonour God and endanger our own souls: for every sin is deadly and malignant, though every one be not the sin unto death. May we keep ourselves, and be kept by divine grace, in such a manner, that the wicked one may not touch us: but all his attempts be turned into his own shame and confusion! Ver. 13 14, 15 16 17 18

And O may God excite our pity to a world which lies in wickedness; and animate us to use our utmost endeavours, to *recover those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure.* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) May we be made sensible of the rich and distinguishing grace of God, if we can say that we are, not only by an external profession, but an inward union, in him that is true, in the Lord Jesus Christ. Him let us adore, as with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the true God. Him let us seek, as eternal life; and let us keep ourselves from all those idols, which would alienate our regard from God, and by the pursuit of which our eternal life might in any degree be endangered. 19 21

lowed. It is an argument of the *deity of Christ*, which almost all those who have wrote in its defence have urged; and which, I think, none who have opposed it have so much as appeared to answer.

g *Keep yourselves from idols.*] Archbishop Tillotson, (Vol. II. p. 488.) who interprets the *sin unto death*, as signifying total apostasy from the christian religion to the heathen idolatry, urges this clause, the connexion of which with the context he thinks not else to be accounted for, as proof of it. But a man might commit the *sin unto death* by falling back into judaism, though guilty of no *idolatry*; and the caution here suggested, may be very well accounted for, from the general circumstances of the *church* near that time, even though there should be no such immediate connexion between this clause and the preceding context, as the Archbishop supposes.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

THESE Epistles have been both very improperly ranked under the denomination, *general* or *catholic;* since each is inscribed to a single person; one to a woman of distinction, styled here the *elect lady;* and the other to Gaius; probably the same person with Gaius of Corinth, who is styled by St. Paul his *host*, and is celebrated for his hospitality to the brethren; a character very agreeable to that which is here given of Gaius by the apostle John.

There is no fixing the date of these two Epistles with any certainty. It in a great measure depends on the date of the *first* Epistle: soon after which, it is generally agreed, both these were written. And this indeed appears exceeding probable, from that coincidence both of sentiment and expression, which occurs in all these Epistles; and from hence it is inferred, that the state of things in the christian church, referred to in these smaller Epistles, was very much the same as it was at the time of writing the *first* Epistle, and that the apostle having *lately* written it, had it now particularly in his view, and the sentiments and expressions of it present to his mind. And possibly about the same time that he sent his *first* Epistle to christians in *general*, he might send his *second* to this honoured lady, and his *third* to his friend Gaius in particular, as a mark of peculiar regard. I shall not here enter into the debate concerning the *authenticity* of these two Epistles, especially as I have already suggested on some former occasions, such general sentiments as are very applicable on this.

The brevity of these Epistles renders it needless to give any other analysis of them than I have done in the contents prefixed to each respectively; to which I refer the reader.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The apostle John, addressing himself to a worthy christian lady, expresses his joy in her good character, and that of her children; exhorts to continued love, and to guard against deceivers, whom it would be dangerous to countenance and encourage; referring what he had farther to say till he should make her a visit. 2 John, *throughout.*

2 JOHN 1.

2 John 1. THE Elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth: and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth:

THIS letter is addressed by John, well known in these parts by the name of *the Elder*,[a] called under that character, to preside in the churches, *to the elect lady*,[b] whom I need not name, as her excellent christian graces render her so gloriously distinguished; *and to her children, whom I love in the truth*, on those principles which the gospel, the great system of truth, requires with respect to those who so remarkably support and adorn it. *Nor* indeed do *I only* love her and them, *but* they are beloved *also* by *all those who know the truth*, and who have had any opportunity of forming any intimate acquaintance with them. These amiable persons are justly dear to us all, *because of the truth which dwelleth in us, and* I doubt not, *shall be in us for ever*. And particularly so deeply is it grounded in your mind and heart, that I am persuaded the relish of it will never be lost, be the remaining years of life ever so many, or the events of them ever so trying. May a rich assemblage of every desirable blessing, *grace, mercy,* [*and*] *peace, be with you* all *from God the Father* of all, *and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father;* and may it animate you to walk *in truth, and* in universal *love*, according to the tenor of that glorious gospel with which he hath favoured you.

SECT. 1. — 2 JOHN 1.

1 2 3

2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever:

3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father:

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

I rejoiced greatly, when in some of those excursions which I made for the service of the gospel, *I found some of thy children walking in* a manner agreeable to the system of divine *truth*, and *according to the commandment which we have received from* God *the Father. And now I beseech thee*, my dear and honoured *lady, not as writing to thee a new* and unknown *commandment, but that which we had from the beginning* of our acquaintance with our Divine Master, and the religion he came to introduce, *that we may* all *love one another. And this is* that *love* which alone can prove acceptable to him, *that we* should constantly *walk according to his commandments;* and *this is the commandment, as ye have heard from the beginning that ye should walk in it;* this was the great end of the gospel, to give us proper directions for our conduct, and motives to engage us to act accordingly. And these rules and principles have been so plainly and faithfully delivered to you, that I need not now say any thing more in relation to them.

4 5 6

I refer you to those sacred lessons into which at your first conversion to christianity you were initiated; *because many deceivers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.*[c] And *this is* a most certain mark of *a deceiver and an antichrist;* and if any would go about to refine upon the doctrine of the incarnation and passion of our blessed Redeemer, as if they were allegorical, and expressed mere appearances, and not realities, whatever sublime notions he may pretend, he is to be

7

a *The Elder.*] The concealment of the *name* of the author can be no objection against ascribing it to St. John; since his name is also concealed in the *First Epistle*, which is universally allowed to be his. Nor was it customary with this apostle, in any of his writings, to be free in mentioning his own name. His styling himself the *elder* in this and the following Epistle, is probably the reason why they were ascribed by some of the ancients not to the apostle John, universally acknowledged to be the author of the *First* Epistle, but to John, an *elder* or *presbyter* of Ephesus. He who would see the testimonies of the fathers, that the apostle John was the author of these two Epistles, may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. There can hardly be stronger internal arguments, that the three *Epistles*, now commonly ascribed to St. John, were the production of the same author, than may be derived from that very remarkable similarity of sentiment and phraseology which appears in them all, on the slightest attention.

b *The elect lady.*] Lord Barrington is of opinion the *lady* here spoken of is the *church* at Jerusalem, *sister* to that at Ephesus. (Barr. *Miscel. Sacr.* p. 51.) and the notion seems to have been taken from Dr. Whitby. Compare Isaiah liv. 1; Gal. iv. 24, &c. But the arguments are by no means convincing: and ver. 10. seems a strong objection against it. It is probable that this *lady*, (styled here εκλεκτη-κυριᾳ, from whence some have fancied her proper name was *Eclecta*, and others, *Cyria*,) was a person of considerable distinction.

c *Come in the flesh.*] The apostle here alludes to the *rise* of those heretics who affirmed that Christ only came in *appearance*.

SECT. 1. rejected with abhorrence. Let me therefore beseech you, and all my christian friends to whom this letter may come, that ye *look to yourselves*, and let us all attend to the caution, *that we may not lose the things we have* already *wrought* in the service of Christ, *but*
2 JOHN persevering and abounding in it, *may receive the ample reward* which I trust through
9 divine grace is laid up for us. For it is certain, that *every one who* in this respect *transgresseth and remaineth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not* an interest in *God*; but *he that remaineth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*,
10 whose cause and whose favour are inseparable. *And if any one come unto you*, under the character of a religious teacher, *and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into* [*your*] *house*, to give him countenance and support, *neither wish him good success*.[d]
11 *For he that* thus supports and maintains him, and *wisheth him good success*, in a case like this, though he does not actually engage himself to labour in it, *is partaker of his evil deeds*, and, in the sight of God and man, accessary to the damage which such a seducer may, in consequence of such encouragement, bring upon the church.
12 *Having many* other *things to write unto you*, which might have employed my pen in a much longer Epistle, *I would not* [*do it*] *with paper and ink: but* break off here, as *I hope* ere long *to* open my mind much more largely when I *come to you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be fulfilled*; and we may have mutual reason to acknowledge, that we have received much greater satisfaction than this imperfect method of converse can
13 afford. In the mean time, I shall only add, that *the children of thine elect sister salute thee*, and I join with them in the kindest wishes which the sincerest friendship can form. And may God accomplish them. *Amen.*

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed.

11 For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us observe this delineation of a love truly christian; the love which the apostle, and all who knew the
2 truth, are said to have had towards this elect and excellent lady, for the truth's sake which dwelt in her. Adored be that grace, which preserved her in so high a rank of life from temptations which could not fail to surround her! that grace, which rendered her an example of wisdom and piety, great and eminent in proportion to her exalted situation!

3 Nor can we forbear reflecting, how happy, in consequence of this, she herself was, possessed of grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, in truth and love! What were all the secular honours by which she was distinguished! What the possession of riches, which in their own nature, and unimproved to the pious and charitable purposes to which she improved them, are very empty and unsatisfactory; what are these, when compared with such important blessings! We cannot but rejoice, at this distance of time, and ignorant as we
4 are of the name, situation, and history of this *worthy lady*, that *her children walked in the truth*. It was a singular joy to JOHN, and may be so in a degree to *all*; and may teach us to lift up our hearts to God in prayer, that all christian parents, especially pious mothers, and more particularly those whose character in life is so eminently distinguished, may enjoy this happiness, and see the seed they are with such commendable industry sowing in the minds of their tender offspring, growing up, and bringing forth much fruit.

5, 6 We have, in the beloved apostle, an excellent pattern of a becoming care, to make a correspondence with our christian friends useful; which we shall do, if, like him, we are exhorting them to the cultivation of mutual love, and to a constant uniform care in keeping the commandments of God: if we continue warning them against the
8 prevailing sins and errors of the day, and urging them to a holy solicitude that they may not lose what they have already attained; but may receive full reward for every work of faith, and labour of love, in consequence of a course of resolute and persevering piety.

Persons of the most distinguished goodness have need to be cautioned against that excess of generosity and hos-
10, 11 pitality, which might sometimes make them partakers with seducers in their evil deeds, by giving them their audience, and wishing them good success, while by their fair speeches they impose upon the simplicity of open and upright hearts, who, because themselves are void of fraud, are often void of suspicion too. But there is a prudent
7 caution to be observed upon this head; and it is the part of faithful friendship to suggest it; for many deceivers are come out into the world. For our security against them, let us be always upon our guard, and take care to continue in the doctrine of Christ; that so we may have the Father, and the Son; and if we are interested in
9 their favour, we shall stand in need of nothing, and shall have nothing of which to be afraid. *Amen.*

d *Wish him good success.*] Thus the Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby observe, were forbid to say, שלום, or *God-speed*, to an excommunicated person, or to come within four cubits of an heretic. But the apostle must not be here understood as excluding the common *offices of humanity* to such persons; for that is contrary to all the general precepts of benevolence to be found in the gospel. But to have received a seducing teacher *into their houses*, and have given him suitable accommodations, would have been showing him such regard, and affording him such support, as indeed, in some measure, would have made them answerable for the mischief he might do in the church; such favours being not merely offices of common humanity, but of patronage and friendship; and, in the general, at least a testimony of their approbation, as well as kindness.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The apostle John, in this short Epistle to Gaius, expresses his concern for his prosperity, and his joy in the honourable character he maintained for christian candour, hospitality, and zeal; cautions him against the ambitious and turbulent practices of Diotrephes; and recommending Demetrius to his friendship, refers what he had farther to say to a personal interview. 3 John, *throughout.*

3 JOHN 1.

THE Elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well;

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

3 JOHN 1.

THE Elder addresses this Epistle *to the beloved* and hospitable *Gaius,*[a] *whom I love in the truth,* and hold as dear in the bowels of Christ, from a regard to the advancement and honour of his gospel. SECT. 1.

Beloved, I pray that, in every respect,[b] *thou mayst prosper; and* particularly that thou mayst *be in health; as* I have reason to believe that *thy soul prospereth;* for I doubt not but that religion flourishes in thy heart, and abundantly justifies my wishing thee as healthful and prosperous as thou art good. *For I rejoiced greatly when the* christian *brethren came* from that part of the world in your neighbourhood, *and testified concerning thy truth,*[c] *as thou walkest in the truth,* and adornest the gospel by an exemplary behaviour. For indeed *I have no greater joy than this* thing gives me, *that I may hear*[d] my christian friends, whether converted by me, or others, whom I look upon as *my* dear *children, are walking in the truth,* and according to those directions which our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, has given us. And, *beloved,* I must declare my entire approbation of thy conduct, and can openly bear my testimony to it, that *thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou performest towards the brethren and towards strangers;* thy behaviour to thy fellow-christians known to thee, and to those with whom thou hast little acquaintance, yea, to all who have occasion to cast themselves upon thy hospitality, is much to the credit of the gospel, and I doubt not but it proceeds from a principle of true faith, and overflowing love to our common Redeemer. And indeed many of the christian strangers, *who* have been thus generously entertained by thee, *have testified* very honourably *concerning thy love before the church; whom thou dost well in bringing forward in their journey,*[e] *in a manner worthy of God,* proceeding from a principle of divine love, and correspondent to the relation in which you and they stand to him. And whatever thou dost for them, our great Lord will take as done to himself; *for* it was *on his account,* and out of zeal for his honour and interest, that *they went out,* abandoned their habitations, possessions, and callings, that they might spread his gospel; *receiving nothing of the Gentiles,*[f] among whom they laboured; that they might take 3 JOHN 2 3 4 5 6 7

a *Gaius.*] We read of one Gaius of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. who hospitably received the apostle Paul, when he went out to preach the gospel gratis; and if this were, as he seems to have been, the same, he was St. Paul's convert: nor is St. John's calling him *his child* an argument to the contrary: since in the general he addresses *all* christians in the same tender and affectionate style, agreeable to the sweetness of his temper, and suitably to his advanced years. Compare Dr. Whitby, *in loc.*

b *In every respect:* περὶ πάντων.] Our English translation is, *above all things.* Mr. Hallet would render it, *above all persons;* as if he had said, you are the *person,* for whose temporal and spiritual advantage I am concerned more than any other. Hallet's *Notes and Discourses,* Vol. I. p. 61, 62. But the words may so justly bear the translation I have given them, by which all manner of difficulty is removed, that I think it much preferable to either of the former. And it hath the sanction of so good an authority as Erasmus Schmidius, who translates it, *de omnibus.*

c *Testified concerning thy truth:* σὺ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.] Some have supposed the apostle here means, that they bore witness to *Gaius's sincerity,* and that this is the idea we should affix to ἀληθείᾳ in this place, in order to avoid that tautology which there would be in the next clause, if we understood him here to speak of his *faith in the gospel.* But though it is allowed that ἀληθείᾳ may signify *sincerity,* yet if we suppose that to be the case here, it will be necessary to understand it in two different senses in the same sentence; and I think the latter clause, *walking in the truth,* may have a farther idea than merely his *faith,* which I have expressed in the paraphrase.

d *That I may hear.*] Dr. Whitby takes notice of it here, as an observation which many have made, that the use of the particle ἵνα for ὅτι and ὅταν is a peculiarity in St. John's style.

e *Bringing them forward in their journey.*] This may possibly be understood in a *spiritual sense,* of assisting them in their travels through this wilderness to the heavenly world. Or it may have a literal signification, and then *one kind* of hospitality and charity is put for the *rest.* But I rather prefer the former sense.

f *They went out, receiving nothing of the Gentiles.* Ἐξῆλθον, μηδὲν λαμβάνοντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν.] Beza refers ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν to ἐξῆλθον, and understands it, that the persons here spoken of, *went out from their respective countries and native places,* (ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν,) *leaving all their worldly possessions,* (μηδὲν λαμβάνοντες,) *to go and preach the gospel.* And in support of this construction, he observes, that πᾶσι should have been used after λαμβάνοντες, and not ἀπό. But Matt. xvii. 25, 26. and 1 John ii. 27. are evident confutations of this remark. And

SECT. 1. 3 JOHN

off all suspicion of those mercenary views, above which divine grace had so far raised them. *We ought therefore*, all of us, who have any habitation of our own, hospitably and respectfully *to receive such: that*, if divine providence do not give us an opportunity of laying ourselves out, as they do, in the ministerial office, *we may become*, as it were, *fel-*
8 *low-labourers* with them *in* the service of *the truth*, and through divine grace may be entitled to a part in their reward.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

9 *I have* lately *written to the church*, about which I know you are so much concerned; *but* I sometimes fear, lest it should not be with so good success as I could wish; for *Diotrephes*,[g] *who affects the pre-eminence among them*, even above the apostles of Christ themselves, *hath not received us* with becoming regard; and his interest with some of the
10 members is much greater than it ought to be. *Therefore if I come*, as I hope I quickly shall, *I will be mindful of the works which he does;* many of which are very irregular, while he is continually *prating*[h] *against us with* idle, petulant, and *malicious words; and not content with this*, goes yet farther in his opposition; for *he receives not the brethren himself*, though he knows they come from us, *and hinders those who would* receive them from doing it; *and casts* [*them*] *out of the church*, forbidding them either to officiate, or communicate where his influence extends; than which nothing can be more tyrannical or
11 intolerable. As for thee, my *beloved* brother, *imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good:* behold such a conduct as his with a just abhorrence; and act according to that model of humility and condescension which you have seen in others, who may justly claim an authority much superior to his. *He that doeth good is of God:* he knows him, and he imitates his most amiable and spotless pattern; *but he that does evil*, that harbours such malignant passions, and behaves in so injurious a manner, whatever high notions he may pretend to, *has not seen God*, but is plainly ignorant of his perfections and of his will.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good, is of God: but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God.

12 *Demetrius*, on the contrary, is a most excellent person, who *has a good testimony from all men, and* even *from the truth itself; and we* have *also*, upon all occasions, borne, and *do bear*, [*the same*] *testimony; and ye know that this our testimony is true.*

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record, and ye know that our record is true.

13 *I have many* other *things*, which I should be glad *to write* to you; *but I will not write* them *to you by ink and pen*, as it would take up too much time, and I should not
14 be able after all fully to express myself. *But I hope quickly to see thee*, and *to speak face to face*, with all the freedom we could desire; till that time, therefore, I refer what I might now farther say; and only add, *Peace* [*be*] *to thee*, and every desirable blessing
15 from God our Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. *The* christian *friends*, who are here with me, *salute thee;* and I desire, that thou wouldst *salute the friends* that are with thee *by name*, and assure them of my most cordial and entire respect.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.

15 Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How happy was Gaius in the friendship of that apostle, whom Jesus had honoured with such a distinguishing degree of his friendship! How much happier still was he, in a soul so thriving and prosperous, that even such a
2 friend, who could not but hold flattery in detestation, should be able to make the good state of his soul a standard by which to adjust his wishes in relation to his temporal affairs! O what a curse would this be upon many, that they might prosper even as their souls prospered! And yet what is all other prosperity without this, but like that of fools, which destroys them, (Prov. i. 32.) How agreeable is it to a true christian, to hear well of the behaviour of those
3, 4 who are dear to him in the bonds of peculiar friendship; to hear of their walking in the truth; and especially when these are our own children, or those whom God has made us the means of converting, or those whom we have been concerned in training up for him! O that those especially, to whom the education of many has been committed, may have this great happiness! "Visit each of our children, and young friends, O Lord, with thy "mercy; animate them to walk in thy truth; and entail thy blessing upon them, when nothing remains, of all "the offices of love we have bestowed, but the memory of our exhortations and examples!"

5 May sentiments of true generosity fill and expand our hearts more and more! May we act towards strangers, and especially our brethren, in all the instances in which they need our assistance, in a manner worthy of God, worthy of the relation in which we and they have the honour to stand to our heavenly Father; and especially, let our
6 love abound to those who have a desire to spread the gospel. And O that it were more universal! O that Divine grace would excite more to quit the indulgence of their homes, or their countries, if there be no bond of duty to
7 detain them there, that they may go and preach to the Gentiles! And though there be no prospect of any requital from them, God will open to them the inexhaustible stores of his celestial treasure, and they shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. Let them but see to it, that their intentions are pure, that they do it for his sake; and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

9 But alas! how much more common even to this day, and that among the ministers of the gospel, is the character of Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence! How has the spirit of opposition and ambition prevailed in
10 the church, as well as in the world! How does it still prevail! and, in this view, how many malicious words

whereas he thinks it absurd to imagine, the *unbelieving Gentiles* would contribute to the support of the *preachers of the gospel*, it is an obvious reply, that των εθνων may mean the *believing Gentiles*, as it is certain the word frequently does. Wolfius, who agrees with Beza, in referring απο των εθνων to εξηλθον, understands it of their being *driven* and *forced out* by the Gentiles, having been *stript of their possessions*; which would render them the more proper objects of *kindness* and *hospitality*. But there is nothing of this in the idea suggested by the word εξηλθον, and the more common signification of it is to *go out voluntarily*. See Wolfii *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 334.

g *Diotrephes.*] It is uncertain who he was. Grotius thinks he was a Gentile convert, who would not admit the Jews; but it seems rather more probable that he was a Jew, who opposed the admission of the Gentiles, and set himself up as the *head of a party* in opposition to the apostles.

h *Prating;* φλυαρων.] Compare 1 Tim. v. 13. note i.

have been uttered against those who have with the greatest simplicity desired to follow the apostles! With what contempt have they often been cast out of the church! Yea, in a thousand instances, with what savage cruelty hunted out of the world! How long, O Lord, holy and true! Let us not, however, be impatient, but glorify God in the most humble or painful station he shall allot, by doing or suffering all his will: still imitating that which is good, as becomes those who are of God, who hope to see him, and enjoy him for ever. SECT. 1. 3 JOHN

Let us endeavour, like Demetrius, to secure to ourselves a good report of all men; but especially, let us see to it that we reverence our own consciences, and that we secure their testimony, which will be agreeable to that of the truth itself. So will our honour and our happiness be secured; and if any vapour should now rise to obscure it, the day is near, when the Sun of Righteousness shall undoubtedly chase it away. 12

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

JUDE, or Judas, the author of this Epistle, is often mentioned as one of the *apostles* of our Lord, and the brother of James the less. The *canonical* authority of this Epistle hath been disputed; but it is not the business of these commentaries to enter largely into such questions. Probably its authenticity would never have been doubted, had it not been for an imagination, ill grounded indeed, that the author hath quoted a *spurious* book, called the *Prophecy of Enoch*. The reader may consult what learned men have written upon this argument, particularly Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*; Dr. Whitby, and Dr. Twells, in the second part of his *Critical Examination of the New Text and Version of the New Testament*. The latter hath collected the principal materials with accuracy, and set them in a clear and convincing light.

There is a remarkable similarity between *this Epistle* and part of the *Second Epistle of St. Peter*, which (as we observed in the Introduction to that Epistle) was probably owing to this, that both the *apostles* drew their character of the false teachers, against whom they cautioned their readers, from the character given of the false prophets in some ancient Jewish author; and it is very possible too, (as Bishop Sherlock observes,) that St. Jude might have the *Second Epistle of St. Peter* before him.

Dr. Mill fixes the date of this Epistle about the year 90; (see his *Prolegomena*, p. 17. sect. 145. edit. Kuster.) and his principal argument is, that the false teachers, which St. Peter describes as *yet to come*, St. Jude mentions as *already come*. But, on a comparison, there does not appear that remarkable difference in their phraseology, which will be sufficient to prove that St. Jude wrote his Epistle *so long* after St. Peter's Second Epistle as is here supposed, though I acknowledge it will prove that it was written *after* it.

The design of the apostle is plainly, "by describing the character of the false teachers, and pointing out the divine "judgments which persons of such a character had reason to expect, to caution christians against listening to their suggestions, and being thereby perverted from the faith and purity of the gospel."

For the analysis of the Epistle, I refer my reader to the contents prefixed to the two sections, into which I have divided it.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

SECTION I.

The apostle Jude, after a general salutation, exhorts the christians to whom he wrote strenuously to assert the purity of their common faith; reminding them of the destruction which came on God's professing people, yea, on the apostate angels, for their sins; as well as on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah: and then he begins the description of some seditious and abandoned persons, from whom he imagined them in peculiar danger. Jude, ver. 1—11.

JUDE 1.

JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

JUDE 1.

SECT. 1.

YOU receive this Epistle from *Jude*, who, like his brethren the other apostles, cannot but rejoice and glory in the title of *a servant of Jesus Christ, and* who is the *brother of James*, so well known by his distinguished services and sufferings in the cause of our Divine Master; and he inscribes it *to those who are sanctified in God the Father*, devoted to his service through the influence of his grace; who are also the *called and preserved in Jesus Christ*, brought into the fellowship of his religion, and guarded by his grace, in the midst of a thousand snares, which might have tempted them to have made shipwreck of their faith. *May mercy, and peace, and love*, from our heavenly Father, and our compassionate Saviour, *be multiplied to you;* and may you increase in all the happy fruits of divine favour and mercy; and especially in that spirit of candour and charity which is to be numbered among the most precious of them. My *beloved, giving all diligence to write to you, concerning the common salvation*,[a] to the hope of which we are brought by the profession of the gospel, *I judged it necessary to* direct my pen, particularly with respect to those unhappy attempts that have been made to adulterate christianity, by some who continue to profess a regard to it. I now therefore *write to you, exhorting* and beseeching [*you*] *to strive earnestly for the faith* which was *once* for all *delivered to the saints*, for the instruction of every future age; and not to suffer any by violence or by fraud to rob you of so inestimable a treasure. *For some* crafty and pernicious *men have*, as it were, with a serpentine art, *glided in* among us, *who were of old*, as it were, described and *registered to this condemnation*,[b] by God's righteous sentence denounced against crimes like theirs, long before they appeared in the world. *Impious* and ungrateful *men, who* presume to *turn* even *the grace of our God* itself, which ought to be an everlasting source of love, and engagement to sanctity and obedience, *into* an occasion of *lasciviousness;* as if they thought they might with impunity go on to sin, that grace might abound: *and denying God the only* original *Sovereign*,[c] *and our Lord Jesus Christ*, whom he has invested with universal dominion, to be acknowledged by all who would not be found rebels against himself! *But I would remind you, as you once knew this*, that having been taught it, you may never forget it, even *that the Lord having saved the people* of Israel from *out of the land of Egypt*, and rescued them by so glorious an interposition of his almighty power, *afterwards destroyed those that did not believe*, though they had once

JUDE 1 2 3 4 5

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

a *Giving all diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation*, &c.] Some have supposed the meaning is, That whereas he intended to write them a *practical* letter, he was compelled to go into some *controversial* subjects. I rather think he intends to declare by this expression, that the exhortation he now gives them, *to contend earnestly for the faith*, was indeed subservient to promote that *common salvation* he designed to lead them to the pursuit of. Bishop Sherlock thinks *the faith delivered to the saints* is the same with the *holy commandment delivered*, 2 Pet. ii. 21. that is, with the directions and instructions which the council of the apostles had sent them, with regard to these pestilent teachers. Sherlock, *On Proph.* p. 200. 5th Edit.

b *Who were registered to this condemnation.*] The word προγεγραμμενοι may well signify, *described and put upon record:* that is, whose character and condemnation may be considered as described in the punishment of other notorious sinners, who were a kind of representatives of them. Which interpretation I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it must bring upon his *moral attributes*, to suppose that he *appoints* men to *sin* against him, and then *condemns* them for doing what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to. A doctrine so pregnant with gloomy, and, as I should fear, with fatal consequences, that I think it a part of the duty I owe to the *word of God*, to rescue it from the imputation of containing such a tenet. Bishop Sherlock thinks the word refers to the description given of such kind of persons by an ancient *writer of the Jewish nation*, cited as he supposes in this Epistle, and in the second chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter. Sherl. *On Proph.* p. 181. 5th Edit. Compare ver. 14, 5, 7, 8.

c *God the Sovereign, and our Lord*, &c.] Some would render it, *our only Master, God, and Lord.* See Dr. Watts, *On the Trin.* p. 113. But it seems most agreeable to the general doctrine and phraseology of scripture, to retain our translation. Compare John xvii. 3.

SECT. 1. JUDE

experienced so wonderful a deliverance. And thus should we have reason to fear, that notwithstanding our christian profession, he would destroy us, if we adulterate and pervert his religion, after a manner contrary to its original design. *The angels also who kept not* 6 *their first state*,[d] *but* suffering their minds to be transported with ambitious and irregular passions, were discontented in that high rank of being which providence assigned them, and *left their proper abode* in the region of glory, instead of permitting them to advance themselves by their rebellion, *he has* by his righteous vengeance precipitated into the pit of destruction, and *reserved in perpetual bonds under darkness*, in the infernal prison, *to* be brought forth at *the judgment of the great day*, and then to receive their final sentence. 7 And earth has produced many awful scenes, in which the divine vengeance has had its triumph over sinful mortals; *as* particularly *Sodom and Gomorrah*,[e] *and the cities about them, in like manner with them, committing fornication, and* by yet grosser and more unnatural licentiousness, *going after strange* and detestable gratifications of their pampered and indulged *flesh, are set forth for an example* to other presumptuous sinners; *suffering* that which really appears a most lively emblem of *the vengeance of eternal fire*,[f] having 8 their lovely and fruitful country turned into a kind of hell upon earth. *So these dreamers also*,[g] in their luxurious indulgences, suffer their thoughts to be amused with vain and polluted imaginations, whereby they *defile the flesh*, which ought to be sacred, together with the spirit, to the service of God. *They make light of dominion* and authority derived from the Supreme Sovereign, *and speak evil of dignities*, of persons in the most honourable 9 stations: *Whereas* we have heard in tradition, that *Michael the archangel, when contending in dispute with the devil concerning the body of Moses*,[h] which the angel was to bury privately, and he would have revealed, *did not presume to bring against him a railing accusation*,[i] *but* had so much reverence for the divine presence, as to speak with moderation and gentleness, even to that great enemy of God and men; and *said, The Lord rebuke thee*[k] for this outrage, and teach thee to restrain such shocking expressions. 10 (Compare Zech. iii. 2.) *But these* daring and impious men *blaspheme what indeed they know not; and what they naturally, as the irrational animals, know*,[l] the things which tend to the gratification of their inferior part, the low circle to which their knowledge and care is confined, *in these they are corrupted*, by the gross and scandalous abuse of them, 11 to the dishonour of God, and to their own infamy and destruction. *Woe* be *unto them*, and woe will attend them; *for they have gone in the way of Cain*, that persecutor and murderer, while, like him, they have despised the appointed method of God's mercy; *and they have run on* with prodigious eagerness *in the description of Balaam's reward;* enslaved, like him, to mean, secular views, they have abandoned themselves to sin *and* ruin. till at length they *have perished*[m] *in the contradiction of Korah;* like him, they have opposed God's appointed messengers, and his Son, to whom he has devolved the conduct of his church; and methinks, like him and his company, I see them already struck by the lightning of God's wrath, and overwhelmed with remediless destruction.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

d *Their first state:* την αρχην εαυτων.] Some translate these words, *the government of themselves.* But Dr. Scott interprets it of that *place* in heaven which was assigned them, and which they were not content with; and their *leaving this first habitation* he takes to have been a voluntary thing, and that they chose to come down to the neighbourhood of this earth, that they might seduce mankind to join with them in their revolt. But this does not seem to suit the phrase of their being *cast out*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Mr. Boyse would translate it, *their own head*, that is, *Christ.* Boyse's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 406. Compare Hos. i. 11. in the LXX.

e *Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner with them:* τον ομοιον τουτοις τροπον.] Some have pleaded, that this seems to imply, that the sin of the *angels* was *fornication*, and consequently that this Epistle is not *authentic.* But there seems no necessity for interpreting the expression with such extreme rigour, as if it must mean that their sin was of the same kind; it is sufficient that the comparison holds in this, that they were both guilty of very *great wickedness.*—There are some who refer τον ομοιον τουτοις τροπον *in like manner with them*, to the *cities about them*, who sinned in the same manner with Sodom and Gomorrah; nor is it any objection to this, as some have supposed it is, that τουτοις cannot agree with Σοδομα και Γομορρα; for in reality, these nouns are of the neuter gender, (see Luke xvii. 29; Mark vi. 11; Gen. xiii. 10.) in the LXX. And if they were not, nothing is more common than an *enallage* of gender, in such a case as this, where τουτοις must refer to the *men* who inhabited these cities.

f *Vengeance of eternal fire.*] Dr. Whitby has brought many arguments to prove, that the vengeance here spoken of must be the *loss of their cities*, rather than their *souls*, and produces instances to show, that αιωνιος is used in a sense consistent with this interpretation.

g *Dreamers:* ενυπνιαζομενοι.] Our translators render this, *filthy dreamers.* The context shows they deserve the epithet; but as the Greek does not express it, I judged it most faithful to the original to omit it.

h *Body of Moses.*] Archbishop Tillotson, (see his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 158.) and many other good writers, think this illustrated by Deut. xxxiv. 6. He supposes, that had the devil been able to discover to the Jews the place where Moses was interred, they would afterwards have paid an *idolatrous* honour to his remains; and it would have gratified his malice exceedingly, to have made *him* an occasion of idolatry after his death, who had been so great an *enemy* to it in his life. To prevent this, he thinks that Michael buried the body secretly. This proves, by the way, that *good angels* are sometimes concerned in limiting the power of *devils*, which must no doubt be a great vexation to those malignant spirits. But Mr. Baxter suggests it as a doubt, whether it were about the *dead* body of Moses, or Moses exposed on the *water*, that there was this contention. Baxter's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 341.

i *A railing accusation.*] Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that the *archangel* was afraid the devil would have been too hard for him at *railing.* The words seem to me to intimate, that the angel thought it a part of the reverence due to God, not to mention his name and judgment, in a *furious, passionate* manner, but mildly and gently. Witsius thinks the devil blasphemed, and that the angel did not accuse him, but referred the matter to the judgment of the great day. Witsii *Miscel.* Vol. II. IV. 6. § 28. See also the *Commentary* of this learned author, *in loc.* whose remarks on all the verses are framed with great erudition and accuracy. Perhaps εκ εδολμησε κριτιν επενεγκειν βλασφημιας may signify, that he did not pass *judgment upon his blasphemy*, but referred him to God.

k *The Lord rebuke thee.*] It is highly probable the apostle refers to some ancient book, in which this fact was thus mentioned, and speaks upon the supposition of its truth, which the persons he reasoned against did not dispute. And the argument does not lie in any regard shown to the devil as a dignitary, and one who exercises dominion over subordinate evil spirits; for to be a leader of a band of such inexcusable rebels could entitle him to no respect; but it seems to arise from the detestable character of the devil; as if he had said, If the angel did not rail even against the devil, how much less ought we against men in authority, even supposing them in some things to behave amiss? To do it therefore when they behave well, must be a wickedness yet much more aggravated.

l *Naturally know.*] Compare the notes on the parallel texts in 2 Pet. ii. for the illustration of this and other passages which occur here.

m *Have perished.*] This is a genuine trace of a *prophetic* spirit, which speaks of things certainly *future*, as if they were *past.* And as such I thought proper to illustrate it in the paraphrase.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy are the people of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in him are called, sanctified, and kept by the divine omnipotence through faith unto salvation! For mercy and peace shall be multiplied upon them, till mercy hath, as it were, finished his commission and conducted them to eternal peace. We learn from the example of the apostle before us, of how great necessity it is in some circumstances, if ministers would promote the common salvation of their hearers, to guard them against the prevailing errors of the day, and to excite them earnestly to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints, as for a prize of the highest importance. May we rightly discern its nature, and be very careful, that while we are attempting to exert a christian zeal, we do not mingle with it our own mistakes, and our own irregular passions, in such a manner as to tear in pieces what we are so eager to preserve. In short, let us learn from scripture what that faith is, and what the importance of its respective articles are; and let us always be endeavouring to maintain it in the spirit of love. SECT. 1. JUDE Ver. 3

May all who would disturb the church by pernicious doctrines, or scandalous practices, and especially they who would ungratefully turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and thereby deny the only true God, and our Saviour, reflect upon the awful judgment of God on the rebel angels, and on sinful men, not on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah only, but even on his own people, whom he had delivered from Egypt, when they proved obstinate and unbelieving: and as we dread an exclusion from the heavenly Canaan; yea, as we dread the chains of darkness, and the vengeance of eternal fire; let us avoid and abhor the character described in the following verses: the dream of lewdness, the brutal indulgence of sensuality, the contradiction of Korah, the covetousness of Balaam, and the malignity of Cain. God has written down their condemnation and destruction in the eternal records of his word; that they might be for a sign, and that others may hear and fear, and take heed that they do not so wickedly. 4 6, 7 5 8, &c. 11 4

SECTION II.

The apostle pursues the character of the scandalous professors he had mentioned before; and concludes with exhorting the christians to whom he wrote, to endeavour to secure their own edification in faith and love, and to do their utmost for the preservation and recovery of others. Jude, ver. 12, *to the end.*

JUDE 12.

JUDE 12. THESE are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

I MUST farther proceed to caution you, my brethren, against those wicked and seducing men, who are so desirous of insinuating themselves into the christian church, and whose attempts to corrupt it are so unwearied, and, in many instances, so fatal. *These are spots in your love-feasts,*[a] which tend to expose them to the reproach of the adversary; *[who] when they banquet with you, feed themselves without fear,* and will run into excesses, which, if they be not resolutely suppressed, will be imputed to the whole body. They make indeed a great profession of their designs of usefulness in the church, but they are *clouds without water,* from which no refreshment or fruitfulness is to be expected: *borne about by the winds* of temptation hither and thither, without any command of themselves; and if, when they first took upon them the christian profession, they gave some better hopes, as many of them perhaps did, they are like *trees whose early buddings are withered,*[b] and so now remain *without fruit;* yea, not only so, but are *twice dead:*[c] successive summers and winters have passed over them, and they have been continually growing more fit for fuel, and so are now good for nothing but *to be utterly rooted up,* to be taken away from the plantation, which they only cumber, dishonour, and deform, and cast into the fire. Their passions are violent and impetuous, like so many *fierce waves of the sea,* furiously *foaming out* the irregular tumults of their hearts; and in them *their own shame: wandering stars,*[d] which, though for a while they may glitter, will soon have ended their course, will be found, notwithstanding all their blaze, destitute of any real and permanent light of their own, and in the number of those *to whom blackness of darkness is reserved for ever,* and will soon be driven to an eternal distance from the great Original of light and happiness, to which they shall never return. *And* indeed, when I consider their characters and their actions, I may say, that according to the ancient tradition, *Enoch also, the seventh* in lineal descent *from Adam, prophesied*[e] *against them,*[f] SECT. 2. JUDE 12 13 14

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying,

a *Love-feasts.*] So I chose to render αγαπαις, as it is well known the primitive christians had such feasts, though it seems that, from the *abuse* of them by persons of a character like those here described, they were soon laid aside. See Mr. Hallet on the subject. *Notes and Disc.* Vol. III. *Disc.* 6. Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby, who follows him, are not for referring the αγαπαι here mentioned to the christians' *feasts of charity;* in opposition to whom, the learned reader may consult Witsius's *Commentary* on the place.

b *Whose early buddings are withered.*] We render this, *whose fruit withereth;* but it seems to me, that φθινοπωρινα is much more exactly rendered as in this version, and the appearance of a tautology avoided.

c *Twice dead.*] Some explain this of *natural corruption* and *apostasy;* but the gloss in the paraphrase seems much more easy and genuine. There is an admirable strength and spirit in the description given in the following verses.

d *Wandering stars.*] The Jews are said to have called their teachers *stars;* and they are represented under that emblem, Rev. i. 16; ii. 1. And as the planets seem to have a very irregular motion, being sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, they are proper emblems of persons so *unsettled* in their principles, and so *irregular* in their behaviour, as these men were.

e *Enoch prophesied.*] A precious fragment of antediluvian history is here preserved to us, as it seems, by the special providence of God, who taught the apostle Jude to distinguish between what was genuine and spurious in the tradition. It can by no means be proved, that this is a quotation from that foolish book, called *Enoch's Prophecy,* as Bishop Sherlock has very rightly urged: nor would it prove the inspiration of the book from whence it was taken, but only the truth of this *particular* passage. Sherlock, *On Proph.* p. 188, 189. 5th Edit. Compare 2 Tim. iii. 8. and the note there.

f *Prophesied against them.*] Mr. Blackwall (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 164.) has shown by adequate authorities, that προεφητευτε τουτοις may be rendered, *prophesied against these.* Perhaps this may explain what was said before, of their being *registered to this condemnation,* ver. 4. Some have thought the *coming of the Lord* here mentioned, was his coming attended with *angels* to bring on the *deluge.* If it refers to his coming to the *universal judgment,* it is a most remarkable testimony to a *future state,* not indeed in the Mosaic economy, but previous to it. And perhaps Moses's omitting this, (as I think it almost certain he knew it,) is to be resolved into the restriction under which he wrote, agreeable to the principles which the learned Dr. Warburton has so largely stated in his *Divine Legation, &c.*

SECT. 2. JUDE

and described their crimes and their condemnation, *when he said, Behold, the Lord* *comes with myriads of his holy ones,* attended with legions of angels in his descent for this important purpose: For he comes *to execute judgment upon all* according to their respective works; *and* by witnesses that cannot be confronted, particularly *to convict all* 15 *the ungodly among them, of all their impious works which they have impiously committed; and* he will then be mindful, not only of their cruel and oppressive acts, but *of all the hard* and irreligious *things which impious sinners have spoken against him* and his people: and certain it is, that these words are as suitable to their case as if it had been 16 particularly intended. *These are murmurers,* that can never be contented with the allotments of Providence, or with the conduct of any about them; *that find fault* continually *with their lot, walking according to their own* unbridled *lusts; and their mouth speaks extravagant things;*[g] some, by way of exclamation against those they disapprove, and others in the height of encomiums and panegyrics, on those who are their favourites and the leaders of their party; *having* [*such*] *persons in admiration,* not so much *for the sake of* their real excellences, as of some present *gain* which they meanly propose to 17 themselves as the reward of their servile flattery. *But you,* my *beloved,* instead of following these wandering guides, *remember the words which were formerly spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,*[h] who have preached his gospel to you in all its purity 18 and energy. *For they have told you, that in the last time* profane *mockers shall come, walking according to their own ungodly* and wanton *lusts,*[i] and making a jest of those 19 who do not run with them to the same excesses of riot. *These are they who,* in many places, *separate themselves* from the church, as of a purer stamp, and more refined attainments than others; *sensual,* and entirely addicted to the low gratifications of their animal life; by which they make it too apparent *that* they *have not the Spirit,* what- 20 ever high pretences they may make to its extraordinary communications. *But* I have the pleasing persuasion, that *you,* my *beloved* brethren, will not only guard against being seduced by them, but, according to the exhortations so often given you, will still be *edifying yourselves* and one another, *in your most holy faith;* that understanding its articles more clearly, and feeling their happy efficacy to promote the work of holiness in your souls, you may be more and more established against the attacks of these deceivers; especially *praying in the Holy Spirit,* and under his influence, vouchsafed in answer to 21 your prayers, making swifter advances in the divine life. And be careful thus to *keep yourselves in* the exercise of that sacred affection, *the love of God,* which ought always to rule in your hearts; *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,* to which this compassionate Saviour will assuredly conduct all those who confide in him.

22 *And* while you are yourselves animated with this cheerful hope, do your utmost for the preservation of others, and, in this respect, *on some have* tender *compassion,* and apply to them with the softest and most endearing offices of christian friendship; *making a* great *difference* between them and the case of others, who have drunk deeper of the poison, and 23 are become active in the mischief. It may seem to have an unkind appearance, *but* it is most certain, there are *some,* whom if you would *save* at all, you must attempt it *with fear* and trembling, by severe methods; as alarmed yourselves, and terrifying them with the apprehensions of God's judgments; as if you were *snatching* [*them*] with eagerness *out of the fire,* into which they are fallen, or just ready to fall. And if you desire that your efforts, in either of these cases, should be successful, you must take great care to preserve your own purity, *hating even the garment* that is *spotted with the flesh,*[k] lest by the 24 touch of it you yourselves be polluted. I am sensible this will require strenuous vigilance and resolution; but I hope the grace of God will animate you to it. To this therefore *now* I solemnly commit you; *even to him who is able to keep you from falling:* rugged and dangerous as the ways of life are, *and* feeble as you know yourselves to be, he is able at length *to present* [*you*] *blameless,* and in the full perfection of holiness, *before the pre-* 25 *sence of his glory,* in his final appearance, *with exceeding* great and unutterable *joy. To* him, as *the only wise God,* who is now become *our Saviour,* our Guardian, our Friend, and our Father, [*be*] *glory and majesty, dominion and power,* ascribed; and obedience, reverence, and love rendered, through Christ Jesus, *both now and through all ages,* world without end. *Amen.*

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words,* having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy:

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

g *Extravagant things.*] So I think υπερογκα may very probably be rendered; and if we may judge of extravagant things, *by those* which Irenæus in particular has recorded in his account of some *early heretics,* the expression was applied with the utmost propriety. See the same phrase, Dan. xi. 36. in the Seventy. Witsius, *in loc.*

h *Apostles of our Lord, &c.*] The resemblance between this text and 2 Pet. iii. 2. is very remarkable. Bishop Sherlock observes it to be such as would incline one to think that St. Jude had the text in Peter before him, and omitted what hath a peculiar reference to the former part of St. Peter's Epistle, and to which there was nothing in his own to answer. See his *Discourses on Proph.* p. 193. 5th Edit.

i *Ungodly lusts.*] For ασεβειων, *ungodly,* some would read ασελγειων, *lascivious,* or wanton. See *Phil. Lips.* against Collins, p. 73. But as this reading is not absolutely necessary to the sense, I cannot persuade myself to alter the word merely on conjecture.

k *Garment spotted with the flesh.*] Mr. Cradock interprets this of the caution with which a man would avoid a *garment* which had been worn by one who had a *plague-sore;* but perhaps there may be a reference to such passages in the Mosaic law, as Lev. xv. 4, 10, 17. See Witsius on the place, who well defends this sense against Erasmus; whose opinion it was, that the apostle alludes to the *white garment,* which those who were *newly baptized* put on in token of *innocence.*

IMPROVEMENT.

Let those who have the honour of being numbered among the disciples of Christ, stand at the remotest distance from the evil with which these unhappy creatures are branded by the apostle in this Epistle. And may divine grace preserve all his churches from such spots in their feasts of charity! May our horizon be secured from those dark and gloomy clouds without water; the plantations of God among us be free from the incumbrance and disgrace of those withered and fruitless trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots! How illustrious was the prophecy with which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was inspired; and how precious is that fragment of antediluvian history which is here preserved, and which shall surely be accomplished in its season! The day is now much nearer, when the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints: may the ungodly remember it, and suppress in time the speeches which will then assuredly be reproved, and repent of the deeds which, if unrepented of, however forgotten now, will be brought into open view, and draw down upon their heads the destruction which at present seems to linger. That we may have confidence before him at his coming, let us remember the words of the apostle, and implore the influences of the Divine Spirit, which sensualists, who walk after their own lusts, quench and stifle, and which they mock and deride. Let us, however, be concerned to edify ourselves in our most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, under his influence, direction, and assistance. The security of the heart amidst so many temptations, and its richest cordial in all its afflictions, is the love of God: but how soon does the celestial flame languish and die, if it be not constantly fed with new fuel! Let it then be our care, in humble dependence upon divine grace, to keep ourselves in the love of God; which will be cherished in proportion to that degree of faith and hope, with which we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life: for what can so powerfully excite our love to God as such a consideration?

SECT. 2.

JUDE Ver. 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

If we do expect it, let us express our regard to the salvation of others, as well as to our own; and apply ourselves to those who seem to be in danger, with such different addresses of awe or tenderness as their different circumstances and tempers may require. But some way or another, let us exert ourselves to pluck them out of the fire, who are in danger of falling into it, and perishing for ever.

22, 23

A care to preserve our own characters and consciences unspotted, will be necessary to our courage and hope of success, in such efforts as these. Let us therefore be more frequently looking up to him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford, beyond what heaven itself shall have given us in the separate state; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed, in seeing the full accomplishment of the travail of his soul. To him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

24, 25

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Paraphrase and Notes

ON

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THOUGH the authority of this book was called in question in the beginning of the *third century*, yet this is no reasonable objection against receiving it into the sacred canon; for perhaps no part of the New Testament, though of unquestionable authenticity and credit, was more universally acknowledged, or mentioned with higher respect, during the *two preceding centuries*. Dr. Mill observes, that in a few years after it was written, it was numbered among the *apostolical* writings, by the churches of Asia, the neighbouring churches of Syria and Samaria, the more distant ones of Africa, Egypt, and Rome, and the other churches of Europe. Accordingly, Mr. Lowman, citing this remark of Dr. Mill, makes the following additional observation, "that hardly any one book hath received more early, more authentic, or more satisfactory attestations."

Its *canonical authority* being debated so late as the *third century*, when it had been universally admitted before, appears to have arisen from the opposition made to those absurd opinions, which it is well known were entertained by several fathers, concerning the *millennium;* these being entirely grounded upon an injudicious and mistaken interpretation of some prophecies contained in this sacred book, Caius, with some others, to end the controversy as speedily and effectually as possible, weakly and indiscreetly ventured to deny the authority of the book, which had given occasion to it. If the reader would see this argument handled at large, and the sentiments of the ancients represented fully and distinctly, he may consult Dr. Mill's *Prolegomena*, Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations on the Apocalypse*, Dr. Twells's third part of his *Critical Examination of the New Text and Version*, and Dr. Lardner's second part of the *Credibility of the Gospel History*, *passim*.

This prophetic book is entitled, *The Revelation of* Jesus Christ, *which he sent and signified by his angel to his servant* John. There is, in my opinion, very little reason to doubt that the John here mentioned was the *Evangelist* of that name, and the *Author of the three Epistles*. For concerning *this John*, antiquity agrees, that he was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, for his adherence to the christian faith. And the author of this book informs the churches of Asia, (chap. i. ver. 9.) that *he, their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, received these revelations, when he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of* Jesus Christ. And if, with some learned men, we apprehend that the tradition of the Evangelist John being banished to the isle Patmos was occasioned by this passage of the Revelation, it shows at least, that it was the most early, as well as most generally, received opinion of the ancients, that the author of this book was the same with *St. John the Evangelist*. This book is commonly called, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. But this appellation of its author is not of *canonical authority:* it was first given to St. John by Eusebius, not to distinguish him from any other person of the same name, but on account of those mysterious and sublime points of divinity, with the knowledge of which he seems to have been favoured above his fellow-apostles.

If the account of Eusebius is to be credited, that St. John was banished into Patmos, and there received his Revelation, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, we may fix the date of this book, with great probability, about the year 96. I am aware, that some authors of very distinguished character, and particularly the great Sir Isaac Newton, place it earlier, and even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The learned Wolfius (in his *Prolegomena to the Revelation*, in the fifth volume of his *Curæ Philologicæ*) hath examined and refuted this opinion: I shall here only observe, that perhaps the seven churches of Asia were not founded so early as this opinion supposes, or at least they were not then become so considerable, much less had undergone such changes and revolutions, as the respective Epistles to them recorded in this book represent them to have done.

At the close of the magnificent description of our blessed Lord's appearance to St. John, contained in the first chapter, he is ordered to *write the things which he saw*, (that is, the glorious vision he then beheld,) and *the things which are*, or

the state of the churches at that time, and *the things which shall be hereafter*, or the future state and condition of the church, to the end of the world. Accordingly, this book may properly be divided into *three parts*.

The *first*, containing the *introduction*, or a preface and dedication to the seven churches in Asia, and an account of the glorious vision of our Lord, with which St. John was favoured during his banishment in Patmos, where he also received a divine revelation concerning the state of the church. (Chap. i. *throughout.*)

The *second part*, containing the *Epistles* which Christ commanded him to write to the seven churches of Asia, relating to their present circumstances, and to the duties resulting from them. (Chap. ii. and iii.)

The *third part*, which describes the condition of the church in after times, from the *third chapter* to the end of the book, begins with a sublime description of the Deity enthroned in glory, surrounded with angels, and with the heavenly church; and then proceeds to represent a *sealed book*, or the volume of God's decrees, given to the *Lamb*, who only was worthy to open it, and who, on that account, receives the acclamation of the whole choir of saints and angels. (Chap. iv. v.) After this sublime apparatus, the *Lamb* is represented as opening the *seals* of the book, one after another; and with this the scene of prophecy begins; which may very properly be divided (as it is by the learned Mr. Lowman, who is undoubtedly the best commentator extant on this part of the New Testament) into *seven periods*.

The FIRST PERIOD is that of the *seals*.

The *first* seal represents a white horse, his rider having a bow in his hand, and a crown of gold on his head, going forth to conquer.

The *second* represents a red horse; and to his rider is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth.

The *third* represents a black horse, whose rider hath a pair of scales in his hand, to weigh corn and provision.

The *fourth* represents a pale horse, whose name is Death, to whom is given power to slay the fourth part of the earth with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts of the field.

The *fifth* represents, under the altar, the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God; and the final reward of their constancy.

The *sixth* represents an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven.

After the description of the opening of these *six seals*, and of the consequent visions, an *angel* is represented as sealing *one hundred forty and four thousand* with the seal of the living God, after which is introduced the choir of the *heavenly church* blessing the Almighty; and one of the *elders* shows St. John the happiness of those who had patiently endured tribulation. (Chap. vii. *throughout.*)

The *Lamb* is then represented as opening the *seventh seal*, which is succeeded by silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; introductory to the

SECOND PERIOD, which is that of the *trumpets*, given to the seven angels already mentioned. And upon the sounding the

First trumpet, there is hail and fire mingled with blood cast down upon the earth, representing bloody and destructive wars. On the sounding of the

Second trumpet, a great mountain, as it were, burning with fire, is cast into the sea; by which a third part of it becomes blood, and a third part of the creatures in the sea die, and a third part of the ships are destroyed. On the sounding of the

Third trumpet, a great burning star falls from heaven upon a third part of the rivers, and of the fountains of waters, and a third part of the waters become bitter. On the sounding of the

Fourth trumpet, a third part of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, is darkened. And a woe is denounced by one of the angels against them that dwell on the earth, for the trumpets of the three angels who are yet to sound. On the sounding of the

Fifth trumpet, the bottomless pit is opened, and from thence issue forth *locusts* in great multitudes, not to destroy the fruits of the earth, but to torment its inhabitants. These locusts are described like horses prepared for battle, with crowns on their heads like gold, and their faces like the faces of men, their hair like the hair of women, their teeth like lions', their breast-plates like iron, the noise of their wings like that of chariots and horses, their tails like scorpions, and armed with stings; having the angel of the bottomless pit for their leader. On the sounding of the

Sixth trumpet, the four angels which were bound by the great river Euphrates are loosed, and lead up mighty armies of horsemen for the destruction of mankind. (Chap. viii. ix.)

After the sixth trumpet had sounded, St. John relates the marvellous vision of an angel who appeared to him in great glory, and brought him a little book, which he is commanded to eat; and then he is ordered again to prophesy to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (Chap. x. *throughout.*) And thus the

THIRD PERIOD is introduced, which is pointed out by various representations;

1. By the measuring of the Temple; part of which is given to, and trodden under foot by, the Gentiles; and two witnesses are represented as prophesying in sackcloth 1260 days, and then, having been put to death, are raised again from the dead; and upon the sounding of the trumpet of the *seventh* angel, their triumphs over their enemies are celebrated by the heavenly hosts! (Chap. xi. 1—18.) And the temple of God being opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant displayed, the state of the church in this period is described,

2. As a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and while she was in travail, assaulted by a fiery dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven crowns; and when she is delivered, her child is caught up to God: and she flies into the wilderness to avoid the dragon, where she is supported 1260 days; and the dragon is vanquished by the angels. (Chap. xi. 19.—xii. *throughout.*) The deplorable condition of the church in this period is described farther,

3. By the faithful being exposed to the ravages of a wild beast, whom St. John saw in a vision rising out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, that is, ten diadems, and on his heads names of blasphemy, to whom the dragon gave his power and authority; so that the inhabitants of the earth worshipped the beast, as well as the dragon; and the beast had power to make war with the saints 42 months, or 1260 days; (which is the same space of time during which the woman, in the preceding vision, is said to have been supported in the wilderness, and during which, in the first vision, the two witnesses are said to prophesy in sackcloth: a circumstance which plainly demonstrates these visions to be descriptive of the

state of things in the same period, and not in successive periods.) And the power and authority of this beast is supported by another beast, which arose after it, and which is also particularly described. And the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, which is also said to be the number of a man, is *six hundred and sixty-six*. After which follows a sublime description of the *Lamb* standing on Mount Zion, surrounded with the *one hundred and forty-four thousand*, who have the name of his Father written in their foreheads, while the heavenly church celebrates the happiness of those who had continued faithful, and persevered to the end.—The next vision is of an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel in his hand, denouncing the judgment of God to be approaching on the beast, and on them who worship him: which is likewise set forth by some succeeding representations:—And particularly,

By an order given to the *seven angels* to pour out their vials, full of the *seven last plagues*, in which the wrath of God is completed on the beast and his votaries.

The *first* vial is poured out upon the earth, and produces a grievous ulcer on them who had the mark of the beast.

The *second* vial is poured out upon the sea, which becomes blood, and every living thing in the sea dies.

The *third* vial is poured out on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, which also become blood.

The *fourth* vial is poured forth on the sun, which hath power given to it to scorch men with fire.

The *fifth* vial is poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom is darkened, and his votaries gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven for their pains and their ulcers.

The *sixth* vial is poured out on the river Euphrates, and the water of it is dried up, so that a way is prepared for the kings of the east; against whom the worshippers of the beast are drawn up in order of battle. And then upon the pouring out of

The *seventh* vial, a voice is heard from heaven accompanied with thunder and lightning, saying, "It is completed;" that is, Babylon the Great hath drank of the cup of the wine of God's fiercest indignation.

After the pouring out of these *vials*, one of the angels who had executed that commission, farther explains what had been represented, by describing the character of the great *harlot* who sitteth on many waters, and with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. And then follows an account of another angel descending from heaven, declaring with a loud voice that Babylon the Great is fallen, and pointing out the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Upon which is described the triumph of the heavenly host on account of the fall of Babylon; which is farther illustrated by the representation of an attack made by Christ and his army on the beast, ending in an entire victory over him. (Chap. xiii.—xix.)

The FOURTH PERIOD represents an angel descending from heaven to confine the great *dragon*, or *Satan*, in the bottomless pit, for the space of a *thousand years*; during which the church is in a very peaceful and flourishing condition. (Chap. xx. 1—6.)

The FIFTH PERIOD represents Satan loosed again for a little season, and making a fresh attempt for the establishment of his kingdom, which shall issue in its utter destruction. (Ver. 7—10.)

The SIXTH PERIOD represents the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the utter destruction of the wicked. (Ver. 11, *to the end.*)

The SEVENTH PERIOD represents the vision of new heavens and a new earth, or the happiness of the Jerusalem above, described by the sublimest figures which can enter into the human imagination. (Chap. xxi. xxii. 1—5.)

In the conclusion of this truly marvellous series of prophecy, with which the canon of scripture closes, our blessed Lord, in the most awful manner, charges his faithful servant and apostle John, to reveal to the churches what had thus been revealed to him, and declares his own speedy approach to the final judgment; denouncing a very dreadful sentence of condemnation on those who should *add to* or *diminish* the words of the prophecy of this book. And then the sacred writer concludes the whole with a solemn benediction. (Chap. xxii. 6, *to the end.*)

After all the labour and pains which learned men have been at, to explain and illustrate this book, so many articles are contained in it, which are dark and mysterious, that I remained some time undetermined whether I should publish any commentary upon it at all. But on a more devout and attentive review, I resolved to offer to the reader what assistance I could, to enable him to comprehend its general design, and lead him to those practical and important instructions which it suggests, with great plainness and energy: without entering very deeply into critical inquiries concerning those particular events to which the several prophecies may be supposed to refer. It is an excellent observation of Mons. Saurin, that "this is a very mortifying book to a mind greedy of knowledge and science, but a very satisfying and agreeable one to a "heart solicitous about maxims and precepts," for regulating our tempers and lives; or, in his own expressive and elegant words, *L'Apocalypse, qui est un des plus mortifians ouvrages, pour un esprit avide de connoissance et de lumiere, est un des plus satisfaisans pour un cœur avide de maximes et de preccpts.* Saurin's *Serm.* Vol. XII. p. 234.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

SECTION I.

The preface, and dedication to the seven churches in Asia; including an affecting display of the divine glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sublime songs of praise to him for redeeming love. Rev. i. 1—8.

REVELATION i. 1.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ; which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

REVELATION i. 1.

THIS is the book of *the revelation of Jesus Christ:* even that revelation *which God* his Father *gave to him* for wise and holy purposes, *to show to his servants the things which must shortly be;* many of which are to be very quickly accomplished, and the rest within a period of time, which, when compared with his reign in the heaven of heavens, with all his saints and people, is only a short and very inconsiderable duration. *And sending* the discovery of these things *by his angel,* whose office it was to raise extraordinary signs and representations in his imagination, *he signified them to his servant John,* who had indeed been distinguished by his Master's affection in the days of his flesh; insomuch that he even lay in his bosom, and was stiled, by way of eminence, the disciple whom Jesus loved: And *who,* being honoured with so important a message, failed not faithfully to declare it: but *testified the word of God,* which in those prophetic visions came unto him, *and the testimony of Jesus Christ,* (whose messenger the angel was,) exactly reporting *whatever he saw.* *Happy* [*is*] *he that* attentively *readeth, and they that* obediently *hear, the words of this prophecy, and* who *keep the things that are written in it,* fixing their mind upon them, and duly regarding them; *for the time* of their accomplishment [*is*] *at hand.*

SECT. 1. REV. 1.

1 2 3

And considering the particular manner in which they were addressed by our blessed Lord, in some of the first of these revelations, *JOHN* dedicates and inscribes this account of the whole *to the seven churches, which are in* the proconsular *Asia,* at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; wishing that *grace,* in the richest abundance, *and peace,* in all the variety of its blessings, may [*be*] *with you* all from the great God, the Fountain of all blessings, even *from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come,*[a] possessed of invariable divine attributes and perfections; *and from the seven spirits which are before his throne,*[b] and appear as emblems of the various operations and endowments of that one blessed Spirit by whom they are actuated: *And from Jesus Christ, the* true and *faithful Witness,* whose testimony is ever to be received with the most religious regard, as being *the First-born from the dead,* the first who rose to die no more, and who, as the eldest Son of the family of God, is gone to take possession of the inheritance for himself, *and* in the name of his brethren; even from him, who is *the* supreme *Ruler of* all *the kings of the earth,* and who knows how to humble them in their proudest career, and defeat their mightiest opposition to his kingdom, by deposing one, or exalting another, at his sovereign pleasure; and even removing them by a single act of his will, not only from the thrones they fill, but from the world they inhabit. This glorious Person let us all adore, conscious of our infinite obligations to him; and say, *To him who hath loved us* with the most unparalleled affection, *and* hath condescended so low, that he hath *washed us from* the otherwise indelible stains of *our sins in his own* most precious *blood,* having shed it to make satisfaction and atonement for them; *And* in consequence of this, *hath made us kings and priests to his God and Father,* that we should reign with

4 5 6

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

4 JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne:

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful Witness, *and* the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God

a *From him who is, and who was, &c.*] The learned Grotius is of opinion, that the nominative case not being varied into what the grammarians call a genitive, as the common rules of grammar require, is designed to represent the everlasting veracity and invariableness of God, and the unchangeable majesty of Christ in the testimony of his gospel, and the glory of his kingdom.

b *The seven spirits before his throne.*] Some have explained this of the *seven archangels,* and urged it as an instance of *invocation* to them; but we may rather suppose the *Spirit of God* to be *symbolically* represented by the *seven spirits before the throne;* as it is a view very agreeable to the genius of this *emblematical* book. This, as Bishop Burnet observes, in support of this opinion, (see Burnet, *On the Articles,* p. 39.) is most consistent with the prohibition of *prayer to the angels.* And if we do not suppose this to be the case, it will be a great difficulty to account for the omission of the Spirit, whose dignity must, on almost every hypothesis, be allowed far superior to that of the highest created angels. See Mr. Lowman, *in loc.*

SECT. 1. REV. 1.

him in eternal life, and enjoy the perpetual pleasure of worshipping before him in his heavenly temple, and in the mean time be trained up for it by offering spiritual sacrifices: *to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever*, throughout the endless ages of eternity. *Amen.* So let it be for the honour of our Lord, as well as the comfort of his people, to whom he is more dear, than it is possible any separate interest of their own can be: And

and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 so it shall be; for *behold* and observe with suitable regard, *he is*, as it were, even now *coming in* that pomp and majesty in which he himself described his appearance, with *the clouds* of heaven, in power and great glory; the day is so near at hand, that it may be said to be already come; *and* however men may affect to overlook and neglect him and his interest now, *every eye shall* then *see him*,[c] and every other object which at present invites their regard, shall utterly vanish; *even* all *they who* have *pierced him* shall behold him, and they that condemned him shall be arraigned at his tribunal; *and all the tribes of the earth*, who have rejected his government, and opposed his interest, *shall mourn because of him*,[d] shall lament that fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction. "*Yea*, Lord, we repeat "our joyful assent: *amen;* come, Lord Jesus, in the clouds of heaven; take to thyself "thy great power and reign; thy people shall lift up their heads with joy and triumph,

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 "being infallibly assured that their complete redemption is approaching." And to confirm their faith and hope, let them hear him speaking, as it were, by his own majestic voice from heaven, and saying, *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end;* I was before all worlds, and shall continue the same when all the revolutions of this world are over, and the final scenes relating to it shall be concluded. I am the First and the Last; I am he, *saith the Lord* Jehovah, *who is, and who was, and who is to come*, the eternal, the unchangeable, *the Almighty*[e] Author, Supporter, and Disposer of all things.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what sublimity doth this wonderful book open! which, though pregnant with inexplicable mysteries, is at the same time pregnant with instruction, which the weakest of Christ's humble disciples may peruse with sacred complacency and delight. For surely we are not to imagine that divine book to be unfit for our perusal, and
Ver. 3 undeserving our regard, concerning which its Divine Author expressly declares, Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy! Thanks be to our heavenly Father, that he gave it to his Son
1 Jesus Christ. Thanks to the Son of God, that he gave it to his servant John, to be transmitted down to future generations.

Let us attentively view the divine glory of the Father, and of his only-begotten Son, who is the Brightness of that glory, and the express Image of his person, and of the Holy Ghost, who is here represented by the seven spirits
4 before the throne. From us, and from all created nature, let there be glory to him that is, and that was, and that
5 is to come, and to the First-Born from the dead, who is superior to all the kings of the earth, and to all the angels
8 of heaven, who is so intimately united with the Father in divine perfections and glories, that he also is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End; that he also is Almighty; able by his mighty power to subdue all things to himself; and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Never let us be unmindful of the condescension of the Son of God, in becoming for our redemption and salvation the Son of man. Let the great things he has done for us, the great things he has taught us to expect from him, be ever familiar to our minds. How astonishing was
5 that love, which engaged him to wash us from our sins in his own blood! How glorious is that exaltation to which he is raising us: rendering us, even in the present world, kings and priests to God, and inspiring us with the ardent hope of an immutable kingdom, and an everlasting priesthood in the temple of our God above. This is the sublime and transcendent happiness of all who with lively faith look for that blessed hope, and the glorious
7 appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This illustrious Personage is coming in the clouds, and our eyes shall see him: too often already have we pierced him; let us now look up to him with an humble and lively faith; let us mourn over our sins at present, that we may not pour forth floods of unprofitable tears in that awful day; as all the tribes of the earth shall do, who have dared to set themselves against the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom which shall then be triumphant over all opposition, the last of its enemies being vanquished and destroyed.

c *He is coming in the clouds, and every eye shall see him.*] It is surprising that Dr. Whitby should interpret these words as relating to the temporal calamities to befall the Jews, when the destruction of Jerusalem was long since past. And whatever slaughter was made of the Jews in Lybia, Smyrna, Alexandria, and other places afterwards, it could by no means be called *the coming of Christ in the clouds* by way of eminence: even though that phrase might be allowed applicable to remarkable temporal vengeance, inflicted by the providence, and in the cause, of Christ.

d *All the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him.*] In this verse is prefixed the *great moral*, which the whole book is designed to illustrate; namely, that though there should be great opposition made against the cause and kingdom of Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain; and his kingdom should triumph in the most illustrious manner; so that all who had opposed it, should have the greatest reason to *mourn*. And as this series of divine prophecy begins, so it ends, with this sentiment, and with the joyful *consent* of his faithful servants to this glorious truth, which should fill the enemies of Christ with such terror and dismay. Compare chap. xxii. 20.

e *I am the Alpha, &c.*] This has been interpreted by many as spoken by the Father; but it will be very difficult to give sufficient proof of it. Most of the phrases which are here used concerning this glorious Person, are afterwards used concerning *our Lord Jesus Christ;* and παντοκρατωρ, though in ecclesiastical writers of the earliest ages, generally, so far as I can find, appropriated to the Father, may, according to the Syriac version, be rendered, *He who holds*, that is, superintends, supports, and governs *all;* and then it is applied to Christ, Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3. But if, after all, the words should be understood as spoken by the Father, our Lord's applying so many of these titles afterwards to himself, plainly proves his partaking with the Father in the glory *peculiar* to the divine nature, and incommunicable to any creature.—See Bishop Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 175. Dr. Clarke contends that the word παντοκρατωρ is peculiar to the Father, (compare Clarke, *On the Trinity*, No. 414, and *Posth. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 70.) yet he intimates that Christ may have the title of *Alpha and Omega*, as *Author and Finisher of our Faith*, Beginner and Completer of our salvation. Heb. xii. 2.

SECTION II.

St. John gives an account of the circumstances and manner of our Lord's appearance to him, when he received the revelation in Patmos. Rev. i. 9—16.

Rev. i. 9.

I JOHN, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword:

Rev. i. 9.

I JOHN, who was formerly distinguished by the name of the disciple whom Jesus loved,[a] *who am also your brother*, O ye christians, *and* who have the honour to be a *partaker* with you all *in* the *tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:* with all, I say, who are called to the hope of his kingdom, and in the patient expectation of that, endure with cheerfulness the afflictions which his infinite wisdom is pleased to appoint us: I *was in the* desert and disconsolate *island* of the Ægean sea *called Patmos*,[b] to which I was banished by Domitian the Emperor, *for the sake of the word of God*, manifested in the gospel, *and for the testimony of Jesus Christ* which I had endeavoured faithfully to maintain. *I was* on a sudden *in the Spirit*, under his miraculous energy, *on* that blessed day which we christians are accustomed to call *the Lord's day*,[c] the first day of the week, which our dear Redeemer has rendered sacred and venerable by his resurrection from the dead on the morning of it; *and* though I was then incapable of joining in any worshipping assembly, the want of that privilege was amply made up, by that manifestation with which the Lord of the day was pleased to favour me; for I *heard a great voice behind me*, as loud *as* the sound *of a trumpet*, *Which said*, in distinct and articulate accents, *I*, who am going to appear to thee, O John, *am the Alpha and the Omega*,[d] *the First and the Last;* I boast divine perfections and glories, and assume without robbery and usurpation the peculiar titles and prerogatives of the one eternal, infinite, and unchangeable Jehovah; and I am now descended from heaven, to give thee a revelation of the most astonishing and important events. *And*, as even the remotest ages are concerned in *what thou seest, write* an exact account of it *in a book, and send* copies of [*it*] *to the seven churches in Asia*,[e] *to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea*, that each may receive its own lesson, and at the same time enjoy the benefit of those which are intended for all the rest. *And I turned to see the* Person who uttered that wonderful *voice which spake unto me; and being* thus *turned, I saw* an astonishing scene, the particulars of which I shall now relate: There were *seven golden lamps* on their stands, which gave a bright and beautiful flame; *And in the midst of the seven* golden *lamps*, there was [*One*] in a human form, a glorious and majestic Person, *like* him who appeared to Daniel under the title of *the Son of Man*, and in whom I traced the lineaments of that blessed Redeemer, whom I had so long known under that endearing name and character; he appeared *clothed in a long robe*, not unlike the priestly vestment, *and* like persons of that holy order, *girded*, not about the middle, but something higher, *about the breasts with a golden girdle*,[f] which, being properly fastened there, hung down to his feet. And *his head, even* [*his*] *hairs* which adorned it, and flowed round his shoulders, [*were*] *white as wool*, or, to speak more properly, *as white as snow;* (Dan. vii. 9.) *and his eyes* [*were*] vivid and piercing *as a flame of fire; And his feet* were resplendent *like fine brass, when purified in a furnace* from all its dross, and polished by the hands of some skilful artificer; *and his voice* was loud *as the voice of many waters*, so that I imagined it might have been heard as far as the sounding noise of the billows of the sea, when they beat against the rocky shores: *And he had in his right hand seven* luminous and very beautiful *stars*, the motions of which he seemed to direct and govern, at the same time that he supported them; *and out of his mouth there went a sharp two-edged sword*, or dagger, capable of piercing and wound-

SECT. 2.

REV. I.

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a *I John*, the disciple whom Jesus loved.] So I boldly paraphrase these words, trusting to the general tradition of the church upon his head, of which I have taken notice in the Introduction; and I think there is some *similarity* in the phraseology here, and in the gospel of St. John, though I am sensible, at the same time, there is a greater elevation of style in some parts of this book than is to be found in the other writings of this apostle, which is not to be wondered at, considering the *extraordinary* nature of the *scenes* he records: which had a very natural tendency to raise the style, and perhaps might have elevated it in any *future* writings, in consequence of the wonderful and sublime ideas which now passed through his mind.

b *Island called Patmos.*] Ecclesiastical history tells us, that St. John was here employed in digging in a mine, being banished hither by Domitian the Emperor, after he had come unhurt out of a caldron of boiling oil. But the historical evidence produced for this great event is very uncertain.

c *In the Spirit on the Lord's day.*] It is so very unnatural, and contrary to the use of the word in all other authors, to interpret this of the Jewish Sabbath, as Mr. Baxter justly argues at large, (see his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 798.) that I cannot but conclude with him, and the generality of christian writers on this subject, that this text strongly infers the *extraordinary* regard paid to the first day of the week in the apostle's time, as a day solemnly consecrated to Christ in memory of his resurrection from the dead.

d *I am Alpha and Omega.*] That these titles should be repeated so soon, in a connexion which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the *eighth verse.* The argument drawn in the preceding note upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had been found; but its immediate connexion with this greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in the Bible, toward preventing me from giving in to *that scheme*, which would make our *Lord Jesus Christ* no more than a *deified creature.*

e *Seven churches in Asia.*] I presume not to inquire, whether these were the only *Asiatic churches.* To be sure, they were the *principal.* Nor will I inquire, why the Epistles were appropriated to the churches of that province. It is certain they contain many things of *universal* concern; and as there is plainly an intention to represent the regard of Christ to ministers and churches, by his *walking among golden candlesticks, and holding stars in his right hand*, the number *seven* may be mentioned as it seems best to harmonize with some other parts of this book, namely, with the *seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders*, and *seven spirits before the throne.*

f *A golden girdle.*] The girdles were a kind of *sash*, which first went over the neck like a tippet, were crossed on the breast, and then went round the lower part of the breast two or three times, like a modern circingle, and then they fell down almost to the feet. And as they were sometimes *embroidered*, and sometimes *fringed with gold*, they must make a very ornamental part of dress. The priests were required, for coolness and decency, to wear linen garments, and gird themselves higher than others. Compare Ezek. xliv. 17, 18. And this is one of the many allusions to the *temple*, and its forms and customs, with which we shall find this book so greatly to abound. Compare Exod. xxxix. 5.

SECT. 2. REV. I.

ing every way; *and his countenance* [*was*] radiant and glorious *as the sun* [*when he*] *shineth in* all *his* meridian *power* and lustre, and beams forth his rays, vigorous and unclouded.

and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9 WHAT unspeakable happiness can our blessed Redeemer confer on his faithful servants, while suffering in his cause! How wretched was Cæsar on his imperial throne, compared with this despised and persecuted disciple of Christ, in his old age banished to the desolate island of Patmos! There his Lord condescended to visit him, opened his eyes to prophetic visions, and diffused around him celestial glories. May we in no case be ashamed of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, a zeal for which was so graciously acknowledged, so gloriously rewarded.

10 It was on the Lord's day that the apostle was in the Spirit: how often has the Spirit of God visited his people at that sacred season, visited them as well in their secret retirements as in the public assembly; when the hand of Providence, as in the instance before us, and not their own negligence and indifference to divine ordinances, occasioned their absence from them: otherwise we might fear that those raptures of mind, which in the contempt of ordinances some make their boast and glory, arise from the artifices of the great enemy of souls, and are to be numbered among the most dangerous engines by which he attempts our ruin.

11 Let our souls again bend, in humble veneration, to him who is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega.

12 As if we heard his awful voice proclaiming himself by these illustrious and divine titles, let us turn, as it were, to behold him; and by these marvellous visions in which he manifested himself to St. John, let us endeavour to form

13—16 some imperfect ideas of our blessed Lord, and the magnificence and glory with which he appears to the inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Every circumstance, not excepting the minutest and most inconsiderable, attending this appearance of Christ to his beloved apostle, seems designed to convey some divine truth, some important lesson, for the contemplation and instruction of future ages. It was, in general, beyond all question, intended to impress us with the lowliest reverence of our glorified Redeemer, that we may pay him our humble and devout adoration, and thus in some degree anticipate the pleasure with which we hope to appear in his immediate presence above.

SECTION III.

Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses himself to the apostle John, and charges him with an Epistle to each of the seven Asiatic churches already mentioned; and, in the first place, with the Epistle to the church of Ephesus. Rev. i. 17.—ii. 7.

REV. i. 17.

SECT. 3. REV. I.

I HAVE just been describing the appearance of Jesus Christ to me, with which I was favoured on the Lord's day, in the island of Patmos, while I was engaged in such devout sentiments as were suitable to the time and occasion; *and I* now add, that *when I saw him* in this awful, this glorious and resplendent form, I was perfectly overwhelmed with

17 the majesty of his appearance, so that *I fell down at his feet as dead: and* he immediately condescended to raise me up with great indulgence; for *he laid his right hand upon me*, [*and*] *said to me, Fear not*, John, for I appear to thee for purposes of mercy; *I am*, indeed, as I have proclaimed myself, *the First and the Last*, possessed of divine perfections and

18 glories: And yet I still wear the human form, which I assumed for the redemption of human and fallen creatures like thyself; *I* [*am*] *he who lives*, and have life immortal and glory immutable in myself, though I *was* once *dead*, as thou knowest; *and* now *behold* it both with joy and wonder, *I am living for ever and ever; (Amen*;[a] be it so then, O Lord; mayst thou for ever live and reign!) *And* he added, *I have the keys of the unseen world*,[b] *and of death*; I have a supreme dominion over it, and remove the souls of men from world to world, calling them out of the body, and fixing them in the invisible state,

19 according to my pleasure, till at length I shall exert my power of raising the dead. *Write* therefore *the things which thou* now *seest, and those which* will be opened to thy view, in which there will be, in part, a reference to the things which already *are, and* a farther

20 reference to *the things which shall hereafter be*. And, as a general key to what I am now going to dictate, observe, that *as to the mystery of the seven stars, which thou* here *seest* as *in my right hand, and of the seven lamps* which are *of gold; the seven stars are* an emblematical representation of *the angels*, or presiding ministers *of the seven churches; and the seven lamps which thou seest, are* a representation of *the seven churches* themselves, to which I have directed thee to inscribe and transmit the important Epistles I am now about to dictate, according to what I observe of their respective circumstances and necessities.[c]

REV. i. 17.

AND when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not: I am the first and the last;

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

a *Amen.*] As this word appears to have additional force, if understood as expressing the joyful *assent* of John to what was delivered, I have inclosed it and the paraphrase upon it in a parenthesis.

b *Unseen world.*] It must be allowed, that ἅδης sometimes signifies, the *grave*, when the *body* only is spoken of. But, as Mr. Howe has largely proved in his excellent discourse on this text, the interpretation I have here given is most reasonable. That which would refer it to *hell* as the seat of the *damned*, limits the sense in a manner very derogatory from the honour of our blessed Redeemer, as he there shows unanswerably. Howe's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 61, &c. According to Grotius (see his note on Matt. xvi. 18.) the word *hades* always denotes either *death*, or *the state after death*, and they who are of opinion that Luke xvi. 23. is an exception, may consult this learned author's judicious notes on this place. Our English or rather Saxon word *hell*, in its original signification, (though it is now understood in a more limited sense,) exactly answers to the Greek word *hades*, and denotes a *concealed* or *unseen* place; and this sense of the word is still retained in the eastern, and especially in the western, counties of England; to *hele* over a thing, is to *cover* it. See Lord King's *History of the Creed*, chap. iv.

c Respective circumstances and necessities.] How exactly the address in each Epistle suits the state of the church to which it was sent, and what condescension is implied in our Saviour's giving them these distinct notices and admonitions, is in some measure, though very imperfectly, illustrated in my *Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ*. See *Serm.* vii. p. 182—184.

Rev. ii. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

And in the first place, address *to the angel*, or presiding officer,[d] *of the church at Ephesus*, and *write* thus, *These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand*, to signify that he is the great Support of his ministering servants, and directs their several situations and motions in the churches; and *who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps* to intimate thereby his presence among christian societies, and his particular inspection over them. My eyes have been carefully fixed upon thee, and I have observed many things in thy conduct with pleasure. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience*, with which thou hast endured the trials and sufferings to which thou hast been called out; *and* I know thou hast such a zeal for the honour of my gospel, and the establishment of my kingdom, *that thou canst not bear those who are evil*.[e] *And* as false pretensions to a divine mission and inspiration are so common, I know *thou hast tried those who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them* [*to be*] *liars*, and rejected their pretensions with a becoming disdain. *And* I know *thou hast sustained*, with exemplary fortitude, the trouble they have given thee; *and hast* exercised invincible *patience* under all thy sufferings and trials, in my cause; *and thou hast laboured* constantly and tenaciously *for my name's sake*, and to establish the faith of my people; *and hast not fainted* under thy toils or tribulations. *Nevertheless, I have* [*something*] to allege *against thee*, exemplary as thou art, in many respects, and it is this, *That thou hast lost* the zeal and fervour of *thy first love*[f] to me and my cause; and this cannot but be very displeasing to me. *Remember therefore from what thou art fallen;* recall those better days to thy memory, *and* in the view of them set thyself seriously to *repent* of the decay which hath so much prevailed; *and do the first works*, or rather endeavour to exceed them. *Otherwise* thou must expect that *I will come unto thee quickly*, in some awful dispensations of providence, *and take away thy lamp out of its place, unless thou repent*;[g] no longer shalt thou continue to be a church, if thou dost not endeavour to recover thy lost ground, and to shine at least with thy former lustre. *Nevertheless, thou hast this* honour and praise remaining, *that thou hatest the* impure *works of the* lewd *Nicolaitans*,[h] *which I also hate*, as having brought so great a reproach upon the christian name: To conclude: *Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to* all *the churches* for their encouragement; and to that of Ephesus in particular: *To him who conquers* the enemies which lie in the way of his duty and happiness, and manfully breaks through all opposition, *I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God:* the fruit of which gives immortality; and it is situated in the paradise above; so that he who resides within its reach, is possessed of such felicities and delights, as are far superior to those which Adam enjoyed in an earthly paradise, though in a state of uncorrupted and perfect innocence.

SECT. 3.

REV. II.

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IMPROVEMENT.

With whatever humble and holy reverence this awful representation of our blessed Redeemer may strike us, let us be encouraged to look up to him by a lively faith, and to hear with joy, and with purposes of the most grateful obedience, the gracious declaration he makes of that amazing contrast of divine perfections and characters, and of human weaknesses and infirmities, which met in him. The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, is he who lives and yet was dead, but is now alive for evermore: for us he became liable to death, but is now risen to a divine and immortal life; in which consideration let us continually rejoice on his account and on our own. It is exceedingly reviving to the heart of a sincere christian, that Jesus has the keys of the unseen world, and of death: so that whenever we are removed by the stroke of this our last enemy, it is only to be considered as his turning the key, which will let us out of this world into another of happiness and glory everlasting. How delightful to reflect,

REV. I. 17, 18

d *To the angel*, or presiding officer.] That there was one pastor, who presided in each of these churches, is indeed evident from the expression here used: but that he was a diocesan bishop, or had several congregations of christians under his care, can by no means be proved. Nor is there the least hint of it, that I know of, in any of these Epistles. Many have shown, from ancient Jewish writings, that there was an *officer* of the *synagogue* who had the name of *angel*. See Vitring. *de Synag. Vet.* lib. 3. p. ii. c. 3. And Dr. Lightfoot adds, that from his office of overlooking the *reader of the law*, he was called שליח, or *episcopus*. Compare Mal. ii. 7.

e *Canst not bear those who are evil.*] This has been pleaded by Lord Barrington, as an argument that the church of Ephesus, in the early days of christianity, recovered itself from those corruptions which some endeavoured to bring into it, (2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 17—26; iii. 6—10.) and which St. Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy, endeavoured, it seems, with some happy success, to prevent. *Misc. Sacr.* Vol. I. p. 42. Limborch has sufficiently shown (see his *Theol. lib.* v. cap. 37, § 19.) the absurdity of opposing such a text as this to the great christian doctrine of toleration, which some have madly endeavoured to prejudice by trifling inferences from such detached and perverted clauses, in opposition to the tenor of the whole New Testament. But the pretending to enforce such ecclesiastical censures as the laws of Christ do indeed in some cases require, with those secular terrors which the magistrate, by virtue of his office, is to inflict on immoralities prejudicial to society, has been the destruction of christian discipline in popish countries universally, and generally in all protestant establishments too.

f *Lost thy first love.*] It is very plain that these Epistles, though inscribed to the *angels* or *pastors* of the churches, are directed to the *churches themselves*, as represented by them. Just as the Jewish church was represented by Joshua, their high-priest, Zech. iii. 1. But it is not improbable, that where some of the churches are blamed, there might be in their ministers some faults correspondent to those charged upon the society; and particularly, that the zeal of this minister of Ephesus might be declining. There is, I think, no reason to be anxious with regard to Timothy's character on this account; for it can never be proved that he was a stated pastor of the church of Ephesus, though such confident things have been said concerning it on very slender foundations.

g *Take away thy lamp out of its place.*] As this threatening is addressed to the church of Ephesus, though much better than some other churches, it is reasonable to believe, that it, like other denunciations, was intended to awaken the rest. It intimates how terrible a thing it would be to have the *gospel taken away* from them. And indeed it has been executed upon them all in a very awful manner. For though there be a little congregation, if I remember right, at Smyrna, yet most of these churches are quite ruined, and with them the cities in which they stood, though they were once very celebrated. And it is hardly possible, even for one who is not a christian, to view the account which Sir Paul Ricaut, and the learned and ingenious Mr. Smith, have given of them, without being tenderly affected with so lamentable a catastrophe.

h *Nicolaitans.*] Some have thought these heretics derived their name from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons; and some ancient writers have asserted it. But the name was so common among the Jews, that little argument can be drawn from thence. See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 26. The substance of what ancient writers say concerning them is, that they taught the lawfulness of lewdness and idolatrous sacrifices, esteeming them things indifferent in their own nature; and their practices were suitable to such principles. Compare ver. 14, 15.

SECT. 3. that heaven is under the command of our Redeemer, and hell is under his control! What have his faithful servants to fear from the one? what have they not to hope from the other? How does this cheering sentiment disarm both life and death of their respective terrors!

Let us attend to each of these excellent epistles, which Christ condescended himself to dictate, and to address by the hand of his servant John, to these Asiatic churches. Let us attend to his titles, his admonitions, his promises, that we may be awed with holy reverence, that we may be animated to humble hope, and steady courage, in every encounter with the enemies of our salvation.

REV. II. Let the ministers of Christ rejoice, that they are as stars in the right hand of their Redeemer. "Support them, "O Lord, by thy almighty power, and guide all their motions by thine infinite wisdom." Let all the churches of
1 Christ remember, that he walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks; may they be pure gold; may their lamps shine with unsullied lustre, that their Father may be glorified, and their Saviour delighted with the survey.
2, 3 He sees our labour, our patience, our fidelity, and our zeal. May he see that we cannot bear those who would
6 corrupt our religion, without exerting ourselves to silence their false pretensions, and to guard the churches, to which we are related especially, from the venom they might diffuse over them! In all these respects, may we daily approve ourselves to him in a more perfect manner. But alas! does he not perceive in many of us, what he complained so
4 early of in the church of Ephesus; that we have lost our first love, and that much of that zeal with which we set out in religion is declined? If so, let us take the alarm: for dreadful indeed would it be to have our candlestick
5 removed out of its place; to have the gospel and all its privileges taken away from us. To prevent this awful judgment, let us recollect from whence we are fallen, if we are indeed in a backsliding and declining state; and humbly and heartily repent, and vigorously exert ourselves against the enemies of our salvation: that overcoming the diffi-
7 culties of this howling wilderness, we may be received to the enjoyments of the heavenly country: and when we can no longer share in the bounties of providence in this inferior state, be feasted with the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

SECTION IV.

The epistles which Christ orders St. John to write to the churches of Smyrna and Pergamos. Rev. ii. 8—17.

Rev. ii. 8.

SECT. 4. *AND to the angel*, or minister, *of the church of Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last;* that glorious and divine Person, *who*, having assumed the human nature into a union with deity, is able to say, he *was dead and is alive;* who therefore

REV. II. demands, by all considerations of reverence, gratitude, and love, thy most attentive audi-
9 ence, and most obedient regard; *I know thy works* to have been in many respects very extraordinary; *and* I am well acquainted with thy *tribulation and poverty*,[a] with the humble opinion thou hast of thyself; *but* I know also that *thou art rich* in faith and in all its genuine effects, and art daily laying up for thyself an increasing treasure in heaven. *And* [*I* also *know*] *the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not*,[b] *but* while they boast their relation to the synagogue of Moses, [*are*] indeed *the synagogue of Satan*, whose temper they breathe in their opposition to my gospel and to my people,
10 while they blasphemously pretend a zeal for my name, even in their impieties. But let all my faithful servants be encouraged boldly to face their opposition; and I say to each of them, in addressing to thee, *Fear none of the things which thou shalt suffer:* for, *behold*, I inform you, that *the devil*, acting in and by these instruments, the men of his synagogue, *will* indeed have a permission to *cast* [*some*] *of you into prison*,[c] *that you may be tried*, and by these trials more remarkably approved; *and ye shall have tribulation ten days*;[d] for a certain limited time he shall be permitted to afflict you; but bear up courageously against his assaults, as becomes my valiant soldiers: *be thou faithful unto death*,[e] persevere in thy attachment to me, and thy zeal for my interest, even to the last, though death in its most terrible form should assault thee; for thou fightest under a General, who, though thou fall by the stroke of this last enemy, can raise thee again; *and*, instead of losing by thy fidelity to me, thou shalt be richly rewarded: for *I will give thee a crown of* eternal *life*, and advance thee to such glory and felicity, as shall be infinitely more than an equiva-
11 lent for the utmost thou canst possibly suffer in my cause. *He that hath an ear* to hear, *let him* be all attention to *hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: The* valiant *conqueror shall* be secured from evils, which are beyond all comparison greater than any he can endure on earth. In this world he may indeed encounter the first death for my sake; but he shall *not be injured* hereafter *by the second;* he shall rest in everlasting security and peace, while those who desert and renounce their duty for the preservation of

REV. ii. 8.

AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

a *And poverty.*] Archbishop Wake supposes this refers to the extraordinary character of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had, as ecclesiastical history tells us, reduced himself to a voluntary *poverty*, as many of the primitive bishops did, by selling his estate, and distributing it to the poor. But I much question whether the personal character of the bishop, or pastor, of these churches, be referred to in this address: and the very next verse seems to demonstrate it is not. Compare also ver. 5.

b *Say they are Jews, and are not.*] There were great numbers of Jews in the proconsular Asia; and their inveteracy against the gospel there and elsewhere is well known. This is an instance in which the word *Jew* signifies one of God's peculiar people; and it is not improbable, that many prophetic phrases, in which Jewish rites are mentioned, are to be interpreted with as great a latitude: that is, for those rites of worship which God's *peculiar people* should use.

c *Cast some of you into prison.*] Whether the power of the *synagogue* extended so far as to *imprison*, I do not certainly know; to *scourging* it undoubtedly extended.

d *Tribulation ten days.*] Mr. Fleming (*Of the Resurrection*, p. 129.) with many others, think this refers to the persecution under Domitian, which continued about ten years, and was begun when John was banished into Patmos, and saw these revelations. But it may only signify a short and limited time. Compare Gen. xxxi. 7; 1 Sam. i. 8; Eccl. vii. 19; Dan. i. 12; Zech. viii. 23.

e *Be thou faithful unto death*, &c.] I have endeavoured at large to illustrate the great force of this noble text in my *Funeral Sermon* for that illustrious christian hero, Colonel Gardiner, whose name I could not forbear recording here; and the Memoirs of whose Life, which from the most intimate knowledge of him I have written, will, I hope, promote the admiration, love, and imitation of all who peruse them.

this transitory life, shall be consigned to that state of misery, where they shall seek *death*, but it shall for ever flee from them. SECT. 4.

12 And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges,

And to the angel, or minister, *of the church which [is] in Pergamos, write, These things saith he who*, in token of the penetrating and efficacious nature of his word, is represented as one who *has the sharp two-edged sword* coming out of his mouth; even that word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword: *I know* 13 *thy works*, and thy circumstances, in every respect; *and*, particularly, *where thou dwellest; [even] where the throne of Satan [is]* fixed, in the midst of superstition, and in the midst of persecution, by the union of which the kingdom of darkness is supported; *and thou holdest fast* the honour of *my name, and hast not denied* and renounced *my faith, even in those days* of extreme difficulty and danger *in which Antipas [was] my faithful martyr*,[f] and sealed his fidelity to me with his blood; even that dear and resolute christian, *who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*, and seems to take up his residence, as might be inferred from the enormities which are continually practising there. *Nevertheless, I have a few things* to allege *against thee, that thou hast there them* 14 who remain uncensured in your societies, *who hold* what is, in effect, *the* detestable *doctrine of* that infamous *Balaam, who taught Balak*, king of Moab, *to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel*, by which they fell into sin and ruin; encouraging and seducing them *to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication*. These 15 practices are tolerated by some among you; whom therefore it becomes you to search out, and to treat with due severity; for *thou in like manner hast those that hold the doctrine of the* accursed Balaamites, or wicked *Nicolaitans*,[g] *which I hate*. *Repent* therefore of 16 these irregularities; *or otherwise*, thou mayst depend upon it, that *I will come unto thee quickly* in a way of chastisement, *and I will fight against them with the* sharp *sword [that cometh out] of my mouth*; I will pronounce terrible calamities against you, and execute upon you what I have threatened in my word. *He that hath an ear* at all, capa- 17 ble of hearing, *let him hear* with the greatest attention *what the Spirit saith to the churches: To the conqueror I will give* the privilege of being, as it were, admitted into the most holy place; and there he shall have liberty *to eat of the hidden manna*; and shall be entertained with those sacred pleasures, which God's sanctuary above affords, and of which the manna that fell in the wilderness, and was laid up in a golden vessel before the Lord, was only an imperfect type. *And I will give him a white stone*,[h] in token of full absolution from all his crimes; *and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, except he who receiveth [it]*;[i] I will admit him to that intimacy of sacred friendship, from whence results a joy which the stranger intermeddles not with, and which can be only conceived by those who happily experience it.

REV. II.

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth *it*.

IMPROVEMENT.

AGAIN let us direct our eyes to that glorious Person, who is the First and the Last; and who, though it may Ver. 8 appear incompatible with that divine title, was once dead, and is alive again; and since he is here awfully repre- 12 sented as with a sharp sword going out of his mouth, let us be greatly concerned, that we do not incur his displeasure by our irregular conduct, lest he smite or even destroy us. Let us observe and imitate what he commends in the churches whom he here addresses; their humility in being sensible of their poverty, when enriched by his 9 grace; their patience, their diligence, and the resolution with which they retained the honour of his name, not- 13

f *Antipas my faithful martyr.*] Ecclesiastical history has not informed us who this Antipas was. Perhaps he was some zealous minister who died for the faith he had preached; or some private christian of obscure birth, rank, and circumstances, *ennobled* by enduring *martyrdom* in the christian cause. But we may be sure that such condescending notice taken of him by his Divine Master, who mentions his name with affection and regard, would be instead of a thousand arguments, to animate the courage and fidelity of other christians, who might be called out to the like extremities.

g Balaamites, or *Nicolaitans.*] As Balaam has the same signification in Hebrew which Nicolaus has in Greek, and both signify, *conquerors of the people*, (which name might probably be given to the celebrated Balaam, on account of the great influence which he had in the place where he lived,) it seems not improbable, that the *doctrine of* Balaam and of the Nicolaitans, might be the *same*; (or the latter might be more strenuous in justifying and propagating their doctrine, and acting upon it.) As if he had said, Balaam taught Balak to lay a stumbling-block before the children *of Israel*; and *thou hast also them that hold the doctrine of the Balaamites*. Probably this doctrine might be like that of some modern seducers, that it was lawful to dissemble the christian faith, and to conform to established superstition, to prevent persecution: a *fatal error*, which tends most effectually to overthrow christianity; the existence of which, in these latter ages, is owing to the contrary doctrine and practice. And I greatly fear, that millions of souls are continually sacrificed to it, especially in France, and other countries, in which protestant churches were once planted, but are now overthrown. Nor can it be hoped, that the reformed interest will ever revive, till a few of its professors at least have the courage to *die* for the truth, and scatter their blood as the *seed of the church*. An anonymous writer, (in the *Memoirs of Liter.* Vol. V. p. 258.) thinks that by Balaamites, or Nicolaitans, (which he also supposes the same,) we are, in general, to understand *lewd and profligate persons*, who aim at nothing but their own *secular* advantage, and pleads in favour of his opinion, ver. 20; iii. 9; viii. 11; ix. 11; xi. 8. In all which places proper names are used in such a figurative manner, to express characters resembling theirs whose names are thus used.

h *A white stone.*] It is well known, that among the Greeks, a *white stone* was a token of *absolution*, as a *black stone* was of *condemnation*; but the writing a *new name* upon this stone is not, that I know of, illustrated by any ancient practice. And the connexion between the two ideas seems to be this, That in the great day on which the absolution of Christ's people was to be declared publicly, they were to be admitted into that intimate converse, and high state of favour, which is signified by the *new name*; which *last* circumstance plainly alludes to the custom of *princes*, who give *new names* to those whom they have raised to very extraordinary *dignity*; of which we have many instances in the Old Testament; particularly, Gen. xli. 45; 2 Sam. xii. 25; Dan. i. 7. Dr. Goodman thinks this is an allusion to the token, or ticket, given to the conqueror in the Olympic games, expressing his name, and signifying the reward he was to receive for his achievements. See his *Par. of the Prod.* p. 307.

i *No man knoweth, except he who receiveth [it].*] I have sometimes thought, ο λαμβανων may signify, *one that has received it*, as it seems a *name* given to any person must be known *to others*, or it would be given in vain; and then it intimates, that honour shall be conferred on such an one, which shall only be known to the inhabitants of *that world* to which he shall be admitted, and who have already received it. Otherwise, it must refer to a custom which has sometimes prevailed among princes, of giving particular names, expressing familiarity and delight, to distinguished favourites, by which to call them in the greatest intimacy of converse, whether by discourse or by letter; and which have not been communicated to others, or used by them at other times. I have hinted at both in the paraphrase, not being able in my own mind certainly to determine which is the peculiar and more exact sense.

withstanding the throne of Satan was in the midst of them, and the rage of persecution had destroyed Antipas before their eyes; that blessed, that triumphant hero, whose fidelity and constancy his Divine Saviour commemorates with approbation, and even with satisfaction and pleasure. Who would not be ambitious of dying in the same manner, were it ever so severe and terrible, to be thus honoured and celebrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, or any of his faithful apostles? Let us not be terrified at the apprehension of what we may suffer from the malice of Satan, and by his instruments, even though not merely imprisonment, but death itself were to await us. It is only for a limited time that he can occasion tribulation to any of the people of God; and our blessed Lord will never be unmindful of that gracious promise, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. O let us by faith survey that innumerable company, who, though they have fallen by the stroke of the first death, have been, and shall for ever be, unhurt by the second: that blessed society who are encircled with immortal crowns, which their triumphant Leader, whom they followed with such undaunted fortitude, hath bestowed upon them; who, though they partake no longer of the bread that perisheth, nor are feasted with earthly viands, are yet eating of the hidden manna; who have received the white stone, in token of their absolution; and while the names and memory of many of them have sunk into oblivion, and the honours attending others are of little consequence, they are known in the heavenly regions by a new name conferred as a mark of favour and distinction by the King of kings, and Lord of lords. We are drawing on, if we are true christians, to the completion of that blessed hope, and that we may not be disappointed, may we, by divine grace, be preserved from the artifices of those who call themselves the people of God, while they are indeed of the synagogue of Satan, and from whatever, like the doctrine of Balaam, would ensnare our consciences and defile our souls.

SECT. 4. REV. ii.

SECTION V.

The epistles which Christ charges St. John to write to the churches of Thyatira and Sardis. Rev. ii. 18, *to the end;* iii. 1—6.

REV. ii. 18.

AND to the angel, or christian minister, *of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes* bright and penetrating *as a flame of fire, and his feet* shining *like fine brass: I know* and approve *thy works* of piety, which are many, *and* which, I am well apprized, are the effects of ardent *love* to me; *and* I am acquainted with the *service* thou art performing for my cause *and* interest, and with thy *faith and thy patience; and* that, with respect to *thy works, the last* [*are*] *more*, greater, and better, *than the first*. Very far art thou from that declining state of religion, of which I have had reason elsewhere to complain. *Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee;* and particularly, *that thou permittest that woman Jezebel*,[a] (for she deserves no better name than of that infamous and idolatrous harlot,) *who* audaciously and falsely *says* that *she is a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants*, in order to avoid persecution, *to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols*.[b] *And* she is the more inexcusable, as *I have given her* sufficient *time to repent of her fornication, and she repented not;* but continued her enormities with increasing aggravation. But *behold*, at length *I will* execute judgment upon her. And let the process of my righteous vengeance be observed: I am just preparing to *cast her into a bed; and* will bring *those who commit fornication with her*, who suffer their consciences to be debauched by such licentious and detestable principles, *into great tribulation, unless they* speedily *repent of their* wicked *works*. *And I will slay her children*, those that presume to follow her in her wickedness, *with* sudden and inevitable *death; and all the churches shall know*, that though I am very long-suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities, yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with: that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and *that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts*;[c] *and I will* at length approve the justice of my proceedings with respect to this society, as well as all others, and will *give to every one of you according to your works*, and according to those principles from which I know they have proceeded. *But I say to you* who are faithful, *even to the rest* of those that are *in Thyatira, As many as do not hold this* pernicious *doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they* proverbially *speak*, nor make themselves the instruments of accomplishing the designs of his infernal policy; *I will lay upon you no other burden*,[d] will not severely reprove you for that mixture of human infirmity, which is to be discerned every where. *Nevertheless, what you have* received as of divine revelation and command, *hold fast till I come*, and let nothing prevail upon you to make a sacrifice of your regard

SECT. 5. REV. ii.

REV. ii. 18.

AND unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass:

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death: and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burthen.

25 But that which ye have *already*, hold fast till I come.

a *That woman Jezebel.*] When the description of the followers of Jezebel, in this verse, is compared with what was before said of the Nicolaitans, (ver. 14, 15.) the resemblance appears so great, that I am induced to believe it is the same heresy which is represented under both these views; namely, the *doctrine* of those who taught it was lawful to dissemble our religious principles, and occasionally to conform to *superstition* and *idolatry*, in order to avoid persecution. And as Jezebel was so infamous an *idolatress*, and so great a mistress of seducing arts, there was an evident propriety in such a representation, 1 Kings xvi. 31; xxi. 25. Some have fancied this was some female heretic. Dr. Scott thinks it to have been Helena, the harlot of Simon Magus, the great ringleader of the unclean sect of the Gnostics. (See Scott's *Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 231.) Whether these words refer to any *woman* who was in the plot, or only mean to describe a *person* of such seducing and dishonest practices, I cannot determine, though I rather incline to the latter. Compare ver. 15. note g.

b *Commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols.*] Perhaps both of these might be the same; as it is well known *idolatry* is in many places in the Old Testament, and in several passages in this book, represented as *adultery* and *fornication*.

c *I am he who searcheth—the hearts.*] This manner of speaking is much more remarkable, than if it had only been said, that *I search the heart;* which remark answers the train of Mr. Emlyn's reasoning against the argument brought from this text, to prove Christ's proper deity.

d *No other burden.*] Lord Barrington imagines this refers to the *gospel-decree* addressed to *Gentile proselytes*, now abolished with the Jewish polity. As if it had been said, Though *things strangled*, and *blood*, were formerly forbidden, as well as *idolatry* and *fornica-*

for me and my cause, for neither my ability, nor inclination, to reward those who are SECT. faithful, will ever be diminished. *And as for him that conquers, and keeps my works* 5.
unto the end, notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the enemies of my gospel to wrest
it from him, or induce him to deny it, though he should be ever so much exposed and REV.
overborne now, *I will*, at length, *give him* complete *power* and victory *over* all *the nations* II.
that have combined against my people.[e] *And* I will raise him to the dignity and glory 27
of sharing with me in my final triumph; and *he shall rule them with a rod of iron*, and
they shall be at once *dashed in pieces* with it, *like a potter's vessels:* in like manner,
as I have also received the promise *of my Father* in that ancient oracle, (Psal. ii. 9.) the
accomplishment of which all my faithful subjects shall see; for they shall behold all their
enemies, however numerous and mighty, laid prostrate at their feet in the dust, and covered
with everlasting confusion. *And I will give him*, even every one who approveth his 28
fidelity to me, such lustre and glory, that he shall shine in my presence like *the morning
star*, when its sprightly and cheerful beams break through the shades of night, and pro-
claim the approaching sun. *He*, therefore, *that hath an ear, let him* attentively *hear* 29
what the Spirit saith unto the churches; for all the churches are concerned in the
message I send to each; and the importance of the contents make them worthy of universal
regard.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

And to the angel, or minister, *of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he* REV.
that hath the seven spirits of God; he who presides over, and orders the dispensations III.
of the Spirit, with respect to his various gifts and graces, and produces thereby such won- 1
derful events as shall astonish all future ages; *and* that hath in his hand *the seven stars*,
which represent the ministers of the churches, all whose motions he continues to govern
and direct, according to his all-wise and gracious pleasure; *I know thy works;* that
thou dost not answer that character which thou generally maintainest in neighbouring
churches, for religion and piety. I know *that thou hast a name that thou livest;* thou
makest a splendid profession, and many of thy brethren are deceived by thy apparent zeal;
but thou *art* indeed *dead:* there is little real religion lying at thy heart, nor do the uniform
fruits of it prevail in thy life and conversation. *Be watchful*, therefore, that the whole 2
may not be lost; *and strengthen the things which remain*, and *which are ready to die;*
for I have not found thy works filled up in the sight of God, with that care and fidelity
with which they ought to have been discharged; and he, therefore, cannot behold thee
with the same approbation and delight, as he does more active, more diligent, and more
resolute christians. And this thy declension in religion is the more aggravated, as thou
hast had so many advantages for improvement. *Remember, therefore, how thou hast* 3
received and heard: for though thou mayst forget these advantages, they are all distinctly
in my view; *and* let it therefore be thy care to *hold fast* what yet remains; *and* to
repent of that negligence by which thou hast lost so many opportunities: *therefore,*
unless thou art watchful, I do now solemnly warn thee, that *I will come upon thee* by
some alarming and awful interposition of my providence, on a sudden, *as a thief*, on
those that are buried in sleep; *and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon*
thee; and the surprise will throw thee into the greatest consternation and distress. But I 4
will do thee the honour, and the justice, to say, that *thou hast a few names* and people,
even in Sardis, corrupt and indolent as the general state of it is, *who have not polluted*
their garments with the abominations by which so many have contracted gross defilements.
And, as they have been distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, I will distinguish
them by my special favour, and raise them, ere long, to those seats of complete purity and
glory, where *they shall walk with me in white*[f] robes, and attend my joyful and triumphant
train: *for they are worthy* of such distinguished honour, as they have been especially
careful to keep themselves from those evils which have been generally prevailing around
them. *As for the conqueror, he shall be clothed in white raiment;* every victor shall 5
wear the habit of festivity and triumph; *and I will not blot out his name from the book*
of life;[g] *but* as he is enrolled among my faithful people, he shall ever continue in their
number; and when the register shall be read over in the presence of God in the great day,

Rev. iii. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but

tion, yet I will not subject you to this injunction. Bar. *Ess.* iv. p. 20.

e *Power over the nations.*] This *power over the nations, of breaking them to pieces like a potter's vessels, &c.* cannot, I think, be understood of *temporal* dominion: for as the promise is made to every conqueror, and many christians fell by the oppressive power of the enemy, and would, considering their present circumstances, be degraded rather than exalted, if raised to the possession of any earthly dominion and triumph, it appears to be much more properly explained of that *final* triumph of Christ over his enemies in the *last* day, when he shall *crush* them all to utter and irrecoverable ruin, and all his saints, raised from the dead and clothed with robes of glory, *shall sit down with him on his throne*, and constitute that illustrious body, which in and with their exalted *head*, shall subdue every opposing power.

f *Walk with me in white.*] It is well known that *white robes* were worn on occasion of great *joy*, and sometimes in *triumphant* processions; to both which here is, probably, a *reference*, as indeed it seems that *triumph* and *feasting* would naturally go together. *Priests* also were clothed in *white*, and the addition of that dignity may also be implied, as certainly coming within the scheme of Christ with regard to his people. (Compare Rev. i. 6.) Some think here is an allusion to the custom of the sanhedrim, when they examined the candidates for the *high-priesthood;* if they judged him worthy, they gave him a *white garment;* if unqualified, he was sent out from among them in *mourning*. L'Enfant, *Introd.* p. 86. See Ainsworth's *Pref. to Gen.*

g *I will not blot out his name, &c.*] I think this plainly implies that *some names* shall be *blotted out from the book of life;* and consequently, as nothing can occasion an alteration in the *decrees* of God, I think it proves, that *the book of life* does not signify the catalogue of those whom God has *absolutely purposed* to save; but rather the catalogue of those who were to be considered as *heirs of the kingdom of heaven*, in consequence of their christian profession, till by apostasy from it they threw themselves out of that society to which they before belonged; and it seems to intimate, that though the imperfection even of these *conquerors* might, in strict justice, have *deserved* it, yet Christ would spare them, and suffer them to continue in the number of those who should finally be found registered, as *free* of the heavenly city; and who, in the great day, should be called up to *possess* it.

SECT. 5. REV. III. *I will confess his name before my Father, and before* the full assembly of *his* glorious *angels*, and not be ashamed to acknowledge him as my friend and my favourite. *He that hath an ear* to hear, *let him hear what the Spirit saith to* all *the churches:* and let every one that hears, be animated by so glorious a hope, to exert his utmost efforts in this holy and honourable warfare.

I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IMPROVEMENT.

II. Ver. 18 23 19 III. 1, 2 3 5 II. 26, 27 28 LET the disciples of Christ always remember, that his eye penetrates the most hidden recesses; that he searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men; accordingly, let them take heed to cherish nothing, even in their hearts, which their great Master will behold with displeasure. There may faith, and patience, and charity erect their throne; and may their dominion so prevail, that our last works, like those of the church of Thyatira, may be more than the first. And surely it is most reasonable, as we approach the end of our course, as we experience more of the vanity of life, and the substantial and solid pleasures of religion, that they should be so. But, alas! how much more common is the character of the church of Sardis, and of those who have only a name to live while they are dead! Censorious and uncharitable, as too great a part of the world is, are there not some who are ashamed and humbled in the view of the esteem which they are held in by their brethren, while conscious of so many inward though unallowed infirmities, of so much deadness and coldness in religion, even where they would be most zealous and lively? Alas! how far are our works from being filled up before God! Let us often lament these our imperfections and declensions; let us deeply humble ourselves before God on account of them; and let us be as vigilant as possible, that we may strengthen those things which, if they do indeed remain, seem ready to die. The more general the prevalence of such an indolent temper is, the more let us emulate the distinguished honour of those few names in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments; that we may walk with them, and with Christ, in white raiment; that we may arrive at that happy state of everlasting purity, of everlasting festivity, of everlasting triumph, which our Divine Master has encouraged us to expect. We know not how unexpectedly he may come upon us: let us be always ready, always strenuous in maintaining a holy war against the enemies of our salvation; and then we shall conquer, we shall triumph; our name shall remain in the book of life; it shall be confessed by Christ before his Father and his holy angels: we shall share with him in his triumph over all the rebellious nations, in that day when he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; we shall for ever wear the lustre of the morning star; yea, we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. *Amen.*

SECTION VI.

The epistles which Christ orders to be written to the two remaining churches, the Philadelphian and Laodicean. Rev. iii. 7—22.

REV. iii. 7.

SECT. 6. REV. III. 7 8 9 10 *AND* now *to the angel*, or minister, *of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith the holy One*, and *the true One*,[a] *he who* claims perfect holiness and invariable truth, as necessary and essential to his nature, in a manner which no creature can pretend to; he whose authority in the church of God is so uncontrollable, that it may truly be said, he *has the key* of the house *of David; he who openeth, and no man shutteth*,[b] *and shutteth, and no man openeth;* insomuch that Eliakim, who is spoken of in such terms of honour, (Isa. xxii. 22.) was only a type of him: *I* well *know thy works*, how exemplary they are; and *behold*, I have used the power of the key which is in my hand, in such a manner, that *I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:* I give thee a power and opportunity of spreading my gospel, which none shall take from thee; *because thou hast*, at least, *a little strength; and* thou *hast* used it well, and hast courageously *kept my word, and hast not denied my name*, though many attempts have been made to drive thee to do it. *Behold, I will give*, as it were, into thy power, *those* hypocritical wretches [*who are*] indeed *of the synagogue of Satan*, and, under all the solemn guise of religious worship, are carrying on his cause and interest; *they say they are Jews*, and pretend to be my people, *and are not, but lie. Behold*, I say, I will give them into thy power; and *I will make them to come and worship before thy feet;*[c] *and they shall know that I have loved thee*, finding I have evidently supported thy cause and interest against all that have opposed it. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience*, that gospel which I have myself by such patient suffering in my human nature established in the world, and by which I at once exercise and support the faith and patience of my people; *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try* all *the inhabitants* of these parts *of the earth:* my hand

REV. iii. 7.

AND to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

a *The holy One, the true One.*] This is so peculiarly the prerogative of God, that I have sometimes wondered no greater stress should have been laid upon it, in proof of the deity of our blessed Redeemer, by many writers who have pressed other texts, of a much more dubious nature, to serve in the cause. (Compare chap. vi. 10.)

b *Who openeth, and no man shutteth.*] The office of *lord steward of the household*, who hath the power of *opening* and *shutting* what apartments in the palace he pleaseth, is described by these terms.

c *Worship before thy feet.*] Were we more particularly acquainted with the history of these seven churches, in the times immediately succeeding the date of these epistles, we might perhaps find many remarkable illustrations of several passages in them, and of this among the rest: supposing, for instance, persons of considerable rank and dignity in Philadelphia were converted to christianity; and the interest of the synagogue here spoken of was so weakened, or the heathen populace of the place so prejudiced against them, as that the chief members of the synagogue should find it necessary to court the protection of the christians for the security of their persons or effects; it will throw considerable light upon the place. The like observation may be applied to the following clause: *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, &c.* Dr. Smith has observed in his learned and accurate account of these parts, p. 134—141.) that the city of Philadelphia was the last of all the seven, here spoken of, which fell into the hands of the Turks; for whereas the rest were subdued by Urchan and Amurath, Philadelphia held out till the time of Bajazet. So that the remains of this society were preserved, when those of the rest were ruined. But how far that event might immediately be referred to in the words before us, I cannot certainly say.

shall remarkably appear in sheltering thee from the dangers by which others fall, and in strengthening thee in proportion to the trial. *Behold, I come quickly*, to put an end to those exercises which are for the present so painful; *keep that which thou hast* with resolute fidelity, *that no man take thy crown* from thee, even that crown of everlasting glory which will be the gracious reward of thy continued fidelity. *As for the conqueror, I will make him a pillar* of distinguished ornament and beauty; and I will not only fix him near but *in the temple of my God* above, *and* he shall stand there upon an unshaken and everlasting basis, so that *he shall go out no more: and* he shall bear the marks of immortal honour; for *I will inscribe upon him the name of my God*, under whose auspicious influence the grand victory has been gained, and under whose protection this sacred monument of it shall for ever remain. *And* I will also inscribe *the name of the city of my God*, even *the New Jerusalem*, as it is that to which he belongs, and of which he is free, even that New Jerusalem, *which is come down from heaven from my God*, and shall soon be represented to thee, O John, in a most glorious vision; *and* he shall bear *my new name*, the name which I have acquired by that great expedition which brought me into the world, and carried me through so many labours and sufferings; even that of the Redeemer of sinners; under which character I will own him for one of my redeemed, who fought under my banner, and overcame his enemies by my influence and my blood.[d] *He that hath an ear, let him* attentively *hear what the Spirit saith to the churches:* for addresses of this kind are made not to a particular person, or to one christian society alone, but are indeed of more extensive, and even universal concern.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

And to the angel of the church which is *in Laodicea, write, These things saith* he who is *the Amen, the faithful and true Witness;* attesting those truths which are of the utmost importance, on the most perfect knowledge of them, and with most unerring exactness; yea, he who is *the Beginning of the creation of God*,[e] by whom it was produced, and who is the Head and Governor of all that he has made: *I know thy works*, and all the particulars of thy conduct; *that thou art neither cold nor hot;* that thou art growing very indifferent in religion, though thou canst not allow thyself entirely to cast it off; now this is so disagreeable to me, that *I wish* thou wouldst determine one way or another; and that it might be said, *thou* wert either *cold or hot*;[f] if thou really thinkest it not worth thy regard, reject it entirely; but if indeed thou art convinced of its truth and importance, act with a steady conformity to that conviction. *Therefore, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot*, this indifference of thine is as disagreeable to me as liquor, in this condition, is to the stomach; and therefore, to pursue the similitude, odious as it may seem, I must tell thee, that if thou persistest in such a disposition, *I will cast thee out of my mouth* with loathing. *Because thou sayest, I am wealthy, and have enriched myself* by my own wisdom and virtue, *and have need of nothing;* imagining thy state in religion to be so very prosperous and happy; *and* in this spiritual lunacy into which thou art fallen, like a miserable beggar, who fancies himself a prince, *knowest not that thou art wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked*,[g] in a most deplorable condition, destitute of every desirable blessing; *I counsel thee*, that with an humble sense of thy condition, so extremely unhappy, thou apply to him who alone is capable of helping thee. And as I require no price or equivalent for my treasures, but only a conviction of such an incapacity to make an adequate return for them, I advise thee, in that way, *to buy of me* a full supply for all thy necessities; blessings as desirable as *gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst* indeed *be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and* that *the shame of thy nakedness may not appear*. Apply to me for an interest in my righteousness and sanctifying grace; that thou mayst be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue which can render thee lovely in his sight. And whereas thou art blinded with such unhappy self-conceit, come, *and anoint thine eyes with* my sovereign *eye-salve, that thou mayst see;* for I can bring thee to right sentiments of thyself, and of thy state; and can teach thee to judge of objects according to their real worth. In the mean time, imagine not, that what may seem severe in this address, proceeds from any unkindness to thee: for *whomsoever I love, I reprove and correct*. Instead, *therefore*, of ungratefully quarrelling at so kind an admonition, set thyself immediately and diligently to improve it: *be* more *zealous* for the future, than thou hast

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be

d *I will make him a pillar*, &c.] Few texts in the whole New Testament are more illustrated by *antiquity* than this. Great numbers of *inscriptions* are yet remaining, brought from the Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos, in which the *victories* of eminent persons are commemorated. And as some of these were placed near the temples of their deities, others were in those temples, to signify their being put under the particular protection of those deities; whose names therefore were inscribed upon them, and the names of the conquerors, and of the cities to which they belonged; as also the names of the generals, by whose conduct the victory was gained. As all these circumstances suit such kind of martial victories, much more than those obtained in the Olympic games, so celebrated in antiquity, and so largely and elegantly described by Mr. West in his late *Dissertation* on that subject, I think this text seems to justify the turn I have generally given in my paraphrase to those weighty passages, on which so much of our strength and comfort as christians depends.

e *The beginning of the creation of God.*] Mr. Fleming would render it, *the efficient Cause of God's creation*. But as it is certain that αρχη has not always that signification, I judged it safe to give what is more commonly the sense of it.

f So disagreeable to me, that I *wish* thou wouldst determine one way or another.] Mr. Lowman observes, that the clause, *I would thou wert cold or hot*, may be understood as expressing great dislike, not as a proper wish, or expression of what men really desire.

g *Wretched and pitiable*, &c.] The sad account which is here given of the Laodicean church, which is placed last, when compared with what is said of the glorious state of christianity in the last ages of the world, may, I think, convince any attentive reader, that these epistles are not to be understood in a prophetic sense, as expressive of the state and character of the christian church in different periods of time. It may also be observed, that at that rate the middle ages of the church, which were in fact most corrupt, must have answered to Pergamos and Thyatira, which are described in these Epistles as in the most flourishing and happy state.

SECT. 6. REV. III.

ever been in time past, *and* deeply *repent* of thy prevailing indolence and degeneracy. *Behold,* I have stood for a long time, and *I* still *stand at the door and knock;* waiting for admittance into your hearts. *If any man hear my voice,* with a due regard, *and open the door;* if he welcome me with the affection due to such a friend, and such a Saviour, how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character may formerly have been, *I will enter into his house,* and, like some princely guest, will bring my own rich *and* delightful entertainment along with me; *I will sup with him, and he* shall sup *with me;* I will treat him with the most endearing and familiar friendship, accept the tokens of his affection, and give him the most solid evidences of mine. Let this variety of motives then engage you, O ye Laodiceans, to shake off that dull, lethargic temper which has so long given me cause of complaint; and for your farther encouragement, hear the last promise which I make to all who exert themselves in that holy warfare, to which I am calling you, with becoming vigour and resolution; *as for the* valiant *conqueror, I will give him to sit down with me upon my* glorious and exalted *throne* in the heavenly world; *as I also* myself *have conquered* the enemies which violently assaulted me in the days of my flesh, *and am set down with my Father upon his throne;* my faithful servants shall partake with me of this honour in the great day of my appearing, and shall live and reign with me for ever. *He,* therefore, *that hath an ear* to hear, *let him* be all attention on this occasion, and *hear what the Spirit saith to the churches;* regarding what has been addressed to each as intended to afford matter of general instruction.

zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IMPROVEMENT.

In what age, or in what place, will the church be entirely free from this Laodicean temper, which is so justly
Ver. 15 complained of by our Lord, and represented as so loathsome to him; I mean, an indolence in religion, often joined with arrogance and spiritual pride too, as if great attainments were made, where it is almost matter of doubt, whether
16, 17 the very essentials be remaining! Let us not indulge in a vain conceit of our own wisdom, and riches, and suffi-
18 ciency; but let us thankfully hearken to that kind invitation which he here gives us, to come and purchase that of him, without money and without price, by which we may be truly and substantially enriched; that by which we may attain to real knowledge and true discernment; and may be clothed with ornaments and glories, which shall
20 render us amiable in the eyes of God. How long has our compassionate Saviour been waiting upon us! How long has he stood knocking at the door! And oh! for what guests hath he been excluded! who have filled our hearts and taken the throne in them, while the entrance has been denied to the Lord of glory and of grace! Let us humble ourselves in the dust before him, and entreat that he would now enter as into his own habitation; that he would do us the honour to sup with us; that he would cause us to sup with him; opening to us the stores of his love and
19 bounty, and causing our souls to rejoice in his salvation. "Awaken us, O blessed Jesus, to give thee a most "cheerful admittance; and rather show thy love to us by chastisement and rebuke, than suffer us entirely to
7 "forfeit it, by continued insensibility and negligence. Holy and true, who hast the key of David, exert thy
8 "power, irresistible in heaven and on earth, in opening our hearts: and O set before us an open door of service;
10, 11 "and give us to use it to the utmost, for thy glory. Strengthen us to keep the word of thy patience, and make "us unshaken in our attachment to thee, in every hour of temptation which may come upon the earth, that none "may take away our crown."

11 Whatever our trials may be, let us rejoice in this, that they will be only for a short duration; for our Lord is coming quickly: whatever our combat may be, let us arm ourselves with faith in those glorious promises, which our Lord makes to them that persevere and overcome.

12 Have we not experienced the pleasure of filling a place in the house of God on earth? But this sacred satisfaction, and the holy season which affords it, is quickly over: let us long for the blessed time, when we shall be fixed as immovable pillars in the temple of God above. And O may we now wear, engraven on our hearts, the name of our God, and of his heavenly city, and the new name of our triumphant Redeemer, as a token for good, that we shall bear the inscription in bright and everlasting characters above! But even this most expressive promise was not equal to all the purposes of a Saviour's love: that nothing, therefore, might be wanting to enkindle the most
21 generous ambition, he has been pleased to speak of our sitting down with him upon his throne, as he is set down on his Father's throne. And who then will ever scruple to suffer with him, when thus assured of reigning with him in everlasting glory! O who would grudge to resign, not merely the accommodations of life, but even an earthly throne, in the hope of one so much more radiant, exalted, and permanent! Fear not, little flock! it is your Father's and your Saviour's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, (Luke xii. 32.) and he animates you to pursue it with such compassionate earnestness, as if he could hardly enjoy it himself, unless it were communicated to you.

SECTION VII.

Another scene now opens on the apostle John, in which God is represented as enthroned in celestial glory, surrounded with the hieroglyphical representation of angels and the glorified church. Rev. iv. 1, *to the end.*

Rev. iv. 1.

SECT. 7. REV. IV.

1 *AFTER these things,* and after Jesus had dictated to me these seven epistles, *I saw, and, behold,* it seemed as if *a door* were *opened in heaven,* near to which I was brought; so that I was able to look in, and see what passed and was transacted there. *And the first voice which I heard* before, [*was*] as loud *as* the sound *of a trumpet;* and while *speaking to me,* it seemed to issue out from thence; *and it said, Come up hither; and* having given thee this charge relating to present things, *I will show thee what shall be afterwards.*

Rev. iv. 1.

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately **I** *was in the Spirit,*[a] *and* an extraordinary vision presented itself to my intellectual view; for *behold,* and observe diligently a circumstance of so great importance, *a throne was set in heaven,* to represent that of the blessed God; *and* there was [*One*] *sitting upon it,* of a majestic form and appearance, and arrayed in robes of glory, suited to the situation in which he was. *And he who sat* [*on it*] *was, in* the form and lustre of his *appearance, like a jasper and sardine stone;*[b] *and a rainbow,* in which the bright green, *in appearance like* the vivid, though soft and agreeable, colour of *an emerald,* [*was*] especially prevalent, appeared *round about the throne;* expressive of that propitiousness and kindness, and of that covenant-relation to his people, which the blessed God is pleased to acknowledge in the midst of his transcendent glory. (Compare Gen. ix. 16.) *And,* in an extensive circle, *round about the throne* of God [*there were*] *twenty-four* other *thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders*[c] *sitting,* as an emblem of the Old-Testament church, and also of the New; and they were *clothed* in a habit somewhat resembling that of the Levites, or priests, *with white raiment; and,* in token of their royal dignity, *they had upon their heads golden crowns. And out of the throne there came* flashes of vivid *lightnings and thunders, and* sometimes articulate *voices; and seven lamps of fire* [*were*] *burning continually*[d] *before the throne; which are the seven spirits of God;* that is, they represent a great variety of the Spirit's operations, and those of good angels who act in subserviency to him. *And before the throne* [*there was,*] correspondent to the brazen sea in Solomon's temple, (1 Kings vii. 23.) *a* great laver, or *sea,* which was made all *of* pure pellucid *glass,* which was clear *like crystal* itself. *And in the middle of the* space between *the throne and the circle about the throne,* [*there were*] *four living creatures;*[e] and to signify their intelligence and quickness of observance, they appeared *full of eyes,* both *before and behind.* These four animals, of a very extraordinary form, seem to have been intended as hieroglyphical representations of the angelic nature:[f] *and* the head of *the first animal,* in this marvellous composition, [*was*] *like a lion,* to signify the courage and vigour with which these celestial beings execute the commands of God, and the irresistible strength with which they encounter and vanquish all opposition. *And* the head of *the second animal* was *like a calf,* or young bullock, to signify the firmness, patience, and perseverance with which they go through the labours which God has appointed them. *And the third animal had a face like a man,* to express, by the image of the only rational creature on this earth, the clearness of intelligence, and the strength of reason, with which, in a vastly superior degree, they are endowed. *And the fourth animal was like a* swift *flying eagle,* with its wings displayed, and with quickness in its eye and motion, to signify the sprightliness and activity, and incomparable velocity, with which these celestial spirits fly from world to world, to execute the commands they receive from their Sovereign. *And* though *the* heads of these *four* wonderful *living creatures* were different, yet they had in the rest of their body one form; and they *had*

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine-stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts, full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings

a *I was in the Spirit.*] This phrase signifies, to be under a *strong* and *supernatural* impulse, caused by the *miraculous* operation of the Spirit of God acting on the imagination in such a manner as to open extraordinary scenes, which had not any exact external *archetype.* And it is much illustrated by the view presented to Ezekiel, *when he sat in his house among the elders of the people,* (Ezek. viii. 1.) who probably saw nothing but the prophet himself, as one in a *trance,* or *ecstasy,* or whose thoughts were so attentively fixed, as to be insensible of what passed around him. We are not therefore to imagine, that the person *sitting on the throne,* or the four *animals,* or the *four and twenty elders,* were real beings existing in nature; though they represented, in a *figurative manner,* things that did really exist. And though it is possible, that *aerial* scenes might, by divine or angelic power, have been formed, I think it much more probable, that all that passed was purely in the *imagination* of St. John. This will keep us, in our interpretation, clear of a thousand difficulties, not to say absurdities, which would follow from a contrary supposition; namely, that there is in heaven an *animal,* in the form of a *lamb,* to represent Christ; and that there are such *living creatures* as are here described; and that God himself appears in a *human* form, &c. And this observation I make once for all, desiring that it may be remembered, and applied as occasions present.

b *Like jasper, &c.*] I do not suppose this refers so much to the *colour* of these stones, as to their *lustre,* and the radiancy of the light as reflected from them, when perfectly polished. The *rainbow* of *emerald* was, no doubt, to express a *covenant of peace;* of which the *rainbow* was, with Noah, an appointed token. And that lively and cheering colour seems to have been particularly mentioned, not to imply there were no other, but that the proportion of *green* was greater than ordinary. Compare Ezek. i. 26.

c *Twenty-four elders.*] The number seems to allude to that of the *patriarchs* and *apostles;* and they are called *elders,* as the presidency of elders was common among the Jews. And these might be considered as representatives of the *church,* paying homage at the *throne* in the name of the rest.

d *Seven lamps of fire, &c.*] Some think these are the *seven spirits of God,* that is, *angels* spoken of afterwards, chap. v. 6. but I at present doubt whether they may not be distinguished. *Lamps of fire,* or lambent flames, like those that fell upon the apostles on the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 3.) might perhaps be emblems of the blessed Spirit of God in its various and powerful operations; especially those by which the minds of intelligent created beings are illuminated and purified. And *the spirits standing before the throne* might be distinct appearances of *angelic forms;* as it is certain some of them were, from the actions they afterwards performed; *sounding the seven trumpets, &c.*

e *Four living creatures.*] It was a most unhappy mistake in our translators, to render the word ζωα, *beasts:* it certainly signifies any other kind of *animals,* that is, of creatures which have *animal life,* as well as *beasts.* The word *beast* not only degrades the signification, but the animals here mentioned have parts and appearances which beasts have not, and are represented as in the highest sense *rational.*

f Hieroglyphical representations, &c.] It is well known the ancients (borrowing them I suppose from the Egyptians) dealt much in hieroglyphics, by which natural and moral truths were expressed. Dr. Middleton, in his curious collection of antiquities, presents us with one so remarkable, that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. It is a copy of a gem, in which a man's face, an elephant's head, a peacock, and a sceptre, are joined together. He thinks it was intended as an hieroglyphic, or emblematical representation of Socrates; as the face bears a strong resemblance to the pictures usually given of him. He supposes the human face to represent that of Socrates, and the other figures, those beautiful and divine images which were in his mind. The peacock, being the most beautiful bird, may denote the beauty of his virtues; the sceptre, his majesty and authority; the elephant, the strength and fortitude of his mind. And for the same reason, he observes, it might be used to express the character of a philosopher in general; but especially, the stoic's wise man, who was furnished with all kinds of virtues and perfections, being the only beautiful and valiant man, and a king, whatever his circumstances might happen to be. Middleton's *Antiq. Tab.* xxi. § 10. p. 243—245. There can, I think, be no doubt, but these are the cherubim described by Ezekiel, (chap. i.) which therefore should be carefully compared with this representation. To consider this appearance as an emblem of Deity, which is the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson and his followers, appears to me a very great absurdity. Nor can I think, with Mr. Jackson, that they are merely intended to signify the homage paid to God by all terrestrial creatures. Another peculiar and extraordinary hypothesis, with regard to them, has been proposed to me, and may perhaps be laid before the world; and therefore, I think it most respectful to the reverend and ingenious author, not to anticipate his own design. Some have thought these animals represent spirits of an order superior to angels, taken up wholly in contemplation. See Reynolds, *Of Angels,* p. 6.

SECT. 7. REV. IV. *each of them six wings round about;* so that their body seemed covered with the rich plumage of them. *And within* [*they were*] all *full of eyes,* to signify their quick discernment of every object around them. *And they rest not day nor night;* but they stand in the divine presence, *saying* with united voices, (as the seraphim represented in the vision which Isaiah saw, Isa. vi. 2, 3.) "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,*[g] "*who wast, and art, and art to come:*" thus giving to God, in continual acts of adoration, the glory of his natural and moral perfections, and acknowledging their immutability from everlasting and to everlasting. *And while the living creatures are* thus *giving glory and honour, and thanks to him that sits upon the throne,* and addressing their sublime and harmonious anthems of praise to him *who liveth for ever and ever,* with unwearied vigour and activity of mind; *The four and twenty elders,* whom I described before as themselves sitting on majestic thrones, *fall down* in the divine presence, even *before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and they cast down their crowns before the throne,* in token of their homage to that transcendently glorious Being, from whose sovereign grace and unparalleled munificence they received them; *saying,* at the same time, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive* the ascription of *glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast,* by thine almighty energy, *created all things, and for thy* sovereign *will they are and were created;* their first production, and continued existence, is owing to the riches of thy free goodness; and, therefore, they are all under the strictest obligations, according to their respective natures, to subserve the purposes of thy glory.

about *him;* and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

IMPROVEMENT.

AND should not we likewise fall down with the angels and glorified spirits, and pay some homage to the Sove-
Ver. 1 reign Majesty of heaven, though it be impossible for us to equal theirs? For ever adored be the divine grace, that a door is opened in heaven; in consequence of which, even before we enter, we are allowed to look in; and thus to confirm our faith, and to animate our devotion; which, alas! after all, is too ready to decline and languish.
2, 3 That it may be greatly invigorated, let us look up to the throne, and to him that sitteth thereupon; and rejoice to see that peaceful emblem with which the seat of his glory is surrounded, the rainbow of vivid and pleasant green: signifying that the majestic Being who fills it, is the covenant-God of all his believing and obedient people, and that mercy and love reign triumphant in the whole constitution of that perpetual covenant. Let us contemplate with
6, 7 veneration the blessed angels, the ministers of God, who do his pleasure, represented here under hieroglyphical characters, as possessed of amazing strength and courage, resolution and patience, of the sublimest reason, of the most deep and penetrating sagacity, active and pure as flames of fire; and with these lofty ideas in our minds, let us ardently pray that the will of God may be so done on earth as it is done in heaven. Let us also remember the
4 elders here mentioned, the representatives of the church of the redeemed, seated on glorious thrones, clothed in that white raiment which is the righteousness of the saints, and adorned with crowns of glory. And let us especially
8 consider, how the angels and the saints are employed: they rest not day nor night from breathing out the most ardent devotions; they feel nothing of that weariness and languor with which we are too frequently invaded in this state of mortality, even in our best moments and divinest frames; but they cry continually, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; who art, and wast, and art to come; they give glory, and honour, and thanksgiving to him that sitteth on the throne. And infinitely worthy he is to receive it: He who is the Almighty Creator, He who is the
11 ever-present and ever-gracious Supporter of all! Thou art worthy, O Lord, thou alone art worthy; and though thou withholdest from us the face of thy throne, while we dwell in these tabernacles of clay, yet as we are thy creatures, thy rational creatures, we partake of thy protection and bounty; and, feeble as our faculties are, and dark as the world is in which we dwell, we are able to discover thee as our Almighty Creator, our constant Preserver, our never-failing Benefactor. And, as such, may we daily worship and adore thee, with our feeble voices in this state of mortality; that when we are duly prepared, we may begin a nobler song, and join in the sublimer anthems and hallelujahs above. Amen.

SECTION VIII.

The vision of the sealed book, and of the Lamb that was slain, who was found worthy to open it, and on that account received the acclamation of the whole choir of angels and saints. Rev. v. *throughout.*

REV. v. 1.

SECT. 8. REV. V. *AND,* having observed the particulars mentioned above, *I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the* glorious *throne* already described, the volume of *a book,* or scroll, *written* on both sides, *within and without;*[a] for though I saw only the outside, perceiving it inscribed with characters, I naturally concluded the inside was full; and, as it was rolled up,
2 it was *sealed with seven* strong *seals,* each of which belonged to a distinct leaf. *And I saw a mighty angel,* who wore, in his appearance, the evident marks of dignity and power, *proclaiming with a great voice,* and saying, *Who is worthy to open the* mysterious *book* which is in the hand of God, *and to loose its seals,* and so to disclose its wonder-

REV. v. 1

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

g *Holy, holy, holy, &c.*] This anthem is that which Isaiah tells us he heard the seraphim sing; and it is observable, that many other hymns recorded in this book are borrowed from the Old Testament.

a Written on both sides, *within and without.*] Mr. Lowman, after Grotius, hath observed, that there ought to be a stop after the word *within,* (εσωθεν,) and that it should be rendered, *written within, and sealed on the back side.* But the learned Dr. Hammond hath very well defended the sense given in the paraphrase; observing, that it appears in the process, that the opening of every single seal brings forth some new representation; which could not be the case, if all the seals were on the back side; for then they must all be opened, before any part of the book could be discovered, &c. And therefore it must be concluded, that each seal belonged to a distinct leaf.

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

SECT. 8. REV. V.

ful contents? *And* upon this I saw an universal blank confusion upon every countenance; so that it plainly appeared that *no one* among all the creatures of God, *in heaven, or upon earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it:* And, as I had an earnest desire to know the contents, *and* had pleased myself with a secret expectation that some extraordinary discovery was to be made to me and to the church from thence, it grieved me exceedingly, insomuch that *I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open and read the book; nor*, indeed, so much as *to look into it.* *And* as the grand act of adoration, in which the elders had joined with the living creatures, to him that sat on the throne, was over, *one of the elders said to me, Weep not; behold, the Lion, who is of the tribe of Judah*, (that excellent Person to whom that oracle relating to Judah, in which he was described under the token of a lion, to represent his invincible strength by which he shall triumph over all his enemies, (Gen. xlix. 9, 10.) principally referred;) he hath conquered this great difficulty: He who is *the Root* that was to spring from the stock *of David*, when it seemed to be withered in the earth, *hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose its seven seals;* so that thou shalt soon hear its contents; for he is appointed by God to penetrate and discover those secret decrees, which are concealed from every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. *And I beheld, and lo*, to my great astonishment, *in the middle space, between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders*, who made a kind of semicircle about them, *there stood* this illustrious Person, whose title I had just been hearing; and, though he was spoken of by the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to express the terrors of his wrath against his implacable enemies, the symbol of his person, in this mysterious vision, was very different; for he appeared as *a Lamb, who had been slain* for sacrifice, and wore the recent marks of slaughter, in the blood on his throat and breast; and this Lamb was of a very uncommon form, *having seven horns and seven eyes*, instead of two of each; and this I understood as a mysterious representation of extraordinary power and knowledge, and of the wonderful degree in which the Spirit of God was poured out upon the Person whom this visionary Lamb represented: for *these are the seven spirits of God*,[b] *sent forth into all the earth;* they represent that divine energy, which operates every where; and of exerting which, the most illustrious angels have often the honour to be the ministers. *And he came* near to the seat of Majesty, *and took the book out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne;* which I understood as a symbol, to intimate that the Lord Jesus Christ whom I knew to be represented by this slaughtered Lamb, was appointed to reveal the secret decrees of God, and to give me those discoveries which I so much desired to receive. *And when he received the book* in the manner I have described, *the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb*, in token of humble reverence and adoration; and these elders appeared as a choir of humble worshippers in the temple of God, *having every one harps* of gold, with which they played in sweet harmony, to aid the music of their voices; *and* they had also *golden vials*, or censers,[c] *full of perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints;* for, as I understood these elders to be the representatives of the church, I apprehended that, in allusion to the incense offered in the temple while the people were praying, this circumstance had a reference to prayer, and was intended to show how acceptable it is to God, when it proceeds from an holy and upright heart. *And they sang a new song*, excellent in its kind, and composed on a much greater occasion, and in much sublimer strains of divine harmony, than those which the priests and Levites sang in the temple at Jerusalem; *saying, Worthy art thou to take the book* from the hand of God, *and to open the seals thereof: for thou*, O blessed Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, thou *wast slain* to expiate our guilt, *and* thou *hast redeemed us to God by thy* precious *blood*, from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of a justly incensed Deity; whose servants and favourites we are now become, in consequence of thy kind and gracious interposition. And we are now assembled round his throne, *out of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation*, near and afar off, sacred and profane, learned and barbarous; wherever we were dispersed, thou hast found us, and into whatever bondage and misery we were sunk, thy power and thy mercy have rescued us; *And* thou *hast made us to our God kings and priests;* we are robed in purity and majesty, we are crowned with gold; and here we appear in these priestly offices, which we perform with the splendour of princes; *and we shall reign on earth:* the christian cause shall prevail through all ages; while the happy souls who have passed courageously through their trials upon earth, come hither in their appointed seasons, and share the honours of thy triumphant kingdom. *And I beheld* this glorious scene with inexpressible pleasure; *and* while my soul was all at-

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

b *Seven spirits of God.*] Comparing this text with chap. viii. 2. I must acknowledge, that this is indeed to be understood of *seven angels*. Mr. Mede infers from hence, that there are, in fact, *seven archangels*, who preside over all the rest; but I cannot allow the consequence to be certain. We sometimes read of *four spirits*, sent forth as these are said to be, (Zech. vi. 5.) and, I think, the whole it amounts to is, that there are *many* celestial spirits, who are the instruments of that providence which Christ exercises over the earth, who bring to him an account of what passes, and receive and execute his commands. But by the way, this will no more prove that he is under a *necessity* of receiving intelligence from them, or of using their assistance, than the parallel passage of Zechariah will prove it of *God the Father*. Zech. iv. 2, 10. But Dr. Scott very justly argues, that as they are called *the seven eyes of the Lord* in that text, and here of the *Lamb*, it is an argument for the exaltation of the *Man Christ Jesus* above the highest *angel* in heaven.

c *Vials*, or censers.] These (as Mr. Lowman observes) were not small bottles, such as are now called *vials*; but cups on a plate, like a tea-cup and saucer, in allusion to the *censers* of gold in which the priests offered incense in the temple.

SECT. 8. REV. V.

tention, I also *heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures,*[d] which betokened in general the angelic nature, *and of the elders* which represented the church. *And* a multitude appeared joining the choir, so exceeding great, that *the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands;* I was ready
12 to apprehend that neither thousands nor millions were sufficient to express them. And there was not so much as a jarring voice, or a cold and languid heart in the whole assembly; but, with united ardour and harmony, they were *saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered, to receive power* over universal nature, *and* all the *riches* it can boast. Worthy is he, to whom we should ascribe consummate *and* unsearchable *wisdom, and* resistless *might, and* peerless *honour, and* resplendent *glory, and* immortal *blessing;* even he, who once appeared under a cloud of weakness and poverty, and under the imputation of folly, loaded with dishonour and infamy, with reproaches and curses: worthy is he of all the dignity and glory, the benediction and homage of the
13 heavenly world, throughout the endless ages of eternity! *And* while the multitude of the heavenly hosts were singing this sublime anthem, *every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea,*[e] *even all things that are in them,* in every various form of nature, seemed to echo back the voice; and *I heard* them *saying, To him who sits upon the throne, and to* his Son *the Lamb,* the worthy Partaker of his throne and kingdom, [*be*] perpetual *blessing, and* the profoundest *honour, and* con-
14 summate *glory, and* almighty *strength,* ascribed *for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen,* to this hymn, to testify their hearty concurrence; *and,* at the same time, *the twenty-four elders fell down* before the throne, *and worshipped him who liveth for ever and ever;* acknowledging him to be infinitely superior to all those services which the most exalted powers of created nature are capable of rendering.

gels, round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 It should fill us with unutterable joy, when we lift up our eyes to the throne of God, that we there discern the Lamb wearing the marks of slaughter. We should then gratefully remember his dying love; for it is his precious blood which cleanses us from all sin, and emboldens our addresses to God, conscious as we are that our guilt is attended with great aggravations. Surely had it been queried, with respect to the great atonement to be made for our transgressions, as it was with respect to the opening these seals, Who is worthy to complete this gracious under-
3, 4 taking? we should have seen with unspeakable anguish, that none in heaven, or on earth, would have been found
5 equal to the task. But here likewise, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. How divinely is he furnished
6 for the high station he sustains, and for all the glorious services assigned to him! What amazing power, what adorable wisdom is implied in the seven horns and seven eyes, with which he is here delineated! and O what love, in submitting to be slain, that he might redeem us to God by his blood! With the prayers of the saints, which come up before God as incense, may they ever mingle their most ardent praises for this divine condescension. And out of gratitude to their Redeemer, let them rejoice to see the glorious change in his condition, from his humiliation and sufferings on earth, to his exaltation and reward in heaven: and let them ardently long for
9 the happy season, when the full choir of the redeemed, from every nation, and people, and tongue, shall unite in this joyful acclamation, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.—In this world the disciples of Christ are only a little flock; but
11 when they stand together upon the heavenly mountain, they shall appear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; and all the harmony of their voices, and all the ardour of their souls, inconceivably improved, as all their powers will be, shall be united on this happy occasion. Form us, O Lord, we entreat thee, for this divine employment, and teach us in some measure to anticipate its pleasure in these regions below. Even now, in spirit and intention, we prostrate ourselves before thee, and lay down the crowns which faith, as it were, hath already received, at thy feet; giving glory to him who sitteth upon the throne, and celebrating the victories and honours of the Lamb.

SECTION IX.

An account of the opening the six first seals, and of the awful events which accompanied the opening of each. Rev. vi. *throughout.*[a]

SECT. 9.

Rev. vi. 1.

REV. VI. 1

I COULD not but be all attention to this wonderful scene; *and I saw when the Lamb opened one of the* seven *seals* of the book, which he had taken out of the right hand of

Rev. vi. 1.

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals;

d *Of many angels, and of the living creatures.*] This plainly shows that there was an appearance of angels, as well as of these *animals* which represented their natures; a circumstance, which I do not remember in the vision of Ezekiel.

e *In the sea.*] As the inhabitants of the *watery* elements are necessarily *mute*, I suppose we are not to understand by this, that they seemed to grow *vocal* in the praises of Christ upon this occasion; but rather, that *heaven, earth,* and *sea,* is used to signify, that *all nature,* in its different ways, concurred in the praise; that is, that the whole constitution of it contributed to furnish out matter of praise; just as inanimate as well as rational creatures are called upon to praise God in several of the Psalms, especially Psalm cxlviii.

a The vision of the *seals.*] I am vastly more obliged to that ingenious and excellent commentator, Mr. Lowman, for what I understand of this book, than to any other writer whatsoever. And as I think his celebrated and valuable scheme of interpretation the most satisfactory, and which indeed throws considerable light upon the series of prophecy, I shall present my readers with a short view of his plan, under the several visions; referring the more curious to the commentary itself. But I would first observe, with regard to this celebrated performance, though there is, in many particulars, a beautiful resemblance between the prophetic representations and the events supposed to be correspondent to them, and that the historical facts are represented with great learning and judgment; yet the correspondence between the prophecies and the events is not, in *all* respects, so clear and evident, as might have been expected; nor can we always say, why the events in question are represented by one of the emblems used, rather than by another. However, he has finely illustrated many passages, especially by similar phrases from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, in which he is quite unequalled; and hath made out so

and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

him that sat upon the throne; *and I heard one of the four living creatures, which said,* SECT. 9.
as with a voice of thunder, Come, and see the wonders which are now presenting themselves. *And I saw, and behold, a white horse* appeared; *and he who sat thereon had a* REV. VI.
bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows hanging at his back; *and* to express his royal dignity as the King both of the church and of the world, *there was given to him a crown* 2
of gold, *and he went forth conquering and to conquer:* I understood that he was to gain signal victories, and that the series of them was immediately to begin. (Compare Psal. xlv. 3; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11.[b])

And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature,[c] *saying,* 3
as the former had done when the first was opened, *Come, and see. And another horse* 4
came out,[d] [*which*] seemed to betoken some great slaughter and desolation to be made by approaching wars; for he [*was*] *red; and it was given to him who sat upon it, to take peace from the earth; and that they should slay each other. And,* as a farther token of this, *there was given to him a great sword* or falchion in his hand, by which he might make terrible devastation.

And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, as the 5
two former had done, *Come, and see. And I saw, and behold,* there appeared a black horse, which might betoken an approaching famine, by the emblematical *and* memorable circumstances which attended his entrance on the scene; for *he that sat upon him had a pair of scales in his hand,* to imply that men should eat their bread by weight, and drink their water by measure. *And I heard a* great *voice in the midst of the four living* 6
creatures, saying, A measure of wheat, which shall only be daily food for one man, shall now be sold *for* a denarius, or Roman *penny,* which is the price of his daily labour; *and three measures of barley* only shall be sold *for a* denarius, or Roman *penny.*[e] And *yet,* that there may not be a total scarcity, [*see*] *that thou* who appearest as the executioner of this judgment, *injure not the oil nor the wine,*[f] let the olive-trees and the vines remain unblasted, to show that God in judgment remembers mercy.

And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature 7
saying to me, *Come, and see* a farther discovery of the divine will. *And I saw, and* 8
behold, a pale horse appeared; *and as for him that sat on him, his name was* called *Death.* He appeared like a person entirely emaciated, *and hell followed him;* he seemed to be attended with a person who was a proper emblematical representation of the state of separate spirits; *and there was given unto him power to slay* a great number, as it were, *the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with* pestilence, that most dreadful kind of *death; and with the wild beasts of the field.*[g]

And when he opened the fifth seal, a very memorable scene represented itself to me; 9
for then *I saw under the altar,* which made a part of the view before me, a visible representation of *the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God, and the testimony* to the truth of the gospel *which they* courageously *retained,* in the midst of all opposition. *And they cried with a loud voice,* as making an appeal to the 10
injured justice of the Divine Being, *and said, How long, O* thou supreme and sovereign *Lord* of the universe, who art ever armed with almighty power and terror against all thine implacable enemies; how long, O thou *holy and true* God, shall it be, *ere thou dost judge and avenge our blood upon those who dwell upon the earth,*[h] who have, without re-

much, particularly with respect to the first, and beginning of the third period, as evidently proves this book to be a glorious confirmation of christianity, and worthy our most attentive and diligent examination.—This learned and accurate writer, then, divides the *prophetic* parts of this book into seven periods. The *first* represented by the *seals,* shows the state of the church under the heathen Roman Emperors, from A. D. 95, to A. D. 323. II. *Period,* of the *trumpets,* in its state from Constantine, A. D. 337, to A. D. 750. III. *Period,* of the *vials,* its state in the times of the last head of Roman government, represented by the *beast,* for 1260 years, from about the year 756, to A. D. 2016. IV. *Period,* the *millennium,* from A. D. 2000, to A. D. 3005. V. *Period,* Satan loosed for a little season, and then destroyed. VI. *Period,* the resurrection and final judgment. VII. *Period,* the heavenly state.

b *First seal,* &c.] This refers to the *triumph of christianity* over Jewish and heathen opposition, by the labours of its first preachers.

c *The second living creature.*] As each of these *living creatures* is represented as speaking *successively,* I think it confirms what was advanced in § 7. note f, relating to the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson, who supposes *the four living creatures,* taken *together,* to be an emblem of the Deity.

d *Another horse came out.*] Mr. Lowman thinks, that the leaves of the book were so adjusted, that on opening the *first seal* the first leaf unfolded; and on it there was *drawn,* in a vivid and beautiful picture, a *man* mounted on a *white horse;* and that what is described on opening those that follow, is an account of the *various pictures* which John saw delineated on the several leaves. But as we have an account, not only of the appearance of these things, but of their *motion* and their *voice;* and, especially, of a change of the state of several of them, particularly of the *souls under the altar,* (ver. 9.) I conclude, that the scene did not lie in the *leaf* of the book, but arose in *vision* as the rest; and that the events described, seemed successively to pass before the eyes of John. And, indeed, I think it apparent that the state of the vision he at first saw, was something altered, upon the opening of some of the *seals,* especially the *seventh.*—The ingenious author above mentioned, interprets this *seal* of the judgments of God upon the Jewish persecutors, under Trajan and Hadrian, A. D. 100, to A. D. 138, when the Jews had 1000 cities and fortresses taken and destroyed, and 580,000 men slain.

e *A measure of wheat for a penny.*] This may seem, to an English reader, a description of great plenty; but it certainly intends the contrary, as I have intimated in the paraphrase. The penny was about seven-pence halfpenny of our money; and it appears from Tacitus, as well as from Matt. xx. 2. (See *Fam. Expos. in loc.*) to have been the daily wages of a labourer. It also appears from other ancient writers, particularly Herodotus, (see Raphelius, *in loc.*) and from Hippocrates, Diogenes, Laertius, and Athenæus, (see Grotius, *in loc.*) that this *measure,* or *chœnix,* was no more than was allowed to a slave for his *daily* food. What would become of families, when a man could gain by his labour no more, and that only of bread, than might suffice for his own subsistence?—Mr. Lowman interprets this third seal of the scarcity, in the time of the Antonines, from A. D. 138, to A. D. 193. and produces passages from Tertullian, and the Roman historians, concerning the calamity the empire endured by scarcity in this period.

f *See that thou injure not, &c.*] The introduction of so many allegorical persons as *famine,* and *death,* and the state of separate spirits in this vision, confirms what was said above in note d, as to the nature of the things that appeared.

g *Fourth seal.*] Mr. Lowman interprets this of the seal of the pestilence, and other calamities, in the reigns of Maximin and Valerian, from A. D. 193, to A. D. 270. This he supports by proper authorities from several christian and heathen writers in that period, who particularly mention one pestilence, that lasted fifteen years.

h *Ere thou dost avenge our blood.*] We are not to understand this

SECT. 9. REV. VI.

morse, poured it out as water. And upon this, they appeared to be called up from the place where they lay as so many bleeding victims; *and there were given unto each of them white robes,*[i] in token of the triumph they had gained over death and all its terrors; *and it was said to them, that they should rest yet a little while,* though their blood
11 remained unavenged, *till the number of their fellow-servants and brethren, who should be killed as they* [*had been,*] for the testimony of a good conscience, and the defence of the gospel, *should be fulfilled,*[k] according to the intention of Divine Providence, in letting their persecutors go on a while, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity.[l]

12 *And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was* immediately *a great earthquake; and* not earth alone, but heaven, was affected with great consternation; for
13 *the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became* red *as blood: And* it seemed as if *the stars fell from heaven upon the earth;* numbers of them at once, as fast *as* when *a fig-tree droppeth its untimely figs, being shaken by* the force of *a mighty*
14 *wind. And the heavens passed away,* the clouds rolling one upon another, *like a volume* of a book *when it is rolled up; and every mountain* on earth, *and* every *island* in the sea, *were moved out of their places;* so great and general was the shock, to represent the calamities approaching in those terrible wars, which were to precede the revolutions to
15 which this seal referred.[m] *And* all the inhabitants of the world were thrown into an universal terror; so that *the kings of the earth, and the grandees* about their courts, *and the rich men, and the chief officers* of armies, who commanded their thousands, *and the powerful men,* who bore the greatest sway in the public councils, or were armed with the most warlike prowess; *and every slave, and every free man,* fled as in surprise, and *hid themselves* as fast as they could, even *in the* most gloomy *caves, and* among the *rocks of*
16 *the mountains,* horrid as this retreat appeared. *And* not thinking themselves sufficiently secure there, *they said,* in wild astonishment and affright, *to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne,* the
17 almighty and terrible God, *and from the wrath of the Lamb; For the great day of his wrath is come;* and mild and gentle as he once appeared, we find it insupportably dreadful; *and who can be able to stand* against it? Thus it appeared that they would have thought the crush of a mountain less terrible than the vengeance they expected; and had more hope of moving inanimate nature by their outcries, than of prevailing upon their righteous and inexorable Judge.[n]

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were,* should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

IMPROVEMENT.

To whatever event these seals may refer, it is certain that the representations here made are very awful, and very
Ver. 1 instructive. Let us consider ourselves as invited to come up and see, and let us observe the memorable spectacle
2 with attention. Let the view of the white horse and his rider, who went forth conquering and to conquer, lead us to reflect on the peaceful purposes of our blessed Saviour's appearance, and the rapidity of his conquests; and engage us frequently to pray for the farther prosperity of his kingdom, that kingdom of righteousness, love, and
3, 4, 5 happiness. When we think of the terrible effects of war, of famine, and of pestilence, represented by the three following horses and their riders, here mentioned, let it excite our thankfulness, that not one of this dreadful triumvirate is sent forth against us, though our national crimes have indeed deserved that they should invade us with united terrors; that peace should be taken from our land, that our bread and water should be received by weight and measure, and that the dead should lie unburied in our streets, the food of the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth: nor can any thing more justly excite our gratitude and thankfulness, than that the terrors and the
9 guilt of sanguinary persecution are not to be found in the midst of us. The history of its horrors and ravages in other nations and ages, may sometimes be an exercise of our faith; and we may be ready to cry out, with the souls under the altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not avenge the blood of thy saints upon the earth? But let us wait with patience; let us not form a hasty and inconsiderate judgment. The dead, who die in the Lord, and those who had been persecuted to death for his sake, and in his cause, are incomparably more happy
11 than those who are the happiest among the living. The white robes, and golden crowns, with which they are adorned, are an abundant compensation, not only for every lighter suffering, but even for the slow fire and the rack, those most dreadful instruments of torture. And though their malicious and implacable enemies may bitterly

as the language of personal *revenge,* but of *zeal* for the honour of God, which was so intimately concerned in the punishment to be inflicted upon those *blood-thirsty* persecutors.

i *White robes.*] Mr. Fleming understands this as an intimation of their preferment to some *new* post of honour and service. But I suppose this was only a representation, that though their *blood* did cry for vengeance in the ears of God, yet that vengeance should be *delayed;* nevertheless, that, in the mean time, they should be *exalted* to a glorious state. The argument he draws from this passage, in proof of *a first resurrection,* seems too precarious to be repeated. Flem. *First Res.* p. 46, 47.

k *The number of their brethren who should be killed, &c.*] Nothing could tend more to encourage christians to endure their sufferings with steady *patience,* than this, that it was appointed of God, that a certain number of martyrs should be put to death, and that the season of their triumph was to succeed.

l *Fifth seal.*] Mr. Lowman interprets this seal of the severe *persecution* under Dioclesian, from A. D. 270, to A. D. 304, which was the most extensive and furious of all; and so many christians suffered death, that the heathens boasted in an ancient inscription, that they had effaced the name and superstition of the christians.

m *Earthquake—sun becoming black—stars falling, &c.*] Awful judgments and calamities are often described by such commotions and alterations in the *natural* world. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 10; and the like.

n *Day of his wrath is come.*] As it appears, by comparing one part of this book with another, that the last *seal* made way for, and introduced, the *trumpets;* and the last *trumpet* the *vials;* it is justly argued, that there is a reference to a series of events, successively following each other; and, consequently, this passage cannot refer to the *final judgment;* but to some great and spreading *calamity,* in which the hand of Christ should appear. And this interpretation is illustrated and confirmed, by the manner in which the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold. Matt. xxiv. Compare Isa. ii. 19; xiii. 6; Hos. x. 8; Zeph. i. 14; Luke xxiii. 30.—Mr. Lowman interprets the sixth *seal,* of the great commotions in the empire, from Maximinian to Constantine the Great, who put an end to the persecution of heathen Rome; from A. D. 304, to A. D. 323, during which time there were many bloody battles between the contending emperors, till Constantine abolished paganism, and established the christian religion. This interpretation he confirms by apposite passages, from Lactantius and the heathen historians: and it appears the most probable.

insult over them for a while, yet the triumphing of the wicked is for a short time, their guilty spirits will soon be summoned before the great Avenger of blood; and the day is coming when they shall be publicly brought forth, to suffer the utmost demands of his justice; even that day, when all the figurative descriptions here used shall be fully answered in their literal meaning; when the sun shall indeed be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the volume of heaven shall be rolled up as a scroll, and its stars shall fall from their orbs. It is no wonder that ungodly sinners fly from this alarming and tremendous scene, with wild consternation and confusion; no wonder, that they rend the very heavens with their cries, and call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to cover them: for O, what were the sudden and irresistible crush of a rock or a mountain, when compared with the weight of the wrath of the Lamb, and with the fire and brimstone of this second death! O that by the expectation of this awful day, men of all ranks and conditions may be influenced to make their application to him, while he yet appears in the displays of his grace and mercy! to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, even when his wrath is only beginning to be kindled. (Psalm ii. 12.)

SECT. 9. REV. VI. 15, 16 17

SECTION X.

The increase of the christian church, which was to succeed the opening of the seals, is represented by the vision of twelve thousand sealed out of each tribe of Israel; and then follows a view of the glory and happiness of those who should courageously endure persecution while it continued. Rev. vii. *throughout.*

REV. vii. 1.

AND after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

REV. vii. 1.

AND after these things, it pleased God to give me a representation of the increase which his church should receive after the commotions which had been shadowed out by those visions which were introduced by the opening the seals. Accordingly, *I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth;* that is, the north, the south, the east, and the west; and they appeared as *holding the four* cardinal *winds of the earth* in their hands, *that the wind might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree;* but that there might be the most entire and complete calm, to represent the peaceful state of things which should succeed the tumultuous and distressing revolutions which had been intimated to me above. (Compare Jer. xlix. 36, 37.) *And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun,* to intimate the progress the gospel should make from the east to the west; *having* in his hand *the seal of the living God,* in order to impress a mark upon those whom he was graciously determined to distinguish as his own property, and who should be inclined to dedicate themselves to his service. *And he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom power was given* over the winds at present to restrain them, but afterwards to loose them with great violence, and by them *to injure,* in a terrible manner, *the earth, and the sea; Saying, Injure not,* by the missive vengeance committed to you, *the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;* that distinguishing them by that seal, you may know how to moderate the force of the storm where their safety and comfort is concerned. *And I* then *heard the number of those that were sealed,* in all, *one hundred and forty-four thousand, who were sealed* in an equal number, *out of every tribe of the children of Israel.* And I heard them mentioned in the following order: *of the tribe of Judah,*[a] as the most noble and glorious, distinguished by its regal dignity, and its peculiar relation to Christ according to the flesh, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Reuben,* though that were so much degraded by Jacob, and comparatively so small, when the people were numbered in the wilderness, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* too. *Of the tribe of Gad,* whose territories in Canaan lay contiguous to those of Reuben on the other side Jordan, [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And, from thence, the angel appeared to pass over to the north-west boundary of the land, and to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, which was the lot *of the tribe of Asher,* of which there [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the* neighbouring *tribe of Naphtali,* whose inheritance lay east of the former, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Manasseh,* whose land lay next to the east of Naphtali, [*were*] *sealed* the same number, that is, *twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Simeon,* though it had its inheritance taken out of that of Judah, and so might seem less considerable, there [*were*] *sealed* as many as of the former, even *twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of* his brother *Levi,* though his posterity were scattered among the other tribes, and had no land that was properly their inheritance, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* likewise. And *of the tribe of Issachar,* to which the angel then passed, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Zebulun,* which lay contiguous to that of Issachar to the north, [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of* Ephraim, the other son of *Joseph,* and by far the most considerable of his descendants, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* too, he not being in that respect at all distinguished from Manasseh his brother. And, to conclude, *of the tribe of Benjamin,* Jacob's youngest son, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And thus, upon the whole, the number of one hundred and forty-four thousand was completed. Nor did I presume to inquire

SECT. 10. REV. VII. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea:

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed; *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

a *Of the tribe of Judah,* &c.] I freely acknowledge, that it is very difficult to me to assign the reason of that *order* in which the *tribes* are placed, or the reason why *one* of the tribes is omitted; the latter of which appears much more important than the former. However, this is plain, that when Levi was mentioned for *one tribe,* it was necessary that, since *twelve* only were to be mentioned, *one* should be omitted. Some indeed have imagined, that Dan was omitted, to express how detestable idolatry is in the sight of God; as the tribe of Dan was the first that fell into idolatry after their settlement in Canaan. Compare Judges xviii. 30, 31. Dr. Hammond assigns another reason, namely, that long before that time, the tribe of Dan was destroyed, or brought very low, say the Jews; and indeed it is not numbered among the rest of the tribes, 1 Chron. ii. and following chapters. See Ham. *in loc.*

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why Dan was not introduced among his brethren on this occasion. Thus did God represent to me the extraordinary growth of the christian church, which seemed to be matter of inexpressible joy to the inhabitants of the heavenly world. For *after this, I saw, and beheld a great multitude*, who made a thronged assembly, *which no one could number*;[b] and appeared to have come *out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and language*; the blessed fruit of preaching the gospel over all the world; and they then appeared to me as *standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in* long *white robes, and* having branches of *palms in their hands*, to signify the victory they should gain over all their enemies, and the state of holiness and joy to which they should be finally conducted, notwithstanding all the formidable opposition through which they should be called to pass. *And* I heard them *crying with a loud voice*, in token of the intenseness of their devotion, and *saying*, Let all the glory of this great *salvation* which we have obtained, be ascribed *to our God who sits upon the throne*, and from thence has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were; *and* let it be also ascribed *to* the grace and blood of *the Lamb*, who gave himself to be slain for our redemption. *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and* encompassed also, at the same time, *the* twenty-four *elders and the four living creatures, and*, in token of the humblest reverence, *they fell down on their faces before the throne, and worshipped God: Saying, Amen:* thus let it be, let *the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the strength*, [*be*] ascribed *to our God for ever and ever, Amen:* may all creatures for ever bless and give thanks to him, as originally and essentially possessed of supreme glory, complete wisdom, of irresistible and almighty power, and therefore worthy of all honour, though exalted above all praise. We acknowledge him to be so, we rejoice that he is so, and wish that universal nature may join with us in so reasonable and so delightful an homage, and pronounce the solemn amen. *And one of the elders answered, saying to me, As for those who are clothed with white raiment*, and make such a splendid appearance, *who are they, and whence do they come? And I*, supposing by his question that he asked in order to quicken my attention to what he had to tell me concerning them, *said to him, Sir*, I conclude *thou knowest*, though I do not. *And he said to me*, It is true; and I would have thee observe, for thine own encouragement, and that of thy brethren and those who may arise after thee, that *these are they who are come out of much tribulation*, which they have endured in the cause of true religion; *and* they *have washed their robes, and made them* so *white* as you see them *in the blood of the Lamb*:[c] they owe all their exaltation and glory, not to the blood they have themselves offered, but to that most precious blood of his, which he permitted to be shed for their sakes. *Therefore*, being thus redeemed to God by him, and having been enabled to approve their fidelity to their Divine Master, in the midst of the greatest extremities, they now receive a rich equivalent for all they have suffered; for *they are before the throne of God, and they perform divine service to him day and night in his temple: and he who sitteth upon the throne pitches his tabernacle*, as it were, *upon them*, and displays the tokens of his presence all around them. *They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more*, for ever; *nor shall* the scorching rays of *the sun fall upon them; nor any* other inconvenient and disagreeable *heat; For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall* himself, as it were, own the relation of a Shepherd to them, and take care to *feed them, and he shall lead them to fountains of living water; and* that *God* whom they have faithfully served, and whose interest has been so dear to them, *shall* act, as it were, the part of an indulgent Father, and tenderly *wipe away every tear from their eyes;* comforting them with the most reviving consolations, after all the calamities and distresses he has permitted them to endure below.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1—8

How inexpressibly happy are the thousands of those who are sealed, those whom God has marked out for his own, and in that character has taken them under his special protection. Whatever storms and tempests may arise, they are in no danger of being forsaken; they shall be preserved inviolably safe, and their happiness is secure.

9 They shall be brought at length to join with the innumerable multitude who surround the throne, and ascribe, as all Israel must do, salvation to God who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. And O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Sion, that their praises might sound sweeter here on earth, and that myriads of new voices might

12 unite in the harmonious concert! Those songs of heaven let us begin below, and say, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be to our God for ever and ever; Amen! If

10 through his grace we can call him our God, how cordially should we join in this sublime ascription!

In the mean time, we may see the church in affliction; we may feel a large share of personal or public tribula-

b *Multitude which no one could number*, &c.] Some have supposed that the *hundred and forty four thousand* were Jews, and that these were the Gentile church. But it appears to me, that the *sealing these thousands* expres the progress of the gospel under Constantine; and that the *innumerable multitude* here spoken of, were the *spirits of good men departed* out of this world, and now with God in glory: and especially those who had weathered the difficulties and persecutions during the first centuries of christianity, when the civil power was generally active against it; and when I think it highly probable that many persecutions might have raged in various parts of the world, whose histories are not come down to us. And perhaps the *holding the winds*, which is mentioned, ver. 1. may denote the peace in Constantine's time.

c *Made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*] It looks too much like an obstinate resolution by no means to acknowledge the *efficacy of Christ's blood* to our salvation, for any to maintain, that the *blood of the Lamb* here signifies blood shed *for his sake*, when it is said in words so much resembling these, chap. i. 5. *who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* And chap. v. 9. *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* The

tion; but, when it presses hardest upon us, let us lift up our eyes to that glorious scene which the apostle beheld, and which was so excellent and sublime, that it might well transport him, even under the tribulations through which he was then making his way to it. Let us persevere steadily and faithfully, as they did; and the day will come, when our robes shall be as white, and our crowns as radiant, and our palms as verdant as theirs. Let us then bear with patience, hunger and thirst, heat and weariness, while we travel through this vale of tears; rejoicing in hope of the everlasting refreshment and pleasure to which the Lamb will lead us; even those fountains of living water of which he will give us to drink, when God has wiped away all tears from our eyes, and placed us before his throne, where we shall serve him day and night in his temple, and see his face, and dwell with him, and have him for ever dwell with us and in us. *Amen.* 17 15

SECT. 10. REV. VII.

SECTION XI.

On the opening the seventh seal, the seven angels appear with their trumpets, and the four first of them sound. Rev. viii. *throughout.*

Rev. viii. 1.

THUS I have given an account of the manner in which the Lamb proceeded in opening six of the seals, and of the effects produced by them; *and* I am now to add, that *when he had opened the seventh seal, there was* a profound *silence in heaven*[a] *for about* the space of *half an hour;* to awaken, by that means, a more earnest attention to the extraordinary things that were to appear in consequence of the opening that seal. *And I saw the seven angels*[b] which I had before mentioned, and *which* then *stood before* the throne of *God, and seven trumpets were given to them,* that they might each of them successively sound an alarm; which I understood to be the symbol of some very important and awakening events, which were in order of time to succeed those which had been expressed by the seals. *And* while they were preparing to execute the orders they had received, *another angel,* whom I understood as a typical representation of the great High-Priest of the church, *came and stood before the altar* which I saw in this celestial temple, *having a golden censer, and there was given to him much* fragrant *incense,* consisting of a variety of excellent perfumes mingled together, *that he might present* [*it*] *with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne;*[c] just as the Jewish high-priest used to burn incense on the golden altar in the temple, while the people were praying in the courts of it at the hour of morning and evening sacrifice. *And the smoke of the perfumes went up* in a thick and odoriferous cloud, together *with the prayers of the saints, from the hand of the angel* as he stood *before God;* and seemed thereby emblematically to signify, how grateful to the Divine Being those prayers were which proceeded from holy hearts, being recommended by the intercession of that great High-Priest, whom this glorious angel had the honour, upon this occasion, to represent; as Aaron and his sons did in the Jewish tabernacle of old. *And* when *the angel* had performed this office, in order to show the awful manner in which God would avenge the injury which his praying people upon earth received from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he *took the censer, and* advancing towards the brazen altar of burnt-offerings, he *filled it with fire of the altar,*[d] *and threw it upon the earth; and* as soon as ever this action was performed, *there were* long and terrible *voices, and thunders,*[e] *and lightnings,* which seemed to break out from the Shechinah, the glorious token of the divine presence; *and* there was also the sudden and violent shock of *an earthquake,* which seemed to shake the foundation of the world: *And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets,* stood out in order, and *prepared themselves, that they might sound,* as every one should receive the appointed signal; which hereupon was given to each in his order.

SECT. 11. REV. VIII. 2 3 4 5 6

Rev. viii. 1. AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

texts produced to palliate the other forced and unnatural interpretation, when consulted, will appear little to the purpose. They are chiefly Col. i. 24. and Heb. xi. 26.

a *Silence in heaven.*] Some are of opinion here is an allusion to the *silence* which used sometimes to be kept in the worship of God in the *temple*, while the people were praying, Luke i. 10.—I think, with Mr. Lowman, that the *seventh seal* was only introductory to the *trumpets*, and the *seventh* trumpet to the *vials*.

b *The seven angels which stood, &c.*] The manner in which this is expressed in the Greek, τους αγγελους, οι εστηκασι, is very emphatical. It seems to signify the *seven angels*, who had *before* been mentioned as *standing before the throne;* and this form of speaking so plainly refers to what had been said before, that it does a great deal towards proving, that *the seven spirits of God*, mentioned, chap. v. 6. as *the eyes and horns of the Lamb*, are the same with these *angels* mentioned in the note on Rev. iv. 5. though, as I have there intimated, it is not absolutely certain.

c *With the prayers of all the saints.*] Some have thought, that this is a plain intimation of the doctrine of the *intercession of the angels*, which is urged to have been an erroneous Jewish notion; and those who imagine it to be taught here, have made it an argument against the *inspiration* of this book. But I rather agree with those interpreters, who consider *this angel* as an emblem of Christ. If we were indeed to consider Christ as appearing in the shape of a *lamb*, this would be a difficulty; but it does not appear at all absurd to me, that while the *efficacy of Christ's atonement* was represented by a *lamb slain*, his *intercession* consequent upon it should be represented by *an angel offering the incense;* which seems only a *symbolical* or *hieroglyphical* declaration of this truth, that the prayers of the saints on earth are rendered acceptable to God by the intercession of one in heaven, who appears as a priest before God; just as the *vision of the lamb* represents to us, that a person of perfect innocence, and of a most gentle and amiable disposition, eminently adorned and enriched with the Spirit of God, has been offered as a sacrifice: and is, in consequence of that, highly honoured on the throne of God. But who this important victim, and this intercessor is, we are to learn elsewhere; and we do learn, that both these offices met in one, and that this illustrious Person is *Jesus the Son of God.*—As the *golden altar* made a part of the scene, there was a propriety in its appearing to be used, and the time of *praying* was the *hour of incense.* This *vision* may probably be designed to intimate that, considering the scenes of confusion represented by the trumpets, the saints should be exceeding earnest with God, to pour out a spirit of wisdom, piety, and zeal, upon the church, and preserve it safe amidst these confusions.

d *With fire of the altar.*] There was no fire upon the *golden altar*, but that which was in the *censer*, in which the *incense was burnt;* so that we must necessarily, by this fire of the altar, understand that of the *brazen altar*, though it is not expressly declared to be so; and this may intimate, that in some other places the same words may, by comparing different circumstances, have different ideas annexed to them.

e *Voices and thunders.*] If the *latter* word be intended to explain the *former*, it might be rendered, *voices, even thunders.* But if different ideas are to be annexed to the words, I must confess that I know not what they are. Yet we may imagine some distinct articulate sounds different from *thunder*, to be mixed with it, like that which some of those present heard, John xii. 29. (Compare Isa. xxix. 6.) This representation may be intended to intimate, in general, the confusion and calamities with which the *period*, expressed

SECT. 11. REV. VIII.

And the first angel sounded his trumpet; *and there was* a violent storm of *hail and fire*, and the shower was also *mingled with blood*,[f] *and it was cast down upon the earth*, greatly to the detriment of its productions; *and* particularly, it seemed to me, that *a third part of the trees was burnt up, and all the green grass* of the field *was* also *burnt* and scorched *up*. (Compare Exod. ix. 23.)

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 *And the second angel sounded: and it was as if a great mountain burning with fire*[g] *was cast into the sea; and* it produced so great an alteration in the colour of the waters, that it seemed as if *a third part of the sea became blood*, which I easily apprehended to signify the slaughter which should come upon many people by means of some victorious prince, and those who fought under his banner. *And*, as a farther token of it, *a third part of the creatures which had* animal *life in the sea died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed* thereby, and the persons sailing in them all perished. (Compare Jer. li. 25.)

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 *And the third angel sounded; and* to represent some great destroyer that was to appear, and become very conspicuous, both for the mischief he should occasion, and the ruin in which he should be involved, *there fell from heaven a great star*,[h] *burning like a torch; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;* to signify the influence which the person represented by it should have upon human affairs, and upon those things that were the springs of comfort and support to mankind. *And*, in reference to the effect it was to produce, *the name of the star is called Wormwood, and a third part of the waters became* impregnated with *wormwood;* but with this additional circumstance, that it was poisonous as well as distasteful; *and many men died* in consequence of drinking *the waters, because they were become bitter.* (Compare Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 *And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them,* even of their light, *was darkened*;[i] *and the day did not appear, [with respect to] a third part* of its lustre, *and the night also;* but there was as great a deficiency in the usual light of both, as when either the sun by day, or the moon by night, is so eclipsed, that a third part of the body of each is shaded; which I understood to imply, that God would, in the course of his providence, draw a veil over the whole face of things, and obscure the glory of the state to which this vision referred. *And I beheld, and heard one of the angels flying in the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice,* The things which have already happened are terrible; but what is yet to come is much more so; *woe, woe, woe to those that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!* Prepare therefore for the manifestation of these awful scenes.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WHILE we prepare ourselves, with silent admiration, to attend the discoveries here opening upon us, let us rejoice in the symbolical representation of the intercession of Jesus, our great High-Priest, shadowed forth, in so beautiful 3, 4 and expressive a manner, by the angel standing at the altar with the golden censer and much incense. Behold, how the prayers of all the saints ascend before God with acceptance! See the method we are to take, if we desire that ours should be acceptable to him; and, encouraged by such a view, let us offer them up, not only with humility, but with cheerful confidence, though we are conscious of their great unworthiness.

To what wretchedness are they exposed, who oppress and injure those that, through their great Representative, 7 have such an interest in the court of heaven. The hail and the fire shall, at the divine command, powerfully plead 8 their cause; the mountains shall be torn from their basis, and cast into the midst of the sea; the sun, the moon, 12 and the stars shall be darkened in their orbs, and all nature be thrown into convulsive agonies, ere God will suffer them finally to be overborne, or fail to punish, with becoming severity, those who continue to persecute or evil-entreat them.

Let such awful representations as these remind us of the sovereign, almighty power of God, whom all the hosts of heaven worship with reverence; and at whose awful word, when he gives forth his voice, hailstones and coals of

by the successive *trumpets*, should be filled, and the regard God would show to his praying people during its continuance.

f *Hail and fire mingled with blood.*] Grotius explains this of the hardness of heart and bloody rage of the Jews; Mr. Mede, of the invasion of the northern nations upon the Romans; and Mr. Clark, of the Arian heresy and persecution, whereby many professors of christianity were infected, and many destroyed. See his *Annotations, in loc.* But Mr. Lowman, more probably, interprets it of the bloody wars in Constantine's family, which, with the invasion of the neighbouring nations, almost ruined the whole strength of the Roman empire, fell heavy on its great men, and particularly the family of Constantine, which during this period was quite extinguished; from A. D. 337, to A. D. 379.

g *Mountain burning.*] Grotius explains this of the soldiers' rapine upon the people of Jerusalem, and firing the towers; Mr. Mede, of the firing of Rome; Mr. Clark, of the spirit of ambition and pride among the clergy; Mr. Lowman, of the invasion of Italy by the northern nations, and the taking of Rome by Alaric, general of the Goths, who plundered it and set it on fire; and this calamity was followed by the spoil of the greatest part of Italy; from A. D. 379, to A. D. 412.

h *There fell from heaven a great star.*] Compare Dan. viii. 10. Grotius interprets it of the *Egyptian impostor*, Acts xxi. 38; Mr. Mede of the fall of the *western* empire under Augustulus; and Mr. Clark, (see his *Annot. in loc.*) of the corruption of ordinances by an *heretical* churchman, of great parts and considerable figure, whom he supposes to be Pelagius. Some explain it of Mahomet, whose name signifies, *illustrious. Mem. of Literat.* Vol. V. p. 253. But Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, interprets it of the succeeding ravages in Italy, founding the Gothic kingdom there, and putting an end to the Roman empire; from A. D. 412, to A. D. 493. Agreeably to this, historians inform us, that several provinces of the *empire* were dismembered, the city of Rome again taken and plundered, and Italy became a prey to the barbarous nations.

i *Darkened.*] Compare Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Grotius interprets this of taking the *south Galilean* towns; Mr. Mede, of the destruction of the light of Rome, when deprived of *regal* and *consular* majesty; and Mr. Clark, (see his *Annot. in loc.*) of eclipsing the *light of the church* by tradition and human inventions. Mr. Lowman interprets it of the wars in Italy between the Goths and Justinian's generals, whereby the exarchate of Ravenna was erected, all remaining power and authority at Rome suppressed, and the imperial city became subject to Ravenna, where the exarch, or lieutenant of the eastern emperor, resided; from A. D. 493, to A. D. 568.

fire descend; (Psal. xviii. 13.) at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the foundations of the earth are shaken; who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not; who darkeneth the moon, and sealeth up the stars. Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations, so terrible in the judgments thou executest on the earth? Deliver us, we entreat thee, from the multiplied and accumulated miseries of those who continue obstinately to oppose thee; and conduct us at length to thy heavenly presence, though it should be through days of darkness, and waters of bitterness, and seas of blood. *Amen.* SECT. 11. REV. VIII.

SECTION XII.

The effect of the fifth and sixth angels sounding their trumpets. Rev. ix. *throughout.*

Rev. ix. 1.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions

9 And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

Rev. ix. 1.

AND the fifth angel sounded; and I saw an angel of distinguished lustre descending with such amazing velocity, that he seemed like *a* shooting *star*, (compare Job xxxviii. 7.) and when he was *fallen*, as it were, *from heaven to the earth, and* appeared standing upon it, *there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit:* And he went to the door of that infernal dungeon, *and he opened the bottomless pit, and a* thick *smoke ascended from the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and* it diffused itself all abroad; so that *the sun, and* the whole body of *the air, were darkened by the smoke* and gloomy exhalations *of the pit;* which I understood as intimating some terrible calamity approaching. *And* I saw a very shocking appearance; for *out of the smoke there came locusts upon the earth,*[a] *and* a destructive *power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power*, that they should be as pernicious to the inhabitants of the earth as those terrible animals, and should injure men by their stings as well as by their teeth. *And* there was this farther remarkable circumstance, that whereas locusts bring along with them such general destruction to all vegetables, *it was said to them*, whom I saw on this occasion, *that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only*[b] some human creatures; and this under a particular limitation to *the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads;* from whence I inferred that this destructive visitation should especially affect those who, whatever they might profess, were destitute of true vital religion. *And* to signify the lingering vexation which these destroyers should occasion to the inhabitants of the countries they were to ravage, I was farther informed, that *it was given to them, that they should not kill them* outright, *but that they should be tormented five months;* which might be intended to express a calamity that should endure about an hundred and fifty years. *And their torment*, that is, that which they occasioned by their attack, [*was*] extremely violent, *like that of a scorpion when it strikes a man.* *And in these* dreadful *days*, to which this vision refers, *men shall seek death*, in a wild kind of despair,[c] *and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee* away *from them*, and leave them to mourn over a life of wretchedness, all the comforts and enjoyments of which shall be utterly swallowed up in their sufferings. *And* these creatures were not exactly of the form of locusts; but though they bore some resemblance to them in many instances, they differed from them in others, and were to be considered as a[d] kind of hieroglyphical representation of creatures which are very mischievous and terrible; and I particularly observed, that *the likeness of the locusts* [*was*] *like horses prepared for war*, (compare Joel ii. 4.) especially the form of their heads; *and* whereas common locusts have some brilliant ornaments on their heads and various parts of their bodies, I observed, with regard to these, that *on their heads* [*were*] *as it were crowns like gold; and their faces* were *like the faces of men;* which two circumstances gave me to understand, that they were intended as an emblem of mighty and powerful men, who were to reign over various provinces and kingdoms. *And they had* on their heads long *tresses* of hair, *like the tresses of women;* whereas common locusts have only a down upon their breasts. *And* whereas other animals of that name have large strong teeth, *their teeth were like* [*the teeth*] *of lions*, sharp and pointed, as well as large and strong. *And* instead of the fine down on the breasts of common locusts, *they had breast-plates like breast-plates of iron; and* whereas common locusts make a terrible noise with their wings, *the noise* which these strange and symbolical locusts made by the motion *of their wings* [*was*] *like the noise of chariots* [*and*] *many horses rushing to war;* so that they seemed to tear the ground with their rage and fury, and to shake the air with SECT. 12. REV. IX. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

a *Locusts upon the earth.*] Many protestant writers imagine these *locusts* to signify the religious orders of monks and friars, &c. The learned Grotius understands by them the sect of the Zealots, which appeared among the Jews during the siege, and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Mede, the inundation of the Saracens; and indeed, with considerable circumstances of *resemblance*. The ingenious Mr. Lowman confirms this interpretation: and shows, that the rise and progress of the Mahometan religion and empire, till checked by internal divisions, is a remarkable accomplishment of this part of the prophecy; which is farther illustrated, by the ignorance and error the Mahometans every where spread, their great number and hardiness, their habits, customs, and manners; namely, twisting their hair, wearing beards, their care of their horses, invading their neighbours in summer like locusts, sparing the trees and fruits of the countries they invaded, &c. The captivity of the men, and the miserable condition of the women, exposed to persons who gave an almost unbounded liberty to their lusts, which was enough to make them even to *desire death*, verse 6. All these circumstances are suitable to the character of the Arabians, the history of this period, and to the particulars of the prophecy.—The period extends from A. D. 568, to A. D. 675.

b *Only the men who had not.*] The use of the particles ει μη here is very remarkable; and it is apparently necessary it should be rendered *only*, rather than *except*.

c *Shall seek death*, &c.] As such great numbers were, in fact, slain by these locusts, (if they signify, as it is generally supposed, the Saracens,) this expression must only be understood of *many* survivors, who, by the calamities they inflicted, should be made weary of their lives. See note a.

d A kind of hieroglyphical representation.] As there are no animals in nature answerable to those which are here described, I take it for granted, that as the *four animals* mentioned above are *hieroglyphics of angels*, so are these of *mischievous* creatures. Compare chap. iv. 7, note f.

SECT. 12. REV. IX.

their neighings. *And* instead of being formed at the lower end of their bodies, as other locusts are, which have no stings, but are quite inoffensive and innocent animals, *these* creatures *had tails like scorpions, and their stings were in their tails; and their power,* as I observed above, [*was*] given them *to hurt* the earth, and *men,* its inhabitants, for about *five months,* or about an hundred and fifty years. *And they had a king over them,* wherein they farther differed from the locust kind, (Prov. xxx. 27.) who is *the angel of the bottomless pit,* and the great head of those apostate spirits who dwell there; *whose name* [*is*] *in the Hebrew language, Abaddon;*[e] *and in the Greek, he has the name of Apollyon:* both the one and the other expressing his destructive nature, and the dreadful havoc he makes, wherever his attempts are successful. And thus *one woe is gone;* [*and*] *behold, yet other two woes besides it coming,* threatening yet more terrible calamities than these.

And upon this *the sixth angel sounded: and I* did not see any immediate appearance in consequence of it; but I *heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which was before God,* (which seemed therefore to come from the most holy place which was directly behind it,) *Saying to the sixth angel, who* still *had the trumpet* which he had sounded in his hand, *Loosen* now *the four angels,*[f] *which are bound by the great river Euphrates;* who were intended to represent some potentates arising from that part of the world, who, in the period referred to, should become very famous throughout the earth, for their exploits and achievements. *And the four angels were loosened, who were prepared for* a certain period of time, signified, according to the prophetic reckoning, by *an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year;*[g] *that they might* make a great slaughter among the inhabitants of the earth; or, as it was expressed to me in the vision, according to the language used before, might *kill a third part of* the *men,* who after the preceding plagues continued upon it. They accordingly appeared, as leading on a mighty army; *and the number of the horsemen* they led on *was* immensely great, represented to me by *two myriads of myriads,* that is, no less than two hundred millions. *And I heard the number of them* thus mentioned to me, as it was impossible for me to count them. *And I saw the horses, and those that sat upon them thus, in* [*their*] *appearance;* that is, *having breast-plates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone,* which seemed to send forth blue, burning flames, which went devouring before them; *and the heads of the horses* [*were*] *like the heads of lions: and out of their mouths went fire, and smoke, and brimstone,* to represent the courage and fierceness of these armies, and the irresistible destruction they should make wherever they marched. And *with* the united force of *these three things,* that is, *by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, that went out of their mouths, they slew a third part of men,* as was declared above. *And* as the destroyers, represented by the locusts, appeared as having devouring teeth, and stings like scorpions in their tails, these had likewise a double provision of mischievous furniture; for *their powers are* partly *in their mouth,* from whence, as I have already said, the fire appeared to issue, *and in their tails; and their tails* also [*are*] *like serpents, having heads, and with them,* as well as with their mouths, *they injure* men. Thus they were represented as bringing a most fearful destruction on the human species. *Yet* it was not productive of such a reformation as might have been expected; *the remainder of men who died not by these plagues, did not repent of the* wicked *works of their hands,* nor reform those abominations which had brought down destruction on their brethren: and particularly did not forsake those detestable superstitions which had been so offensive to God, *that they might not worship demons,*[h] and senseless *idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which,* instead of having any divine properties, are destitute of the senses common to men, and even to brutes, as they *can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. And they repented not of* other crimes, more immediately affecting their fellow-creatures; such,

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; *and* behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they

e *Abaddon.*] When the etymology is so evident, and so particularly explained by the author, I cannot but wonder at Dr. More's endeavour to explain it another way, as referring to the profession which the Mahometans should make of maintaining the doctrine of the *Unity.* See More's *Theol. Works,* p. 130.

f *The four angels which are bound.*] Grotius refers this to the *Roman army* under four commanders, which came from the borders of this river. Mr. Mede, to the four *beglerbegs* of the Turks; and he interprets ver 17. of *guns* invented about that time, and used by them in their successful war upon the Europeans. See the passage at large in More's *Theol. Works,* p. 130, 131. They who refer this passage to the rise of the *Turkish Ottoman* empire, suppose that the four angels mean either four provinces, or four cities near Euphrates, from whence considerable leaders arose, who pushed on, and advanced the Turkish conquests; and Mr. Pyle, and others, have endeavoured to confirm this interpretation. But, as the Turkish empire did not commence till the 13th century, this event seems to be too late in the successive order of periods and correspondent events. Mr. Lowman's interpretation seems to me much more probable, which refers it to the re-union of the divided Saracen power, their invading and ravaging Europe, till they were defeated by Charles Martel; and agreeable to ver. 20, 21. the sufferers were so far from repenting, that *image-worship* was confirmed by order of the Pope, and the authority of councils in the *east* and *west.* This period reaches from A. D. 675, to A. D. 750.

g *Of an hour, and a day, &c.*] Dr. Lloyd, bishop of Worcester, in his interpretation of this passage, foretold, many years before it happened, that peace would be concluded with the Turks in the year 1698, which accordingly came to pass; and that they should no more renew their wars against the popish christians. His argument was, that the *angels loosed* were the commanders of the many Turkish squadrons who had been before subject to the Sultan of Babylon. And as for the time here mentioned, he endeavours to show it to be, in the prophetic style, 396 years; and computing from their conquest at Prousse in 1302, by adding 396, the number will be 1698. See Bishop Burnet's *History of his Times,* Vol. I. p. 204. But how lucky soever the conjecture was, it does not convince me that it is the true interpretation; and so much the less, as it seems evident to me the year spoken of in this book consists only of 360 days. Besides, the Turks have renewed their war on the popish christians, particularly on the Emperor and the republic of Venice, in 1716, and since. As for the phrases, *an hour, a day, &c.* I do not understand them; they may perhaps only signify a determined, limited time, as such expressions in scripture frequently do; though they would seem most naturally, and agreeable to the prophetic reckoning, to denote about 391 years.

h *Not worship demons.*] This *demon-worship* Mr. Mede has taken great pains to prove to be the worship of *dead men,* which is so common in the church of Rome. As for their *worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone,* the fact is as evident, as that the heathens themselves ever practised such idolatrous worship.

of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

for instance, as *their murders, and their sorceries*;[i] *nor their fornication, nor their thefts* and robberies, by which they had so notoriously injured all about them, and bid defiance to every law, but that of their own unruly appetites and passions, to which they were held in the basest subjection. SECT. 12. REV. IX.

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is exceeding natural to reflect, while reading this representation, how exactly the mightiest princes, and most savage destroyers of mankind, execute the plan of Divine Providence, and fulfil the decrees of God; even while they are intending nothing but the gratification of their own ambition, and avarice, and cruelty. The angel of God holds the key of the bottomless pit; and it is by divine permission that these voracious locusts issue forth and infest the earth. The ministers of God's pleasure bind the messengers of destruction, and loosen them at the divine command. And the season, wherein they shall ravage the world, is here limited to a year, to a day, to an hour: ABADDON, APOLLYON, the great and mighty destroyer, cannot effect the least of his mischievous and ruinous purposes, without the permission of the Preserver and Redeemer of mankind; and cannot go beyond his limits. And even the mischief which he does, is intended and overruled to subserve the wisest and kindest designs. But O how grievous is it to think of that degree of obstinacy and perverseness which so generally prevails in the world, and which renders men so incorrigible, under the most painful chastisements Satan is permitted to inflict! Send forth, O Lord, the gentle influences of thy Spirit, and melt those hearts, which will not be broken by the weightiest strokes of thy vengeance; and deliver us from a temper so much resembling that of hell, and so evidently leading down to those dreadful abodes; the temper of those, who are hardened by correction, and in the time of their affliction and misery increase and multiply their transgressions against thee. Ver. 1, 3, 15, 5, 11, 15, 20, 21

SECTION XIII.

The vision of a mighty angel appearing in great glory, who had in his hand a little book, which St. John was commanded to eat. Rev. x. *throughout.*

REV. X. 1.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, That there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the

REV. X. 1.

A MOST beautiful *and* wonderful scene now opened itself to my view; for *I saw another mighty angel*, who carried in his appearance the marks of unusual strength and vigour, *descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud*,[a] so that I could not discern the full lustre of his whole body; though variegated with the rays it either reflected or transmitted, it appeared very glorious; *and* the complete circle of *a rainbow* [*was*] *about his head, and his face* [*was*] bright *as the* meridian *sun:* so that I could not bear to gaze directly upon it. *And* I had reason to think there was an extraordinary lustre emitted from all the other parts of his body; for even *his feet* were *like pillars of* lucid *fire*. *And he had in his hand a little book open*, which I afterwards understood to be the volume of the divine decrees, to be communicated to me. *And he put his right foot upon the sea, and the left* foot *upon the earth*, to signify the divine dominion over both, and the concern of both in what was farther to be transacted. *And he cried with a loud*, solemn, and awful *voice, as a lion roars*;[b] *and when he had cried, the seven thunders*, which I had heard before, *uttered their voices* again, responsive to his, and to increase the terror of so tremendous a scene. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to have written* the contents of what they had uttered; for, loud as their voices were, there was something articulate and intelligible in the sound; *and*, just in that instant, *I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up* in secrecy *what the seven thunders have spoken, and write them not;* for they are indeed intended for thy information, but not for that of the public. *And the angel which I saw* with so many ensigns of distinction, *standing* with one foot *on the sea, and* the other *on the earth, lifted up his hand towards heaven*, with a gesture of solemnity and reverence, as appealing to the great Sovereign of the universe; *And sware by* the eternal Jehovah, even by *him who liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven, and those things which are in it, and the earth, and the things which are in it, and the sea, and the things which are in it, that time should be no longer*:[c] that the time of the judgments, to be signified by the pouring out of the seven vials, should not be much longer delayed; and that when it came, the whole economy of the world should soon draw to a conclusion, and all the periods of time be consummated, that the more important scenes of eternity might open: He sware, SECT. 13. REV. X. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

i *Sorceries.*] By φαρμακειων, Dr. Clarke understands all the superstitious methods of making men *fancy* themselves to be religious by what others can do for or to them, or what they can do for themselves, without the practice of true righteousness and virtue. Clarke's xviith *Serm.* p. 168. But others understand by it the arts of *poisoning*.

a *Angel clothed with a cloud.*] The beauties of this noble description are finely illustrated by that most elegant and pious writer, the Rev. Mr. James Hervey, in his *Meditations*, Vol. II. p. 21, 22.

b *Lion roars.*] The original word, μυκαται, rather signifies *bellows;* but that English word has an idea annexed to it, which appeared to me not to suit the dignity of this description.

c *That time should be no longer.*] The word χρονος sometimes signifies *delay*, as well as *time*. And, according to the former version, the meaning is, that there should be no *delay* of the destruction of the church's enemies, and of its prosperous and glorious condition. In the latter view, it signifies that the end of time, and the consummation of all things, should soon come. Though the former sense seems to be principally intended, yet I own myself not to be so certain as absolutely to determine it. I think it is evident that some of the *concluding prophecies* of this book refer to the *eternal state*, and therefore I have taken that sentiment into the paraphrase, though not to the exclusion of the former sense: which, as I said, seems to be principally intended, considering the connexion, and that the interval between the *pouring out the seventh vial*, and the consummation of all things, must, at least, be more than a thousand years; and, perhaps, a much more considerable period. Dr. More is of opinion, that the only meaning of this clause is, that the time was elapsed which had been marked out by the period of *three years and an half*. See his *Theolog. Works*, p. 122. Grotius refers the accomplishment of it to the vengeance to be taken upon the Jews, by Adrian and his successors. Compare Saurin's *Serm.* Vol. I. p. 1, 2. Mr. Lowman renders the clause, *the time shall not be yet;* that is, the time of the glorious state of the church shall not be yet; but it shall not be long to it; for *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel*, as it follows, *the mystery of God shall be fulfilled, &c.*

SECT. 13. REV. X.

I say, that the delay should not be much longer, *but* that it should hasten to its end, *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about quickly to sound*, and was to introduce the period of the seven vials; and that, consequent on the pouring out of the last vial, *the mystery of God*,[d] *as he had revealed its glad tidings to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled*, in the utter ruin and destruction of all the enemies of the church,

and in its happy and glorious exaltation.[e] *And the voice which I* before *heard from heaven*, now *spake to me again, and said, Go*, and *take the little book which*, as thou perceivest, *is open, out of the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth;*

for it is intended for thy use and information. (Compare Jer. xv. 16.) *And* accordingly *I went to the angel, and*, awful as his appearance was, *I said to him* boldly, in consequence of the divine command, *Give me the little book* which thou holdest in thine hand; *and he said unto me, Take* [*it*,] as Ezekiel did that which was shown to him, (Ezek. iii. 1, 2.) *and eat it up;* to signify thy receiving it into thy mind, and digesting there the events to which it relates: *and it shall imbitter thy belly, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey;* to signify that how pleasant soever it may be to be honoured with such revelations, the contents of these, in thine after-reflections, shall be very bitter and grievous.

And, accordingly, *I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and* seemed to myself to *eat it up; and* the event exactly answered what he had said to me; for *in my mouth it was sweet as honey, but when I had eaten it my belly was bitter. And he said to me*, Thou hast not yet despatched the whole of thy work, in what thou hast already registered of these visions of the Lord; but *thou must again prophesy*[f] *to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings.* The oracles thou hast yet to deliver shall be propagated through many countries, translated into a variety of languages, and perused by persons of various ranks and conditions, and some of them the most eminent and conspicuous; but fear not to deliver them, being assured that He, by whom they are inspired, will take care they shall be punctually fulfilled.

voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

IMPROVEMENT.

If other parts of this chapter should seem to be less pregnant with important practical instructions, perhaps the design was that we might be engaged to fix our entire and undivided attention on the awful words of this illustrious angel, whose appearance is described in colours so exceeding beautiful and striking; with the radiance of the sun streaming from his countenance; the variegated colours of the rainbow encircling his head; of a stature so vast and majestic, that he at once bestrode the earth and the sea, with his hand solemnly lifted up to heaven; with a voice awful as thunder, appealing to the venerable name of God, the Creator of the heavens, of the earth, of the sea, and of all their various inhabitants, in order to add the sanction of an inviolable oath to a declaration, which, in itself, from such a divine messenger, was worthy of absolute and entire credit; a declaration that time should be no longer: which is a certain truth, in the most sublime and interesting sense of which the words are capable. Time, as distinguished into days, and weeks, and months, and years, by the revolution of the heavenly luminaries, when the most resplendent of these are extinguished in their orbs, as they quickly will; when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; time shall then, I say, be absorbed in an immeasurable eternity. And O what an eternity! An eternity, either of perfect and inconceivable felicity, or hopeless and remediless misery.—But besides this general construction, there is an important sense in which the proclamation of this celestial herald shall be fulfilled, with regard to individuals; that time shall be no longer; the time of divine patience in waiting upon us; the time in which we shall be continued under the sound of the gospel, and the offers of mercy and the means of salvation; the time in which we shall be conversant with these scenes of mortality, and with the persons who are here most familiar to us, at least in the present circumstances of their being. The period, during which we are to inhabit this earth, and enjoy our spiritual advantages, or our worldly possessions and pleasures, is confined within very narrow limits. The oath of this mighty angel is, perhaps, just ready to be accomplished, and time is closing, and eternity is opening upon us. O that we may consider time and all its concerns as very shortly to vanish, that our thoughts and our cares may be directed more and more to our own eternal interest and to that of our fellow-creatures. The Judge is even at the door: let us endeavour therefore to be ready, let us improve every transient moment to the purposes for which it was given us; and in these views of the brevity of time, and the importance of preparing for eternity, let us detest all the pleasures and allurements of sin; for they will soon appear like the mysterious morsel of the apostle, bitter as wormwood in the belly, though with deceitful and fatal indulgence, we may, for a few moments, have rolled them, like a sweet morsel, under our tongues; vainly desiring to prolong those pleasures, which can serve only to add more keen and exquisite sensibility to our future pain.

Ver. 1 2 3 5, 6 10, 11

d *Mystery of God.*] Dr. Butler, the late worthy Bishop of Durham, understands by this, the *great mystery* of Providence, in suffering vice and confusion to prevail so much in the world. See Butler's *Anal.* p. 40.

e *Should be fulfilled.*] As it is here said, that the mystery of God should be *fulfilled*, it seems plainly to intimate, that the things yet to be revealed should extend to the end of time; and when it is declared, that this should be fulfilled in *the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about to sound*, it intimates that the remainder of time, even to the end of the world, should be comprehended in that period of prophecy to which the *seventh trumpet*, introductory to the vials, relates.

f *Again prophesy.*] Mr. Mede infers from hence, that the apostle is about to go over the *same period* of time he had before been discoursing of, giving an account of the state of the *church*, as he had just done of the state of the *empire*. But the new descriptions, and new events to which they refer, which are introduced here, and constitute the following chapters, may be sufficient, without any peculiarity of interpretation, to justify the expression. See the preceding note.

SECTION XIV.

The vision of the angel commanding St. John to measure the temple: and declaring that the Gentiles should tread down the outer court, and that the two witnesses should be slain, and raised from the dead, and received into heaven; after which, the triumphs of divine vengeance over their enemies are celebrated. Rev. xi. 1—18.

Rev. xi. 1.

Rev. xi. 1.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

AND when I had eaten the book, according to the divine command, *there was given to me*, as there was shown to Ezekiel, whose vision bore so great a resemblance to mine, (Ezek. xl. 43.) *a reed, like a* [*measuring*] *rod; and the angel*, which had spoken to me before, *stood* by me, *saying, Arise, and measure the temple of God,*[a] *and the altar, and* the space filled by *those who worship at it* in the inner court: *And the outer court of the temple throw out* of the account, *and measure it not; for* there shall be such great disorders introduced, that *it shall be given to the Gentiles, and they shall trample*, not only *upon* that, but upon *the holy city*, for the space of *forty-two months*: such corruptions shall prevail in the christian church, though by profession the holy city and the temple of God, that they who pretend to be its inhabitants, and to worship in it, shall be no better, in the divine account, than Gentiles. And in the mean time, I will raise up some to bear an united testimony against these growing corruptions; *and I will give to my two witnesses*[b] an authoritative [*commission,*] *and they shall prophesy* all this while, that is, during the forty-two months, or *a thousand two hundred* [*and*] *sixty days, clothed in sackcloth*;[c] to denote their afflicted condition. *These are* dear and precious to me, as Joshua and Zerubbabel among the Jews of old: and in reference to the emblems under which I represented those my faithful servants, (Zech. iv. 3, 11, 14.) I may call these *the two olive-trees, and the two* burning and shining *lamps, who stand before the God of the* whole *earth*; high in his esteem, and continually in his presence, planted like olive-trees in his house, or kindled like the sacred lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary. *And if any one will* obstinately *injure them*, encouraged by the gentleness of their appearance, and the seeming weakness of their present state, he shall find to his cost that they are under an Almighty protection. Their cries to God shall be heard, and such sudden and irresistible vengeance shall follow, that *fire shall* seem to *come out of their mouth*[d] *and devour their enemies* at once; it shall not merely scorch and terrify, but utterly destroy them: *and* I pronounce it again, *if any one will injure them, so must he be put to death. These*, despised as they are, *have power* with God, like my servant Elijah of old, (1 Kings xvii. 1.) by their prayers *to shut heaven,*[e] *so that no rain shall be showered down in the days of their prophecy; and* like Moses and Aaron, (Exod. vii. 20.) *they have power over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth, as often as they will, with every plague*; such is the prevalence of their prayers with God, that they may be said, as it were, to be armed with his omnipotence. *And when they shall have finished their testimony*, according to the plan of Divine Providence, *the* fierce and *savage beast which ascends out of the abyss,*[f] and is afterwards to be described, *shall make war against them, and shall conquer* and triumph over *them* for a while, *and* carry his success so far as to *kill them. And their* dead *corpses* [*shall lie*] unburied *in the* open *street of the great city,*[g] *which is spiritually called*, on account of its lewdness and persecutions, *SODOM and EGYPT*;[h] *where also our Lord was crucified*; that is, in the place

SECT. 14. REV. XI. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

a *Measure the temple of God.*] From the proportion between the area of the temple, and the outer court, supposed to be as one to three and one-half, Mr. Mede, understanding by the *temple*, the pure, uncorrupted state of the *church*; and, by the *outer court*, its corrupted state, endeavours to prove that the latter did not entirely commence till the beginning of the fifth century; inferring also from hence the authority of the *four first general councils*. The argument may be seen at large in his *Works*, p. 588, 589. But it does not seem to require a particular examination, especially in the face of so many notorious errors and absurd superstitions, as were evidently introduced into the church long before the time in question. How Grotius should imagine it to signify, that the temple should not be rebuilt by Adrian, though Jerusalem should, is to me very surprising: I doubt not but it signifies the *profanation* of the church by growing *idolatry* and *superstition*, though some few should preserve their purity.

b *Two witnesses.*] Some have strangely supposed these are Enoch and Elijah, who are to come to fight against antichrist. See Limb. *Theol.* 7. xi. 31. Dr. More understands it of unpolluted *priests* and faithful *magistrates*, appearing for reformation. Others of the Old and New Testament. But the learned Bishop Lloyd, of the Waldenses and Albigenses. Perhaps it may signify *any witnesses* for reformation, who should be raised up during this period: illustrated by *two*, as that concurring number was necessary, according to the law, to make the testimony valid; or to intimate, that their number should be but *small*. See Mr. Lowman, *in loc.* who proves there has been a succession of faithful witnesses.

c *Clothed in sackcloth.*] This was the habit of *mourners*, and suited to their prophetic character, Isa. xx. 2. This period is the same with that after described as the time of the *woman's abode in the wilderness*, chap. xii. 6; Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7.

d *Fire shall come out of their mouth.*] I think it highly probable this expression may be *figurative*, and intended to express the awful vengeance which Christ will take on their enemies in that day *when he is revealed in flaming fire*, and when the injury received by any of his servants, and especially his *faithful witnesses*, shall be remembered, and their wrongs fully avenged.

e *Shut heaven, &c.*] Lord Chief Justice Hale seems to think it is intimated here, that the spirit of Moses and Elias should be in them, *Elijah having called down fire from heaven*, and hindered the *rain*; and Moses having *turned water into blood*. (See Hale's *Contemp.* Vol. II. p. 175.)—It indeed seems to intimate, that God would interpose for their defence, as he pleaded the cause of his *people* and *witnesses* of old, in the awful manner here described.

f *Out of the abyss.*] By the *abyss* Dr. More understands *the sea*, and thinks this passage is to be explained by what follows, chap. xiii. 1. I am rather of opinion, it alludes to what had been said before, chap. ix. 11. where *a king of the locusts* is mentioned as a most destructive creature, called also *the angel of the abyss*; and it is certain the word Ἄγγελος is used with this latitude. (Compare Acts xxviii. 4, 5.)

g *The great city.*] Mr. Fleming understands this of the German, that is, the Roman empire, of which Bohemia was a part. Indeed, it is probable the whole Roman empire may be here represented as *one idolatrous* and *impure city*; as elsewhere, the *church of Christ* is represented by one *pure, holy*, and *glorious city*. It may intimate the extreme persecution many of God's witnesses should suffer; and that their enemies should triumph over them so much, that his cause should seem to be quite ruined.

h *Sodom and Egypt.*] The *lewdness* of Sodom, and the *cruelty* of Egypt, are so celebrated in scripture, as to make them proper *emblems* of these evils in general. And the abominable wickedness of the church of Rome, in both these respects, (I suppose not to be equalled in any other society of men, calling themselves a church,) is most justly, as well as severely, expressed by these appellations. When one sees their places of worship every where

SECT. 14. REV. XI.

where he has suffered so much in his spiritual members that he may be said to have been crucified over again. *And* [*persons*] *of* [*various*] *people, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall look on their dead bodies three days and an half,* and maliciously insult over them; *and they shall not permit their corpses to be laid in the graves* which should be prepared for them. *And they who dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them,* 10 *and be glad, and* with mutual congratulation *shall send gifts to each other,* to testify their great exultation, *because these two prophets,* who *tormented those who dwelt upon the earth,* by their plain and faithful remonstrances, shall be entirely silenced; and, as they 11 suppose, for ever removed out of any capacity of molesting them. All these things I distinctly saw, just as the angel had represented them to me in his description; and while I was looking, with the greatest concern, upon the venerable remains of these two excellent persons, denied the common rites of burial, *and* exposed to all the insults of their enemies, I saw, that *after three days and an half*[i] *the Spirit of life,* communicated *from God,* who quickeneth all things, *entered into them, and they stood upon their feet* again, to renew their testimony; *and great fear* immediately *fell upon those who looked upon them,* when 12 they saw so wonderful a resurrection. *And they,* that is, the witnesses, *heard a great voice, saying unto them from heaven,* in loud accents, which I likewise distinctly heard, *Come* ye *up hither; and they* accordingly *ascended up to heaven*[k] *in a cloud,* as our Lord had done in the sight of his apostles: *and their enemies,* with infinite surprise and fruitless rage, *looked on them,* without being able to hinder or oppose the marvellous 13 event. *And in that hour,* as an earthquake attended the resurrection of our Lord, so likewise, at the ascension of these witnesses, *there was a great earthquake; and a tenth part* of the buildings *of the city fell* down to the ground, magnificent and sumptuous as they were; *and seven thousand men,* some of them of great name and figure, *were killed*[l] *by the earthquake; and the rest were terrified, and* their alarm wrought more kindly upon them, than judgments had done upon some others; for they *gave glory to the* 14 *God of heaven,* as the Author of these awful events. *The second woe is past,* [*and*] a terrible one it is; but let none imagine all ground of alarm is over, for *behold the third woe cometh quickly,* to succeed it.

15 *And the seventh angel sounded: and* immediately *there were great voices* of thunder *in heaven, saying,* At length the happy, the triumphant period is approaching, and seems to be even already come; when it may be said that *the kingdoms of the world are become* [*the kingdoms*] *of our Lord, and of his Christ,*[m] his anointed Son; *and he shall reign* 16 *for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders, that sat before* the throne of *God on their* splendid *thrones,* as already described, *fell* prostrate *upon their faces, and worshipped* 17 *God* with profound reverence, on hearing these glad tidings; *Saying, We give thanks unto thee, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come;* we adore the triumphs of thine omnipotence, and of thy wisdom; *because,* though for a while thou didst suffer the interest of thy kingdom to be in part overborne, as if the adversary were stronger than thou art, *thou hast* at length *taken* to thyself *thy great power, and* 18 *hast reigned* with an uncontrolled dominion. *And the nations were wroth,* and were transported with rage and pride, that their vain schemes were thus powerfully opposed; *and* having suffered them for a season to exert their impotent efforts, *thy wrath came* in its awful turn; thou didst display the terrors of thy superior vengeance; *and the time of the dead* came, *when they should be judged,* and the blood of thy people avenged, *and* when *a reward should be given to thy* faithful *servants,*[n] *the* inspired *prophets, and to the saints, and,* on the whole, *to them that fear thy name,* both *small and great:* for, such is thy goodness, that thou wilt not forget any one of them; *and* the period is at

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them: and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them:

13 And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; *and* behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them

adorned with images of a crucified Saviour, one would think, (as our Lord says with respect to the garniture which the persecuting Pharisees bestowed upon the sepulchres of the ancient prophets, that they meant to perpetuate the memory of the dead with honour,) that these persecutors intended to crucify Jesus in effigy: a sentiment, perhaps, not disagreeable to the original design.

i *Three days and an half.*] Very different interpretations have been given of this period of time. Mr. Fleming thinks it to his purpose to observe, that from the death of Andrew Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr, to the appearance of Carlostadius and Zuinglius, at the beginning of the reformation, was just *three years and an half.* See Flem. *Of the Resur.* p. 144. The above-mentioned Bishop Lloyd imagined it was fulfilled in the slaughter of the Albigenses and Waldenses, in the year 1686; and they arose in 1690. He supposes Archbishop Usher's celebrated prophecy a mistake of this place; he thought the *treading down the court* was the affliction of external professors; (whereas it was, indeed, the general prevalence of idolatry in the church;) and that the witnesses were slain by the king of France, not by the Pope; and that the earthquake, (ver. 13.) signified the destruction of the kingdom of France. Some think here is an allusion to the time of our Saviour's lying in the grave; and that it intimates, that the time of the witnesses suffering will be in proportion to the time of their prophecy, which is described as a time of persecution; and so it comports with *three times and an half,* 1260 days, or 42 months. It may, in general, signify a certain limited time; and, perhaps, *three days and an half* may be mentioned, in reference to the state of a dead body, which will seldom keep longer without corruption. See Mr. Lowman, *in loc.*

k *Ascended up to heaven.*] This was no doubt to signify, that the cause of true and genuine christianity should not only be revived, but *exalted;* and that it should have so illustrious a triumph over all opposition, as no *earthly* elevation was sufficient *adequately* to represent.

l *Seven thousand men were killed.*] This seems to represent some *great calamities* which were to befall the enemies of the *reformation* during the following period, and which would be a great means of promoting it.

m *The kingdoms of the world, &c.*] The learned Grotius, than whom no great commentator was ever more mistaken in his explication of this book, strangely sinks the importance of the event here referred to, by expounding it of the liberty given to the christians to profess their religion in Judea, when the Jews were banished. Mr. Mede and Mr. Clark refer it to the Reformation. Dr. Samuel Clarke says, *Whether this and the like passages shall have a literal accomplishment, by the universal prevalency of the gospel of peace upon earth, or only in the new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is a secret in the breast of Providence, which we ought not to be over-confident in explaining.* See his *Posth. Serm.* Vol. III. p. 295. But it seems probable, that this may be designed to intimate, that in the period of time signified by the *seventh trumpet, and the vials* following it, there should be a triumph of the christian cause in its power and purity, notwithstanding all the attempts made to pervert and corrupt it; which has been, in fact, the case. Compare chap. vi. ver. 17, note n.

n *A reward should be given to thy servants.*] The reward to be given to all that *fear God,* both *small and great,* seems to be the *final* reward at the *judgment-day.* This therefore represents that *judgment day* as now *nearly* approaching.

that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

length come [*when thou*] *shouldst* interpose in an awful and irresistible manner, to *destroy those that destroy* and corrupt *the earth* by their many vices; and particularly by their cruel ravages, in persecuting those who were, with the greatest integrity of heart, solicitous to have reformed it. SECT. 14. REV. XI.

IMPROVEMENT.

LONG hath the court of God's temple been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and a party of very corrupt and degenerate christians, (if they at all deserve the name, though they proudly arrogate to themselves the title of the catholic church,) been introducing and countenancing all the fopperies and absurdities of pagan superstition, as well as more than the horrors of pagan cruelty, so as indeed to have disgraced not the gospel alone, but human nature itself. A wise and gracious providence hath raised up witnesses for the truth in all ages; and it is a signal honour to bear a faithful and courageous testimony against these enormous corruptions, though it were unto bonds and imprisonment, and even at the expense of life. Those noble and heroic confessors God hath remarkably supported; and even when they had been in a state of mourning and oppression, they have borne their testimony and prophesied; their prayers have been remembered before God, and many have been smitten, who injured and oppressed them. But notwithstanding this, the beast had continued his war upon the saints, and their oppressions have increased, until, in many places, they have been cast down and trodden in the dust, and their blood hath been poured out like water on the earth. Thus hath that great city, the metropolis of the world, once faithful and celebrated, become even as Sodom and Egypt, or even as Jerusalem, where Christ himself, our Divine Master, was crucified. Thus have the enemies of the truth triumphed over the servants of the Lord, and have erected trophies of their victory. But, thanks be to God, their triumph shall not be perpetual; Christ our Redeemer will revive his expiring cause in a manner as glorious and wonderful as a resurrection from the dead: he will glorify the remnant of his people; he will cause the earth to tremble, and shake down the towers of the enemy; and when the first and the second woe is past, will bring upon them a third and more terrible woe. In the faith of this triumphant event let us rejoice; and though in our day we see not this glorious scene, let us consider it as approaching, when the seventh angel shall sound, and when all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. Let our prayer do all that the most earnest prayers can do, towards promoting this great event. O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come, we beseech thee to take to thyself thy great power and reign; for the proudest of the enemies who oppose thy kingdom reign, and even live, only by thy permission. Overbear, by thy superior rebuke, the rage of the angry nations; and give patience to thy afflicted servants, that if they should wait even till the dead be judged, they may never resign the hope of the reward which thou wilt at length confer upon them: not only on the prophets, and most eminent and distinguished of the saints, but on all them that fear thy glorious and tremendous name; on the small, as well as on the great; when the destroyers of the church and of the earth shall be destroyed together. *Amen.* Ver. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18

SECTION XV.

On a view of the temple of God, as opened in consequence of the seventh trumpet, a vision appears representing the multiplication of the church, and the attempt to be made by the devil upon it, under the emblem of a woman bringing forth a son, attacked and persecuted by a great dragon. Rev. xi. 19.—xii. *throughout.*

REV. xi. 19.

REV. xi. 19. AND the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

AND when these acts of adoration passed, upon the sounding of the seventh angel, *the temple of God was opened in heaven; and* the veil, which seemed to separate the most holy place, being drawn aside, *the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple;* to signify farther manifestations of the divine presence, which were now to be made. *And* as, when the law was given from Mount Sinai, the whole atmosphere seemed in a violent commotion, which was communicated to the most solid parts of nature, so *there were* now *lightnings, and* loud and awful *voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and a great* storm of *hail*, which had been described as a circumstance attending the divine appearance, under former dispensations. (Compare Psal. cxiv. 4. *et sim.*) *And* thus ushered in, *there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman* of a beautiful and majestic form, *clothed*, as it were, *with the* radiance of the meridian *sun*, streaming forth on all sides; which I understood as an emblem of the church of Christ, most gloriously arrayed through the comeliness and lustre which he puts upon her: *and the moon was under her feet*, to signify the conquest which the church should gain over all sublunary enjoyments and terrors; *and upon her head* there was *a crown of twelve stars*, to represent the twelve apostles, who had been so illustrious an ornament to that honoured society. *And* to signify the increase of the christian church, this woman, by which *she* was represented, *being* apparently *pregnant, cried out in travail, and* seemed as *in* violent *pangs to be delivered. And* while she was in these circumstances of extremity, *there appeared another sign in heaven: and behold!* for it was a very memorable phenomenon, there was *a great* red *fiery dragon, having seven heads and ten horns;*[a] *and upon his heads seven crowns*, on each of them SECT. 15. REV. XI 19. REV. XII. 1 2 3

Rev. xii. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

2 And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven head

a *Dragon having seven heads and ten horns.*] I suppose most of my readers will know, that a *dragon* is a vast *serpent* of enormous bulk; there is one of them about 23 feet long, preserved in the repository of the Royal Society. And Job, the celebrated African, assured me, that one of them carried away a live cow in its mouth, before his face. Nothing could be a more proper emblem of the *persecuting power*, that, by the instigation of Satan, attacked christians; or rather, of Satan, as instigating these persecuting powers, and those especially of Rome, under its different states, as heathen and christian: for the *directing* agent was still the same. I apprehend therefore, that the church is here represented, *first* as *pregnant*, to signify its state while the *empire* was heathen; the more *vigorous* state it afterwards arrived to, when such large accessions were made to the number of christians, is described by the *birth of the child*; and its state, when an almost *universal* corruption was introduced, by its *abode in the wilderness*. The *dragon*, in the mean time, in all these various successions, labours, if possible, to destroy it; at least to prevent the propagation of its interests.

SECT. 15. REV. XII.

one; which represented Satan, the great enemy of the church, as animating a people, who were to answer, in a remarkable manner, to these mysterious and symbolical characters. *And* he appeared as having a long tail; and with it he took an horrible sweep over the compass of a considerable part of the heaven, on which he seemed to stand; and as it then appeared as decked with stars, whereby christian ministers were especially represented, *his* 4 *tail drew down a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth;* which signifies, that many, whose business it was to enlighten and preserve others, should themselves be corrupted by the attempts of this great and subtle deceiver, whose artifice and rage were so aptly represented by the seducing nature of this vast and voracious dragon. *And the dragon stood* directly *before the woman, who was about to bring forth, that when she was delivered he might* immediately *devour her child,* for whose appearance he 5 seemed eagerly to wait. *And* to signify the certain success of the church, and the care God would take to preserve it, *she* whom I saw in the vision as the representative of it, *brought forth a masculine son,*[b] a male child, who appeared of a vigorous constitution, and likely soon to advance to manhood; *who,* as I then learned, *was* destined by God to a most glorious triumph over all opposition; so as *to rule all the nations with a rod of iron,* which they should be unable successfully to resist. *And* as the strength of this dragon seemed vastly superior to that of the woman, or the new-born infant, *her child was,* on a sudden, *caught up to God, even to his throne,* there to be guarded as the charge and favourite of heaven, in full security from all the rage of his furious and destructive enemies. 6 (Compare 2 Kings xi. 23.) *And the woman,* his mother, *fled into the wilderness,*[c] by which circumstance was represented to me the obscure condition in which true christianity should long remain, while antichristian principles and practices every where prevailed. There she dwelt, *where she had a place prepared* for her *by* the ever-watchful providence of *God, that she might there be nourished one thousand two hundred* [*and*] *sixty days,*[d] for God took care that she should be nourished, though in a wilderness, raising up friends 7 and supporters for her during that desolate and melancholy time. *And there was* the appearance of a very formidable *war in heaven,* and several mighty battles seemed to be fought before my sight; *Michael,* the great leader of God's host, and therein an emblem of the great Emmanuel, *and his angels,* were marshalled on the one side: and they *made war against the dragon; and* on the other side, *the dragon made war* with him; *and his angels* likewise, consisting of many legions of infernal spirits, in confederacy with the great 8 head of the apostasy, made war under him. *Nevertheless they did not prevail* against the armies of God, *neither was place found for them any more in heaven;*[e] but being unable 9 to stand their ground, they seemed to be expelled, and fall down to the earth. *And thus the great,* furious, and voracious *dragon was cast out;* [*even*] *the old serpent,* so long experienced in the arts of mischief; who, from his falsehood, is *called the devil,* or the false accuser; *and* from his malice, *Satan,* or the general adversary: he, *who deceives the whole world* by his subtle temptations, *was cast out* of heaven, and sunk down *to the earth; and his* confederate *angels were cast out with him,* following him in his ruin, as 10 they had done in his guilt. *And I heard a great voice saying in heaven, Now is come the* long expected *salvation: and the power and the kingdom of our God* is now exerted and established; *and the authority of his Christ* shall now prevail against all opposition; *because the* malignant and perfidious *accuser of our brethren is* now *cast out, who* carried his malice to such a height, that he *accused them before our God day and night:* unrestrained by a sense of the divine presence, he was ready, as in the instance of Job, (Job i. 9; ii. 5.) continually to charge them with the greatest evils before him who 11 was indeed the Witness of their integrity. *And* now *they have overcome him,* formidable as he appeared, with all his confederate angels; and it is *by the blood of the Lamb* they have gained this glorious victory: its sacred efficacy has procured them divine strength and grace; and the remembrance of it has wrought powerfully on their souls. *And* their victory has been, under this, in a great measure, occasioned *by the word of their testimony;* by that word of the gospel to which they had borne their testimony with so much

and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels;

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they

b *Masculine son.*] As it was impossible, that *νιον a son* should be any other than *αρσενα a male,* I conclude, that the conjunction of these two words was intended to express the *vigorous constitution* of the child, and what we properly call a *masculine form,* which may, or may not, be joined with the *male sex.* Such was Esau, who from thence had the name of a *child fully made.* Gen. xxv. 25.

c *Into the wilderness.*] I think I never met with a *wilder* interpretation than that which Grotius gives of this place; referring it to the banishment of christianity out of Rome, into little neighbouring towns and villages, (which, in comparison of that *capital city,* might seem a *wilderness,*) during the time of the seduction of Simon Magus; an event neither certain in itself, nor, if ever so certain, by any means answering to the description here given, and the *great* and *important* idea suggested, and so much insisted upon in this *prophecy.* It is on the same precarious principles that he explains the triumph of heaven on *casting out the dragon,* of Simon's being vanquished in his contest with St. Peter at Rome.

d *One thousand two hundred and sixty days.*] These days are *years* of papal usurpation. Mr. Fleming (who hath the honour herein to be followed by Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Lowman, though not as I remember named by the *former,* whom the latter professes to follow) supposes them to begin in the year 736, when Pepin of France made a grant to the Pope of the *temporal dominion of Rome,* on the destruction of the exarchate of Ravenna, to which that imperial city for a while belonged. Upon this the Pope began the *eighth head of Rome;* and the period of his continuing so will end about the year 2016: or if (which seems most reasonable) *prophetical years* be used in the computation, consisting of 360 days, about 2000, which he supposes will be the beginning of the millennium. Flem. *Of Res.* p. 120.

e *Neither was place found for them any more in heaven.*] I once thought this referred to a representation made to the apostle, in the vision, of the first expulsion of Satan from heaven; but upon considering that he, who is represented as *cast out* of the divine presence, is described as *the accuser of the brethren,* who had *before* been *accusing them day and night before God;* I was induced to change my mind. On the whole, I am extremely dubious about this, and refer it to farther consideration, whether this may not signify the conquest of Satan by Christ, by the first publication of the gospel. Mr. Lowman interprets it of the victory over Satan and his power, when christianity had fully prevailed over heathenism in the empire, and when an effectual stop was put to the Mahometan imposture in these western parts.

loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-*child*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

fidelity, *and* at so great an expense, for *they loved not their lives unto the death:* they exposed themselves to the greatest dangers, and many of them actually met their death in this glorious conflict; but they fell to rise, and triumph, and reign. And *therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye who inhabit them*, and, as it were, pitch your tents there: let all the celestial armies proclaim the victory with joy. But *woe to those that inhabit* the terraqueous globe, consisting of *the earth and the sea: for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time;* and therefore is maliciously bent to make the most he can of it, exerting one powerful effort more to establish and confirm his cause. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast out on the earth*, I perceived him to be greatly enraged; and saw that, mindful of the original of the late war, *he persecuted the woman who had brought forth a male-child. And* to signify the extraordinary provision that should be made for her deliverance, *there were* immediately *given to the woman two wings*, like those *of a great* and strong *eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,*[f] *unto her place*, which, as I observed before, was appointed for her; *where*, as I said, *she is nourished*, for one thousand two hundred and sixty days; that is, *for a time*, or one year, *and times*, or two years, *and half a time* or year, that is, for three years and an half, which is the same period. And thus she was hid *from the face of the serpent*, and preserved from his destructive efforts. *And the serpent threw out of his mouth* a flood of *water, like a river,*[g] *after the woman*, as she was winging her flight from him, *that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth assisted the woman; and the earth opened its mouth, and drank up the flood which the dragon threw out of his mouth,*[h] so that it sunk as fast as it fell, and could not swell into such a formidable current as he seemed to have intended it should. *And the dragon was enraged against the woman*, to see all his efforts against her defeated by a superior power; *and* he *went away* to excite new troubles, and *to make war* against the woman, and *against the remainder of her seed*, even as many as might by any means be brought within his reach; nor did he spare any of those *who keep the commandments of God* inviolable, *and* have the courage to *retain*, at the greatest expense or hazard, *the testimony of Jesus Christ*, in his pure, uncorrupted gospel.

SECT. 15. REV. XII. 12 13 14 15 16 17

IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER concealed and unknown wonders may be intimated, in some parts of this grand and awful vision, in others it contains very obvious and important instructions.—While we are beholding this emblematical representation of the christian church, let us adore the great original Sun of Righteousness, who has decked her with his glorious beams, and will at length cause every faithful member of this blessed society to shine forth as the sun in his Father's kingdom. And let us be desirous of treading this changeable and uncertain world under our feet. Let us thankfully own the hand which has crowned the church with the apostles, as with a diadem; and, taught by their precepts, and inspired by their example, let us prepare ourselves for that sacred war to which we are called, the war against the devil and his confederate hosts. It is indeed under a very formidable type that he is here represented:—His cruelty, his subtilty, his experience in all the arts of destruction, are painted out with dreadful propriety, in the old serpent, the great dragon; but, formidable as his violence, or artful and potent as the confederacy of infernal spirits may be, here is a victory gained over him, which calls for the congratulation of all the armies of the Lord: the dragon and his angels are cast out; the saints are enabled to triumph over him, feeble and impotent as they are. But in what way are they able to overcome him? It is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Instructive and edifying admonition! Let this be our confidence, even the banner of the cross, the blood of the Saviour, who died upon it; and, in this signal, we shall come off conquerors too; faith in him shall be our shield; the word of God shall be our sword, the sword of the Spirit; and Satan, thus resisted, shall flee before us, (James iv. 7.) In vain are the floods of temptation, which he may attempt to throw out of his mouth, to debauch our principles or practices; they shall be entirely swallowed up. And though the church be for a while in the wilderness, it shall be happily sheltered, and tenderly nourished; there its members shall be in safety, as if they were taken up to God, even unto his throne, till the time which he has appointed for its triumph. In the meanwhile, however, the sons of malice, under the instruction and influence of the great accuser of the brethren, may defame them: however persecution may attack and harass them; let them be courageous and undaunted, not loving their lives even to the death, in the cause of Christ; for, though they fall, they shall rise again to certain victory and glory; nor shall death bring down their heads so low, as to render them unworthy of wearing a crown of eternal life.

Ver. 1 2 7 3 9 10 11 15, 16 14 5 10 11

f *Fly into the wilderness.*] This is the same event that was represented, ver. 6.

g A flood of *water, like a river.*] Perhaps this is one of the artifices which these enormous creatures make use of to *beat down* their prey, when flying from them; though I cannot, at present, remember any passage that illustrates it.

h *The earth assisted the woman, &c.*] This may intimate that, notwithstanding all the violent and cruel attempts of Satan, and of those persecuting powers whom he instigates, God will raise up some persons, (and perhaps, as Mr. Lowman observes, it may mean, some persons of power and authority in the world,) to protect his *witnesses*, and secure many of those who faithfully retain the testimony of Jesus; and to prevent pure religion from being entirely overborne and lost. And this has been, in fact, the case in many nations; and particularly in this.

SECTION XVI.

The vision of the two beasts, and the outrages committed by them. Rev. xiii. *throughout.*

Rev. xiii. 1.

SECT. 17. REV. XIII.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, as I apprehended in the vision, *and saw a* fierce and *savage beast*[a] *ascending out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns;* to intimate the city of Rome standing upon seven hills, and the ten kingdoms into which its dominions were to be divided; *and upon his horns* [*were*] *ten diadems;* to signify the royal power that was to be found in each: *and on his heads* [*there were*] *names of blasphemy,*[b] such names as it was most profane and blasphemous to assume.

2 *And the beast which I saw was,* as to the form of the greater part of its body, *like a leopard, and its feet* [*were*] *like those of a bear,* to signify its exceeding great fierceness; *and its mouth* was *like the mouth of a* roaring and furious *lion; and the dragon,* who still appeared on the visionary scene, that is, the devil, *gave him,* by solemn delegation, *his power, and his throne, and great authority* in his kingdom; so that this beast seemed to be constituted his vicegerent; however he might pretend to represent a very different person.

3 *And I saw one of his heads wounded, as it were, to death;* that is, in such a manner, that a recovery seemed impossible; to signify those early efforts which should be made, to put a stop to the usurpation, cruelties, and blasphemy, represented by these heads, and the names written on them. *And yet its mortal wound,* as one would have thought it must have proved, *was* unaccountably *healed. And the whole earth wondered* at so strange an event, [*and*] they [*followed*] *after the wild beast,* thinking a greater argument of its extraordinary power arose from its cure, than could have taken place, had he never
4 been wounded at all.[c] *And they,* that is, the inhabitants of the earth, *worshipped the dragon who gave* his *authority to the wild beast; and they worshipped the wild beast,* even as with God-like adoration, *saying, Who,* that pretends to deity in heaven, or earth, [*is*] *like unto the beast?* or *who can* ever presume to *make war against him,* since his
5 power is so well established, without hazard of immediate or certain destruction? *And there was given to it,* that is, to this monster, *a mouth, speaking great things, and blasphemies,* as with a human voice; to signify that it was influenced by that being, who, assuming the form and organs of a brute, had used the power of speech for the most mischievous purposes. *And there was* also *given unto it power to make war*[d] with the saints with some apparent advantage, for the term above mentioned, of *forty-two months;*
6 that is, one thousand twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. *And he opened his* infernal *mouth to utter blasphemy against God,* even *to blaspheme his* holy and venerable *name, and his tabernacle* pitched among men; *and,* not only did he speak malignant things against the inhabitants of the earth, but even against *those that dwell*
7 *in heaven.*[e] (Compare Dan. xi. 36.) *And it was,* by divine permission, *given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them* for a time; *and* so universal was the success of his pernicious undertakings, that it seemed as if *there was given to him power*
8 *over every tribe, and tongue, and nation. And all the inhabitants of the earth* shall be so deluded with his artifices, or intimidated by his terrors, that they *shall worship him,*[f]
9 that is, all *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slain;* for some were registered in that book even *from the foundation of the world:*[g] and they shall, by a secret energy, be preserved in the midst of so general and ruinous a defection. *If any one has an ear* to hear, *let him* attentively *hear* this; for it is a matter of a most

Rev. xiii. 1.
AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

a *Savage beast.*] This I understand of the *papal power*, as exercised by the Bishop of Rome, supported by his regular clergy, and by those secular princes, who have given up their name and power to him. And when the *dragon* is said to *give him his power and throne, &c.* ver. 2. it intimates, that he should have his seat or residence there, where the dragon had reigned, even at Rome; which had been the seat of idolatry and persecution during its pagan state.

b *Names of blasphemy.*] They must have very little acquaintance with the arrogant titles which have been assumed or admitted by the popes, who discern not in them a very remarkable illustration of this circumstance of the prophecy.—Instead of ονομα, the common reading, I think ονοματα, *names*, in the *plural*, which is supported by the authority of the Alexandrian and other manuscripts, to be preferable.

c Never been wounded at all.] It is certain that *ineffectual efforts* to recover the liberty and purity of the church, have sometimes been improved into occasions of farther *usurpations;* and many have been intimidated by them from making any farther attempts. Yet they are not entirely destitute of their good effects, as they at least deliver the souls of those who have exerted their utmost ability in making them: and may afterwards be productive of better fruits and consequences.

d *Power to make war:* πολεμον ποιησαι.] Our translators have followed those copies which omit the word πολεμον, and have rendered ποιησαι, *continue:* a sense which, it must be owned, it sometimes bears, particularly, Acts xv. 33; xx. 3. but I have chosen to rely on those copies which retain the word πολεμον. See ver. 7.

e *Those that dwell in heaven.*] It is very injurious to the *saints* and *angels*, when they are represented as desirous of attracting to themselves that *worship* which ought to be appropriated to God; and nothing worse can be imagined of them, than that they should be delighted with such services as are paid them in the Romish ritual.

f *The inhabitants of the earth shall worship him.*] The extravagant *idolatry* here mentioned, is very suitable to the *temper* and *practice* of those who, in order to avoid persecution, comply with the claims and demands of the papal power, contrary to their conscience; for it is the language of such a compliance, that the *wrath of men* is more to be dreaded than that *of God himself.*

g Registered *from the foundation of the world.*] I am well aware of what has been said to justify the sense which these words must have, if taken in connexion with those which immediately precede them; but, after all, it is very harsh to say, *Christ was slain from the foundation of the world.* He is in another place called simply, *the Lamb slain*, Rev. v. 12. and a kingdom is said to be prepared for good men *from the foundation of the world*, Matt. xxv. 34. And, laying these things together, I think it abundantly sufficient to justify the interpretation I have here given, especially when compared with another passage in this book, chap. xvii. 8. *whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world.* Mr. Pierce thinks it is an allusion to the custom of registering the actions of worthy persons, as Mal. iii. 17. undoubtedly is; and that *this book of life* is, as it were, the *catalogue* of good men that have lived in all ages. Pierce, on Phil. iv. 3. But I cannot be of opinion, that this exhausts the *full meaning* of the expression.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, and his number *is* six hundred threescore *and* six.

important nature, and the most surprising phenomenon which can be imagined, that such an idolatrous and persecuting power should arise in the christian church, and that God should suffer it so far to prevail. Nevertheless, God will not forget the injuries his people sustain; but *if any one lead* [*them*] *into captivity, he shall be led into captivity* himself by a superior power, which he shall not be able to resist; and *if any one slay* others *with the sword* of injustice and cruelty, *he shall himself be slain with the sword* of divine vengeance, when God comes to make inquisition for blood. In the mean time, while they are waiting for his appearance, *here is* a sufficient exercise for *the patience and the faith of the saints:* it is the greatest trial to which they were ever brought; let them therefore consider themselves as called out by God to it, and be assured that he will limit it both as to its duration and degree, in a manner answerable to the purposes of his infinite wisdom, and of his peculiar love to them. *And*, to represent a very crafty and insidious power, which should join with the former, and greatly abet its sanguinary persecutions, *I saw another beast*[h] *ascending out of the earth*;[i] *and it had two horns like a lamb; but*, whatever gentleness there might be in that circumstance of its appearance, *it spake like a dragon. And* such is the nature of their alliance, that *it exercises all the power of the first beast, in its presence; and it makes the earth, and those that dwell in it, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*, whose interest, which seemed so much endangered, was greatly revived, being thus powerfully abetted and supported. *And he*, in order to confirm his subtle pretences to lord it over the consciences of men, *does great miracles*,[k] *so as* even *to make fire come down from heaven to earth before men:* strange artifices he has, to persuade them of his being endowed with more than natural powers, and that the vengeance of heaven will be armed against all that oppose him! *And he deceiveth the inhabitants of the earth, by the signs which it is given him to do before the beast; commanding the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast that had the wound of the sword and* yet *lived;* that is, he teaches men to extol, and almost adore, that which in itself is most contemptible and detestable. *And it was given to him*, by a divine permission, *to give* spirit and *breath*, as it were, *to the image of the beast*,[l] *that the image of the beast might speak* with an audible voice. *And*, so zealous and powerful is he in abetting this cause, that by this its oracle he should *cause as many as will not worship the image of the beast to be put to death. And he causeth all*, of every rank and condition, *both small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to receive the mark* of this detestable power *on their right hand, or their forehcads*, in token of becoming its subjects and property. *And* so rigorously is this enforced, *that no one should be able to buy or sell, but one who has* some such trace of *the mark*,[m] *or the name of the beast, or the number*, which is equivalent to the numeral letters *of his name*, and which I thought, in the vision, I saw impressed on the hands and foreheads of many. *Herein is* a great effort of *wisdom; let him* therefore, whoever he be, *who hath* an enlarged and penetrating *understanding*, beyond what is common, *compute the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man*,[n] or the numeral letters in the name of a man, *and his number is*, and amounts, on the whole, to *six hundred* and *sixty-six;* which I leave to the intelligent reader to decypher.

SECT. 16.

REV. XIII. 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

IMPROVEMENT.

WHOEVER is the beast intended, and whatever be meant by his image, his character, beyond all controversy, is very odious and detestable; for he is represented as blaspheming the name of God, and his tabernacle, and as making war with the saints. There have arisen such impious monsters in the christian church, and none among them have been more openly and enormously wicked and profane, than those who have made the loudest pretensions to be the

Ver. 6 7

h *Another beast.*] As I look upon the former to be the *papal power*, I am ready, with the best critics I know, to interpret this of the *religious orders* of the *church of Rome*, (particularly that of the Jesuits,) who have many of them *temporal* estates and jurisdictions added to their spiritual, and *thus* have greatly supported the papacy.

i *Out of the earth.*] This beast is said to ascend *from the earth*, whereas the other ascended *from the sea*, to make the *distinction* between them the more remarkable; but what other mystery may be suggested, I cannot conjecture.

k *Great miracles.*] The artful impostures, which the regular clergy, that is, the several orders of monks, and especially the Jesuits, have used to persuade the people of the truth of their pretended miracles and revelations, seem to be finely delineated by this otherwise amazing description.

l *Image of the beast.*] What *the image of the beast* is, distinct from the *beast itself*, I confess I know not; and therefore interpret the expressions, *making an image, and giving it breath*, &c. of idolizing the power of the pope, and compelling persons to pay homage to it, and obey the edicts it published. And all the enormous fury of the inquisition, which is managed by one of the regular orders included in this representation, namely, the Dominican, is a remarkable verification of the following part of the prophecy, of its *causing all that would not worship it to be put to death.*

m *Receive the mark.*] I have elsewhere observed, (*Serm. to Young People*, Serm. iv. p. 79.) that it was customary to *mark soldiers* and *slaves* with some impressions, either on their *hands* or *foreheads*, by which they might be known to belong to their respective masters or commanders; and idolaters, with the signature of the god they worshipped. Perhaps this may particularly refer to the *sacraments* which the people are obliged, on the highest penalty, to receive from the *Romish priests*, and which none can receive without such *superstitious* and *idolatrous* rites as are, in effect, *worshipping the image of the beast.*

n *The number of a man*, &c.] Of all the various interpretations given to this text, which it would be endless to enumerate, and much more to canvass, I find none that pleases me so well, as that of Sir Isaac Newton; that the words, λατεινος, and ρωμη, *the man of Latium*, or of Rome, whose numeral letters, taken together, make 666, are here referred to. And I suppose this number is mentioned to signify, that the *appearance of that power*, whose efforts were to continue 1260 years, (compare chap xii. 6. note d,) was to happen about 666 years after the date of the *Revelations*, A. D. 96. And this I take to be the grand key by which the era of the fall of Babylon is to be calculated, as it fixes *the rise of the beast* to the year 756, or thereabouts, when, upon the destruction of the exarchate of Ravenna, the pope became a temporal monarch: that is, in prophetic language, a beast. See many other conjectures in Limborch's *Theol.* 7. xi. 19. Mr. Potter thinks the number referred to is the cube root of 666, namely, 25, (which has led Dr. More to fix upon number 12, relating to the church of Christ, and number 25, relating to antichrist;) and concludes farther, that the exact cube is not mentioned, to prevent too sudden a discovery. Compare More's *Theol.* p. 134. Grotius's referring it to Trajan, is very ungrounded in every view.

SECT. 16. REV. XIII. vicegerents of Christ, and invested with his whole authority. Many of the saints of God have seemed to have been overcome by this antichristian tyranny; many have been led into captivity; many have been slain with the sword: but those who took them captive, continuing impenitent, shall be taken and the slayers slain. O may our names be written in the Lamb's book of life! then shall we be secure in the midst of all these formidable evils; and, from every trial of our faith and patience, shall come out as gold seven times purified.—Let us not be troubled and offended, to discern these usurpations in the course of divine providence prevailing, and the time actually come in many parts of the world, in which men can neither buy nor sell, nor are permitted to enjoy any other natural or civil privilege, if they will not give up their names to the beast, receive his mark, and implicitly submit to his authority. The prophecy justly removes all offence which might be taken at the event; and discerning its accomplishment, we may embolden our hopes, that the triumphs of divine justice over these ministers of the dragon, as they are also foretold, will be fulfilled with the like punctuality. And O may the church of God be secured from their artifices, and fortified against their terrors; and in his own due time, may he break the jaw-bone of the wicked! May he utterly disarm all the power and policy of those who take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed; and though their confederacies may seem to mock all human opposition, yet at his appearance, they shall melt away as snow before the sun, when the time to remember Sion, yea, the set time, is come. (Psalm cii. 13.)

SECTION XVII.

The vision of the Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, surrounded with those whom he had redeemed; and of several mighty angels, proclaiming his vengeance upon the beast, and upon those that worship him. Rev. xiv. *throughout.*

Rev. xiv. 1.

SECT. 17. REV. XIV. *AND* while these terrible objects were before me, *I looked*, and beheld another object, which animated my heart under the alarm *and* distress they gave me: for, *behold, the Lamb was standing upon mount Sion*, which was represented to me also in my vision, as the place on which the temple that had been opened in heaven stood; *and with him* were *one hundred forty-four thousand, who*, in opposition to the name of the beast, which was so rigorously imposed, and by many received with so base a submission, *had the name of* God *his Father written on their foreheads*, in token of their inviolable submission and entire dedication to him. *And I heard a voice out of heaven*, which was loud *as the sound of many waters*, when tossing themselves in the ocean, *and like the sound of great thunder:* and loud *and* awful as it was, it was accompanied with a most delightful harmony; for *I heard the voice of harpers playing upon their harps*, aiding their instruments with the melody of their voices. *And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the* twenty-four *elders*, who, in this vision, still appeared to be present; *and none could learn the song, unless the one hundred and forty-four thousand, who are redeemed from the earth*, and are as representatives of the whole body of the redeemed. *These are* pure and unspotted souls, free from the idolatries and other abominations which have been so prevalent in the age in which they live; or, to speak in the prophetic language, these are *they who have not been polluted with women; for they are* chaste *virgins*:[a] *these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth:* and having humbly traced his footsteps upon earth, shall be led by him to the possession of various and ever new delights in the celestial world. *These* are they, who *were redeemed from among men*, [*as*] *the first-fruits*, consecrated *to God and to the Lamb;* most excellent in their kind, and separate from every unclean or profane use, to the immediate honour of God, and of their Redeemer.[b] *And no deceit*, or evil of any kind, *was found in their mouth, for they are* entirely *blameless before the throne of God*, and exalted to that world, where he reigns in perfect purity, as well as divine glory, nor can any thing unclean be admitted in his presence.

And I saw another glorious *angel, flying* with strength and rapidity *through the midst of heaven*,[c] *having* in his hand the volume of a book, which he displayed, as with an air of complacency and triumph, even *the everlasting gospel, to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people*, dispersed over the world. And as he passed I heard him making proclamation of its important contents, and *saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him* with becoming reverence and submission, *for the hour of his judgments is come*, when he shall execute vengeance on his enemies, *and worship him who made heaven and earth and sea, and the* limpid *fountains of waters*, which are derived from it, and flow back into it. *And another* great *angel followed* him crying out, as with the voice of exultation and triumph, *saying, It is fallen, it is fallen*, [*even*] *Babylon, the great city*, a city famous as Babylon of old, when it was at the height of its power and glory: God in his righteous vengeance hath brought it down, *because it made all the nations drink of the wine of its raging fornication*, till they were stimulated thereby to the most scandalous and furious excesses. *And the third angel followed them* both, *saying with a loud voice, If any one*, how strong soever the temptation may have been, *worship the beast, and his image, and re-*

Rev. xiv. 1.

AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no one could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a

a *They are virgins.*] This probably signifies their *freedom* from *idolatry*, which is, in a *spiritual* sense, *fornication;* nor can it, with any reason, be urged against marriage.

b *First-fruits*, most excellent in their kind, &c.] That the *Jewish first-fruits* had this property, will appear from comparing the following texts relating to them; Deut. xviii. 4: Exod. xxii. 29; Numb. xviii. 12; Micah vii. 1. Compare James i. 18.

c *Angel flying*, &c.] The *flight of an angel* admirably repre-

loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine-press was trodden without the

ceive the mark on his forehead, or on his hand;[d] if he subject himself to this wicked and idolatrous form of religion, and obstinately persist in it, notwithstanding the light which God is giving to discover its errors and superstitions; *He also shall* himself *drink of the wine of the indignation of God, which is tempered* with various ingredients of wrath, *without* any *mixture* of mercy, *in a cup of his wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone*, in the day of God's future vengeance, *in the presence of the holy angels*,[e] *and in the presence of the Lamb*;[f] whose religion has so shamefully been perverted and dishonoured, even by those who pretend entirely to have engrossed it: *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever*, without any period; *and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whoever*, in contempt of the authority and testimony of God, *receive the mark of his name*,[g] as the badge of their devotedness to him. In the mean time, these deceivers shall have their day, when all the terrors of secular power shall enforce their impious and iniquitous decrees. And *here is the patience of the saints; here* [*are*] the triumphs of *those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*, and are determined to maintain the purity of the gospel amidst these formidable efforts to corrupt it. *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, Write* this for the instruction of mankind in the most distant ages: *henceforth*[h] *blessed* [*are*] *the dead, that die in the Lord*:[i] so numerous, and so various, are the calamities which persecuting powers shall bring upon the saints, that there is abundant reason to congratulate those who are taken out of this vexatious, oppressive, and afflictive world, whether by a natural, or by a violent death; *yea, saith the Spirit*, by whose inspiration and command I record it, they are assuredly blessed; for they are removed, *that they may* for ever *rest from their labours* and their sorrows; *and their works* of piety and goodness, though so ill requited here, shall not be forgotten, but shall *follow them* into the presence of God, shall be acknowledged there in the most condescending manner, and through the riches of divine mercy, recompensed with eternal glory. Accordingly, let this remembrance of their faith and patience, in connexion with this transcendent reward, encourage and animate their surviving brethren to imitate their examples.

SECT. 17. REV. XIV.

10 11 12 13

And I saw, and behold, another remarkable appearance offered itself to my view; *a white cloud*, shining with wonderful lustre and beauty; *and on the cloud one sitting*, who seemed, by the majesty of his form, to be *like the Son of man*, as represented in Daniel; *having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand*, instead of a sceptre, *a sharp sickle:* so that he seemed to be going forth, as to some wonderful harvest. *And* as soon as I had viewed him, *another angel came out of the temple* of God, *crying with a loud voice, to him that sat upon the cloud, Put forth thy sickle, and reap, for the season of thy reaping is come, because the harvest of the earth is* now fully *ripe.* (Compare Joel iii. 13.) Execute therefore this judgment, O thou mighty Messenger of God, which the wickedness of the world hath righteously deserved. *And*, accordingly, *he that sat upon the cloud, put forth his sickle on the earth*, with strength and rapidity; *and* the harvest of *the earth was* presently *reaped;* signifying, that the execution of the threatened vengeance should be very speedy. But it seemed that the vintage yet remained to be gathered in. *And*, in reference to this, *another angel came out of the temple that was in heaven; and he* also was armed as the other, like the Son of Man, and *had a sharp sickle* in his hand. *And another angel*, just at that instant, *came from the altar, having*, as it seemed, *power over the fire* of it; *and he called out with a great cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and lop off the clusters of the vine*, which grows *upon*, and extends itself almost over *the earth, for its grapes are ripe;* and the persons represented by it have so abused the divine long-suffering, that it is proper the season of their destruction should commence. *And* accordingly *the angel*, with celerity and vigour, *thrust out his sickle upon the earth, and lopped off* the grapes from *the vine of the earth; and he threw* [*them*] *into the great wine-press of the wrath of God*, which seemed to stand ready to receive them. *And the wine-press*, [*which stood*] *out of the city, was trodden* with great violence; *and the blood* of the

14 15 16 17 18 19 20

sents the *swiftness* of that progress by which the *gospel* dispersed itself over the whole world, as Archbishop Tillotson well observes. See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 144.

d *On his hand.*] Compare ch. 16. note m.

e *Presence of the holy angels.*] From hence Mr. Reynolds conjectures, that possibly the torments of the damned may, at certain seasons, through eternal ages, become a spectacle to the inhabitants of the blessed world above. See his *Queries concerning Angels*, p. 305.

f *Presence of the Lamb.*] This signifies (as Dr. Clarke well observes) that it shall not only be appointed by the infinite Majesty of God, the righteous Judge of all, but approved moreover by *men* and *angels*, and by him also, who *loved us* unto death, even Christ, that *merciful* and *compassionate High-Priest.* Clarke's *Posth. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 341.

g *The smoke of their torment—who worship the beast, &c.*] When I seriously reflect on this text, and how directly the force of it lies against those who, contrary to the light of their consciences, continue in the *communion* of the *church of* Rome, for *secular* advantage, or to avoid the terror of *persecution;* it almost makes me tremble; and I heartily wish, that all others, who connive at those things in the *discipline* and *worship* of *protestant churches* which they, in their consciences, think to be *sinful* remains of popish superstition and corruption, would seriously attend to this passage, which is one of the most *dreadful* in the whole book of God, and weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse, which is sufficient to *make the ears of every one that hears it to tingle.* Compare Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

h *Henceforth.*] The learned Witsius understands this to mean, from the time of their death: as if it had been said, (ἀπαρτι,) *immediately* after their dissolution they are *blessed.* Wits. *Oecon. Fœd.* 3. xiv. 21. And Mr. Baxter observes, their works are said *to follow with them*, μετ' αὐτων, not to come many thousand years *after* them.

i *Die in the Lord.*] Archbishop Tillotson interprets this chiefly of those who die martyrs in the cause of Christ; who, no doubt, are included. But I think the phrase more extensive. There is, perhaps, an allusion to the words of Solomon, Eccl. iv. 2. *I praised the dead already dead, rather than the living, yet alive*, in time of extreme degeneracy, and bitter persecution. See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 183.—Bishop Burnet, (*On the Articles*, p. 200.) and many other protestant writers, have justly urged this text, as demonstrative against the popish doctrine of purgatory.

SECT. 17. REV. XIV. 20

grape, which I knew betokened the blood of those who were enemies to God and his people, *came out of the wine-press* in such abundance, that it made a kind of inundation, like a vast river or sea, and reached up *even to the bridles of the horses*, which attempted to pass the channel through which it flowed, *at the distance of one thousand six hundred furlongs.*[k] In such an amazing extent and quantity was the effusion of blood represented to me in vision. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 3.)

city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15, 16—20 IN what awful characters is the righteous vengeance of God here described! How quickly do his haughtiest enemies fall before him, like corn before the sickle, or clusters of grapes before the knife! His wine-press shall indeed be trodden, and the blood of his enemies shall overflow: but blessed are all they that put their trust in him, and look to him, who trod the wine-press alone, and who distinguishes himself by the title of him, who is mighty to save, and who travels in the greatness of his strength, (Isa. lxiii. 1—3.) Arrayed in terror, he will vanquish all the enemies of his people: but, to his faithful followers, will appear with the gentleness of the Lamb, of the Lamb their 1 Redeemer, to whose honour their voices and their harps shall resound. O how happy are those souls, who by his 3, 4 special love, being redeemed from among men, and having humbly traced the steps of his purity and goodness on earth, shall in the heavenly world follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes! Let us be accordingly engaged to preserve ourselves unspotted from the world, and to walk worthy of so exalted a hope and expectation; to keep our 5 mouths from every deceit, that we may be found blameless in the presence of God and of the Lamb. God hath 6, 7 granted us the everlasting gospel, on purpose that we might be taught to fear him, and to give glory to his name; to worship him as the great Creator and righteous Governor of the universe: and while we are under the conduct of his providence, and devoted to his service, let nothing discourage or dismay us. Though for the present we see 8—10 that Babylon is triumphant, though its patrons are making themselves drunk with the blood of his saints, a very different cup is prepared for her, and will assuredly be given her to drink; even the cup of the wrath of God, poured forth without mixture; while blessings, inconceivable and eternal, are reserved for those that suffer for righteousness 12 sake. Let the patience, therefore, of those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Christ, be invincible; for their fiercest and most formidable enemies can only kill the body; and, having done that, can neither pre- 13 vent nor delay the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord. The infallible Spirit has said it, the blessed apostle hath, by divine command, recorded it, for the instruction and triumph of his people in all ages, that they rest from their labours, and that their works follow them; while those that persecuted and hated them, rest not day nor 11 night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And, oh! that numbers of those who worship 9 the beast, and who receive its image, may be awakened, while the day of their visitation continues; lest they also, 10 after having dealt damnation, in their arrogant censures upon men of much purer faith and holier lives than themselves, be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb

SECTION XVIII.

The appearance of seven angels, with seven vials, full of the seven last plagues; and the pouring out of the three first vials, with their consequent effects. Rev. xv. 1, *to the end*,—xvi. 7.

REV. XV. 1.

SECT. 18. REV. XV. 2

AND I saw another great and wonderful sign in heaven, which fixed my attention, and will demand that of the reader: *Seven angels, who had the seven last plagues;* so called, *because in them the wrath of God was to be completed;* and because they refer to some of the last judgments, which he shall pour forth on the enemies of the church, before the time of its most illustrious triumph. *And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass*;[a] a great 2 crystal vessel, like the sea in Solomon's temple; and it was so irradiated with the reflection of that light which fell upon it from the throne of God, that its waves seemed *mingled with fire*. *And those who overcame the beast*,[b] *and his image, and* stedfastly refused, though at the expense of their possessions and lives, amidst so many who were devoted to him, to receive *his mark*, [*and*] *the number of his name*, I saw *standing by the sea of glass, having the harps of God* in their hands; with which they were celebrating his praises, 3 for that powerful presence and assistance which had rendered them victorious. *And they sung the song of Moses, the* faithful and beloved *servant of God, and the song of* Jesus *the Lamb*, who had bought them with his blood.[c] They celebrated the triumph they had gained over the proud enemy, with a joy like that with which Israel of old, at the Red sea, celebrated the destruction of the haughty and cruel Egyptians, by the immediate and

REV. XV. 1.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the

k *One thousand six hundred furlongs.*] As a furlong is one eighth of a mile, this would amount to 200 miles. This representation, like the dimension of that temple which Ezekiel saw, may seem extravagantly large, and such as the eye, in vision, could not possibly judge of. I look upon it, therefore, as only an hyperbolical expression, to signify its *exceeding greatness;* unless possibly it may point out the dimension of that country over which the judgment should extend, which is here prophetically referred to. Though perhaps it may only intimate in general, that after the antichristian powers had long oppressed and persecuted the saints, the power of Christ should humble and destroy them; and therefore they are represented as a *harvest ripe and fit for reaping, &c.* the measure of their iniquities being full.

a *Sea of glass.*] Some explain this in a different manner, as if there were properly *a sea*, seeming to lie before the ground which appeared in the vision, through which they had passed who now stood upon the shore of it: and they suppose *the glass* to represent the *frail nature* of this world; and *the fire*, the mixture of calamity and misery to which they had been exposed, before they arrived at the state of security and happiness in which they then were. Many other interpretations have also been given. But the consideration of what I have said elsewhere, of the reference to *the scenery of the temple*, determined me to the interpretation I have preferred.

b *Overcame the beast.*] It is, in the original, εκ της θηρος, which Dr. Clarke would translate, *out of the midst of the beast;* that is, adhering stedfastly to the true religion, in the midst of an idolatrous and corrupt nation. See his *Post. Serm.* Vol. III. p. 86.

c *Song of Moses—and of the Lamb.*] That is, saith Mr. Mede, upon the conversion of all nations from *idolatry*, they sung a *song* of congratulation to Moses and Jesus, whose doctrine had so directly opposed it. Mede, on Luke xi. 2. But I think this a very low *interpretation*. Whoever diligently observes the contents of the *song of Moses*, Exod. xv. will find many expressions finely adapted to the occasion here supposed. And if it were true, as Maimonides tells us, that *the song of Moses* was sung *daily* in the *temple-service*, it may be considered as a beautiful illustration of this circumstance, agreeable to the general plan pursued in these visions.

Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Rev. xvi. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth: and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea: and it became as the blood of a dead *man:* and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink: for they are worthy.

glorious interposition of the divine power, *saying*, "*Great and wonderful* [*are*] *thy* SECT.
"*works*, both of judgment and of mercy, *O Lord God Almighty;* nor dost thou use 18.
"thine Almighty power to oppress any, the meanest of thy creatures; on the contrary, ——
"perfectly *righteous and true* [*are*] all *thy ways* and administrations, *O King of saints,* REV.
"who art thyself supremely holy, as well as powerful. *Who should not fear thee, O* XV.
"*Lord, and glorify thy* great and adorable *name? because* [*thou*] *only* [*art*] *holy;* 4
"and, in thy presence, the holiness of all other beings disappears, as unworthy to be mentioned or remembered. *Surely all nations shall come and worship before thee,* in
"token of the humblest adoration, *because thy righteous judgments are* already in many
"instances *made manifest,* and are about to be manifested in a yet more illustrious
"degree."

And after this I saw, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle, in which was the 5
ark *of the testimony, was opened* again *in heaven:* the most holy place, which, since the vision I before described, had been veiled again, being now subjected to my view. *And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues* already mentioned, *came out of* the 6
inner apartment of *the temple,* as from the immediate presence of God; and like the high-priest on the day of his most sacred ministration, they were *clothed with pure and shining* [*garments;*] only with this difference, that whereas he had on this day only his linen girdle on, *and* continued in that dress till the time of the evening sacrifice, they *were girded about the breasts with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures,* which I 7
have so often mentioned, *gave to the seven angels seven golden vials,* or censers, *full of the wrath of* the great and blessed *God, who liveth for ever and ever;* and therefore is to be regarded as the most formidable Enemy, as well as the most desirable Friend, to immortal beings. *And* agreeably to that wonderful event, which happened when God 8
first took possession of the tabernacle and of the temple, (Exod. xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10; 2 Chron. v. 14; Isa. vi. 4.) *the temple was full of smoke,*[d] which came *from the glory of God, and from* the symbol of *his power. And no one could enter into the temple, till the seven plagues,* which were signified by the vials *of the seven angels, were finished;* and, till they had emptied them by the divine command. *And I* then *heard* REV.
a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, whom I have described XVI.
above, *Go, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God,* with which you are charged, 1
upon the earth; for his patience will no longer endure the provocations they are intended to punish.

And the first angel, in obedience to this divine injunction, *went forth, and poured out* 2
his vial upon the earth; and there was a malignant and grievous ulcer, which broke out in large and dreadful scars, *upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and them who worshipped his image,* and they were extremely tormented with it, and found it incurable. (Compare Exod. ix. 8—10.[e])

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became a mass of 3
blood and putrefaction, *like that of a dead* [*man;*] *and every living soul* [*that was*] *in the sea died;* the fish were immediately destroyed, and the sea appeared a most gloomy and terrible spectacle.[f] (Compare Exod. vii. 20.)

And the third angel bore a commission to spread the same terrible calamity over all the 4
fresh waters; and, accordingly, he *poured forth his vial on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, and they* also *became blood;* as the sea had done on pouring out the vial of the former angel. *And I heard the angel of the waters,*[g] who seemed to be appointed 5
to have the care of them, instead of repining at what was done, adoring the hand of God in it, and *saying,* Most *righteous art thou, O Lord, who art, and who wast,* the same immutable and everlasting Jehovah; *and* [*thou art*] *holy,*[h] *because thou hast judged these,* and executed such awful vengeance upon them. Justly dost thou make these per- 6
secuting and wicked countries the scene of such desolating judgments, *because they have poured forth the blood of* thy *saints, and* even of thy *prophets,* like water; and it hath flowed in a crimson stream, till their rivers have been dyed with it. *And,* accordingly, *thou* madest them read their crime in their punishment, and *hast given them blood to*

d And agreeable to that wonderful event, &c.] Indeed it appears most surprising, and worthy of greater notice than has generally been taken of it, that the blessed God should thus, on the consecration of the temple, possess it *alone,* and drive out, as it were, even the favourable *tokens* of his majestic presence.

e *First vial.*] Mr. Lowman supposes that this *third* period of the *vials* reveals the state of the church and providence in the times of the last head of the Roman government, represented by the *beast,* for 1260 years, from about A. D. 756, to its final overthrow, about A. D. 2016; and he interprets each vial of some signal judgment upon the papal kingdom; supposing the five first already to be poured out, and the two others to be future. But I must own myself not to be entirely satisfied, whether this supposition be just, (though I am rather inclined to think it is,) or whether all the following representations do not refer to events yet future, and describe the supernatural plagues to be inflicted on the papal kingdom, in its last days. Mr. Pyle interprets the first vial of the abandoned degeneracy of the popish clergy. Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers it to the great commotions in the whole empire, under the family of Charles the Great; by which that family became extinct, and the empire and the crown of France were transferred to other families; A. D. 830, to A. D. 988. And he shows by what intrigues the popes endeavoured to weaken and diminish the imperial power, and serve their own ambitious designs; which proved a painful sore, and were the cause of innumerable mischiefs to Europe, and especially to Italy. During this period, the Normans invaded and plundered France, the Saracens ravaged Italy, and the Hungarians the western parts of Germany and Italy.

f *Second vial.*] Mr. Pyle and Mr. Lowman agree in referring this to the great effusion of blood in the holy wars, to recover Jerusalem from the Saracens. This romantic project was set on foot by the pope, pursued by the emperor, the king of France, our king Richard, and other princes, and many prelates; and about two millions lost their lives in the several expeditions, from A. D. 1040, to A. D. 1190. And this appears to me a very probable interpretation.

g *Angel of the waters.*] From this text, compared with chap. xiv. 18. some have inferred, that there are certain intellectual beings which preside over the *several elements* of *water* and *fire*, and, by consequence, of *earth* and *air*.

h *Thou art holy.*] I follow those copies which read it, ⸀⸁ ὁ ὅσιος, whereas others have it, ὁ ἐσόμενος, as in other places of this book.

SECT. 18. REV. XVI. 7 *drink, for they are worthy* of it, worthy to find such horrors as these, whenever they look for refreshment and comfort. *And I heard another* angel, whose voice seemed to come *from the altar, saying, Yea, O Lord God Almighty*, it is indeed thus; *true and righteous* [*are*] all *thy judgments*. Heaven adores the equity of thy proceeding; and the most impious inhabitants of earth, or hell, shall not be able to find any thing to object against them, even when they have the appearance of the greatest severity.[1]

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

IMPROVEMENT.

REV. XVI. Ver. 2 3 4 6—8 REV. XVI. 5—7 3, 4 Let us now raise our eyes and our hearts above the low and sordid scenes of mortality, to those happy and exalted spirits who are described as standing before the crystal sea, with golden harps in their hands. Let us attentively hearken to those broken and imperfect echoes of the song of Moses and of the Lamb, which a gracious God causes to descend, as it were, to this world of ours, and which sometimes sweetly mingle themselves with the clamour of strife, with the din of folly, with the groans of misery. Happy and glorious is their condition now, who are freed from all these evils, and who triumph over all their enemies; whom, as it was said to Israel of the Egyptians, having beheld, they shall see them no more for ever. (Exod. xiv. 13.) They are now acknowledging their great Deliverer, singing everlasting praises to his name, and celebrating the wonders of his works, and the righteousness and truth of all his ways. O Lord God Almighty, O thou King of saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy holy name? Let the nations come and worship in thy presence; let them pay thee their humble reverence and homage, before the vials of thy wrath are poured out; those vials which, terrible as their contents are, the benevolent spirits of heaven prepare themselves, at thy command, to pour forth with pleasure; applauding, in their responsive hymns, thy righteous judgments, even when the sorest and most dreadful plagues torment the worshippers of the beast and his image; even when their seas and their rivers are turned into blood. Whatever be the calamities, whether past or future, to which any of these particulars may refer, surely they are big with terror to those wretches who, on any pretence, are pouring forth the blood of thy prophets and thy saints. They are worthy of having blood given them to drink, and accordingly thou hast a dreadful draught in reserve for them. And though some of them may have laid down their hoary heads in peace, which, we might rather have expected, would have been brought to the grave with blood, the day of thy vengeance will surely come: a vengeance so terrible, that nothing but a zeal for thy violated law, and thine injured gospel, would make the very sight of it supportable to those whose cause shall then be pleaded, and whose blood shall be visited on their tormentors and murderers.

SECTION XIX.

The pouring forth of the four last vials, and the awful events they produce: with the incorrigible obstinacy of the sinners on whom this vengeance is executed. Rev. xvi. 8, *to the end.*

Rev. xvi. 8.

SECT. 19. REV. XVI. 9 *AND* the three former angels having thus poured forth their vials on the earth, and sea, and the rivers of water, *the fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun*;[a] *and*, in consequence of that, an extraordinary *power was given to it, to scorch men with* an intolerable heat, so that they seemed, as it were, to live in the very *fire* itself. *And men were scorched with* sudden calentures, and with *great* and insufferable fierceness of *heat*; *and* yet, instead of giving glory to the great Author of these awful chastisements, which afforded them so lively an idea of everlasting burnings, as if they had already been inhabitants of the world of despair, *they blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues*. And the continuance of their torments did not subdue their hearts, but they still persisted, as with a diabolical obstinacy, *and repented not, to give glory to him*, by a confession of their sins, by seeking his mercy, and returning to his obedience. (Compare Isa. xxiv. 6.)

Rev. xvi. 8.

AND the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun: and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 *And* as these vials had greatly affected the kingdom of the beast, the next came still nearer to him; for *the fifth angel poured forth his vial upon the throne of the beast* itself;[b] *and his kingdom was darkened*, so that his unhappy subjects, from whom he

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast: and his kingdom was full of

i *Third vial.*] Some interpret this of the persecution of the church of Bohemia. (See Mr. Pyle, *in loc.*) But this by no means suits the act of adoration, ver. 5, 6. It seems to refer to calamities to be brought on some parts of the papal kingdom. According to the order of time, Mr. Lowman supposes this to refer to the bloody wars between the Guelphs and Gibellines, or the papal and imperial factions, whereby the popes were driven out of Italy into France; from A. D. 1200, to A. D. 1371. During this period, both these parties had joined in many persecutions, and a violent one raged against the Albigenses; the inquisition was begun about A. D. 1216; and the council of Lateran established these severe and cruel methods of supporting the papacy. And *God gave them also blood to drink*, (ver. 6.) for a violent contest arose between the papal and imperial parties, about the right of presenting to ecclesiastical preferments, so that almost all the cities in Italy were engaged in civil wars, and great multitudes destroyed. In A. D. 1282, all the French in Sicily were massacred. Thus were they, who *shed the blood of the saints*, punished by civil contentions and bloodshed. And, on the whole, this seems to be the most probable and satisfactory interpretation.

a *Fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun.*] Some interpret this of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. See Mr. Pyle, *in loc.* Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers to the long and bloody wars in Italy, France, Germany, and Spain, occasioned by a schism in the papacy, (from A. D. 1378, to A. D. 1530,) there being three popes, in three lines of succession, at the same time. During this period the Turks took Constantinople, and put an end to the eastern empire. And some suppose there is a farther reference to hot and burning seasons which should destroy the fruits of the earth, and occasion pestilential disorders; and historians inform us, that this was the case in the time supposed to be here referred to; particularly by means of the *sweating sickness*, which began in England, and spread wide into other countries, particularly Germany, A. D. 1517; and again, A. D. 1529. But that *they repented not*, (ver. 9.) is evident from the war commenced against the Bohemians; the infamous conduct of the council of Constance, in burning John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, in violation of the public faith, and establishing that scandalous doctrine, *that faith is not to be kept with heretics, &c. &c.*

b *Fifth vial.*] Mr. Pyle interprets this of the perplexity occasioned to the see of Rome, by removing the seat of it to Avignon, and the schism between the popes. But this prophecy seems to refer to a later period. Mr. Lowman's interpretation is more probable, who refers it to the protestant reformation, and the confirmation of it by the principal states of Europe, notwithstanding all the attempts of the Pope, and in opposition to the papal authority: from A. D. 1560, to A. D. 1650. During this period, several nations renounced subjection to the Pope, and have continued free to this day; and, in other nations, his power has been greatly abridged and

darkness: and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon

had so long veiled the light of God's word, and of his favour, had not the benefit of the solar rays, either to guide or cheer them. (Compare Ezek. xxxii. 8.) And yet, at the same time, the secret fire kindled in their veins by the former scorching heat continued: *and they gnawed their tongues for* the extremity of the pain and *anguish* which they felt: *And* they still *blasphemed the* great *God*, the tremendous Majesty *of heaven* as well as earth, *for their pains and their ulcers*, which the scorching heat had excited; *and* they *repented not of their* wicked *works*, whereby they had awakened his just indignation. SECT. 19. REV. XVI. 11

And[b] *the sixth angel poured forth his vial upon the great river Euphrates*:[c] *and its* 12 *water*, wide and rapid as the stream had been, *was dried up* immediately, *that a way might be prepared for* the march of *the kings from the rising of the sun*, who appeared in vision as coming to the borders of it, with all their armies, to pour forth destruction upon the beast and his kingdom. *And*, as *I saw* the dragon standing in my presence, 13 with the beast and the false prophet near him, as the great abettors of his kingdom, which was threatened by this invasion, I had an intimation given me of the various efforts they should make for the preservation of it: [*and*] *out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet*,[d] [*there came*] evidently *three* animals, which expressed *unclean spirits*, being represented by creatures *like frogs*: *For these are the spirits of demons*, whose design it is to impose upon mankind 14 by the most artful stratagems, and pretences of *working miracles*, by *which* they attempted to support the kingdom they had raised; and, indeed, it seemed they did even enchant whole nations; for they were permitted by God to *go forth to the kings* of that part *of the earth* where the seat of the beast was; *and*, indeed, his territory was so extensive, that it might be said, they went through *the whole world*; and they operated so powerfully, as *to bring them together to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty*, in which he was secretly determined to pour forth his vengeance upon them. And, as this 15 last effort of this infernal agent would be a signal trial of the faith and constancy of the saints, in order the better to fortify them against it, I heard a voice which I understood to be that of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, *Behold, I come* suddenly and unexpectedly, *as a thief*, that surprises a sleeping family: *blessed* [*is*] *he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments*,[e] *that* they may not suddenly be snatched from him, and *he may not* be forced to *walk naked, so that men should see his shame*. Let my servants, therefore, guard against these sudden surprises, which during this time of danger and alarm may frequently happen. *And* the army appearing against the saints, as was observed above, *He*, that is, 16 God, by the secret conduct of his providence, so disposed things, that he *gathered them together*[f] *into a* certain *place*, [*which is*] *called in the Hebrew language, Armageddon*, or the mountain of Megiddo, because it was to be a place more remarkable for slaughter than Megiddo had ever been.

And when they were there assembled, *the seventh angel poured forth his vial into* 17 *the air; and there came forth a great voice from the temple of heaven*, even *from the* very *throne* of God himself, *saying*, "*It is* now *done*, the great work is just completing." *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was* also together with 18 them *a great earthquake*, to add new horror to the scene, *such as there had not been from the time that men were upon the earth*; even *such, and so great an earthquake*, quite unequalled in history or observation. *And the great city was* immediately *divided* 19 *into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell down. And* thus it appeared, that *Babylon the Great came into remembrance before God, to give her the* long threatened *cup of the wine of his fiercest wrath*, in which all the most dreadful ingredients of vengeance were, as it were, mingled together, like poignant poison in the strongest wine, to give it the greater power and efficacy. *And* the whole face of nature was thrown into 20 such a consternation by means of this grand event, that *every island fled away, and the mountains were found no more. And a great* and violent storm of *hail*, the stones of 21

restrained. This event gave great vexation to the popes and their adherents; occasioned invasions, assassinations, massacres, and bloody wars; as the civil wars in France, the wars in Germany about the Reformation, the war between Spain and the United Provinces, the Spanish invasion of England, and the powder-plot; the massacre of Paris, &c. Yet all proved unsuccessful to prevent the establishment of the reformed religion. And that *they repented not of their deeds*, (ver. 11.) is evident from the instances of their rage and cruelty already mentioned, and which they take care to repeat whenever they have power; and especially from the edicts of the council of Trent, (from A. D. 1542, to A. D. 1562,) which, instead of diminishing or relaxing, increased and confirmed, the corruptions of popery, and condemned all doctrines tending to reformation.

c *River Euphrates.*] It appears to me, that this implies the *invasion* of the *papal kingdom* from the *east*; but, as I believe the vision not yet *accomplished*, I freely confess, that it is involved in those *clouds* and *darkness* which I am not able to penetrate. Mr. Pyle explains it of the conquest of the *eastern* christians, by the growing power of the Ottoman house, and the contempt of popery in some parts of the *west*. But this part of the prophecy seems to refer to an event much later; and, like the rest, to denote some judgment on the *papal kingdom*, to happen, probably, between A. D. 1700, and A. D. 1900.

d *False prophet.*] As the *false prophet* is here joined with the *beast*, and also in chap. xix. 20. and there said to *work miracles* before the *beast*, he seems to be the same mentioned, chap. xiii. 11, 12. but there described as *another beast*, and said to *do great miracles* in the sight of the *beast*. See § 16. notes h, i.

e *Keepeth his garments.*] Dr. Lightfoot thinks here is an allusion to what that *Jewish officer*, called *the man of the mountain*, that is, of the *house of the Lord*, used to do, when taking his round in the temple to examine *the watch*; if he met with any asleep, he had a liberty to set fire to his garments. Perhaps, in this case, the person might be obliged to appear in the *fragments* of his *burnt garments* the next day, which would be a great disgrace. See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 919. According to Ainsworth, (on Numb. xviii. 4, 5.) they were beaten by the provost, and their *garments* were *taken away* and *burnt*.

f *He gathered them.*] This seems a memorable circumstance; they were the dragon's army, yet God assembled them. Such oblique intimations of the interposition of Providence are wonderfully instructive, and they are scattered up and down in many places of the sacred writings.—That Megiddo had been a place remarkable for slaughter, see Judges v. 19; 2 Kings ix. 27; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22. Compare Zech. xii. 11. To express the certain destruction that should come upon these antichristian powers, they are described as brought together to this mountain.

SECT. 19. REV. XVI. which were *as* of *the weight of a talent, descended from heaven upon men*, so as to dash in pieces the stoutest heroes, how well soever they might be armed and defended. *And men*, instead of being reformed by it, *blasphemed God* so much the more *for the plague of the hail; for the plague of it was very great*, and brought along with it a very extensive ruin and desolation.[g]

men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8—10 12 18 12 9 10, 11 14 16 15 WHATEVER particular events these vials might be respectively intended to represent, they all agree in giving us most awful views of the divine power and agency over the whole universe. He is able to scorch and blast the earth with insufferable heat, to veil it in midnight darkness, to dry up its rivers, or even shake its foundations, so as to throw down in a moment the strongest and the proudest cities. From the air he can cause even rivers of ice to descend, sufficient not only to destroy our frail and tender bodies, but those regular fortifications which are deemed impregnable; turning them into the graves of those who seek and expect protection from them. How worthy is this tremendous Being of our homage and reverence? And yet men hear of his awful judgments, and sometimes see and feel them too, and continue unreformed. Even while they are gnawing their tongues through the extremity of pain and anguish, it is possible, that, as well as their wounded tongues will give them leave, they may blaspheme the God of heaven, and utter their impotent rage and malice against him. The infernal regions resound with diabolical language; and O that so many parts of this earth bore no resemblance to them! But let the outrage of the wicked be what it may, God, when he enters into judgment, will overcome. And, though the rage of his enemies engages them to gather themselves together, the event will prove, that it is only as sheep for the slaughter. And, while they are acting in this with the utmost freedom, they are indeed assembled by him, their own angry passions subserving the purposes of his righteous Providence.

Let us confide in his word, let us attend to his voice; and, in spite of all our difficulties and dangers, let us do our endeavour to secure the blessedness of that man who watcheth and keepeth his garments; who is always on his guard against every surprise, which might expose him to shame in the presence of his Master, though he should come in ever so unexpected a manner, even like a thief in the night.

SECTION XX.

In order to let the author into the meaning of the seven vials, he sees a representation of the great harlot sitting upon a mysterious beast, and hears her doomed to destruction by the divine judgments. Rev. xvii. *throughout.*

REV. xvii. 1.

SECT. 20. REV. XVII. 1 2 3 4 5 6 *AND*, when all this was done, *one of the seven angels, who had* been honoured with bearing *the seven vials*, the pouring forth of which I have just described, *came and spake with me, saying to me, Come,* [*and*] *I will show thee* to what this prophetic scene, which has passed before thy view, principally refers, even *the judgment of the great harlot, that sitteth on many waters*, whom thou shalt now see; and observe the terrible vengeance to which she is reserved, though so many people have been corrupted by her, and though she has tyrannized over them in so insolent and imperious a manner: Even of her *with whom the kings of the earth have* so long *committed fornication*, (compare Isa. xxiii. 17.) *and* their subjects have been debauched with them; so that, in a manner, all *the inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her whoredom*, as if they had taken some powerful provocative, to make them dote upon her, and sacrifice every dictate of religion, and reason, and even common sense, to those alluring arts with which she has been tempting them. *And he brought me in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman*, of an impudent front, and a most imperious and cruel appearance, *sitting upon a scarlet beast*, fierce and savage; and the beast had gaudy trappings of embroidery upon it, *full of blasphemous names*, ascribing to itself, and the harlot upon it, properties and glories which belong to God alone; and *having* also, like the beast which I saw before, (chap. xiii. 1.) *seven heads and ten horns;* referring to the hills on which the city, designed by this harlot, stood, and the number of kingdoms subject to its government. *And* the charms of her person, such as they were, were set off with all the gorgeous ornaments of the most splendid dress; for *the woman was clothed with purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones, and pearls; having* also *a golden cup in her hand full of* that inflaming mixture, by which those who drank of it were instigated to all the *abominations and pollution of her* dissolute and abandoned *whoredom;* that is, those idolatrous practices, which the society of men represented by this infamous woman, had carried to so shameful a height. (Compare Jer. li. 7.) But, that she might appear in my eyes as a criminal marked out by God for speedy and dreadful execution, [*she had*] *upon her forehead* [*her*] *name*, her titles, and crimes, *written:* and the first word was *MYSTERY:* the great mystery of iniquity, abetted by all the fraud and artifice which can be conceived, is represented by this woman: after which followed these words, *BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH:* the most impudent strumpet that ever appeared upon earth, and the greatest procuress of lewdness that ever polluted the face of it. *And I saw the woman drunk;* and was informed that it was *with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;* of which she had gorged vast quantities, and for which

REV. XVII. 1.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints; and with the blood of the martyrs of Je-

[g] *Seventh vial.*] This is introductory to the fall of the papal kingdom; and the expressions, ver. 19. may only signify that great numbers should fall by these awful judgments, which were only introductory to the full and complete ruin afterwards described.

sus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

she still thirsted impatiently; and seemed to cast her greedy eyes around, as longing for renewed draughts of it. *And I wondered, when I saw her, with great amazement,*[a] as I knew she represented a society that would call itself christian, and pretend a regard for Jesus and his saints, in the midst of all this cruel persecution of them; and also, for the honour of God amidst all these unequalled idolatries and immoralities. *And the angel said unto me, Why dost thou wonder?* Hast thou not thyself had intimation of this antichristian sect, and this great apostasy? *I will tell thee* the secret of the whole matter; *the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carries her, which hath,* as thou seest, *the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast which thou* formerly *sawest, was, and is not;*[b] that is, God will cut short its reign, *and he will* indeed *ascend,* as has been represented, *out of the bottomless pit, and go* suddenly *into destruction; and the inhabitants of the earth, (whose names,* as I said, *are not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world,) shall wonder, seeing the beast, who* for a little while *was, and is not;* that is, he shall quickly be overthrown, *though he is* to appear for a while, and perform such great wonders.—*Here* [*is*] a proof of *the understanding that hath wisdom;* for the utmost sagacity may here be put to the trial. But this I will observe, to guide the inquiring mind, and I am commissioned by God to give this key to the mystery, that *the seven heads* of the beast *are seven mountains,* on which that celebrated city is built, *on which the* infamous *woman* I have been describing, *sitteth. And there are seven kings,* or forms of government,[c] *five* of them *are fallen, and one is,* [*and*] *the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must endure for a little time,* but will soon be destroyed and swallowed up. *And the beast,* of whom I said *that* he *was, and is not, he is the eighth, and* he *is of the seven;*[d] he ariseth out of the remainders of this people, *but* at length *goes into destruction,* as the rest, though his reign shall be so much longer than any of his predecessors. *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings,* or kingdoms, *which* shall arise out of the ruin of the former state, and shall all, for a while, be dependent upon, and subject to, the beast; they *have not,* indeed, *yet received their kingdom, but they shall receive authority from the beast as kings,* though greatly under his limitation and control, to reign, *for one hour,* for a certain limited time. And however *these* princes may be disunited in their political interests, which may, in some respects, contradict each other, yet, with respect to their unhappy prejudices in religion, and idolatrous inclinations, there shall be a surprising agreement between them; and they *have one mind* and sentiment in that respect, *and shall* consent to *deliver* over *their own power and authority to the beast,* to be employed by him for the advancement of his interest; so that they shall act but as his viceroys, even in their own territories. *These* also *shall* presume to *make war with the Lamb; and* the consequence may easily be conjectured; for *the Lamb,* who bears such magnificent titles, and who hath already triumphed over all the powers of hell, *shall* undoubtedly *overcome them,* and triumph over them; *for he is* indeed (what some vain mortals have impiously and arrogantly called themselves) *Lord of lords, and King of kings,* the supreme Ruler of all governors and magistrates upon the face of the earth, to whom dominion over them belongs, by the strictest and most unalienable right; *and those that are with him,* and have the honour to fight under his banner, [*are*] not only *called* to arm themselves in this glorious cause, but *chosen,*[e] to act in the service, *and* they are *faithful* to the engagements into which they enter. All these were the words of that angel who was commissioned to instruct me in the meaning of an appearance which had thrown me into such amazement. *And he* proceeded, and *said* farther *unto me, The waters which thou sawest, on which the* specious but abandoned *harlot sat, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,* a vast multitude of different nations and languages, who shall consent for a long time to those degenerate forms of religion which she shall introduce. *And the ten horns which thou sawest on the* savage *beast, these* are the kingdoms subject to her. But the princes of them shall at length turn against her, so that she shall, as it were, be thrown down, and gored by the creature that has so tamely and patiently carried her; for they *shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked:* they shall strip her of all those ornaments which they have profusely lavished away upon her; *and they shall* be ready, as it were, in the transport of their indignation and zeal, to

SECT. 20.

REV. XVII.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore dost thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and

a *Amazement.*] This seems a plain argument, that the society referred to was christian; for it had been no great wonder, that a heathen power should *persecute.*

b *The beast—was, and is not.*] This seems to intimate, that the persecuting power of pagan Rome should for a while revive in papal Rome, and ere long be utterly destroyed.

c *Seven*—forms of government.] Some reckon these to be the Roman *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, and popes.* But I much question whether this be a right solution. Mr. Lowman supposes here is an intimation that the seventh form of government was not to begin till the imperial power was destroyed. And this last may, on some account, be called the *seventh,* and for other reasons, the *eighth* head of government, as the exarchate of Ravenna was in some sense a new form of government, and yet hardly so distinct and proper a form, as to be reckoned for a different head. Compare chap. xii. 6. note d.

d *He is the eighth, &c.*] Mr. Fleming understands this of the government of the Ostrogoths in Rome; who, though they were the *seventh* head in number, yet were not of the *seven,* that is, such as the *six first* and the *eighth,* because they were *foreigners,* whereas the others were *natives.* Flem. *On the First Resur.* p. 106, 107. This exact prophecy, he says, is a great confirmation of the divine authority of this book. Limborch understands it of the German emperor, who was only titular king of Rome. See the preceding note.

e *Called, chosen, and faithful.*] Here may very possibly be, as the ingenious author of the *Christian Warfare* has represented, in his learned and beautiful remarks on this text, a reference to the *military custom* of the Greeks; who used to *call* the people together when any expedition was designed, out of which there were some *selected* to serve in the action intended, who swore *fidelity* to their leader. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 10. note i.) But I can by no means suppose that this is the *uniform* idea to be annexed to the word *chosen* in scripture, any more than I can suppose the term *called,* always to signify, *invited to a feast;* which is an idea another ingenious writer has endeavoured to lead his readers to affix to it. The truth is, both signify something much more *general,* though both may be applied, in *particular* cases, in the *limited* sense contended for. Compare Isa. xxxiv. 2, 6, 7.

SECT. 20. REV. XVII.

eat her very *flesh, and shall burn her with fire.* They shall be bent upon destroying their stupid idolatry, and all the monuments of it, and turn their keenest resentment upon the abettors and instruments of such cruel persecution as they have exercised: *For God hath given it into their hearts,* by a strong and powerful impression, *to execute his* counsel and *sentence,*[f] and they shall agree in it, *even to perform one purpose. And* 17 he hath left them under a fatal infatuation, in opposition to true policy, as well as virtue and religion, so as *to give their kingdoms to the beast, till the words of God be fulfilled;* and then their minds shall be turned, and their eyes opened, and they shall ruin this 18 oppressive society more eagerly than they ever established it. *And the woman which thou sawest, is the great* imperial *city, that ruleth over the kings of the earth,* and now disposes of their crowns at her pleasure, none daring to make war against her.

shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9 EASILY might we have apprehended, that Rome had been here designed, though it had not been so particularly 18 described by its situation on seven hills, or by the empire it then possessed over all the kingdoms of the world. The 3 harlot might be sufficiently distinguished by her names of blasphemy, by her cup of enchantment, by her titles, 4, 5 MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE 6 EARTH. Yea, she might be known by this single character, of having made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And is it heathen Rome, to whom these characters are most remarkably applicable? The apostle would not then have wondered with so great admiration, that idolatry and persecution should prevail, where the former had raged for so many ages, and the latter almost from the very beginning of christianity, and to such a degree, in the days of Nero, who, as their own historian tells us, had, thirty years before this, added mockeries and insults to torment, that christians were dressed up in the skins of wild beasts, and so exposed to be worried on the theatre: a method which hath, indeed, figuratively speaking, been every where practised, and must be practised, if christianity is to be made ridiculous or odious. But the true occasion of the apostle's astonishment was, that Rome professing christianity, Rome setting up for the head of the christian world, should have emulated and exceeded any pagan city, and even itself in its pagan state, in its idolatries and in its cruelties. And this is a fact indeed wonderful, but these are the secret counsels of God, even those counsels which are to us unsearchable. 17 Nevertheless, the beauty and glory of them shall at length be apparent. The kings of the earth, though, like Nebuchadnezzar, (Isa. x. 7.) they meant it not, are now fulfilling the plan of Divine Providence; a plan that shall at length appear wise and harmonious, though the permission of all these absurdities and horrors make a part of it. And when the words of God are fulfilled, they who with one mind have given their power and strength to the 16 beast, in order to support the harlot, shall be as unanimous in hating her, and making her desolate and naked, shall be ready to devour her flesh, and consume her in her own fires. Fierce and savage as the beast may at present 14 appear, its war with the Lamb shall be utterly in vain; for the Lamb is always victorious, and will assert his grand and imperial titles, LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS. May we all list under his banner! May we not only be called, but chosen and faithful, faithful even to death; since all the rage of men, and multitudes, and 15 nations, and tongues, if it were united against us, could not prevent his giving us a crown of victory and a part in his everlasting triumphs!

SECTION XXI.

A sublime description of the fall of Babylon, and an account of the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Rev. xviii. *throughout.*

REV. xviii. 1.

SECT. 21. REV. XVIII.

AND after this, I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had in his countenance and appearance the signatures of *great power; and the earth was enlightened with his glory,* which spread a vivid lustre all around him, reflected from every neighbouring ob- ject. *And he cried with* great *might* [*and*] *a loud voice* of triumphant joy, in the words of Isaiah, (chap. xxi. 9.) *saying, It is fallen, it is fallen,*[a] [*even*] *Babylon the Great; and* 2 what was prophesied concerning the celebrated seat of the Chaldean empire, shall presently be verified in this detested city; so that we may already say, *it is become the habitation of demons* (as desolate places were reputed to be) *and the hold of every unclean spirit,* 3 *and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird;* (Isa. xiii. 21; Jer. l. 39; li. 37.) *Because she hath caused all the nations to drink of the* intoxicating and inflaming *wine of her raging* and insatiable *whoredom; and* all *the kings of the earth have committed whoredom with her, and the merchants of the earth have* traded with her, and *been* 4 *enriched by the abundance of her luxuries.*[b] *And I* then *heard another voice from heaven, saying* to the remainder of faithful souls which were yet in Babylon, *Come* ye *out from* the midst of *her, O my people,* separate yourselves from this accursed society, *that ye may not be partakers with her in her sins,* which are so polluting and ensnaring; *and*

REV. xviii. 1.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of

f *Execute his sentence.*] We render it, *to fulfil his will.* Hence some have inferred, that it is the *will of God* that *heretics* should be *cut off.* But it is sufficiently known to what extremities people are driven to find any thing that looks like an argument for persecution in the New Testament, when they are forced to have recourse to a text for this purpose, which only proves that God had, in his wise and holy counsel, determined that the idolatrous and persecuting antichristian power should be destroyed.

a *Is fallen.*] This is still the language of prophecy, expressing what shall certainly and speedily come to pass; for the fourth verse shows, that in strictness of speech, Babylon was yet to be considered as *standing.*

b *Luxuries.*] The word σφνος, seems to signify such *luxury* of diet as cherishes *wantonness,* and disposes to acts of *unchastity;* and may well represent the manner in which the Roman clergy have pampered themselves, and the effects it has produced, to the scandal of the christian profession, in the eyes of all the world, as well as the idolatries which have been established and maintained to support that *luxury.* Compare 1 Tim. v. 11. and the note there.

her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues;

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more;

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping, and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!

that ye may not, by a fatal consequence, *partake of her plagues* too, which those who share her sins must expect to share, whatever their former profession may have been. *Because her sins have followed up to heaven* with their clamours, *and her unrighteous actions are come up in remembrance before* that *God,* who will not fail severely to visit her for them. And now, O my people, *give her, as she also has given to you, and recompense to her double, according to her works;* for God will plead your cause for you: *in the cup* of terror, *which she has mingled* for those whom she was not able to seduce and debauch, *mingle her a double quantity* of those poisonous ingredients: *In* full *proportion to the degree in which she hath* for so many ages *made ostentation of her glory, and lived in luxury, inflict upon her torment, and grief,* and vengeance; *because she has* audaciously *said in her heart,* while the divine threatenings have been sounding in her very ears, *I sit as a queen* enthroned above the reach of adversity, *and I am not a* desolate *widow,* as it hath been pretended I should be; *and I shall not see sorrow.* (Compare Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.) *Therefore, in one day shall her plagues come* upon her, even upon this impious and abominable city, *death, and mourning, and famine,* which shall all unite their efforts against her; *and she shall be burnt with fire; for strong* [*is*] *the Lord God who judges her;* and all her boasted strength will, in his presence, be weakness and confusion. *And the* other *kings of the earth,* who shall not be active in the execution before described, but still retain their affection for her, even the remainder of those *who have committed fornication, and lived in luxury with her, shall mourn over her, and lament for her, when they shall see* the flames of wrath kindle about her, and *the smoke of her burning,* like that of Sodom in the day of its conflagration, ascending up to heaven. They shall see it, *standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe,* and alas, *O thou great city, Babylon, the strong city!* well may we lament over thee! *for in one hour thy judgment is come,* and thy desolation is as sudden as it is dreadful and entire. *And the merchants of the earth,* those who enriched themselves by her expensive magnificence, *shall wail and lament over her,* out of a regard to their own interest, if not to hers; *because no one any longer shall buy their wares,* with which they had loaded so many gallant vessels that carried on a traffic with her: They shall lament, that so noble a vend for all the delicacies of a pompous and luxurious life is lost; and that they can no longer thus dispose of *the ladings of gold and silver, and every precious stone, and pearls, and* of the *fine linen* of Egypt, *and* the *purple* of Sidon, *and* the *silk* of the eastern countries, *and* the *scarlet, and every odoriferous wood* that the plantations of Arabia, or the coasts of India, could boast; *and every* curiously wrought *vessel of ivory, and every vessel of most precious wood,* in value exceeding even that, *and* all the utensils *of brass, and of iron, and of marble,* with which the houses of the rich and of the great have been furnished. No longer shall they there find a market for rich *and* fragrant commodities; for *cinnamon, and perfume, and myrrh, and incense,* nor for the more necessary *and* important supplies of *wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and kine, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves:*[c] *and* their yet more infamous traffic for the lives and the very *souls of men,* which they sacrificed to their avarice, and their treachery, shall cease. *And* thou, O Babylon, shalt join thy cry with theirs; for all *the fruits which thy soul desired,* and for which alone thy degenerate nature had any remaining relish, *are gone from thee, and all* thy *delicious and splendid things are departed from thee; and* the loss is final as well as entire; for *thou shalt never find them any more.* I repeat it again, *the merchants of* all *these* [*commodities,*] *who were enriched by her, shall stand afar off,* in a mixture of terror and grief, *for fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,*[d] but absolutely incapable of giving her any relief; smiting on their breasts, *And saying, Alas, alas,* for *the great,* elegant, and magnificent *city, that was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For,* who can sufficiently lament this sad instance of the uncertainty of all human things, when he sees that, *in one hour, all these* great *riches are* laid waste and *made desolate?* And this sad scene was represented to me in a lively vision; *and every pilot, and every one of the ship's company, and the mariners, and all that bestow their labour upon the sea, stood afar off* from the flames of the burning city, *And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning* ascend in such thick columns to heaven, *What* [*city is*] *like to the great city,* so long unequalled in its glory, and now in its ruin? *And they* seemed like men in the greatest agony of distress, and *cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Alas, alas,* for *the great city, by whose magnificent expenses,* arising from her profusion, and elegance, and grandeur, *all that had ships in the sea were enriched,* so

SECT. 21. REV. XVIII. 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

c *Slaves.*] The Greek word σωματα has plainly this signification. Compare Tobit x. 9.

d *Weeping and mourning.*] There is in all this so evident a *reference* to the *lamentation* over Tyre, described by Ezekiel, (chap. xxvii.) that I suppose few readers can fail to take notice of it. Compare Isa. xxiii. 1, 7, 14, *et sim.* Some have interpreted many of these passages as referring to the circumstances of popish worship, and the trade of their priests; as ver. 11. to relics, pardons, and indulgences: ver. 12. to their images, and the furniture of their churches and chapels, and the variety of rich dresses for their images and priests: ver. 13. to the incense used at their altars: ver. 22. to the musical instruments used in their worship: and ver. 23. to the vast numbers of lamps, burning before their idolatrous altars, and the like.—But it seems rather to centre in one view, the loss of every thing valuable and desirable, and the utter ruin of this magnificent city.

SECT. 21. REV. XVIII.

that she alone was sufficient, as it were, to maintain the merchandize of the world; *for she is made desolate in one hour*, to a degree that we should have imagined utterly impossible.

for in one hour is she made desolate.

But while they were thus lamenting their own loss and hers, I was affected in another manner, and could not forbear crying out in my own heart, *Rejoice over her, O thou* 20 *just avenging heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets*,[e] who look down from your abodes of glory, on so wonderful and interesting a scene. Take your part in the sacred triumph; *for on your account God has pronounced sentence upon her;* he hath adjudged her to righteous destruction, for her opposition to his kingdom, and for the injuries done to you who, with ardent and unwearied zeal, endeavoured to establish and promote it.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 *And* as soon as I had uttered this, in correspondence to the scene which had been represented of old, with relation to the great seat of the Chaldean empire, (Jer. li. 64.) *a strong angel took a stone, like a great millstone; and*, with a vigorous and rapid motion, *hurled it into the sea, saying, Thus shall Babylon the great city*, unequal as the production of this event may seem to any human power, *be violently hurled away*[f] by the almighty arm of an avenging God, *and* sink into the depths of destruction; so that it shall 22 *never be found any more. And the* harmonious *sound of harpers, and* other *musicians, and those who sound the flute and the trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee; and every artificer of every* curious *trade* employed for the accommodations and ornaments of life, *shall no more be found in thee*, O Babylon, *nor shall the noise of the millstone* 23 *be heard in thee any more*, even to prepare bread for the meanest inhabitant. *And the light of a lamp shall no more be seen in thee*, to gild thy dark night with its cheerful rays; *and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride*, rejoicing in their new relation, and celebrating the nuptial feast, *shall be heard in thee no more*;[g] *because thy merchants were grandees of the earth*, and maintained so shameful a traffic by every dishonest art, and *because all the nations were deceived by thy sorceries*, and poisoned by thy per- 24 nicious practices. *And*, to complete her guilt, as Babylon of old had grown great by the slaughter of Israel, so *in her* who has been here represented, *was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints* of God, *even of all those who were slain upon the earth;* for this wicked city exceeded all the rest of the world in cruelties, and might boast in the multitudes of the martyrs she had slain, beyond all that had ever gone before her, in such detestable persecutions; and this hath filled up the measure of her iniquities, and plunged her into this irrecoverable ruin.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee: and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 13 FROM the particular detail which is here given us of the various commodities in which Babylon traded with its merchants, we may surely take an incidental occasion to reflect upon the rich bounty of Divine Providence to the children of men, in giving them such a variety of good things, which tend not only to their necessary support, but their ornament and delight. To whatever pernicious purposes vanity and luxury may abuse the silver and the gold, the gems and the pearls, the fine linen and silk, the purple and scarlet, the ivory and the marble, the cinnamon and the myrrh, as well as the more important blessings of wheat and oil, of kine, and sheep, and horses, all are the gifts of God; and, if wisely and properly used, may justly excite our thankfulness to him; and it is on ourselves, and not on him, that we are to charge it, if what should have been for our welfare becomes a trap, and our treasures be turned into idols. Nor is the wise disposition of providence to be disregarded, in causing many of these things to be the peculiar products of different countries, denying to some what he has given to the rest, that so traffic and commerce may be encouraged, and by it society and intercourse extended among different nations, and provision made for that spread of divine knowledge, which had in many instances been impossible, if human industry, quickened by necessity and the prospect of gain, had not invented those arts of navigation, to which Great Britain, above all other nations, is so much indebted, and without which, indeed, our beautiful and fruitful island had been a desert, inaccessible to men.

But though this oblique reflection may profitably be made, the great object to which we are directed by this 21 chapter, is the certain and final ruin of Babylon, which, how highly soever exalted, how superbly soever adorned, 8 how luxuriously soever regaled, shall fall, shall fall as a millstone cast into the sea. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her: and it is impossible she can withstand the force of his omnipotent arm. Long has she, in a meta- 2 phorical sense, been the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird: and God will 5 make her so in another, even in a literal sense, when he shall appear to remember and punish those iniquities which have reached unto heaven; among which, various and detestable as they have been, shedding the blood of 24 the prophets and the saints must be reckoned as most enormous. Let no triumph of the antichristian powers, for the present, shake our faith in these most certain and indubitable prophecies: and let that charge never be forgotten, 4 "Come forth from her, O my people, and be separate." Blessed be God, that a separation has been begun, that it has been so long supported, and that so many attempts to bring back God's Israel into captivity have been defeated. May the boundaries of the Reformation be extended; may the purity of the reformed churches be more and more advanced, and all remainders of superstition, persecution, and imposition be taken away. And, to conclude all, let those who are now living deliciously, and glorifying themselves in the forgetfulness of God, abusing

e *Apostles*.] Nothing can be more *lively* than this *apostrophe*; in which the apostles, though honoured in Rome by so many superstitious and idolatrous rites, are, nevertheless, called upon to *rejoice* in her *destruction*.

f *Hurled away*.] This the original words, ορμηματι βληθησεται, import; as if falling by its own weight, its fall would not have been rapid enough. From hence Dr. Thomas Burnet infers, in his *Theory of the Earth*, that Rome, being first *fired*, (Compare Dan. vii. 11.) will be swallowed up in a *lake of fire and brimstone*, as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Burn. *Theol.* Vol. II. p. 123. Compare Rev. xix. 20.

g Verse 22, 23.] Compare Jer. xxv. 10; xxxiii. 11; Ezek. xxvi. 13; *et sim.*

the various gifts of his bounty to his dishonour, and saying in their hearts, that they shall see no sorrow, remember how suddenly their state may be changed; how quickly they may sink into the depths of misery, proportionable to the height of their abused prosperity; and experience a torment and sorrow, which will be doubly bitter in the remembrance of their former condition. Let such, therefore, in whatever rank of life they are, according to the words of Daniel to the most illustrious king of Babylon, (Dan. iv. 27.) break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening out of their tranquillity; and give glory to God, before all their cheerful light be exchanged for darkness, and all the harmony of their music for weeping and wailing, groaning and lamentation for ever.

SECT. 21. REV. XVIII. 23 9—15

SECTION XXII.

The triumphs of the heavenly host in the fall of Babylon are described, and farther illustrated, by the view of an attack made by Christ and his army on the beast, which ended in an entire victory over him. Rev. xix. *throughout.*

Rev. xix. 1.

Rev. xix. 1.

AND after these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

AND after these things, this affecting representation of the certain destruction of Babylon, as the seat of the antichristian kingdom, *I heard the voice as of a great multitude in heaven,* who seemed to be triumphing on this occasion, *saying, Hallelujah;* let the name of Jehovah, the Most High God, be ever praised and exalted. Let this great *salvation, and* all the *glory and honour* which can arise from this, and all his other wonderful works, *and* the *power* so amazingly displayed in them, be ascribed *to the Lord our God. For his judgments* [*are*] *true and righteous,* and we have lately seen a most glorious illustration of them; *for he hath judged the great harlot, who corrupted the* whole *earth with* the contagion of *her fornication; and he has* awfully *avenged the blood of his* faithful *servants* and martyrs, which hath been [*shed*] so profusely *by her* cruel *hand. And a second time,* at the conclusion of the hymn, *they said, Hallelujah; and* looking down upon her ruins, they added, *The smoke of her* [*torment*] *ascends for ever and ever;* and God is pursuing the impenitent sinners he has destroyed in her, with far more terrible vengeance in a future state, than any they could endure while they continued in the body. (Isa. xxxiv. 10.) *And the twenty-four elders, and the four animals,* so often mentioned before, who still appeared present, *fell down and worshipped God,* who was represented *sitting upon the throne, saying, Amen: Hallelujah,* so let it be; let universal Hallelujahs, and everlasting praises, rise to thee, O thou ever adorable Jehovah, who art most worthy to receive them. *And a voice came out from the throne, which said,* in my hearing, Now *praise our God,* in the most exalted strains of rapturous devotion, *all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great,* in your various ranks and circumstances of life. Adore his great and magnificent name, so highly exalted, and, in these scenes of wonder, so gloriously displayed. *And I heard* [*a sound*] *which was as the voice of a great multitude, and* loud *as the voice of many waters,* when the waves of the sea are in a violent agitation, *and like the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God* Almighty, the *omnipotent* Jehovah, who is the Author and Support of universal nature, *reigneth,* and is about to exalt his kingdom among men to more visible splendour than it has ever yet worn. And *we* will now, in an especial manner, *rejoice and exult* in the greatest transport of holy joy, *and we* will *give glory to him, because the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has prepared herself* to meet him, being adorned with all those ornaments, which are most graceful in themselves, and most agreeable to him. And he is going to espouse his church with circumstances of the highest festivity and solemnity. *And it was given to her, that,* in token of her virgin innocence and sanctity, *she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and resplendent; and the fine linen* that I speak of *is* intended to signify *the righteous acts of the saints,*[a] whereby they are adorned in the sight of God, and an evidence given of the sincerity of that faith, which interests them in the merit of what their Lord has performed, to which they ultimately owe their acceptance before him. *And he said unto me, Write* this down, as an important truth, in which all that read this book in future ages will be greatly concerned, *Happy* [*are*] *they who are invited to* be guests at *the* splendid *marriage-supper of the Lamb,* which is now prepared, and shall accept the invitation, so as to partake of its blessings. *And he said unto me, These are the true words of God,* and are to be regarded by thee and all that read them as an oracle which he hath inspired. (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2.)

And while he was speaking to me in this manner, overawed by his majestic appearance, *I fell before his feet to pay homage to him. And he* immediately interposed to prevent it, and *said unto me, See* [*thou do it*] *not:* for *I am* not worthy of such regard from thee, being *a fellow-servant with thee, and with* the rest of *thy brethren,*[b] *who* resolutely and faithfully *keep the testimony of Jesus. Pay thine homage,* in such expressions of it, *to God* alone. I am now sent for the service of that religion to which you and your brethren are making such considerable sacrifices; *for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of*

SECT. 22. REV. XIX. 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

a *The righteous acts of the saints.*] So δικαιωματα evidently signifies; and, therefore, though I make no doubt but it is with regard to the *obedience* and *righteousness* of the Son of God, that *all our righteous acts* are accepted before God, and have accordingly referred to this doctrine in the paraphrase; yet I cannot suppose that these words have that reference which some have imagined, to the *imputation* of his *righteousness to us.* And I hope christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture, even though it should be at the expense of their reputation for orthodoxy with some who profess, nevertheless, to make *scripture their standard.*

b *With thy brethren.*] The expression in the Greek obliges me to

SECT. 22. *Jesus*, and serves, in a glorious manner, to confirm his divine mission to all that know and duly observe the circumstances of it; and that which I now reveal to thee, makes a considerable article of the proof.

REV. XIX. *And* a glorious vision immediately followed this; for *I saw heaven opened, and behold,* and observe it with due attention, *a white horse* appeared, *and he that sat upon it* [*was*] 11 *called Faithful and True,* being indeed no other than the Person speaking of him elsewhere, as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; *and he judges and makes war in righteousness,* and not like the unjust conquerors of the earth, who are so ready to use 12 their superior power to oppress all that fall under it. This was the glorious Prince, *whose eyes* [*are*] piercing *as a flame of fire; and many diadems were upon his head, having* also *a* mysterious *name written* upon them, *which no man knows but himself,* to signify, that there are mysteries in his nature, and in the administration of his kingdom, which it 13 is impossible for men to find out. *And* to express the irresistible power with which he triumphs over his enemies, and brings destruction upon them according to his pleasure, *he* [*was*] *clothed in a garment dipt in blood; and his name is called, The Word of God,* the glorious and divine Person, whom I have elsewhere spoken of, as in the beginning 14 with God, and himself God, and the great Medium of divine revelation in all ages. *And the armies which are in heaven followed him,* in token of being most willingly and entirely under his command, and they appeared [*riding*] *on white horses,* and themselves *clothed in fine linen, white and* perfectly *clean* and pure, to denote their perfect innocence 15 and righteousness. *And* he still retains this circumstance in the vision I at first saw of him, that *there went out of his mouth a sharp sword, that with it he might smite the heathen;* to signify the power of his word; *and he shall govern them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the indignation and wrath of Almighty God,* which was signified by the blood-staining his garments, to intimate that he shall subdue the proudest enemies with as much ease as men burst grapes by treading them under their 16 feet. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 2, 3.) *And he hath upon his garment and his thigh,* that is, upon the sword which hangs upon his thigh, *a* magnificent and exalted *name written,* even *KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS;* to signify his universal empire over all the princes and potentates on earth and in heaven.

17 *And I saw a single angel,* but one of great majesty and strength, detaching himself, as it were, from the army in heaven, who followed the great Leader of the Lord's host on their white horses: and he was seen by me *standing in the sun; and,* to intimate the approaching slaughter and desolation which was so soon to come upon the enemies of the church, *he cried with a loud voice, saying to* the eagles and vultures, and *all the* other *birds* of prey *which were flying in the midst of heaven, Come and assemble yourselves to the supper of the great God,* for he is about to make a splendid entertainment for you; 18 *That ye may eat the flesh of* mighty *kings, and the flesh of* famous *commanders,* who have led on their thousands to battle; *and the flesh of the mighty* soldiers, who have fought so courageously under their banners; *and the flesh of* warlike *horses,* that were advancing with so much intrepidity and rage to the battle; *and* the flesh *of those who sat thereon,* and were so ready to trust to their strength or their speed; *and* the flesh *of all* the promiscuous multitude, *freemen and slaves, both small and great,* who shall fall down together in the dust, and pour out their souls in blood, leaving their mangled car- 19 casses for your prey. (Compare Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18.) *And,* to fulfil this awful decree of the great God, whose influence over all human affairs is supreme, and who knows how to work his own purposes, even by the greatest malice and rage of his enemies, *I saw the beast* appearing again, as at the head of the antichristian interest; *and the kings of the earth,* who supported him, and gave their power unto him; *and* I saw all *their armies gathered together to make war with him who sitteth upon the* white *horse, and with* all *his army,* even the host of heaven, which I mentioned as with him: insensible of his superior power, and madly borne on to their own destruction, they marched their feeble forces against him 20 and all his celestial legions. *And* the issue was such as might be expected; for *the beast was taken captive,*[c] *and with him* also *the false prophet who had wrought* so many fallacious *signs before him, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped his image;* and they were bound fast in chains of divine vengeance, and *both of them were cast alive*[d] *into the lake of fire which burnt* so fiercely, enraged *with* stores of *brimstone,* to make the flames more durable, and more

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself:

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called, The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

give the word this turn: συνδουλος σου και των αδελφων σου. But Mr. Fleming understands it, *I am one of thy brethren,* which he thinks intimates, that this was the *departed spirit* of an *apostle;* perhaps of St. Peter or St. Paul, or his own brother James, though not in a form to be known. And, on the same mistaken principle, he thinks the person speaking, chap. xxii. 9. might be the spirit of one of the prophets, perhaps Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel. Flem. *Christol.* Vol. I. p. 81.

c *Beast was taken.*] What Brandt tells us of the interpretation given by a divine of Heidelberg to this text, as promising Frederic, king of Bohemia, that he should take the emperor prisoner, and that all the other potentates of Europe should be subjected to his sovereign will, appears too *ridiculous* to be canvassed; but I mention it to engage men to be cautious how they apply any of these *prophecies* to *events* which may happen to *themselves,* or those for whom they are immediately concerned. Brandt's *Hist. of the Reform.* Vol. IV. p. 202.—Compare chap. xvi. 13; and § 16. notes h, and i.

d *Cast alive.*] See the note on chap. xx. 14. Dr. Clarke observes, it is only said of other sinners, *they were cast into the lake;* and this he supposes intimates a *distinction* of punishment, severe in *proportion* to the faults of the punished; and he thinks it illustrated by the words of Moses, concerning Korah and his company, Numb. xvi. 29. *If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me:* intimating, that there would be as much *difference* in their punishment, as between being executed in the common way, and swallowed up with an earthquake. Clarke's *Post. Serm.* Vol. I p. 400, 401.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

tormenting. *And the rest*, who had so insolently and foolishly followed the banners of these accursed leaders, *were slain with the sword that came out of the mouth of* the great leader of the heavenly army, even *him who sat on the* white *horse*, described before, robed with light, and crowned with glory. And their carcasses were left unburied on the field of battle; *and all the birds* of the air, according to the invitation which the angel had given them, *were satiated with their flesh.* SECT. 22. REV. XIX.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn by what we have here been reading, to adore the Lord God omnipotent, who reigneth over all, and who displays the truth and righteousness of his judgments, in his vengeance on the enemies of his church, even when he inflicts on them a torment, the smoke of which rises up for ever and ever. In the certain assurance, that in due time he will plead his own cause, and rescue and exalt his people, let all his servants and people praise him, even all that fear him, both small and great, and labour to live that divine life of gratitude, and joyful thanksgiving on earth, which may anticipate the pleasures and employments of the heavenly world. The time will at length come, when all of such a character shall celebrate the marriage-supper of the Lamb; yea, when the whole society shall appear in his presence as one chaste virgin, whom he has espoused to himself; and whom, with unutterable delight, he places in his more immediate view, not only as arrayed in robes of pure and shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, but as perfectly free from spot, or blemish, or any such thing. He will admit them all to feast in his own presence; yea, to dwell for ever with him; so shall we ever be with the Lord. These are the true sayings of God. And though a consciousness of our own utter unworthiness of such honours, might be ready to detract from the credibility of these divine assurances, or at least prevent us from giving so clear an assent to them as we might otherwise do, yet let God be true, and every man a liar. Ver. 1 2, 3 5, 6 7, 8 9

And, in the mean time, in the mingled scenes of adversity and prosperity, which attend the Israel of God, let us direct our believing eyes to him who is faithful and true; to him, who both administers justice, and wages war in righteousness. Let us reverence his penetrating eyes, which are like a flame of fire. Let us rejoice in the diadems placed upon his head, to signify the extent of his dominion; and read with awe the inscription upon his vesture, and his thigh, The Word of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. As such, let us pay our homage to him; and let the favour of lords and kings be as nothing to us, where his favour or his honour is concerned. The proudest of earthly potentates oppose his dominion in vain; in vain do they marshal their captains and their mighty men; vain is the strength of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the combinations of bond and free, though Satan himself abet their rebellion, and inspire them with subtilty, and arm them with rage; their subtilty shall be defeated, their rage shall be repelled. The sword of the Lord shall devour them. The birds of prey shall at his pleasure be feasted with their carcasses; and the sad catastrophe of their bodies shall be only an imperfect emblem of the anguish and misery of their spirits, when, plunged with the evil spirit that deceived them, they sink deep into the lake that burns for ever, and feel the terrors of the second death. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear; and, sensible of his uncontrollable dominion, and your own weakness and imperfection, even while ye rejoice before him, rejoice with trembling. (Psal. ii. 10, 11.) 10 11 12 13—16 17—21

SECTION XXIII.

The binding of Satan for a thousand years, during which the gospel is greatly to prevail; with a view of the destruction of the enemies of Christ, upon their making their last attempt against his church; and of the universal judgment. Rev. xx. *throughout.*

REV. XX. 1.

REV. XX. 1.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and

THUS the beast was conquered and taken; but the dragon yet remained at liberty. *And* that I might also be informed as to his doom, *I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and* he had also *a great chain in his hand. And he* advanced with the intrepidity of one who feared no resistance; and *laid hold on the dragon* dreadful as he was; even *that old serpent who is* called *the devil*, from being the great false accuser; *and Satan*, as being the great adversary both of God and man; *and he bound him for the space of a thousand years.*[a] *And* having opened the door with the key that he bore, *he cast him into the abyss, and shut him* down, *and set a seal upon him*, to signify that none should break open the door; *that he might not deceive the nations any more*, for the time above mentioned, that is, *till a thousand years were accomplished, and then he must be loosed again for a little time*, and make his last effort against the cause of God, and the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ *And* after this, *I saw thrones* placed, *and they sat upon them, and* a power of judgment *was given to them; and the souls of them who had been beheaded*[b] *for the testimony of Jesus, and for the* SECT. 23. REV. XX. 2 3 4

judgment was given unto them; and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded

a *A thousand years*] I think we must despair of being able to interpret any passage of scripture upon the plainest principle of reason, if this does not signify that there shall be such *a period* as this, in which Satan shall be remarkably restrained, and the christian interest shall prevail. But whether *the thousand years* are here to be taken literally, as is most probable, or whether here, or elsewhere, *each day* is put for *a year*, and, consequently, the whole period be 360,000 years, I will not pretend to determine. This thought has been very lately started by an ingenious and worthy person, who hath, I doubt not, intended the service of christianity; though I am very apprehensive he has failed in some of the mediums by which he has endeavoured to prove this point. See Dr. Whitby's *Treatise on the Millennium*, where he shows at large, that this whole passage is *figurative*, agreeable to the prophetic style, especially in this book. And ver. 4. may only intimate, that the *spirits* of the martyrs seemed to live again in those whom God should then raise up. Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 14; Rev. xi. 11, 12; Rom. xi. 15. This interpretation is illustrated and confirmed also by Mr. Lowman. So that the seventh *chiliad*, or 1000 years, from the creation of the world, is to be a kind of sabbath. Compare Ainsworth, On Gen. i. 31; and Worthington, *On Redemption*, p. 211—213.

b *The souls of them who had been beheaded.*] Dr. Whitby, not unjustly, thinks this a *strange expression*, to signify the resurrection

SECT. 23. REV. XX.

word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, when his cause was so triumphant, *and* who bravely opposed the torrent of prevailing degeneracy, so that they *had not received his mark in their foreheads, and upon their hands,* when it was so furiously urged upon all; these appeared to rise in triumph, *and they lived and reigned with Christ,*[c] whose cause, during this time, was prosperous and flourishing, even for *a* 5 whole *thousand years; But* this was peculiar to this holy remnant: for as to *the rest of the dead,* they *revived not till the thousand years were accomplished;*[d] so that *this* 6 [*was*] *the first resurrection.* Eminently *happy and holy* [*is*] *he who has a part in the first resurrection* I have been describing; it is a singular felicity and high token of the degree in which God, the supreme Standard and Judge of moral rectitude and holiness, approves his character: *on such the second death* we before described, with so many dreadful circumstances, as the portion of the wicked, *shall have* no degree of *power,*[e] nor shall any of its terrible forerunners, in the execution of divine wrath upon his enemies; *but they shall be the priests of God and of Christ; and they* shall not only be afterwards admitted to a kingdom of eternal glory, but *shall reign with him a thousand years,* 7 partaking in the triumph of his kingdom upon earth. *And when the thousand years,* before described, *shall be accomplished,* then *Satan shall,* for a certain time, *be loosed from his confinement,* to give the last proof of his malice against Christ and his saints. 8 *And he shall go forth to deceive the nations, who are in the four* distant *corners of the earth,*[f] and shall prevail against them, so that they shall engage in a vain and fatal enterprise, for the overthrow of what God has determined for ever to establish; even *Gog and Magog,* as the prophecy of Ezekiel, (chap. xxxviii. xxxix.) styles the enemies of God's people: and Satan shall succeed in his attempts *to gather them together in war;* even 9 an army, *whose number* [*is*] *like the sand of the sea.* Accordingly, I beheld them in vision, as drawn forth in order of battle, *and* saw that *they went up over the breadth of the earth;* so that they seemed to cover the face of it from north to south, *and* then *surrounded the camp of the saints, and* Jerusalem, *the beloved city,* in which they dwelt; *and* it seemed at first in imminent danger, but it was not long before it was remarkably delivered; for *fire came down from God out of heaven* at once, *and devoured them;* so that there were no more remainders of them to be seen; but they, and all their dreadful artillery, perished and disappeared, as if they had never existed. (Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 10 22.) *And* then *the devil, who had deceived them,* came in for his share of that punishment, which had long before been inflicted upon many of his accomplices, and *was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where,* as I before said, *the beast and the false prophet* [*were;*] *and* there *they shall be tormented* together *day and night, for ages of ages,* for ever and ever,[g] without any hope of release or respite.

11 *And,* after this, *I saw a great white* and resplendent *throne,*[h] which shone with a glory scarce to be supported, *and* yet mine eye, being divinely strengthened for that purpose, I beheld *him who sat thereon, from whose* majestic *face,* when he came on this solemn and tremendous occasion, *earth and heaven fled away,*[i] *and there was found no place for* 12 *them,* in which they might continue.[k] *And I saw the dead,* of all ranks and orders, *small and great,* rich and poor, princes and people, in one grand assembly, which knew no more of those distinctions once so much regarded, *standing before God,* to receive their final doom from him; to intimate that the last judgment should quickly follow the wonderful events which had been represented to me before. *And the books were opened,* which contained the records of divine omniscience on the one hand, and, on the other, the

for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are,* and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another

of their *bodies.* (See his *Treatise on the Millennium,* chap. iii.) Mr. Fleming observes, it is said elsewhere, that their souls were actually living before; and *living,* he thinks, must be put for *rising from the dead,* because it is said, *the rest of the dead lived not till a thousand years.* Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 57.

c *They lived and reigned with Christ.*] This is the *chief text* on which Mr. Fleming builds his doctrine of the *first resurrection;* when, he supposes, those who have *died for the testimony of Jesus,* and other *most excellent* saints, shall be raised from the dead; not (he imagines) to live upon earth, but to live *a thousand years* with Christ in heaven; enjoying a blessedness nearly *approaching,* if not altogether *equal,* to that which good men are to enjoy after the *general resurrection;* while the rest have only the common blessing of the separate state during this period; and, even after the resurrection, shall have only inferior degrees of glory, to what these first-fruits of the resurrection shall for ever possess. Flem. *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 42.

d *The rest of the dead, &c.*] This has been urged to prove, that a *proper resurrection* is here spoken of; but I much doubt the justness of the conclusion. Such expressions may, sometimes, be thrown in to promote that *obscurity,* which seemed, upon the whole, convenient in such a series of prophecy. Compare chap. xxi. 17.

e *On such the second death shall have no power.*] Mr. Fleming considers this as an intimation, that *the second death* will have *some power to terrify,* though only for a little while, those good men, who shall not have their share in the *first resurrection.* See his *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 45. But the notion appears to me very absurd, and ill to agree with the representation which scripture gives of the universal judgment, as a day of unmingled joy and triumph to all the righteous.

f *The four corners of the earth.*] As it is most certainly known, from the most convincing arguments, and from repeated experience, that the earth is of a *spherical form,* it is certain that by *the four corners of the earth,* we are to understand the nations which lay at the *greatest distance* from the *city of the saints:* which, I suppose, does here especially signify Jerusalem. And we may suppose that those who live in that situation, shall be last instructed in the gospel, and so capable of being most easily engaged to rise up against it. Compare chap. vii. I. and paraphrase. By Gog and Magog, many understand the Scythians, and other northern nations, whom the devil will stir up to assault the people of God.

g *For ages of ages: εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων.*] This is the most *literal rendering* of these words: but it is certain that no argument can be drawn from hence against the eternity of future punishment, for no phrase can more strongly express a proper eternity than this.

h *A great white throne.*] It has been observed, that this judgment-seat has been represented by *a throne,* to show that there can be no *appeal* from it; *a white throne,* to signify the bright *glory,* the unspotted *purity,* and inflexible *justice* of him who sits upon it.

i *From whose face earth and heaven fled away, &c.*] Mr. Blackwall compares this description with a celebrated passage in Homer, in which Jupiter is described as sitting on his throne, and asserts its great superiority, though its *plainness* renders the majesty less observable to common readers. "It is so *plain,* (says he,) that it "does not *need,* so majestic and grand, that it *exceeds, commentary* and *paraphrase.*" See his *Sacred Class.* Vol. I. p. 329.

k *There was found no place for them.*] Hence Mr. Whiston infers, that at the consummation of all things, and the final judgment, *the earth* will desert its present station, and be no more found among the *planetary* chorus. Whist. *Theor.* p. 282. But I cannot think this description intended to teach us any *astronomical* niceties; it seems only to intimate, that *all nature* was thrown into *strong commotion,* as if it were incapable of sustaining the majestic presence that appeared.

book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

law and the gospel, which were the rule whereby those who stood before him were to be judged. *And another book was opened*, distinct from these, *which is [the book] of life*, in which were registered the names of all those happy persons, who, according to the tenor of the divine declarations to men, should be the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and live with God for ever in the enjoyment of felicity and glory. *And the dead were* all impartially *judged out of the things written in the books*, and in a manner agreeable to the tenor of them, *according to their works*, as they had been agreeable or disagreeable to the discoveries which God had made to them of his will for the rule of their actions. *And*, that none might be exempt from coming into judgment, I perceived that the resurrection extended also to *the sea*, which *gave up the dead that were in it; and death, and the unseen world*, and separate state, in all their extensive domains, *gave up the dead that were in them*, all that death had swallowed up, and hades received; *and they were judged*, as I said before, *every one according to their works*. *And* I saw, in the vision, emblematical persons, who seemed to preside over the regions of *death and hades*, or the separate state; and to signify that human souls should be no more separated from the bodies to which they were now united, these persons, as it appeared, *were cast into the lake of fire*, which I have before described, and of which I said, that *this is the second death*.[1] *And* as the register, which God, in pursuance of his counsels of everlasting love, had kept of those whom it was his gracious purpose, agreeably to the tenor of his gospel, to save, was complete, I saw, that *if any one were not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire*: so that this was the awful end of the whole human race, to be plunged into that flaming and eternal ruin, or to be received into those abodes of glory, which I am next to describe, under the figure of a new heaven and a new earth. (Compare Rev. xxi. 1, note a.)

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IMPROVEMENT.

We have here a most affecting view before us, of that important event, in which we are all so intimately concerned. Whatever the resurrection may import, or that glorious reign of a thousand years, (which probably intimates a signal revival of the christian cause in the world, and a display of its influence beyond what hath yet been known,) I say, whatever these events may particularly intend, the illustrious day, in which heaven and earth is to pass away, demands the attention of all mankind. For the dead, both small and great, whether buried in the earth or the sea, must then stand before God: Therefore, let all the living, both small and great, seriously weigh the solemnity and the importance of that appearance. Let them often look forward to the awful period, when the glorious throne shall be set, the important volumes opened, which contain the records of our lives and actions, and of God's gracious and merciful transactions with us. We must be judged according to our works; that God before whom all our ways are, and who searches our hearts, will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Let us judge ourselves impartially, that we be not condemned of the Lord; and conscious how unable we should be to stand in that judgment, if God were rigorous to lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, let us humbly apply to the throne of mercy, to the blood of his Son, to the grace of his gospel-covenant. So shall we find mercy of the Lord in that day, and be the priests of God and of Christ, and reign with him, not a thousand years alone, but for everlasting ages. Ver. 5 4 11 11, 12 13 16

In the mean time, let those who have no reverence for his majesty, who have no esteem for his gospel, who have never taken this awful alarm, who have never fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, tremble at these awakening views. Let them all, of every condition, both small and great, say in their hearts, Who shall dwell with devouring flames, and lie down in everlasting burnings, even in this lake of fire, into which every one who is not found written in the book of life shall be cast, and where the wretched victims of divine justice shall be tormented for ever and ever? 15

How melancholy does the face of our earth appear, when we reflect on the reign of Satan on it, on the influence of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet! O Lord, cut short their power; send down the angel that has the key of the bottomless pit, to bind this destroyer; yea, when he shall be loosed for a season, moderate his rage; support thy saints under the terror of every assault, till thou appear to the last confusion of their enemies, till thou appear to close this perplexing scene, by the wise and glorious catastrophe of all things; when it shall be seen, that the souls of them who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus were not lost, and that it was wisdom strenuously to refuse the mark of the beast, and the homage so generally paid to his image, though men might neither buy nor sell, nor enjoy their liberty, nor their lives, without making an entire submission to it. 1 2, 3 7, 8 4, 5 20

SECTION XXIV.

The solemn introduction to the glorious vision of the new heaven and the new earth; with a declaration of the blessing to attend the faithful and courageous conqueror, and the misery to be inflicted on impious and wicked offenders. Rev. xxi. 1—8.

SECT. 24.

Rev. xxi. 1.

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the

Rev. xxi. 1.

AND when this scene of things was passed away, another most glorious and delightful one opened upon me; for *I saw a new heaven and a new earth*, wherein I knew right- REV. XXI. 1

[1] *Death and hades were cast into the lake of fire.*] It is no wonder a man of Mr. Hobbes's disposition and principles should be ready to catch at any argument, to prove the *annihilation of the wicked*. But that which he insinuates from this passage (see his *Leviathan*, p. 335) seems to be very precarious. For, as Archbishop Dawes observes, (see his *Serm.* No. 7. p. 100.) to talk of *hell* being cast into *a part of itself*, is downright nonsense. The plain meaning is, there shall be *no more separate state*. And this I think clearly overthrows that hypothesis which supposes this last *fire* will *kill* those that are thrown into it, and that their *separate* spirits will for ever remain in that misery, which must be the consequence of having lost happiness and hope, while they retain their thinking powers; a doctrine which Dr. Whitby has strangely taught in his *Append.* to 2 Thess. chap. i.

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eousness was ever to dwell, *for the former heaven and the former earth was passed away*, as I said before; *and the sea was no more*;[a] the whole terraqueous globe was changed for another kind of world, wherein every thing was incomparably more beautiful and excellent than the face of nature had ever been, and room was made for a vastly greater number of inhabitants: *And* as an emblem of the eminent holiness and felicity which 2 should there reign, *I John saw the holy city*, that is, *the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven*;[b] and it was *prepared* with all imaginable ornaments and decorations, *like a bride adorned for her husband*, and preparing to meet him with all her 3 charms set out to the greatest advantage. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying* aloud, *Behold, the tabernacle of* the living *God* [*is*] now *with men: and he shall pitch his tent among them*, in token of his favour and friendship, *and they shall be* owned by him as *his people, and God himself shall be* with and *among them as their God*, their Protector and Friend, their Guardian and Father, their Supreme Good and final Portion. 4 *And God shall*, with parental tenderness, *wipe away their tears from their eyes*; though here their tears have plentifully flowed, not one shall now be left on any of their faces. *And death shall be no more*; he shall be for ever banished those blissful regions, and with him all his melancholy train, *nor* shall there be *grief, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain* or labour; *for* all *the former things are passed away*, all the mournful scenes 5 which were on earth so familiar to their eyes. *And he that sat upon the throne*[c] then spake himself, and *said* with his own awful and gracious voice, which through the whole vision I had not before heard, *Behold, I make all things new.* I exert my power in producing a new creation, whence every trace of seeming imperfection and irregularity shall be banished. *And he* then condescended to take notice of me; and singling me out by his eye, and directing his voice to me, he *said unto me*, while all my soul was awed into reverence and attention, *Write* what thou hearest, *for these are true and faithful words*; and as their contents 6 are important, so they are beyond all controversy certain. *And he said unto me*, Wonderful as the prediction is, doubt not of its accomplishment; *It is done*, it is, as it were, already present with me; *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End*; too great and excellent to need to use any artifice with my creatures; *and* far above the temptation of raising in them any false hopes and expectations, *I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely*; I open the springs, and they shall flow in abundance; and let every humble soul that desires it, freely come and quench his thirst. 7 I have already made many gracious promises to him who overcometh; and I will now comprise them all in one; *the conqueror shall inherit all things*; the whole new creation shall be his, he shall possess its blessings to the utmost of his most enlarged desires. *And I will be to him a God*, a Source of complete and everlasting blessedness; *and he shall be my son*, and as my son inherit my kingdom, and dwell with me in it through eternal ages. 8 *But as for the fearful and unbelieving*, who dare not face the difficulties which a courageous profession of my religion requires; *and the abominable*, who have devoted themselves to sensual affections and pursuits; *and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars*,[d] all who allow themselves, in their words, or in their actions, to violate the eternal and invariable law of truth by which I have governed myself, and by which I have required all my rational creatures to be governed; *their part* [*shall be*] *in the lake which burns* for ever *with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Let this therefore be recorded by thy pen, that every future generation of men may carefully peruse, and seriously consider it; that every sincere believer, however weak, may be encouraged, and that every obstinate sinner may be terrified and, if possible, awakened;

first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

a *The sea was no more.*] The consequence which Dr. Thomas Burnet hath drawn from hence, in his *Theory*, to prove there was *no sea* in the paradisaical state, is so manifestly absurd, that I need urge nothing against it. For it is certain, were God to cover the whole sea with dry land, the earth must quickly *perish*, as well as much of its commerce be destroyed. But a world more populous than this can be, while the sea takes up so large a part of its surface, might well be expressed by such a *figurative vision*. As for this account of *the new heaven and new earth* in general, commentators have been divided. Some have thought it represents the happy state of the church upon earth during the Millennium. A very ingenious writer, I mean Mr. Worthington, in his *Treatise of the Extent and Progress of Redemption*, endeavours to prove that it is intended to represent a yet more perfect and durable period of prosperity which shall be enjoyed upon this earth, *after* the Millennium; and when the *paradisaical state* shall be yet more fully restored, by the more abundant progressive influence of the gospel. But, on weighing the whole matter, I must declare myself of the opinion of those divines who understand it as an *emblematical* description of the happiness which the saints are to enjoy *in heaven* after the resurrection, and to enjoy for ever; when, according to the preceding descriptions, *the dead shall be judged according to their works*, when this *heaven and earth shall have passed away with a great noise, and the elements* shall *have melted with fervent heat*, as St. John and St. Peter concur to describe it; and when *death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, with all that are not written in the book of life*; phrases which, I think, cannot be explained properly of any event but those of the day of *universal judgment*. And it is certain, that if we do not go into this interpretation of them, there is no view given us of the *final catastrophe* of things on this earth of ours, in this *comprehensive prophecy*, though intended to represent the triumph of christianity; which seems in theory a very improbable supposition.

b *Descending from God out of heaven.*] I apprehend he saw in the vision *an appearance of a city*, which seemed, like *the sheet which Peter saw*, to *be let down from heaven*, and appeared *pendent*, as it were, *in the air*, in such a view, that the *foundations* were visibly distinguishable from the *superstructure*; and this he considered, not as actually the abode of the blessed, but as a *figurative* representation of the holiness and felicity in which they were to dwell, so that it was a *type* of what *the church* itself should be. To interpret it, therefore, as if there were now *such, a city made in heaven*, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, and settled upon some spot of it, is so wild and romantic a thought, that one would wonder any one person of learning and understanding should ever have embraced it. Compare Hallet's *Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 200. See Isa. liv. 11, 12.

c *He that sat upon the throne.*] *As the Lamb*, and *He that sat upon the throne*, have been mentioned as *distinct*, through the whole book, and as the Lamb is mentioned here as the *Spouse of the church*, I am ready to understand *the Father* as the Person here spoken of. But I will not absolutely insist upon this, because in chap. xx. 11, 12. it seems to be Christ who is represented as *sitting upon the throne*; since we know it is he who is to appear as *universal Judge*, under which character the Person who *sat upon the throne* is there spoken of.

d *All liars.*] Some think this refers to the general notion, which is so largely inculcated by the well known author of the *Religion of Nature Delineated*, that there is a *language in actions*, as well as words; and that the malignity of every vicious and immoral action consists in its contradiction to the great *rule of truth*. But in this view it must comprehend the case of *express lying*, against

and that none, in the day of my final judgment, may complain that they have not been warned and cautioned with the greatest plainness, and with the greatest solemnity. SECT. 24.

IMPROVEMENT.

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LET us pause a little, before we proceed to the more particular description of this glorious scene; and let our hearts rejoice in this general view of the new heaven and the new earth, and of the holy city descending out of heaven from God. Will God in very deed dwell with men? Will he dwell with them for ever? Will he fix his tabernacle with them, and condescend to avow them for his people, and to make himself known unto them as their God? Ver. 1 2 3

Let our souls then be awakened, to pay a due attention to such glorious and important promises. Let us hearken to the voice of him who sitteth upon the throne, whose words are undoubtedly true and faithful. Lord, dost thou make all things new? Verify the word first, we implore thee, in our hearts, that it may be verified at length in our state and condition. O thou Alpha and Omega, who art the Beginning and the End, thou who hast done so much to introduce this divine scheme of salvation, perfect it, we entreat thee, with respect to us; exciting our thirst after the water of life, and may we come and take it as freely as it is offered in the gospel! 5 6

In what part of the holy scripture is life and death, the blessing and the curse, set before us, if not in these awful passages? Let those who are too timorous resolutely to adhere to their duty be recovered, and as it were driven back to it, by the fear of divine vengeance. And let all habitual and obstinate sinners, and especially all liars, who bring up the rear of a catalogue, in which murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, make a part, be awakened by this awful threatening. O desperate and inexcusable folly to be afraid of the displeasure of men, and the inconveniences which may possibly attend an adherence to the truth, and not to fear the lake which burns for ever with fire and brimstone! 8

But let us courageously encounter and then we shall conquer all our enemies, animated by these glorious promises, in which all the encouragements contained in the sacred volume are comprised, that he who overcomes shall inherit all things, while God owns himself his God, and acknowledges him as his son; and if a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ; and if so, all things are indeed ours. Let those tears, that will now sometimes silently steal down our cheeks, be shed as tears which we expect quickly to have wiped away, even by the soft and compassionate hand of our heavenly Father. Let us bear our sorrows and our pains, as those that know we shall, through divine grace, soon be out of the reach of them; and let us meet death itself, if we are sincere believers in Christ, as those that know its reign will soon come to a period; and that when once we are recovered from it, by the almighty power of our great General, we shall never more be subject to its invasion, or any of its terrors; even then, when all former things shall have passed away. 7 4

SECTION XXV.

A sublime and particular description of the splendour, glory, purity, and happiness, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. xxi. 9, *to the end.*

REV. xxi. 9.

REV. xxi. 9.

AND there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew you the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

AND after he who sat on the throne had condescended to speak to me, in the words I have just now mentioned, *there came to me one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues* which had lately been poured out; *and he spake with me, saying, Come, and I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb,* and thou shalt observe how beautiful and glorious she is. *And he brought me, in* a vision of *the spirit, to a great and high mountain, and he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God;* which I understood to be an emblem of the church of Christ, in its most happy and glorious state. And it was indeed a most delightful object to behold, *having the glory of God* shining round about it: *and its lustre* [*was*] *like to that of a most precious gem,* bright *as a jasper stone,* and *clear as crystal;* for the whole city, as it was represented to me pendent in the air, shone with an elegant and amazing lustre. *And it* appeared *having a great and high wall,* for ever to secure it from all the attacks of its enemies; *having* also *twelve gates, and over the gates* there appeared *twelve angels,* as a celestial guard posted there; *and* there were *names written, upon them, which were* [*the names*] *of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel:*[a] to signify that it was the dwelling of the Israel of God. And the city made a complete square, having *on the east* side, which I first viewed, *three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And* as I saw the city suspended, as it were, in the air, I had an opportunity of observing, that *the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb* were engraven; to signify how great a dependence the church had on their testimony, and what an influence the gospel, which they preached, had upon raising this noble and divine structure. *And he that spake with me had,* as the angel who appeared in vision to Ezekiel, (chap. xl. 3.) a measuring rod, but with this circumstance of illustrious distinction, that it was *a golden reed;* and it was given him, *that he might measure the city, and*

SECT. 25. REV. XXI. 10 11 12 13 14 15

which, in the most obvious sense, the terrors of this clause are most *directly* levelled.

[a] *The twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.*] Such a regard continually maintained to the Jews, and their *manners,* and their *temple-worship,* might have a great tendency to conciliate their regards; and may also afford some hints for the interpretation of many passages of the Old Testament, in which expressions, taken from the Jewish church, are used in describing that of the Messiah.

SECT. 25. REV. XXI.

its gates, and its wall. And the city was a complete *square;* and *its length was* exactly *equal to its breadth; and he measured the city with the reed,* and each side was *twelve thousand* stadia, or *furlongs.* And, which was most extraordinary of all, it appeared to me, in this vision, as a perfect cube, so that *its length, and its breadth, and its height, were equal;*[b] which was an intimation how impossible it was for any of its ene-
17 mies to scale the bulwarks that defended it. *And he measured* the thickness of *its wall,* and found it *one hundred forty-four cubits,* the square of twelve; and this was *according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel* who had the measuring rod in his
18 hand, and accurately took the dimensions of it. *And the building of its wall was like* a complete rock of *jasper, and the city* [*was*] *pure gold,* and it was bright and clear, *like*
19 *refined glass. And* to signify how firm *the foundations of the walls of the city,* which were the emblems of the apostles and their doctrine, [*were,*] they appeared *adorned with every precious stone,* like so many vast and solid rocks of gems, lying under the gates, and appearing radiant and glorious, while the city hung, as I said before, suspended in my
20 sight. *The first foundation* [*was*] *jasper; the second sapphire: the third chalcedony:* these were on the east side;[c] *the fourth emerald; The fifth sardonyx; the sixth sardius;* these were on the north; *the seventh chrysolite,* or a stone of the colour of pure gold; *the eighth beryl: the ninth topaz;* these were on the south; and to complete the square, *the tenth* was *chrysoprasus,* or a beautiful mixture of gold and green; *the eleventh hyacinth; and the twelfth amethyst;* which appeared on the west side; thus they were agreeably variegated and decorated, with all the elegance and magnificence that
21 can be imagined. *And the twelve gates* [*were*] *twelve pearls; each of the gates was* of *one* entire undivided *pearl,* with all the beautiful pillars and arches, mouldings and cornices. *And the street of the city,* instead of being paved with common stones, [*was*] *pure gold,* the substance being *transparent as glass,* and reflecting the light that shone upon it, with
22 a lustre equal to that of polished gold. *And* whereas the temple made so considerable a part of the view of Jerusalem, the holy city, which I had been used to visit; as for this heavenly Jerusalem, *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it:* God was present in Christ his Son, by a more intimate presence than had ever been known upon earth, and by that presence he made even the whole of the city
23 most holy. *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine therein; for the glory of the Lord enlightened it*[d] on all sides, *and the Lamb* [*was*] *the Light thereof,* and the illustrious manifestation of his presence rendered not only artificial, but
24 all natural light unnecessary. *And the nations of the saved shall walk* continually *in its light;* happy nations consisting of myriads and millions, shall expatiate in and enjoy the delightful scene; *and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and their honour into it.*[e] If you were to conceive all the monarchs upon earth, uniting all their treasures to adorn one single place, they could produce nothing comparable to what I then
25 saw. *And the gates of it shall not be shut by day:* and that is equivalent to saying,
26 they shall never be shut at all; *for there shall be no night there.*[f] *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it;* whatever is most desirable among all nations, seemed to meet together, to adorn that place, where good men of all nations shall
27 dwell and reign with God for ever. *And nothing unclean shall enter into it, nor* [*any thing which*] *practises abomination and falsehood* of any kind, *but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life,*[g] in which none of such a detestable character can possibly have any place.

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed; twelve thousand furlongs: the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

b *Its length, its breadth, and its height were equal.*] As this is quite inconceivable, with regard to any *cubical* structure, which can be supposed of this bigness, I look upon it as a *wise* and *well-judged* intimation, that all these descriptions are *figurative.* The like intimation is given in the vision of Ezekiel; according to which, if it were able to be taken literally, the building described must be a *mile high.*

c On the east side.] As the *temple of Jerusalem* was beheld in its greatest glory, when viewed from the *east,* towards which *the beautiful gate* looked, I think it is probable that the like was observable in this *visionary* city, which was all as *one temple* in which *God dwelt.*

d *Glory of the Lord, &c.*] Some have thought this was an *extraordinary lustre,* which seemed always to hover over it, like *a sun* never going down. I rather think, that *the whole city* appeared to him like a *luminous object,* sending out rays on every side, which he apprehended to be in consequence of *God's dwelling* there; and that these rays might have much of the lustre of the *Shechinah.* Mr. Fleming argues from this text, that *the Lamb* is the *Shechinah* in the heavenly world.

e *The kings of the earth.*] This is the clause upon which Mr. Worthington insists very much, to prove, that we are to understand this description, not of *the heavenly world,* but of some glorious state of the *christian church,* which is to pass *upon earth;* and it must be acknowledged a *plausible* argument. The reader must consider, whether it is sufficient to outweigh those on the other side; and if it be not, I suppose he will find no solution *preferable* to that which I have here given; for I cannot suppose that *the kings of the earth* are those who are to reign in *this new earth,* whose glory shall be reflected *from,* and so adorn the blissful city which they shall then inhabit. (Compare Isa. lx. 3, 11, 20; lxvi. 12.)

f *There shall be no night there.*] Mr. Whiston supposes, that a *comet,* meeting *the earth* at the *conflagration* (for to such a concurrence he ascribes that awful phenomenon,) shall give it such a blow, as to destroy its *diurnal motion,* leaving only such a degree of it, that like *the moon* with respect to us, it shall move round its *axis,* while it performs its *periodical* revolution round the *central* body; and so as to turn always the same face towards it; so that *one* hemisphere shall be always enlightened by *the sun,* and the want of it in the other shall be supplied by a *supernatural* light. But the *four dark corners* (which where they are it is difficult to say) shall be the habitation of Gog and Magog. It is hard to determine whether this agrees less with the description here given, or the principles of good philosophy. See Whist. *Theory,* p. 447. But this is not a place to canvass such an hypothesis, nor is it necessary, after what his antagonist Keil has said concerning it. This gentleman also thinks a *comet* shall remove the *moon* from its *orbit,* so that it shall be converted into a *primary planet,* as he thinks it would have been *at the flood,* had it not been prevented by a peculiar providence.

g *But only those, &c.*] As it is certain that *nothing profane, abominable,* and *false,* can here be considered as *written in the book of life,* this is another text to be added to the large catalogue I have given on John xvii. 12. where εἰ μη is to be considered, not as an *exceptive,* but *adversitive particle.* See note f. p. 361.

IMPROVEMENT.*

GLORIOUS things are indeed spoken of thee, O thou city of God. (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) Thus does the Divine Being condescend to aid our feeble faith, by such sensible representations. But none of these things which are spoken can give us an idea grand and magnificent enough. The pearls and the gems, the gold and the crystal, the honours of kings, and all the nations they govern, all fall inconceivably short of that glory; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor, active and boundless as the human imagination may seem, has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God has prepared for them that love him, in these regions of perpetual day, of everlasting security, in this grand temple, the whole of which shall be replenished with the most sensible tokens of his presence. SECT. 25. REV. XXI. Ver. 23

And who shall abide in this thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in this thy holy hill? They who are written in the Lamb's book of life, they whom God has, from the beginning, chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, being predestinated to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ unto himself. And who are these? None that are unclean and profane; none that work abomination and a lie; but the pure and pious, the humble and the holy. Form us, O Lord, to this character by thy grace; and never let the gaudy glare of sensual enjoyments and worldly possessions, turn our eyes from contemplating this glorious sight, or alienate our hearts from the pursuit of this blessedness; till, having heard of it by the hearing of the ear, and believed the faithful report, our eyes shall behold those divine substantial glories, which these emblems, resplendent as they are, can but imperfectly represent. In the mean time, O Lord, lead us onward through what dark and gloomy path thou pleasest, to these abodes of light and glory; determine for us in what cottages we shall lodge, though ever so mean and obscure, while we are pursuing our journey to this royal, this imperial palace. 27

* There are many beautiful ideas in the description, which I have not collected together in this Improvement, as some of them have been taken notice of before, and some occur in the next chapter.

SECTION XXVI.

The apostle hath a further vision of the river of life, and of the tree of life; describes the happiness of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and receives a further message from God by an angel, before whom he is about to renew his prostration; but is forbidden. Rev. xxii. 1—9.

REV. xxii. 1.

AND he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

REV. xxii. 1.

AND having given me this view of the holy city, *he*, that is, the angel who condescended to be my guide on this occasion, *showed me the pure river of the water of life*, which was *clear as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb*; an emblem of that perpetual life and overflowing joy, which shall be the portion of all the blissful inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. And *in the midst of the street of it, and on the one side and the other of the river*, [*was*] *the tree of life*, (Gen. iii. 3, 22.) *producing twelve* different [*kinds of*] *fruits; every month producing one* [*kind of*] *fruit*; to signify the permanency and variety of those delights which spring up there. *And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*; beneath their salutary shade no disease shall ever invade the nations of the saved, but perpetual health shall flourish among them: (Zech. xiv. 11.) And whereas in the earthly paradise Satan insinuated himself into the minds of the first parents of the human race, *and* the new-born glories of the creation were blasted by the curse which he introduced; in the heavenly paradise *every* fatal effect of the former *curse shall cease*,[a] and no new evil shall ever arise; *and the throne of God and the Lamb*, upon which the Father and the Son sit together, *shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him*, in the sacred offices of his temple, with far greater advantage than they have ever before done; *And they shall see his face* shining with unclouded lustre; *and*, in token of their perpetual devotedness to him, *his name* [*shall be borne*] *upon their foreheads*,[b] as the name of God was on that golden plate which the Jewish high-priest wore on his. *And*, to complete their happiness, *there shall be no night there; and they* can *have no need of the lamp, nor* indeed *of the light of the sun* itself, that glorious fountain of lustre to this lower world, *because the Lord God shall enlighten them* with the light of his own holiness and glory; *and they shall reign* as kings *for ever and ever*, and enjoy an immortal life, far more delightful, splendid, and magnificent, than any monarch on earth has ever known. SECT. 26. 2 3 4 5

And when *he* had *said* this *to me*, he added, Though *these words* which I have spoken, betoken such glorious things, that they may seem in a manner incredible, yet is not the divine bounty and munificence to be estimated by any human standard; they [*are*] therefore to be received, and depended upon, *as faithful and true*. *And* these things, O John, are intended, not merely for thy own instruction and consolation, and much less for the gratification of thy curiosity; but *the Lord God of the holy prophets has sent his angel*,[c] *to show to his servants what must quickly be done*, and to represent scenes, which it shall not be long ere they begin to open, though it may be long before they 6

a *Every curse shall cease.*] So the late learned Bishop of London, I think very justly, renders these words, which are plainly limited to the inhabitants of the *new Jerusalem*, and must certainly, therefore, refer to the *final state* of happiness after the resurrection; till which time all the saints of preceding ages will remain under *the power of death* as to their *body*, and the effect of the first *curse* be written in their dust.

b *Name upon their foreheads.*] It hath elsewhere been observed, (§ 16. note l.) that there was a custom prevailing among many of the heathen, to inscribe on *the foreheads* the *names* or *symbolical* marks of the *deity* they worshipped; but the near connexion between this clause, and that which related to their serving God in the *offices of devotion* (for that λατρευω signifies) makes me think it more natural to refer this to the inscription of *Holiness to Jehovah*, written on the mitre of the *high-priest*; and so it naturally leads us to reflect upon that intimate *approach* to the blessed God with which all these happy souls shall be honoured.

c *Has sent his angel.*] Perhaps the apostle might think *this angel* to be Christ, and that he speaks of *his own* coming in the following verse. But Dr. Calamy argues the *deity of Christ* from these words, which he thinks the context proves to be applicable to him. Compare ver. 16. Cal. *On Trin.* Serm. ii. p. 41.

SECT. 26. close. Yet, on the whole, I may in his name declare, *Behold, I come quickly*, to call my servants to an account: and *blessed* [*is*] *he who keeps* and strictly observes *the words of the prophecy of this book*; for they will in such a manner direct his course, as that he shall escape many dangerous rocks, on which multitudes shall suffer shipwreck, to their eternal ruin.

REV. XXII. *And I John*, who wrote this book, am the person who *saw and heard these things*; 8 *and when I heard and saw* [*them*,] I was so powerfully affected, that *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed those things to me*, forgetting the man- 9 ner in which the same kind of homage had lately been refused upon a like occasion. *And he* also *said to me*, as the angel had before done, (chap. xix. 10.) *See* [*thou do it*] *not, for I am a fellow-servant with thee*, I am subject to the same Lord, *and* share in the duty and service of *thy brethren the prophets, and* of *those who keep the words of this book*,[d] which thou art now commanded to write: *worship God* alone, and divide not thy religious homage between him and any creature, how exalted and excellent soever.

7 Behold, I come quickly: Blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Worship God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8, 9 We will not now employ our time in reviewing the infirmity of this holy apostle, who seems again to have fallen into the same danger of idolatry from which he had so lately been recovered. Nor will we stay to examine, whether he took this angel for our Lord Jesus Christ, as some have imagined, or to determine what homage it was he attempted to pay. Let us content ourselves for the present, with reflecting, how necessary it is we should be on our guard against exceeding in our esteem and affection for creatures who have been the means of conveying to us signal advantages, and especially assisting our views of the New Jerusalem: To the contemplation of which, may we now return with new and growing delight.

1, 2 Let us raise our eyes to the water of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb: to the tree of life, which grows on its banks, and produces such a variety of fruit both for food and refreshment, and for the healing 3 of the nations; to that more excellent paradise, in which there shall be no curse, where, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be scattered ten thousand blessings on all his servants; who shall there serve him, with ever- 4 lasting, with increasing delight, being admitted to see his face, and exulting in their having the name of God written upon their foreheads; which they reckon a brighter and nobler ornament, than the most glorious crown or diadem, 6 without such an inscription, could be. These are the words of truth and faithfulness: and as such may our faith embrace them, and our souls ever rest upon them.

O that we may feel our thirst after this water of life, our hunger after this fruit of the tree of life, more powerfully excited. We shall, in both respects, be satisfied in the proper season; and, in the mean time, God will send 3 us some refreshments, during our continuance in the wilderness. Already are we, if we are true believers, delivered from the curse; and those things, which were the original effects and consequences of it, shall be overruled by our gracious God, and converted into a blessing. And O may divine love, and every genuine regard to God and to the Lamb, prevail and govern in our hearts; and may our lives be devoted to that service in which we hope our eternity will be employed. Have we not already, as it were, received the mark of God in our foreheads? Have we not solemnly enlisted ourselves to fight under the banner of Christ? Have we not, in repeated and most affecting solemnities and ordinances of his own institution, declared our desire of being for ever devoted to him? O let us ever remember the sacred engagement Let holiness to the Lord be written on our hearts, as well as on our foreheads. Let all our affections, and all our faculties, all our possessions, and all our pursuits, be consecrated to God. To bear this name and inscription, will now, even in this dark and benighted world, shed a glory around us. It will be as a sacred guide to our ways, it will cheer and animate our hearts, it will bring down to us many a delightful foretaste of that world, where in his light we shall see light, and where we shall reign with him for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SECTION XXVII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes the apostle to discover to the churches what had been revealed to him; and solemnly declares his speedy approach, to fix the eternal state of men according to their characters and works. Rev. xxii. 10—15.

REV. xxii. 10.

SECT. 27. *AND he*, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ,[a] from whom I received this revelation, *said unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book*, so that they should not be immediately perused; *for the time is near*, in which the accomplishment of these things shall

REV. XXII. 11 begin. Yea, the time is just approaching, when the last seal shall be set upon the characters of men, and when it shall be said, on the one hand, *Let him that is unjust, be unjust still; and let him that is polluted, be polluted still*; for no more opportunities shall ever be granted for reforming what hath been amiss, and recovering the unrighteous and polluted soul to rectitude and purity. *And*, on the other hand, it shall be said, *Let him that is righteous, be righteous still; and let him that is holy, be holy still*, nothing shall ever happen to bring the virtues and graces of good men into any future danger, or under any cloud; but their righteousness and their holiness shall for ever shine; yea, shine with an 12 increasing lustre. *And*, to confirm this, *Behold I come quickly*; I shall be manifest ere it be long; *and my reward*, both of grace and vengeance, [*is*] *with me*; and *I will recompense to every man according as his works shall be*, whether it shall appear, on an

Rev. xxii. 10.

AND he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

d *Keep the words of this book.*] There are indeed a multitude of things contained in *this book*, which are of such a nature, that whoever pays a *due regard* to them, must necessarily be a true christian, and entitled to all the blessings and promises of the gospel.

a *And he*, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ.] Many following words, and especially verse 12, prove that our Lord is here meant. But it is a remarkable instance of the reference of a *relative* to a *remoter antecedent*: a figure of speech, which I have taken notice of upon many former occasions. Heb. vii. 2. note a.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

impartial examination, to have been good or evil. And, to confirm it farther, I repeat it again, *I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last;* and what I say may be depended upon as the words of invariable fidelity: Hear them, therefore, with attention and regard. And, since my nature and perfections are immutable, see that the necessary change be made in yourselves, in order to your obtaining that happiness of which your sins may now render you incapable. *Happy* [*are*] *they*, and they alone, *who do his commandments*, and so prepare for his important appearance, *that they may have the privilege* [*to eat*] *of the tree of life; and they shall* freely *enter by the gates into the* glorious *city*[b] I have described, and have their perpetual abode there. *But without* [*are*] the unclean, who merit no better a name than that of *dogs*, as they debase their rational faculties to the service of detestable lusts; *and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters*, who may justly be ranked together as the most abominable of sinners, *and* with them must be ranked too, *every one who loveth and maketh a lie*,[c] who forges falsehood, and practises it, or acts in any allowed contradiction to the great eternal rule of truth and rectitude.

SECT. 27.

REV. XXII.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

14

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

15

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us be very thankful, that the words of this prophecy are not sealed from us; but that truths, in which we have so important a concern, are so plainly published and proclaimed. The time is near, when a seal will be set on the characters of men: blessed be God, he who is now unrighteous and polluted, may be purified and reformed, justified and saved. Adored be that grace, that waits so long upon sinners! But the divine long-suffering towards them will have its period: yet a little while, and Jesus comes to render to every man according to his works. May we then be fixed in a world of immutable holiness and happiness. Ver. 10 11 12

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, has discovered to us many evangelical truths in this mysterious book. He hath directed our eyes to the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood; and hath showed us the saints in glory, laying down their crowns in his presence, and ascribing the praise of all their salvation to him; but he has shown us nothing that is inconsistent with the necessity of real and universal holiness. Yea, he himself proclaims them alone to be entitled to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem, and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, who do God's commandments. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with vain words, nor attend to any who would sophisticate the word of God, and fixing their view only on some detached passages of it, enervate, by their unguarded interpretations, its general scope and meaning. Let us, in reviewing scripture, observe what God commands and requires, and compare it with what he forbids, that we may thereby impartially judge and try ourselves. And how free soever we may be from any of the grosser crimes here enumerated, such as fornication, murder, and idolatry, let us not allow ourselves in the love and practice of any thing inconsistent with the immutable rule of righteousness and truth; as well knowing every allowed and continued indulgence of that kind to be utterly irreconcileable with a well-grounded hope of inheriting eternal life. May it please thee, O Lord, to inscribe all these laws upon our hearts; that our joy, in the hope and prospect of the promised blessedness, may rise in proportion to our acquaintance with thy unerring word, and the impartiality and diligence with which we trace the actions of our lives, and the affections of our hearts, in comparison with it, and reduce them to a holy conformity to its precepts. 13 14 15

SECTION XXVIII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ repeats his august titles and gracious invitation; warns us of the dreadful doom of him who shall add to, or take from, his words; and declares his purpose of coming quickly; to which St. John adds his hearty assent, and concludes with his apostolical benediction. Rev. xxii. 16, *to the end.*

REV. xxii. 16.

REV. xxii. 16.

I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning Star.

AND now to conclude the whole; be it known to every one who reads these words, and let it be seriously considered by him, that *I Jesus* the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, *have sent* my beloved disciple and apostle John, as *my messenger, to testify these things to you, in the* several *churches* into whose hands this may come. And let it also be remembered, in order to add a due weight to the testimony, that *I am the Root and the Offspring of David*, by whose divine power David himself was made, though as to my human nature I have condescended to ally myself to him, and be born from his house: I am *the bright and the morning Star*, who wear a glory exceeding that of the most brilliant celestial luminary, and usher in a glorious and eternal day. And the great substance and design of the message is to awaken in the minds of all to whom it comes, an earnest desire of those blessings which from this throne of my glory I am to dispense. *And* accordingly I do now anew publish the invitation: *the Spirit* with which I inspire my servants, *and the bride*, the church to whom I am espoused, concur to *say, Come; and let him*, even every one *that heareth, say, Come.* Let every one echo the invitation, and let my people, in all ages, consider it as their duty to do it. *And let him that is thirsty, Come; and whosoever will, let him* apply to me in my appointed way, and *receive of the waters of life freely*:[a] behold it flows in a full current from

SECT. 28.

REV. XXII. 16

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

17

b *Who do his commandments*, &c.] This promise to all that *do his commandments*, that they shall *enter into the gate of the city* here described, evidently proves it to refer to that state of *future* happiness which all good men shall finally enjoy. Compare ver. 18, 19.

c *Every one who loveth and maketh a lie.*] Though *idols* are called lies, yet as *idolaters* had been mentioned before as excluded out of this New Jerusalem, I think it most natural to understand this clause in the sense given in the paraphrase.

a *Whosoever will, let him receive*, &c.] Such a declaration of *free grace* seems to have been wisely inserted just in the *close* of the *sacred canon*, to encourage the hope of every humble soul that is truly desirous of the blessings of the gospel; and to guard against those suspicions of divine goodness which some have so unhappily abetted. The word λαμβανετω, which we render *take*, does often signify *receive*: and the word δωρεαν, is as much as *gratis*, which implies the *freedom* of the gift; and I think it may probably refer to that celebrated invitation, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth,*

SECT. 28. my throne; and if any man do not receive a part or share of it, without money and without price, the fault is only chargeable upon himself.

REV. XXII. 18 This important testimony I commission my servant to bear: *and I* also *testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man add unto these things, God shall add unto him,* and bring upon him *the* most terrible of those *plagues which are written in this book:*[b] he will, by any designed addition to them, or corrup- 19 tion of them, make himself highly criminal, and eternally miserable. *And if any one take away from the words of the book of this prophecy,* with a design thereby to diminish in any degree, by the omission of what is disagreeable to him, or others whom he may desire to please and favour, *God will* severely punish such a sacrilege, and *take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the* glorious *things,* even the invaluable blessings, *which are written* and described *in* the preceding passages of *this book.*[c]

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

20 *He who testifies these* important *things, says,* and leaves it as his parting warning with all that read them, *Surely I come quickly.* My soul, while I write it, replies, and let every reader reply with me from his heart, *Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus,* come surely and quickly, as thou hast said; for all our highest and sublimest hopes depend upon the blessed and glorious day of thy appearance.

20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 In the mean time, let the churches to whom these messages are especially directed and inscribed, receive my most affectionate wishes, my most solemn benediction, which I express in this one ardent prayer: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* even all the invaluable effects of his favour, and above all, the abundant communications of his Spirit, [*be*] *with you all,* and with all christians, to whom these words may come, unto the end of the world. *Amen.*

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16 How sweetly and delightfully does the canon of Scripture conclude, leaving, as it were, the music of heaven upon the attentive ear. "O thou blessed Root and Offspring of David, O thou bright and morning Star, impress on all "our hearts these thy gracious words, which thou hast condescended to speak from the throne of thy glory; thereby, "as it were, to aid the weakness of our faith, in those which thou didst deliver, while dwelling in mortal flesh." Then did the compassionate Saviour proclaim, from an eminence in the temple, to a crowded assembly on a day of peculiar solemnity, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:* (John vii. 37.) And now behold he makes the same proclamation from his celestial temple; he points, as it were, to the fountain-head of happiness, 17 to the springs of the water of life, near the throne of God, and says, Whoever will, let him come, let him take, let him freely take, of this living water: yea, and not content with speaking this language by his Spirit only, he calls on his bride to lift up her melodious voice, to publish this kind invitation; he calls on every one that hears it to echo it back, as if the excess of his goodness overcame him, as if it were necessary to his own happiness, that men should accept of their own salvation.

With what sacred observance should these books be guarded, which contain a message of such infinite importance! 18 Of what dreadful curses are they worthy, who presume to add to what is already perfect, or to take away from that which is in every part divine. I trust none of us shall ever presumptuously attempt to do it: and may we be pre- 19 served from those mistaken interpretations, in consequence of which we should teach the world, as by his authority, any thing which he has not dictated, or deny any thing which carries along with it the stamp of such an authority "Have pity, O Lord, upon our weakness; impute not prejudices which thou knowest we do not allow; and give "us a greater penetration of mind, to understand the true sense of thy word; a simplicity of heart, to receive it; an "integrity, so far as the duty of our places requires, to declare it; and a zeal to inculcate and defend."

And while we are thus employed, or employed in any other services which Providence has assigned us, in our respective stations and circumstances of life; whatever labours may exercise us, whatever difficulties may surround 20 us, whatever sorrows may depress us, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, Behold, I come quickly; I come to put a period to the labour and suffering of my servants; I come, and my reward of grace is with me, to recompense, with royal bounty, every work of faith, and labour of love; I come, to receive my faithful persevering people to myself, to dwell for ever in that blissful world, where the sacred volume, which contains the important discoveries of my will, shall be no more necessary; but knowledge, and holiness, and joy, shall be poured in upon their souls in a more immediate, in a nobler and more effectual manner. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus. Hasten the blessed hour to us, and to all thy churches, as far as it may consist with thy wise and holy counsels. And, in the 21 mean time, may thy grace be with us, to keep alive the remembrance of thy love, and the expectation of thy coming, in our hearts, and to animate us to a temper and conduct which may suit the blessings we have already received, and the nobler felicity after which thou hast taught us to aspire. *Amen and amen.*

come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.

b *If any man add to, &c.*] It is true, this particularly refers to *the Book of the Revelation:* but the parity of reason extending to other books, I doubt not the terror of the threatening does so too. God forbid we should imagine every *honestly mistaken criticism,* where there is a question of receiving or excluding any particular verse, should affect a man's *salvation,* in consequence of what is here said! But I think such a passage should make men very cautious, that they may not rashly incur any censure on this account; though undoubtedly the terror of the threatening is planted against any *designed* erasement or addition. I shall conclude this note with declaring, that I have endeavoured to carry on my commentary on the sacred books with this thought in my view, and that I have neither designedly attempted to establish any thing, which did not appear to me to be a doctrine of scripture, nor drop any thing which did appear so. And wherein soever, through human infirmity, and the want of a closer and more accurate attention, I have failed either way, I commit myself to the mercy of that Redeemer, whose word it is, and whose interest I have faithfully endeavoured to serve.

c *God will take away his part, &c.*] Since God threatens the *plagues written in this book,* and the loss of *a part in the holy city,* as what might be the portion of those who should presume to *corrupt it,* and such corruption might happen in any age of the church; I think it very evident, that *the holy city,* spoken of in the preceding chapter, is a representation of the *heavenly state* to be enjoyed by all good men, how applicable soever it may seem to any glorious scene preceding the final judgment: and that Rev. xx. 11, &c. refers to the universal judgment.

END OF THE PARAPHRASE AND NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

A DISSERTATION ON SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S SCHEME FOR REDUCING THE SEVERAL HISTORIES CONTAINED IN THE EVANGELISTS TO THEIR PROPER ORDER.

THE name of Sir Isaac Newton is so justly celebrated through the learned world, that they who know he has endeavoured to establish a method of settling a chronology of our Lord's life (for I think one can hardly call it an harmony of the Evangelists) quite different from what has hitherto been advanced, may be curious to know what it is, and why we presume to depart from it, since it is so natural to imagine that such a genius must demonstrate whatever it attempts to prove. I therefore think it incumbent upon me to lay the scheme before my reader, as I promised long since to do: (Note m, on Matt. iv. 25. p. 72.) After which I shall briefly present, in one view, those reasons (many of which have been already hinted) which compelled me to tread a different road, after having most attentively considered all that this illustrious writer has urged for the support of his plan.

I cannot set myself to this task without feeling the fatigue of it sensibly allayed by the pleasure with which I reflect on the firm persuasion which a person of his unequalled sagacity must have entertained of the truth of christianity in order to his being engaged to take such pains in illustrating the sacred oracles: a pleasure which, I doubt not, every good reader will share with me; especially as (according to the best information, whether public or private, I could ever get) his firm faith in the divine revelation discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety; and consequently gives us the justest reason to conclude that he is now rejoicing in the happy effects of it, infinitely more than in all the applause which his philosophical works have procured him, though they have commanded a fame lasting as the world, the true theory of which he had discovered, and (in spite of all the vain efforts of ignorance, pride, and their offspring, bigotry) have arrayed him as it were in the beams of the sun, and inscribed his name among the constellations of heaven.

Sir Isaac Newton has given us his sentiments on the chronology of our Lord's history, in his *Observations on Prophecy*, Book I. chap. xi. p. 144—168; and, according to his usual method, he has done it concisely, only marking out some of the outlines; and after having endeavoured to establish some of the chief principles by arguments which he judged to be conclusive, he leaves it to his readers to apply those principles to several other particulars, which being deducible from them, he did not think it necessary to enter into. Such is the method he has also taken in his *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms;* and it was most suitable to that great genius which bore him with such amazing velocity through so vast a circle of various literature. Yet it must render him less sensible of the difficulty attending some of his schemes than he would otherwise have been, and may leave room to those who are justly sensible how much they are his inferiors, to show, by their remarks upon him, how possible it is for the greatest of mankind to be misled by some plausible appearances of things in a general view of them, against which invincible objections may arise when they come to be applied to unthought-of particulars.

There are many facts recorded in the Evangelists, the order of which is so plain that all harmonies agree in them; and such especially are most of those with which the history begins, and most of those with which it ends, though there be some disputes about a few circumstances relating to the resurrection: But Sir Isaac enters not at all into that part of the history, nor into any thing that precedes the appearance of John the Baptist.

He lays it down as the foundation of all his other reasonings and calculations here, (on the authority of Luke iii. 1.) that John began to baptize in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, reckoning his reign to have commenced from the death of Augustus, which happened, he says, August 28,* in the year of our Lord (according to the common reckoning) 29: This is said (Newt. p. 147.) to have been in the year of the Julian period 4727, which must surely be an error of the press for 4742, the year of that period which is universally known to have answered to the 29th of the received christian era. He supposes the Baptist's ministry opened in the spring, when the weather was warm; and allowing the remainder of the year to the spreading of his reputation, he concludes that our Lord was baptized before the end of it, when Tiberius's 16th year was begun. (Matt. iii. 1—17; Mark i. 1—11; Luke iii. 1—18, 21—23; John i. 6—18. sect. xv.—xviii.) After this the temptation ensued, (Matt. iv. 1—11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1—13. sect. xix.) and all those testimonies of John to Jesus, and the interviews between Jesus and his first disciples, (which are mentioned, John i. 19, *to the end*, sect. xx.—xxii.) as likewise our Lord's journey to Galilee, and his first miracle there: (John ii. 1—11. sect. xxiii.) Then followed our Lord's first Passover, which, according to Sir Isaac, (and I would be understood through all this part of the Dissertation to be only reporting his opinion,) happened, A. D. 30, at which he drove the traders out of the temple, (John ii. 12, *to the end*, sect. xxiv.) had that celebrated conference with Nicodemus, (John iii. 1—21. sect. xxv. xxvi.) and continued for some time to abide in Judea, baptizing by his disciples, while John baptized in Enon, and bore his last recorded testimony to him. (John iii. 22, *to the end*, sect. 27.)

Thus the summer was spent, till John was thrown into prison about November, (Matt. xiv. 3—5; Luke iii. 19, 20; Mark vi. 17—20. sect. xxviii.) and our Lord passed through Samaria in his way to Galilee about the winter solstice, that is, four months before harvest: (John iv. 1—42. sect. xxix. xxx. See note c, on John iv. 35. After which he went, first to Cana in Galilee, (John iv. 43—54. sect. xxxi.) and then, after a circuit [or rather journey] in Galilee, (Matt. iv. 12;

* This is a small mistake; for Suetonius (*Aug.* 100.) fixes it to xiv. Kal Septemb.; that is, Aug. 19.

Mark i. 14, 15; Luke iv. 14, 15. sect. xxxi. xxxii.) he came and preached at Nazareth, (Luke iv. 16—30. sect. xxxii.) and being rejected there, went and settled for a while at Capernaum, where he called Peter, Andrew, James, and John. (Mat. iv. 13—22; Mark i. 16—20; Luke iv. 31, 32; v. 1—11. sect. xxxiii. xxxiv.) This our author thinks must have taken up all the spring, and must bring us to our Lord's Second Passover, A. D. 31.

It is after this passover that Sir Isaac places another circuit through Galilee, which also carried his fame throughout all Syria, and added multitudes from thence, and from Decapolis, to those that followed him from Judea and Jerusalem. (Mat. iv. 23, *to the end;* Mark i. 28; Luke iv. 44. sect. xxxvi.) To these he preached the celebrated sermon on the mount. (Mat. v. vi. vii. sect. xxxvii.—xliii.) Immediately after which he cured the leper, Mat. viii. 1—4; Mark i. 40. *to the end:* Luke v. 12—16. sect. xliv.) the centurion's servant, (Mat. viii. 5—13; Luke vii. 1—10. sect. lv.) and Peter's mother-in-law, with many others, (Mat. viii. 14—17; Mark i. 29—38; Luke iv. 38—44. sect. xxxv. xxxvi.)

By this time Sir Isaac supposes the Feast of Tabernacles approached, when our Lord passing through Samaria was refused a lodging, (Luke ix. 51—56. sect. cxxvii.) to which he strangely supposes a reference, Mat. viii. 19, 20. (sect. lxix.) After which, when the feast was over, and Christ returned from Jerusalem, toward winter, he stilled a tempest as he crossed the sea, (Mat. viii. 23—27; Mark iv. 35, *to the end;* Luke viii. 22—25. sect. lxix.) and when he had landed, dispossessed the legion: (Mat. viii. 28, *to the end*, Mark v. 1—21; Luke viii. 26—40. sect. lxx.) And then returning again to the western side of the sea, cured the paralytic, (Mat. ix. 1—8; Mark ii. 1—12; Luke v. 18—26. sect. xlv.) called Matthew, (Mat. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27. 28. sect. xlv.) and having been entertained at his house, (Mat. ix. 10—17; Mark ii. 15—22; Luke v. 29, *to the end*, sect. lxxi.) went out to raise Jairus's daughter, curing the woman who had a bloody flux by the way: (Mat. ix. 18—26; Mark v. 22, *to the end;* Luke viii. 41, *to the end*, sect. lxxii.) And after performing other cures, (Mat. ix. 27—34. sect. lxxii.) he took another circuit in Galilee, (Mat. ix. 35, *to the end*, sect. lxxiii.) gave a charge to his apostles, and sent them out: (Mat. x. 1, *to the end;* xi. 1; Mark vi. 7—13; Luke ix. 1—6. sect. lxxiv.—lxxvi.) After which, having answered the messengers which John had sent, he discourses with the people concerning him, (Mat. xi. 2—19; Luke vii. 18—35. sect. lvii. lviii.) and upbraids the impenitent cities of Galilee. (Mat. xi. 20, *to the end*, sect. lix.) And as these events would employ the winter and the spring, our author places the Third Passover here, A. D. 32.

He does not indeed expressly assert that this was the feast at which our Lord cured the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and made that defence before the sanhedrim related in the vth chapter of John; (sect. xlvi.—xlviii.) but according to this general plan, this must be its proper place. And that there was a passover about this time, he argues from the story of the disciples rubbing out the ears of corn, which is related as in this place: (Mat. xii. 1—8; Mark ii. 23, *to the end;* Luke vi. 1—5. sect. xlix.) Soon after which happened the cure of the withered hand, (Mat. xii. 9—15; Mark iii. 1—7; Luke vi. 6—11. sect. l.) and a variety of other miracles, (Mat. xii. 15—21; Mark iii. 7—12. sect. li.) with that of the dispossession imputed to a confederacy with Beelzebub. (Mat. xii. 22, *to the end;* Mark iii. 22, *to the end:* Luke xi. 14—36. sect. lxi.—lxiv.) Here Sir Isaac places the parables delivered at the sea-side, as he supposes about seed-time, or the Feast of Tabernacles, (Mat. xiii. 1—52; Mark iv. 1—34; Luke viii. 4—18. sect. lxv.—lxviii.) his renewed visit to Nazareth, (Mat. xiii. 53, *to the end;* Mark vi. 1—6. sect. lxxiii.) and the return of the twelve, after having spent, as he supposes, a year in their embassy. (Mark vi. 30, 31; Luke ix. 10. sect. lxxviii.)

About this time our author places the beheading of John the Baptist, after he had been in prison two years and a quarter: (Mat. xiv. 1—12; Mark vi. 14—29; Luke ix. 7—9. sect. lxxvii.) After which those multitudes resorted to Christ whom he fed with the five loaves, (Mat. xiv. 13—23; Mark vi. 30—46; Luke ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—15. sect. lxxviii.) and to whom, after having crossed the lake, (Mat. xiv. 24, *to the end;* Mark vi. 47, *to the end;* John vi. 16—21. sect. lxxix.) he discourses concerning the bread of life, (John vi. 21, *to the end*, sect. lxxx.—lxxxii.) As we are expressly told, John vi. 4. that when this miracle was wrought the passover was near, Sir Isaac concludes this to be the Fourth Passover after our Lord's baptism, A. D. 33. and argues from John vii. 1. that Christ did not celebrate it at Jerusalem.

Quickly after this followed the dispute with the scribes who came from Jerusalem: (Mat. xv. 1—20; Mark vii. 1—23; sect. lxxxiii. lxxxiv.) After which our Lord departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; and after having dispossessed the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman, (Mat. xv. 21—28; Mark vii. 24, *to the end*, sect. lxxxv.) he returned to the sea of Galilee, where he fed the four thousand, (Mat. xv. 29, *to the end;* Mark viii. 1—10. sect. lxxxvi.) and after having replied to the unreasonable demand the Pharisees made of a sign from heaven, and cautioned his disciples against the leaven of their false doctrine, (Mat. xvi. 1—12; Mark viii. 11—26. sect. lxxxvii.) he came to Cæsarea Philippi, and having by the way acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, he was afterwards transfigured, and ejected an obstinate demon. (Mat. xvi. 13, *to the end;* xvii. 1—21; Mark viii. 27, *to the end;* ix. 1—29; Luke ix. 18—43. sect. lxxxviii.—xci.) He then came to Capernaum, and made provision by a miracle to pay the tribute; (Mat. xvii. 24. *to the end*, sect. xcii.) and there, or in the neighbourhood of it, discoursed of humility, forgiveness, &c. (Mat. xviii. 1, *to the end;* Mark ix. 33, *to the end;* Luke ix. 46—48. sect. xciii —xcv.)

Our author takes no notice of the mission of the seventy and their return, (Luke x. 1—24. sect. xcvii.—cvi.) but he would probably have placed it here previous to that which he supposes to be Christ's last departure from Galilee, (Mat. xix. 1, 2; Mark x. 1. sect. cxxxv.) when he went up to the Feast of Tabernacles. (John vii. viii. sect. xcviii.—cv.) Neither does he take notice of the visit to Bethany, (Luke x. 38, *to the end*, sect. cviii.) nor of the date of any of those discourses which are recorded by Luke, (from chap. xi. 1. to xviii. 14. sect. cix.—cxxix.) except where any passages happen to be parallel to those in Matthew, to which he hints they are to be reduced.

He then introduces our Lord's visit to Jerusalem, and the cure of the blind man at the feast of dedication, (John ix. 10, sect. cxxx.—cxxxiv.) after which Christ retired beyond Jordon, (John x. 40.) where he treats of divorce, (Mat. xix. 3—12; Mark x. 2—12. sect. cxxxv.) blesses the little children, (Mat. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13—16; Luke xviii. 15—17. sect. cxxxvi.) answers and remarks upon the young ruler: (Mat. xix. 16, *to the end;* xx. 1—16; Mark x. 17—31; Luke xviii. 18—30. sect. cxxxvii. cxxxviii.) After which, on the death of Lazarus, he returns to Bethany and raises him from the dead, (John xi. 1—46. sect. cxxxix. cxl.) and then withdraws to Ephraim, till the approach of the Fifth Passover after his baptism, which was the last of his life: The particulars of which are related at large by the Evangelists, and, with the subsequent circumstances of his death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension, make up the rest of this important history: But the contents need not be inserted here, as (for any thing that appears) there is no material difference between a harmony formed on Sir Isaac's principles or on ours.

I have taken the trouble of quoting the particular passages in each Evangelist, as well as of every correspondent section in the Family Expositor, that it may be easy for any one who desires it, to read over the whole paraphrase according to this new scheme; and also to see how it transposes the passages in question, and how it differs from what I judge to be the most exact method of disposition. And the attentive reader will easily see that there is a difference in the order of several of the stories, and a much greater in the dates we have respectively assigned to several which are placed in the same order by both.

A repetition of all the particulars would perhaps be disagreeable; I shall therefore content myself here with observing in general, that Sir Isaac constantly follows the order of Matthew, whatever transpositions of Mark and Luke it may require, which we do not; and he also concludes there were five passovers from the baptism to the death of Christ, whereas we, with the generality of harmonizers, suppose there were but four. I have in my notes hinted at some considerations which determined me to the method I have taken: but it will be expected I should here at least touch upon them again, and give a view of them together; which I the rather do, as they strongly illustrate each other.

The grand reason why I do not every where follow the order of Matthew, is in one word this, That both Mark and Luke do not only in several instances agree to place the stories otherwise, though we have not the least reason to think that one wrote from the other; but also that they do, one or another of them, expressly assert "that the events in question actually "happened in a different order from that in which Matthew relates them." Whereas it is observable, that in all such cases Matthew does not so expressly assert his order as to contradict theirs. A few instances of this may be expedient, and a few shall suffice.

Thus, though Matthew relates the cure of Peter's mother-in-law, (sect. xxxv.) in his viiith chapter, ver. 14, 15. after the sermon on the mount, and, according to Sir Isaac, some months after the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, which he had related, chap. iv. 18—22. Mark says this cure was immediately after they came out of the synagogue, into which they entered straightway after the call of those disciples, Mark i. 20, 21, 29.

Again, though Matthew gives us the story of Christ's calming the sea, dispossessing Legion, and curing the paralytic, in the latter part of his viiith and beginning of his ixth chapter, and does not relate the parables of the sower, tares, &c. delivered from the ship, till the xiiith, and places so many facts between, that Sir Isaac concludes the miracles to have been wrought in winter, some time before the passover, A. D. 32, and the parables not to have been delivered till about the Feast of Tabernacles, almost a year after; Mark is very punctual in assuring us, (chap. iv. 35, *et seq.*) that in the evening of the same day in which the parables were delivered from the ship, Jesus calmed the sea and dispossessed Legion: for which reason I followed him, and placed these miracles immediately after the parables; (sect. lxix. lxx.) but have set that of the paralytic much higher, (sect. xlv.) as both Luke and Mark connect it strongly with the cure of the leper, which Sir Isaac allows to have happened immediately after the sermon on the mount.

Matthew relates the message of John, and those subsequent discourses of our Lord which are contained in his xith chapter, after having given us an account of the mission of the apostles in his xth. But Luke (who more accurately distinguishes between their call, Luke vi. 13—16. and mission, Luke ix. 2—6; as Mark also does, Mark iii. 13—19; and vi. 7—13.) places this message, together with the account of several miracles on which it is founded, as well as the circuit which our Lord made with the twelve before he sent them out, and the forementioned miracles of calming the sea, dispossessing Legion, &c. between those two events, that is, the call and actual mission of the twelve; the one of which must in all reason be supposed considerably to precede the other: in which he also agrees with Mark, as was observed above.

Matthew also relates the story of the disciples rubbing out the ears of corn, and the cure of the withered hand, (chap. xii. 1—13.) after the mission of the twelve; whereas both Luke and Mark place whichever of those events they mention, before the choice of them; (see Mark iii. 1—6; Luke vi. 1—11.) and Luke expressly says that the choice was in those days, (Luke vi. 12, 13.) that is, at the time which followed the forementioned events.

These, and the discourse on the unpardonable sin, (sect. lxi.) which we readily allow might have happened twice, are all the most material transpositions we have made; and I must submit it to the judgment of the reader, whether it be not more for the honour of the New Testament in general, to suppose that Matthew might not intend exactly to preserve the order of the history where he asserts nothing directly concerning it, than to suppose both Mark and Luke to have mistaken it, when they so expressly declare their regard to it, as in some of these instances they do.

Sir Isaac indeed urges, that Matthew (as well as John, in whom I have made scarce any transposition) was an eye-witness; but this can have no weight, unless it be certain that he every where intended to observe an exact order, which, for variety of reasons or causes, many of which may be to us unknown, he might not be solicitous about.* And I cannot forbear observing, that, on this great man's own principles, there cannot be a great deal in the argument; for as Matthew was not called till chap. ix. 9. he could not, according to his hypothesis, have been an eye and ear-witness to all the events from chap. iv. to that place: and if (as Sir Isaac also urges) he was sent out as one of the twelve, chap. x. *init.* and continued a year on his embassy, he could not be such a witness to what passed from the beginning of chap. xi. to the end of chap. xiii. where he places their return after a year's absence: and these are the chapters where we have made the greatest and most material transpositions, the others hardly deserving a mention.

If this branch of Sir Isaac's argument falls to the ground, and it be not allowed that Matthew observed a strict chronological order, that part of his reasoning by which he would fix the date of each event, must fall with it; for if it were to be granted that Matthew hinted at the different seasons of the year when they passed, we could not fix the chronology by that, unless we were sure that each was such a season of a different year, and not of the same, which on this supposition we cannot assert: but I think it very easy *(ex abundanti)* to show, that passages which Sir Isaac produces as indications of the seasons are not so, or at least do not point them out so punctually as they ought to do, in order to justify the uses he would make of them.

One cannot but wonder that some of the arguments which I have now in my eye should ever have been urged by a writer of such extraordinary discernment; as, for instance, that he should conclude the sermon on the mount must be preached later than the passover, because multitudes followed Christ in the open fields, which he says (p. 151.) was an argument of the summer season; though it is so apparent, that when there were those five thousand men besides women and children assembled around him whom he fed with the five loaves, the passover was only at hand; (John vi. 4.) or that he should say (p. 153.) the storm mentioned, Matt. viii. 23. "shows the winter was now come on," as if there were no storms

* Mr. Jer. Jones has hinted at some conjectural reasons, in his *Vindication* of the former part of St. Matthew's Gospel. See chap. iii. p. 20—34.

in the summer; or once more, that it must be seed-time when the parables in Matt. xiii. were delivered, "because sowing "seed is mentioned in them," (p. 154.) when it is so evident (as I have observed elsewhere, note d, on Mark iv. 3. p. 130.) the very same principle would prove it to be harvest, as another parable delivered the same day refers to that season.

I am not willing to swell this Dissertation; and therefore omitting many remarks which might easily be made on other passages, I will conclude with the mention of two or three particulars which might contribute to lead this illustrious writer into some error.

One thing that has occasioned this was, his taking it for granted (as I observed before) that the fifteenth year of Tiberius, in which John the Baptist opened his ministry, must needs be reckoned from the death of Augustus: whereas it ought to be computed from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire. (See note b, on Luke iii. 1. p. 30.)

Another is, his admitting the rabbinical rules for the translation of the Jewish feasts, of which we have not one word, either in the Scriptures, or in Josephus or Philo. Yet it is on this principle that he rejects some years from the possibility of being the year of Christ's suffering, because (as he imagines) the passover, two years before each, would not fall late enough to have the corn ripe on the sabbath that succeeded the Paschal.* (See notes b and c, on Luke vi. 1. p. 100, 101.)

And, to mention no more, a third principle (which is also very precarious, and yet has much stress laid upon it in Sir Isaac's scheme) is, his taking it for granted that whenever Matthew speaks of Christ's going about Galilee and preaching in the synagogues there, he intended to tell us that our Lord made a circuit over all the country; which, if it were admitted, might indeed make it necessary (if Matthew's order were to be the standard) to suppose a longer space of time than we or most others allow to have passed between his entrance on his public work and the passover just preceding the rubbing out the ears of corn, which we own on both sides to have been two years before his death; for four circuits of this kind are mentioned before we come to the xiith chapter of Matthew, where the story last referred to is recorded: the first, John iv. 43. and Luke iv. 14, 15; the second, Matt. iv. 23; the third, Matt. ix. 35; and the fourth, Matt. xi. 1. But if we should grant that his going about all Galilee in the second of these instances, and his going about all the cities and villages in the third, (though that might only be those on the shore of the sea of Tiberias,) were to be taken ever so literally, yet his passing through Galilee in his way from Sichar to Nazareth in the first instance, and his departing, that is, setting out to teach and to preach in their cities in the fourth, can infer no such conclusion.

This might be suggested even if Matthew's order were to be admitted, and would invalidate the argument for protracting the years of our Lord's ministry on that supposition; but it is to be remembered we have produced arguments to prove that order must sometimes be inverted, and particularly, that Christ's going about all the cities and villages, (Matt. ix. 35. sect. lxxiii.) and his departing to teach and to preach in their cities, (Matt. xi. 1 sect. lxxvi.) was some considerable time after the passover after which the ears of corn were rubbed out. (Matt. xii. 1. sect. xlix.)

On the whole, I think that if our order be admitted, there is no part of Christ's ministry which seems so crowded with business as that between his last passover but one, and the following Feast of Dedication. But here our harmony allows more time for the work in Galilee than Sir Isaac, who supposes "Christ never returned thither after the Feast of Taber- "nacles;" (p. 157.) and I leave the reader to judge whether, if such a variety of journies and events must be allowed to have happened in these nine months, or according to him in six, we may not, by a parity of reason, or rather with greater, comprehend all the preceding within the compass of about sixteen: especially when it is considered that, according to Sir Isaac, that progress of our Lord for which the apostles were intended to make way, and that after the embassy of the seventy, must be thrown into the first six months of this year, and is an extreme and, I think, insurmountable difficulty into which we shall not be driven.†

I shall conclude this Dissertation with one reflection which may perhaps be of some use to those who have but little relish for the niceties of this inquiry: I mean, that when we find this great master, and I had almost said, (so far as the title can be applied to a mortal man,) this great father of reason, falling into such obvious mistakes as I have been obliged here to point out, it tends to give us an humbling idea of the imperfections of the human mind in its present state; and consequently, we may learn from it two of the most important lessons that can be imagined in social life—a caution lest we assert our own opinions with too dogmatical an air: and a care to avoid such petulancy in censuring the mistakes of others, as if we thought none but the weakest and most contemptible of mankind were capable of being misled by the specious appearances of some inconclusive arguments: And I will venture to say, that if Sir Isaac Newton's error in the order of the harmony teach us this candour, it will be a much greater benefit to us than if he had placed every circumstance relating to it beyond all possibility of farther dispute.

* I shall content myself with observing here, that on these principles Sir Isaac places the passover, A. D. 31. on Wednesday, March 28. A. D. 32. on Monday, April 14. A. D. 33. on Friday, April 3. and A. D. 34. on Friday, April 23.

† To make the reader more sensible of this, I shall add a brief survey of the compass of time within which I suppose the principal events between the several passovers of our Lord's ministry to have happened, referring him to the following Chronological Table for a more exact view of them.

Events which we suppose between the first and second of our Lord's Passovers.

Our Lord spends the summer and beginning of the winter in Judea; about the winter solstice passes through Samaria into Galilee; (§ 25—30.) spends the remainder of the winter and the spring in a circuit through Galilee, in which are included his visit to Nazareth and short stay at Capernaum; and toward the close of the circuit, having preached his celebrated sermon on the mount, returns to Capernaum. (§ 31—45.)

Events between the second and third Passover.

After vindicating what passed upon rubbing out the ears of corn and curing the withered hand, he travels to the sea of Galilee, chuses his apostles, and makes another abode at Capernaum; visits Naim, and dismisses John's messengers—all which might pass before the end of May: (§ 46—60.) then travels, with the twelve in his train, (Luke viii. 1. Matt. ix. 35.) through the places near the sea of Tiberias, perhaps during the months of June, July, and August; (§ 61—73.) and intending a much more extensive circuit, despatches the twelve to make way for him, and probably setting out quickly after them, might employ six months in this part of it, (§ 74—77.) and leave sufficient time for his interview with the five thousand whom he miraculously fed, and his conference with the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem before the next passover. (§ 78—84.)

Events between Christ's third Passover and the Feast of Dedication, which preceded his fourth.

Allowing the time between the passover and the end of May for his journey to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and other places in Galilee, he might return to Dalmanutha, and feed the four thousand by that time; (§ 85, 86.) and if subsequent events and discourses (recorded, § 87—96.) employed him till the end of June, he might then send out the seventy, and they might easily meet him at Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles in September; between which and the Feast of Dedication, near the end of December, we must place his last circuit in Galilee, (§ 97—127.) unless (which is possible) we suppose it to have been begun quickly after the mission of the seventy, and so some part of July

POSTSCRIPT TO THE PRECEDING DISSERTATION.

I NEVER had nor never took an opportunity of looking into Dupin's *Life of Christ*, till about a year ago, long after the publication of the second edition of my Paraphrase on the Evangelists: but then I found, to my agreeable surprise, a more perfect agreement between his scheme of the Harmony and mine, than I expected any where to have met with, and particularly in the story of the resurrection.

Of the 203 sections into which I have divided the Evangelists, we differ only in the order of twenty-nine; and as several of these are inseparably connected, there are only, on the whole, nine stories or discourses in which there is a variety in our order.

The *first*, sect. xii. The wise men's visit to Christ, which he places before the presentation, sect. xi.

The *second*, sect. xxxvii.—xliii. Matthew's account of the sermon on the mount, which he supposes to have been coincident with that in Luke, sect. liii. liv. which I consider as a repetition of it.

The *third*, sect. lxix. lxx. The stilling the tempest, and dispossessing Legion, which he places before the calling of Matthew, and immediately after sect. xxxvi.

The *fourth*, sect. xcvi. Christ's reproving John for an instance of the narrowness of his spirit, which, as a similar and undetermined fact, he subjoins to sect. xciii. Christ's checking the ambition of his disciples.

The *fifth*, sect. cvi. The return of the seventy, which he connects with the story of their mission, sect. xcvii.

The *sixth*, sect. cxviii. Christ's urging the necessity of striving for heaven, &c. which he strangely introduces between sect. cliv. and clviii.

The *seventh*, The discourses and facts, sect. cxxvi.—cxxxv. which he scatters promiscuously after sect. cv. and elsewhere.

The *eighth*, sect. clxx. The intimation of Judas's treachery, which he introduces after the Eucharist, sect. clxxii.

And the *last*, sect. clxxxi. The warning Christ gave of Peter's denying him, which he joins with sect. clxxi. though I take them to be two different predictions of the same event.

The reader may see my reasons for the order in which I have placed most of these sections, in the notes upon them: But I cannot forbear thinking that such a coincidence in all the rest, where the one could not write from the other, is a strong presumption in favour of both.

No. II.

A DISSERTATION ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AS PROVED FROM THE FACTS RECORDED IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF IT.

NOTHING can be more evident than that a firm and cordial belief of the *inspiration* of the sacred Scripture is of the highest moment, not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence; for if this be given up, the authority of the revelation is enervated, and its use destroyed; the star which is to direct our course is clouded, our compass is broke to pieces, and we are left to make the voyage of life in sad uncertainty, amidst a thousand rocks, and shelves, and quicksands. I hope therefore I may perform a service acceptable to God and my christian brethren, while I endeavour, as plainly and as briefly as I can, to place some leading proofs of it in a convincing view; and I undertake the task the more willingly, as in the preface to the first volume of this work, I laid myself under an obligation (several years ago) to attempt something of this kind, and have often been reminded of it by persons for whom I have the highest regard.

I then proposed to handle the subject in a few sermons, to be added to those, long since published, on the Evidences of the Gospel. But on a review of that particular connexion which the argument I am here to pursue has with the history of the New Testament, I apprehended it could nowhere appear better than at the end of my Exposition on the books which contain it. The reader will, I hope, recollect, that in the sermons just now mentioned I have endeavoured to demonstrate the truth of that history; and every year convinces me more and more of the unanswerable force of the evidence there displayed. It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the divine blessing which hath seemed to attend those discourses; and it is a great encouragement to me to hope that what I am now to offer may be a means of establishing some of my readers in that regard to the sacred oracles which will be their best preservative against the errors and the vices of that licentious age in which Providence hath cast our lot, whereby our fidelity and our zeal are brought to a trial which few ages but those of martyrdom could have afforded.

It will be my business,—*First*, to state the nature of *inspiration* in general, and of that kind of it which (as I apprehend) we are to ascribe to the New Testament: I shall then prove that it was undoubtedly written by such inspiration;—And after this

and September to have been employed in it: And indeed one cannot imagine any necessity that all the seventy, or all the apostles, should have finished their progress before our Lord began to follow those who were sent to the nearest places; or if we should suppose it, and follow Sir Isaac's scheme, we must of necessity place the two circuits which followed these two embassies, within this space of time, as was hinted above; whereas, if we consider the journey to the coast of Tyre and Sidon as an appendix to the former, we may (according to our scheme) assign near eight months to that grand tour of our Lord in which he followed the twelve, which might make it convenient to despatch that in which he followed the seventy in proportionably less time: And I believe, that if we consider Galilee not to have been larger than three or four of our western counties, we shall more easily acquiesce in the competency of the time assigned to these visits to it.

I shall briefly hint at the influence which this important truth ought always to have upon our temper and conduct; by enforcing which, I apprehend, I shall take the best method to promote a growing persuasion of the truth I am labouring to establish.

I will only premise, that I do not intend this as a full discussion of the subject, but only as such a compendious view of the chief proofs as may suit the place in which it stands, and as may, from the easiest and plainest principles, give rational satisfaction to the minds of common christians, who have not leisure, nor perhaps ability, to enter into all the niceties of theological and scholastical controversy.

I. I shall state the nature of *inspiration*, and of that kind of it which we are to ascribe to the New Testament.

In this I shall be more particular, as I apprehend the want of a sufficient accuracy here has occasioned some confusion in the reasoning of several worthy persons who have treated this important subject more largely than I must here allow myself to do. I shall not, however, criticise on their account of the matter, but plainly lay down what seems to me intelligible, right, and safe.

By *inspiration* in general, I would be understood to mean, "Any supernatural influence of God upon the mind of a "rational creature, whereby it is formed to any degree of intellectual improvement beyond what it would, at that time and in "those circumstances, have attained in a natural way, that is, by the usual exercise of its faculties, unassisted by any special "divine interposition." Thus, if a man were instantaneously enabled to speak a language which he had never learned, how possible soever it might have been for him to have obtained an equal readiness in it by degrees, I believe few would scruple to say that he owed his acquaintance with it to a divine inspiration; or, if he gave a true and exact account of what was doing at a distance, and published a particular relation of what he neither saw nor heard, as some of the prophets did, all the world would own (if the affair were too complex, and the account too circumstantial, to be the result of a lucky guess) that he must be inspired with the knowledge of it, though another account equally exact, given by a person on the spot, would be ascribed to no inspiration at all.

But of this supernatural influence on the minds of men, forming them to such extraordinary intellectual improvements and abilities, there are various sorts and degrees, which it will be of importance for us accurately to distinguish from each other.

If a person be discoursing either in word or writing, and God do miraculously watch over his mind, and, however secretly, direct it in such a manner as to keep him more secure from error in what he speaks or writes than he could have been merely by the natural exercise of his faculties, I should say he was inspired, even though there should be no extraordinary marks of high genius in the work, or even though another person, with a stronger memory, or relating a fact more immediately after it happened, might naturally have recounted it with equal exactness. Yet still, if there was in this case any thing miraculous, we must, on the principles above, allow an inspiration; and I would call this, to distinguish it from other and higher degrees, an inspiration of superintendency.

If this influence should act in such a degree as absolutely to exclude all mixture of error in a declaration of doctrines or facts so superintended, we might then call it a plenary superintending inspiration, or, as I would chuse for popular use to express myself in this discourse, a full inspiration.

Now it will from hence follow, (and I desire that it may be seriously attended to,) that a book, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be written by a full inspiration, even though it contain many things which the author might have known and recorded merely by the use of his natural faculties, if there be others which he did not so well know, or could not without miraculous assistance have so exactly recollected; or if, on the whole, a freedom from all error would not in fact have been found unless God had thus superintended or watched over his mind and pen. And in regard to such a production, it would be altogether impertinent and insignificant to inquire how far did natural memory or natural reason operate, and in what particular facts or doctrines did supernatural agency prevail: It is enough if I know that what the author says or writes is true, though I know not particularly how he came by this or that truth; for my obligation to receive it arises from its being known truth, and not merely from its being made known this or that way.—And should God miraculously assure me that any particular writing contained nothing but the truth, and should he at the same time tell me it had been drawn up without any miraculous assistance at all, though I could not then call it inspired, I should be as much obliged to receive and submit to it, on its being thus attested by God, as if every single word had been immediately dictated by him.

It will farther follow from what is said above, that a book may be written by such full inspiration as I have described, though, the author being left to the choice of his own words, phrases, and manner,* there may be some imperfection in the style and method, provided the whole contents of it are true; if the subject be so important as to make it consistent with the divine wisdom miraculously to interpose, to preserve an entire credibility as to the exact truth of facts recorded and doctrines delivered as divine. If indeed God were represented as declaring such a book to be intended by him as an exact standard for logic, oratory, or poetry, every apparent defect in either would be an internal objection against it. But if it be represented only as intended to teach us truth in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions, such defects would no more warrant or excuse our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utterance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard to a person who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us.

I have been more particular in stating this kind of inspiration, because it is that which I shall endeavour to assert to the sacred books of the New Testament, and this without any exception or limitation, as they came out of the hands of the apostles; though I allow it is possible they may, in this or that particular copy, and in some minuter instances which now perhaps affect all our remaining copies, have suffered something by the injuries of time, or the negligence of transcribers as well as printers: Which, that they have in some particulars suffered, is as notorious a fact as that there is a written or a printed copy of them in the world; yet is at the same time a fact which no man of common sense or honesty can seriously urge against their authority.

Though it be the main point in my view to prove that the New Testament is written under that kind of inspiration which I have been explaining, I must nevertheless beg leave to mention two other kinds, of which divines often speak, and which

* It is very evident that the learned Maimonides thought this to be the case with regard to the prophets, though I think it least of all to be apprehended in such oracles. See Maimon. *Mor. Nev. lib.* ii. *cap.* 29.

do also in a considerable degree belong to many parts of scripture, though I think it neither expedient, material, nor safe, to assert that they run through the whole of it: I mean, an inspiration of elevation and of suggestion.

The former (as its name plainly intimates) prevails where the faculties, though they act in a regular and, as it seems, a common manner, are nevertheless elevated or raised to some extraordinary degree, so that the performance is more truly sublime, noble, and pathetic, than what would have been produced merely by the force of a man's natural genius. As for the particular degree of the divine agency, where there is indeed something of this inspiration, perhaps neither the person that is under it, nor any other creature, may be able confidently to pronounce concerning it. Perhaps nothing less penetrating than the eye of God himself may be able universally to distinguish that narrow line which divides what is natural from what is supernatural, in all the productions and powers of imagination, reasoning, and language, or in the effects and powers of memory under the former head. It is a curiosity in the minute particulars of which we are not at all concerned, as it is the same God which, whether naturally or miraculously, worketh all and in all. (1 Cor. xii. 9.) But if any excellency in the performance itself can speak it to be more than human, productions of this sort are to be found in scripture, and the rank and education of some of the sacred penmen render the hand of God peculiarly conspicuous in the sublimity and lustre of their writings. What the gifts of the Spirit may in every age of the church have done by operations of this kind, we know not. And I think it would be presumptuous absolutely to deny that God might act in some extraordinary degree on some of the heathen writers, to produce those glorious works of antiquity which have been, under the direction of his providence, so efficacious on the one hand to transmit the evidences of divine revelation, and on the other to illustrate the necessity of it: In consequence of which, I cannot forbear saying by the way, that I think they who are intimately acquainted with them, are of all men upon earth the most inexcusable in rejecting christianity. But our inability to mark out the exact boundaries between nature and an extraordinary divine agency, is not much to be regretted; since it does not appear to be the design of Providence, by such elevations of sentiment, style, and manner, by any means to bear testimony to the person adorned with them as a messenger sent to speak in his name, which may effectually be done in the plainest and simplest forms of expression, without any thing which looks like the heightenings of art, or the sparklings of an extraordinary genius.

The other, which divines have called immediate suggestion, is the highest and most extraordinary kind of inspiration, and takes place when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does as it were speak directly to the mind; making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others: So that a person, in what he writes from hence, is no other than, first, the auditor, and then (if I may be allowed the expression) the secretary of God; as John was of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he wrote from his sacred lips the seven epistles to the Asiatic churches. And it is, no doubt, to an inspiration of this kind, that the book of the Revelation owes its original.

It is evident from the definitions above, that there may be a full superintendency where neither of the latter kinds of inspiration (of elevation or suggestion) take place: But I think we must necessarily allow, that an inspiration of suggestion, so far as it goes, must also imply a full superintendency in recording the history of what has been seen or heard in any prophetic vision, when it is necessary to make a report of it. For as it would, on the one hand, be impious to imagine that the blessed God would dictate a falsehood to any of his creatures, so neither can we suppose it consistent with the divine wisdom to suffer the prophet, through infirmity, to err in delivering a message with which he had expressly charged him, and which would be given in vain, so far as there was a failure in the exact delivery of it.

Besides the last book of the new Testament, I mean the Revelation, which I have already mentioned in this view, it seems evident to me that some other parts of it were given by such a suggestion; seeing there are so many predictions interspersed, and so many mysteries revealed, which lay entirely beyond the ken of any human or perhaps angelic mind. But that this is applicable to all the history of it, or to all things contained in its epistolary parts, I chuse not to assert. For as it cannot be necessary to its entire credibility, (which nothing can more effectually secure than a full superintendency,) it would subject us to many difficulties which have been so forcibly urged by others, that it is not necessary for me here to repeat them. But I am well assured that the apparent insufficiency of the answers which have been returned to these objections by some very sincere, but I think, in this instance, less judicious defenders of scripture, has led some people to conclude that the scripture was not inspired at all; as if it had been on both sides agreed that an universal suggestion was the only kind of inspiration worth contending about. The consequence of this hath been, that such as are dissatisfied with the arguments which these defenders of the divine authority of the scripture insist upon, read the scriptures, (if they read them at all,) not to learn their authentic dictates, but to try the sentiments contained in them by the touchstone of their own reason, and to separate what that shall allow to be right from what it presumptuously concludes to be wrong. And this boasted standard has been so very defective, that on this mistaken notion they have not only rejected many of the most vital truths of christianity, but even some essential principles of natural religion: And thus they have in effect annihilated the christian revelation, at the very same time that they have acknowledged the historical truth of the facts on which it is built. This is the body of men that have affected to call themselves *cautious believers;* but their character is so admirably well described under that of Agrippa, by my honoured friend Dr. Watts, in his little treatise called the Redeemer and Sanctifier, that it may be sufficient here to have hinted it thus briefly, as the reason why, out of regard to them as well as others, I have resumed the subject of inspiration, and endeavoured to place it in what I do in my conscience apprehend to be both a safe and a rational light.

That I may remedy, so far as God shall enable me to do it, the great and destructive evil I have just been mentioning, and may establish in the minds of christians a due regard to the sacred oracles of eternal truth, I shall now proceed to the second part of this discourse: In which,

II. I am to show how evidently the full *inspiration* of the New Testament, in the sense stated above, follows from the acknowledged truth of the history which it contains, in all its leading and most important facts.

But before I proceed to the discussion of the matter, I must beg leave to observe, that though this is what I apprehend to be the grand argument, and that which may most properly be connected with an exposition of the historical books, I am very far from slighting those other arguments which fall not so directly in my way here.

I greatly revere the testimony of the primitive christian writers, not only to the real existence of the sacred books in those early ages, but also to their divine original: Their persuasion of which most evidently appears from the veneration

with which they speak of them, even while miraculous gifts remained in the church; and consequently an exact attendance to a written rule might seem less absolutely necessary, and the authority of inferior teachers might approach nearer to that of the apostles. I believe every candid reader will acknowledge that nothing can be objected to many strong passages in Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and some other ancient writers he has mentioned that are now lost. It is needless to produce them here, after those valuable specimens of them which Dr. Whitby and Mons. Dupin have given; and especially considering what my learned friend Dr. Lardner has with so much industry and accuracy of judgment collected on this head in the second part of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*. I shall therefore content myself with observing here, that several of the most learned and considerable of these ancients speak of this veneration for the sacred writings of the New Testament, not as the result of their own private judgment, but as that in which all the churches were unanimously agreed.*

The internal characters of divine inspiration with which every page of the New Testament abounds, do also deserve our attentive notice, and render the book itself, if considered as detached from all external evidence whatsoever, a compendious demonstration of its own sacred original, and consequently of the certainty of that religion which it teaches. The excellency of its doctrines, the spirituality and elevation of its design, the majesty and simplicity of its style, the agreement of its parts in the most unsuspicious manner, with its more than human efficacy on the hearts and consciences of men, do all concur to give us a very high idea of the New Testament: and I am persuaded that the wiser and better any man is, and the more familiarly he converses with these unequalled books, the more will he be struck with this evidence. But these things in the general are better felt than expressed, and several of the arguments arise not from particular passages, but from the general tenor of the books; and consequently they cannot be judged of but by a serious and attentive perusal.

Dismissing therefore these topics, not with neglect, but with the sincerest expressions of just and high veneration, I now proceed to that grand proof of the inspiration of the New Testament which is derived from the credibility of its leading facts; which having so fully illustrated in the sermons referred to above, I think I have a just title to assume as the foundation of what farther reasonings may occur.

Admitting this great principle, it is undeniably certain,——That Jesus of Nazareth was a most extraordinary person:—That after having been foretold by many prophets in distant periods of time, he was at length, agreeably to the repeated declaration of an angel, first to a priest ministering at the golden altar in the temple, and then to his mother, conceived by a virgin of David's family:——That his birth was proclaimed by a choir of angels, who celebrated it in celestial anthems as the foundation of peace on earth and the most glorious display of divine benevolence to men:——That before his public appearance, a person greater than any of the prophets, and whose birth had also been foretold by an angel, was sent to prepare his way:——That on his being baptized, he was anointed with a wonderful effusion of the Spirit, poured down upon him by a visible symbol; and that the efficacy of this sacred Agent continually residing in him, was apparent throughout the whole course of his ministry, not only in the unspotted sanctity of his life amidst a thousand most violent temptations, and in the bright assemblage of virtues and graces which shone in it with a lustre before unknown, and since absolutely unparalleled; but also in a multitude of various works of wonder and mercy which he miraculously wrought on those whose diseases were of the most desperate and incurable nature, and even on the dead, whom that almighty voice of his, which had driven out the fiercest infernal spirits, and calmed the rage of tempests, did with serene majesty awaken into life as from a slumber.——It is also on the same foundation certain, That this illustrious person having by the malice of his enemies been most unjustly and cruelly put to death, did on the third day arise from the dead:——And that, after having given to his disciples the most abundant proofs of that important fact, he at length ascended to heaven gradually in their sight; angels appearing to assure them he should as visibly descend from thence to the universal judgment, the administration of which he had declared to be committed to him.

I must freely declare, that had I been an entire stranger to the sacred story, and proceeded no farther in it than this, (supposing me firmly to have believed all these wonderful things, though delivered in the shortest abstract that could have been made of them,) I should readily have concluded that this extraordinary person, being sent (as it plainly appears from the history that he was) with a divine revelation for the benefit of all nations and of all ages, had taken care to leave some authentic records of the doctrine which he taught: and if I had farther found that he had left no such records written by himself, I should naturally have concluded that he took effectual care that some of his followers should be enabled to deliver down to posterity the system of religion which he taught, in the most accurate manner, with all such extraordinary assistance from God as the nature of the subject required, in order to rendering their accounts exact. And I believe every reasonable man would draw this inference: because it is very apparent that the great end of this vast and astonishing apparatus (for vast and astonishing it would appear, if what relates to Jesus alone were taken into the survey) must, in the nature of things, be frustrated, if no such records were provided; it being morally impossible that unwritten tradition should convey a system of religion pure and uncorrupted even to the next generation, and much more that it should so convey it to the end of time. And it would seem, so far as we can judge, by no means worthy the divine wisdom to suffer the good effects of such a great and noble plan to be lost for want of so easy an expedient; especially since men of the age and country in which these things happened, were not only blessed with the use of letters, but were remarkable for their application to them, and for great proficiency in various branches of learning. And if I should not only have an abstract of this history of Jesus, which I judged credible, but should also be so happy as to have the Four Gospels in my hand, with convincing evidences of their being genuine, (which we here suppose,) I should on these principles assuredly argue, That not only the leading facts, but likewise the system of doctrines and discourses delivered in them, might entirely be depended upon: nor could I conceive the truth of such doctrines and discourses to be separable from the general truth of the leading facts referred to above, having (as I here suppose) proper evidences to convince me that the penmen of these books were the

* Thus Origen says, (*Philocal. cap.* xii. p. 41.) Δει σε,——ως πιστος, παραδεξασθαι, οτι θεοπνευστοι εισιν. "That if a man would not confess himself to be "an infidel, he must admit the *inspiration* of the *scriptures*:" And he elsewhere places the Gospels in the number of writings "which were re- "ceived as divine by all the churches of God, and were the elements or first principles of the church's faith:" Εν πασαις εκκλησιαις Θεου πεπιστευμενων ειναι Θειων——Στοιχεια της πιστεως της εκκλησιας.——Tertullian also lays it down as a fundamental principle in disputing with heretics, "That the "truth of doctrines is to be determined by scripture:" for the question has evidently the force of a strong negation; *Aliunde scilicet loqui possunt de rebus fidei, nisi ex litteris fidei?* (*De Præscript. Hæret. cap.* xv.) And Eusebius quotes a much more ancient writer than himself, (Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib.* v. *cap.* 28.) who calls the scripture, πιστεως αρχαιαις κανοσι, "The rule of ancient faith;" and who afterwards, speaking of heretics, declares, "That if they denied the scriptures to be divinely inspired, they were infidels." The expression is remarkable; but having transcribed it in note i, p. 3. I shall not insert it here.

persons by whom the memory of these events was to be delivered down to posterity; which is a farther principle that none of common sense and modesty can pretend to contest, none appearing as their competitors whose pretensions are worthy to be named.

But my apprehension of the full authenticity and credibility of these writers would, on the supposition I am here making, greatly increase, as I proceeded to that excellent and useful book which the good providence of God has given me an opportunity of illustrating, the Acts of the holy Apostles; since I learn from thence, that in a very few days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Spirit of God was, according to his promise, poured out upon his apostles in an abundant manner, attended with the visible appearance of a lambent, celestial flame; and that, in consequence of this amazing unction, the poor fishermen of Galilee and their companions were in a moment enabled to speak, with the greatest readiness and propriety, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic, Persic, and a variety of other languages, the first rudiments of which they had never learnt, and also to perform all kinds of miracles, equal to those of their Master, and in some circumstances superior to them. My veneration for the writings of these men (and I here suppose I know those of the New Testament to be so) must be unparalleled when I think who and what they were; and I am so struck with this plain, but divinely-powerful argument, that I must entreat my reader to review with me, a little more particularly, some of the actions and circumstances of these holy men, to whose writings I am labouring to conciliate his unreserved regard.

Let them all be considered as preaching the gospel in that extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost; and a few days after, when some of their companions had been seized and threatened by the sanhedrim, as anointed again with such an effusion of the Spirit as shook the very house in which they were, and inspired them all at once with the same sublime hymn of praise. Let them be considered as afterwards led out of prison by an angel, and commanded by him to go and preach the gospel in the temple, under the remarkable phraseology of *the words of this life*, as if the whole life and happiness of the human race depended on their knowing and receiving it. Nor let us here forget that extraordinary power, common to all the apostles, of communicating the miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the imposition of their hands. Had we nothing particularly to say of any one, more than these grand things which we hear of them all, it must surely command our reverence to their writings, and set them at a vast distance from any of merely human original.

But through the singular providence of God, it hath so happened that we have the most particular history of the lives of those apostles to whose writings we are generally most indebted; I mean John, Peter, and Paul.

With respect to John we know, that besides the concern he had in the cure of the lame man, he was favoured with the visions of God in the isle of Patmos, where our Lord, after an abode of more than half a century on the throne of his glory at his Father's right hand, did him the unequalled honour to use him as his amanuensis or secretary, expressly dictating to him the letters he was pleased to send to the seven churches in Asia. How easily, then, may we suppose him so to have presided over his other writings, as to have secured him from mistakes in them!

Consider Peter as striking Ananias and Sapphira dead with a word; as curing, by the like powerful word, one cripple at Jerusalem and another at Lydda, and calling back Dorcas even from the dead. Let us view him in that grand circumstance of being marked out so particularly by an angel to Cornelius, and sent to him as the oracle of God himself, from whom that worthy and honourable person was to hear words by which he and all his house should be saved; and after this, let us view him as once more delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews, by an angel, who struck off his chains and opened the doors of his prison, the very night before he was to have been executed. And let any one, with these particulars in his eye, added to the foregoing in which he shared with all his brethren, say, what more could be necessary to prove the divine inspiration of what he taught, so far as inspiration was requisite to render it entirely authentic; or let any one farther say upon what imaginable pretence the authority of his writings can be denied, if that of his preaching be granted.

And to mention no more, let Paul, that great scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to whose pen we owe so many invaluable Epistles, be considered in the same view; and let us endeavour to impress our minds with the various scenes through which we know he passed, and the distinguished favours with which his Master honoured him, that we may judge how we are to receive the instructions of his pen. Let us therefore think of him as so miraculously called by the voice of Christ to the profession of his gospel, when he was persecuting it even to the death; as receiving a full and distinct revelation of that glorious, but to him quite unknown, gospel, by the immediate inspiration of its divine Author, which is a fact he expressly witnesses, and in which he could not possibly be mistaken. Think of the lustre of those astonishing works which shone round him wherever he went, and of those wrought in his favour, which showed him so eminently the care of Heaven—demons ejected; distempers cured, sometimes with a touch, and sometimes without, by a garment sent from him to the patient; his motions guided from place to place by a divine oracle; Elymas struck blind for opposing him; his bands loosed by an earthquake; his strength and vigour instantaneously restored, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace at Lystra had stoned him and left him for dead; and to add no more, his safety in a shipwreck, with that of near three hundred more in the same vessel for his sake, promised by an angel, and accomplished without the loss of a single person, when they had expected nothing but an universal ruin. Let us, I say, think of Paul in these circumstances; and with these facts full in our view, let us judge whether it is at all probable, yea, whether it be morally possible, that a man sent out and attended with such credentials as these, should be so left of God, amidst all these tokens of his constant care, as to mingle error with sound doctrine, and his own fancies with the divine revelations which we are sure he received; or whether, if he were not left to such effects of human frailty in his preaching, but might have been regarded by his hearers with entire credit, he would be left to them in those writings by which he was (as it were) to preach to all future generations of men from one end of the world to the other, and by which, being dead, he yet speaketh, in all languages and to all christian assemblies.

I cannot forbear thinking this plain argument, so well adapted to popular use, abundantly sufficient to carry conviction to every candid mind, in proportion to the degree of its attention and penetration. And I am almost afraid that some should think I have bestowed an unnecessary labour, thus particularly to state a matter which hath such a flood of light poured in upon it from almost every page of the sacred story. But I have been obliged, in the course of this Exposition, to meditate much on these facts; and under the deep impression I could not but speak, as out of the fulness of my heart.

Yet after all I have already said, I should be very unjust to this argument, if I did not endeavour to represent to my reader how much it is strengthened on the one hand by the express and comprehensive promises which our Redeemer made to his apostles, and on the other by the peculiar language in which the apostles themselves speak of their preaching and writings,

and the high regard they challenge to each; a regard which nothing could justify them in demanding but a consciousness that they were indeed under a full inspiration.

The promises of our Lord Jesus Christ must undoubtedly have a very great weight with all that have reflected on that indisputable testimony which God himself bore to him in numberless instances. And therefore, though they are so very well known, I must beg leave not only to refer to them, but to recite the chief of them at large; and I entreat the reader to consider how he can reconcile them with an apprehension that our Lord Jesus Christ did at the same time intend to leave the persons to whom he made such promises, liable to mistake both in facts and doctrines, and being deceived themselves, to mislead such as should depend upon their testimony, where they professed themselves to be thoroughly informed.

In that copious and excellent discourse which our Lord addressed to the apostles, just before he quitted the guest-chamber to go to the garden of Gethsemane, (that is, but a few hours before his death,) the grand consolation he urges to his sorrowful disciples is this, that he would send his Spirit upon them. The donation of which Spirit is represented as the first-fruits of Christ's intercession, when, after so long an absence and such terrible sufferings, he should be restored to his Father's embraces. This is spoken of as the first petition preferred by him, and the first favour granted to his church for his sake: (John xiv. 16.) I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Yea, Christ declares (and he could not be mistaken in it) that the agency of this Spirit should so abundantly counterbalance all the advantages they received from his bodily presence, that, strong as their affection to him was, they would in that view have reason to rejoice in his leaving them: (John xvi. 7.) I tell you the truth, that is, I say what may be depended upon as a most important certainty, (and very important indeed such a representation was;) it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Now from these expressions, were they alone, I think we might probably infer that the apostles, after having received the Spirit, would be in no more danger of erring in their writings than they would have been if Jesus himself had been always near them, to inform them concerning any fact or doctrine of which they might have occasion to speak.

This is farther confirmed by the title which is given him no less than thrice in this discourse, the Spirit of truth, almost in a breath with these great and weighty circumstances, that he should abide with them for ever; (John xiv. 16, 17.) that he should guide them into all truth; that he should teach them all things, yea, and show them things to come; (John xvi. 13.) which must surely secure them from any danger of erring in relating things that were past. But lest any should be perverse enough to dispute the consequence, our Lord particularly mentions this effect of the Spirit's operation, that they should thereby be fitted to bear a testimony to him as those who had long been conversant with him, and whose memories were miraculously assisted in recollecting those discourses which they had heard from him: (John xv. 26, 27.) When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also (being so assisted) shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. And again, (John xiv. 26.) The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Soon after this, our Lord, on the very day in which he rose from the dead, in a dependence on the aids of this promised Spirit, gives them a commission which nothing but its plenary inspiration could have answered, or have qualified them to fulfil; for coming to them, he declares, (John xx. 21.) As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you: and upon this he breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained: which, whether it signifies a power of inflicting and removing miraculous punishments, or of authoritatively declaring that sins were in particular instances forgiven or retained, must either way suppose such a constant presence of Christ with them as it is hard, or rather impossible, to reconcile with supposing them to err in what they wrote for the instruction of the church in succeeding ages.

These are the grand passages on which I rest this part of the argument; yet I think I ought not to omit those in which Christ promises them such extraordinary assistance of the Spirit while defending his cause in the presence of magistrates; and it is the more proper to mention them, as the language in which they are made is so remarkable. On this occasion then he tells them, (Matt. x. 19, 20.) When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. May we not therefore on the same principles conclude, that when they were to write for the use of future generations of christians, it was not so much they who wrote as the Spirit of the Father, who in effect wrote by them, and as it were dictated to them? For the occasion will surely appear as important in one instance as in the other, or rather much more important in the latter than in the former, as an error in their writings would have a much more extensive and lasting influence than a slip of their tongues in a transient pleading before a magistrate. Nay, to give this argument the greatest possible weight, we find that the same promise was made, almost in the very same words, (Luke xii. 11, 12.) to persons in the dignity of their office inferior to the apostles; I mean, to the seventy; which might have entitled their writings to such a regard as I am now labouring to engage to those of their superiors.

I shall only farther remind the reader, that our Lord, when just ascending to heaven, refers to that effusion of the Spirit which was quickly after to happen, even before they departed from Jerusalem, as the era from whence the grand accomplishment of the promises relating to the aids of the Spirit was to be dated. (See Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4, 5.) And as all the apostolical writings which now remain were written several years after that event, it plainly proves they lie within the period in which they were to expect all the assistance which these promises import.

The most plausible objection which can be urged against the application of these promises to the matter now before us, is this: "That these promises only refer to the supernatural assistance granted to the apostles on great and pressing occa-
"sions; but that they might easily, without such assistance, have written a true account of the life and preaching of Christ,
"and of such other facts as they record; and consequently, that their historical writings at least, how credible soever we
"suppose them, might be drawn up without any inspiration at all."

To this I might reply, that if it be allowed that the apostles, in the books which we have been endeavouring to explain, wrote the exact truth, and that in their Epistles they have made a right and unerring representation of the revelation with

which they were charged, so that we may safely make their writings a rule both of faith and practice, the remaining question would only be about the propriety of using the word *inspiration* when speaking of them, and therefore would, on the principles I have laid down above, be comparatively of small importance. Yet I think it easy, in that view of the question, to prove that these writings could not have been thus entirely credible if they had not been written under such a full inspiration of superintendency as is stated in the first part of this discourse.

I do indeed allow, and no candid man can dispute it, that the penmen of the New Testament, supposing them able to write at all, might merely, by the natural exercise of their memory, under the direction of the common sense and reason of men, have given us a plain, faithful, and very useful account of many extraordinary scenes to which they had been witnesses during the time they conversed with Jesus on earth, and in which they were active after his ascension. And I cannot forbear saying, that supposing the truth of the grand leading facts, (as, that Jesus of Nazareth taught a doctrine confirmed by miracles, and was himself raised from the dead,) I should have esteemed such writings, supposing them merely an honest account of what such men must have known, to be beyond all comparison the most valuable records of antiquity. But when these writings came to be perused, it is evident to me, from the particular contents of them, that honest and worthy men would never have pretended to have written in such a manner, if they had not been conscious of superior direction and extraordinary divine influence.

For the historians of whom we speak do not merely give us a very circumstantial account of actions, as what journies Christ made, what miracles he performed, in what manner he was received, where and how he died and rose again and ascended into heaven; but they do also, as we may reasonably expect they should, give us an account of the doctrine he taught; and indeed if they had not done this, the knowledge of his story, amazing as it is, would have been but an unprofitable amusement to us. Nor do they content themselves with giving us a short summary of his doctrine, or a view of the religion he intended to introduce, as the general result of their having attended so long on his instructions, but they presume to tell us his very words. And here, they do not merely relate some short sayings, the remarkable poignancy of which, or their propriety to the circumstances in which they were spoken, might have struck the memory with a peculiar force; but they insert long discourses which he made on public occasions, though they do not pretend that he left any copies of them, or that they themselves took them from any written memoirs whatsoever; and it is worth our notice, that (besides the many shorter sayings and replies with which the history is interspersed,) near one half of the four gospels is taken up with the insertion of these discourses.*

Now it was highly necessary that if these speeches of our Lord were recorded at all, they should be recorded with great exactness; for many of them relate to the system of doctrines which he came to teach, and others of them are predictions of future events, referring to a great variety of curious circumstances, where a small mistake might greatly have affected the credit of the prediction, and with it the cause of christianity in general; so that common prudence would have taught the apostles to wave them, rather than pretend to deliver them to posterity, if they had not been sure they could have done it exactly.

But how could they have expected to have done this merely by the natural strength of their own memories, unless we imagine each of them to be a prodigy in that respect, to which no one of them makes the least shadow of a pretence? It is well known that several of those speeches of Christ which Matthew and John give us, (not now to mention the other Evangelists,) contain several pages, and some of them cannot be deliberately and decently read over in less than a quarter of an hour. Now I believe, if my reader would make the experiment on any thing of that length which he read or heard yesterday, or even on one of those discourses of Christ, though perhaps he has read or heard it an hundred times, he would find, on a careful examination, many things would probably be omitted; many transposed; many expressed in a different manner; and were he to write a copy of such a discourse from his memory, and then critically to compare it with the original, he would find the sense, in many particulars where there was some general resemblance, more different than he could perhaps have imagined; and variations which at first seemed but inconsiderable, would appear greatly to affect the sense when they came to be more nicely reviewed. If this would so probably be the case with ninety-nine out of a hundred of mankind, (and I certainly speak within compass,) when a discourse to be repeated had been delivered but a day or an hour before, what could be expected from the apostles with an interval of so many years, and especially from John, who has, in proportion to the length of his gospel, recorded more speeches than any of the rest, and wrote them (if we may credit the most authentic tradition) more than half a century after our Lord's ascension?

This argument would have great weight with relation to a man whose life was ever so peaceful, and his affairs contracted in the narrowest sphere: But it will be greatly strengthened when we come to consider the multitude and variety of scenes, and those too the most interesting that can be imagined, through which the apostles passed. When we consider all their labours and their cares; the journies they were continually taking; the novelty of objects perpetually surrounding them; and, above all, the persecutions and dangers to which they were daily exposed; and the strong manner in which the mind is struck, and the memory of past circumstances erased, by such occurrences,—I cannot conceive that any reader will be so unreasonable as to imagine these things could have been written with any exactness by the apostles, if they had not been miraculously assisted in recording them. And what is particularly mentioned by the last of these writers, of the promised agency of the Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things they had heard from Christ himself, (John xiv. 26.) must, I think, incontestably prove that this was one purpose for which the Spirit was given, and therefore we may be sure that it was a purpose for which it was needed.

I hope I have by this time convinced my reader that it is agreeable to the other circumstances of the apostles' story, and to the promises which our Lord so largely and so frequently made to them, (and the frequent repetition of the promise strongly intimates the importance of it,) to suppose that they were, indeed, favoured with a full inspiration in their writings.

But to complete the argument, it must be observed, that these holy men (for such the history plainly shows them to have been) assume to themselves such an authority, and speak of their own discourses and writings in such peculiar language, as nothing but a consciousness of such inspiration could warrant or even excuse.

To make us duly sensible of the force of this argument, let us hear Paul, Peter, and John, and we shall find the remark

* If my computation does not deceive me, 93 of our 203 sections are taken up thus: and some of them are long sections too: and the number of verses contained in these discourses, to that of the whole, is as about 1700 to 3779, which is the number of verses in the four gospels.

applicable to them all; though as St. Paul wrote much more than either of the latter, we may naturally expect to find the most frequent instances of it in his writings.

When the apostle Paul had taken notice to the Corinthians, that the subject of his preaching was the wisdom of God in a mystery, and related to things which transcended the sense and imagination of men, he adds, (1 Cor. ii. 10.) But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. And again, (ver. 12.) We have received not the spirit of the world, so as to act in that artful way which a regard to secular advantage dictates, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God. Now it is natural to conclude from hence, that this knowledge being given them, not merely or chiefly for themselves, but for the church, (in which view they speak of themselves and their office as the gift of God to the church; compare Eph. iv. 11, 12. and 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) they should be assisted to communicate it in a proper manner; since otherwise the end of God in giving it to them would be frustrated. But the apostle does not content himself with barely suggesting this, but he asserts it in the most express terms: (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, that is, not with a vain ostentation of human eloquence, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or, as some would render and paraphrase it, adapting spiritual expressions to spiritual things.* And in the close of the chapter, when with a noble freedom, in a consciousness of the distinguished character he bore, he puts the question to the whole world besides, Who hath known the mind of the Lord? he adds, But we have the mind of Christ. Which last clause plainly determines the sense in which we are to take those words at the close of chap. vii. And I think also that I have the Spirit of God;† that is, "I certainly appear to have it;" or, "it is evident and apparent that my pre-"tences to it are not a vain boast." For after having so expressly asserted it just above, none can imagine he meant here to insinuate that he was uncertain whether he had it or not. He appeals, therefore, to those whose gifts were most eminent, to dispute it if they could: (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, that is, if he have ever so good evidence that he really is so, (for it cannot be thought he meant to appeal only to those who falsely pretended to these endowments,) let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.—In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. ii. 10.) he speaks of forgiving offenders in the person of Christ; and amidst the humblest acknowledgments of his own insufficiency, boasts a sufficiency of God, who had made him an able minister of the New Testament. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) Of which he was so thoroughly sensible, that in the first Epistle which he ever wrote (so far as scripture informs us) to any of the churches, I mean his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he ventures to say, (chap. iv. 8.) he that despiseth, that is, (as the context plainly implies,) he that despiseth or rejecteth what I now write, despiseth not man only, or chiefly, but God, who hath given us his Holy Spirit. Which manifestly intimates that what he wrote was under supernatural divine guidance and influence; as in the second verse of that chapter he had spoken of commandments which he had given them by the Lord Jesus Christ, just as he afterwards declared to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. xiii. 3.) how well he was able to give proofs of Christ's speaking in him.—In his Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle solemnly assures them (Gal. i. 11, 12.) that the gospel which he had preached among them was not after man, that is, not of any human original; and he gives this substantial proof of it, that he was himself taught it no otherwise than by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. Agreeably to which assertion, when he gives the Corinthians an account of the institution and design of the Lord's supper, he says in so many words, (1 Cor. xi. 23.) that he had received of the Lord what he delivered unto them; that is, that he had his notion of that sacrament, and of the actions and words of Christ on which it was founded, by an immediate inspiration from him, or, in the language we have used above, by suggestion. And he speaks of his brethren, as well as of himself, in these terms, (Eph. iii. 3, 5.) that the mystery of Christ which was before unknown, that is, the right of the Gentiles, on believing the gospel, to full communion with the christian church, was made known to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and not merely by the natural recollection of what they had heard Christ say, or by their own reasonings upon it.

Most agreeable to this is the strain of Peter, who in one Epistle joins the commandment of the apostles with the words of the holy prophets, (2 Pet. iii. 2.) and mentions the Epistles of Paul with other scriptures, (ver. 15, 16.) no doubt in allusion to the sacred oracles of the Old Testament, which so generally went by that name. And in his other Epistle he insists strenuously upon it, that the gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in exact conformity to the prophetic oracles of former ages, not understood by those who uttered them; a circumstance, in this connexion, highly worthy of our remark. And he seems strongly to intimate that the angels themselves did by these apostolical preachings learn some things which, with all their superior faculties, they did not before so fully know: Which things, says he, the angels desire to look into. (1 Pet. i. 12.) As Paul had also said, that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. iii. 10.)

To conclude this argument, St. John, remarkable as he was for his singular modesty and ingenuity of temper, does not only tell us that Jesus Christ showed him the revelation, (Rev. i. 1.) but speaks in his Epistle of an unction poured out from the Holy One, by which they knew all things. (1 John ii. 20.) And in another passage he in effect asserts that he had, in concurrence with his brethren, given such abundant proof of his being under a divine influence and direction in his teaching, whether by word or letter, that an agreement or disagreement with his doctrine was to be made the standard by which they might judge of truth or error, and obedience or disobedience to his injunctions the test of a good or a bad man; which is considerably more than merely asserting the fullest inspiration. (1 John iv. 6.) We are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

I might here add, if it were necessary, the several passages of the New Testament in which the gospel preached by the apostles is called the gospel of God: (such as 2 Cor. xi. 7; 1 Tim. i. 11, and the like.) But I omit them, as the stress of the controversy does undoubtedly rest on these I have mentioned; and the importance of the question must be my defence for so large an enumeration of texts which are so well known.

I shall only remind my reader, in a few words, of those many passages in which the gospel, as preached by the apostles, is so evidently equalled with, yea, and preferred to, the law given by Moses, and the messages brought to the Jews by the succeeding prophets. These afford a further illustration of this argument, which will appear with very considerable weight when we reflect on the high opinion they had of the Old Testament, and the honourable terms in which they speak of it as the word and oracles of God, (Rom. iii. 2.) as given by his inspiration, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) and as that which holy men spake

* Πνευματικοις πνευματικα συγκρινοντες. † Δοκω δε καγω Πνευμα Θεου εχειν.

as they were moved or borne on [φερομενοι] by the Holy Ghost. (2 Pet. i. 21.) None can fail of observing that they quote its authority on all occasions as decisive: yea, our Lord himself strongly intimates, not only the strict truth of the whole, but (which is much more) that it were intolerable to suppose it chargeable with any impropriety of expression; for this must be the sense of those remarkable words, (John x. 35.) that the scripture cannot be broken; and the whole force of our Lord's argument depends upon interpreting them thus. I might argue at large the improbability, and indeed the great absurdity, of supposing that such assistances were given to Moses and the prophets as to make their writings an infallible rule of faith and practice, and that the subjects of God's only begotten Son, and the grand minister in his kingdom, should be left destitute of equal assistance in their work and writings. I think the argument would be unanswerable if considered apart: But I now mention it in another view, as illustrating the persuasion the apostles had of their own inspiration when they speak of their teachings and decisions as equally authentic with those of the illustrious prophets for whom they had so great and so just a regard.

I am fully satisfied that this last argument, from the manner in which the apostles speak of themselves in their writings, will strike the reader in proportion to the degree in which he reflects upon the true character of these excellent men, and especially upon that modesty and humility in which they bore so bright and so lovely a resemblance of their Divine Master. Let him ask himself what he would think of any minister of Christ now, supposing him ever so eminent for learning, wisdom, and piety, that should assume to himself such an authority? Suppose such a man, under the influence of no miraculous guidance, to say, not with reference to what he might quote from others, but with regard to his dictates, "The things which "I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord: He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God: We have the mind "of Christ; and he that heareth not us, that receiveth not our dictates in religion, is not of God." Suppose, I say, such language as this to be used publicly by any christian minister now on earth, and you must necessarily suppose his character from that very hour overthrown. The whole world would immediately join in loudly demanding miraculous proofs to verify such assertions, or in condemning with just indignation such a claim, unsupported by them, as an unpardonable lording it over men's faith and conscience, and thrusting themselves into their Master's throne. Let us not then charge the holy apostles with a conduct of which we should not suspect any wise and good man now upon the face of the earth; and which if we saw in any of our friends, our charity and respect for them would incline us to inquire after some marks of lunacy in them as its best excuse.

I have now given an easy and popular view of the principal arguments for the inspiration of the New Testament* on which my own faith in that important doctrine rests; and such an one as I hope by the divine blessing may be useful to others. I shall not enter into a particular consideration of the several objections against it, which chiefly arise from texts of scripture in which some pretend to find that the apostles were actually mistaken. I have considered most of these objections already, in my notes on the texts from whence they are taken: For almost all of them relate to passages in the historical books, and I do not know that I have omitted any of them, but have every where given (though as briefly as I could) such solutions as appeared to me in conscience satisfactory, though I have not stood formally to discuss them as objections against the inspiration of those books.

The reader will observe, that very few instances have occurred in which I have judged it necessary to allow an error in our present copies: But as in those few instances the supposed change of a word or two makes the matter perfectly easy, I think it most respectful to the sacred writings to account for the seeming difficulty thus, and to impute it to the transcribers; (though it is certain some of these mistakes, supposing them such, did happen very early;) because, as Mr. Seed very properly expresses it in his excellent sermon on this subject,† (which, since I wrote the former part of this dissertation, fell into my hands,) "a partial inspiration is to all intents and purposes no inspiration at all: For," as he justly argues against the supposition of any mixture of error in these sacred writings, "mankind would be as much embarrassed to know what "was inspired and what was not, as they could be to collect a religion for themselves; the consequence of which would "be, that we are left just where we were, and that God put himself to a great expense of miracles to effect nothing at all: A "consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour."

The arguments brought from a few passages in the Epistles to prove that the apostles did not think themselves inspired, weak as they are, will be considered, if God permit, in their proper places. At present I shall content myself with referring the reader to Dr. Whitby, who I think has given a satisfactory solution to them all.

There are other objections of a quite different class with which I have no concern, because they affect only such a degree of inspiration as I think it not prudent, and am sure it is not necessary, to assert. I leave them therefore to be answered by those, if any such there be, who imagine that Paul would need an immediate revelation from heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the Holy Ghost, to remind Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas, or to advise him to mingle a little wine with his water.

Waving therefore the farther discussion of these topics, on which it would be more easy than profitable to enlarge, I shall conclude this dissertation with a reflection or two of a practical nature, into which I earnestly entreat the reader to enter with a becoming attention.

Let me engage him seriously to pause and consider what sort of an impression it ought to make upon us, to think that we have such a book; a book written by a full divine inspiration: That amidst all the uncertain variety of human reasonings and conjectures, we have a celestial guide through the labyrinth: That God hath condescended to take care that we should have a most authentic and unerring account of certain important though very distant facts, many of which were wrought with his own hand; and, with these facts, should have a system of most weighty and interesting doctrines, to the truth of which he makes himself a Witness. Such a book must, to every considerate person, appear an inestimable treasure; and it certainly calls for our most affectionate acknowledgment, that God should confer such a favour on any of his creatures, and much more on those who, by abusing in too many instances their natural light, had made themselves so utterly unworthy of supernatural.

From this view of the inspiration of scripture we may also infer our obligation to study it with the greatest attention and care; to read it in our closets and our families; and to search in the most diligent and impartial manner into its genuine sense, design, and tendency; which is in the main so evident, that no upright heart can fail of understanding it,

* I was desired by a friend for whose piety and good sense I have very great regard, to add a note here on the inspiration of the Old Testament; but as it would require a large one, and might perhaps interrupt the reader, I chuse to throw it into a Postscript at the end of this Dissertation.

† See Mr. Seed's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 322.

and every truly good heart must delight to comply with it. This is indeed a most important inference, and that without which all our convictions of its divine authority will only condemn us before God and our own consciences. Let us therefore always remember, that in consequence of all these important premises we are indispensably obliged to receive, with calm and reverent submission, all the dictates of scripture; to make it our oracle; and, in this respect, to set it at a due distance from all other writings whatsoever: as it is certain there is no other book in the world that can pretend to equal authority, and produce equal or comparable proofs to support such a pretension. Let us measure the truth of our own sentiments, or those of others, in the great things which scripture teaches, by their conformity to it. And oh that the powerful charm of this blessed book might prevail to draw all that do sincerely regard it into this centre of unity! That dropping those unscriptural forms which have so lamentably divided the church, we might more generally content ourselves with the simplicity of divine truths as they are here taught, and agree to put the mildest and kindest interpretation we can upon the language and sentiments of each other. This is what I cannot forbear inculcating again and again, from a firm persuasion that it is agreeable to the spirit of the gospel, and pleasing to its great Author. And I inculcate it in this place and at this time with peculiar affection, as the providence of God around us calls us loudly to do all we can with a safe conscience to promote a union among Protestants. And I heartily pray that our mutual jealousies and prejudices, which some are so unseasonably labouring to exasperate, may not provoke God to drive us together by a storm of persecution; if peradventure the bond of suffering together may be strong enough to bind those whom the endearments of the same christian profession, the same rule of faith, of manners, and of hope, have not yet been able to unite.

On the whole, let me most affectionately invite and entreat every reader, whatsoever his rank in life or his proficiency in learning may be, seriously to consider the practical design of these sacred oracles, the sense and authority of which I have been endeavouring to explain and assert. It is indeed a mystery in Divine Providence, that there should still remain so much difficulty in them, as that, in many points of doctrine, thoughtful, serious, and, I trust, upright men, should form such different opinions concerning the interpretation of so many passages, and the justice of consequences drawn from them on the one side and on the other. But of this there can be no controversy, "That the great design of the New "Testament (in delightful harmony with the Old) is to call off our minds from the present world, to establish us in the "belief of a future state, and to form us to a serious preparation for it by bringing us to a lively faith in Christ, and, as "the genuine effect of that, to a filial love to God, and a fraternal affection for each other;" or in one word, (and a weightier and more comprehensive sentence was never written,) to teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Tit. ii. 12, 13.) To his almighty hand may our souls be committed by a faith productive of these glorious fruits; and under the sanctifying, quickening, and supporting influences of his Spirit, may we wait for his mercy unto eternal life! Then shall no terror of suffering, no allurement of pleasure, no sophistry of error, be able to seduce us: but, guided by that light and truth which shines forth in the sacred pages, we shall march on to that holy hill where, having happily escaped all the dangers of that dark path which we now tread, we shall greet the dawning of an everlasting day, the arising of a day-star which shall go down no more. Amen!

POSTSCRIPT.

A SKETCH OF THE ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT MAY BE PROVED IN THE EASIEST METHOD, AND BY THE MOST SOLID AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE.

IF the proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament be deduced in its full compass from its first principles, we must have recourse to a method very nearly resembling that which is taken in the three sermons referred to above, for proving the authority of the New; that is, we must first prove, That the books are genuine, and then, That the history which they contain is credible: from which premises the inspiration of the Old Testament may easily be inferred by a train of arguments similar to that which we have pursued in the Dissertation above.

For proving the genuineness of the books, I should think it proper briefly to show (what I think hardly any will be so ignorant and confident as to deny) that the Jewish religion is of considerable antiquity, and was founded by Moses about fifteen hundred years before Christ's time; and farther,—That the Jews, before and at the time of Christ, had books among them bearing the titles of those which make up what we Protestants call the canonical books of the Old Testament;—And that these books, then received in the Jewish church, were the genuine works of the persons to whom they were respectively ascribed.——From hence it is easy farther to show that they have not suffered, and (considering what a guard the Jews and christians were upon each other) could not suffer any material alteration since; and consequently, that the Old Testament, as now extant in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, is genuine, and in the main such as it originally was.

In order to prove its credibility from this established medium, we may prepare the way by showing, That many material facts which are there recorded, are also mentioned by very ancient heathen writers.——And it is yet more important to show, as we very easily may, that there is room to go over the same leading thoughts with those insisted upon in the second of the three sermons mentioned above, and to argue the credibility of the story from the certain opportunities which the writers had of informing themselves as to the certain truth of the grand facts which they assert, as having themselves been personally concerned in them, and from those many marks of integrity and piety to be found in their writings, which may do as much as any thing of that kind can do, to obviate any suspicion of an intention to deceive.—We may here also advance farther, and demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that the facts asserted were of such a nature as could not possibly have gained credit had they been false; yet that they did gain most assured credit, of which the persons receiving these books gave the most substantial evidence that can be imagined, by receiving,

on the authority of these facts, a system of laws which, though considered as to be divinely supported, they were admirably wise, yet were of such a nature, that without such an extraordinary providence as nothing but an assurance of such an original could have warranted them to expect, they must necessarily have proved ruinous to the state they were intended to regulate and establish.*

A farther and very noble evidence of the truth of the grand facts attested in the Old Testament, and of the inspiration of a considerable part of it, may be drawn from the consideration of those numerous and various predictions to be found in it which refer to a multitude of events, several of them before utterly unexampled, which no human sagacity could possibly have foreseen, and which nevertheless happened exactly according to those predictions.†

Having advanced thus far, we may take up a set of arguments correspondent to those insisted on above, to prove from its genuineness and credibility, now supposed to be evinced, that the Old Testament was written by a superintendent inspiration: And this we may argue, not merely or chiefly from the tradition to this purpose so generally and so early prevailing in the Jewish church, though that is considerable, nor even from those very signal and glorious internal evidences of various kinds which every competent judge may easily see and feel, but from surveying the character and circumstances of the persons by whom the several books were written, in comparison with the genius of that dispensation under which they lived and wrote. This may, in all the branches of the argument, be proved, in this way, with the greatest ease and strength, concerning Moses and his writings: And when the authority of the Pentateuch is established, that of the most material succeeding books stands in so easy and natural a connexion with it, that I think few have been found, at least since the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, who have in good earnest allowed Moses to have been a messenger from heaven, and denied the inspiration of the prophets, and of the books which we receive as written by them.

But it is obvious that the illustration of all these propositions would be the work of a large volume, rather than of such a Postscript to a Dissertation itself of so moderate a length. I have discussed them all with the most material objections which have been advanced against them in that course of Theological Lectures which I mentioned in the preface to the first Volume, and which it is my continual care to render worthy the acceptance of the public in due time, by such alterations and additions as frequent reviews, in conjunction with what occurs to me in reading, conversation, or meditation, may suggest.

I shall conclude these hints with the mention of one argument for the inspiration of the Old Testament, entirely independent on all the former, which a few words may set in a convincing light, and which must be satisfactory to all who see the reasonableness of acquiescing in what I have urged above; I mean,—That the inspiration, and consequently the genuineness and credibility, of the Old Testament, may be certainly inferred from that of the New,‡ because our Lord and his apostles were so far from charging the scribes and Pharisees (who on all proper occasions are censured so freely) with having introduced into the sacred volume any merely human compositions, that, on the contrary, they not only recommend a diligent and constant perusal of these scriptures as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness, but speak of them as divine oracles, and as written by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the authors.

I desire that the following list of scriptures may be attentively consulted and reflected on in this view. I might have added a great many more, indeed several hundreds, in which the sacred writers of the New Testament argue from those of the Old in such a manner as nothing could have justified but a firm persuasion that they were divinely inspired. Now as the Jews always allowed "that the testimony of an approved prophet was sufficient to confirm the mission of one who was "supported by it," so I think every reasonable man will readily conclude that no inspired person can erroneously attest another to be inspired; and indeed the very definition of plenary inspiration, as stated above, absolutely excludes any room for cavilling on so plain a head. I throw the particular passages which I chuse to mention, into the margin below;‖ and he must be a very indolent inquirer into a question of so much importance, who does not think it worth his while to turn carefully to them, unless he has already such a conviction of the argument that it should need no farther to be illustrated or confirmed.

* The reader will easily imagine I here refer especially to the laws relating to letting all the land lie fallow together once in seven years, and two years together at every Jubilee; the desertion of their borders at the three great feasts, when all the males went up to the tabernacle or temple; and the disuse of cavalry; to omit some others.

† See Dr. Sykes's *Connexion*.

‡ It may be objected to this, that the authority of the New Testament, as stated in the sermons referred to, and in most other defences of christianity, is in part proved from the prophecies of the Old; so that the argument here urged would be circular. To which I would answer, 1. That if we were to take this medium alone, we must indeed subtract from the proof of christianity all that branch of its evidence which grows from prophecies in the Old Testament; and then all that arises from miracles, internal arguments, and the wonderful events which have followed its first promulgation, would stand in their full force, first to demonstrate (I think to high satisfaction) the divine original of the New Testament, and then to prove the authority of the Old: 2. That most of the enemies of the Mosaic and christian Revelations do nevertheless own those which we call the prophetical books of the Old Testament to be more ancient than the New; and on this foundation alone, without first taking for granted that they are either inspired or genuine, we derive an argument for christianity from their mere existence, and then may argue backward, that they were divinely inspired, and therefore genuine; and so, by a farther consequence, may infer from them the divine authority of the Mosaic religion, which they so evidently attest; which is an argument something distinct from the testimony of the authors of the New Testament, but important enough to deserve a mention.

‖ John v. 39; Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; Mark xii. 24; Luke x. 26, 27; Matt. v. 17, 18; xxi. 42: xxii. 29, 31, 43; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 54, 56; Luke i. 67, 69, 70; xvi. 31; xxiv. 25, 27; John x. 35; Acts ii. 16, 25; iii. 22, 24; iv. 25; xvii. 11; xviii. 24, 28; xxviii. 25; Rom. iii. 2, 10; ix. 25, 27, 29; x. 5, 11, 16; xv. 4; xvi. 26; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 13; vi. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 18; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, Heb. i. 1, 5—13; iii. 7; Jam. ii. 8; iv. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 10—12; 2 Pet. i. 19—21.

No. III.

ADVERTISEMENT RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING TABLE.

AS I thought it would be acceptable to my readers to have the contents of the several sections of this work (which must contain an abridgment of the evangelical history) exhibited in one connected view as concisely as possible, I chose, for many obvious reasons, to dispose it into a Chronological Table.

So far as the harmony of the four Evangelists, and the order of the facts mentioned in them, is in question, I have given my reasons for the present disposition, in my notes on the several sections whose connexion is liable to the greatest disputes. But it would be a work of great additional labour to enter into a discussion of the correspondence between the sacred chronology, in this part of it, and the profane. Had I leisure and ability to canvass all that learned men have said in support of the different schemes they have advanced upon this head, I should think this Appendix to a Family Expositor a very improper place to attempt it, as such an inquiry must take up a great deal of room, and as it is an affair in which it is impossible that common readers should judge, and in which, after all, I think they have very little concern. And indeed, to say the truth, I much question whether, on the most accurate inquiry, it is possible absolutely to fix it, since if the very day of Herod's death could be determined, (which, after all, I think it cannot be,) there would still be room to debate how long before that time Jesus was born, as also what distance of time there was between the first appearance of John the Baptist and Christ's entering on his public ministry. One conjecture may seem more probable than another; but beyond conjecture, I think, none has attained; and the chronology must vary with the diversity of that conjecture on these particulars

The learned reader will immediately perceive, that amidst the various hypotheses which would offer themselves here, I have taken the middle way, not only as in obscure cases I think that generally the safest, nor merely that this Table might in the main agree with those of our illustrious chronologers Bp Pearson and Dr. Prideaux, to whose judgment on such questions I pay a very great deference; but chiefly as, on the most exact and impartial examination I could form of the reasons and foundations on which other critics proceed in placing the chief events a few years higher or lower, (and it is well known that but very few years can be in question,) I found them by no means satisfactory, and the former class much less so than I imagined when I began the first volume of this work, and before I had so carefully searched into some of the authorities.

I once thought of adding a few notes to this Table; but I found that if I attempted any thing important, they must be so large as greatly to swell the bulk, and therefore I have waved it; and content myself with saying, that though I am not without my doubts as to several articles, I know not any scheme which has, on the whole, stronger supports, and is liable to fewer objections.

There might have been several columns added to the Table, expressing the years of other celebrated eras corresponding with those here mentioned; but any one may easily supply these to himself, when he recollects that the first year of the common era of Christ's birth, from which we reckon this the 1760th, was (according to the computation here received) the 4004th from the creation of the world, the 753d from the building of Rome, and the 4714th of the Julian period.

It may not be improper to repeat what I have observed elsewhere, that according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, the Jewish Passover happened, A. D. 30, on Saturday, March 25.——A. D. 31, on Wednesday, March 28.——A. D. 32, on Monday, April 14.——A. D. 33, on Friday, April 3.——and A. D. 34, on Friday, April 23.

To this I shall only add, that Augustus, in whose days Christ was born, reigned after the defeat of Mark Antony at Actium 44 years.——Tiberius, after he had been colleague with Augustus in the Empire about three years, became sole Emperor on the death of Augustus, August 19, A. D. 14.——Caligula succeeded on the death of Tiberius, March 16, A. D. 37.——Claudius succeeded on the death of Caligula, Jan. 24, A. D. 41.——And Nero on the death of Claudius, October 13, A. D. 54, whose reign continued to June 9, A. D. 68, beyond the limits of this history.

A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE

SEVERAL EVENTS RECORDED IN THE HISTORY OF THE EVANGELISTS AND ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: CONTAINING ALSO THE CONTENTS OF THE SEVERAL SECTIONS OF THIS WORK.

Emperors of Rome.	Before the common era of Christ's birth.		
		After Luke's Preface, sect. i. and,	
		John's account of the divinity of our blessed Redeemer, sect ii.	
		The historical facts follow in the order here represented,	
Augustus. 25	6	The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias, to give him notice of the approaching conception and birth of his son John the Baptist, sect. iii.	J. P. 4708.
26	5	Six months after, he informs the Virgin Mary of the conception of Christ to be born of her, sect. iv.	J. P. 4709.
		Mary visits Elisabeth, and breaks out into a song of praise, sect. v.	
		John the Baptist is born and circumcised, sect. vi.; and Zacharias utters an inspired song of praise, sect. vii.	
		The suspicion of Joseph, occasioned by Mary's pregnancy, removed by the appearance of an angel, sect. viii.	
		The genealogy of Jesus Christ, sect. ix.	
27	4	Jesus is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed to the shepherds: He is circumcised the eighth day, sect. x.	J. P. 4710.
		The purification of Mary, the song of Simeon, and testimony of Anna, sect. xi.	
		The inquiry, worship, and return of the Magi, sect. xii.; after which Jesus is carried into Egypt, and the infants at Bethlehem are massacred, sect. xiii.	J. P.
28	3	Herod dying, the holy family returns and settles at Nazareth, sect. xiii.	4711.
33	8	Jesus at twelve years old goes up with his parents to the Passover at Jerusalem, discourses with the doctors in the temple, and returns to Nazareth, sect. xiv.	J. P. 4721.
15 Tiberius with Augustus. 12	26	John the Baptist opens his ministry, and multitudes come to receive his baptism, sect. xv.; to whom he addresses suitable admonitions, proclaims the approach of the Messiah, sect. xvi.; and gives a public testimony to the dignity of his person, sect. xvii.	J. P. 4739.
Tiberius alone. 15	29	Jesus comes from Nazareth, and is baptized by John; the Spirit descends upon him, and a voice from heaven declares him to be the Son of God, sect. xviii.	J. P. 4742.
		Jesus is led into the wilderness, where he fasts forty days, and is tempted by the devil, sect. xix.	
		John is examined by the Jews, and declares he is not the Messiah, referring them to one incomparably superior to himself, sect. xx.; sees Jesus coming towards him, and bears a repeated testimony to him as the Lamb of God; upon which two of his disciples follow Jesus, and Andrew brings Peter to him, sect. xxi.	
		Jesus goes into Galilee, where he calls Philip and Nathaniel, sect. xxii.	
		Attends a marriage there at Cana, where he performs the miracle of turning water into wine, sect. xxiii.	
16	30	Makes a short visit to Capernaum, and from thence goes up to Jerusalem to the First Passover after his entrance on his ministry, and drives the traders there out of the temple, sect. xxiv.	J. P. 4743.
		His conference with Nicodemus, sect. xxv. xxvi.	
		Goes from Jerusalem into the land of Judea, and there baptizes by his disciples: John hears of it, and rejoicing in it, gives his last public testimony to Jesus, sect. xxvii.	
		John is cast into prison for his faithfulness in reproving Herod, sect. xxviii.	
		Jesus, near the winter solstice, returns into Galilee through Samaria, confers with a woman of Sichar, and spends two days there, sect. xxix. xxx.	
		Comes into Galilee, and preaches there; and while at Cana, cures a nobleman's son who was dying at Capernaum, sect. xxxi.	
		Preaches at Nazareth; but being rejected there, goes to settle for a while at Capernaum, sect. xxxii.	
		Preaches with great acceptance at Capernaum, and calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to a more stated attendance upon him, sect. xxxiii. xxxiv.	

Tiberius, 16. | Anno Dom. 30.

Casts out a devil in the synagogue at Capernaum, and cures Peter's mother-in-law, sect. xxxv.

The next morning, after retirement, he sets out on a circuit to the other cities of Galilee, and is followed by multitudes from various parts, sect. xxxvi.

Preaches his celebrated sermon on the mount, sect. xxxvii.—xliii.

Descending from the mount, he cleanses a leper, and then withdraws into the wilderness to pray, sect. xliv.

Returns to Capernaum, where he cures a man disabled by the palsy, and calls Matthew, sect. xlv.

J. P. 4744. | 17 | 31 Goes up to his Second Passover at Jerusalem, where he cures the lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath, and vindicates that action before the sanhedrim, sect. xlvi.—xlviii.

Returning into Galilee, he vindicates his disciples for rubbing out the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, sect. xlix; and on another sabbath cures a man with a withered hand, and justifies his healing on that day, sect. l.

Multitudes follow him to the shore on his withdrawing to the sea of Galilee, whom he heals of all their diseases, and charges those that were possessed not to discover who he was, sect. li.

Having spent the night in prayer on a mountain, he chuses the twelve apostles, and then comes down into the plain, where he works many miracles before the multitude, sect. lii.; and repeats several passages which he had delivered in his sermon on the mount, sect. liii. liv.

Returns to Capernaum, and cures at a distance the centurion's servant who was sick of a palsy, sect. lv.

Going the next day to Naim, he raises the widow's son from the dead, sect. lvi.

Answers the disciples of John, who came to ask him whether he was the Messiah, sect. lvii.; discourses to the multitude concerning John, sect. lviii.; and laments over the impenitent cities of Galilee, sect. lix.

Dines at a Pharisee's house, and vindicates the woman who anointed his feet there, sect. lx.

Makes a progress through every city in those parts, attended by the twelve, and certain pious women: answers the blasphemous Pharisees who charged his miracles on a compact with Satan, cautions them against the unpardonable sin, and warns them of the danger of their sinful words, sect. lxi. lxii.

Upbraids the perverseness of the Pharisees in demanding a sign from heaven, and delivers the parable of the relapsing demoniac, sect. lxiii.

Declares his resolution of persisting in his work, and his endeared affection to his obedient disciples, sect. lxiv.

Goes to the sea-side, and there delivers to the multitude the parable of the sower, sect. lxv.; which he explains to his disciples, sect. lxvi.; delivers and explains the parable of the tares, sect. lxvii.; and then adds those of the springing seed, the mustard seed, the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, and the net, sect. lxviii.

Having answered some that seemed disposed to follow him, he crosses the sea and stills a tempest, sect. lxix.

Arriving at the country of the Gadarenes, he dispossesses two demoniacs; and permitting the demons to enter into a herd of swine, he is desired by the Gadarenes to depart, and crosses over to Capernaum, sect. lxx.

Being entertained at Matthew's house, he justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners, and vindicates his disciples in omitting some austerities that were practised by others, sect. lxxi.

Having cured a woman of a flux of blood, he raises from the dead the daughter of Jairus, and performs some other miracles, sect. lxxii.

Goes from Capernaum to Nazareth, and being again rejected there, begins another circuit, sect. lxxiii.

Sends out his twelve apostles with proper instructions to prepare his way; and after this they go and preach in different parts, sect. lxxiv.—lxxvi.

Herod hears of his fame, and suspects him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had lately beheaded in prison, sect. lxxvii.

J. P. 4745. | 18 | 32 The apostles meet him again a little before another passover, and he retires with them to the desert of Bethsaida by sea: Multitudes flock to hear him, and he miraculously feeds five thousand: They would have made him king, but he obliges his disciples to take ship; and having dismissed the multitude, retires to pray, sect. lxxviii.

The disciples crossing the sea, are overtaken by a storm: Jesus comes to them walking on the sea, and stills the tempest; and landing near Capernaum many are brought that were diseased, and he cures all that touch him, sect. lxxix.

Being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, he tells them of their worldly views in seeking him, declares himself to be the Bread of life, and urges the necessity and benefit of feeding on him, sect. lxxx. lxxxi.

The people murmur at his doctrine, and many of his hearers leave him: The apostles assure him of their continued fidelity, but he foretells the treachery of Judas, sect. lxxxii.

The Pharisees blaming his disciples for eating with unwashed hands, he vindicates their neglect of human traditions, condemns the Pharisees for preferring them to the law of God, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity, sect. lxxxiii. lxxxiv.

About the time of his Third Passover, Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he casts out a demon from the daughter of a Syrophenician woman; and returning through the coasts of Decapolis to the sea of Galilee, cures a man deaf and dumb, sect. lxxxv.

After many other amazing miracles, he feeds four thousand, and then takes ship with his disciples, and goes to Dalmanutha, in the coasts of Magdala, sect. lxxxvi.

Upbraids the Pharisees again for asking a sign from heaven, and cautions his disciples against their leaven and that of the Sadducees, sect. lxxxvii.

Heals a blind man at Bethsaida; and going from thence to Cæsarea Philippi, acknowledges to his disciples that he is the Messiah, and commends Peter's confession of him under that character, sect. lxxxviii.

Foretells his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at the mention of them, and exhorts his followers to self-denial, and a readiness for martyrdom, sect. lxxxix.

Christ is transfigured, and discourses with his disciples concerning the expectation the Jews had of Elijah, sect. xc.

Descending from the mountain where he was transfigured, he casts out an obstinate demon, that had withstood the attempts of his disciples, sect. xci.

Continuing his progress through Galilee, he again warns his disciples of his approaching sufferings; at which they are offended, sect. xcii.

Comes to Capernaum, and makes provision by a miracle to pay the tribute, *ibid.*

Perceiving his disciples were contending who should be greatest, he recommends humility and mortification to them, sect. xciii.; advises how to deal with an offending brother, sect. xciv.; and urges forgiveness by the parable of the unmerciful servant, sect. xcv.

Reproves John for rebuking one who cast out demons in his name, because not of their company, sect. xcvi.

Chuses the seventy, and sends them out to preach, with large instructions, like those he had given to the twelve apostles, sect. xcvii.

Discourses with his brethren about his going up to the Feast of Tabernacles, and tarries some days after them in Galilee, sect. xcviii. Then goes up to Jerusalem about the middle of the feast, (which was in September,) and preaches in the temple, vindicating his own conduct, and asserting his divine mission, sect. xcix.

The sanhedrim, alarmed at the regard the people showed him, send officers to seize him; but he declares they should not execute their purposes as yet, sect. c. The officers admire his preaching, and return without him; which occasions a debate in the sanhedrim between Nicodemus and his brethren, sect. ci.

Having spent the night in retirement, he returns in the morning to the temple, where he declines giving judgment in the case of the adulteress, sect. cii. Speaking of himself as the Light of the world, he warns his hearers of the danger of infidelity, sect. ciii.; shows the vanity of depending on a descent from Abraham, sect. civ.; and declares his own existence to be prior to that of Abraham; at which the Jews are so offended as to go about to stone him, but he miraculously escapes out of their hands, sect. cv.

Before he sets out on his last circuit through Galilee, the seventy return with joy, and report the success of their embassy, sect. cvi.

Jesus answers the scribe who inquired the way to life, and delivers the parable of the good Samaritan, sect. cvii.

Leaving Jerusalem he comes to Bethany, where he commends Mary's attention to his word as better than Martha's care to entertain him, sect. cviii.

Being returned to Galilee, he gives his disciples several instructions relating to prayer, sect. cix.

Dining with a Pharisee, he admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger, sect. cx.; and afterwards cautions his disciples against hypocrisy and the fear of man, sect. cxi.; declines to decide a case of property, and delivers the parable of the rich fool, sect. cxii.; repeating the cautions against covetousness which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount, sect. cxiii.; and urging them to watchfulness, in expectation of his second coming and of their last account, sect. cxiv.

Declares his desire of accomplishing his work, and warns his hearers of the danger of neglecting his message, sect. cxv.; urges the necessity of repentance, and delivers the parable of the barren fig-tree, sect. cxvi.; then cures a crooked woman on the sabbath-day, sect. cxvii.; and continues his journey toward Jerusalem, not intimidated by the fear of Herod from pursuing his plan, sect. cxviii.

Being invited to dine with a Pharisee, he cures a man who had a dropsy, and vindicates his healing on the sabbath-day, sect. cxix.; foretells, in the parable of the great supper, the rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles, sect. cxx.; and urges the necessity of deliberate resolution in religion, sect. cxxi.

The publicans and sinners flocking to hear him, he delivers the parables of the lost sheep and piece of money, sect. cxxii.; that of the prodigal son, sect. cxxiii.; the unjust steward, sect. cxxiv.; the rich glutton and Lazarus, sect. cxxv.; and concludes with exhorting his disciples to simplicity, forgiveness, and humility, sect. cxxvi.

Passing through Samaria, as he was going up to the Feast of Dedication, he rebukes the intemperate zeal of James and John, and heals ten lepers, sect. cxxvii.

As he was near Jerusalem, he warns the Jews against expecting a pompous appearance of the Messiah's kingdom, and foretells their approaching destruction, sect. cxxviii.; presses his disciples to perseverance in prayer by the parable of the importunate widow, and recommends humility by that of the Pharisee and publican, sect. cxxix.

Being come to Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication in December, he opens the eyes of a man born blind, sect. cxxx.; the man is examined by the sanhedrim, and excommunicated; Jesus meets him, and declares himself to be the Son of God, sect. cxxxi.

Having admonished the Pharisees of their danger, he represents himself, first as the Door of the sheep-fold, sect. cxxxii., then as the good Shepherd of the flock, sect. cxxxiii.; and discourses of his union with the Father; upon which the Jews attempt to seize him, and he retires beyond Jordan, sect. cxxxiv.

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Jesus declares against divorces, sect. cxxxv.; blesses the little children, sect. cxxxvi.; answers the young ruler who applied so respectfully to him; discourses of the danger of riches, sect. cxxxvii.; and warns the Jews not to envy the Gentiles' being called to equal privileges with themselves, by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, sect. cxxxviii.

Hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, he determines to return into Judea, sect. cxxxix.; where he raises Lazarus from the dead, sect. cxl.

The sanhedrim agreeing Jesus should be put to death, and publishing a proclamation against him, he retires to Ephraim, sect. cxli.

Setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem, he tells his disciples what he should suffer there, rebukes the ambition of Zebedee's sons, and exhorts to humility, sect. cxlii.

Passing through Jericho, he cures the two blind men, and converts Zaccheus the publican, sect. cxliii.; After which he delivers the parable of the ten pounds, and represents the vengeance he would take on his enemies, sect. cxliv.

He is entertained at Bethany, and his feet anointed by Mary: Many flock thither to see Lazarus, whom also the chief priests conspire to kill, sect. cxlv.

Christ rides in triumph to Jerusalem on the first day of the week, sect. cxlvi. When he came near the city he weeps over it, and at his entrance goes into the temple, which he vindicates a second time from the profanation of the traders, and performs several miracles there, sect. cxlvii.

Discourses with some Greeks who came up to the passover, and retires in the evening to Bethany, sect. cxlviii.

Christ returns to Jerusalem the next morning, (that is, on Monday in the Passion week,) and by the way curses the barren fig-tree, sect. cxlix.; visits the temple, and again reforms the abuses of the traders; the priests are exasperated, and he retires in the evening, sect. cl.

Returning to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning, the fig-tree is found withered away: Coming again into the temple, he confounds the members of the sanhedrim who questioned his authority; utters the parable of the complaisant but disobedient son, sect. cli.; and then that of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, sect. clii.; and of the wedding-feast and garment, sect. cliii.

Confounds the attempt to ensnare him in the question about paying tribute, sect. cliv.; proves the resurrection against the Sadducees, sect. clv.; answers the question as to the first commandment of the law, sect. clvi.; and repeats his charges and denunciations against the Pharisees, sect clvii. clviii.

Going out of the temple, he applauds the liberality of a poor widow, sect. clix.; foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, acquainting his disciples with the signs of its approach, and of his second coming, sect. clx.—clxii.; and urges the suddenness of his appearance as an engagement to watchfulness, sect. clxiii.; which he enforces by the parable of the ten virgins, sect. clxiv.; and of the talents, sect. clxv.; concluding his discourse with a most affecting description of the last judgment, sect. clxvi.

The rulers contrive how they may seize Jesus: Judas makes an infamous contract to betray him: he retires at night to the Mount of Olives, sect. clxvii.

Christ returns again on Wednesday to teach in the temple as before; but the particulars are not recorded, *ibid.*[a]

On Thursday morning he directs two of his disciples to go and prepare the passover, which was his Fourth and Last Passover: He comes in the evening, and sits down with his apostles to that feast, sect. clxviii.

At the antepast he rebukes their ambition and washes their feet, sect. clxix. At supper he intimates who should betray him, and Judas upon this retires, sect. clxx. He exhorts them to mutual love, foretells Peter's fall, sect. clxxi. and then institutes the eucharist, sect. clxxii.

After this he addresses his disciples with a large consolatory discourse, sect. clxxiii.—clxxviii. which he closes with a solemn prayer, sect. clxxix. clxxx.: Then retires from the guest-chamber to the garden of Gethsemane, renewing his caution to Peter and his brethren, sect. clxxxi.

Christ falls into an agony: His disciples sleep, sect. clxxxii. Judas betrays him: He yields himself up, and they forsake him, sect. clxxxiii. He is conducted to the palace of Caiaphas, where Peter denies him, sect. clxxxiv.

He is examined and condemned on Friday morning by the sanhedrim, sect. clxxxv.; Then is brought before Pilate and examined by him, sect. clxxxvi.; is sent to Herod, who returns him to Pilate, sect. clxxxvii.; who having in vain attempted his release, declaring to the Jews he found no fault in him, at length yields to their importunity, and gives judgment against him, sect. clxxxviii.

Being delivered up by Pilate, after various abuses he is led forth to Calvary and nailed to the cross, sect. clxxxix. His garments are divided; and while he is himself outrageously insulted, he shows mercy to the penitent robber, sect. cxc.; and having commended his mother to the care of John, expires: Amazing prodigies attend his death, and alarm the spectators, sect. cxci.

Christ's body is pierced on the cross; then begged and buried by Joseph of Arimathea, sect. cxcii.

Judas confesses his guilt on Christ's being condemned, and hangs himself in despair, sect. cxciii.

On the morrow after the crucifixion, (which was the Jewish sabbath, or Saturday,) the Jews desire to have the sepulchre secured, and procure a guard to watch it, *ibid.*

Christ rises from the dead early on the Lord's-day morning: Mary Magdalene finding the sepulchre open, calls Peter and John, who enter into it and return, while Christ makes his first appearance to her, sect. cxciv.

The other women coming to the sepulchre, are informed of his resurrection by angels, who bid them go and tell his disciples: He appears to them as they return, and they report it to his incredulous disciples, sect. cxcv.

The guards who had fled away make their report of what had passed to the chief priests, and are hired

Tiberius, 19. Anno Dom. 33. to disguise the truth. Christ appears to Peter, sect. cxcvi. and then to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, sect. cxcvii. who return and report it; and while they are together, Christ appears to all the company the same evening, sect. cxcviii.

On that day seven-night he appears again to the eleven, Thomas being with them, and offers to be examined by his touch, sect. cxcix.

He discovers himself to Peter and other disciples at the sea of Tiberias while they were fishing, sect. cc.; and after a remarkable discourse with that apostle, foretells his martyrdom, sect. cci.

Christ appears to the whole body of the disciples in Galilee, and afterwards meets the apostles several times at Jerusalem, discoursing with them of the affairs of his kingdom, sect. ccii.

He leads them out of the city, and having blessed them, ascends to heaven in their sight: They return joyful to Jerusalem, sect. cciii.; with which the history of the Evangelists concludes.

Contents of the Acts of the Apostles.

Christ (as was said before) ascends to heaven from the Mount of Olives in the view of his apostles, forty days after his resurrection, sect. i.

The apostles return to Jerusalem, and being assembled with the rest of his disciples, Matthias is chosen in the room of Judas, sect. ii.

The Holy Spirit descends upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and people of all nations hear them speak in their own language: Peter declares that this was what the prophet Joel had foretold, sect. iii. and shows that Jesus whom they crucified was risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah, sect. iv. Great numbers are converted and baptized, and converts are daily added to the church, sect. v.

Peter and John cure a man who had been lame from his birth at the gate of the temple, sect. vi. Peter makes an affectionate discourse to the people assembled on that occasion, sect. vii.

The two apostles are seized by order of the sanhedrim, and being examined by that court, courageously declare their resolution of persisting to preach in the name of Jesus: they are severely threatened and dismissed, sect. viii.

Returning to their company, they all unite in an inspired prayer, which is attended with a new effusion of the Spirit. The number and zeal of the converts increase: many estates are sold, and the price distributed, sect. ix.

Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for their fraudulent dealing: the church increases, and extraordinary miracles are wrought, sect. x.

The twelve are apprehended and imprisoned, and after a miraculous deliverance are brought before the sanhedrim and scourged; but, by Gamaliel's prudent advice, are discharged without farther severities, sect. xi.

20 34 The seven deacons are chosen: the number of disciples multiplies, and many of the priests believe, sect. xii.

Stephen disputing strenuously with the Jews, is seized and brought before the sanhedrim, *ibid.* Being accused of blasphemy, he makes a long defence, but is interrupted in it, and tumultuously stoned to death, Saul heartily concurring in the execution, sect. xiii.—xv.

A great persecution is raised at Jerusalem, where Saul makes havoc of the church, who being all dispersed but the apostles, go into other parts and preach the word, sect. xvi.

Philip the deacon preaches Christ at Samaria, and many believe; which also Simon Magus professes to do, and is baptized, *ibid.* Peter and John being sent by the apostles, communicate the Spirit by the imposition of their hands; and Simon offering money for the like power, Peter detects and censures his hypocrisy. The two apostles return to Jerusalem, preaching the word in many villages of the Samaritans, sect. xvii.

Philip is ordered by an angel into the desert in the way to Gaza, where he instructs an Ethiopian eunuch in the faith of Christ; and having baptized him, the Spirit takes him to Azotus, from whence, when he had preached in all the cities of the neighbouring coast, he comes to Cæsarea, sect. xviii.

21 35 Saul setting out for Damascus with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously converted by Christ's appearing to him on the way, who bids him go to Damascus, where he should hear what he must do. The light that shone around him strikes him blind; and being led to Damascus, he continues three days fasting, sect. xix.

Ananias by divine direction comes and restores his sight, declaring that the Lord had chosen him to be his witness unto all of what he had seen and heard; and having baptized him, he receives the Holy Spirit, sect. xx.

Immediately he preaches Christ at Damascus, and confounds the Jews, proving that Jesus is the true Messiah, *ibid.*

Then goes into Arabia, and preaches there; from whence he returns to Damascus, where the Jews seek to kill him, but he makes his escape in the night, *ibid.*

2 Caligula. 38 Three years after his conversion, Saul returns to Jerusalem, and is introduced by Barnabas to Peter and James; but preaching boldly there, he is again in danger from the Jews: on which the brethren conduct him to Cæsarea, and send him away to Tarsus, *ibid.*

The persecution ceases, and the churches are multiplied, *ibid.*

3 39 Peter making a progress through the neighbouring parts, cures Æneas of a palsy at Lydda, and raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa, sect. xxi.

Cornelius, a devout centurion, is divinely admonished to send to Joppa for Peter, who, in obedience to the divine command, comes with his messengers to Cæsarea, preaches the gospel to him and his friends though Gentiles, and receives them into the church by baptism, sect. xxii. xxiii.

Peter returning to Jerusalem, is questioned by the brethren of the circumcision for his conversing with

Cal	An.	
gula	Do.	such as were uncircumcised; but on his giving an account of the matter, they acquiesce, and bless God for his grace to the Gentiles, sect. xxiv.
4	40	The gospel is preached at Antioch, and a great number of the Greeks believe. Barnabas is sent from the church at Jerusalem to confirm the disciples at Antioch, who are first called christians there, sect. xxv.
Claudius. 2	42	Barnabas goes to Tarsus for Saul, and bringing him to Antioch, they spend a year together there, *ibid.*
3	43	Agabus comes thither from Jerusalem, and foretells an approaching famine: A collection is resolved upon for the poor brethren in Judea, which is sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, *ibid.*
4	44	Herod Agrippa puts James to death at Jerusalem, and imprisons Peter, who is delivered by an angel, sect. xxvi.
		Herod extravagantly applauded at Cæsarea, dies miserably by the stroke of an angel, sect. xxvii.
		Barnabas and Saul having executed their commission, and carried to Jerusalem what was collected for the poor brethren, return to Antioch, and bring with them John, surnamed Mark, sect. xxviii.
5	45	The Holy Spirit orders Barnabas and Saul to be set apart to preach to the Gentiles: They go to Seleucia attended by John, and from thence sail to Cyprus: Having preached at Salamis, they go through the island to Paphos, where Elymas opposing them is struck blind by Saul, (hereafter called Paul,) and Sergius Paulus the proconsul is converted, *ibid.*
		From hence they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, where John departing from them returns to Jerusalem, sect. xxix.
6	46	Paul and Barnabas go on to Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul makes a long discourse in the synagogue, and the Gentiles desire to hear him again, *ibid.* The Jews rejecting the word, they turn to the Gentiles, and as many as are determined for eternal life believe, sect. xxx.
		A persecution being raised against them by the Jews, they are driven away, and go to Iconium, *ibid.* Many converts are made there both of the Jews and Greeks. The unbelieving Jews stir up the multitude against them, and they depart to Lystra, where they cure a lame man; on which the people take them to be gods, and are hardly restrained from sacrificing to them, sect. xxxi. But being followed thither by the Jews, the people are persuaded to stone Paul, who being left for dead, recovers and goes with Barnabas to Derbe, from whence they return through Pisidia and Pamphylia, constituting presbyters in every church, and sailing from Attalia, come back to Antioch in Syria, where, having called the church together, they report the wonderful success of their ministry among the Gentiles, sect. xxxii.
8	48	Paul and Barnabas continue a long time with the disciples at Antioch, *ibid.*
		The Jewish converts urge the necessity of circumcision: Debates arise at Antioch; and Paul and Barnabas are sent, with some others, to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, sect. xxxiii.
9	49	Having passed through Phœnicia and Samaria in their way, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy of all the brethren they come to Jerusalem, where the matter is debated in a full assembly: in which, after Peter and James had spoken for their liberty, the celebrated decree is made in favour of the Gentile converts, *ibid.* and xxxiv.
		They send back messengers with Paul and Barnabas, who arrive at Antioch with the decree; and having made some stay there, Judas returns to the apostles, but Silas chuses to continue longer there, sect. xxxv.
10	50	Peter comes down to Antioch, and is publicly reproved by Paul for dissimulation in his conduct, *ibid.* a.
		Paul with Silas, and Barnabas with John surnamed Mark, set out different ways to visit the churches they had lately planted, *ibid.*
		Paul and Silas travel through Syria and Cilicia and several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and come to Derbe and Lystra, where having associated Timothy with them, they go on to Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, and from thence come to Troas, where they are called to Macedonia, sect. xxxvi.
11	51	Being joined by Luke at Troas, they sail from thence and cross the sea to Europe, passing by Samothracia to Neapolis, where they land and go to Philippi, *ibid.*
		Having preached at Philippi, Lydia is converted, and receives them into her house: But a tumult arising on Paul's dispossessing the Pythoness, he and Silas are scourged and thrown into prison: The jailor is miraculously awakened and converted, sect. xxxvii. On pleading they were Romans, the magistrates come and dismiss them; and having visited the brethren, they depart from Philippi, sect. xxxviii.
		Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they come to Thessalonica, where Paul having preached in the synagogue and planted a christian church, the unbelieving Jews stir up the mob against them, and oblige them to depart, sect. xxxix.
12	52	Being come to Berœa, they are received more candidly by the Jews there, many of whom, and of the Greeks, believe; but being followed thither by the Jews of Thessalonica, Paul goes away to Athens, appointing Silas and Timothy to follow him, *ibid.*
		Paul, greatly moved at the idolatry which prevailed at Athens, makes an excellent discourse to the philosophers there; who most of them make light of what he says, but some believe, sect. xl.
		Paul departs from Athens to Corinth, where he finds Aquila and Priscilla, and lodging at their house, works as a tent-maker, but preaches every sabbath-day to the Jews and Greeks. sect. xli.
13	53	Silas and Timothy come to him here: and Paul, rejected by the Jews, turns to the Gentiles, many of whom believe and are baptized, *ibid.*
		Being encouraged in his work by a vision of Christ, Paul continues at Corinth a year and six months, and is rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews, *ibid.*

Claudius 14. Anno Dom. 54.

From hence he writes his First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to the Galatians, *ibid.* i.

Paul departs from Corinth to Cenchrea, where, in performance of a vow which he had made, he shaves his head: From thence he sails to Ephesus, where he leaves Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had brought with him from Corinth; and spending but one sabbath there as he was hastening to the passover, pursues his voyage to Cæsarea, where he lands and goes up to Jerusalem. There he salutes the church, and having kept the feast, returns to Antioch in Syria, sect. xlii.

Having continued there some time, Paul sets out on another progress, (which was the third that began from thence since his conversion,) in which he visits the Asian churches, and particularly those of Galatia and Phrygia, *ibid.*

Apollos, in the mean time, preaches at Ephesus; and being farther instructed in the christian doctrine by Aquila and Priscilla, goes over to Achaia, and preaches at Corinth and other places in that province, *ibid.*

Nero 1 55 While Apollos was watering what Paul had planted at Corinth, Paul comes to Ephesus, where some of John's disciples being instructed by him, are baptized and receive the Spirit, sect. xliii.

Having taught there in the synagogue three months, meeting with opposition from the Jews, he separates the disciples, and discourses daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus—performing extraordinary miracles, while the exorcist Jews are beaten by a demoniac they would have dispossessed; and preaching the word with such success that many believe and burn their magical books, *ibid.*

About this time he writes his First Epistle to the Corinthians, sect. xliv. a.

3 57 Paul thinks of setting out for Macedonia and Achaia, from whence he would go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome; but sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, he alters his design, and tarries some time longer in that part of Asia, *ibid.*

Demetrius the silversmith raising a tumult against him, the mob is enraged, and cries out for Diana: Paul is advised not to venture among them: The chancellor comes and appeases the tumult, *ibid.*

Paul leaving Timothy, who was now returned to him, at Ephesus, departs from thence; and having passed through Troas in his way, crosses the sea to Macedonia, where he visits the several churches, gathering a contribution, as he passed, for the poor brethren in Judea, sect. xlv.

In this journey he writes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: as also, probably, his First to Timothy, *ibid.* b, c.

4 58 From Macedonia he goes on to Greece, where he visits the churches at Corinth and in the neighbouring parts of Achaia; and having finished his collection, after three months' abode there, being now ready to embark for Syria, to avoid the Jews he chuses to return by Macedonia, *ibid.*

From Corinth, in this journey, the apostle writes his Epistle to the Romans, *ibid.* c.

Timothy being returned from Ephesus, accompanies Paul in his journey, with Luke and several others, who sail from Philippi after the passover week to Troas, where, on the first day of the week, Paul celebrates the eucharist, and having preached till midnight, raises Eutychus to life, who was killed by a fall as he slept; after which he proceeds on his voyage, and comes to Miletus, designing, if possible, to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost, *ibid.*

At Miletus he sends for the elders of the Ephesian church, and takes his leave of them in an affectionate discourse, sect. xlvi.

Paul and his company pursue their voyage, and having sailed by divers places come to Cæsarea, where they are entertained at Philip's house; and notwithstanding the repeated warnings that were given him by inspired persons of what the Jews would do to him, he resolutely goes up to Jerusalem, sect. xlvii.

Upon his coming to Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the elders of the church there, Paul being advised to join with some that had a vow, to obviate the prejudices of the Jews, begins his purification; but is assaulted in the temple by some Jews from Asia, who so incense the people, that they would have killed him if Lysias the Roman tribune had not come and prevented it, who orders his soldiers to bind him and take him into the castle, sect. xlviii.

As they were carrying him away, Paul obtains leave to speak to the people, and gives them an account of his conversion, and of the call he had to preach the gospel, sect. xlix.: But upon mentioning his being sent unto the Gentiles, the Jews are enraged and will hear him no farther: The tribune orders that he should be scourged; which Paul escapes by pleading he is a Roman, sect. l.

Paul being brought before the sanhedrim, occasions a division in the council; and a tumult arising, the tribune takes him away. Christ appears in a vision to Paul, and tells him he should testify concerning him at Rome. The Jews conspire to assassinate him, which being made known to Paul, the tribune is informed of their design, sect. li.

Lysias sends away Paul under a guard, who bring him by night to Antipatris, and conduct him from thence to Felix the Roman governor at Cæsarea, who orders him into custody till his accusers came, sect. lii.

He is soon followed thither by the high-priest and elders of the Jews; and Tertullus accusing him, the Jews affirm that what he said was true, *ibid.* But Paul having made his defence, Felix adjourns the cause till Lysias should come down, and only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement, with liberty for his friends to come to him, sect. liii.

5 59 On hearing Paul discourse before him and his wife Drusilla, Felix trembles, and puts him off to another opportunity; but though he frequently sent for him afterwards, it was only with a view of getting money from him to release him, sect. liv.

6 60 When Paul had been in custody two years, Felix, on quitting his government, to gratify the Jews, leaves Paul a prisoner, *ibid.*

Nero 6. | Anno Dom. 60.

Festus succeeding Felix, is applied to by the Jews, who renew their complaints against Paul. He makes his defence before Festus; and to avoid his sending him to Jerusalem, appeals to Cæsar, *ibid.*

King Agrippa and Berenice coming to visit the new governor, Festus acquaints them with the case of Paul; and, at the king's request, Paul is produced before him in a large assembly, sect. lv. Being permitted to speak for himself, Paul makes an excellent defence, and gives such an account of himself and his doctrine, that Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a christian; and the assembly rising, he declares Paul might be set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar, sect. lvi.

Paul is shipped for Italy with some other prisoners in custody of a centurion, and is attended in his voyage by Luke and Aristarchus. Having suffered great extremity in a storm, Paul is assured by an angel that none of them should perish; which he declares, for their encouragement, to those that sailed with him, sect. lvii. The storm continues many days, and they at length are shipwrecked on the coast of Malta, but all get safe to land, sect. lviii.

The inhabitants of Malta treat them with great kindness. A viper fastens upon Paul, and he receives no harm: Publius's father and others are miraculously cured: And after three months' stay there, they depart for Rome, sect. lix.

7 | 61 Having touched at Syracuse in Sicily, they sail to Rhegium in Italy, and from thence to Puteoli; from whence they go by land to Rome, being met by several christian brethren on the way, *ibid.*

When they were come to Rome, Paul is allowed to dwell in his own hired house, while the rest of the prisoners are delivered to the captain of the guard, *ibid.*

Soon after his arrival, Paul has an audience of the Jews, and gives them an account of the christian faith; but most of them being hardened in their unbelief, he declares the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, sect. 60.

9 | 63 He spends two years confined to his own hired house there, preaching the things concerning CHRIST to all that came to him, *ibid.*

During this time of his abode at Rome he writes several Epistles; particularly, those to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians; as also that to Philemon; and not long after, that to the Hebrews.—His Epistle to Titus, and the Second to Timothy, seem to be of a later date, *ibid.* g.

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No. IV.

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE RELATING TO THE PARTICULAR TIME IN WHICH THE SEVERAL HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN.

SINCE the preceding parts of this work were finished, it has been suggested to me by a much esteemed friend, that it might be proper to say something concerning the time of writing each of these Sacred Books on which I have commented. I confess it might justly be expected I should touch on this article; and I heartily wish I were capable of doing it in a more satisfactory manner.

In general, it must be allowed, their being so universally received among those who were most capable of judging, and who were certainly obliged by the highest interest to be accurate in their inquiries, as written by holy men, who were contemporary with Christ himself, and personally concerned in the grand facts they record, plainly shows they must have been of very early date, and secures the point which is most important to our faith and edification as christians.

But as to the particular year in which either of the Four Gospels or the Acts were published, I am of opinion, on the most careful inquiry I have had a capacity and opportunity of making, that we have no certain foundation to go upon in determining it.

It is but very little we can learn from the books themselves with regard to this circumstance. Matthew does not continue his history quite so low as the ascension of Christ. Mark, indeed, goes much farther, and speaks of the apostles going out and preaching every where; which implies, that the gospel had made a considerable progress before his history was concluded. Luke carries down the Acts, which book was written after his Gospel, to the end of the second year of Paul's imprisonment; which shows it could not be written till about thirty years after Christ's ascension, but does not certainly prove it was written quite so soon: And as for the argument from 2 Cor. viii. 18. to prove that his Gospel was dispersed throughout all the churches with applause, before Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (that is, before the year 57,) I think it very precarious. John plainly appears to have intended his gospel as a supplement to the other three, and consequently it must have been the last of the four: But as he mentions nothing which happened after the ascension, though he so certainly wrote after christianity had been widely propagated, (as appears from what has been said of Mark's conclusion,) it will show that no conjecture can be formed as to the date of one of these books merely from the last article recorded in it.

Tradition does indeed say something on this subject, but not in so determinate, or always in so consistent a manner, as we might have been ready to expect. Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, are mentioned by almost all critics and commentators that write upon this head. They all agree in telling us, what is extremely probable, that Matthew's Gospel was first written: (Compare Iren. *Adv. Hær. lib.* iii. *cap.* 1. Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib.* vi. *cap.* 1. Hieron. *Catal. Script. Eccles.* and Aug. *De Consen. Evan. lib.* i. *cap.* 1.) But in the account of the year of publication they differ. Eusebius (in his *Chronicon*) and Theophylact, whom most of the moderns follow, place it but eight or nine years after the ascension; and Calmet tells us, that almost all the old Greek manuscripts have it thus at the end of his Gospel. The Alexandrian Chronicle brings it seven years lower; and Irenæus, in the fore-cited place, on the authority of a tradition from Papias, (which in itself seems not very probable,) sets it as late as the preaching of Peter and Paul at Rome; which must have been (if they ever preached together there) more than fifteen years after that. The same author says, that Mark wrote two years after Matthew: And hardly any other accounts (so far as I can recollect) say any thing determinate about it; though several of them speak of Mark's writing his Gospel at the request of St. Peter. (See Clem. Alex. *Apud* Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15. *et lib.* vi. *cap.* 14. Hieron. *Catal. Vir. illustr. in Marc.* and *Epiphan Hær.* 51.) I cannot certainly affirm, that Luke had seen both these, though M. L'Enfant thinks he strongly intimates it: And I find little in the Fathers about the time of his writing, more than what Irenæus says, that he digested into writing what Paul preached among the Gentiles; thereby seeming to intimate, that it was after that apostle had despatched some considerable part of his ministry. (See Iren. *lib.* iii. *cap.* 1.)—Eusebius, (*Eccl. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 24. *et lib.* vi. *cap.* 14.) Jerome, (*Catal. in. Joan.*) and Irenæus, (*lib.* iii. *cap.* 11.) say, that John wrote his Gospel in an extreme old age, and very near the conclusion of the first century. And this is the substance of what I can learn concerning the light that antiquity throws on this question.

On the whole, it will appear certain concerning two of the Gospels, those of Mark and John, and probable concerning the third, I mean that of Luke, (whatever we may conjecture concerning Matthew's,) that they were not written till some considerable time after our Lord's resurrection. Perhaps this may afford a probable argument, that Matthew's was written sooner; since we can hardly suppose, (as M. Le Clerc observes, *Eccl. Hist.* p. 414.) that the church should be left so long without any authentic account in writing of facts so highly important to its edification and its very being.*

* See M. Le Clerc's *Dissertation on the Four Evangelist* prefixed to his Harmony; in which he says as good things as I have any where met with, in favour of the earliest dates which any have assigned to Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

As for the later Evangelists, it might perhaps be urged, that they, who wrote not altogether from their own knowledge, but from the testimony of others, would have opportunity of making fuller inquiries from a greater variety of persons, in consequence of the deliberation they used before the publication of their works. Yet, on the other hand, it would, on the part of the original witnesses, so much increase the probability of some slip of memory, that on the whole it might something derogate from the full credibility of what they have written, were it not for what hath been proved above of the divine superintendency and inspiration with which they were favoured. But when this is allowed, the objection immediately falls to the ground; for, in regard to this, we may as entirely credit Moses, when relating facts which happened two thousand years before he was born, as Luke, when giving an account of the shipwreck he himself suffered at Malta.

I shall close this Note with observing, that the longer christianity had been settled in the world before these books were written, the stronger is the argument which we may deduce from the universal reception they met with, to prove their credibility: Because it plainly shows they were perfectly agreeable to what the churches in one place and another had been taught by the lips of the apostles; otherwise their inconsistency with those originally received accounts would, no doubt, have been esteemed an invincible reason for rejecting them. And when a due weight is allowed to this thought, it will perhaps appear, that if we should bring the date of each book as low as any of the ecclesiastical writers do (for which I can see no sufficient reason) yet the cause of christianity would not, on the whole, lose any thing material by such a concession.

A TABLE

FOR THE MORE READY FINDING ANY VERSE OF THE EVANGELISTS IN THE HARMONY.

N. B. *The* VERSES *between those inserted in this* TABLE *follow each other in the same* SECTION, *and begin at the* PAGE *referred to. Thus, in* MATT. *chap.* I. *the verses from verse* 1, *to verse* 17, *are in sect.* ix. *and begin at page* 14. *And then from verse* 18, *to verse* 25, *which ends the chapter, they are in sect.* viii. *and begin at page* 13.

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GENERAL INDEX,

REFERRING TO THE EPISTLES AND BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

N. B. This Index chiefly refers to articles treated of in the Notes. For the author, date, design, and plan of each Book, the reader is referred to the Introductions: the Text will generally serve as a kind of Index to the Paraphrase.

The Notes on the prophetic part of the Revelation contain many things to which it was not easy to refer: but several of them being mentioned no more than once, the Text will readily point to them; and therefore the reader is desired to excuse the omission of them in this Index.

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